

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

January 17, 2018

**MINUTES**

**BOARD GOALS**

- **VISION** - Develop and share vision for church in effective ways
- **STEWARDSHIP** - Increase understanding that all TJMC members are responsible for its well-being
- **ADMINISTRATION** - Ensure TJMC's infrastructure can meet its needs
- **RACIAL JUSTICE** - Lead TJMC's racial justice work inside and outside our walls
- **TRUST** - Strengthen trust relationships between congregation members, and board and congregation
- **75TH ANNIVERSARY** - Create a fun and meaningful celebration

**In attendance** - Adam Slate - President, Jeanine Braithwaite - Treasurer, Ann Salamini - Secretary, Colleen Anderson - President Elect, Katharine Maus, Christina Rivera - Ex Officio, Leia Durland-Jones - Ex Officio, Annalee Durland-Jones, Erik Wikstrom - Ex Officio, Cindy Shepard, Karen Ransom, Ian Sole

**Absent** - David Mick

**Guests** -

**I. Opening--(35 minutes total) Opening/Closing Words (Colleen), Snacks (Colleen), and Process Review (All)**

Opening words – Colleen

Public Comment – None

Check in -

**1. Acceptance of Agenda**

Amend the agenda to remove item number 1 under Old Business "Review Senior Staff Priorities."

**MOTION**: Accept the Agenda as amended.

**Unanimously approved.**

**2. Correspondence - None**

**II. Reports**

1. President's Report (written) – Adam Slate.
  - The “get to know your congregation” breakfast meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup> was well received. A range of comments was gathered for board consideration. More such meetings will be planned to offer congregants a variety of meeting times. (Saturday, Sunday, evening.)
2. Vice President's Report (n/a) – vacant
3. Treasurer's Report (written) – Jeanine Braithwaite
4. Lead Minister's Report (written) – Erik Wikstrom
  - Erik passed out a new pamphlet: Membership Expectations: Deepening your relationship with TJMCUU. Membership Committee will be passing these out at Newcomer Orientations. It was suggested that they also be placed in pew racks.
  - A second new brochure describes a program Erik and Leia have developed called First Steps: A chance to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and this congregation. (Originally offered as the Inquirer's series last fall.) The course will be offered over five Sundays starting February 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - Chris, Leia and Erik have been invited to participate in a class at Harvard Divinity School, doing a session on shared ministry. They are recognized as having a truly shared ministry among leaders.
  - Erik will not be taking his sabbatical this year as was planned. He and Leia are working out a plan of how their sabbaticals can be arranged to be most beneficial and least disruptive to programs in the 2018-2019 church year. This will be presented at the February meeting.
  - 39 pledge cards came in after Erik's January 15<sup>th</sup> service on financial support of the church. There was a mix of new, increased and next year pledges.
5. Director of Faith Development Report (written) – Leia Durland-Jones
  - Thank you for the Christmas gift.
6. Director of Administration and Finance Report (written) – Christina Rivera
  - The recovery in pledge income at the end of last year seems to be holding up in January.
  - Rental income continues to track very strong.
  - Staff expenses will go up this month as two members have elected to start using the medical benefit. The fact that not all staff were taking this benefit in the past has been used as an expense reduction method. It will not be available this year.
  - This increased expense is nearly offset by shifting medical benefits to the Premium Only plan, which is pretax. The cost is \$300 per year but the plan saves thousands of dollars per year by lowering our tax basis. It also lowers Workers' Compensation costs and increases staff paychecks.

- Chris is collecting online applications for the paid admin assistant position. Following interviews, she hopes to have a person in place within the first two weeks of February.
- Chris hopes to get all the thermostats on a wireless “nest” this year so they can be controlled from her desk.
- The UUA Common Endowment Fund returned over 10% to our endowments last year.
- The pledge deficit which had been tracking at \$23K has been reduced to \$3K at this point. The year-end appeal brought in \$1,400 in new pledges, \$3500 in one-time donations, \$,8800 in 2018-19 pledges, \$4,000 in current pledge payments and one increased pledge. There were \$600 in expenses in staff time and hard costs to send the letter.

#### 7. Membership Report (written) – Sally Taylor

#### 8. Board Liaison Reports

- Personnel Committee – Chris
  - Personnel will be meeting January 24th.
- Nominating Committee – Karen
  - Nominating missed a meeting because of bad weather, but still plans to table February 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> to recruit new members. This need would be a good tie-in for the “get to know your congregation” meetings as well.
- 75th anniversary - Karen/Leia
  - February 28<sup>th</sup> is the actual anniversary date. Erik will lead an evening kickoff event on that date. The community and the press will be invited to take part. We would like to light the steeple, at least for that night, “if possible.” Living former ministers will be asked for brief congratulatory statements. Also the writings of deceased former ministers will be culled for appropriate remarks.
  - Then each month will have a specific event celebrating the anniversary. Many of the ideas from the open brainstorming sessions which Leia held will be incorporated.
  - Chris is coordinating the creation of a logo.

### III. Consent Agenda / Electronic Motions

#### 1. Approve December 2017 Board Minutes

**MOTION:** Approve the Consent Agenda.

**Unanimously approved.**

### IV. Old Business

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

## **V. New Business**

1. High level principles / objectives for FY19 budget - Jeanine / Adam (30 min)

The Finance Committee is energized this year and has asked for guidance as to board priorities in advance of their budget creating work. There won't be a lot of surprises in the budget; expenses will largely be carried over from this year. Revenue expectations are where judgement will be needed.

Recommendations:

- No cuts to staff, staff time/effort, or staff compensation.
- Restore IMPACT to 50% of its previous level. This acknowledges both our commitment to it and also our tight budget.
- Work with treasurer and DAF to build assumptions about revenue.

The treasurer added her thinking on the deficit situation:

- There will very likely be another budget deficit next year; the question is degree. Before the pledge turnaround at the end of 2017, it looked like we would face a much higher deficit. Currently we project a deficit of \$50K, which is in line with the budget. We will likely run high, medium (flat) and low budget scenarios depending on pledge response. We won't know until we ask for financial support.

Comments:

- This sounds good, but how do we answer the congregation's questions? How do we articulate the plan / endgame? congregants need to be comfortable with this.
- We said from the beginning this would take a couple of years. That hasn't changed.
- We're working to restore trust and grow stewardship. What modest level of financial commitment would be necessary to support this congregation to be financially stable? It's not that much.
- The membership expectation of 2.5% pledge for those who are able would totally solve the problem. Some will still not pledge, but if the people who are pledging are really committed, we'll be able to erase the deficit in 1 – 1 ½ years.
- The January 21st sermon which said we can live within our means by decreasing staff, but which 100 congregants will have to leave pointed out that the call to "live within our means" has an impact. That was really effective.
- The reinvigorated Finance Committee is expected go beyond balancing numbers and to participate in making stewardship calls, to be at the heart of stewardship at TJMC.
- Referring to the first comment, is that a request for more specificity in our plan? We can't predict stewardship accurately, so that's not an answerable question, but:
  - We've reinvigorated the Finance Committee
  - We are establishing membership expectations

- The new stewardship position will develop a 3 – 5 year stewardship plan
- It's okay to say "that is not an answerable question, *but* we are doing this, this and this." It's important to remind ourselves of what we have already done. That gives inspiration.
- If each member gave \$75 for the 75th Anniversary, that would generate \$30,900.
- If each of us would get up and say what kind of steward we plan to be next year, our problem would be solved.
- We're looking at a very straightforward budget next year, carrying out the plan we have put in motion this year.
- What will we be doing differently to make this happen? What's the right time to get these budget guidelines out to the congregation? Could it go into the financial snapshot and board summary? That might relieve anxiety in the congregation.
- Is there any more specificity we can give as to the parts of the plan?
  - Details of the response to the end-of-year stewardship letter.
  - Response to the January 21st stewardship sermon.
  - Imminent hiring of Admin assistant which will allow the DAF to initiate stewardship coordinator duties
  - Revitalization of Finance Committee

2. Update on reaching out to UUA resources for help with congregational trust - Adam (5 min)  
 The presidents and senior staff decided to bring in a UUA resource, preferably from outside the Southern Region. They have identified a couple of desirable candidates and are working through UUA channels to get this resource in place.

3. LREDA Religious Educator General Assembly Delegate Status - Chris (5 min)  
 LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Assn.) is an organization of mostly UU religious educators; Leia and Chris are members. Since merger, UU ministers have received automatic credentialed delegate status to General Assembly if serving or affiliated with a congregation. They can vote, speak at the microphone during debate, and sign petitions to allow items onto the agenda. Religious educators only receive that status at the masters credentialing level (the highest of three levels). This creates an imbalance of power among religious educators and between religious educators and ministers. Following LREDA recommended best practices, religious educators are generally not members of their congregations. Thus a congregation can't make its religious educator a delegate even if it wished to.  
 The LREDA proposal requires a UUA bylaws change. To get the proposal on the agenda requires that 15 member congregations request it be discussed at GA. Then it takes two years to reach a vote.

- Is it enough for the board to approve this as opposed to the congregants? - The requirement is for the board to make the recommendation. It will be in the minutes and should be highlighted in board notes to the congregation.
- This is a long overdue justice issue, proving there is justice work to be done within our own organization. It's worthwhile for this congregation to be involved.
- This is not an endorsement of the position, just noticing that it is worth talking about.

**MOTION:** The Board of Trustees of Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church Unitarian Universalist enthusiastically endorses the LREDA proposed Amendment to the UUA Bylaws regarding the delegate status of religious educators. We direct our Sr. Staff team to fill out and submit the “Certification of the Proposed Amendment to the Bylaws” form indicating our endorsement of the Amendment being added to the agenda of the upcoming General Assemblies as necessary for the amendment process.

**Unanimously approved.**

The musicians’ network and church administrators’ network are taking note of this process. Clergy may push back on the idea of broader professional representation.

## **VI. Closing Activities (5 minutes)**

### **1. Process Review (all):**

- Energized
- Good
- Allowing time to talk over reports is important. A shorter agenda allows for that.
- This has been a positive meeting. It’s encouraging to get positive feedback on stewardship and interest from the congregation. We’re healing. Marc Ewert (the Next Steps consultant) would be proud of us for undertaking the difficult work he laid out for us.
- 75 is sticking in my mind
- We were efficient, got a lot done. It feels good. We’re getting some traction.
- Glad about the LREDA endorsement.
- Appreciative of board’s leadership tonight.

### **2. Things to do / communicate –**

- Adam will summarize the comments from the “get to know your congregation” meeting to distribute to the board.
- Adam will do a summary of the meeting to be posted to the congregation.
- Put the budget guidelines in the financial snapshot and summary of board meetings. Also highlight the LREDA proposal.

### **3. Closing words -**

#### **Dates to remember –**

February 7, 2018 – Board Exec meeting  
February 21, 2018 – Board meeting  
February 28, 2018 - TJMC 75th Anniversary kickoff  
June 3, 2018 Annual Business Meeting after 10AM service

#### **Upcoming topics -**

- Policy Review panel - (Empower group to undertake policy review process and bring policy manual up to date)
- Charge for Personnel Committee
- Public Comment

## REPORTS

### **President's Report to Board** January 22, 2018

Dear TJMC Board members,

As of this writing, we are just over half-way through the church year. We have made progress in important areas such as managing a deficit budget, re-authorizing the congregational survey, and moving forward on our stewardship position, not to mention a focused response to last summer's white nationalist rallies.

We still have what our Next Steps consultant called "significant headwinds." We need to bring in a UUA consultant to help us with issues of congregational trust and our staffing structure, and we have been anticipating a second year deficit budget.

In the midst of all this, I appreciate the Board's willingness to embrace a spirit of transparency in our work this year. There are numerous examples of this such as:

- Making financial information more readily available to church members
- Organizing and attending at least five events/sessions (so far) for congregation members to ask questions and give feedback about the church, governance, and policy
- Presenting the full spectrum of findings from the Next Steps report
- Openness about the probability we will need to have several years of a deficit budget
- Allowing visitors to board meetings ample time for public comment

This work is important, and will continue to be important. Our job as church members is not to get issues to resolve in the manner we support; it's to develop the sorts of relationships with each other that strengthen our congregation regardless of how any particular issue turns out.

Moving forward, we are looking at a number of other steps to improve communication and transparency. As a result of suggestions we've received and information we've solicited from other churches, we are getting ready to start posting draft board meeting minutes and draft agenda items. At this upcoming meeting, we will lay out some guiding priorities for next year's budget that will set our intentions early in the process. And I hope to see us put together a number of additional feedback sessions/events with the congregation.

These days I often receive positive feedback for this continued commitment to listening to the congregation and respecting the diversity of opinions. I want to make sure you are aware of that feedback, and the less visible ways that our work this year is paying off.

Faithfully,  
Adam

### **Treasurer's Report**

Our year-end financial picture was much brighter than we saw back in October. Congregants responded to our calls for catching up with pledge payments, and to the letter that our incoming President sent with her personal testimonial about what TJMCUU means to her. And traditionally, we see a surge in pledge payments in December as people pre-pay their pledges at the end of the calendar year for tax reasons.

Current year pledges surged to \$195 K at end-December 2018, against a budgeted total of \$198 K, so the lag in pledge payments I wrote about with such concern in previous reports almost disappeared. However, the need for vigilance has not abated. Much of the surge may be a result of people pre-paying church year 2017-2018 pledges in end-2017 because of anticipated changes in the US tax laws, and a pledge gap may re-emerge in the first two quarters of 2018.

Smaller revenue items were also positive. Building user fees performed robustly in July-December 2017, at \$7 K vs. a budgeted \$4.5 K, and prior year pledges came in at nearly \$5 K vs. a budgeted \$1.5 K. The offering came in at \$9 K vs. a budgeted \$6 K.

Total revenues were \$248 K vs. the budgeted amount of \$278 K. Led by staff efforts, stringent expenditure control continued through end-December, so that total expenditures were held to \$270 K against a budgeted \$ 283 K. Our actual end-December deficit was therefore \$ 22 K, or just under half of what we projected for this church year when we asked the congregation to support the deficit budget at the congregational meeting June 4, 2017.

The Finance Committee and Executive Committee of the Board communicated about likely budget priorities from the Board, which will formally follow from the January 2018 Board meeting. The Finance Committee will not be projecting expenditure cuts at this juncture, but will rather work with scenarios on the revenue side.

### **Minister's Report**

#### **Lead Minister's Report to the Board – January 2018**

*"The first of January is another day dawning, the sun rising as the sun always rises, the earth moving in its rhythms ... everything is the same ... Yet also we stand at a threshold, the new*



*year something truly new, still unformed, leaving a stunning power in our hands: what shall we do with this great gift of Time, this year?" ~ Kathleen McTigue (adapted)*

Before anything else I want to tell you how much I appreciate the support you offered me and my family in advance of my wife's surgery. Thanks to you, terrific colleagues, and no small amount of advanced planning, I felt no qualms about being absent the week before Christmas. That was a gift.

The surgery went well – the surgeon said, “she did great” – and she is already feeling the benefits in terms of the reduction of her most serious symptoms. As she said, she is starting to feel like herself again after roughly 2 ½ years of being very much *unlike* herself. My one wish for Christmas did come – having my wife back as I've always known her. Santa was kind.

I've been thinking a lot about our current situation – in general, as a congregation, and, more specifically, as a Board. I don't believe that anyone would disagree with the assessment that there is “anxiety in the system.” This anxiety shows up in different places, focused on different things – our budget; the “transparency” of our Board (and a distrust of its decision-making processes); concern that the senior staff is becoming “too powerful” and that, specifically, the Lead Minister is shirking his responsibilities; the sense that there's too much emphasis on the work of racial justice to the exclusion of other things; the inability of both volunteer and staff leaders to address the demonstrably low levels of financial giving, etc. No doubt there are other examples that we could name, but they all point to the reality that our current situation is one in which anxiety is always in the foreground when we look at congregational life.

Recently I've begun reading *A Failure of Nerve: leadership in the age of the quick fix*, by Edwin H. Friedman. (Friedman might be considered the “grandparent” of the application of family systems theory to congregations.) In this, the book he was working on at the time of his death, he addresses the need to deal with what he sees as an endemic problem facing institutions of all kinds, and for leaders of all kinds – “from parents to Presidents.” Here's how he describes the central assertion of the book:

“It will be the thesis of this work that leadership in America is stuck in the rut of trying harder and harder without obtaining significantly new results. The rut runs deep, affecting all the institutions of our society irrespective of size or purpose. It even affects those institutions that try to tackle the problem. These institutions are ‘stuck,’ and there exists a connection between the paralysis that leaders experience and the paralysis in the thinking process of those who would get them unstuck.”

Does that sound at all familiar to anyone? Don't we experience being “stuck,” trying hard to address the various problems we face – and have faced – without any “significantly new results”? As just one example, in the Next Steps report we were told that our pledge campaign leaders have known what to do, and have done all the right things, and yet the results have been essentially the same. We're “stuck.”

Friedman notes that one of the reasons for this “stuck-ness” is that whenever a leader (singular or plural) *does* try to move an institution in new (and, he’d add, healthier) directions, a strong opposition arises.

“I believe there exists throughout America today a rampant sabotaging of leaders who try to stand tall amid the raging anxiety storms of our time. It is a highly reactive atmosphere pervading all the institutions of our society – a regressive mood that contaminates the decision-making process of government and corporations at the highest level, and, on the local level, seeps down into the deliberations of neighborhood church, synagogue, hospital, library, and school boards.”

I’ve been thinking about an exchange some months ago in which we discussed the Board’s role in providing leadership for the congregation – making decisions on behalf of the whole, for instance – as opposed to insisting that the congregation come to some sort of consensus. I mentioned what seemed like an irony to me that one of the critiques of my early years as Lead (ordained) Minister here was my failure to take strong stands and offer clear direction to the congregation, and that here the Board was debating the “right,” if you will, of the Board to take strong stands and offer clear direction to the congregation!

Friedman says that a primary symptom of this rampant reality of our times is “a failure of nerve” among leaders. (This is also, by the way, one of the chief fuels feeding this “stuck-ness.”) “[W]henver a ‘family’ is driven by anxiety, what will always be present is a failure of nerve among its leaders.” The cure, if you will, is for leaders to learn to, in his words, “self-differentiate,” to see themselves as separate from the system’s anxiety, to refuse to get entangled in people’s fears, to be, “a non-anxious presence.” He is equally clear that this is not easy.

“This is a difficult perspective to maintain in a ‘seatbelt society’ more orientated toward safety than adventure. This ... is not, therefore, for those who prefer peace to progress. It is not for those who mistake another’s well-defined stand as coercion. It is not for those who fail to see how in any family or institution *a perpetual concern for consensus leverages power to the extremists*. And it is not for those who lack the nerve to venture out of the calm eye of good feelings and togetherness and weather the storm of protest that inevitably surrounds a leader’s self-definition. For, *whether we are considering a family, a work system, or an entire nation, the resistance that sabotages a leader’s initiative usually has less to do with the ‘issue’ that ensues than with the fact that the leader took initiative.*” (Italics added)

Last year the Board took a strong, courageous stand – choosing to risk investing in the possibilities of our congregation rather than be hamstrung by the long-prevailing narrative of scarcity. Even before the congregation voted on this vision-based budget, the “sabotaging” began. I don’t say this to deny that some of the concerns raised are valid. Every risk taken involves ... risk. Risk, and the possibility of failure. Nor do I believe that *any* of the people who raised concerns and expressed anxiety did so out of anything other than a desire to protect the congregation’s health (as they understand it). Nonetheless, the result is a heightened sense of

anxiety that results in a strong resistance to our moving forward, to our becoming more fully who we can be; it results in a pull to remain who we have been.

I fear that *this* Board is at risk of being entangled in the anxieties that permeate our congregational system, and to see that anxiety as our prevailing reality rather than to see our promise and our possibilities, our strengths, as the truth of who we are. We run the risk of defining our identity by our weaknesses rather than our strengths.

We, as a Board, as congregational leaders (both volunteer and professional), have a “stunning power” in our hands – the opportunity to help change the narrative our congregation tells about itself, and believes about itself. I will continue to share what I learn about Friedman’s theory of “self-differentiated leadership” in the months to come. I think we all have much we can learn from it that will help us, and the congregation we both love and serve, to boldly move into the next chapter.

Pax tecum,

RevWik

P.S. – I found a good overview of all of this in a short video titled, “Friedman’s Theory of Self Differentiated Leadership.” I’d encourage you all to take 6 minutes and 44 seconds to watch it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgdcljNV-Ew>

### **Director of Faith Development Report**

**Report to the Board**

**January 2017**

**Leia Durland-Jones, Director of Faith Development**

#### *Children’s Programming (Nursery through 5<sup>th</sup> grade)*

##### *Youth Programming (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)*

- Our Neighboring Faiths (6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grades) continues to explore the meaning and history of religion and will experience an earth-centered ritual on January 14.
- Our Challenge: Coming of Age (8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> grades) continues to deepen their understanding of Unitarian Universalism through their Sunday RE classes as well as their work with their mentors and COA notebooks. The group will visit National Museum of African-American History and Culture on Sunday January 21.
- YRUU is also visiting the National Museum of African-American History and Culture on January 21.
- I am working with ASP (Appalachia Service Project) and making plans for our Coming of Age and YRUU groups to participate in ASP this July 1-7.

#### *Adult Programming*

Winter/Spring Adult Faith Development classes:

- This semester we have 9 racial justice focused offerings confirmed so far including: “The Role of Children in African American History,” Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy Legislative Day: “A Day for All People,” “Understanding with a New Mind,” “That World is Gone,” “3/5ths,” Documentary on Tim Wise’s book *White Like Me*, Book Discussion of *White Like Me* by Tim Wise, “Lynching in America”, and “Racism in the North”
- Additional Adult Faith Development offerings this semester include: Short Story Reading Group, Tai Chi, Spiritual Autobiography: The Story of Your Soul, a Communication Skills Workshop, The Faith Forward series [still in development] led by myself and Wik), Wednesday Wonderings (led by Lou Centore), a class TBA led by Alex McGee.
- I am meeting regularly with the Dream Quest Planning Circle as we prepare for this year’s Women’s Dream Quest February 23 & 24 and the Land of the Soul retreat on Sunday February 25.

#### *Pastoral*

- I was honored to be asked by Lynn Heath to conduct the December 30 memorial service for her daughter Catherine Reynolds.

#### *Multigenerational Programming*

Our annual New Year’s Eve labyrinth walk was magical. Patty Wallens did a fantastic job of coordinating the volunteers who set up, held space and cleaned up from this year’s event. The church was full—over 80 people walked!

#### *Worship*

##### *Children’s Worship*

- In December, Children’s Worship explored Hanukah with the help and leadership of Margo Gill. In January we are connecting to the ministry images of “Bare Branches” and following up on the Story Sunday conversation Erik had with the children about trees. The remainder of the month will connect to racial justice lessons and themes.

##### *Contemplative Worship*

- I continue to enjoy working with the Contemplative Worship team and take the lead for our Wednesday Contemplative service twice a month.

##### *Multigenerational Worship*

- It was great fun to lead our annual Christmas Eve interactive nativity and a special treat to have the Gill family participate as this year’s holy family.
- Alex and I are working on the next multigenerational worship service (February 11.)

#### *Professional Development and Opportunities*

- In January and February I am co-leading an online Renaissance Module (a UUA continuing education program) for religious educators on RE Teacher Development.

*A big and heartfelt thank you to the entire Board for your very generous Christmas gift. It is much appreciated!*

**Director of Administration and Finance Report**

**Director of Administration and Finance – Christina Rivera**

**Board Report, January 17 2018 mtg**

**December 2017**

- Number of emails received: 2267
- 1 rental tour, contract pending
- Hosted VACUUM meeting; supported church memorial service
- Supported various extra church holiday services
- Prep and attended following meetings:
  - Exec. Mtg
  - Board Meeting
  - Presidents Mtgs
  - Finance Committee Mtg
  - Staff Holiday gathering

**FY 18 Financial Report Notes:**

**December 2017**

**Year to Date Month-End Report\***

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Revenue	\$278K	\$248K	(\$30K)
Expenses	\$283K	\$270K	\$13K
Revenue/(Deficit)	(\$5K)	(\$22K)	(\$17K)

- Drop from last month's to this month's operating deficit is from \$36K to \$22K
- Expenses continue to be managed with deferred staff and program costs
- Revenue: Rental income continues to track high due to sustained repeat rentals with various organizations
- Revenue is tracking lower in two areas:
  - Pledge lag: the EXCELLENT news is that the strong November pledge payments was followed by an even stronger December surge in pledge payments. This has virtually reversed all the previous month's pledge lag. This surge may have been, in part, due to congregants seeing the weekly "Financial Snapshot" with accompanying explanation inviting them to automate their pledge payment.

Another factor is strong year end pledge payments for tax reasons. I continue to closely monitor pledge payments and we will have a fuller picture after month end January.

- Scrip – Per my previous board report, this is an area to be addressed in January with a couple of scrip volunteers. I'd like a Board or Finance Committee volunteer to work with me on this program.
- Professional Development expenses are overstated due to the December credit card payment not yet being line item coded in full. However, the payment has been allocated to expenses so it will not affect our bottom line expense/revenues. I will have it fully reconciled by the January financials. Rest assured your staff are excellent stewards of their professional expense budgets.

#### **Admin/Finance Notes:**

- Wendy Steeves our Office Assistant was out of the office for much of December due to illness and then the subsequent holiday office closure season. This absence was managed by staff members picking up various Office Assistant responsibilities and on one occasion by a congregational volunteer. We will need to work on a plan to train more volunteers who have interest in covering the office on those occasions of sick/prof dev/vacation of our Office Assistant.
- Coordinated extra church cleanings for the Christmas/New Year's church festivities
- Served as Sr. Staff member on call for holiday office closure between Christmas and New Year's

#### **Stewardship Coordination / Admin assistance:**

- I have several leads on admin assistance and am working to have someone in place by end of January
- I have been clearing out my office in anticipation of adding a second work station
- Have begun prepping reports needed for initial stewardship contacts and planning

#### **Denominational service:**

- Upcoming UUA Board of Trustees meeting January 18-21, Highlander Research and Education Center, Knoxville TN
- I have been asked to co-host the weekly Church of the Larger Fellowship online talk show and podcast "The VUU." I will begin hosting with the January 4<sup>th</sup> episode. This will be done on my lunch hour and is a volunteer position. You can view or download podcast episodes at <https://www.questformeaning.org/vuu/>
- Served on a curriculum incubator project for Meadville Lombard Theological Seminary. The project will eventually be released as an Adult Faith Development curriculum titled "Creating Theologies Together".

#### **Membership Report**

December 31, 2017 Membership report

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of November 31, 2017: 412

**Add:**

**Drop:**

Bajare-Dukes, Leonore (Noni), notified Membership Committee during phone contact effort on Dec. 9, 2017, moved to Pennsylvania, archive

Taylor, Sharon, notified Membership Committee member that she has joined Unity Church, archive, Dec. 9, 2017

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of December 31, 2017: 410 members

**CORRESPONDENCE** - None