

All Souls Church Unitarian Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2022

Trustees Present

Cait Clarke
Joe Feuer
Sophia Fisher, Secretary
Gretta Goodwin
Maya Hermann
Traci Hughes-Trotter, ex officio
Neil Manzullo, President
Bernard Mustafa, Treasurer
Clair Null
Bill Sinkford, ex officio
Justis Tuia
Chuck Wooldridge

Trustees Absent

Guests Present

Jan Gartner
Donna Olson

Reports Received

- Executive Team Report

Convening

Neil convened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Chalice Lighting and Reading

Bernard lit the chalice and shared a reading

11-1 Approval of Agenda

- *Motion to approve agenda*
 - Approved without objection

11-2 Approval of Consent Agenda

- Items on the consent agenda:
 - Find that the Executive Team's interpretations of the Staff & Volunteer Treatment policies are reasonable interpretations of those policies.
 - Clarification that vote is only on interpretations (yes)
- *Motion to approve, seconded, approved without objection*

11-3 Q&A with Jan Gartner re Compensation

- Jan Gartner with the UUA Office of Church and Staff Finances; helps congregations be good employers
 - Presentation on UUA congregational salary program
- How do we fit in folks who don't have "standard" church jobs?
 - New levels may help slot people in
 - Hard to say what salary for be for everyone—market based
- How do congregations of our size set pay?
 - Membership as a proxy for complexity
- Large II salaries were starting to feel large compared to smaller congregations
- Hard for Large II congregations to keep up in terms of paying people
- Local norming = local cost of living?
 - DC is in the UUA's Geo Bracket 6
 - More about wage patterns and comps to local similar organizations
- How does the local cost of living play in?
 - Sometimes through 1 time moving adjustments
- When will this be reassessed?
 - Could be tweaked at any time but hopefully in 2-3 years
 - Maybe live into process
 - No one's pay should go down
- NACBA (National association of church business administrators) ranges—thinking about possibly changing to the UUA system
- Encouragement for congregations to be more flexible
- Guidelines have been aspirational
- Impulse toward generosity
- Congregations being good stewards
- Admins were paid less than program staff—went towards moving people up

11-4 Article II Study Commission

- ASC follows the UUA and includes the principles in the bylaws (article II)
- Updating principals and purposes always controversial and frequently driven by political movements
- Comments on the proposed changes (note these reflect Board member's personal opinions and not the position of the church):
 - I liked having love at the center of the graphic and values.
 - The inclusion of more modern iterations of the principles was a positive, but I felt gutted by the loss of the six sources.
 - Find the inspirations too generic.
 - Not opposed to the new values and covenant, but find them a bit wordy.
 - Hard to leave the principles because that's what I was raised with.
 - The living tradition means letting principles change and evolve.
 - Language is more abstract, different approach but not losing anything in the new language.
 - Took several times reading it and became more comfortable with them.
 - Example -- Buddhist mindfulness practices also changes. Other faiths evolve and adapt.
 - C-2.5 gets very legalistic. Would love to see that section use more friendly, values based, plain poetic language like the other sections.

- New language gives a sense of, “Is this a commune I want to join? Where is the church stuff?”
- Not enough reverence, self betterment, music... what makes us feel holy together?
- Language reflects a shift away from the Judeo-Christian heritage.
- To what extent will this give license to shift away from religious style services?
- How will this affect us in the future?
- Does this language reflect All Souls? Yes, in terms of seeing parts of our church (like the “community of communities” language) written into the new values, but it does not reflect that we are a faith community that talks about Jesus and God and other manifestations of the divine.
- Language portrays love as a binding force among us, not as a higher power that inspires/calls us to do better.
- Misses the richness of sources/inspirations derived from a history of our UU faith.

11-5 Bylaws Team

- Church membership
 - Hybrid—people enjoy online access
 - What does time, treasure, and talent look like in a hybrid/online world?
- People are concerned about categories of membership
- Membership secretary needs guidance about what the membership secretary actually does
 - Staff functions are clear; fuzzy about what secretary does
- Online folks feel disconnected; hard to form relationships/community
- Extent to which folks choose to engage outside of Sunday services
- Hard to engage in meaningful ways
- Have to be very intentional about seeking out connections
- Welcoming is a two way street
- Should have some seats available for fully remote folks on the Board of Trustees
- Encourage us not to back ourselves into a corner—need to do things with online folks instead of for them
- Don’t like the idea of categories of membership
- Shouldn’t ask less of a commitment from online members
- Trying to change the mindset around money
- Would be good to have time, treasure, and talent in the bylaws
- Currently have categories of members
 - Members, voting members, withdrawn members, members emeritus
- Good problem to have—ability for people outside the area to be part of the community
- Should take advantage of the virtual space
- Engagement may not be appropriate for bylaws
- Membership in congregational = membership in a covenant (history of liberal church)
- Staff recommended no separate membership categories
- Should there be a minimum pledge required to be a member?
 - No, but we need to be better at communication about pledging and financial expectations for the church

11-6 Executive Team Report

- Funding Our Future: over \$380,000 pledged

- Pledges—did they come from a lot of people?
 - 148 pledges ~ 25% of members
 - The concern is that close to ½ was a one time/matching gift—repeating pattern of pleas for money and some people step up and give lots of money
- Never going to increase giving by 35% in this round
- Started talking to stewardship committee to talk to every member
- Culture of generosity will take years
- Note: when Board of Trustees meetings happen on the 3rd Wednesday, the finances from the previous month won't be ready
- Missed Unemployment notice—what are the controls to make sure that annual irregular notices get processed?
 - Traci is implementing new controls/oversight to ensure that it doesn't happen again
- What, if anything should the Board do to acknowledge those who made a contribution to Funding our Future?
 - Letter signed by the Board of Trustees
- Sunday plate collection—move away from plate exclusive to the church and split 50/50 with local organization
 - Plate collections should go up
 - One organization per month, rotate, mostly local organizations, could be national UUA/disaster response
 - Board Handbook has a policy that 10% of the funds from the plate collection goes to charities—should be rescinded
 - Should have a neutral or positive impact on the budget
 - Could go for a fund for church emergencies

11-7 Next Meeting

- December 14 (one week early due to early winter holidays) on Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.