

**All Souls Church Council Meeting Notes**  
**Lay Leadership: Recognition, Empowerment, and Responsibility**  
Saturday, May 21, 2016, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

**Opening**

- Arrival and Breakfast Council Steering Committee Members
- Chalice Lighting and Reading
- Welcome and Introductions Cledwyn Jones (Council Chair)
- Opening by Rev. Parker, included this gem: "there is a deep significance to church life as a collaborative, and holistic, endeavor."
  - We seek to embody being a beloved community
  - Life together in religious community is a fantastic, holistic, experience

**Database Update**

Cledwyn Jones

- We are back to using ACS and are going to try to make better use of it than we had before. If anyone has any interest in helping – please sign up – Pamela volunteered!
- Emily requested a training session to learn.

**Goals Presentation**

Goals Team Matt Bowen

- Proposal Update and Request for Feedback
- The Goals team is very close to having a draft of the proposal for how we will move forward with draft goals. Once we have a draft of the goals and how we intend to measure our progress and success criteria, we will share a draft and ask for your input as to whether this captures what you all do. If we are going off the tracks, then your Goals committee liaison will be available.
- Bill Kules asked if there is an anticipated time – Matt guessed the draft will be ready in mid-June.
- Peg noted that there is a board meeting in mid-June – Matt said they will try to circulate the draft before that time so that the board has it.

**Diversity and Anti-Racism**

Ita Hammond called in sick – Whitney cooper standing in

- Celebrating Where We Are • Testimonials
- Youth Curriculum Update • Q&A Opportunities
- Whitney Cooper gave an update on diversity and anti-racism. Whitney is co-chair of the 8<sup>th</sup> principle task force
- To note where we are currently: she noted that there were NO people of color in the room right now. (note - Kenisha Scott joined us a bit later)
- BUT, we have taken big steps forward – in moving to create the JAR/ 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Committee
- The proposed UUA 8<sup>th</sup> principle The congregations of the UUA affirm and promote: Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse multicultural Beloved Community that accountably dismantles racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.
- After several meetings of the task force, we've come up with a mission: to implement anti-racism tools and practices toward institutional cultural change that best supports "a journey toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse, multicultural 'Beloved Community that accountably dismantles racism and other oppressions" (as stated in the proposed 8th Principle for Unitarian Universalists).

- The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Committee has worked with the goals committee – to goal “½ of the active members to go through the anti-racism training” at this point – and about 1/3 of the council members here HAVE gone through the training.
  - That each of the church committees have at least two leaders go through the training
  - That each committee go through the seven levels training and develop own diversity goals.
  - All staff participate in the training
  - That every single board member go through the training
- Whitney presented on a chart designed to help committees track their progress as anti-racist organizations along seven stages: maintaining, adapting, revisioning, retelling, restructuring, transforming. She stated that she is happy to share this chart with anyone electronically.
- ALSO REQUESTED VOLUNTEERS to help organize the 4 trainings/year that the 8<sup>th</sup> principle task force has a goal of running at this church or elsewhere
- Suggestion – could some of the committees co-sponsor a training? Pamela volunteered REEB voting rights project -
  - This is an idea to not only get assistance, but also have wider distribution
  - ALSO suggested that anti-racism work should become an EVERYDAY activity, not a separate activity
- Rev. Parker noted that there are always opportunities to become aware of diversity – for example, the gardening committee could make a study of how gardens mean different things in different cultures – e.g., that African American communities have specific histories; note too, that our courtyard garden is like a western European monastery garden.
- Steve – wondered about metrics and measurement – when you have a 3-person committee, what does it mean to require two of us to do a training versus two members of a 10-person committee?
- Testimonials about the Anti-Racism Training
  - Zoila – “The training was a really powerful experience, and allowed me and others to see the differences in other people’s experiences from our own: that in itself was eye opening.”
  - Laurie – “I have a child of color so I’ve had a lot of these discussions and 20 years ago, we had a black minister. In addition to intentionality which is critical, as a member of the membership committee, I can tell you that it’s difficult to have folks of color in leadership because they’re ALWAYS asked to be on committees... it’s hard – and I’m not sure how to get beyond it.”
- Bill – “One of the values of the workshop is language and conceptual foundations so that we have a common language to be able to HAVE conversations at all.”
- Emily – “I’ve done the jubilee training and found the extent of our white privilege and it’s just so important to be made aware of it.”
  - The question came up whether we as an institution are helping our staff to get this training? Esp. considering weekend training times etc.
- Peg noted that leadership training happens over several sessions over weekends, so that maybe there’s another way to package this training so that it doesn’t take up 2 straight weekend days
  - Cledwyn: “we’re moving slowly but surely in the right direction, thanks for contributing”
  - Michael Milano – “This is the most complex cultural change you can imagine – there are two points of complication:
    - 1. Our western white mentality is that you set goals and measure them, but this is a sort of thing that doesn’t necessarily fit our idea – instead you have to pay attention to the fringes where weird and wonderful things are happening
    - We are built BY the beloved community – and will be changed by what we reach for – and this is going to make us ‘wildly uncomfortable’”

## Council Requests and Responses

Allison Ralph

- Voice of the Council (Requests) Allison briefly reviewed the following:
  - Anti-Racism Training
  - A Better Process for Committee Presentation at Meetings
  - Better Tools for Collaboration and Information Sharing
  - Connecting our committee work to fundraising as a discussion of meaningful contributions,
  - Discovery of new leadership potential
  - Making sure my committee's goals are heard by those developing the church's goals
  - Figure out how to engage those who can't make weeknights
- Responses
  - Group Rotation and Collaboration Plan Outline
- Break Out Groups (Community, Social Justice, Spirituality)
  - Susan Crim announced the structure of the facilitated process
  - Kenisha Scott facilitated community-building groups, Matt Bowen facilitated Social Justice groups, and Susan Crim facilitated Spirituality groups.
  - Susan notetaker from spiritual development – shout outs that a quarterly roundtable might be a place to share ideas and collaborate
    - In terms of structure – how do we not overcommit to too many meetings – can we move to community structure where we emphasize community and sharing, and how we can work together as a whole.
    - Finally, also want to take advantage of folks in other committees even if they are not committee leadership, but who may be conduits for information.
  - Mark from community – noted there was a bifurcated discussion
    - 1. Shared problems in recruiting and keeping people; lacking a shared understanding of what it means to make a commitment to the church (e.g., only 69% fulfillment of annual pledges)
    - 2. Solutions – joining project collaboration (e.g. silver souls and RE putting on annual church picnic); sacred spaces and committees working together to decorate the church; if you see a person on Sunday morning and you see a visitor – GO TALK TO THEM
      - We need to make an effort to understand the folks in our community –who are they, where do they commute from, what is their income, etc.
      - Group together the book signing, the roots and wings class, and the pledge/volunteer sign up / spiritual development stuff.
      - Kenisha – perhaps we could use part of the regular church council meeting AS a meeting space-time for our cohorts.
  - Matt from Social Justice (SJ) –
    - Shared concerns: we don't have good ways of communicating with SJ groups
      - We don't know who's doing what
      - We don't know who is in charge of a given area – whom do we contact if we want to work with someone on a project?
    - Solutions: we'd like to look for ways to assist staff in solving these problems (web development is a skill we have and can share, e.g.); community building within the group – maybe a potluck for SJ groups?; working more intentionally with the

resources in the church like Beckner fund so we can maybe tap into those funds as a self-reinforcing cycle of funding and accountability.

- General appreciation for this process –
  - Really liked the cross-collaboration idea (committees working together on a shared project) from the community group
  - Jen – when setting yearly goals for the committee THINK about setting collaboration goals for the committee, as a codifiable
  - Can we develop a skills inventory? So we can better assist each other
  - Erika – given staff realities – there’s a real need especially for SJ groups for meeting again and collaborating more particularly.
    - IF a group like the SJ collective could meet a couple of times over the summer and REPORT BACK in September.
- NEXT MEETING – MUST HAVE A MICROPHONE!!

### **Volunteer and Leadership Recognition**

Cledwyn Jones

- Emily recognized Molly Freeman for her long time leadership of Archives
- Jenn recognized Jen Abercrombie for her leadership in RE!!!
- Recognition of Laura WHO for leadership of REEB voting rights project!!!
- Sterling recognized Liz Coit for stepping up to leadership role in LDNC
- Brendan recognized Cledwyn and outgoing Young Souls Board
- Cledwyn recognized Erika for her leadership
- Erika recognized Liz Coit for her board leadership
  - Also Jenice View, Liz .... and Kate Saylor
  - And Mark Matthews secretary extraordinaire
  - Cheryl as treasurer
  - Anne Bradley

### **Announcements**

- Emily regarding safe congregations – trying to make the church aware of the committee – established by the board about a year and a half ago – focused on safety policies including fire, active shooter, protection of children, and violence policies
  - The church now conducts background checks on staff, RE teachers, and everyone in key positions
  - Delores Miller has a set of policies that aim to ensure the safety of the kids – we may work with her to tweak them
  - There is now an evacuation plan that has been approved by the DC fire Marshall.
    - There is now an evacuation map in every room
    - We have purchased evacuation equipment for RE, including walking ropes, evacuation cribs,
    - Have been working with ushers to have training to direct traffic during an emergency
  - We’ve been doing trainings on first response and the defibrillator – talk to Rose.
  - We are looking for volunteers, esp. if you have first responder or medical training.
- Liz Coit – LDNC – leadership development is core to what the church needs. We encourage you to come to the leadership social on June 16.
  - Thank you, too, to the council members who have talked to us about what you do and what you need

- Laurie – Membership committee – trying desperately to get the new membership directory out by September.
  - Part of the membership directory will have the opportunities for service booklet - and we need ALL of you and your committees listed
  - Part of this is getting evergreen Gmail addresses for the committees – pay attention to your emails and look for this.
- Jennifer – SIGN UP FOR RE, especially for summer – also for fall – we’re looking for fall workshop signups. Also, need chapel leaders.
- Silent Auction – Please go online and make bids! Go talk to your friends and see if they’ll bid too
- There is a briefing Tuesday evening, Wednesday June 1 UUA is doing an online webinar on engagement. June 15th will be a screening of Selma
- Mark – needing ushers – please ask your friends!
- Carrie – overcoming Islamophobia panel at noon on June 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Brendan – WIN partnership with Young Souls on June 7<sup>th</sup> – teaching and door knocking on housing issues.
- Jen Bolick – Heiwa committee has refugee assistant project looking to develop partnership with other experienced groups. Also note Hiroshima commemoration event August 6
- Whitney August 13 WHEN Columbia heights tournament games – looking for volunteers
- Cledwyn – Weekend on the Bay – REGISTER!!!! Still looking for workshop leaders at WoB

**Closing**

Rev. Rebecca Parker

**Steering Committee Members:**

Ken Ambrose, Elyte Baykun, Jen Bolick, Matt Bowen, Anne Bradley, Wendy Carter, Susan Crim, Carrie Davidson, Pablo de Jesus, Ita Hammond, Anne Herr, Cledwyn Jones (Council Chair), Leo Jones (Chief Program Officer and Council Liaison), Karen King, Vickie Lindsey, Allison Ralph (Council Secretary), Kenisha Scott, and Lowell Ungar