

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church - Unitarian Universalist
BOARD OF TRUSTEES JUNE MEETING**

June 14, 2017

MINUTES

In attendance: Laura Horn (Past President), David Mick, Leia-Durland-Jones (Ex Officio), Karen Ransom (President), Ann Salamini, Chris Rivera (Ex Officio), Jeanine Braithwaite, Jen Larimer (Vice President), Adam Slate (President Elect)

Absent: Katharine Maus, Annalee Durland-Jones, Breck Gastinger, Ian Sole (new Board member)

Guests: Cindy Shepard and Colleen Anderson (new Board members)

I. Opening--(25 minutes total) Opening/Closing Words (David), Snacks (David), Timekeeper (Adam), and Process Review (All)

Opening words – David

1. Check-in – let's reflect on the theme of gratitude.
2. Acceptance of Agenda
Discussion: Add a motion after the approval of the consent agenda to update named check writers on the church's checking account.

MOTION: Accept the Agenda as amended.

Unanimously approved.

1. Public Comment –
2. Correspondence - see attached at end of minutes.

II. Reports

1. President's Report (verbal) – Karen Ransom
We talked about senior staff assessments at the Presidents' meeting. Dawn Dirks is committed to finishing staff assessments before she goes off the Personnel Committee. She has sent out requests for feedback to a list of people provided by staff, including Board members. A summary of comments will come to the Board in July. (Staff will all be gone on vacation at that time.) Dawn, Laura and Karen will meet with staff to share feedback after this Board review. It will likely be reported on / accepted at the August meeting.

Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, Exec on first Wednesday. (SUUSI includes the third Wednesday in July.)

2. Vice President's Report (verbal) – Jen Larimer
A beautiful ceremony was held for the presentation of the Connie Cheetham Award to Jean Newland on June 11. The subcommittee members (Jen, Ann and Annalee) have signed cards to thank nominees for their service, using cards made by Nik Skaggs.

Achsah Carrier has requested a list of committee vacancies to be posted on the church website to highlight where volunteers are needed.

3. Treasurer's Report (verbal and written) – Jeanine (Treasurer Elect)
(Submitted verbally on June 14, 2017 and subsequently in writing by Jeanine Braithwaite)

As of end-May 2017, our actual revenues were \$424 K and our actual expenditures were \$453 K. This variance of the budget through end-May of \$29 K will be addressed by receipt of about \$15 K in expected pledge payments, \$5 K in a single legacy pledge check about to be deposited, \$5 K to be transferred from the building and grounds fund to cover the air conditioner which cost was incurred earlier in the year, and about \$5 K which the Director of Administration and Finance will come back to the Board with recommendations on how to manage at the end of June.

Our actual current year pledges of end-May were \$318 K against a budgeted amount of \$363 K, and this needs to be understood in the context of our historical pledging cycle. Some people simply don't pay their pledges until the last minute, although they then pay them in full. Much of this \$47 K difference will be covered when the Treasurer will send a letter to people who have not yet completed their pledge payments for this church budget year (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017). Such a letter was sent last year and had a very good response.

However, the possibility of any remaining difference between actual and budgeted pledges points to the need for TJMCUU to undertake a serious assessment of our stewardship and mission, and our size and staffing. The Board has arranged for a UU stewardship consultant, Mark Ewert, of Generosity Path, to come to our congregation on August 25-27, 2017, to conduct a "Next Steps" weekend. Mark will meet with church leaders and congregants, and will provide verbal and written feedback about how to grow our stewardship at TJMCUU.

<http://generositypath.com>

Discussion:

- Last year's letter was very effective. It can be tweaked to fit this year's timeframe. The Treasurer signed the letter last year.
- Remind people we've made a substantial change in expectations for getting in pledges, both to minimize hassling people and decrease volunteer hours. This is a philosophical watershed, so please help us with this.
- The Building Reserve still has \$5000 in it? – Yes. We decided to use it to cover the AC replacement if necessary. It will be needed for that.
- Will there be a copy of financials in the Board minutes as well? – Yes, going forward. The Finance Committee also gets a printout of the summary.

4. Minister's Report (verbal) – Erik Wikstrom

- I held a follow up conversation on the white supremacy teach in with 26 attendees. Since it was a large group, the time allotted was too short, but we had good conversation and no one wanted to leave.
- I attended a meeting at Mt. Zion 1st African Baptist Church to consider responses to the KKK rally on July 8. Their sanctuary was filled to standing room only. There was unified energy about not returning evil for evil. Lots of ways to respond came up.
- There was also a larger than expected meeting of the Charlottesville Clergy Collective. Faith leaders should make a strong presence at the KKK response activities. I am on a small group to develop clergy plans. There is activity planned at the Pavilion on the downtown mall to provide a strong alternative. We want the KKK to be talking to the trees because no one else is there.
- Our church was contacted by a lawyer in New York who heard the clan was coming to Charlottesville and asked if we wanted any help. It is significant that she reached out to TJMCUU because we are connected with justice work in town.

5. Director of Faith Development Report (verbal) – Leia Durland-Jones

- I'm receiving great reports from the Appalachian Service Project trip. The youth are working very hard and accomplishing a lot. They will return this Saturday.
- Summer programming is in full swing.
- We had lots of visitors for the ordination Saturday.
- There are no written reports this month because we're writing assessments and leaving for GA this weekend. We anticipate GA may be very intense.
- I'll be meeting with Erik tomorrow to plan Faith Development offerings for the Fall.

6. Director of Administration and Finance Report (verbal) – Christina Rivera

- Once the budget passed, I switched to year end mode, cleaning up outstanding odds and ends in accounting and making sure things are correctly allocated to line items.
- I'll help Jeanine with a list of outstanding pledges for the final collection effort.
- I'm preparing for my new full time job.
- And I'm preparing for General Assembly as a UUA Board member. The UUA is ending the year with no president or moderator, so GA will be challenging. There will be some changes which make people uncomfortable.
- There is a lot of staff vacation time coming up. The Office and Presidents will have copies of the joint schedule. Chris will be gone a month but will be available via phone and email during that time. Frank and Linda Dukes, with backup from Breck Gastinger, will handle Buildings and Grounds needs and Ann Salamini will cover rentals.

7. Membership Report (written) – Sally Taylor

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of April 30, 2017: 426

Add:

David Heins, May 24, 2017

Drop:

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of May 31, 2017: 427 members

8. Board Liaison Reports

MOTION: Enter Executive Session.

Unanimously approved.

MOTION: Leave Executive Session.

Unanimously approved.

Summary: There is a lack of clarity on the duties of the Personnel Committee, Leadership Development Committee and Finance Committee in relation to the Board. This needs to be addressed by the Board and new charges made that are appropriate to a church of our size.

III. Consent Agenda / Electronic Motions

1. Approve May 2017 Board Minutes
2. Approve Ann Salamini as Secretary

MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda.

Unanimously approved.

MOTION: For purposes of fulfilling the TJMC Check Writing Policy as shown below, moved to recognize Adam Slate as 2017-18 Board President and Karen Ransom as 2017-18 Immediate Past-President as of 7-1-2017. This removes Sally Taylor and Laura Horn as previous Board Presidents and Immediate Past-Presidents.

4. MONEY HANDLING AND CHECK WRITING AUTHORITY

POLICY V.A.4.b: TJMC check-writing authority will be vested with the Director of Administration and Finance (DAF), the current Board President and immediate Past-President. The DAF is authorized to sign checks up to a limit of \$3000.00 per draft. The Board President will review all DAF issued checks monthly and sign the check receipt. Checks in excess of \$3000.00 will be dual-signed by the DAF and the Board President or immediate Past-President. Reconciliation of the bank accounts will be done by the Treasurer.

Approved: September 2011

Revised: August 2015

Unanimously approved.

IV. Old Business

1. Processing of Congregational Meeting - Karen (20 min)
 - The short time frame worked against us. An ambitious budget came out late because of the organic process of determining the needs of our church at this point in our development. We underestimated the response of resistance and fear, but it woke people up: we've had people volunteering. We need to work on communicating with the congregation.
 - Listening to the critiques, there were some valid points made. We need to acknowledge that. Some people may be punishing the church by lowering their pledge, but others are stepping up to volunteer and pledge more.

- We need to inform stakeholders in advance of important decisions, like removing IMPACT dues from the budget.
- We need to parse anxiety about finances from anxiety about where the church is going. (Who will we be? How will we be UUs in the world?) We need to link finances with vision and mission.
- I hear process and communication.
- The budget is a metaphor for everything we do; the congregation has leverage at this point in the church year. People felt starved for information about our finances, the endowment, everything we're doing. They wanted info. We need a system to communicate better.
- The Board is in good shape to address these issues going forward with a Treasurer, Secretary and Members-at-Large. People want the survey again.
- There were no cottage conversations on the budget because of the time frame. Another year we can do this again. More explanation is needed on why a program budget is appropriate. Pie charts aren't appreciated. Amy Wissekerke's letter pointed out that people aren't using available avenues of communication.
- This is the most important moment in our church since we developed the Strategic Plan. Will the congregation trust the Board and Staff? It's gratifying to see support so we can go forward in the way we should
- We put in a lot of hard work preparing for the annual business meeting. It was no train wreck. It was a well done, challenging congregational meeting. Carry that knowledge in your hearts.
- Pastoral care may be needed for those who voted against the budget. Going into summer is a hard time of year to do this.
- On trust, the standing ovation was totally deserved. They recognized good leadership. White Supremacist culture likes Robert's Rules. We're used to these structures. How can this congregation transform? There may be other models that are more genuinely inclusive.
- Continuing education on church size is appropriate. We haven't brought the congregation along on that.
- Being the front person was possible because all Board members were 100% behind the budget. It was powerful because we know this is right. And it helps recruitment of good people to the board.
- Half the things we need to talk about on the board come up at the budget meeting.
- Those who are loud in dissent soak up a lot of energy, and we give them a lot of attention. We need to preserve our energy to move forward with our vision.

BREAK AND GRATITUDE CARDS (15 Minutes) - Please think of people the Board should recognize for their recent contributions to our church community.

V. New Business

1. Church 75th Anniversary - Wik/Leia (10 min)

The official anniversary is next February. Do we need a task force to extend the celebration throughout the year, perhaps tying into fundraising? We should start soon so we can be ready.

Discussion: Where do we start? Who has the energy? We had a big 50th celebration. – Al Reynolds was Board president at the time. Sally Taylor cares about showing off our history. Perhaps we could invite input from them at the July or August meeting. We could also ask the Next Steps Consultant. Our capital campaign could be

“The Next 75 Years.”

2. Finance Committee – Jeanine and Adam (10 min)

When Jeanine agreed to be Treasurer, one of her conditions was that Finance meetings be held in the evenings via video conferencing. When thinking about whom the Board should appoint who could be effective, Jeanine decided to meet people with a vision of what the Finance Committee and the church could be. She has a list of current Finance members and some other interested people. She will conduct ZOOM interviews and needs another Board member to help with those. Some questions for prospective Finance members are: How do you view a racial justice centered program size church? Would you be comfortable working via video conferencing?

Discussion:

- We need to decide what Finance does before we recruit people so we can tell them what the work will be. Some people have strong ideas of what they want to do on Finance. What is the best use and purpose of Finance? They need a succinct charge.
- Do we already have a version of this information in the bylaws? If so, we'll need to rewrite that.
- We need an alignment of mission between the Board and the committees that work for the Board.
- If the Board and the Finance, Leadership Development and Personnel committees are aligned on vision / mission, then these committees can do more of the work the Board has done.
- Some people want to work counter to the Board through the committees. How do we incorporate these voices and still move forward? How do we get into covenant with each other?
- This may boil down to needing a vision to move into the future, such as being a racial justice oriented, program size church. Some of the congregants don't embrace that vision.
- It's not about how much we're spending on staff or office supplies, but do we fundamentally agree that this is how we want to move forward?
- In the past the budget has been made one of two ways. Finance creates a budget with recommendations which the Board may well disregard or the Board creates the budget and shows it to Finance once completed. A hybrid might be to give Finance some strategic guidance before it creates a budget, followed by some back and forth with the Board. This takes a significant time frame.
- A program approach is more strategic than a line item budget. Mission clarity makes guidance possible.

3. Reflection and guidance from those Board members leaving – Karen (15 min)

Consider these questions:

- What do I wish I had known as a new Board member. (How can we help new Board members to engage more quickly?)
- What have we not quite finished? (Who will take it up when I leave?)
- What advice / gift would you give to the next Board?

Discussion:

- The most important foci for the next year are financial stewardship, engagement and racial justice.
- I'd like to finally change the name of the church. A task force could investigate the ramifications and costs of doing that (ie. changing signage, etc.) – The way to

change the name of the church is to change the name of the church.

- We put out a deficit budget to change stewardship and we have limited time to do that. It's a make or break situation. I'll do everything I can to make it.
- Preparation is everything.
- The new staff must document what this investment has allowed to happen. Think creatively about it to show the skeptics this is a good thing.
- Lift up the engagement issue; help people find how to live out their faith. It's vital to what we want to do. Faith development is integral to this and to our racial justice work.
- We need to work on job descriptions so volunteers and committees understand what they are being asked to do.
- Complete the emergency action plan. The security policy went through the committees. A policy review group could help with this.
- Rework the bylaws so they are realistic to how we operate.
- Move through the Governance and Revenue Task Force recommendations.
- We still need a pledge drive. If we don't ask, the financial support won't come in.
- How do we deal with grievances, other than by talking to the president? The Committee on Ministries has not emerged as a place to pass these things along. Maybe we need an ombudsman / grievance person.
- We need to look at systems and infrastructure. The DAF does a lot of this.
- There are proven ways to work other than using Robert's Rules of Order. Perhaps Frank Dukes could help us find a more inclusive way to work.
- We need to emphasize church size education
- We need to renew the strategic plan with emphasis on church size, racial justice and money.

2. Appreciation and Closure – Wik (20 min)

(Appreciation of those leaving and hopes / wishes for new Board members)

Board members wrote appreciative notes to each former, current and incoming Board member. We shared appreciation for each other and for our work together in service of this church.

VI. Closing Activities (5 minutes)

1. Process Review (all):
2. Things to do / communicate –

To do and Communicate

- Pastoral care for those who voted no – presidents' group
- Make list of opinion makers that board will need help from going forward.
- July or August meeting – 75th anniversary – Laura will ask Sally Taylor if she could attend – also Al Reynolds, who was president at the 50th anniversary

3. Closing words – David

Dates to remember:

SUUSI – July 16 - 22

Alternative to KKK rally – July 8

July Exec meeting – July 5

July Board meeting – July 19

Correspondence:

May 23

Dear TJMC Board of Trustees,

Thank you for sending out the information packet for the congregational meeting. I am grateful to you for the work that has gone into these documents, and the work you have done this year. I am well aware that what you have done requires a great deal of time, effort, compromise, and thoughtful consideration.

Thank you for your service to our congregation!

Because of my former role on the Board, sometimes I am still subjected to feedback about budgets, personnel, or the Board. I am careful to remind people quickly that there are avenues for them to share their concerns in ways that promote communication in covenant. I remind them that the COM has a specific role in hearing their concerns, that they are always welcome to write to the Board (rather than just grabbing someone in the Social Hall), and that congregants even have the right to petition the Board to hold congregational meetings. However, it is my perception that congregants are not using these avenues of communication, as much as they perhaps plan to voice their concerns at the annual Congregational Meeting that deals with our budget.

I tell you this because I have come to dread our annual budget Congregational Meeting for that reason. I have noticed that concerns about personnel and accountability (of all kinds) rise up in painful ways at that meeting, which makes me ask, "Why?"

Why do congregants feel unheard despite all the ways of communicating that are open to them? In other words, how could those avenues be more effective—are there obstacles to their effectiveness?

Why does this attempt at accountability happen specifically at the **budget** meeting?

I acknowledge these questions are my own, based on my own speculation and experience. They are questions we tried to answer when I served on the Board. And now, two years later, I would like the Board to consider these questions again.

During my tenure on the Board, we voted to institute a yearly "Pulse Survey." Many hours of work went into the design and analysis of that survey. We approved the implementation of the survey only if it would be done yearly in order to gather information about trends over time. To my knowledge, the last Pulse Survey was conducted in 2015, with information shared with the Board at the May 2015 meeting. Leia shared with me that the Board felt its time was better spent elsewhere, which I understand—the Board has many important projects it has undertaken, and our staff do as well. Still, my personal sense was that the information the Pulse Survey gathered was both helpful and offered the members of the congregation a voice. I also found it helpful in order to assess how widely shared specific concerns in the congregation were. At one point, specific goals in the strategic plan were tied to measures that could be quantified by the pulse survey.

However, I'm not aware of how the Strategic Plan is currently being used. As many of you

know, I have tried to stay involved in service to our congregation without being overly involved in the business of the Board. I have not read the Board minutes.

While it is no longer my decision whether the church conduct an annual Pulse Survey, I would offer that it could be a useful tool in increasing the perception and reality of Board and staff accountability to the congregation. This could make our annual budget meeting be more about the budget, and less a catch-all for every disappointment. Yes, I do understand it is not the Board's job to make everyone "comfortable." Participation in our democratic process can be messy.

And yet...if we appropriately ask people to talk about only the budget at the budget meeting, where and how will their other concerns bubble up? In ways that help our church? Or hurt it?

Despite the old dread in my guts about the annual Budget meeting, be assured I will be in attendance, and ready to speak in favor of the budget. Last year I spoke at the meeting in favor of the proposed Revenue Task Force. Our Board members and staff, people I trust deeply, were to be at the heart of that task force—and if it had been possible for them to close our revenue gap in that incarnation, they would have done it. I see from the budget proposal that we hope increasing the DAF position to full-time and adding a development person will increase revenue, and I fully support this direction. John and I will increase our pledge by 10% in order to make our support more than words alone.

I am especially proud to be a member of our church at this time in our church's history, and our country's history.

Thank you for considering my questions, and for your faithful service.

In faith and gratitude,
Amy Wissekerke

To Presidents May 23:
Greetings.

I was pleased to be involved in the meeting last Thursday. I think it could be a great model moving forward on engaging folks. I think the people that were there had great questions and Adam and Karen, I think you all did a great job answering them!

The warm feelings i took away from the meeting soon moved to concern as i looked through the congregational meeting materials. I am probably one of the few people okay with moving forward in the new year with a deficit. I do understand that we will not be hiring the pt person right away - so the full \$13,000 may not be spent in the next fiscal year. However - i heard over the weekend that Trudy will not be doing Scrip after June 30 and there will not be anyone to take her place. i have also heard mixed things about whether or not we will be having a yard sale. I personally do not feel that the yard sale is a big loss - that is a lot of effort for little return. But these last two things could result in us going forward with an additional \$17,000 to \$19,000 deficit on top of what you have already projected. I don't think a part time person (@ 1/4 time) will be able to bridge this gap anytime soon. I think the deficit will be a hard sell at the congregational meeting. Are there more details that could be provided that might persuade folks?

A larger concern is the number of openings on the slate of candidates. The Leadership

Development Committee was not at full capacity this past year. With these openings - i am not sure who will be remaining.** As you may remember (but before Adam's time on the board) the Governance Task Force came to the board and specifically asked to have the volunteer portion of the original charge removed as we all have identified this as a larger issue than what the Task Force could be expected to accomplish. I believe the dearth of names on the slate is consistent with what has been discussed in the past about volunteering. In the materials presented you have talked about a possible solution for lack of funds (hiring a part time person to do fund development) but there is no mention of how to beef up volunteerism. If you haven't discussed it already - i recommend that you have some comments ready to share about volunteers. We can't expect to move into the new program year still looking for a significant number of volunteers. Are we looking at another task force? Community meeting? Targeted meetings with COM/Membership/others? I wish i had the answer! But i do think this is urgent.

Having been in your shoes - i wanted to share my thoughts up front in case it could be helpful in preparation for the meeting. Use the comments as you will. I don't share this in a vacuum. I do look forward to figuring out how to be a part of the solution as we tackle funding and volunteer issues!

In peace,

Donna Baker

**(I know there was some confusion and my name might have originally been on the list for this - but i truly believe my skill set and time is better spent on the leadership portion, which i will be glad to help with moving forward. I do anticipate the governance proposal successfully passing!)

May 26, 2017

Dear Friends,

We the undersigned would like to share our concerns about the proposed budget coming up for a vote at the Congregational meeting on June 4th. We recognize that TJMC has struggled with finances for many years. The Board has worked hard and yet struggled yearly with designing a budget that stays within our means. Adding to the difficulty has been a membership which has stayed essentially flat, a declining number of volunteers to support the vital functions of the church, and the failure of "new" efforts designed to increase revenues.

Unlike in past years, the congregation has not been informed monthly of our ongoing financial status. So currently, we have little information about how we are doing financially for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. This makes it difficult to evaluate the success of the management of the current deficit. What information we do have indicates that it has taken large amounts of fundraising efforts from a limited number of hard-working members and a certain amount of serendipity to even approach managing the deficit budgets we have approved in the past. There are also serious questions presented by the proposed line item revenue numbers in the budget we are being asked to approve.

Since the deficit in the proposed 2017-2018 budget is more than twice last year's deficit (\$49,566 vs. \$23,000), we are unwilling to support a budget that is not balanced with our

projected revenues. We feel the congregation has given this strategy a fair try for the past three or four years, but since there has been no systematic management effort, we believe it is unreasonable to attempt to manage a \$50 -70,000 deficit in the same manner. This is true especially given that we have NO reserves to allow us to cover such a gap, and no clear plans on how to close it.

We would advocate voting “NO” on the proposed budget at the upcoming Congregational Meeting and asking the next Board to go forward with a mandate to create a budget that matches reasonably proposed revenues without deficit line items.

In addition, we encourage all members and friends of TJMC to search their hearts deeply and determine what each of us individually can do, spiritually, financially, and actively to help our community move forward together.

Names listed in alphabetical order

Pete Armetta
Sharon Baiocco
Marcia Brecker
Steven Brecker
Elizabeth L. Breeden
Susan Bremer
Sandra Brooks
Elaine Chapman
Valerie Chasen
Tom Colbert
Burnie Davis
Greta Dershimer
Patricia Eldredge
Gayle Floyd
Kate Fraleigh
Sara Gondwe
Jason Halbert
Lynn Heath
Nancy Hurrelbrink
Marlene Jones
Cathy Lawder
Elizabeth Lowe
Stephanie Lowenhaupt
Gloria Morgan
Sallie Kate Park
Jill Payne
Cathey Polly
Arthur Rashap
Donna Redmond
Trudy Rohm
Beverly Ryan
Bonnie Sheppard
Glenn Short
Rosalie Simari
Natalie Somer
Jim Souder
Cherry Stewart
Sally Taylor
Don Ubben
Kasha Viets- Woods
Janice Walker
Stan Walker
Laura Wallace
Douglas Webbink
Johanna Woodchild

May 26

Karen,

Thank you for your dedicated and often inspirational work and your eloquence, insight, and vision here. I had seen the email you include here and had one in depth conversation with one of the authors/initiators and plan to have more with some of you church leaders who could help me better understand these issues.

Frankly, I'm sadly ignorant of the big picture here (it's no decent excuse, I've had lot going on recently, but nothing compared with what I imagine you have and have continued to contribute powerfully) and haven't made a decision on how to vote.

Again, great job expressing a clearly, deeply thought through vision for growth (financially and values-based as well).

Thanks again for your service and if you're available, I may try to be on touch to discuss some of these issues directly with you as I shall with a few other particular folks whose experience and wisdom I value.

Gratefully,
Marc (Goldberg)

May 28

Dear President

Great response to a well meaning email. We have always had challenges since I joined 10 years ago, and this year appears no different other than perhaps the size of the deficit recommended. However, given the critical importance of having a FT DAF, and unless others have an alternative method of funding, I support your decision. I will also look to see if I can increase my pledge.

Thank you for all that you and the Board of Trustees do for our community.

In Gratitude,
Ian Sole

To Presidents and Wik, June 5:

Yet again, I was really moved by the work that the board has done. Thank you so much for your commitment to TJMC.

Moving forward i would really like to work with Adam and Rev Wik on the area of engagement. I think the dinner meeting that Adam and Karen hosted was well received and helpful in informing congregants who may be new to the church or are being recruited for leadership roles. One thing i could do is perhaps serve as a liaison to the Nominating Committee and/or membership as ideas are fleshed out. Adam - you have a lot on your plate this upcoming year - please do not hesitate to reach out.

Again - many thanks to all of you.

In peace - Donna

May 25, 2017 (received June 11)

Dear TJMC-UU Board Members,

We write to express our concern about the proposed 2017-18 Budget. We understand that the budget eliminates the membership fee for IMPACT, so that we would cease to be a member congregation. As individuals and as a group we feel strongly that this would be a big mistake, and we ask you to reconsider this specific part of your proposed budget.

To support our request, we present the following facts (and feelings):

1. TJMC was one of the founding members of IMPACT. We are proud of the work that IMPACT has done over the years to improve life for many members of our community and of our role in creating and supporting this valuable organization. We hope that you and many other members of our congregation share those feelings.

2. Until this current year, TJMC has been a highly active contributing member of IMPACT.

We have had strong Team Leaders and active Network Members until very recently. We have had at least one member on each of the IMPACT research committees almost every year, helping to develop the "change proposals" presented to officials at the annual Action. Most years we have had strong numbers of people representing TJMC in attendance at the Action; we won awards in 3 different years for having 75 to 80% of our average Sunday service attendance at the Action.

3. This year, with no real Leadership Team and no identified Network Members at TJMC, a few people who are committed to IMPACT, with Erik's help, organized an IMPACT Sunday service on April 9, handed out (free) Action tickets to the congregation during the service, and provided a sign-up chart in the Social Hall after services for the three Sundays before the Action on April 23. As a result of this very minimal recruitment effort, 78 TJMC congregants signed up, noting their intention to attend the Action. And 70 TJMC congregants and "friends" did attend, while our choir sang in the opening and closing sections of the meeting. TJMC provided the second largest number of attendees of the 27 member congregations. (Church of the Incarnation, with a huge, highly committed congregation, had 250 attending.) This seems to indicate that a good segment of our congregation still wants to support the work of IMPACT.
4. TJMC has become more widely known in the Charlottesville-Albemarle community because of our work with IMPACT. We have connected with folks from many other congregations through research committees, Network meetings, and Team Leadership meetings. We have worked together with Muslims, Jews, Hispanics, African Americans, Catholics, Protestants, Quakers, and Mennonites to promote social justice changes identified as needed by members of these

religious communities. And we have contributed to successful ventures to bring about needed change in the lives of the less powerful members of our community. (See appended sheet with a list of these successes.)

5. The Board's message to the congregation in a recent email says "we believe (this proposed budget) speaks to both the TJMC that we are and the one that we are led to embody in the world. A TJMC that is a powerhouse for Justice in Charlottesville; a congregation which holds Justice as one of the core tenets of how love operates both internally and externally." If strong recognition of our work for local justice is the aspiration at the heart of this proposed budget, it seems that a strange logic has led to the elimination of the $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of the budget that would pay for our continued membership in IMPACT. IMPACT is the one community organization that we helped to found, and that unites us with a widely diverse set of congregations to carry out important justice work in our community. Our strong contributions to IMPACT have helped to create our current status as a *potential* "powerhouse for Justice in Charlottesville." Now is hardly the time to withdraw from this organization.

We believe that if we retain our membership in IMPACT, a strong Leadership Team will eventually emerge from the congregation. Until that time, we can certainly continue to send significant numbers of our members to attend the annual Action to display our support for the adopted issue of the year. We also believe that a more formal approach to selection of Team Leaders might be more effective than the "self-selection" (volunteer) process of the past, or the most recent process used, in which Erik provided names of potential Team members to Ruth Berta, the IMPACT organizer assigned to our church, leaving her to call, talk to, and invite TJMC members to join a TJMC IMPACT Leadership Team. Perhaps the Personnel Development Committee could help with this process, or an ad-hoc committee of former Team Leaders could be appointed by the Board to carry out this task.

It is our understanding that IMPACT asks that each member congregation pay dues of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of their annual operating budget (minus debt). Our Social Action Collections produce funds that flow in, then directly out to the recipient organizations, so that portion of the proposed budget (Community Outreach Collections - \$25K) would not qualify as operating costs. The \$49K that the Board is proposing in the 2017-18 budget as "Operational Budget Gap" funds would seem to qualify as debt under IMPACT membership procedures. So we calculate that the TJMC membership dues for IMPACT would be \$486,000 x .005, or \$2,430. We believe that there are a variety of ways that amount could be raised, with Board approval, if the predicted amounts in the proposed budget did not swell to cover that additional cost. For the time being, placing that amount in the Community Outreach Collections category would keep the dues at the level of \$2,430.

Based on all these considerations, we urge you to keep the IMPACT dues in your proposed budget. If you are not able to agree to this request, we ask that you at least bring this matter up for a vote at the Congregational Meeting.

Sincerely,
The Active Minds Group

