

UUCSC Board of Directors Meeting

June 11, 2026

Present: President Amber Collins, VP Russell Stokes, Treasurer Karen Ellsworth, Clerk Mary Fulton, Directors Donna Caldwell, Chris Johnson, April Ruedaflores, Rev. Denis Paul

Call to Order: 10:00 am by Amber Collins

MOTION: Donna moves to ratify the May minutes.

PASSED unanimously.

MOTION: Donna moves to accept the staff reports and the treasurer's report.

PASSED unanimously.

Reports Appended

Treasurer's report – The music director requested an addition to the 2026/27 budget to hire a piano accompanist. Given that the Personnel committee included hours in the job description that were meant to allow the director time to practice the piano between services, the Board wishes to encourage both more practice and the use of choir member's skills, rather than hiring additional staff.

The IRS phoned Karen to explain that retroactive recognition of non-profit status does not apply to religious institutions. Nevertheless, approval is anticipated soon.

OLD BUSINESS

Some necessary work for the congregation could benefit by being restructured. It was decided that the board would seek a coordinator for these areas of work: Fundraising, Technology, Social Justice, Hospitality, and Pastoral Care.

Donna will speak with Betsy Dalton about Fundraising, Russell will coordinate the Technology, Amber will speak with Cathy Solomon to discuss how to move forward with Social Justice, more thought will be

given to the needs of Hospitality, and Mary Fulton will work with Rev. Denis about coordinating Pastoral Care. Amber proposed that congregational leaders should have key codes and preferential access to ministerial pastoral care.

Sara Kaplow needs a list of the people who should have a key code for access to the building. The codes have not been purged for several years and for security purposes they should be reset regularly, perhaps annually on July 1.

NEW BUSINESS

Amber is the congregation's representative to the Lily Pads Condo Association. She reported that the association should issue a report for UUCSC to review before making further payments.

The budget informational meeting went well so there is anticipation that the Annual Meeting will be as convivial.

The UUA exit interview for Rev. Denis Paul was done on 6/9.

Adjourned 11:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Fulton, Clerk

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County
Treasurer's Report
for the June 11, 2026 UUCSC Board of Directors meeting**

Budget

Attached is a spreadsheet showing spending through May 15. As you know, the budget adopted in June 2025 has a deficit of \$19,471. We have made up the entire deficit and as of May 15 we are ahead by about \$4,000.

Finance Committee chair Sue Strakosch, financial administrator Ame Botus, and I now have access to the UUCSC's Quickbooks online account. We have asked Ame to attend our Finance Committee meeting on June 18.

Budget for 2026-2027

The Finance Committee conducted a question-and-answer session about the proposed 2026-2027 budget after the service on May 24. It was well-attended, considering that it took place on Memorial Day weekend.

Music director Ami Pienknagura and the Music Committee are requesting that the proposed music budget be increased to add a piano accompanist. They believe that having a designated accompanist would be pivotal in improving the music program and would help Ami focus on the choir. The committee has suggested reductions that can be made in the proposed budget and they are willing to hold at least one fundraising event to help offset the additional cost. A piano player who is a friend of Jane Rubenstein has been playing at choir rehearsals as a volunteer. She is willing to play for \$20 an hour. She would start in September and would play at choir rehearsals and during the Sunday service. The committee estimates that would cost at least \$3,200. Finance Committee Chair Sue Strakosch and I suggest that in the proposed budget, we reduce the guest musicians account from \$600 to \$300, reduce the music materials account from \$300 to \$200, and add an accompanist at \$3,200. This would increase the total music budget by \$ 2,800 to \$4,040. If the Board approves this, a motion can be made from the floor at the annual meeting to amend the proposed budget.

Property and casualty insurance

As you know, the UUA has chosen a new insurance carrier to replace Church Mutual as the recommended carrier for UU congregations. Last month, I was told that our application for coverage by the new carrier would not be considered until a couple of months before our current policies expire, but last week I received a call from the new insurance agency following up on my earlier request to switch carriers. Apparently it will not be necessary for us to wait until January. I will re-apply for the new coverage later this month.

Application for IRS determination letter

The congregation's application to the IRS for a letter of determination of 501(c)(3) status was submitted on June 4. There is no way to know how soon it will be considered. Please let me know if you would like a copy of the application, which is 20 pages long.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Ellsworth
UUCSC Treasurer

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

June 6, 2026

Dear Members of the Board of Directors,

Saying goodbye has been so bittersweet this time around. I'm feeling how much I don't want to leave. As I enjoy my last month serving as minister at UUCSC, following are my thoughts on different areas of ministry since my last report:

Worship Life

These are the services I am leading or have lead since my last report, until my departure:

- 5/10 "The Rise of Self-Direction"
- 5/31 "A Place in the World," with Sky Kimball
- 6/7 "Coming of Age," assisting Lee with Dash, Ezra, Moses and Tusz
- 6/21 "The Aim of Life"
- 6/28 "A Goodbye Brunch"

The Final Service will be shortened, with the usual rituals, plus blessings and an exchange of gifts as we send each other onto new adventures apart.

For most of the time I've been here, I have joked that I am like a Chatty Cathy doll" Pull the string in my back and I say the same thing about the work Lee and I have been doing together. "Our goal is to nurture a generation of youth who choose Unitarian Universalism because we belong to them. In the last month I've been saying something different. "Everyone has one great sermon in them, and I know you would all love to hear each other's." I know both of these statements to be true. So I am happy to work with the Coming of Age youth AND to encourage all of you to share your great sermon in the coming months.

Whether a new minister arrives in August, or it takes a while to get there, the Worship Committee is going to need help. I know we've done good work to improve their skills, but it takes a lot to keep the pulpit filled every Sunday without a minister. Please help them.

Congregational Life

Just this week, I have officiated a funeral (Marjie), a memorial service (Louise) and a wedding (Stu and Lyddie), which is a first for me. Meanwhile, as I have been attending my last committee meetings, I've been keeping up a rigorous schedule of

meeting with folks as they request one last one-to-one conversation to say goodbye. Lee, Sally and I will be meeting in a couple weeks to talk about how to have the Reflection Circles continue into the future in a way that is healthy and avoids entrenchment, which can be damaging to the life of the congregation, with or without a new minister.

Tomorrow, June 7, the COM will be gathering the congregation after the service for its annual evaluation of the ministry. In the past, the evaluation has focused on me and the program staff with the input of representative from the board and a few key committees, with the framework of the UUA's eight offices of professional ministry. This time, they'll be asking two questions (How are we doing? What can we do better?) about the four "offices" of UUCSC's mission of Welcoming, Loving, Growing Spiritually, and Seeking Justice. The hope is that this can be an evaluation of the WHOLE ministry, and the beginning of a conversation about what the TASKS are of those four areas of worship, rather than trying to populate them with committees.

Community Life

It's been bittersweet saying goodbye to local colleagues, both UU and interfaith, but I am so looking forward to being at the South County Pride Fest on June 13, for one last opportunity to offer my traditional blessing to everyone there: "May you be loved exactly as you are." If there's one thing I would like to be my legacy in the community, it is that.

I will not be attending General Assembly this year, as I will be busy with packing up for the move to Michigan.

Housekeeping

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

Monday is my regular sabbath.

My next furlough week is June 9-14.

My last day will be June 30, which will revolve around packing my office, leading the mediation group one last time, and enjoying coffee with Adria for one last pep talk.

Please don't forget that in July, I will technically still be with you, though it is my paid vacation. In the case of an emergency, please contact me on my cell phone.

In Peace,
Rev. Denis Paul

Director of Faith Exploration, Lee Cowan
Report to the Board of Directors
June 8th, 2026

Dear Board,

We had another visitor to RE this month: Papillon (aka Barbara Pagh) came to make paper with us. It's such a magical process. We also spent time this month brainstorming for a talent/variety show and came up with some skit ideas. Andrew White and I met with the Coming of Age youth to plan their skit for their service. Outside of Sunday, I met with those teens several times this month to help put their service together.

The Coming of Age program felt like such a success after last Sunday's service. I was so impressed with the credos our teens wrote and so impressed with them stepping into leadership roles in the service and standing up at the pulpit to speak. And a giant thank you to the mentors who volunteered their time to be with us on that journey. I can't wait to do it again.

I helped with the Evaluation of Ministry on Sunday and was glad to be part of it. I'm curious to see what will come from all the feedback and ideas that were generated.

The Wunder Academy now has 21 kids registered and 2 more most likely on the way. I met with Danielle Bilecki, Julien Roberts and Ami Pienknagura to discuss justice workshops at the Wunder Academy. I am so excited about all of the talent and ideas these folks bring. Julien will be leading a workshop in embodying and expressing our emotions through movement. Danielle will be leading a workshop on creative outlets for expressing our anxiety/grief/big emotions. Ami will be leading a workshop about what we can do as a community to make this world a better place. And Clare Sartori and I will be leading one about big and small acts of resistance with examples from the past, like Kingian Nonviolence. It's going to be a fantastic week.

Wunder Academy needs: We need a few people to help lead the Ancient Alchemy apprenticeship. This is projects like making herbal skin potions, mixing magical slime or some kind of kitchen creation. Put out the word that we're looking for folks who like to do this kind of stuff and want to do it with

kids! We're also still looking for a couple people to bring snacks on some of the mornings.

I will also put a wish list in the newsletter next week for physical items that we need.

We have three more gatherings planned in RE this month: a parent's circle on June 16th with younger kid DnD, a movie night on June 17th to watch Persepolis together to honor Marjane Satrapi, and book club plus DnD on June 30th to close out the congregational year. I love seeing our RE space alive with all ages, engaging with each other in meaningful ways.

As we wind down the year, I'm thinking a lot about priorities for next year. I'm planning to run another reflection circle and a monthly parent circle. I'd like to bring back the Breakfast Club for our youth group, with rotating youth group mentors meeting with them. And I plan to run OWL for K-2nd graders.

Lots of love,
Lee

Office Administrator Board Report, June, 2026

Annual Meeting Packet

The biggest project this month was gathering and formatting reports from the various committee chairs and putting together the Annual Meeting packet and setting up the proxy forms for the annual meeting.

Ministry Search

I supported the work of the Ministry Search Committee, producing copies of the draft application to be made available to the congregation for review.

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