



**First Unitarian Church of Rochester
Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, October 10, 2022
6:30 pm on Zoom**

Attendance: Ken Buckle, Emily Clasper, Barbara Gawinski, Jon Horne, Lynn Kinsman, Robert Lyubomirsky, Gregory North, Carl Olsen, Anne Perry, Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz, Elise Wall, Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan.

Guests: Tracy Nemecek, Greater Good Committee; Kyle Williams, Building for our Future Team

Absent: John Farrell

1. Establish a Quorum and Call Meeting to Order at 6:32 pm — Gregory North
2. Chalice lighting – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan
Centering Reading offered by Elise Wall
“Postcard from God” by Jim Wormington
3. Greater Good Committee recommendations – Tracy Nemecek
MOTION: To approve the recommendation of the Greater Good Committee to forward to the children for a vote the following nonprofit organizations: EquiCenter, Inc. sponsored by Ruth Myers, Flower City Arts Center sponsored by Amy Stockwell, and Rochester Ecology Partners, sponsored by Marilyn Roche, and to thank the Greater Good Committee, Jo Cone, Paul Minor, Tracy Nemecek, Elaine Richane, David Ryder (chair), Jason Ryder (youth), Sheila Schuh (ex-officio), and Joe Simson for their diligent efforts.
Moved: Anne Perry Seconded: Jon Horne
Motion approved.
4. Building for Our Future – Kyle Williams reporting for the team that includes Barb de Leeuw, Kyrill Gill, Mallory Szymanski, Lindsay Brown, EJ Santos and Kyle Williams
There have been four meetings so far with two main issues (1) focus on projects to be included and (2) need for consultant. By the way, Gregory North has created a great PowerPoint on what the committee is doing. Two overriding principles in the projects: (1) should bridge intergenerationally within the church community and (2) should bridge to the larger community. Strategic planning consultancy is more likely than a fund-raising specific consultant to help focus on the projects.
Question: At what point in the process do you expect to be ready for input from Board and congregation?
Answer: That will come once we have experience with a consultant.
Question: How does the strategic planning process link to the Board’s role in strategic planning?
Answer: Will take feedback from the Board to the Building for our Future Team.

5. Consent Agenda [*Note: consent agenda includes items that are distributed before the Board meeting and are voted on without discussion. Any Board member can request that an item be removed so that it can be discussed.*]
 - September 12, 2022, Board minutesConsent Agenda Approved

6. Minister Evaluation – Elise Wall and Carl Olsen

Elise reports that the forms were sent out to the Board members. Completed evaluations are due Tuesday, October 11. Five of twelve have been completed. Elise and Carl will consolidate the responses in preparation for a special Board meeting on Zoom on Monday, October 24th, 7-8:30 to review the consolidated form and approve the result. Elise and Carl will communicate with Rev. Shari following the October 24th meeting and prior to submission on November 1st. There will be a discussion with Rev. Shari at the November Board meeting.

7. Staff Survey – Gregory North

Draft is completed. Gregory will attend a staff meeting to introduce the survey and to answer any question staff may have. Carl Olsen and Jon Horne have agreed to review the input from the survey along with Gregory.

8. End 3 Monitoring
 - a. Information we have – Linkage Committee Update from Jon Horne and Barbara Gawinski based on the congregational survey
 - i. Re-evaluated the congregational survey results related to End 3. There were 20 questions. Mostly the results were greater than 4 out of 5. There were some areas that were between 3 and 4 that may indicate areas for attention
 - ii. There were also some questions that many people didn't or couldn't answer.
 - iii. Some focus groups on several of the survey questions on End 3 were proposed.
 - iv. If we want more people to participate in focus groups, perhaps the questions could be taken to existing groups.
 - v. Design of focus groups needs additional thinking to bring in diverse voices.
 - vi. Definition of 'spiritual growth' would be helpful. There's soul matters and wellspring, but some people experience this at Bi-Friers or working in the gardens or singing in the choir.
 - vii. Let's put together some brilliant minds to figure out who should be in a focus group. One interesting idea is to invite people who live near the church but do not attend.
 - viii. For future surveys, let's engage facilitators of other groups to push their members to complete the survey.
 - b. Rev. Shari will add what's changed from last year
 - i. There isn't any qualitative change from last year
 - ii. The things that surfaced last year were actually addressed. Yahoo!
 - iii. The big question we can ask ourselves (the Board), do we need to engage in a spiritual practice? The pandemic offers an opportunity to talk about spiritual practice. If really hard things keep happening in our personal lives or among

congregants, do we need to encourage congregants to engage in a spiritual practice. How have I grown spiritually over the past 2.5 years and how has the church been a part of that? Some answers:

1. Spiritual growth leading up to the pandemic helped getting through the pandemic?
 2. Working at home means our worlds have gotten smaller. Connection to church is the only thing that keeps me from only being in my house.
 3. People we know through the church have kept us moving forward.
 4. Church was a lower stress place than my workplace. A place of peace and refuge. Other places had a lot of people dependent on me.
 5. Elder Tree – remarkable deepening space.
 6. Beloved Conversations Projects. Organizing PODs for people within our community. POD that I was part of still connects.
 7. Crash course in learning Zoom through work led to helping the church pivot to online.
 8. Part of pastoral care team and caregivers support group which is a place to lay down their burdens.
 9. Anti-racism audit findings – closing one audit item was a goal. Did we accomplish that? Do we need to do more? We have not closed an action item. IDI and Julica Hermann de la Fuente is a step in the right direction. Rigorous self-assessment that leadership does. This Board and the attention it is putting on its own anti-racism learning is progress.
 10. Trying to measure efforts toward rather than to reach an ‘end’.
 11. Team reviewing minutes and policies – do we have a team? We’ve pursued it once and got a “no, not now”. We can reach out again.
 12. End 3 is huge. It’s way comprehensive. It’s more like 5 Ends rather than 4 sub-ends
 13. Let’s find a smart way to go deeper.
 14. Where were the most ‘no answer’ responses on the survey. The following question had 43 of 168 either blank or “I can’t answer”:
“When I find myself in conflict with another member, I feel I can express my feelings openly.”
- c. Are there things we’re doing that we should stop doing? There are some general guardrails. We try not to offer things that make more sense in some other setting. Example, a world history class . . . an intellectual curiosity that may belong elsewhere. How we think about anti-racism programming has changed over the past few years. Does it build spiritual connection in community? If we don’t stop doing some things, we won’t be able to start new things.

The following Board members put their names in the chat to indicate interest in thinking about next steps with Focus Groups: Emily Clasper, Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz and Jon Horne & Barbara Gawinski as part of Linkages.

9. Minister's Report

- a. COVID has had an effect on staff during every pay period in 2022!
- b. We've been expecting more conflict to surface following the end of the pandemic phase of COVID and haven't encountered it up until now. Five separate issues surfaced last week. Two things came up regarding individuals having inappropriate interactions with staff. Work on conflict management with the congregation is a timely topic.
- c. Pablo's first Sunday is October 16.
- d. Half-time minister for growth . . . conversation is continuing. Hoping to pull together a job description this week.

10. Treasurer's Update – Robert Lyubomirsky

- a. *Please note: At the October meeting, we reviewed the August 31, 2022, financials that were placed in the Board's shared google drive for all to review. There is a more extensive report following quarter ends. At the November Board meeting, there will be an in-depth report covering the quarter ended September 30, 2022.*
- b. The hacked checking account has been closed. Thanks to M&T bank for providing quick initial response and ongoing day to day review and communication. We have learned a lot about what to watch for. Huge thanks especially to Bookkeeper Rene Kiefer for discovering the problem the day after the hacking occurred.
- c. Stock market has not been kind to us in the third quarter. \$9 million down to \$7.2 million. We lost less than the market as a whole, but this is a fairly large fluctuation. 20 quarter look-back for the draw is helpful in these situations.

11. Board self-evaluation – working to push administrative stuff offline has been helpful, time on End 3 was productive; felt good about working on End 3; appreciated the discussion on End 3 and especially liked the input from Barbara Gawinski and Jon Horne to frame the discussion; appreciate format – prework allows us to spend the time on substantive discussion; Kudos to Barbara / Kudos to the rest of the Board for having the discussion. It's cool that not everything is roses and sunshine. Kudos for work that was done by emails between meetings. Very productive meeting. Make a point of learning more about what people who make the church work. Was experiencing trepidation about the evaluation process and now feeling better about it. Fully awakened by the opening reading. Hard to make information out of data – appreciate Barbara and Jon doing that. Take-away from the discussion – we do a reasonable job of looking internally and need to tackle engagement outside the church.

12. Adjourn. With no objection, meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.

13. Chalice Extinguishing – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan

November Centering Reading volunteer is Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz.