

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date: Tuesday January 9, 2018

Location: Gilbert Hall

- Call to Order: 6:36 PM
- Adjourn: 8:34 PM



firstunitarian
church of rochester

Board members present: Jo Cone, Nicole Delgrosso, Tim Farnum, Mary Hammele, Stephanie Ketterl, Shadia McAnally, Courtney Miller, Anne Perry, John Solberg, Paul Suwijn (Present via web conference: Gregory North)

Board members absent: Dave Burnet

Special guests: Sheila Schuh and Ahlia Kitwana

AGENDA & MINUTES

1. Centering (Rev. Joel Miller)

- a. Reading: We May Have It, by: Louis Magee, from: Meditation Manual - Been in the Storm So Long

2. Values - Mission - Ends (Project Updates)

- a. The board has a call scheduled with Laura Park on Thursday evening
- b. Freedcamp is an online project management tool that Mary used to get the board organized and it will track each and every task that needs to be done during the process. All board members have been sent an invite to join the project. The task list has been updated, Gregory has been getting lots of them done.
- c. Calls to recruit facilitators have been going well so far. We need some way to thank folks who agreed to help in addition to a way to have them register for timeslots. Nicole agreed to create a facilitator sign up using an online tool in advance of our meeting with Laura Park on Thursday.
- d. Tabling starts this weekend – This will allow folks to ask questions and register for sessions in person. Steph will create signage for the table and email it to Paul to be printed for this weekend.
- e. Steph will have a draft of the brochure ready in advance of our meeting Thursday using information/content shared by Gregory.
- f. For Board members who wish to join them, Tim and Joel will be set up in Joel's office for the Zoom meeting on Thursday evening.

3. Question - Solicitation of Sponsors for Honduras Project Scholarships (Paul)

- a. Paul wanted to follow up regarding his two previous emails about asking for Board permission to solicit scholarship sponsors.
- b. Rev. Joel will get back to Paul on Wednesday after meeting with the staff. The clarification was made that coordination of fundraising falls under staff responsibilities.

4. Minister's report (Rev. Joel Miller)

- a. Moving forward on racism –
 - i. There was previously conversation amongst social justice leadership of the congregation and specifically BLM working group about doing a common read. The group got excited about doing the common read and invited the congregation, then realized they had not consulted folks of color. Based on the subsequent follow up meeting, a different direction will be taken.
 - ii. As the work around racism relates to children and parents involved in religious education (RE), Rev. Joel asked Sheila to attend tonight's board meeting. Sheila attended the follow up meeting, (referenced above) in order to support the children and youth as well as to provide a voice for parents of color in the congregation. Sheila has been in conversation with families of color to get a sense of their experiences, their needs, and a sense of how they want to move forward. Kids are at highest risk of institutional racism, based on what we are and *are not* teaching them. Identity formation for kids of color brings about uncertainty and fear as they question whether or not their racial identity will be

- represented in UUism. Sheila has been active and vocal about concerns related to how racism is addressed in our community. Up to this point, it has been piecemealed together and is not comprehensive or collaborative.
- iii. What would be most helpful to kids and youth is a comprehensive plan that involves entire church community, there needs to be crossover, example - BLM with youth curriculum, etc. If we don't do things in a comprehensive way, above and beyond teaching concepts, kids will get the default. The work of anti-racism should be integrated into all that we do. In order to continue working towards building a beloved community, Sheila has worked with families to find ways for building connection and finding entry points for people of color (POC). Upcoming, there will be both a Soul Matters group for POC and a Youth Group for kids of color.
 - iv. Sheila emphasized that there is currently nothing in the system, institutionally (at First U) that is holding Sheila accountable to our goals of eradicating racism. She currently serves on the Liberal Religious Educators Association(LREDA) accountability team at the UUA national level. There is a sense of urgency in how we centralize the proposed 8th principle of our faith, and make a commitment to the dismantling of white supremacy.
 - v. Ahlia affirmed Sheila's message, noting that we need to all build this together and it should not just be the Social Justice Council dictating how we are going to do this. The process should be inclusive from the beginning. Regardless of race, this is a community and it should be built together.
 - vi. Rev. Joel followed up on the requests in to make sure he understood them and determined that in order to make sure actions were aligning with governance we need a plan. He is accountable to do this through the staff in consultation with the Board. The process has already begun to create places for POC to be together where presumptions of whiteness are not at the center of the experience. There was a request to have more POC at the front door on Sundays, which is also something that Joel is working on. As a plan is further developed Rev. Joel noted that he and the staff will keep in conversation with the Board, people of color and the congregation as a whole. Rev. Joel did speak with Laura Park about how this might integrate into the "Our Road Ahead" process and this discussion will be part of our meeting with her on Thursday. As a result of the "Our Road Ahead" workshops, if congregation comes back with a weak sense of multiculturalism in congregational life and where to go with it, that does not prevent the Board from articulating it as part of the mission and ends of the congregation.
 - vii. It was brought up during the discussion that there are two ways that the Board can assure accountability, both through the ends and the limitations. Concerns were also brought up about the dangers or considering the work of anti-racism as social justice work. Anti-racism efforts should be a lens we apply to everything we are doing. Example included the Soul Matters packet for this month, references were made to race but one of the activities was very "white", there are also opportunities to talk about this from the pulpit. The SJ Council recognized that this is beyond the scope of their specific work, this is a culture that needs to be created throughout the entire congregational community.
 - viii. Institutionalized and structural integration of anti-racism is important. This is defined in the ways we interact with our groups as well as channels of power. The work of anti-racism informs Rev. Joel's interim goals as well as the work we will be doing with "Our Road Ahead". Ahlia raised the point that her plan is to be more visible and less passive in an effort to create safe spaces for people of color in our community. This will include POC Soul Matters group as well as possible pot luck meals.
- b. Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) request for support (Sheila)
 - i. In order to maintain healthy boundaries, many religious educators do not become members of the church they serve. Currently only DREs with master level status (highest level of credentialing for DRE) can be a voting delegate at General Assembly (GA). LREDA has petitioned the UUA board to allow DREs who belong to LREDA and who are serving a congregation to have delegate voting status at GA. The UUA board would like 15 congregational boards to support an amendment to the bylaws to give DREs voting status

- at GA as long as they are serving a congregation and part of LREDA. Being affiliated with LREDA means that DREs are required to follow a professional code of conduct.
- ii. Sheila's request is for the First Unitarian board to review the information (she will send along via email) and affirm the request for an amendment to the UUA bylaws.
 1. The board discussed the fact that DREs have the responsibility of shaping the lives of youth and the future of our faith, they should also have a voice in the process.
 2. A DRE attending GA, goes with two obligations first being to that of the congregation they serve as well as to their profession and the learning needs of children movement wide now and in the future.
 3. It was clarified that the master level DRE credential is above and beyond a graduate level degree. It is not something that many DRE professionals take on (due to restraints such as time, finances, congregational support, etc). This year it is estimated that Sheila and one other DRE will be sitting for the credentialing process.
 4. The LREDA proposal would remove the barrier/inequity of DREs not having master level credential from their ability to support congregational ends at GA. The deadline for submission of congregational support for the LREDA proposal is February 1, 2018.

MOTION (Paul Suwijn): Support LREDA proposal to allow for DREs to serve as delegates at GA.

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

c. Interim process - goals shifting

i. Rev. Joel will send the updated interim chart to us later this week.

1. Goals for fall included ramping up Nominating Committee to solicit congregation recommendations for the search committee, managing staff transitions and reintegrating social justice ministry into overall congregational governance. Rev. Joel has slowly begun to work on healthy congregations. Rev. Tina has assisted by beginning to write a curriculum. Both Tina and Joel have begun to assemble a team.
2. Goals for winter include continuing to reintegrate social justice into the life of the congregation, search process for hiring the interim associate minister following Tina, the work of anti-racism, work on annual budget drive (ABD).
3. Typically working on three goals is the recommendation for interim ministers.
 - a. Rev. Joel has four but does not really see a way around it, especially because the work of anti-racism is important and it requires constant attention by the senior minister, interim or otherwise.
 - b. Rev. Joel recommends that the work of anti-racism be an ongoing goal for the duration of his ministry.
4. Side note regarding interim associate minister search (Tina's position), the team supporting Rev. Joel includes: David Neuman, Patty Neuman, Gary McAnally and Mary Jones
5. ABD will happen in early April to allow for completion of "Our Road Ahead" BOT work on the ends and Nominating Committee presenting a search committee slate for the Senior Minister search process. ABD plan is sketched out, it will include a brief campaign with a big Sunday experience integrating the collection with pledges. This type of experience helps to connect experience a Sunday with the spiritual practice of giving.

5. Affiliated minister

- a. Rev. Joel has granted Joy Collins status as an affiliated minister. This is the same status as Lynne Acquafondata and Libby Moore. Joy meets the standards of experience and training typical for this designation. Joy attended One Spirit Interfaith Seminary (same as Libby & Tina), she is also a licensed mental health professional in NYS along with being a co author of the Wellspring

program. This designation is not lightly granted. Affiliated ministers function as a fellowshipped UU minister but only in the congregation which ordained them. The status of affiliated minister is only something Joy (et al) have here at First Unitarian of Rochester, not anywhere else. Only congregations have the right to ordain ministers. The association can grant fellowship. This means that Rev. Joel and Rev. Lynne with fellowship status would be recognized as "Rev" in other UU congregations, Revs Libby, Joy and Tina are only recognized as "Rev" here at First U. Rev. Joel requires that affiliated ministers comply with the same expectations and guidelines as a UUA minister.

- b. What benefit does our church receive in having affiliated ministers? Someone who performs weddings, funerals and child dedications, 1-2 services per year and clergy dedicated to spiritual direction for UUs (limited resources in WNY for that).
- c. What benefit does being affiliated give to this type of minister? Public standing, helps assure people using their services that someone is checking in on their practices.
- d. The status of affiliated minister does not continue indefinitely, is dependent on the senior minister; this means that when we call a new senior minister, in order for the Revs (listed above) to continue they will have to be granted affiliate minister status again in the future.

6. Calls to those we have not heard from in a while

- a. Larry Eldridge (with the help of Lynn Acquafondata, Bruce Fredericks, Elaine Fredericks, Nancy Koch, Louise Paulsen and Elaine Richane) spearheaded this project to reach out to members we haven't heard from in awhile in order to determine their status. Based on the work of Larry and his team, Rev. Joel will be able to make a recommendation on our congregation numbers next month.
- b. Congregational recertification is coming due and it is based on congregation numbers. Last year Rev. Joel reported that we had 804 members. That was his best estimate with the information he had at the time. Rev. Joel and Allen Gundlach feel the actual number is below that, probably closer to 750. This number would categorize us as a Large 1 Church (550-750 members) which in actuality is how we operate.
- c. The recertification is due in two weeks. Knowing that the follow up calls have not yet been completed, Rev. Joel requested some leeway in the number her reports. It will be an estimate but much closer to the actual number than last year.

7. Social Justice Council Governance

- a. Rev. Joel Miller is proposing a new model for governance and oversight of First Unitarian's social justice programs. The new model is based on the successful social justice programming at Unity Unitarian in St. Paul, MN. The current structure at First Unitarian has all social justice programming managed by the Social Justice Council, which is directly accountable to the congregation, which provides its feedback at one annual meeting of the congregation. This current practice bypasses integration into the programming overseen by staff and accountability to the Board of Trustees.
- b. There are significant problems for First Unitarian in this current structure:
 - i. **Fiduciary Risk:** In the state of New York, the Board of Trustees is accountable for the fiduciary operations of the congregation. Without either staff or board oversight, the Social Justice Council (and the monthly oversight of its Executive Committee) can make decisions without adequate knowledge of liabilities, risks, and costs of those decisions.
 - ii. **Staff Accountability:** Under Policy Governance at First Unitarian, the Senior Minister is accountable for the outcomes of the congregation's programs. So even if the Board of Trustees relieves the Senior Minister of accountability for all social justice programming, that programming still has an effect on the rest of the congregation, including building use, the congregation's image in the larger community, and the nurture and well-being of the congregation's membership.
 - iii. **Fragmentation of Congregational Life:** With each social justice program operating without connection to all the other programs at First Unitarian, social justice cannot be fully integrated in the educational and spiritual life of the congregation.

- iv. Congregational Accountability: Oversight of any church program requires active attention. A congregation as a whole cannot easily provide this oversight. And the Social Justice council itself cannot provide its own accountability. By being integrated into the daily programming of the rest of the congregation through the staff as partners with the Board of Trustees, social justice at First Unitarian can be connected to the spiritual experiences of everyone in the congregation – and everyone can be more connected to Social Justice, too.
- v. Rev. Joel is proposing a new model for how social justice is managed at First Unitarian. This new model would be based on the model in use at Unity Church, Unitarian, in St. Paul, Minnesota (Unity Church has been providing consulting services for First Unitarian’s reboot of Policy Governance). Unity Church, which also has a strong social justice ministry, has a model that encourages new successful social justice efforts. The model includes an application process very similar to the process that was being used here at First Unitarian. Unity’s process is more rigorous and operates under the model of Policy Governance, including direct oversight through the congregation’s staff.
- vi. Unity’s process for new social justice ministries also has several more steps and a higher threshold for approval. So the process would include these steps:
 - 1. More members (about 15) must sign-on to the proposal of a new social justice ministry -- and must remain active in it.
 - 2. All social justice ministries, new and ongoing, must be accountable for how they serve the mission and ends of the church.
 - 3. Each social justice ministry must be accountable for its outcomes in the four areas of advocacy, direct service, education, and spiritual growth.
 - 4. The Board of Trustees is responsible for holding the Senior Minister and each social justice program accountable to the congregation – avoiding the inevitable lapses that result from direct congregational oversight.
- vii. Rev. Joel believes these changes remain true to the spirit of justice-work at First Unitarian – and will improve the presence of the spirit of social justice throughout the rest of the congregation.
- viii. A question was brought up regarding Social Justice reporting lines directly to the congregation. How did that happen? Is that something that the congregation will have to give up? Per Rev. Joel that has already happened with the bylaws revision 6-7 years ago.
 - 1. In practice, the old structures continued. When Rev. Joel arrived to First U, and saw this was happening, he knew things would have to shift. There is a nuance between “the letter of the law” and human relationships. Rev. Joel is interested in having more than just enforcement.
 - 2. Open meeting Social justice potluck is coming up this Sunday at 5PM. The meeting starts at 6:15PM. The proposed changes are the topic of the meeting. The social justice exec has been excited about the upcoming changes and
 - 3. Moved social justice work out of solely social justice council and de integrating it into the work of the entire congregation.

8. Nominating committee report (Rev. Joel)

- a. Dave Burnet had a report, Rev. Joel will make sure the board gets a copy to review.
 - i. The nominating committee is working on their request for recommendations to serve on the senior minister search committee. Rev. Joel is very grateful for the work that has been done up to this point.
 - ii. Some congregants needed clarification that Rev. Joel is not steering or influencing the overall process of finding a new minister. He gives very general advice but has nothing to say regarding the people they interview. This congregation knows best on who they need to select as a minister.
 - iii. If a member of the congregation has concerns, this is where healthy congregations is just getting started. Rev Joel uses this opportunity to respond to rumors and provide information.

9. Personnel

- a. Cassie is doing great with School 22 partnership; her full 10 hours are this work. She does not see the ability to go beyond that. Integration of social justice communication work is not going to happen.

10. Routine Business

- a. Approval of Board Minutes
 - i. Stephanie made a suggested edit – Item 3b.ii (item 1) Remove nonfactual content.
 - ii. Stephanie made a suggested edit – Item 4b.iv (item 16) No meeting on January 7, 2018.
 - iii. Motion to approve December 2017 minutes with suggested edits**
 - 1. With no objections, motion was approved.**
- b. Cards of gratitude and concern (Jo Cone)
 - i. Jo sent a note to Dan Hollands on our behalf.
 - ii. The board also signed a card for Ronna Abbot.

11. Board Reports

- a. Treasurer's Report — Anne Perry
 - i. No December Treasurer's report yet because Allen has been out of town.
 - ii. Progress has been made on updating the report to include information about the prior year which will allow for an easy comparison of totals year to year.
- b. Election of Board Vice President (Tim Farnum) No progress in securing a Board Vice President. Tim is planning on talking to Stephanie about covering this role for the year in addition to her clerk responsibilities.

12. New business

- a. Bylaws updates (Stephanie Ketterl)
 - i. As a result of the October congregational meeting, the Clerk was granted permission to make grammatical and formatting corrections with the approval of the Board.
 1. Don Wilder and Barb de Leeuw started review of the document earlier in the year
 2. Anne has acted as the Clerk's designee in updating the bylaws document. She ended up retyping the bylaws document in order to remove embedded formatting, etc. Stephanie has reviewed and approves of all updates that Anne provided.
 3. It should be noted that the font and font size was updated which caused the addition of an additional page in the document.
 - ii. Please review the copy of the bylaws sent to you via email in comparison to the copy currently published on the church website. The expectation is that we will vote on these changes made at our February board meeting.

13. Questions, Comments, Good of the Order

- a. Steph Ketterl will provide food for the February board meeting.
- b. Next meeting will take place on Tuesday February 13, 2018.

With no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Draft submitted by: Stephanie Ketterl, Clerk
Wednesday January 17, 2018