



**First Unitarian Church of Rochester  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Monday, November 14, 2022  
6:30 pm on Zoom**

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

Guests:

Absent: Barbara Gawinski

1. Establish a Quorum and Call Meeting to Order at 6:32 pm — Gregory North
2. Chalice lighting – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan  
Centering Reading by Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz  
Richard Gilbert, “The Moon is Full, The Autumn Nights Grow Longer”
3. 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.*]
  - October 10, 2022, Board minutesApproved
4. Minister Evaluation – Executive Session at 7:04 pm to 7:38 pm. Elise Wall & Carl Olsen managed the evaluation process and led a discussion with Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan and the Board. This is the third year of Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan’s Fellowship Renewal process in which the Board’s evaluation uses a form provided by the Unitarian Universalist Minister’s Association.
5. Staff Survey Report – Gregory North  
The Board offers the staff an opportunity each year to participate in a survey that is meant to ascertain that the staff is aware of human resources policy and to raise issues of concern. As of November 10<sup>th</sup>, a significant number but not 100%, have responded. Jon Horne and Carl Olsen have agreed to work with Gregory North on an analysis of the responses for the December Board meeting.
6. End 3 Monitoring.  
Recommendation for Focus Groups. Barbara Gawinski, Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz, Jon Horne, Emily Clasper, Gregory North
  - a. Focus groups will be held during Connections Hour following church service in January.
  - b. Each session will have a facilitator and a note taker.
  - c. There’s a script for the facilitators to help focus on the questions that had the lowest responses.
  - d. Will have pre-registration but won’t turn people away who didn’t pre-register.

- e. Plan is to have two sessions, one for people who did participate in survey and one for those who did not.
- f. Need more Board members to participate so as many as 3 groups could meet at a time.
- g. There will be sign-up sheets at the sessions – these may collect demographic information.
- h. There will be an online session.
- i. There is a plan to repeat the survey. The content of the survey is an open question at this point. Perhaps we will focus on two ends each year rather than all four.

## 7. Ministers Report

- a. New hires – part time custodian David Rich.
- b. Sheila has hired a youth group coordinator, Jared Wentrack. This is a deeply important community, and it is really difficult to get someone committed to it. Each year our high schoolers don't have consistent adult facilitation. Correlation – youth need 5 relationships with adults outside of their parents to stick with UU. Staff position. High school and young adult. Working on a plan to enlist mentors.
- c. Building challenges – sound challenges, partly due to new volunteers and partly tech issues.
- d. Heating is inconsistent. Had to call in someone to work on our system. The last couple of weeks have been better. New Horizons has been raising heating issues and also some sound challenges.

## 8. Social Justice Update – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan

- a. Things worth sharing about where we are now:
  - i. The social justice exec was the 'holder' of social justice activity in the church, including all the social justice ministries. Group has been characterized by long-term leadership, difficulty in bringing new people into leadership, and a space with characteristics of white supremacy culture and paternalism. Ministers' experience was that young (under 50), non-binary, LGBTQ new people would come to a meeting or two and then leave. This has been the only place in church where people would regularly raise their voices at each other. There was an incident in the spring of conflict that ended up with a 3-person advisory team to support the work of Rev. AJ van Tine called the Social Justice Support Team. We still have a model where a group of people can form a ministry to work on a specific issue. This is a work in progress.
  - ii. Lots of people are here because they want to serve with love and humility. Would like to have some core issue(s) that we would ask everyone to work on.
  - iii. The three people came from different places, including the previous social justice exec.
- b. Discussion.
 

There was some disagreement regarding the characterization of the conflict within the leadership, indicating that there is a difference between people challenging someone about an idea and that challenge being interpreted as a personal attack and violation of covenant. There was recognition that there are often different views of the same event.

Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan clarified that the decision to change the structure was based on a multiple year history, not just on a single event. We probably need consensus on what social justice work should look like. How do we weigh into the bigger issues of the day in Rochester and Monroe County. Previously, each member of the social justice council was a liaison from a ministry and that's no longer the case. This represents a loss. The spring 2022 incident is indicative of tension that is both representative of generational / cultural differences and of our difficulty in engaging in conflict.

What does it feel like to be active in one of the ministries? There are people who are active long term and others who are involved from time to time. Some people want to know how to be more engaged. Others are comfortable attending services and sharing the plate.

For churchgoers who see Sunday as their main participation, it's difficult to involve them in social justice because it's hard to accomplish anything one day out of the week. We need to hold space for the Sunday morning people . . . a lot has to do with where we are in our lives. It may be easier to have a specific task, such as serving a meal, writing a letter, tutoring a child, or contributing to a scholarship for a Honduran child.

Some of our most successful activity involved political action, such as Raise the Age, Daniel Prude, and the Police Accountability Board. Overall, our social justice programming has been pretty unfocused, in spite of lots of activity. But when something comes up that needs a concentrated response, we are able to organize a good number of people. This lack of focus may stem from the model of encouraging a group of 5 leaders plus 5 followers to form a ministry and carry out work. We have not had a model of focusing on a church-wide issue.

Our other successful activity has been donating to outside groups through sharing the plate, grants and the Greater Good. Even here, we support lots of organizations, but without a clear focus on what we are trying to achieve.

What if we look at economic issues in Rochester, where there's been little or no change in 30-40 years. There's no silver bullet. Social justice work is really hard. We've been good at advocacy in legislative work and it's hard to engage newcomers in this. Should we be designing social justice work to be most responsive to where First Unitarian can have the biggest impact? or to where can we engage the greatest number of people?

Our fourth end focuses on partnerships – what relationships are we forming outside our walls? We are challenged to think about the bigger question and it's outside of our comfort zone. We could have a vision for what we can do in the community, where we can make the most impact, remembering that not everyone is able to or inclined to put in the work. It's critical to strike a balance – are we making social justice work accessible to involve as many people as possible in ways that they are willing and able to contribute? What does it mean to serve and why are we doing this?

9. Treasurer's Report.

*Please note: This month is an extended report following the quarter ended September 30, 2022.*

Financial September 2022 performance:

a. Income/Expenses:

- i. September Pledge Income actual was \$11.9k more than Prior Year (PY) Year to Date (YTD), predominantly owing to larger congregant pre-paid pledge payments. At the same time, the overall pledge commitment is still substantially below last year, by about \$25k and will continued to be watched closely in the 2nd quarter against Full Year Expectations. Other Operational Income YTD is larger by \$23.5k versus PY due to one substantial gift that was received toward Operations (\$20K). Total Income is \$16k more than PY YTD.
- ii. YTD Expense has decreased by about 25k, predominantly due to one less Payroll run during the same time period and good expense management.
- iii. YTD Net Income total was \$222.35k (vs. PY YTD \$161.12k), i.e., increase by (\$61.23k).

b. Balance Sheet:

- i. The YTD Balance Sheet Financial Assets values has decreased \$553.21k
- ii. M&T Checking Account which was hacked is successfully closed with no financial Loss to First Unitarian. Thanks again to Church Operations.
- iii. Q1 Reconciliation/Performance:
  1. Income Endowment (IE) value decreased by (\$520.96k) predominantly due to Market Performance.
  2. Common Fund (CF) value decreased by (\$29.03k) through receipts \$15.58k (Property Maintenance & Improvement Fund Draw), offset by Market Performance decrease by (\$41.01k) and (\$3.6k) in Scholarship Fund spending.

- c. Board motion status also reviewed. Treasurer Robert Lyubomirsky tracks the status of financial motions of the Board to show those that are open / in progress and those where the funded projects have been completed and need to be closed.

10. Board self-evaluation

Appreciate all the generative thinking today – our goal for the year. Appreciate thoughtful conversation that highlights our desire to learn more about our work with social justice. Honest, frank discussion.

11. Adjourn. With no objection, meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

12. Chalice Extinguishing