

UUCSC Board of Directors Meeting

October 9, 2025

Present: President Amber Collins, Treasurer Karen Ellsworth, Clerk Mary Fulton, Directors Donna Caldwell and April Ruedaflores, Rev. Denis Paul

Absent: VP Russell Stokes, Director Chris Johnson

Call to Order: 10:04 am by Amber Collins

MOTION: Mary moves to ratify both the August and September minutes.

PASSED unanimously.

Staff and treasurer reports are appended.

Capital Campaign/Pledge Campaign/ Auction

1. The basic issue for whether or not to have a capital campaign is how successful a pledge drive can be. If we could raise enough to fund building maintenance, a sabbatical and operate without a deficit; then a capital campaign would be unnecessary. The Finance committee may have some plans for gathering a new stewardship committee. Mary will contact Sue Strakosch for further information.
2. The Stewardship committee could propose new ideas for a Pledge Campaign using newer technology. We discussed the congregation's need to open a venmo account.
3. Linda Whyte Burrell will chair the planning committee for an in-person auction with an auctioneer and a silent auction to be held January 17, 2026 with January 31 as a snow option. A variety of auction items will be offered, including dinners and events similar to those offered previously with Dining for \$\$\$\$. People interested in working with Linda should contact her directly.

Copyright: It was questioned as to the legality of publishing online readings and lyrics as part of the Sunday service. Copyright laws allow a lot of things to be used within a church building that are not clearly allowed or prohibited online. Although Church Mutual provides insurance to cover unwitting copyright infringement, there is enough concern to discontinue

this practice. Mary will ask Etta Zasloff to take down the link to the services already posted online. Occasional requests for written words may be addressed directly to Rev. Denis Paul.

Hacking: A recent incident was due to an unexpected update and has been resolved.

Sabbatical planning: Amber will address this with Adria Evans, chair of the Worship committee. There are a variety of options for supporting the Worship committee. For example, a speaker coordinator could be appointed to facilitate planning or local pastors might agree to preach on a regular rotation.

Board Retreat: Tentatively set for November 15 from 10:00 till 2:00, probably at the Land Trust building. Russell and Chris need to check their calendars. Amber will check with the Willow Dell Historical Association about the availability of their building.

Board communication with the congregation:

Board members doing the Welcome and announcements for the Sunday services:

October 12 – Mary
October 19 – Amber
October 26 – Karen
November 2 – Donna
November 9 – Russell
November 16 – Chris
November 23 – April
November 30 – Mary

New Business: Tom Magliochetti is resigning from the Committee on Ministry due to increased job commitments. The Board recommended 4 people for Rev. Denis to contact about filling this vacancy.

Adjourned: 11:15

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Fulton, Clerk

Reports

Office Administrator Board Report, October 2025

Membership

I helped Val Follet and Mary Finnegan find materials and coordinate the transfer of the committee chairmanship. I updated and printed materials for folders for the upcoming New to UU class.

Working with the new treasurer

I have been emailing back and forth with Karen Ellsworth about a number of issues, including updating the tax exempt certification and clarifying language for the facilities use agreement.

Fundraising

Work has already begun on the Holiday Fair and the upcoming Yard Sale.

Ongoing

I continue to work with Etta on the newsletter and website, and to take care of the mail, email, phone messages, ordering office supplies and writing checks in response to special requests. I continue to produce the weekly order of service, and to deliver the food donations to the Johnnycake Center.

Best,

Sara Kaplow
Office Administrator

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County
Treasurer's Report Summary
9 October 2025 Board of Directors meeting
7/1/2025 – 8/25/2025

Income	Actual to date	Budget
Pledges, donations	7,908	18,916
Fundraising	0	0
Rental	360	1,250
Interest	400	166

Expenditures	Actual to date	Budget
Personnel: <i>Salaries, pension, housing, payroll taxes</i>	13,924	14,947
Professional services	3,689	1,865
Utilities	<i>not available</i>	
Telephone, internet	370	312
Building: <i>Repairs, maintenance, supplies</i>	0	750
Committee expenses	1,457	569
Contributions (District, UUA)	0	29
Miscellaneous expenses	94	137
Condo fees	987	1056
Mortgage	381	385
Insurance	0	0

Notes: Figures are rounded to nearest dollar.
Income does not include restricted funds.
Wunder Academy reconciliation is on separate sheet.
RE supplies are included in committee expenses.

Report for October Board Meeting 2025

Director of Religious Exploration

Dear Board,

Sundays have been lovely in RE. We have been slowly working towards creating a covenant together. We began by working on individual collages to represent ourselves and what makes us special. We've talked about what promises and offerings we can make to our community, such as kindness, fun, hugs, creativity. And we've talked about what we love about UUCSC. With all this info, we will craft a covenant to help us create the kind of beloved community we all want to contribute to and be part of.

Time for All Ages will be this coming Sunday, with kids starting upstairs. We are also planning a Samhain celebration for Nov. 2nd when the kids will be upstairs for the beginning of service and then everyone will be invited to the backyard for a celebration. We'll make stone soup again and have a ritual in the spiral space.

Our middle/high school youth are settling back in together and engaging more during our all ages circle time downstairs. We did not do the Breakfast Club this month, but plan to do it the last Sunday in October. We will also be starting DnD again, most likely on Wednesdays in mid-November.

I'm now meeting monthly with the DRE from Westminster Unitarian and the DRE from First U in Providence. It's a wonderful supportive time of sharing and inspiring each other with the work we do. I also have another meeting scheduled with the CE at Peacedale Congregational to talk about collaboration.

We have six people signed up for the OWL facilitator training that's coming up on Nov. 7-9th. Three of those people are from our congregation! We need a minimum of 12 people for the training to run, but we have several people from other congregations who have expressed interest, so I'm hopeful it will happen.

I'm very excited about the Sharing Circles we are offering this year! As we prepare for this, I've been watching webinars from the Soul Matters team, which have been inspiring. They have trainings for their small groups offerings and how to engage more with their curriculum.

I rescheduled our first RE Visioning meeting to Oct. 12th at 11:30, after coffee hour. It's a time to gather ideas and feedback and set goals for RE. It's also a time to sign up for tasks and projects to help RE. We also have a sign-up sheet in the Oneto room, so you can add your name during coffee hour. I know that committee goals are due this week, and I will send in a draft of our annual goals, but I would like to revise them when I get input from our visioning meeting.

Take care all, Lee

**Treasurer's Report
for the October 9, 2025 UUCSC Board of Directors meeting**

Budget summary

Attached is a budget summary for the period ending August 25, the same period for which you received the Excel spreadsheets last month. The Finance Committee assisted in designing the form. The form is a work in progress and may change. Please note that not every income and expense line item is included, so there are no totals for the categories. Before the Finance Committee meeting on October 16, I will assemble a new budget summary based on the most recent spreadsheet from Ame (which I have not yet received) so that in November you will receive a budget summary reviewed by the Finance Committee.

The final numbers for Wunder Academy are included on a separate sheet.

State sales tax exemption

Our state sales tax exemption certificate expired on September 9. Since then, I have been in discussions with the Division of Taxation to renew it.

Apparently the problem occurred when the department decided to change its renewal application to require a determination letter from the IRS to prove tax-exempt status for any nonprofit that is not a § 501(c)(3) entity. The new form was adopted in late July, apparently with no advance public notice. As both the procedure for getting § 501(c)(3) status and the procedure for obtaining a determination letter from the IRS take several months, there is no way we would have been able to comply with the new renewal procedure even if we had known about it before September 9.

I had a detailed conversation with Kerri Cyr, a DOR supervisor, on September 25 and later sent her additional information about the congregation, but I have not yet heard back from the division.

Fundraising

At their September 18 meeting, the Finance Committee discussed the decision not to hold Dining for Dollars this year. They are extremely concerned that without the revenue from Dining for Dollars, the congregation will have an income shortfall of about \$10,000. They asked me to express their concern to you.

Facilities Use Policy revision

I completed a first draft of the revision to the Facilities Use Policy last week and gave copies to Amber, April, and Sara Kaplow for their review. My conversation with a representative of Church Mutual Insurance was unenlightening, but Sara has been extremely helpful. As I suspected, it appears that virtually no one is following the current policy.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Ellsworth
UUCSC Treasurer

**Minister's Report to the Board of Directors UU Congregation of South County Rev.
Denis Paul**
October 2, 2025

Dear Members of the Board of Directors,

Following are my thoughts on different areas of ministry:

Worship Life

9/14 "Worthy of Reflection," with Sally Barney

9/21 "Thief of Joy," with Sky Kimball

10/5 "Unconditional Love in Hateful Times," with April Ruedaflores

Preaching during chaotic times can be challenging. Every week, it feels like something in the news cycle is big enough to force me to rethink the sermon that's been brewing for weeks. Each sermon feels like an unexpected opportunity to model constant reflection, so I am grateful for the mutual support of the Worship Committee and the generosity of presence of Worship Assistants. We will all be gathering on October 11 for another grounding session.

A big part of me still wants to figure out a way to get the choir and the music director into the congregation, instead of separated, up on the chancel; simply because I think we all appreciate being together as one. But the space simply might not allow it, without creating major disruption. And who wants disruption in our *sanctuary* amidst so much global chaos?

Board members welcoming everyone at the beginning of the service has felt like a great success. Already I've been hearing positive feedback about increased visibility, so thank you all.

Congregational Life

Reflection Groups, facilitated by Sally Barney, Lee Cowan and me, have begun this week. Altogether, we have 31 people involved, which is a little more than 20% of the congregation, an amazing response. There's still time to sign up for the group that will meet on 8 consecutive Tuesday afternoons in January.

It's been great to see Coffee Hour return. It's a reminder that it doesn't have to be perfect or grand. It only has to provide an opportunity to gather.

The first congregational dinner is planned for October 17, and we're looking for folks to cook at home: simple LARGE dishes like rice, or beans, or roasted vegetables. We're still committed to preparing meals where everyone can eat, regardless of their dietary restrictions.

A lot of ideas are floating around for fundraisers that open our doors to events that will be appealing to the wider community, fun events that address interests beyond our walls. Anyone interested in a South County Cookoff, with chilli or chowder? Meanwhile folks are talking about new ways (and new people) to approach the annual pledge drive. Both are great opportunities for younger/newer members of the congregation to get involved and have fun.

Community Life

We've been gathering for Beverages and Banter at new places outside of Wakefield. Well, at least we're *trying* for new places. Turns out, spaces are small and hours are unpredictable, so if you have any ideas for good locations please let me know.

We'll be screening "Grains of Sand" with the Hera Gallery on Monday, October 27, so mark your calendars.

The Hurdis Fund is making donations to some great events, extending our reach and influence, while also supporting the work we do here in our congregation.

Housekeeping

At the urging of finance and personnel committees, I've been thinking about what a sabbatical could look like for me. While lots of ideas are coming up to challenge my mind, re-engage my spirit and recharge my batteries, I haven't yet come up with *the* thing. Too many possibilities. But I will keep you posted when an idea comes along for a three month period that could be as early as spring of 2027.

Monday is my regular sabbath.

My next furlough week is October 21-26

Since my last report, I have made no disbursements from the Agape Fund

In Peace,

Rev. Denis Paul