

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wilmington, North Carolina
Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting Minutes, February 27, 2024**

Attending in person:

Kathy Gillcrist, Jane Horrell, Jeannie Lennon, Dennis McCulley, Gary O'Connell, Jimmy Reeves, Fran Strauss

Absent: Robert Demko, Michael Sheridan,

Ex-Officio: Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, Reverend Kelley Wheat-Rivers

Guests: Treasurer John Grigsby

Call to Order: Gary called the meeting to order at 5:15, chalice was lit.

Approval of Minutes: January's minutes were approved as submitted.

Emergency Contact Information: Reverend Kelley introduced a proposal for congregants to provide emergency information, to be kept locked in the reverend's office. This information will be asked for on a voluntary basis. This initiative will be communicated via the Digest, weekly announcements and at a table following service. The Board unanimously approved to move forward with this initiative. (Appendix A)

RE Report: Kelley provided an update on the youth programs:

- Creation of guidelines and expectations for RE volunteers
- Name tags for the kids
- Re-set the main classroom
- A report next month

Reverend Kelley left the meeting at 5:33pm.

Executive Report: Reverend Kathy and the Board discussed elements of her (final) report.

- Individual Growth
- Institutional Growth
- Growth as a presence in the wider community

(Appendix B)

Proposed Budget: John Grigsby attended to discuss the upcoming budget plan per his report.

Conversation included making UUCWNC a "fair share" congregation with UUA (+\$2200 in FY25), Settled Minister planning, reserves, etc. Rev Kathy shared that UUA recommends two months operating on reserve. Gary to set meeting with GLT to discuss the pledge drive. John left the meeting at 6:30pm. (Appendix C)

Interior Committee: Gary shared that the Interior Committee has been officially established per the policy. There will be four members on the committee including Jeanne Lennon, Roxie Morison, Michelle Mason, and one other member. The Board voted unanimously on this item.

Building Committee: The committee has met a few times already. Currently measuring and planning for future growth. An outdoor recreation area is being considered and priced. Gary stressed that all efforts are preliminary.

The Board voted to remove the yellow “Side with Love” sign currently on the front of the building. The sign is in disrepair and not in line with UUA’s current message. The Board voted unanimously on this item.

Fund Raising Event(s): Dates were discussed for upcoming Tacos & Trivia Night (May) and Mystery Dessert (fall 2024). The calendar is currently quite challenging.

Discussion “friend” v/s “member” status: Conversation ensued regarding the definitions of a friend versus a member. Clarification needs to be provided to Holly and the Welcome Desk volunteers.

Considerations provided to Member Engagement Team (MET):

Friend:

Visitor card completed

Donates a >\$25 of record and/or volunteers significant time

Does receive communications

Has a nametag

Member:

All of the above for Friend status

Signed The Book

It remains unclear how to handle Friends and Members that haven’t attended/communicated/donated recently. MET is working through the entire list to clear out what they can. Jane shared a congregation she’d visited before kept a cork board at the welcome desk with Friends tags, thus enabling the Welcome Table volunteers to track new visitors, once they’ve attended a few times, they are approached to discuss status. MET should be invited to discuss possible options and come to solution together.

Additionally- discussion arose that MET and Hospitality should be separated into two different committees.

Calendar: The Board voted un’s meetings will move from the 4th Tuesday per month to the 3rd Tuesday (Executive Committee meet 2nd Tuesday). The next meeting will be 3/19 via Zoom.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:49pm.

Rev. Kelley, Caring, Pastoral Care Proposal Hello all,

The Caring Team, Pastoral Care Partners, and I have been working on an Emergency Contact Form to potentially be filled out by congregants. I'm attaching a copy of the most updated form for your review. I would love for you all to look it over and give us your support in encouraging congregants to fill it out.

Some background: During the holiday season, there was at least one emergency situation with a congregant and left many of us floundering trying to contact family for a person in the hospital. Members of the congregation helped tremendously and went FAR above and beyond to help this person and family out. But there were many difficult moments that could have been helped by the presence of a form like the one attached.

If you all are good with us moving forward, here is our plan for next steps.

1. I will present the form on a Sunday or two as part of the announcements.
2. I will write a digest article or two about it.
3. We will have a table set-up in Dobkin after some of the Sunday services where members of the Caring Team and PCP can have copies of the form for people to fill out and give back.
4. If people fill them out on their own, they can place them in my mailbox.
5. The forms will be stored in a binder in the minister's office.
6. Additional blank forms will be placed in the "wall of forms and brochures" in the vestibule for people to fill out.

We want to make it clear that the information will be kept private and will only be used at an appropriate time, namely in an emergency to contact the necessary people in their lives to help.

If you would like, I can be present at the beginning of the next Board meeting to discuss this form further. I have another appointment on that same Tuesday evening, but could be present at the start.

I will also put printed copies in the Board mailbox in the hallway in case anyone wants to grab one on Sunday to see it printed.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments!

REPORT TO THE BOARD
February 2024

With this being my final report, I have chosen to focus on growth, given that we are witnessing what I might call “growing pains” in many areas of the congregation, and growth needs to be managed in order to sustain it, to have it be creative, to prevent it from resulting in chaos. In alignment with most church management studies, I am not assuming you need to do anything to make growth happen (and such efforts invariably do not end well); rather, I am considering the growth already underway here, believing that such growth points to a real need for this congregation to remain healthy and vibrant in order to continue serving those who seek us out.

The Alban Institute, a longstanding organization that studies congregations of all kinds, proposes that growth be looked at from four perspectives (and note that none of these is discussing growth in terms of numbers): individual growth, in which congregants are provided means to pursue their own personal/spiritual growth; connectional growth, in which congregants are supported in forming and deepening relationships with one another; institutional growth, in which a congregation grows stronger in how it is organized and how it functions; and growth in outreach, in which a congregation becomes a more noticeable and significant presence in the larger community. I will suggest in this report strategies/challenges that I see either already present, or on the horizon, for our congregation in this time when growth is underway.

Individual growth: the presence of Quest serves as a key element in providing congregants resources for individual spiritual growth through its offering of programming. Quest has traditionally met the hour before Sunday worship. With the addition of a television in Dobkin Hall, the timing and presence of Quest have become challenging with other uses of Dobkin Hall on Sunday morning, as a second setting for persons to experience the worship service and as our primary fellowship room for coffee hours and other special events. To maintain the quality of Quest while accommodating other demands for that time and space on Sunday mornings—demands which are likely to increase as membership numbers increase—will be an immediate challenge. Beyond Quest, the congregation would benefit from other offerings for individual spiritual growth, such as adult classes that the DRE sometimes offers. Present circumstances may make it impossible to grow this area of congregational life anytime soon. But when the new settled minister is in place, diversifying opportunities for individual growth and creatively solving the practical demands of time and space for such opportunities should be an immediate concern. And the Board is likely to be drawn into these conversations as a mediator between conflicting demands.

Connectional growth: once upon a time this area of growth was served well by offering chalice circles, small group gatherings where persons could form and deepen relationships through sharing in safe, confidential space. Changes in expectations and leadership meant these circles either disappeared or, as they continued, they became gatherings outside the church, disconnected from any church support. Re-establishing chalice circles would be an easy and immediate way to attend to connectional growth needs, especially as such circles are ideal to offer new members an entry point into the congregation. The UUA offers myriad resources for starting/maintaining chalice circles. Without such opportunities, new members are

challenged to find ways to form meaningful relationships that do not depend on their being recruited to do some kind of work, such as joining a committee. Inviting a newcomer to get to work is singularly inhospitable; inviting a newcomer to a gathering where reflection and relationship are the sole reason for gathering is true hospitality.

Institutional growth: as the Board experiences most months in your meetings, this element of congregational life is perhaps the most difficult, presenting myriad challenges as you struggle to discern how to manage buildings, finances, committees, and the inevitable conflicts that come with all those elements in a time when the congregation is experiencing growth in numbers and a ministerial transition. However, you have already demonstrated fine leadership in taking up what might have previously seemed impossible problems, such as expensive building repairs. You have an excellent resource in the Committee for Ministry that can be called on for assessment and possible solutions as you undertake mission and vision work, the first step in setting a course for institutional growth that will be thoughtful rather than random and reactive. Further, you are well-positioned at this time when the congregation has a high degree of trust in your leadership—which means you can make difficult decisions and have them be accepted. This year’s annual pledge drive will determine much of what you are able to do going forward in supporting institutional growth, so ensuring the Generous Life Team receives solid support in its work is critical. One additional piece of institutional growth that would benefit from Board attention is our Membership Engagement Team (MET): this particular committee needs restructuring and review of its responsibilities, as it is presently assigned too wide a scope of work for it to do the work fully, either the work of membership or the work of hospitality.

Growth as a presence in the wider community: the combined efforts of the Social Justice Ministry in drawing our congregation outside our walls and into public witness situations, along with Rev. Kelley’s and our Communications Team’s increased attention to our social media presence, are already bearing fruit in terms of more persons seeking us out as the result of seeing congregants in the community, and in terms of newcomers stating that wanting to join our social justice work is a key draw for them exploring our congregation. Where this element of growth risks becoming a challenge may show up in terms of too many undertakings, so that no single effort is receiving the full support of the congregation, and so that social justice leaders become exhausted from all they are attending to. The Board might consider managing this aspect of growth by having focused conversation, in consultation with the social justice ministry, about exactly what aspect or trait or identity of our congregation is most important in terms of how the wider community knows us. That is: do we want to be primarily known, for example, as a place of welcome and support for LGBTQ persons where we actively work on their behalf to maintain rights? Or as a place where deep antiracism work is making changes in worship style and what justice efforts are supported? Or as a place that is thoroughly committed to environmental justice in how the church is run? Or as a voice for economic justice in what organizations we develop meaningful partnerships with? The usual answer in UU congregations is yes to all such efforts, as well as many more. But when many worthy causes are supported, no single cause receives significant support, only a scattering of support. As the Board steps into the work of developing a new mission and vision, questions about congregational identity and how that determines what justice efforts are primary can come to the forefront.

In conclusion, it has been a deep privilege for me to work with all of you on the Board this year, as well as those trustees who were on the Board last year. Board work is one element of ministerial responsibility that I always enjoy, in large part because I am touched and humbled by the commitment of persons like yourselves who are courageous in stepping forward to lead a congregation. I will be watching you from a distance in the coming months, excited to see what lies ahead for you, treasuring the work you and I did together.

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Kathy Hurt

UU CONGREGATION OF WILMINGTON							
PROPOSED BUDGET 2024-2025 and							
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES Jan. 31, 2024							
	Operating Budget				Restricted by Board		
	PROPOSED BUDGET 2024-2025	Approved Budget 2023-2024	Actual Income & Expenses YTD 1/31/24	Percent of Budget Year To Date (7/12 or 58%)	Board Allocation	Expenses YTD 1/31/24	Percent of Allocation
INCOME							
Pledge and Donation Contributions	\$ 290,000	\$ 245,000	\$ 164,372	67%	tracking @ \$281.8K		
Plate Collection (gross)	36,000	30,000	20,369	68%	tracking @ \$34.9K		
Fund Raising	10,000	12,000	4,938	41%	tracking @ \$8.5K		
Facility Rentals	8,000	5,000	4,115	82%	tracking @ \$7K		
Total Income	\$ 344,000	\$ 292,000	\$ 193,794	66%	\$ -		
EXPENSES							
Staffing (salary & benefits)							
Minister (salary, pension, insurance)	115,000	105,000	37,148	35%			
Associate Minister & RE Director	52,000	-	6,692				
Director of Lifelong Faith Explor. (salary & pension)	-	33,495	12,706	38%			
Office Administrator (salary & pension)	26,400	24,000	14,400	60%			
Employer FICA & Medicare (\$144,000 x 7.65%)	11,000	4,862	2,973	61%			
Sexton	6,000	-	-				
Choir Director	10,000	10,000	6,000	60%			
Pianists	5,000	5,000	2,580	52%			
Pastoral Care	500	-	-				
Worship	3,000	3,000	1,697	57%			
Childcare	2,300	2,300	1,837	80%			
Professional Dues	800	1,000	25	3%			
Professional Expenses	500	500	-	0%			
Total Staffing	232,500	189,157	86,058	45%			
Facilities							
Mortgage Principal and Interest	14,700	14,700	8,385	57%			
Insurance	12,000	10,000	5,014	50%			
Utilities	7,000	10,000	3,899	39%			
Cleaning	7,000	9,000	3,954	44%			
Repairs & Maintenance (Note 1)	15,000	15,000	34,300	229%	22,500	22,500	100%
Total Facilities	55,700	58,700	55,552	95%	22,500	22,500	
Office/Administrative	16,000	15,265	8,930	58%			
Share the Plate gifts to nonprofits	18,000	15,000	9,586	64%			
Dues UUA, UU Justice, UCONCI	11,750	9,750	5,000	51%			
Programs/Teams (See Note 2)	10,480	9,250	2,649	29%			
Search for Minister (Congregation approved)	-	0	-	0%	26,800	2,331	9%
Total Expense	\$ 344,430	\$ 297,122	\$ 167,775	56%	\$ 49,300	\$ 24,831	
Operating Net Income/(Expense)	\$ (430)	\$ (5,122)	\$ 26,019				
Note 1: Congregation approved \$100,000 in May 2023. \$77,500 was spent in prior fiscal year.							

Note 2: Programs/Teams Expense Year-To-Date Detail below:							
Programs/Teams	PROPOSED BUDGET 2024-2025	Approved Budget 2023-2024	Actual Income & Expenses YTD 1/31/24	Percent of Budget Year To Date (58%)			
Caring	750	1,000	118	12%			
Board of Trustees	300	300	228	76%			
Generous Life	1,000	900	74	8%			
Hospitality	1,380	1,420	720	51%			
Interior	2,000	-	-				
Membership	400	500	138	28%			
Quilters	150	300	-	0%			
Religious Education	2,500	2,000	630	32%			
Social Justice	2,000	2,000	741	37%			
Total	\$ 10,480	\$ 8,420	\$ 2,649	31%			