

## **UUCSC Board of Directors Meeting**

March 26, 2025

via Zoom

**Present:** President Nancy Richman, VP Russell Stokes, Treasurer Mary Alice Kimball, Clerk Mary Fulton, Directors Kelsey Briggs, Chris Johnson, Trish Hindley and Rev. Denis Letourneau Paul

**Guest:** Trish Kelley

**Call to Order:** 10:32 am by Nancy Richman

**MOTION:** Nancy moves to ratify the February 26 minutes approved via email.

**PASSED** unanimously

**Staff reports are appended.**

**Treasurer's report:** There are new people on the Finance committee: Pat Keefe, Brian Maynard and Rob Carter. Some of the work previously done by Mary Alice Kimball will be done by other Finance members. Elise Bender will be working with Personnel to develop the 25-26 Salary and Benefits. Sue Strakosch will be preparing the budget proposal for 2025-26. Harry Buffum and Will Bender (both former treasurers) met with Finance to look at how the treasurer's role has changed. A candidate for the Financial Administrator declined to take the position when offered it. This development means other steps must be taken soon to relieve Mary Alice's work load. Trish Kelley will contact local accountants and Mary Fulton will speak with Personnel about another search strategy.

### **Old Business**

**Bylaws:** Nancy Richman, Kelsey Briggs and Mary Fulton will meet to write proposed changes to be presented to the Board at the April 30 meeting.

**ICE policy:** This has low priority at this time but the Board wishes to support immigrants and would like to meet with local police officials to assess what assistance would be available.

### **New Business**

**Nominating:** Variations on the presidential role were discussed as finding a successor for next year is proving difficult. Rev. Denis and Nancy Richman will talk with Nominating and others about possible changes.

**Fundraising:** Trish Hindley would like an apprentice to work with her on the Holiday Fair. Another person to help with Dining 4 \$\$\$ would also be welcome.

**Clean Team:** Kelsey Briggs reported that the team could use more volunteers, or perhaps we should go back to hiring a cleaning firm.

**General Assembly:** There is \$485.00 available to help fund delegates. Anyone interested in serving as a delegate should speak with Rev. Denis or a Board member.

**Introductions:** Board members are trying to speak with new people. Rev Denis urged us to seek out men in particular as many are feeling socially disconnected due to shifts in our culture.

**Masking:** The data the Board was following now shows a drop in respiratory illness markers, such as wastewater data for COVID, so March 30 will be the last date we will strongly encourage masking. People are still encouraged to do whatever makes them feel safer.

Adjourned at 12:28.

Submitted by Mary Fulton, Clerk

**Next Board Meeting:** Wednesday April 30 10:30 – 12:30 on Zoom

Coordinating Council: Wednesday May 14 1:00pm on Zoom

The Annual meeting will be held June 8.

### **Staff reports appended below**

#### **Office Administrator Board Report, March 2025**

##### **Membership**

I worked with Val Follett and Mary Finnegan on entering new yellow cards and updating the directory.

##### **Stewardship**

I assisted Mary Fulton with preparation of the materials, and with Jeff Berry to keep a record of pledge forms received and pledge totals.

##### **Family Dance**

I created a flyer for the family dance held on March 16th and coordinated with Harry Buffum and Lee for rehearsals and publicity.

##### **Newsletter Changes**

Worked with Cathy Solomon, Etta Zasloff and Rev. Denis to develop a policy in response to the quantity of information coming in about protests, marches, letter writing campaigns, etc.

##### **Ongoing**

I continue to work with Etta on the newsletter and website, and to take care of the mail, email and phone messages. I continue to produce the weekly order of service and the monthly announcements insert, and to deliver the food donations to the Johnnycake Center.

Best, Sara Kaplow, Office Administrator

Report for March 26th Board Meeting  
Director of Religious Exploration

Dear Board,

We had our multi-gen service on March 9th and kicked off our Sidekicks program. Thirty people participated this time around and are all matched up with emails going out this weekend.

We held our first Wunder Explorers group meeting on March 8th with a deep dive into really tasting and experiencing ice cream together. We're exploring our senses and how we perceive the world, and our responses and questions about it. Our next meeting will be a walk in Ninigret Park on April 19th to meet the giant trolls.

On Sundays we continue to have new kids every month. We are working with the theme of Trust: trusting ourselves, each other and life. I'm using parables from the Soul Matters curriculum and Wunder Box ideas with discussion questions for our elementary aged kids. It's going so well.

Our youth group started The Breakfast Club last Sunday with Andrew, Sky and Kenneth accompanying them on a walk around Peacedale, picking up trash and getting a treat from the local bakery. They reported a great time and many interesting objects collected! This will be a monthly event, connecting them to the Peacedale community with various service projects.

This Sunday we will be celebrating the Spring Equinox with our traditional egg divination practice and planting peas!

I took an online workshop that other UUCSC folks attended at the end of February called "Embodied Pastoral Care for Liberated Community." It was fantastic and I've brought some of the ideas from that to our Wednesday UU Village gatherings.

The Community Old Time Dance was such a success last Sunday! It was great to see so many people of all ages just beaming and dancing together. We want to plan another for early June and aim to offer this kind of dance seasonally.

Upcoming events that I'm helping to plan:

- Our 3rd Annual Congregational Birthday Bash for April 2nd
- Easter service and an egg hunt
- Beyond the Binary on April 26th
- An RE projects and clean up day at the end of April, coordinated with the facilities committee
- Wunder Revels of Beltane May 4th
- Wunder Academy August 4th-8th

Thanks all,  
Lee

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

March 15, 2025

Dear Members of the Board of Directors,

Following are my thoughts on different areas of ministry:

Worship Life

Since my last report to the board, I have led the following worship services:

2/2 "Kentucky Jean," with Amber Collins

2/9 "Whatever Happened to Greenwood?" With Lee Cowan

2/16 "Witnessing History," with Elizabeth Spring

3/2 "Ladies and Gentlemen"

3/9 "You're Not Alone," supporting Lee Cowan

Severe winter weather on 2/9 and 2/16 required we do some rearranging of services. Thank you to everyone who helped make the pivot feel effortless. An unfortunate consequence of having a very small turnout one Sunday and being completely online the following Sunday is that our loose plate collection for the month is down significantly. The multigenerational service called "You're Not Alone," was appreciated for its inclusiveness, joy and content, but we did get a lot of feedback about the 90+ minute duration. Lee and I will be working how to reign in those services so they aren't so long.

During my March Study week, I will be planning out the remainder of the services (and adult RE classes, among other things). Meanwhile, the Worship Committee is all set through the end of June, ready to start planning for the summer. Ami Pienknagura is set to act as Music Director from Mid-April through June. I will be part of the evaluative process to determine if they will be hired on on long-term beginning the first Sunday in September.

Congregational Life

The Committee on Ministry (COM), as one its members said, "had a lot of business lately," as they support the board in addressing some of the more pressing issues causing tension in the congregation. My feeling is that in the context of our government being dismantled as we and the people we love are named as "enemies" of the administration based on our beliefs and/or identities, we're having to redefine terms like transparency, accountability and inclusion. As a member of the Relations Committee recently reminded me, we would do well to remember that the their committee is always available to to mediate whenever someone asks for third party to step in, or any time any member of the community is feeling unheard.

On April 6, the COM will begin a series of regularly scheduled Listening Sessions after Sunday worship to talk about the biggest issues we face, providing a sounding board and a means for communicating better as a congregation.

Community Life Faced with an overwhelming request for our presence and participation in local, state and regional justice events to protect democracy and the safety of at-risk individuals and communities, the Social Justice Committee has requested that UUCSC members and friends sign up for the South County Social Justice Coalition newsletter. Two of our members, Etta Zasloff and Johnnie Rodriguez, work with the committee to synthesize and share information, so that we don't have to use our limited resources reinventing the wheel. Through the newsletter, we've gotten involved in the local March Forth demonstration for democracy in Wakefield on March 4th, and I will be joining a few others at the RI Council of Churches' workshop on working against Christian nationalism on March 22. Our own Social Justice Advisory Committee will be hosting a workshop called Beyond the Binary on April 26 here at UUCSC, with local speakers addressing issues of concern to trans\* and non-binary people and their families and allies. Housekeeping My next furlough week is March 18-23 during which I will be available only in an emergency, followed by a study week (previously mentioned) during which I will be available, but working from home. Since my last report, I have made no disbursements from the Agape Fund.

In peace,  
Rev. Denis Paul