

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date: Tuesday August 8, 2017

Location: Gilbert Hall, second floor

- Call to Order: 6:35 PM
- Adjourn: 8:19 PM



firstunitarian
church of rochester

Board members present: Dave Burnet, Jo Cone, Tim Farnum, Mary Hammele, Stephanie Ketterl, Courtney Miller, Anne Perry, John Solberg (**Gregory North joined via Skype at 7:00 PM*)

Board members not present: Shadia McAnally, Paul Suwijn

AGENDA

1. Centering (Rev. Joel Miller): Reading for the Standing Committee, by Phyllis B. O'Connell from the book: Bless the Imperfect: Meditations for Congregational Leaders.

2. Approval of Minutes:

- a. Per Tim Farnum, May 2017 minutes have already been approved.
- b. June 2017 meeting was a potluck with a few updates by Rev. Joel (no motions, no voting).

3. Minister's Report (Rev. Joel Miller):

- a. **Roof Updates:** Rev. Joel has been in communication with Virginia Searle (architect). Roof project has experienced delays due to ongoing weather issues. Projected start date for the project is now September 5, 2017 right after Labor Day. Timing would still be good, as it would be done within a couple of days of the original projected completion time. If weather delays continue, the likely priority at the start of the roof project will be focused on the area over the nursery school and near the playground in an effort to get the roof in that area completed with minimal disruption of their operation.

ACTION ITEM: Rev. Joel will provide a roof update to the Board once he has more information.

b. Staffing & Volunteers:

- i. The new Junior High Youth Coordinator is Catyra Polland. Catyra is not a UU but she has a master's degree in social work and comes to us with experience in educational youth programming. Sheila is excited for Catyra to join the staff.
- ii. The new Senior High Youth Coordinator is Wayne Holt. Wayne is a member and he has already been advising, he is well trained in working with UU youth.
- iii. The new Coming of Age Coordinator is Lynn Acquafondata. She has a complex set of relationships with the church as an Affiliate Minister, member and now this new role. Lynn specializes in congregational relationships and dynamics and we (Joel, Kim, Sheila) are very comfortable with her managing her Affiliate Minister, staff and member roles.
- iv. Very soon, we will be advertising to fill a part time Membership Coordinator position. At this point it is a 10-hour a week position.

ACTION ITEM: If you know of anyone who is organized, good at working with people, and can also do some light database tracking, please have them contact Kimberly Joy or Rev Tina Simson if they are interested in applying for the Membership Coordinator position.

- v. The job description and hiring for a Social Justice Coordinator will follow as soon as we are done with the work of a Membership Coordinator. Hiring process for this position is anticipated to take place in early September.
- vi. There is a new Personnel Team, which has been organized by Rev. Joel and Tom Wetherell. Tom Wetherell was the original chair/leader of that team. Personnel team members include: Rev. Joel Miller, Kimberly Joy, Ellie Stauffer, Maren McCoy-Kyle, Tim Farnum and Tom Wetherell. The team will meet at least quarterly, if not more often, and

they have already partnered with Sheila with her hiring this past week. They will continue to engage with Rev. Joel and other senior staff in hiring. The goal the new Personnel Team is to make sure membership is always engaged in and participating in hiring and overall management of staff. We want to close the loop with congregation and staff and provide accountability as it relates to hiring and staff related items. The team will also report back and provide updates to the Board of Trustees so they are aware of how things are going.

- vii. Rev Tina Simson has done a great job this summer, creating a newly trained team of worship associates.
- viii. We are in the process of using UUA guidelines in order to adopt policies about participation of sex offenders. If there is a reason to enact the policies and procedures, at minimum, Rev. Joel would have a conversation with the board officers but it would be possible he would also have a conversation with the rest of the Board of Trustees as well.
- ix. Big picture view with hiring - As demand increases and availability of resources decreases, members of the congregation will need to be more active. Knowing this shift will take place is impacting how Rev. Joel is currently structuring staffing. The upside is that staff will shift focus from "doing ministry" to enabling the congregation to "do ministry". This fits in with the desires of the congregation to be more involved along with economic trends of most congregations.

c. Membership & Annual Budget Drive (ABD):

- i. As of Winter 2017, the count was 804 members.
- ii. ABD was very successful this year thanks to the hard work of the Thrive Team. That being said, there are 65 units who have not yet pledged and those people need to be followed up with in order to determine what this means and whether or not they wish to remain members.
- iii. Eight members have resigned verbally or via email to staff. Our policy as written requires those who wish to resign to write a letter to the Board of Trustees to notify them of their resignation. Almost no one does that. Rev. Joel recommends that after we have been in touch with these eight folks, the board should vote to accept their resignations. It does not make sense to go back to them and require submission of a formal letter. It does not seem like a good way to close those relationships.

ACTION ITEM: Contact Rev. Joel if you are interested in assisting with membership follow up.

- iv. Rev Joel believes that some of the calls would be better made not by staff but by church leadership. The follow up with those eight folks, should be focused on restoring (or at least) reconciliation of the relationships in a healthy way.

ACTION ITEM: Rev Joel will send the Board of Trustees information on member resignations and folks who need be contacted.

- v. Additionally, there are 41 "student members" and the staff practice has been to keep student members on the books as long as their parents are pledging and then remove students from the books after they leave college (and have not pledged) OR if they have pledged, keep them on as members. This practice is problematic as it is classist, not all youth go to college. The other issue is that the practice has occurred without board involvement. The only body authorized to make decisions about membership transitions is the Board of Trustees. Rev. Joel will continue to bring membership transitional issues to the Board. This issue is complex as it assumes that youth should remain under the umbrella of their families after they have left youth programming. We do not have to discuss this further today, but Rev. Joel wanted the Board to be aware that this is an issue that he and staff are having with where to go next with this. The current procedure cannot be continued.

- 1. **Question (Jo Cone):** Is there literature out there on best practices and what other churches are doing related to student members? **Answer (Rev. Joel):** There

is some literature out there and it is evolving quite rapidly. Kayla Parker is a younger minister and a leading thinker on this topic. She has a book called "Becoming" and it is about the journey about being a young adult. **Answer (Anne Perry):** The only place where this is addressed in the bylaws is the provision for youth having the ability to become pledging members at age 16. NYS restricts voting to people aged 18 years and older. At First U, you can become a member at age 16 but cannot vote at a Congregational Meeting until you are 18 years of age. The other issue that arises is when a youth says "my parents pledge for me". **Discussion (BOT):** A non-voting member is a friend. Right now we have a practice that is contrary to the bylaws. Answer (Rev. Joel): This conversation (pledging & membership) will be ongoing and student members will be a group we have to think about in the process.

ACTION ITEM: Rev. Joel will send out reading materials related to young adult/student members.

- vi. Many thanks to the ABD and Thrive Team. Rev. Joel has been thinking ahead and when looking at the budget is able to feel grounded in it. It is sustainable and there is an ability to make long-term plans. He has a draft of long-range strategies for the budget but it is not ready to share with others yet. With the increase of the endowment and grounding of pledges and other income out of this ABD, the congregation is pretty much where it needs to be. Rev. Joel is feeling comfortable with things at this point.
 - vii. Rev. Joel and the Board need to start thinking ahead to the next ABD. He has asked Dale Weller the Director of Congregational Giving with the UUA to come in October to talk with the BOT about stewardship. When they talked on the phone, Dale was impressed that we had just completed an all member canvass. She knows that it was a big lift. She has a great idea for a follow up style program that can be used for the next ABD. It is shorter and less labor intensive for the ABD. One of the approaches she has that has worked favorably with back-to-back ABD is a large blowout party. She mentioned doing careful work with big donors beforehand. Rev. Joel and the Board officers will need to start identifying strong leaders for the next ABD.
- d. Interim Associate Minister Search Process:** Rev. Tina Simson will be retiring at the end of this church year. She is responsible for pastoral care, adult spiritual development (Soul Matters and other programming) and supervision/oversight of membership. There are a lot of responsibilities within the position and Rev. Joel is thinking about how these tasks will be delegated.
- i. We will be working with the Personnel Team for this search.

ACTION ITEM: If anyone on the BOT is interested in participating on the Associate Minister search committee, contact Tim Farnum. There will also be members from adult spiritual development, those who have been doing pastoral care work, and some representation from greeters/membership folks.

- ii. Goal will be for an Interim Associate Minister to arrive on August 1, 2018. Rev. Joel will have 2 years overlap with Interim Associate Minister. Interim Associate Minister will overlap during the 1st year we have a settled Senior Minister. The permanent Associate Minister needs to be selected by the next settled minister. Fit is important and the next acting Senior Minister should play a strong role in selecting them.
 - iii. Funding has been set aside for Interim Associate Minister role in the proposed budget.
- e. Upcoming Interim Tasks**
- i. HANDOUT: Interim Calendar (February 2017 – June 2019). If those observing didn't get a copy of the handout, please drop Rev. Joel an email requesting to see the Interim Task Schedule.
 - ii. Interim tasks are broken down roughly into quarters. Realistically, Rev. Joel is only able to focus on three of these items at a time. There was a gap in this Fall, and the Black Lives Matter work and with all that has been going on at the UUA, the work towards a spiritual

practice that is comfortable with a great range of diversity will take a great deal of Rev. Joel's effort and attention.

- iii. Debbie Irving, author of "Waking Up White" (about structural racism) will be speaking at the Social Justice Congregational meeting on October 8, 2017. This text is currently being read by the Black Lives Matter group here at church. Others in the congregation have also been invited to read it.
- iv. Staffing Transitions –Along with two new hires in Fall 2017, staff will be restructuring in anticipation of Rev. Tina's retirement. There will be updates made to staff policies and procedures. Building oversight will be shifted to Kim Joy. She has been doing a great job. Kim is also tightening up the hiring process and updating personnel policies. Personnel team will be working on updating these items by the end of the year. The plan is to have one year of updated practices prior to new minister starting.
- v. The Board has charged Rev. Joel with creating a "Staff Grievance Process" as part of the cycle of accountability. This will be the one item that is not quite finished when updated staff policies and procedures are implemented. Goal will be to have a formal written structure for which staff can have their concerns addressed, in the meantime staff has verbally been encouraged to contact Tim Farnum is Rev. Joel is non responsive to their concerns (Staff → Supervisor → Rev. Joel → BOT).
- vi. Healthy Congregations Team – This was something that was originally going to be in place last year. Due to all of the transitions last year, it was a moving target. Once in place, it will increase accountability of the Senior Minister, BOT and the congregation to each other.
- vii. Interim Minister Appraisal Process –Year 1 (2 appraisals), year 2 (1 appraisal), year 3 (1 appraisal). Standard set of questions.

ACTION ITEM (Jo Cone): Coordinate data collection and compile information for Rev. Joel's performance appraisal.

- viii. **Question (Stephanie Ketterl):** What is the timeline for this project? When can we expect to have a board discussion about Rev. Joel's performance appraisal? **Answer (Rev. Joel):** By next meeting if possible but it is okay to be bumped back if necessary.
- ix. **HANDOUTS (John Solberg):** Distributed handouts from his presentation on policy governance with the new board members. Additionally, John distributed a summary of comments from the ABD. He requested that an agenda item be added to a future board meeting to discuss what we should do with these ABD comments.

ACTION ITEM (John Solberg): Per Tim's request, John will put together a presentation for interested congregants for sometime in September or October so they can learn more about policy governance.

4. **Finance Report (Anne Perry, Treasurer):** HANDOUT: Financial Overview (one page). One of the questions that came up was "why did we have a surplus last year?" to address this, Anne created a cheat sheet that included a column that has the difference between budget and actual, in addition to some comments.
 - a. On the income side we fell short on pledge collections but more than made up for that in other income. The other income included contributions to cover Orange Sky for the second half of last year and additional hours for Kim Joy. There were also higher plate collections, higher building usage fees and higher fundraising income. Additionally, the \$40k from Sharkey Fund was in an investment fund that earned \$3-4k.
 - b. There were also savings in expenses – salaries (Ursula's departure) and building operations (gas). If the Property Maintenance Fund had been funded per the bylaws, we would have used \$30k more. It was funded a little less than half of what it should've been.
 - c. Other items to note- Music and Arts appears as if there was excessive spending but it was offset by the Orange Sky donation. Denominational affairs cost is a set amount that we pay to the UUA. Religious Education (savings in salary were offset by additional expenses in supplies), Finance & Canvas (insurance cost was slightly above what was budgeted). Social Justice – Pass through between income and expense, there is a difference which Anne would call irrelevant. Leadership & Governance had an unbudgeted expense. Worship included savings in AV salaries. Membership was

a big percentage over budget but not a big dollar amount over budget. This was for new brochures for visitors and new members.

- d. In the ministerial staff area there was excess negotiated for Carlos, which was offset in Staff Personnel. This type of thing is why we have a contingency in our budgets. There was no issue with the Senior Ministers pay. We do vote on this, even though Joel is an interim minister. Staff Personnel is not a great title, essentially it is benefits. Budgeted conservatively with medical benefits, spent less in FICA. There was also savings in pensions and contingency.
- e. Now the Operation Special Fund contains \$50,668.
 - i. Anne proposes that \$25k stays put in the Operation Special fund, \$10k goes into a reserve account for the ministerial search process and the Board preauthorizes spending of up to \$15,668 in the event of a budgetary shortfall.
 - ii. Rev. Joel noted that sometimes in the budget process there is an excess of income over expense. Sometimes there isn't. The bylaws are very clear that the budget needs to be balanced by the end of the year. A balanced budget is an obligation that the minister and the Board have to the congregation. The Operation Special Fund serves as a cushion for the "gives and takes" each year and across many years. We build up this fund so that when we have tighter years there is not a crisis where the minister and the Board are not required to go into an emergency fundraising situation (which is essentially required by the bylaws).
 - iii. **QUESTION (Jo Cone):** Is the pre authorized spending of \$15,668 good forever or a fixed amount of time? And if it is for a fixed amount of time does it stay in the Operation Special Fund? **ANSWER (Tim Farnum):** It would be for this fiscal year only and if not spent it would stay in the Operation Special Fund.
 - iv. **QUESTION (Jo Cone):** The money Anne proposed go towards the ministerial search (\$10k) is about half as much as she heard will be called for (range \$18-20k). We would still need to come up with funds for the search. Where would that additional money come from? **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** The search is a two-year process. It makes sense to create a reserve for half the money in the first year. We can wait and see if it is covered in the budget or comes from another source in the second year.
 - v. **QUESTION (Dave Burnet):** Could you recap your proposal again? **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** Leave \$25k in Operation Special Fund, allocate \$10k to a reserve account for minister search process and BOT to pre authorize spending of up to \$15,668 of Operation Special Fund if needed, in the event of a budget shortfall during the fiscal year.
 - vi. **QUESTION (Tim Farnum):** Would the \$10k be held in a new account? **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** An reserve account would be created. Ordinarily the accounts we use for our operations expire June 30th but a reserve carries forward.
 - vii. **QUESTION (Dave Burnet):** The reason to make this decision now as opposed to wait is? **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** We can wait on the \$15k but I'd like to make the decision now on the \$10k so we can set up the reserve.
 - viii. **QUESTION (John Solberg):** Are there things this year that are specifically not being done that would be really helpful and beneficial to us, that are not being done because of a current budget? If we used some of that money, and allocated it now could fill that gap and provide what you can see that we really need that you've been cutting back. **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** We had a budget shortfall. We would take this piece to offset the lower pledges. **ANSWER (Rev. Joel):** Next year will be the swing that gets us into sustainable. My last year as interim minister will be a tighter year. If the pledges remain steady, the other expenses and income remain steady, and the endowment will go up by about \$35k. The \$10k for search will be an enormous help and is a good use of the money.
 - ix. **QUESTION (John Solberg):** The part of the money you are suggesting to stay put, why? **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** Yes. That money (\$25k) will stay for now. We could vote on that if the need arises. Personally, I like where we are at, becoming sustainable. I don't think we should go any further than the \$15k. **ANSWER (Dave Burnet):** I agree. It is important to have a cushion and rebuild the Operation Special Fund.
 - x. **QUESTION (Jo Cone):** What is our goal or the ideal for a contingency fund? **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** The Operation Special Fund in the time I've been here has ranged from \$15k to almost \$60k. At one point it was in the negative and through a series of donations we have been able to reestablish it. **QUESTION (Jo Cone):** What is your target? **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** I think a reasonable number would be between \$35-50k. It might take us awhile to get there. That is liquid cash. The goal is to have enough to cover payroll if disaster strikes?

- xi. **QUESTION (John Solberg):** Is there anything from stopping us from stopping us from authorizing additional spending in the future if needed for an emergency? **ANSWER (Anne Perry):** No it doesn't.
- xii. **QUESTION (Tim Farnum):** Is there a motion?

MOTION (Gregory North): Leave \$25k in Operation Special Fund, allocate \$10k to a reserve account for minister search process and pre authorize spending of up to \$15,668 of Operation Special Fund if needed, in the event of a budget shortfall during the fiscal year.

- **Seconded by: Dave Burnet**
- **Vote: All in favor, 0 against, 0 abstain (MOTION PASSES)**

ACTION ITEM (Rev. Joel): Request setup of a reserve account for minister search process.

- xiii. Anne noted that each board member has a copy of the policies. In the back, the Investment Guidelines are out of date. She distributed the most recent version.
- xiv. Per Dave Burnet, the version available online is not current.

ACTION ITEM (Anne Perry): Work with Laurie Collins (evening admin) to get the most recent version (December 2016) of Investment Guidelines onto the website.

5. **Board Covenant (Tim Farnum):** One voice vs. one spokesperson. We meet as a deliberative body, interact with one another and work to come to an understanding of what we think the best move is and make decisions based on that. Everyone on the board will not necessarily agree on every decision. Once we've made a decision, it is best for everyone on the board to be willing to say "this is the direction the board has decided to take right now". It may not be perfect but we are going to give it a shot. There is a history of factionalism in this congregation. At some point we need to move beyond that and say "we tried that, it didn't work out so well. Let's try something different now." vs. "The board is going to try that, I don't think is going to work". It's important to have some sense of identity on this.
- a. Anne Perry – It has to do with our relationships around this table. It is the contribution to rumor about what someone may have said or how they may have felt that has to be beaten back with a stick. If people have issues or concerns about a decision and they express them with us, "let me take your thoughts back to the board so we can discuss that".
 - b. Tim Farnum – It's a matter of decency and politeness that we not discuss the reactions of others in the meeting. The feelings of others is not my information to share.
 - c. Jo Cone – There is a communal nature to our relationship. We represent the group and need to function as the board. We need to be supportive and have each others back. Have confidence and hold confidences in one another.
 - d. John Solberg – Policy governance cannot work if the board is a splintered group of voices. The clarity of the board is based on our collective willingness to make decisions together. Don't stand in the way. Find ways you can support things you may not totally agree with.
 - e. Anne Perry – Former board experience in another setting, the president used to go around to each person when a big decision was made and ask "are you at peace with this?"
 - f. **QUESTION (Stephanie Ketterl):** Testing options – What if we find that someone in the room isn't holding to the "one voice"? How do we agree to handle this if we get the sense that it is not happening? **ANSWER (Tim Farnum)** It would be helpful to include some sense of an approach to reconciliation.
 - g. **QUESTION (Gregory North):**Is there expectation of confidentiality for consensus? **ANSWER (Tim Farnum):** Expectation that people share their opinions and listen carefully to one another. Others should contribute to the document since I'm sure I won't think of everything.
 - h. **QUESTION (John Solberg):** Last year we spent a lot of time putting together a covenant. Do we make a new one every year or can we use last year's as a starting point? **ANSWER (Tim Farnum):** I would be happy to start with last year's covenant as to not reinvent the wheel.
 - i. Anne Perry – Addendum to the one voice issue- Occasionally there are emails from someone who want the board to do something. It is not good for 12 people to respond, it's good for the president to respond.
 - j. John Solberg – We need to be sure there is a response.
 - k. Nicole Delgrosso – It is also important that the board all sees the communication and the response.

ACTION ITEM (Tim Farnum): Update covenant and share draft with rest of BOT for review with the goal of gaining consensus at the next BOT meeting.

- a. Tim brought up the possibility of continuing having dinner prior to the start of monthly meetings. Discussion about making sure it is not a burden on people who do not have the resources. There is value in socializing and having informal time together. Give it some thought, and we can continue the conversation at a later time. Note of dietary restrictions – vegetarian & GF options needed.

ACTION ITEM (Jo Cone): Will provide food prior to September BOT meeting.

6. Board Governance Retreat: Mark your calendars for Friday August 25 (6:00 PM – 9:00 PM) & Saturday August 26 (8:30 AM to 4:00 PM). Anne Perry will provide meals for the retreat (Friday dinner, Saturday late breakfast, Saturday lunch).

ACTION ITEM (Rev. Joel): Send schedule and pre retreat reading materials to the Board.

ACTION ITEM (Board): Send any questions you about retreat or retreat homework, please let Joel know by August 18th so that your questions can be addressed at the retreat.

7. Questions, Comments, Good of the Order

- a. **SAVE THE DATE:** October 13 and 14, 2017 - Board stewardship training with Vail Weller.
- b. **QUESTION (Stephanie Ketterl):** What are the timeline expectations for submission of a draft of the meeting minutes? **ANSWER (Rev. Joel):** Send draft of minutes to Board within seven days of the meeting so that a draft can be sent out in the newsletter.

With no objections, Tim Farnum put forth a motion to adjourn: 08:19PM

Draft submitted by: Stephanie Ketterl, Clerk
Tuesday August 15, 2017