

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wilmington, North Carolina
Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting Minutes, February 21, 2023**

Attending:

Robert Demko, Kathy Gillcrist, Jane Horrell, Jerry Hurwitz, Jeannie Lennon, Raine Morgan, Gary O'Connell, Becki Schreiber, Fran Strauss

Absent: Jerry Hurwitz

Ex-Officio: Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 5:15, kicked off with a reading by Rev. Kathy, "Jigsaw" by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner from *Honey from a Rock*.

Calendar:

- Board members will meet February 26 after the service to establish Search Committee Slate
- March 19: Board-led service (Robert, Kathy G, Fran)
- All Congregation meeting March 26 (to include voting for the Board's recommended Search Committee Slate)
 - It was decided that on-line (Zoom) participation would again be available for congregants. Members are checked-in and votes are monitored throughout the meeting. This has proved to be a valuable tool for congregants, particularly those that travel or have medical situations that prevent them from attending in person. The Board will communicate again that on-line participants risk technology issues. Should a congregant lose connection, they will not be able to vote. Additionally, on-line participation does not allow for privacy.

January's minutes were accepted as presented. After a brief conversation with about replacement playground equipment, the Director of Lifelong Education and Treasure's reports were accepted as presented.

UUA Interim Minister Assessment/Report

Reverend Kathy explained a requirement (per UUA) for Interim Minister and the Board, is to submit a report/questionnaire. Such reports are due at 6 and 12 months. As such, this report is due in February. The minister completes it first, then the Board. Of note, items discussed might be viewed by a potential future settled minister. Gary, Becki and Jane to work on the document.

Executive Report

○ **Julie Burcham's departure**

Reverend Kathy explained that Julie had been with the congregation for six years- through Hurricane Florence, Covid and change in ministerial management. The Board is sad to see Julie go and voted to provide Julie with a monetary gift. Jane and Becki will provide cards for congregants to sign over two Sundays and a check will be included. The Board voted unanimously to this action.

○ **Julie's Replacement**

Holly will be Julie's replacement, and has been training alongside Julie ahead of her departure. Holly had previously worked cleaning UUCWNC and has been able to provide references for her replacement. Speaking on behalf of the Hospitality Committee, Kathy G requested Monday cleanings. The request was noted by Reverend Kathy.

○ **Choir Director Replacement**

The search for a Choir Director has begun. The position requires 8 hours a week for a 10-month position at \$20 an hour. The rate is the mid-range rate as identified by UUA. The Board voted in support of this action.

Campus Assessment

Gary updated the group that all proposals had been completed and estimates had been received. The Campus Assessment Committee meets March 1st to compare and review the proposals.

Their goal is to recommend:

- Security
- Lighting
- Carpentry work (siding and soffits)
- Roof

Follow the March 1st meeting, they will meet with the Finance Committee to discuss funding. Decisions will need to be voted upon at the March 26 congregational meeting. The Board votes to proceed with the recommended work, while the congregation votes to approve the funding.

The Board expressed their gratitude with the work being done.

Settled Minister Search

Nominations and applications for Search Committee was completed. Multiple conversations with the Board were provided in the name of transparency. February 20th was the deadline for Nominations. The Board reviewed the names of applicants and nominations. Conversation ensued. The Board will meet Sunday (2/26) to establish their recommended slate for the Search Committee.

Meeting Adjourned

Next meeting March 21 at 5:15pm.

Supplemental information:

- Executive Report
- Treasurer's Report
- DLFE Report

REPORT TO THE BOARD

March 2023

General

Packed sanctuary, high energy, projects launched and completed: on all sides, the church is vibrant, energized, and making excellent progress on interim work to ensure it is well positioned for next year's ministerial search process. With the naming of the search committee, openings will soon appear in various leadership positions that can allow for new voices to emerge. One congregant commented that "the congregation is fully present, no longer looking in the rearview mirror, ready to plan its future." That seems an apt description of the current time in church life.

First Priority: Campus Assessment and Plans

The ongoing work of the Campus Assessment Committee is winding up its estimates for the various building issues that need to be addressed, and arranging those needs in a prioritized list. While funding had initially seemed to be the next daunting challenge, news of funding that can now be available has suddenly shifted expectations, as it seems likely we will be able to complete all the needed repairs and updates. I had been concerned about the possible negative impact of building issues on your upcoming ministerial search, but no longer: instead, the search committee can proudly inform applicants that the building has been assessed and needed issues resolved—a singular accomplishment.

With the work nearing completion, the Board may want to consider shifting the focus of reflection on this priority towards longer range plans for the campus. For instance, does the sanctuary need expanding or remodeling? What will happen when the Annex is removed to that part of the property? Is it nearing time for the congregation to dive into a discussion about possibly relocating? In other words, with this priority no longer simply about catching up on deferred work, it can be a future-focused priority, part of your visioning work.

Second Priority: Updating Technology

This priority, like the preceding one, has been largely completed and thus affords the opportunity to look forward towards future worship trends and what technology is needed to address those trends. Questions such as creating a staff position to oversee and operate the technology in order to give volunteers some breathing room, or installing a permanent screen in the sanctuary, are possibilities that can now be considered for this priority.

Third Priority: Governance

While the Board has settled into working with a policy governance model, the same cannot be said for the congregation generally. I hear significant misunderstanding of how this model works, including the misconception that it somehow involves the minister "being in charge of the whole church." Committees are still confused about whether the minister or the treasurer or the Board is the appropriate place for their questions and requests. Some congregants have the belief that our bylaws need to address this, though bylaws do not usually define governance beyond the customary notes about a governing Board, terms for trustees, sometimes mention

of how a nominating committee would work given that it is assigned the task of providing trustee candidates. Perhaps an online tutorial, or simply a presentation for the Program Council, would help clarify how policy governance works. But a shared understanding of at least the basics of the model seems important for good decision-making and to prevent unhelpful assumptions.

Fourth Priority: Family Ministry

In her budget request for the coming fiscal year, Leslie O'Connor is asking for funding to pay RE teachers, recognizing that this is a significant departure from the usual reliance on volunteers. She notes that her efforts to recruit teachers have come up empty, with the result that we are not adhering to our safety policies of having two adults/classroom and/or she is combining ages to be taught by staff members. Because paying teachers is not our present policy, because it involves funding that has not before been part of our budget, and especially because this highlights where work is needed to pursue this particular priority, I would ask for some Board discussion of the matter.

Fifth Priority: Engagement and Empowerment

We are approaching the final months of this initial interim year having accomplished an enormous amount of work—yet the high energy and morale of the congregation suggest that people are not feeling weary but actually ready to do more. This might be an opportune moment to lift up this final priority for consideration, asking where in congregational life can we see signs of detachment or lack of involvement, and what solutions are available to address that. In addition, the overall energy of the congregation needs to be focused by a visioning and strategic planning process. The Board might begin to consider how to step into that work, and when. While it is not the Board's job to do such work, you will want to oversee it.

For Communication and Counsel to the Board

With many of the major elements of transitional work accomplished, I am noticing places of resistance and potential conflict emerging, an inevitable part of change. With a solid base of positive morale in place, stepping into these conflicts now is timely—and necessary for the congregation to be truly open for new ministry.

--Respectfully submitted by Kathy Hurt

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wilmington
Treasurer's Report for 8 Months ending February 28, 2023

Total Revenues to date: \$171,747.00

Total Expenses to date: \$185,975.00

Operating shortfall: \$ 14,228.00

Operating income for eight months of the fiscal year 2023 is over budget by \$4,323.00. On the expense side we are close to being on budget, however our numbers are distorted as the transfer to pay the costs of our HVAC systems is not reflected in our general ledger numbers. The actual expense total only exceeds the budget numbers by \$3,252.00 and are offset by the lower moving expenses and healthcare costs of our minister.

Operating funds available total \$101,234.00

The mortgage balance is \$106,472.00 with principal and interest payable monthly. (\$1,220.06 P & I per month)

Attached is a balance sheet as of February 28, 2022 and the general ledger report covering the same period.

Submitted,

John Grigsby, Treasurer

Director of Lifelong Faith Exploration (DLFE) Monthly Report to the Board March 2023

Please let me know if you have any questions about the numbers, or if you need me to revise the tracking presentation.

Quest Childcare

| 0226 | | 0305 | | 0312 | | 0319 | | 0326 | |
|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|
| NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM |
| X | 0 | X | 2 | X | 2 | X | 2 | X | X |
| 0 | | 2 | | 2 | | 2 | | X | |

Nursery Attendance

| 0226 | | 0305 | | 0312 | | 0319 | | 0326 | |
|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|
| NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM |
| 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | X | 2 | 1 | 1 | X | X |
| 2 | | 2 | | 2 | | 2 | | X | |

**NEW=first-time visitor or first time in long time MEM=parents are members or friends*

Youth Religious Education Attendance

| GRADE | 0226 | | 0305 | | 0312 | | 0319 | | 0326 | |
|-------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|
| | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM | NEW | MEM |
| K – 3rd | 1 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 5 | X | X |
| 4 th + | X | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | X | X |
| TOTAL | 10 | | 9 | | 9 | | 9 | | X | |

**NEW=first-time visitor or first time in long time MEM=parents are members or friends*

Adult Faith Exploration Attendance

| Event | Date | Attendance | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|-----|
| | | NEW | MEM |
| OWL for Older Adults | March 15 | 6 | 7 |
| Simply Pray | March 19 | 1 | 5 |
| Nice Racism Book Discussion Group | April 10 | X | X |
| Nice Racism Book Discussion Group | April 17 | X | X |
| Nice Racism Book Discussion Group | April 24 | X | X |

Reporting & Membership Engagement

I submitted nine articles for the UUDigest, including my annual 'UU Summer Camp' summary about The Mountain, SUUSI, and UUA General Assembly.

I submitted a draft, proposed LFE budget to Rev. Kathy and The Treasurer. The budget is based on using paid Sunday school teachers rather than volunteers. This reflects current reality in that with one service on Sunday, it is very challenging to find volunteers to teach.

This represents a significant increase to the LFE budget, but please consider it in context. Rev. Cheryl had already dropped the LFE budget down to bare bones due to the covid shutdown. So some of the difference comes from the fact that the existing budget was unusually low. You would need to go back to before covid for a meaningful comparison of budgets.

Also, I am not sure how the nursery childcare budget was handled in the past. I think it was separate from RE but then at some point became combined with it. We also began providing childcare for Quest participants in October, 2022. At least one Quest participant routinely uses this service, and I believe it is a value-add to our Sunday morning worship offerings. Historically, a line (of responsibility and of money) has been drawn between "childcare", which is standard safe and loving babysitting, and "religious education" which is planned, holistic education using lesson plans developed to meet the core curriculum recommended by the UUA for a child growing up in a UU house of worship.

I am open to thinking outside the box to find a solution; maybe having religious education the hour before or after the adult service? Reviewing curriculum that opens up new options? For example, I am considering a world religions curriculum that would involve having adult members volunteer to teach one chosen religion to youth for three weeks: week 1: learn about the religion, week 2: visit a local church to attend a service, and week 3: debrief discussion and comparison of this religion to others. This would accommodate volunteers by requiring only a limited 3 week engagement, and they may (hopefully) choose the religion of their choice to teach about. World religions is a key component of the UUA's suggested core curriculum.

So I am happy to discuss strategic options that directly impact our budget, and I'd love to hear the ideas of board members and others.

Adult Lifelong Learning

The OWL for Older Adults series of workshops kicked off on March 15th with 13 participants; 7 are friends or members of UUCWNC and 6 are from the larger community. Due to continued interest in the series, the facilitators are considering holding a second cohort.

Simply Pray was held on March 19th with six member/friend participants. We all made UU prayer beads and learned about the history and culture of prayer in the world's religions – and, how UUs may incorporate prayer into their own personal worship.

The Nice Racism book discussion group is scheduled for 3 parts: April 10, 17, 24. This will be done in conjunction with all the other anti-racism activities being offered by the 8th Principle Team. This will be the last Adult Lifelong activity offered by the Lifelong Faith Exploration Director this year, due to the expansion of the children's religions education department. The growing number of children demands that the DLFE spend more time in planning and implementing the children's and youth's programming.

Youth Religious Education

We completed our unit on How to Be An Anti-Racist. We are now focused on the springtime holidays of different religions (Equinox, Ramadan, Passover, Good Friday, Easter). Planning for the traditional Easter Egg Hunt is underway.