

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church - Unitarian Universalist
BOARD OF TRUSTEES FEBRUARY MEETING
February 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, Leia Durland-Jones - Ex Officio, Erik Wikstrom - Ex Officio, Karen Ransom - Past President, David Mick, Colleen Anderson - President Elect, Ann Salamini - Secretary, Annalee Durland-Jones, Ian Sole, Cindy Shepard, Christina Rivera - Ex Officio, Jeanine Braithwaite - Treasurer, Katharine Maus

Absent – None

Guests - Greta Dershimer, Frank Dukes, David Shutt, Beth Jaeger Landis, Ruth Douglas, Cathey Polly

I. Opening--(45 minutes total) Opening/Closing Words (Ian), Snacks (Ian), and Process Review (All)

Opening words – Ian

Check in -

Frank Dukes is sitting in on this meeting to observe our process from a white supremacy / oppression perspective. He'll join us again next month to share his thoughts.

We held silence for gun violence victims.

Public Comment –

(Note: Adam would like to try giving commenters about 3 minutes for their presentation. Questions from the Board can be passed to Adam to be sure the important points are raised efficiently.)

Greta Dershimer thanked the Board for approving the request to allow church volunteers to work with IMPACT in spite of TJMC not officially being a member congregation. She has been able to gather a team of nineteen people who want to work with IMPACT. The issue this year is affordable housing, an issue that affects people within our own congregation. Affordable housing in Charlottesville was also chosen by the Racial Justice Committee as something they wanted to work on, so there are two groups in the congregation working on this issue.

- The team used church procedure to ask Finance Committee for permission to collect funds from individuals to continue TJMC's membership this year, as some people felt very strongly that continuous membership was important. They were able to raise more than enough funds to meet membership requirements.
- Looking forward, they ask the Board to inform the congregation that we have been able to pay IMPACT dues this year so our membership will be continuous.
- They recommend a new congregational vote to approve IMPACT membership for a specific length of time, such as three to five years, rather than a non-specific membership.
- They appreciate the Board asking Finance Committee for partial membership dues while the church is running a deficit budget. To relieve budget pressure Greta is asking Social Justice Council to make IMPACT an automatic recipient of one of the monthly social action collections, as is the case with Food Pantry and IHS Food Packets. The idea of funding IMPACT in this way could be supported by a positive congregational vote.

Discussion -

- If you have raised more than enough money for dues, why are you asking for a social action collection? - That is for future years.
- Can the extra amount collected be applied to next year's membership? - It was collected for this year and the total amount will be given to IMPACT. The membership fee that IMPACT asks for is 1/2 to 1% of budget. The amount raised falls within those limits.

Thanks for your presentation and your diligence in helping to resolve this dilemma in such a satisfactory and thorough way.

1. Acceptance of Agenda

MOTION: Amend the agenda to put the Committee on the Ministry survey discussion at 7:30PM.

Unanimously approved as amended.

2. Correspondence –

- Stan Walker – reply to January Minister's Report
- Stephanie Lowenhaupt – reply to January Minister's Report
- Membership Committee – clarification of process for signing Membership Book
- Laura Wallace – Pulse Survey

II. Reports

1. President's Report (written) – Adam Slate

The discussion with UUA Southern Region on scheduling a consultant continues; there is a phone conversation scheduled tomorrow.

2. Vice President's Report (n/a) – vacant

3. Treasurer's Report (written) – Jeanine Braithwaite

- The January numbers continue to look good.
- The preliminary budget developed by Finance Committee based on flat pledge income creates a worrisome deficit. They will create additional scenarios with higher pledge

income.

4. Lead Minister's Report (written) – Erik Wikstrom

Comment - The anonymous email incident was troubling and completely out of covenant.

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

Leia has been overwhelmed with Dream Quest preparations so there is no written report this month. She passed out the new Adult Faith Development prospectus.

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

Highlights:

- The deficit held at \$27K again this month.
- Updating the professional expenses line item and applying endowment interest to the endowment will be done by month end February.
- TJMC-UU has been recertified with the UUA, so the General Assembly delegate selection will go on smoothly.

7. Membership Report (written) – Sally Taylor

Our membership went up by seven this month, including a third young adult.

8. Board Liaison Reports

- Personnel Committee – Chris (see Chris's report)

Adam attended in place of David Mick. There is no chair as yet, but a regular meeting date has been chosen. They did resolve the question of paying out health benefit premiums directly to employees as stated in the personnel manual and determined that retroactive payments will be made to two staff members who had been given incorrect information on the policy. These amounts involved are significant. Chris will develop some plans for how to pay this out over time. (The amount has been in the budget but had not been taken by staff previously. It has been used as a cushion for balancing the budget.)

- Nominating Committee – Karen

They have been tabling in the Social Hall; people have been stopping by to discuss volunteer opportunities that are available. They will hold a drawing for a copy of Serving With Grace for those who visit the table. Sally Taylor will join the next meeting to help with the governance transition plan.

- 75th anniversary - Karen

The kickoff event will be in one week. Playtime (4-5PM) followed by dinner at 5PM, then a special service at 6:15PM, including a surprise ending and dessert afterward. We have a logo for the year.

Wik has been mentioning the celebration and inviting other local clergy and UU ministers. He passed around a photocopy of the classified ad placed by Carrie Baker 75 years ago.)

We need volunteers around the dinner, clean up and children's craft. We're also looking for monthly topics for the rest of the anniversary year.

III. Consent Agenda / Electronic Motions

1. Approve January 2018 Board Minutes
2. Accept verbal and written reports as submitted.
3. Approve Leia Durland-Jones' authority as wedding officiant (see letter to County Clerk requesting that Leia be recognized as an officiant of weddings in the Commonwealth of Virginia in Correspondence at end of minutes.)

MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda.

Unanimously approved.

IV. Old Business

1. Discussion with Committee on the Ministry of proposed process for sharing Pulse Survey results - David Shutt (15 min) (Ruth, Cathey, Beth)

David introduced the other members of COM who attended the meeting: Ruth Douglas, Cathey Polly and Beth Jaeger Landis. Katherine Parsons and Pete Armetta complete the committee roster. They presented the following statement:

Upon the advice of the 2015 Pulse Survey team, the Committee on Ministry requests that the board and staff respond to the results of the 2018 survey in the following ways:

Notify the congregation that the results have been received with gratitude for all participants soon after receiving the results. We request that the board and staff include celebrating the areas that receive positive feedback and how these areas will continue to be supported, as well as restating the issues that need to be addressed and that there will be a plan to remedy them as quickly as possible. We feel this information should be published in the board minutes on our TJMC UU website and in an email to the congregation.

As we have seen recent progress in communications between the board and congregants, we support the excellent idea that Adam suggested of conducting open discussions about the survey with any interested groups.

Thank you for helping us in this work that is vital to fulfilling our covenant together.

Their intended timeline includes:

- Preliminary notification via email (and regular mail for those who don't use email) to go out this week in the weekly email and bulletin
- March 2 - more detailed communication on survey. Additional requests for participation are planned during the open period for the survey, including a Facebook campaign.
- The survey will launch March 10th and run through April 17th.
- They hope to share survey results at the May 18th Board meeting.

The survey motto is "let your voice be heard." Taking the survey will require about 15 minutes; there will be opportunities to take the survey in the social hall. They hope to match or surpass the participation level in the last survey. Cathey expressed appreciation of Adam's

willingness to meet with people to discuss all issues.

The board will accept the results and decide how to publish them.

Discussion

- The survey is anonymous. Is there a way to be sure people only take it once? – That is difficult since the survey is anonymous. Survey Monkey can record the IPO address and only accept one survey from a particular computer, however that would prevent family members from taking the survey from the same family computer.
 - Add language that the expectation is that everyone will take the survey and will take it only once.
- How does this differ from the 2015 survey? - It is the same survey. How the results are evaluated at the end will be somewhat different.
- Will you be mentioning some of the results from the last survey in announcing the new survey? - No, we will just mention that it is the same survey and thank those who wrote and ran the last survey.
- How will the analysis differ? - The data will be presented as percentages of answers in each response category (A, B, C, etc.). The comment section will be analyzed into summaries but not interpreted. The “moderate” responses will stand alone rather than being grouped with either the positive or negative category.
- When we look at longitudinal data between 2015 and 2018, will the comparison be un-interpreted? - Yes.
- What was the response rate in 2015? - about 50%
- Is Survey Monkey mobile friendly? - Yes, we think so.
- The survey results will be coming to the board at budget time, which is so busy. - The COM hopes the Board will announce they have received the results, and say when they expect to get a detailed plan out to the congregation.

This will be on next month’s agenda. Thanks for coming. Please join us for snacks.

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

2. Approve senior staff priorities - Adam (25 min)

(Note: the priorities document is included after reports following the minutes.)

This document represents priorities for our senior staff in guiding the church but was not devised as a checklist. The categories are not limited to the specifics under each category. One difference from previous years is that some priorities have been grouped as shared priorities, reflecting the shared staffing model in use.

Discussion:

- Hopefully we can continue this format into the future so the board and staff have more certainty about the process.
- How do the staff feel about these priorities? Do they reflect what you want? - Pretty much.
- Will these priorities be made public? - They will go in the minutes and be posted on the bulletin board.
- It’s important that these be publicized as joint priorities between the board and staff.

- Hopefully using higher level categories will make evaluations more efficient.
- This framework seems more clear than what we've used in previous years.

MOTION: Approve these staff priorities.

Unanimously approved.

Next month we will review how these priorities are going. Staff will do a self-review in March in time for a review by the presidents and then be included in the board packet for the March meeting.

3. Approve Finance Committee modeling budget scenarios at 5% and 10% more revenue - Jeanine (5 min)

The first pass at making a budget based on flat pledge income resulted in an unacceptably high deficit. Even without staff raises, the budget deficit will be larger than last year. Finance will create additional scenarios with 5 and 10% increases in pledges.

We have to do a pledge drive this year. The pledge numbers have been robust lately, but we need additional money. We haven't asked people to increase their pledges for two years. We should discuss this at the next board meeting.

Discussion:

- Is anyone opposed to Finance Committee creating these sensitivity models? - No, it will be helpful to see them.
- How will we retool stewardship visits to replace the traditional pledge drive now that a staff person is involved in stewardship? Rather than appointing a new committee each year, there may be value in having predictable volunteer leadership from various areas of the church, such as Finance, Committee on the Ministry, Board, Pastoral Care, Communications.
- Finance has talked about doing some listening sessions with the congregation on budget priorities.
 - The conversation should be guided as there isn't much wiggle room in the budget.
 - An open session can easily fall into discussion of line items, so the priorities need to be discussed in terms of a program budget. If you receive ideas that are not actionable, it may seem like you haven't listened. We can try to apply suggestions to budget preparation even if the specifics cannot be achieved.
 - Another benefit of a guided conversation is that people can move forward rather than spinning the same anxieties from last year.
 - We may need to reintroduce the program budget concept.
- A more meaningful visual presentation of the proposed program budget would make it more useful to the congregation.

V. New Business

1. Create Connie Cheetham Award task force - Ann (10 min)

The Connie Cheetham Award honors extraordinary service to the church by an individual or couple. A recipient must have been a member for a minimum of seven years. Connie Cheetham was the first recipient.

The board generally appoints a small group to advertise for nominations, review nominations and recommend a recipient/s for board approval (or recommend that no award be given), arrange a date with worship leaders for the announcement of the recipient, have a Jefferson cup and name plaque engraved. This year we have three people willing to serve: Ann Salamini, Sally Taylor and Ruth Douglas. Sally and Ruth are both past honorees.

MOTION: Approve Ann Salamini, Sally Taylor and Ruth Douglas to undertake the Connie Cheetham Award selection process.

Unanimously approved.

2. Role of officer and senior staff reports at board meetings - Adam (5 min)

The Board has started officially accepting the verbal and written reports as part of the consent agenda. Report writers use their discretion on content. The Board may want to react to something in a report, but does not approve the content. Discussion of reports does go into the minutes.

Writers should use their reports to explain things, but not to insert items on the agenda. If you want to introduce a topic that is appropriate for Board discussion, please notify Executive Committee in time to include it in the building of the agenda.

VI. Closing Activities (5 minutes)

1. Process Review (all):

2. Things to do / communicate –

March board meeting - 3rd quarter assessment of staff priorities.

March - response to COM survey.

March - pledge drive

Build a timeline for budget preparation - we usually have an extra meeting.

FinCom scenarios may go on March meeting.

Adam - message to congregation about IMPACT news

3. Closing words – Ian

Dates to remember –

April 21, 2018 - Spring Auction and Plant Sale

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

REPORTS

President's Report

President's Report to Board February 15, 2018

Dear TJMC Board of Trustees,

It feels like the time since that last Board meeting has flown by particularly fast. I don't have a lot to report.

We have continued our work on priorities with our senior staff, and I hope we will be able to approve them at the February meeting.

On Sunday, February 25th after the 11:15 service, the Board is hosting another talk-back session with the congregation in Lower Hall room #2. These open feedback sessions have been interesting, thoughtful, and enjoyable, so please try to attend, especially if you have not attended one yet.

Arrangements are proceeding for TJMC's 75th anniversary celebration. Plan on being at church on Wednesday, February 28 for a very special evening of events!

I attended the Personnel Committee's January meeting. They took up the issue of a disconnect between the policy manual and what several staff were told at time of hire regarding payout of their health insurance benefit when the employee does not get their insurance through the church. The Committee found that the policy manual's position that these payouts are permitted should be the prevailing judgment, and that we should make retroactive payments to those staff who were given conflicting information. Our DAF will bring a proposal to an upcoming Board meeting letting us know the full dollar implication, and her recommendation for making these payments.

The conversation with the UUA Southern Region regarding how a congregational life staff member might work with our congregation as recommended by the Next Steps report has been proceeding slowly. Everyone has been busy, and they are still collecting information that they need to make a recommendation. Rest assured that I am working on moving this forward, and as soon as I have a proposal to review with the Board, I will bring it to you.

I have switched the weekly meetings that I have with the senior staff, president-elect, and past president from weekly to bi-weekly. Both Colleen and I have felt that weekly meetings seem unnecessarily frequent, and we are discussing using the open slots for the presidents--past, current, and president-elect--to meet among ourselves from time to time.

Finally, I would appreciate you all reviewing the Board of Trustees priorities roadmap that we developed at the beginning of the church year. We are working through a number of those items; however, I would like to see if there are particular areas you would like to see move faster, and what ideas you may have for doing so.

Faithfully,
Adam

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report for February 2018 Board Meeting

Jeanine Braithwaite

January actuals were discussed at the Finance Committee meeting on February 12, 2018. Detailed line-by-line budget information is available in the red binder in the Church office and is shared at the January 2018 Board meeting as well as with the Finance Committee during its meeting preceding the Board meeting.

Our strong year-end performance for 2017 continued through January 2018. Revenues were at 90% of budgeted amounts. Current year pledges came in at \$223 K or 97% of the budgeted amounts, so the lag in pledge payments I wrote about with such concern previously has not re-appeared in January, hooray. We will continue to monitor pledge payments closely. Other revenue items performed well, including unpledged donations (\$14 K), offering plate (\$11 K), and building user fees (\$8.5 K).

Led by staff efforts, stringent expenditure control continued through end-January, so that total expenditures were held to \$314 K against a budgeted \$ 328 K. Our actual end-January deficit was therefore \$ 22.8 K, or just about 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.

Following on from our directions from the Board, the Finance Committee made a preliminary budget forecast for church year 2018-2019, using the assumption of flat (unchanged) pledge revenues and essentially unchanged expenditures. Finance Committee members are concerned about the potential size of the deficit, given this first cut which is based on a flat projection for pledge income. Finance Committee members are ready to produce additional budget scenarios based on other assumptions about pledge income.

The Finance Committee also approved the request that the offering during the special service on February 28th for the 75th anniversary kickoff and additionally the offering during the regular service on March 4th would be used to support Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU). The UUA Board of Trustees has called on member congregations to support BLUU.

Minister's Report

Lead Minister's Report to the Board – February 2018

There are several things I would like to lift up for attention this month:

My January Board Report

Lest anyone ever think that the minutes of our Board meetings – including the various reports – are not read by members of the congregation, the response(s) to my report last month should put those thoughts to rest. I think it fair to say that while I did not receive any feedback directly – about which I have to say that I'm disappointed – the Board and the Committee on the Ministry received more of a response than that to all of my previous reports over the past 20+ years combined!

The form these responses took ranged from what seems to me to have been extraordinarily out of covenant to a truly powerful example of what being in covenant looks like. On the one extreme, an anonymous email was sent to an unknown number of congregants from an email

address that appears to have been opened for the express purpose of drawing attention to my report and which was apparently closed immediately afterward. As I said to Stan Walker, the author of what I believe was the first letter to the Board, I think that it's perfectly appropriate to write to the Committee on the Ministry and the Board to share one's discomfort, discontent, dissatisfaction, or distress at something they see happening. People should do this! It is essential that the congregation's leadership – both paid and volunteer – know how people are feeling.

I think that it's particularly important that leadership hears from people who have different (even seemingly “unpopular”) points of view! As we often say, “We need not think alike to love alike.” I know that I always want to hear from people who disagree with me. I don't assume that I'm always right, so I count on people telling me when they think I'm wrong. How else am I going to learn?

The anonymous email, however, does not seem to have been sent in an effort to increase and clarify communication and strengthen our relationships with one another as a covenanted community. It was not directed toward the leadership, in general, nor to me, in particular, as the person who'd written the report they found concerning. The email didn't even attempt to express what the sender's concerns are! In other words, that email simply implied a problem, while providing no context or, for that matter, anything that could lead to greater understanding.

On the other end of the spectrum, I reached out to Stan and asked if the two of us could meet. He agreed, and we talked for a little over two hours. I think he would agree that during that time we found more things on which we agreed than over which we disagreed, and even where we remained in disagreement at the end of our conversation I think I can say that we each left with a greater understanding of the other. Beyond this, Stan had taken the time to look into Friedman's theories so as to try to understand what I might have been intending to communicate rather than simply assuming that it was what it looked like. (I can't say how impressed I am by that!) He said to me that he really couldn't believe that I'd actually meant to say what it seemed to him that I'd said, so he wanted to try to better understand it. At the same time, he felt it important to let congregational leaders know the impact my words had had on him (and, he knew, others) regardless of my intent. And, as I've said, I wholeheartedly agree.

Stan's response to all of this seems to me to be such a wonderful example of what our covenant is intended to do – his email and subsequent face-to-face conversation with me were done in a spirit of rebuilding connection and restoring relationship – “lovingly calling ourselves back into covenant when we have fallen short,” in other words. I cannot say how deeply I appreciate both that he cared enough to tell congregational leaders how he felt, and that he was in covenant enough to engage directly with the person he was having a problem with.

Through my conversation with Stan I've come to realize that I had, actually, forgotten that there is an “audience” for our Board minutes (and, so, my reports) beyond the Board itself. I had written my summary introduction to Friedman's theories about systems thinking and self-differentiated leadership as part of our commitment to educating ourselves further, as a Board, about church-size dynamics, leadership models, etc. I wrote what I did, in the way I did, because I knew that report to be part of an ongoing conversation, and within that context I thought it would be pretty obvious that I was using the language of Friedman's theories, in the “technical” way he uses it. (And since I saw the report as a part of our ongoing conversation about these things, I also assumed that at our next meeting you'd have asked any questions

you might have had, so that my intended meaning could be clarified.)

What I had not been thinking about — and I take full responsibility for this — is that there would be people reading that report who did not share that context with us. Instead, for them, the context was quite possibly something more like feeling that they've been dismissed and disregarded, aren't sure that they entirely trust the way the Board works, and certainly aren't settled on whether the direction we're heading is the direction we should be heading. Within that context, it would be hard not to read those words with their more common meanings, and to see this report as one more instance of leadership — and, perhaps particularly my leadership — cavalierly dismissing people who disagree with me, and doing so in almost as rude a way as possible. The fact that that is not at all what I'd intended to communicate does not in any way absolve me of responsibility for the equally important fact that the impact my report had on a portion of our congregation was to deepen feelings of being disrespected, and expand the experience of division between these congregants and congregational leadership (me, in particular).

Stan and I agreed with each other that an apology consisting of the phrase, "I'm sorry if you were offended ..." is really no apology at all. And I assured him that I am sorry not only that people were offended, but that I'd written my report without the needed context to mitigate misunderstandings and lessen the likelihood that it could be read as an insult. That is a mistake I hope not to make in the future.

Sabbatical Planning

Another subject I need to raise this month is that of sabbatical planning. Our policy is that the Lead Minister accrues one month of sabbatical time for every year of service, and that this sabbatical should be taken no earlier than in the fourth year, and no later than in the seventh. This is the seventh year of our mutual ministry and, so, at the beginning of the year I was talking about taking the first half (three months) of my sabbatical this year. For a number of reasons I decided that this would not be a good time — for one thing, I want to be here to do what I can to help move forward the vision the congregation voted to invest in when they approved this year's budget, and I also want to be here as we launch our year of celebrating our 75th anniversary! I reported this decision at last month's meeting, and said that I would bring a proposal to this one. Since Leia is also due a sabbatical at this time, after all her years of service, the plan I'm presenting includes ideas for hers, as well.

I am proposing that I take a six-month sabbatical, from January through June of 2019. Within the next couple of months I'll ask the Board's help in creating a Sabbatical Committee that will be charged with doing several things: coordinating communication about the sabbatical with the congregation (beginning this Spring and increasing in the Fall); preparing for an appropriate send-off; holding and navigating some of the duties I would normally perform; and preparing for an appropriate re-entry. I also believe it would be in the best interest of the congregation to hire a part-time worship coordinator, to oversee and coordinate the work that goes into our Sunday morning sanctuary worship. (There is money already set aside for such a purpose.) Around this same time next year, Leia would begin preparations for her sabbatical, which would take place from January through June 2020. This means that she would create her own Sabbatical Committee to perform essentially the same functions, modified as needed for her position.

I do not believe that either of us have at this time any clear notions of how we will use our sabbatical, beyond the understood generalities of rest and rejuvenation.

Official Recognition of Leia's Ministry

I could write about theology, ecclesiology, philosophy, and legality, the long and short of it is that tonight we are being given the opportunity to affirm Leia's place in our community as one of its ministers. It was said to me over and over when I first came that people felt during those interim years that Leia really was most definitely one of the congregation's ministers, not only for RE families, but for many other folks as well. That's not surprising – Leia is, was, and always will be a minister, a perfect example of the truth that not all ministers are ordained.

Over the years Leia has been asked to officiate at Rites of Passage — memorial services, weddings, etc. — particularly for people with a deep connection to the congregation's religious education programming. Lynn Heath, for instance, recently asked Leia to officiate at the memorial service for her daughter for that reason. And what's prompted this request of the Board is that she's been asked to officiate at the wedding of Abby Diamond and Eugene Peckham. Abby is the daughter of Anne and Bob Diamond, and she grew up in our RE program, so this makes Leia the perfect person to celebrate their union.

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, as in most places, it is not a legal requirement that the person officiating at a wedding be ordained. Rather, the person must be someone who is recognized within their faith tradition as having the religious authority to do so. It is extremely common in Canadian Unitarian congregations to have lay "chaplains" who, while not ordained, are affirmed as having that authority. This is a growing practice in the U.S., now, as well. (When Chris Rivera was working at our congregation in Waynesboro, she had the congregation's endorsement.)

You are being asked to affirm the letter that's in the Consent Agenda as one more level of affirmation for Leia as someone whose ministry to (and in) this congregation is such that she should have the authority to officiate at Rites of Passage, including weddings.

As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Pax tecum,

RevWik

Director of Faith Development Report

Director of Administration and Finance Report Director of Administration and Finance – Christina Rivera Board Report, February 21 2018 mtg

January 2018

- Number of emails received: 2554
- Prepped facilities for inclement weather days
- Completed and issued vendor 1099's and employee W-2's

- Prep and attended following meetings:
 - Exec. Mtg
 - Board Meeting
 - Presidents Mtgs
 - Finance Committee Mtg
 - Personnel Committee Mtg

FY 18 Financial Report Notes:

January 2018

Year to Date Month-End Report*

	Budget	Actual	Difference
Revenue	\$323K	\$290K	(\$33K)
Expenses	\$328K	\$313K	\$15K
Revenue/(Deficit)	(\$5K)	(\$23K)	(\$18K)

- Continued to hold operating deficit to \$23K
- 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 we continue to see strong November-January 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.
 - Professional Development expenses are overstated due to the January 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 had previously committed to having that completed for the January financials however I was sick for 2 days and covering for other staff absences in late Jan/early Feb which prevented me from completing it before the Board meeting. I will have it completed by end of February. I reported this to the Finance committee and they affirmed both my self-care and the revised timeline.

Admin/Finance Notes:

- We identified last month our weak link in Admin coverage when Wendy Steeves, our Office Assistant, is out of the office for sick or vacation leave. We have had a volunteer, Amy Epp, say "yes" to our call for stewardship and help cover the office during these absences. Wendy is overseeing the training of Amy and we very much appreciate Amy's service!
- You may have noticed new trash cans and ice melt containers around the grounds. This is part of ongoing efforts to see aesthetic maintenance as part of our TJMC-UU stewardship.

- We received our city assessment notice and we will see an increase in our stormwater bill in 2018 due to an increase in assessed value of our properties. The assessment included an error which is being corrected and a new notice will be received this month. The increase is not expected to be large.

Stewardship Coordination / Admin assistance:

- I have selected Steven Radilla, a first year UVa student, to be our contract Admin Assistant. He will begin 2/15.
- Have continued prepping reports needed for initial stewardship contacts and Planning

Personnel Notes:

- Personnel Committee met on 1/24. Adam Slate filled in as Board liaison as David Mick was out of town. The Committee has not yet named a chair. They did made tremendous progress on their charge for this year. They identified/completed the following tasks:

- Review Personnel Policy Manual
- Align staff letters of agreement into similar content and format
- Decided on regular meeting date (fourth Wednesdays)
- Voted to affirm the existing Personnel Policy Manual policy of paying out the medical premium benefit of staff compensation upon presentation of coverage through another provider. Please see next item for more detail.

- Health Care Benefits paid to provider or employee:
 - The current policy as specified in the Personnel Policy Manual is “Health Care Benefits...The employer share shall be paid either to the provider or to the employee on proof of coverage”.

- However, in 2015, upon hiring the DAF letter of agreement specified that this would not be offered. When questioned about this being in direct conflict with the Personnel Policy Manual that was provided upon hiring, the hiring committee indicated that this was new policy.

- In 2017 a staff member (not DAF) asked to for this benefit to be paid out according to the Personnel Policy Manual. This staff member was advised by the DAF as to the “new” policy. This staff member challenged this reinterpretation of written policy which does not appear in the Personnel Policy Manual and asked the Personnel Committee to review.

- The Personnel Committee can find no record of this policy change (previous chairs have been asked and records searched.) They therefore directed that this staff member be allowed to receive their benefit retroactive to the date of request and that similarly the DAF be compensated retroactively to date of employment.

- The Personnel Committee voted to affirm the written policy as it appears in the Personnel Policy Manual.

- Based upon the above decisions by the Personnel Committee, I will be working up a payment schedule for the retroactive payments and present this proposal to the Board at the March Board meeting. No action is required by the Board at this time (Feb meeting.)

Denominational service:

- Attended UUA Board of Trustees meeting January 18-21, at historic 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 4th 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”.
- March 14-17, I will be attending “Finding our Way Home”, a conference for UU Religious Professionals of Color. This conference is sponsored and subsidized by the UUA via the congregational Annual Program Fund.

Membership Report

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of December 31, 2017:410

Add:

Jensen, Dinny, joined Dec. 31, 2017

Slate, Rian, rejoined January 13, 2018, (joined 6/1/13)

Fetter, Chuck, January 21, 2018

Fetter, Robin, January 21, 2018

Epp, Amy, January 28, 2018

Epp, J. Terry, January 28, 2018

Record, Margaret, January 28, 2018

Drop:

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of January 31, 2017: 417 members

CORRESPONDENCE

To The Board, Senior Staff, and Committee on Ministry of TJMC-UU,
I read the Minister's Report from the January meeting, and I feel that I must respond. I stress I am not writing as the Finance chair, or even a Finance member (although that is tangentially relevant, as you will see below), but simply as a member of TJMC.

I see a number of inaccuracies in Erik's characterizations of those who disagree with him and the Board. In fact, I would argue that the word "anxiety" is not the most appropriate, and that the phrase "anxiety in the system" could better be restated as either "growing dissatisfaction with the leadership" or even just plain "anger".

To give him credit, he begins well, listing almost all of the areas that I am aware of that congregants have issues with. However, he then proceeds to blithely brush these issues aside as the "anxiety" of people faced with change. In the process of quoting Friedman he specifically highlights a phrase implying that those who disagree with the current direction of the Church are "extremists". He then refers to the legitimate efforts at opposition prior to the budget vote as "sabotaging". Being one of those who was instrumental in the process he is now calling "sabotaging", I am personally insulted by those characterizations.

In fact, my own opposition was not motivated by a desire for the status quo. (If it were, I wouldn't currently be on Finance, or even writing this letter.) Instead, it began with anger at the (in my opinion) improper process involved in creating the budget, followed very quickly by disbelief that the Board would actually propose such a deficit.

As you all know, after the vote I decided to do what I could to at least get the process back on track, and possibly be of some help achieving the stated goals the Board has for this budget. After having complained two years in a row, I felt obligated to get back onto Finance. Others, though, made the legitimate decision not to support the Church in what they saw as a mistake, and "voted with their feet (or pocketbooks)". None of us are "anxious" or "extremists" or saboteurs.

Additionally, his statements betray a lack of knowledge of the recent (last 20 years) financial history of the Church. There has (at least the entire time I've been involved with TJMC) ALWAYS been a very top-heavy pledge demographic, with the older, more settled members pledging (and actually giving) a disproportionate share of the total. Unfortunately, it is exactly this demographic that is also disproportionately represented among those he implies are extremists.

These are also the people that are coming to me with their complaints. They strongly feel that there were other ways besides the deficit budget to invigorate the Church. Many of them are telling me that they simply will not stand for another deficit like this one. I consistently tell them that we need to have another deficit budget. That, given that this budget was approved, we need to let the Board's vision have a fair chance. However, there's only so much I can do. Some of them feel very strongly about this. You should keep this in mind going forward.

Another of the issues mentioned and thereafter ignored was 'the "transparency" of our Board'. First, as many of you know, I have used this word in this context many times over the last seven months. Having it in scare quotes is both unnecessary and belittling of my reasoning. The Board has lost the trust of a number of members. The way to regain that is to be open. Both about what the Board is doing, and to suggestions and input. In fact, my having the draft January minutes to post is a clear sign that they have heard that input and are making steps in that direction. Having to wait a minimum of one month, and most often more (sometimes up to four months) only feeds distrust. Again, not "anxiety", constructive advice.

This is not an easy thing you are trying to do, and it is still far from certain to succeed. For the Lead Minister to characterize those in his Church who have a different point of view than his as "anxious", "extremists", "sabotaging", and lacking in vision should be totally unacceptable. It only serves to drive a further wedge into the divisions in the Church. Rather than arguing for a "self-differentiating leadership" he should be advocating for more reconciliation. Rather than insulting the "opposition" he should be reaching out and listening. These kinds of statements will only serve to exacerbate the current difficulties, and potentially drive more people away from the Church. He should keep in mind that, for many people and households, mine included, Church membership is an ongoing choice, not a settled fact.

Far from being emboldened by the vote in favor of the budget, he and the Board should be humbled by the unprecedented size of the "No" vote.

Since rejoining Finance, I have been doing my best to tighten up procedures, and support the

approved budget. I have been making a point of telling people that I already see positive results in some areas, such as those outlined in the Treasurer's Report. I have tried to be helpful, act as a bridge between the factions, and serve as an example. I hope to be able to continue doing so. I have most certainly never tried to sabotage anything.

At an absolute minimum, those of us who have chosen to remain in the Church during this divisive period deserve a public apology for the sentiments expressed in the Minister's Report. I would also hope that Reverend Wikstrom takes this criticism to heart and re-evaluates whether this is the style of leadership for which he truly wishes to advocate.

In Covenant,

Stan Walker

Thanks so much for posting the draft minutes. Very well done and informative.

I was feeling more positive with the openness and positive steps that are being taken by the board to move forward.

Then I got to Erik's report to the board. I feel like it set the tone of Us versus Them and did not like the paragraph that stated the budget was sabotaged. Being a long term member and experienced in church finances, I was trying to communicate my concerns the direction the board was headed. As well as the process for budget creation. I could not morally or ethically support the budget. Unfortunately, Erik's letter has set the church back in the board's efforts in trying to move the church forward. I feel it has further divided us. I hope the board can take steps to provide a response to Erik's letter to the congregation.

I continue to not attend church and have no plans to return at this point.

Best wishes,
Stephanie (Lowenhaupt)

Received by email, 2/6/18

To: Board members

Re: January 31, 2018 Membership report

It has come to my attention that not all Board Members know what to tell newcomers if they express an interest in becoming a member. We do not have requirements (other than age) for signing the Membership book. However there are a limited number of people who are able to witness the signing: Membership Committee Co-Chairs (Sally Taylor and Jean Newland) and Assistant Chairs (Achsa Carrier and Kelly Dryden), Lead Minister (Erik), Assistant Minister (Alex), DFD (Leia). Every Sunday there is someone at the Connections Table in the Social Hall after each service who has access to the key to unlock the box where the membership book resides and can witness the signing of the book (and make sure that the appropriate paperwork is done and Stewardship issues are addressed). During the week anyone who wishes to join should contact the office, make an appointment with the minister, assistant minister or DFD and sign the book with one of them. We do encourage newcomers to come to a Newcomer

Orientation before they sign the book but it is not required.

Membership Committee

Dear Board:

It was wonderful to meet with the Committee on Ministry as they undertake a new assignment they've been given, to conduct the 2018 TJMC Survey. We (myself, Wendy Repass, Laura Horn and Carol Wise) all appreciated greatly their invitation and thoughtful listening.

I'd like to comment on a few directions for the survey given in the December Minister's report, in hopes of clarifying:

The Survey created is "larger than most people would recommend" to administer yearly. "Most people?" Best practices do not suggest it was onerously lengthy. A set of questions that takes 5-10 minutes to answer (hence a remarkable 50%+ response rate) is not long. And because templates for survey and report, including announcements and a communications timeline have now been created, this shrinks the size of the task.

It should be "no more than 5 and no less than 3 years apart". During turbulent times more often is a good idea, so it was unexpected in 2015 to see it shelved for three years. It was proposed to the team that conducting it annually or biannually was the goal. Waiting three, four or five years would dilute or delay its usefulness for planning, particularly in critical times. Also consider that after 2018 more people who've administered this survey will be available for advice.

The survey should be done "without an overlay of interpretation." The 2015 summaries provided below charts and in the introduction and conclusion were straightforward. A simple change that would not alter facts but perhaps make the summaries easier to absorb could be: always note positive data in the first sentence and any negative after. Too much anxiety over whether "moderate" should be categorized as negative or positive may be a red herring; chart titles make clear what a summary describes. As critical thinkers, congregants will interpret them independently too.

Some congregants learn easily from visual and numerical presentations; others prefer a narrative. Just as budgets are explained verbally to the congregation as well as in spreadsheets, members who learn best from verbal summaries can consider those in the Survey Report, while those who feel at ease with graphs and statistics may evaluate those more easily. The report template offers both and so is accessible for diverse people.

Hope these thoughts are helpful. It is good to know the Board supports the survey and sees it as a tool for responsible leadership. It was important to us all to do our best work to contribute this to our community.

Love, Laura

February 22, 2018
To Whom It may Concern,

We are writing to request that Leia Durland-Jones be recognized as a legal officiant of weddings in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Leia certainly meets the requirement of being in “regular communion” with our religious community. She has served as our Director of Faith Development for more than two decades and, through that service, has unquestionably demonstrated herself to be one of our congregation’s ministers. While she does not hold formal ordination, within the Unitarian Universalist tradition this is not necessary for someone to have the religious authority to act in this capacity. Ours is a congregationally-based tradition, in which each of our local congregations is free to attend to such matters as it sees fit.

This letter is written jointly by our Lead Minister and the President of the Board of Trustees, and has been affirmed by a vote of our entire Board. This is all the documentation our tradition would require us to present in support of this request.

If there are any questions, please feel free to reach out to either Rev. Wikstrom or President Slate and we will do our best to respond.

Yours,
Adam Slate
Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom

FY18 Senior Staff Priorities
Revised Feb 14, 2018

The following are the TJMC senior staff priorities for the 2017-2018 church year, as approved by the Board of Trustees. Priorities are fluid throughout the year, and the roles of senior staff often required them to provide leadership and make decisions outside of these priorities.

Christina Rivera, Director of Administration & Finance

Administrative management

Board Priority: Administration, Trust

- check writing, calendaring, financial reports prep, facilities management, promoting facility rentals, and coordinating regional meetings/events that TJMC is hosting (e.g. VACUUM)
- responding to emails and other requests in an appropriate time frame
- finding ways/creating systems to count participation in worship and other programming and events
- working with Membership Committee on new visitor/new member data collection for PowerChurch
- oversee mass communication with congregation (i.e., weekly or monthly communications) and community, coordinating with Communications Committee as necessary
- oversee maintenance of buildings and grounds, working with volunteers as appropriate.

- delegating administrative tasks to admin staff and volunteers as appropriate

Financial management

Board Priority: Stewardship

Strategic Plan: Expanding & Strengthening our Spiritual Lives

- Closely follow cash flow, expenses and revenue to manage deficit budget, working with Treasurer to keep Board and Finance Committee informed
- Assist the Treasurer with determination of Treasurer job responsibilities and its relation to Finance Committee
- Support ongoing evaluation of staffing plan and fully fund adapted staffing plan according to UUA Fair Compensation Guidelines
- Support creation of following year budget, and development of engaging way(s) to present it to congregation

Stewardship coordination

Board Priority: Stewardship

Strategic Plan: Stewarding Our Resources

- Move congregation from Spring pledge drive to ongoing stewardship model
- Begin defining a planned giving program
- Work with member-led stewardship team to set stewardship priorities

Denominational connection

Board Priority: Strengthening our Connection

- Deepening church's denominational connection by participation in General Assembly, LREDA conference, and other communications/events as appropriate.

Work with other senior staff to accomplish shared goals

Leia Durland-Jones, Director of Faith Development

Faith development

Board Priority: Racial Justice, Trust

Strategic Plan: Expanding and Deepening our Spiritual Lives

- In partnership with the RE Committee, continue to develop, support and lead Children and Youth RE programming that strengthens UU identity, builds racial justice competency and nurtures faith development.
- Support the work and members of the Youth Adult Committee in creating meaningful leadership opportunities and programs for senior high youth (such as cluster and regional youth trainings and fellowship.)
- Ensure AFD opportunities that strengthen UU identity and faith development for adults in our congregation.
- Collaborate with the Racial Justice leaders to offer children, youth and adult faith development programming that engages our congregation in anti-racist, multicultural, anti-oppression work.
- With the RE Committee and other RE volunteers, strengthen the connection between social justice and our children and youth's spiritual lives.
- Communicate regularly with the congregation about Faith Development programming, opportunities and practices, coordinating with other TJMC

communications as appropriate.

Worship

Strategic Plan: Expanding & Deepening our Spiritual Lives

- Co-create impactful worship services that strengthen UU identity and faith development.
- Continue to coordinate and co-lead the congregation's contemplative worship service and promote wider participation in these services both within and beyond our congregation.

Family Ministry

Strategic Plan: Strengthening our Connection

- partnership with the RE Committee, plan specific events at least quarterly to connect families to each other and the larger congregation.

Stewardship

Board Priority: Stewardship

Strategic Plan: Stewarding our Resources

- Improve stewardship levels amongst families with children and youth who are active in our congregation by personal invitation to participate in the pledge drive and other fundraising initiatives

Leadership Development

Strategic Plan: Strengthening our Connection

- Support and empower the RE Committee and other leaders in our faith development programs so that they have increased ownership of the program and share more of the heavy lifting towards its success.

Denomination Connection

Strategic Plan: Strengthening our Connection

- Deepening church's TJMC's denominational connection by participation in General Assembly, LREDA conference, and other communications/events as appropriate
- Bring home information and resources to enhance our congregation's faith development program.

Work with other senior staff to accomplish shared goals

Erik Wikstrom, Lead Minister

Worship

Board Priority: Racial Justice

Strategic Plan: Expanding and Deepening our Spiritual Lives

- Preach regularly on:
 - how our UU faith calls on us to be a prophetic voice in difficult times.
 - meaning of money and role in our lives; generosity; expanded view of stewardship.
 - white supremacy, white privilege, and Unitarian Universalists' role in racial

justice work

- Strengthen the new Worship Design model, and continue to clarify the different yet interrelated roles of the Worship Ministry Staff and the Worship Weavers.
- Look for ways to recognize volunteers in Sunday services on a regular basis throughout the year.
- Effectively manage music director and assistant minister to contribute to high quality worship.

Racial justice

Board Priority: Racial Justice

- Provide guidance and active support to anti-racism steering committee in prioritizing the congregation's efforts to live into the public witness statement.
- Continue to be a public voice for racial justice in the Charlottesville community, and both develop and strengthen relationships in the community.
- Actively assist with racial justice audit of TJMC structures and policies.

Stewardship

Board Priority: Stewardship;

Strategic Plan: Stewarding Our Resources

- Take a lead role in one-on-one stewardship with congregants as recommended by Board, stewardship coordinator, and member-led stewardship team.
- Clarify and strengthen the meaning and expectations of membership.
- Emphasize and guide new members in the importance of generous financial support, and what it means to be generous.
- Work with senior staff, assistant minister, and Board to more clearly articulate the congregation's vision and mission in the world (i.e., how to tell our story).
- Develop greater clarity about how we help newcomers to orient and ground themselves.

Pastoral Care

Strategic Plan: Strengthening our Connections

- Providing spiritual/pastoral support for lay leaders involved in Racial Justice work.
- Reach out pastorally to congregational leaders more regularly, intentionally, and proactively.
- Continue Leadership Circle program, offering spiritual community for lay leaders at least 3x/yr.

Faith Development

Strategic Plan: Expanding & Deepening our Spiritual Lives

- Work with DFD and the Racial Justice Committee to develop programming aimed at helping white congregants understand the meaning of our whiteness, and our role in systems of oppression, including at least one multi-session program each semester.
- Offer at least one AFD program on spiritual practices each semester.

Work with other senior staff to accomplish shared goals

Senior Staff Shared Goals

Support Board

Board Priority: Trust

- Board-led process of working with UUA to evaluate congregational trust, stewardship, and staffing model
- Committee on Ministry's administration of congregational survey.

Look for ways to identify racial justice acting as part of our core theology

Board Priority: Racial Justice

Assist in planning and execution of TJMC's 75th Anniversary celebration

Board Priority: 75th Anniversary

Publicize/market the full spectrum of worship life and other activities at TJMC both within and outside of the congregation

Board Priority: Strengthening Our Connections

In partnership with Board and other members of the congregation, help complete and implement the congregation's Disaster Preparedness plan (BP: Administration).

Board Priority: Administration