

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church - Unitarian Universalist
BOARD OF TRUSTEES JULY MEETING

July 18, 2018

MINUTES

In attendance – Adam Slate – President, Erik Wikstrom – Ex Officio, Jeanine Braithwaite – Treasurer, Cindy Shepard, Ian Sole, Ann Salamini – Secretary, Donna Baker

Absent – Christina Rivera - Ex Officio, Leia Durland-Jones – Ex Officio, Annalee Durland-Jones

Guests – Stan Walker, Kate Soderman, Shannon Redmond

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

Opening words – Cindy

Community Time / Public Comment –

- Stan Walker will participate in the financial part of the meeting.
- Kate Soderman is here to listen and learn.

- Shannon Redmond – I'm concerned about a couple of things that are happening. One is a general lack of understanding among the congregation in general about what's happening, emotionally and mentally, to all of us since the presidential election. Everyone's nervous system is hyper-aroused; we're scared and feeling defensive. So when things like bias are pointed out, we get defensive. Bias is an evolutionary biological trait: the way our brains work. Our brains love patterns; they find and use them to control information. Otherwise we would be frozen all the time. So when bias is pointed out, it's the same as pointing out eye color. It's a fact, not a fault. Getting defensive doesn't serve us. The bias which evolved thousands of years ago to keep us alive also doesn't serve us anymore. This is how I explain to myself how people I love can be behaving the way they are. It's painful for me to say that there are folks right now who are behaving outside of our covenant. When I read some of the letters that had

been sent to Wik, what struck me was the level of aggression and coercion in some of the language. It speaks directly to the mirror that he was holding up to us.

I don't know what the answer is. Education could help. I don't think Wik is a perfect minister, but when I've had problems with him, I've told him. When he's upset me or let me down or made me mad, I've told him. When Christina got the note and Wik gave the sermon, I called and told him that in spite of our issues in the past and in spite of wondering if the search committee, which I was on, had made the right choice, after that sermon I knew we had. I wanted him to know that and I want you to hear me say it. I know this church can survive what's going on now. We have people of a certain socioeconomic class that are using that as leverage, naming themselves as higher donors; they are also people above a certain age bracket and having a certain sexual orientation. If they are driving change in this way, this is not a safe place for everybody. I have heard other congregants who are people of color or in mixed-race families say they are not comfortable inviting their friends to this church. And that is precisely where our work needs to focus. It made me stop and think: do I invite my queer friends here? I don't.

That's where my biases come in. As a queer woman, I accepted that I would face the world with two choices: I could be tolerated or abhorred. Tolerance is the better of the two choices, so I got comfortable with being tolerated. This place was a little better than being tolerated so it was okay with me. But now I have kids and it's not okay anymore. I love this place and I love these people and I know we can be better than we're being.

I don't know the answers, but I know some folks who can do some education on the bias piece. It isn't anyone's fault that they have these biases and prejudices, but they feel put down or blamed when it's shown to them. That's all. I can answer questions if you have them.

Thank you for being here. We would like to talk more about this. We'll be in touch.

Check in -

1. Acceptance of Agenda

Since we have guests at this meeting, let's amend the agenda to discuss the committee nominations last, as part of that will be in executive session.

MOTION: Accept the Agenda as amended.

Unanimously approved.

2. Correspondence (see text at end of minutes) -

- Letter from Virginia James

- Letter from Mark Day
- Letter from Stan Walker
- Letter from Greta Dersheimer

Adam - Greta is looking for someone to serve on the IMPACT board. Since our board is pretty busy right now, I asked her if two people could cover this job. She thought that could work. I suggested she should post this need to the congregation as well. Erik will look into whether he or Alex could be freed up to do this as well.

- Letter from Members for Ministerial Change Steering Committee and letter to congregation.
- Letters from Mark Heisey regarding Albemarle Charlottesville Regional jail policy

II. Reports

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

The board was asked to sign a letter addressed to Albemarle County Board of Supervisors member Diantha McKeel and Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail Superintendent Martin Kumer critical of their policy of notifying ICE prior to the release of undocumented individuals. The request was consonant with our Public Witness Statement in support of Black Lives Matter, so the board voted electronically to approve TJMC's signing the letter. The letter was reported in the Daily Progress. TJMC was the only church signatory, along with the Clergy Collective and many other organizations. Comment – Wik and Ann did some work to tie the request to our public witness stance, which made the board's decision easier.

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

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

I was not able to make a written report, but there were no issues. We're not in a position to close the books for the year-end yet because some information comes in later than end-June. We should have a financial report by the August meeting that will close the books. We did get that information re: August meeting out in the Friday email. Both the Board and Finance Committee had working sessions on the budget.

Question – Is it feasible to have an income statement and balance sheet in the board's hands for board meetings? We want to be as up-to-date as possible. – Christina can do that. The Treasurer doesn't have passwords (nor should she) to the systems to do that.

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

It's really quiet when staff isn't here. I've gotten a lot of work done, including some of the chores that never get done. There have also been many people wanting to talk, and because my schedule has been more open, I've been able to see people quickly.

We're living in interesting times. I'm grateful for all the people who really care about this congregation and want to insure that we find ways to have the conversations we need to be having in a respectful and helpful way.

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

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

7. Membership Report (written) – Sally Taylor

We have 426 members.

Question – As people resign for reasons other than moving or death, does anyone reach out to have a conversation with them? – It's discussed in the Membership Committee but their reasons are not consistently sought out. There is some anecdotal information, but records are not kept.

8. Board Liaison Reports

- Personnel Committee – There was no meeting. Donna volunteered to be the board representative this year.
- Nominating Committee – There is only one member with an ongoing term, plus Adam. They will meet again in mid-July. No report.
- 75th anniversary – No report.

III. Consent Agenda / Electronic Motions

1. Approve June 2018 Board Minutes.
2. Accept verbal and written reports as submitted.

MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda.

Unanimously approved.

IV. Old Business

1. Update / conversation on budget - Jeanine/Adam (20 min)

There was a board working session at which a number of cuts were made:

- A large cut to our UUA dues.
- Not printing an order of service, except for a few large print versions, and projecting the information instead.
- Closing the office an additional day during the week.
- Cutting RE and music supplies.
- Most of the staff cost of living adjustment.

That brought the deficit down to \$19K. Then we heard that pledges had recently gone down an additional \$13.5K, bringing the deficit back up to about \$32K, a number that most board members felt would be unacceptable to the congregation.

Pledge income goes up and down. The Board has been so caught up in other things that stewardship hasn't received the necessary emphasis. There have been some new pledges, so we can raise income that way.

Questions –

- When people don't fulfill their pledge but also don't reduce it, what is the follow-up? – The pledge tracker only sends a pledge statement to individuals. Remember that we've had some years of disarray with no Treasurer and no pledge drive. It's not always clear why pledges are dropped. Sometimes it is dissatisfaction but there are other reasons as well.
- We don't have enough data to answer these questions, which is a great concern. In past pledge drives, each type of pledger was handled differently: new pledges, existing members, dropped pledges.
- We need to develop a balanced budget to present at the congregational meeting.
- It will be awkward having budget conversations with members of staff present. – Personnel and the DAF have talked with Adam about that. You don't go into Executive Session just because it's a difficult discussion. Executive Session is meant for information that needs to be protected. That said, any board member can propose going into executive session, with or without staff present. We need to talk honestly and feel free to say what we need to say.
- Staff compensation is directly related to programs because the vast majority of church programming is delivered by staff. We have to keep that in mind when talking cuts to staff. Using a program budget relates something that seems separate (staff compensation) and divides it out into the way it actually functions in the life of the church.
- The ¼ time stewardship position we created this year was intended to develop the data we say we lack. It was not intended to directly generate increased

pledge income but to provide information for those making stewardship calls. Had this been a normal year, we would likely have seen quite a difference in stewardship. The position wasn't created until January, then the racist note was received in February. It's unfortunate that we took a leap of faith in investing in growth in this church and then weren't actually able to begin the work effectively. It's makes the investment appear worthless. It's important to keep that as part of our memory in looking at the current situation.

- The stewardship position has developed a good deal of pledge history on individuals who should be contacted in stewardship calls.
- Has the drop in pledges been correlated with the signers of the letter advocating for the end of the current minister? Stewardship is supposed to nurture generosity and touch a place that the giver may not know exists for them. If our drop in pledges is primarily from a group that wants to replace the minister, they have already made a decision that supporting the faith is taking a backseat to this issue.
- There are other opportunities around stewardship. The ConnectHers group discussed stewardship. They wanted to know what was needed and how they could help. The board needs to think about how we can get the information out and pull people in. We've been broadsided by the events of the spring and haven't been able to move fast enough to reach out to these people.
- It seems that very few people are actually resigning from the church. When we call people during the pledge drive who have drifted away and ask if they want their names removed, they usually say no, even if they aren't pledging.
- There must be more to allow someone to vote than to have their name in the membership book. – The UUA wants us to do some of the rebuilding work after this conflict is behind us.
- We should highlight that the older people in the church are not irrelevant, even if some of them feel that way. It is categorically untrue. This church is run almost entirely by people 50 and older. Financially that is 100% true. The Board, major committees, those attending Paula Cole Jones's visits are very nearly all in that age group.

Stan Walker shared data he has developed to support his views on church finances:

- The amount of pledges actually collected has gone down over the last couple of years.
- The stewardship call information Christina provided includes people whose high pledge mark was fairly recent. Those people are not likely to raise them back up at this time, so counting on that income is not realistic.

- Looking at pledges as far back as 2004, from then to two years ago, our pledge income was almost completely flat when adjusted for inflation, no matter how many members we had. In his view, the kind of drop we have had in the last couple of years is unprecedented.
- Staff cost last year was 97.3% of our unrestricted income. In 2004 staff costs were 50% of the budget. (Note: Unrestricted income is only a portion of TJMC income. We also have more staff positions now.)
- The idea that the older people are using their pledges as a cudgel can also be seen as the older people feeling pushed out and pushed away. They happen to be the people who also have the money and time. So the financial situation is that the ones who feel most ignored are also the ones who are most needed. They feel their only ways to be heard are to withdraw support or withdraw from the church.
- This is more complicated than just changing the minister. The discontent goes back to the solar panels. Neither side is completely to blame or blameless. The concern now is, who is going to pay for this budget. We don't have the money right now and we don't have the people willing to give it.
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2. Update on congregational issues and UUA Southern Region support - Adam (30 min)

The previous item has run into this topic, so we'll continue. Connie Goodbread, one of the co-leads of the Southern Region of the UUA, has said that covenant isn't about saying to each other "You're out of covenant." It's when something is not right in a dynamic. If the people in the room are primarily from one age group, no one has to say a thing to be out of covenant. It already is. Until we have everyone in the conversation, we really aren't in covenant. It's really hard work and will take a long time. Often the younger people don't feel comfortable speaking up. We have to find a way to get other voices in the room, to have some younger people on the board and elsewhere in leadership.

- There are always two sides. Regarding older people, couldn't we say they are very much in love with TJMC but have a very different point of view on how we're doing things? They may have looked for ways to have those conversations. There's a reason that they showed up to the Paula Cole Jones session. They feel they've been left with no alternative. I believe it was a mistake to deny them access to the whole church email list. The Bylaws and Policies require approval of the Communications Committee, that's all.

- Erik has consistently and explicitly affirmed the right to oppose the way he and the board have been doing things, including whether he should stay as minister. From a certain perspective, the issue isn't whether he stays or goes. It's really about differences of opinion as to what the church should be and what direction it should take, with the minister embodying one of the choices. Part of the discontent is with his performance and style, but also about the direction of the church. Historically this church has been divided in a similar way multiple times. Each time we have kicked it under the rug, choosing peace rather than solving the issue of what kind of church we want to be. Erik wants to keep the conversation alive until we decide that question, whichever way it goes. If he feels he is not the correct leader for the chosen direction, he would not choose to remain as lead minister.
- In all the conversations we need to have, we need to know the difference between being heard and being agreed with. We've been hearing the people who say they feel unheard. We just haven't agreed.
- When we characterize the people who are dissatisfied as the backbone of the church, we are forgetting the tremendous amount of time and energy put into the RE program by young families. We don't always hear from them, but they provide a tremendous service to this church.
- As a young UU, I attended a church that split over issues similar to ours. It was so ugly and out of covenant that I stopped being a UU for three years. Then I attended another UU congregation for a few years. When the initial congregation called a new minister and eventually settled on the course that the younger members had been in favor of, I went back.
- On exit interviews: we need this in the situation we are in now.
- I'm hearing some of the same things now that I did when I was on the board seven or eight years ago. One thing I've noticed - with our interim ministers and when David and Leslie were here – we as a congregation have very unrealistic expectations of our staff. Until we reign in those expectations, we'll have problems. In a church of 400 to think that members can talk with the minister within 24 hours of asking or to expect ministerial leadership at all the social justice events is completely unrealistic. Yet there are some folks holding onto these expectations, which compounds the disappointments because we aren't talking about these things. People have been disappointed and angry with every minister in my experience. We need to be honest about this as a congregation.
- There are some relatively skilled but small functions of staff that could be done by the right volunteers if they could be identified.
- In the President's report you referenced the letter which states that attendance is down by a third. If people are engaged, a very good measure is showing up for

Sunday services. We haven't actually seen any data. – Adam and Erik checked attendance after the presidential election and found that it hadn't gone up, as they anticipated, but they did find it to be relatively flat for the part of the year they looked at.

- Just like someone without money can come to our church without pledging, someone without time can come to our church without volunteering. In the twenty-five years I've been coming to this church, starting as a young member with little money, I have given more money to this church than a wealthy person who decides they don't like it after three years and leaves. So someone who is a small pledger this year isn't necessarily a small pledger overall. I don't care how the conversation turns out, but I want to be sure the next time Paula Cole Jones comes to this church, we have younger people there. Please balance your conversations with older people with someone who is 30.
- I'd like to see the attendance data over the past ten years. We can't conjecture about this.
- When the first pulse survey was done and disappointment with the minister's performance was registered, Erik did an analysis of attendance and found it challenging to interpret the data. You need to agree on one way to do the analysis.
- There was a ZOOM call today with the Southern Region. They had agreed to pay for a third session with Paula. But today we all agreed that we are not ready for this work. We are far from being able to pick up the thread of the covenantal work she started. This is a byproduct of the current turmoil. So we are instead talking about having a congregational conversation with Southern Region staff in attendance on the first weekend in August. Please hold the date.
- We need to schedule a budget discussion in early or mid-August, preferably on a weeknight rather than the weekend.

BREAK AND GRATITUDE CARDS (10 min) - Please think of people the Board should recognize for their recent contributions to our church community.

MOTION: Go into executive session without staff to continue the discussion of budget matters.

Approved with two abstentions.

MOTION: Leave executive session.

Unanimously approved.

Summary – We discussed budget priorities. Adam will write them up for board members to confirm that it accurately captures the discussion. Then they will be shared with senior staff.

V. New Business

1. Aug 11-12 weekend - Adam (15 min)

We need to have a message for the congregation this year, other than “go do what you feel you need to do.” We need to communicate what’s going on at church and establish a contact person and network for who will be participating in various events. Other congregations have been more organized about where and when they would meet.

Also, we should be part of whatever the community is doing, perhaps in addition to doing something at TJMC. Connection to the community is important right now. Adam asked Erik to help put a framework around what we do. This could include wearing our TJMC T-shirts to make our presence visible and unified. We could offer our church as a site or join what some other congregations or community groups are doing.

2. Appointments/reappointments to church committees: - Adam (15 min)

MOTION: Go into executive session.

Unanimously approved.

MOTION: Leave executive session.

Unanimously approved.

Summary – The following appointments or reappointments were made:

Committee on the Ministry – Reappoint Ruth Douglas whose term is expiring.

Personnel Committee – Appoint Bev Ryan with Donna Baker as board representative.

Nominating Committee – Appoint Sally Taylor with Adam Slate as board representative.

Policy Review group – Appoint Sally Taylor and Karen Ransom

VI. Closing Activities (5 minutes)

1. Process Review / (all):

(How are you feeling and / or what would you like to see different?)

2. Things to do / communicate –

- Adam will send a budget discussion summary to board members for confirmation
- Donna is assigned to confirm appointments with Sally Taylor

- Christina will prepare income statements and balance sheets in advance of Board meetings

3. Closing words - Cindy

Dates to remember –

- August 1, 2018 – Exec meeting
- August 4-5, 2018 – congregational conversation with Southern Region
- August 15, 2018 – Board meeting

Upcoming topics -

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

President's Report

Dear Board of Trustees,

Welcome to a new church year, and let me be among the first to thank you for stepping into one of our congregation's key leadership roles for the 2018-2019 church year.

Last month, I was fortunate to be able to attend my second UUA General Assembly. It's always a joy to spend time among several thousand enthusiastic Unitarian Universalists. It was also affirming to see that the denomination is working on the same things that TJMC is: How to frame our racial justice work in a way that will change what white Americans are finally acknowledging is white supremacy culture in our country, organizations, and personal lives; and how to bring the voice of UUs in their 20s, 30s, and 40s into the conversation in a meaningful way in a denomination traditionally run by folks of my generation.

For the first time, the UUA President, Executive Vice President, and Co-Moderators of the Board of Trustees are all under 50 years old. I hope you can appreciate how hard it's been to add those voices to the congregation, and how important it is. And persistence, and continued engagement, through the rough times that have led us here

is just finally beginning to pay off. For the first time in a number of years, UU membership has grown. I hope you have found a way to plug into General Assembly by watching some of the sermons and talks from Kansas City. If you haven't, I urge you to do so. You will get a sense of where Unitarian Universalism is heading, which is essential for anyone taking on the responsibility of being a leader in our faith.

I want to make you aware of several things going on in the congregation right now:

Just as I've sat down to write this, I have received an email copy of a letter from a group in the congregation that is not happy with Rev. Wik's ministry, that I understand has been sent broadly to the congregation. I think the content of the letter will not surprise you based on feedback we've heard from some members. There are a few details that I think may be misunderstandings or mischaracterizations--such as reporting that attendance has declined by a third, and not framing a 2018-19 deficit budget as part of the Board's original plan--but generally it was a balanced letter. It acknowledges some level of secrecy as the group has worked through how to communicate how it feels, and expresses support for the work that we have brought the UUA Southern Region and Paula Cole Jones in to help with.

You won't be surprised that the most concerning thing for me about the letter is that it represents almost exclusively church members my age and older. This is not an issue in and of itself, however it underscores that we still have a lot of work to do before the entire congregation is represented in this conversation. And I continue to hear from members younger than myself--in at least the same numbers and same level of enthusiasm as the group writing the above referenced letter--that they are happy with Rev. Wik and that they are disappointed with the tenor of the conversation they're seeing in places like social media. Remember that as Board members, even though most of us are in fact my age, we represent the entire congregation. The loud voices and the quiet voices, the small pledgers and big pledgers, people of every generation. Our goal as a board isn't for any one group of us to get our way; it's for the entire congregation to find its way.

I was surprised when talking recently to one of the signatories of the above-referenced letter to hear them express concern that the voice of members of my generation and older don't matter. Surprised because--as anyone who attended the recent congregational meeting or the most recent Paula Cole Jones session knows--this conversation thus far has been driven almost entirely by this generation, including at the Board and senior staff level. I want you to be aware that this sentiment may exist for some people. As we insist on broad participation from our membership, I hope we can

do it in a way that doesn't create insecurity that any generational group is going to be disregarded.

I mentioned our work with Paula Cole Jones above. I am in conversation with the Southern Region (S.R.) congregational life staff about the best way to move forward. One by-product of the conversations we're having about the budget and Wik's ministry is a level of conflict with some members of the congregation that--until it's resolved--has the potential to interfere with the repair work we're trying to do. Paula and the S.R. staff continue to discuss TJMC and our needs regularly, and the S.R. has expressed willingness to pay for another session for Paula to come to Charlottesville. However, I am asking them about whether the specific type of work we've started with Paula needs to be put on hold to focus more specifically on the way conflict is being manifest at TJMC right now. We are going to try to arrive at a decision this week. Either way, I'm expecting that we will have them here soon for some sort of work, and we are holding Saturday, Aug. 4 as a potential date.

Moving forward, expect to see more congregational feedback sessions. I don't know how many will be facilitated by folks outside the congregation, and what process/theme they will have, but please attempt to attend as many as you can. And spend as much time as you can getting feedback from the full spectrum of TJMC members. It's a big congregation, and we need to make everyone feel welcome to express their truth about how TJMC fits into their lives.

Faithfully,
Adam

Treasurer's Report - verbal

Minister's Report - verbal

Director of Faith Development Report – on vacation

Director of Administration and Finance Report – on vacation

Membership Report

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of May 30, 2018: 426

Add:

Kenzie Marier, June 17, 2018

John Marier, June 17, 2018

Drop:

Abrams, Janice, resigned to office, moving, June 6, 2018

Abrams, Richard, resigned to office, moving, June 6, 2018

Wendelin, Jerry, resigned to office, June 6, 2018

Heath, Lynn, moving, resigned via email to Tracker, June 30, 2018, archive

Coleman, Mary, died

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of June 30, 2018: 429 members

CORRESPONDENCE -

Attn: TJMCUU

Board of Trustees

July 7, 2018

In 2008 (when I was 88) I became a member of the Charitable Gift Proposal program of the UUA. I understand that, at my death, any funds remaining will be sent to TJMCUU.

I would like to specify that any such amount be used solely for maintenance and repair of our original church building.

Thank you,
Virginia R. James

Dear Jeanine & Ann,

Since volunteering to serve on the Finance Committee at the June 13, 2018 Board meeting I have reconsidered what serving on that committee would mean and realized that I simply cannot give that position the time, energy and commitment it deserves. I already have made a substantial commitment as Democratic Party Vice-Chair the Tonsler Precinct working to flip the Fifth Congressional District. In addition, I also

realized that the primary problems facing the TJCM are not technical financial ones that can be solved by diligently applying accounting best practices (which would be my contribution), but problems of a fractured political culture. Healing these fractures will take a long time and the process seems to have barely begun. As far as I can tell, for example, the topical workgroups set up by Paula Cole Jones at her last meeting with the congregation on June 2 have yet to be activated.

As a newcomer, who only recently was involved in a major corporate turn-around as a Board of Directors member and Vice-Treasurer for our condominium in Chevy Chase -- whose financial difficulties also were precipitated by a dysfunctional political culture -- for the sake of my family I am not ready to subject myself to that emotionally and physically searing experience again. Therefore, I regretfully withdrawn my request and ask you to cancel our interview planned for Thursday, July 12,

However, I also have given some serious thought to how a balanced TJMC budget might be achieved in light of our financial and political situation and have come up with a suggested approach that I would like the BOT to consider. Please find it attached.

I would have preferred to present this withdrawal from consideration as a Finance Committee member and this budget proposal in person at the upcoming BOT monthly meeting on July 18, 2018. Unfortunately, several months ago my wife and I signed up to attend the Southeastern Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute (SUUSI) at Western North Carolina University. So we will be out of town that week. Therefore, I would like the BOT Secretary to enter this email and attached proposal to the minutes of the BOT July 18 meeting as correspondence. Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

Mark T. Day

[A Proposal to Achieve a Balanced Budget That Advances our Mission and Supports our Shared Ministry](#)

Recently the congregation rejected a FY2019 budget proposal that would have continued this Fiscal Year's \$44,000 deficit. Various interested parties have different interpretations of why this budget was rejected and what our priorities should be. The current TJMC leadership that proposed the budget thinks that deficit spending for a beefed up professional staff will result in the increase in income that is required for us to pursue our mission to become a more beloved, anti-racist, multicultural community. Many of them, therefore, also seem to equate the vote against a deficit budget with opposition to the leadership itself and/or our mission.

As a newcomer I have not had a long background of experience with this congregation, but I have attempted to study its history and documents and have listened to a wide variety of opinions. So far, no one with whom I have communicated rejects our core

mission to be a more gathered, multicultural organization. Many do, however, question the current leadership's strategy for achieving that goal.

A key point of contention revolves around what it means to have a "radical shared ministry." It really is not clear to me what that term means in both practice and theory, as I have stated previously in my comment on

<http://thetalkoftjmc.blogspot.com/2018/06/if-we-are-being-our-best-selves.html>.

However, it seems to have led to the creation of a "triune" form of leadership in which the core authority and responsibility for defining and advancing our mission are shared by the DFA, DAF, and Lead Minister and in which the Lead Minister supposedly, to take a trope from the national scene, will "lead from behind."

This concept of a shared ministry, unfortunately I believe, has been laid over the existing traditional bureaucratic church structure of having a Lead Minister, an Assistant Minister and a professional support staff. This creates some major internal contradictions. How is it that we have a "shared ministry" devoted to the promotion of multicultural equality that is nevertheless led by a white male whose compensation is 50% higher than the other two female members of a team and that leaves out the half-time Assistant Minister who is paid even less proportionally?

There are only two ways to eliminate a deficit: increase income or decrease expenses. Given that a primary cause of our financial bind has been the difficulty in increasing income, this approach does not appear to be a viable option. Any special fund raising dedicated to making up the deficit could easily have the effect of diminishing future donations. I am not opposed to this approach, but it is a long shot.

Looking at how our expenses are distributed, it is clear that the only area where substantial cuts can be made is with salaries. Staff compensation represents 69% of our overall budget and represents 93% of our Ministry program budget. Indeed, the deficit itself was created by increased compensation costs resulting for the need to expand staff to make up for the loss of volunteers.

The question then becomes: how can we reduce personnel costs in a fair manner that will not endanger our mission or compromise our model of a "radical shared ministry?" I respectfully suggest that staff compensation, not just authority and responsibilities, be shared equally among our professional leadership. Specifically, I suggest that we first combine the entire sum of money proposed in the rejected FY2019 budget to cover compensation for the four positions mentioned above. This amounts to \$319,360. We can then deduct the projected (\$44,000) deficit from that amount to get \$274,360—thereby achieving a balanced budget. If we then divide this result equally and proportionally (the Assistant Minister is only half-time) we get \$78,674 each for the DAF, DFA and Lead Minister and \$39,337 for the Assistant Minister. I believe that such an approach would preserve the newly built professional capacity to raise funds in the coming years. In addition, it would inspire members of TJMC to be more active

participants in our shared mission by modeling exactly what it means to be part of a shared ministry striving to achieve that mission.

To the Board of TJMC-UU,

For the last year, I've been giving the best advice I can in matters relating to church finances. Some of my advice has been followed, but the most important piece has so far been rejected. I believe the time has come for the Board to come to terms with the reality of our current situation, and abandon the course that they have been on for the last two years.

In the fiscal year ending in June, 2016, we had a pledge income of over \$402,000. For FY 2017, the Board introduced the Program Budget and restricted access to the line-item budget. They also budgeted a \$25,000 deficit. After quite a lot of negative feedback about both of those steps, they did reduce the budgeted deficit to \$11,000. I still wasn't happy, even though it was an improvement, and spoke against the proposed budget that year. At that time there were 7 votes against the budget. That year actually ended within a few hundred dollars of the budgeted deficit, but pledge donations were down \$31,000 from the prior year.

For FY 2018 there were 35 votes against budget. Five times the number that voted against the FY 17 budget. Preliminary pledge totals from Cathey Polly indicate pledge income for FY 18 was down over \$70,000 from 2016.

So, in two years we have collected over \$100,000 LESS in pledges than we would have if the 2016 levels had been maintained. While there were some areas of increased revenue this past year, they are nowhere close to making up that difference.

I acknowledge that there have been other issues that have contributed to this trend, but I maintain that what gave a focus to the dissatisfaction within the congregation was the introduction of the Program Budget in concert with much larger deficits. You've all heard my arguments before, most recently in my statement sent to the Board for the May 16 meeting, so I won't repeat them here. I believe that it's time to recognize that the current path has drastically reduced our income along with sowing a level of discord in the congregation that is unprecedented in my experience.

It is irrelevant what the UUA recommends, or what other churches do. At THIS church, the Program Budget is an abject failure. At THIS church, at THIS time, the deficit is so divisive that it has cost us far more than it was intended to raise.

When I met with Erik back in February, at one point he reminded me that "only" 35 people voted against the FY 18 budget. I pointed out that only 7 had voted against the

FY 17 budget. Then I believe my exact words were "This is not a trend you want to continue." Obviously, it has continued, and the FY 19 proposed budget was rejected.

Whenever I have had any discussion about balancing the budget with a Board member, the response was always that we couldn't do it without cutting staff expenses.

Everything else is already cut to the bone. So, after the initial proposed budget was rejected, the Board decided to ignore that opinion. Instead, you reduced (NOT eliminated) the staff raise, reduced our payment to UUA, made a token gesture of \$1000 to those concerned about the state of the building, and then cut \$13,000 worth of bone. All of this and the deficit was STILL \$19,000. I doubt that would have had any better chance of passing than the earlier budget did.

Given the most recent information from Cathey, the pledge commitment for FY 19 has dropped another \$13,500 in just the last month. That raises the newest budget's deficit to over \$30,000. That information also indicates that the pledges are dropping at an even faster rate than before.

The financial trends over the last couple of years are clear, and we most certainly do NOT want them to continue. As Chairman of the Finance Committee, the best advice I can give is that you balance the budget appropriately, and include a full line-item budget by default along with a Program Budget. This will only be a start. There are too many people with too little trust in the Board right now for those steps to be enough. But without them the situation will only get worse.

The numbers are undeniable. You need to decide now which road to take. Continue as you have been, insisting that "it's the right thing to do" and watch the church crumble around you. Or admit that this experiment has failed, and begin the work of rebuilding what has been lost. The saddest part of all of this for me is that I truly have no idea which choice you will make.

For those of you who think I'm just being too much of a pessimist, I want to leave you with this thought. I honestly believed that the proposed budget was going to pass. I thought it might be close enough to require a recount, but I thought it would pass. I never expected a 2 to 1 "No" vote. The level of disaffection in the church is obviously even worse than I had thought. If anything, I'm being optimistic.

Most Sincerely,

Stan Walker

July 16, 2018

Dear TJMC Ministerial Leaders and Board Members,

The new IMPACT program year will begin on late August with the “Listening Process” to identify grassroots concerns and recruit Network Members. As part of the Social Justice Council’s agreement to give IMPACT a Social Action Collection as a church-wide, congregationally-approved project, I agreed to work again as Team Leader. Many of last year’s Network Members will continue in that role for the coming year.

Last year we proposed to operate TJMC’s IMPACT volunteer group as a “Leadership Lite” project. That ultimately turned out to mean that I took on a wide variety of leadership responsibilities, including: recruiting Network Members; providing monthly updates on IMPACT activities to Network Members; preparing materials for the monthly IMPACT Table in the Social Hall after services; becoming an active member of one of the two IMPACT research groups; attending IMPACT Board meetings as TJMC’s representative; managing the collection of money from interested TJMC members to pay for our IMPACT membership dues; organizing the process for Network Members to select TJMC members to recruit as attendees at the IMPACT Action; making arrangements for the IMPACT Sunday Service in March, including printing extra Action tickets to distribute at the service; maintaining computer records of all TJMC members’ and friends’ commitments to attend the Action (made to individual Network Members and/or as sign-ups on the chart in the Social Hall; and reporting to the congregation on actual attendance by TJMC members and friends and commitments made by local policy makers at the April Action.

Although we did not reach our goal of 100 TJMC members and friends attending the Action, we did make a strong contribution to IMPACT’s work on improving the availability of affordable housing in Charlottesville and Albemarle. The policy leaders in Charlottesville and Albemarle who attended the Action answered “YES” to all IMPACT’s questions, so I consider TJMC’s efforts a success.

However, the work of the past year has taken a toll on me both mentally and physically, and I cannot continue to handle all of the IMPACT leadership responsibilities alone. I am in the process of asking some Network Members to take on a few of the necessary tasks, and I am writing to you to ask if one of the Ministerial Leaders or Board Members would be interested in taking on the task of representing TJMC at the IMPACT Board of Directors meetings in the coming year. There will be six meetings, usually from 8 to 9 p.m., on Thurs. 10/11, Thurs. 12/13, Tues. 2/12, Tues. 4/2, Tues. 6/18, and July 30 or August 1. The Board reviews progress and makes policy decisions for the IMPACT organization. Most of the Board members are ministers of the member congregations, and these meetings can provide an opportunity to connect with other religious leaders of our wider community. Please let me know if someone among you can take on this important role.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,
Greta Dersheimer

Dear Member of the Board:

The attached Letter to the Congregation has been mailed to all congregants and should be received by sometime next week. We're also emailing it to all those we can to ensure that every member has a chance to weigh in or follow up. You can do that too, by replying to this email or contacting any of us. We would be very glad to meet with you or hear from you.

Soon we'll be sending a Questions & Answers document that explains in detail how MMC came to be and how we understand a congregational decision-making process could work.

As we have also communicated to the President, we would be glad to meet with the Board or Board representatives at any time. Please don't hesitate to ask.

We do not have to think alike to love alike.

In gratitude,

Sharon Baiocco
Dan Grogan
Marlene Jones
Stephanie Lowenhaupt
Laura Wallace

MMC Steering Committee

July, 2018

Dear Friends,

We write today with the goal of a thriving TJMCUU filled with love, mutual trust, and spiritual vibrancy. Every congregant deserves a nurturing, empowering, and inspiring environment in which to worship, work for justice, raise our families, find spiritual growth, and spend the arc of our lives.

This letter is not about white supremacist culture. We understand and embrace the urgency of that recognition in our society, and that includes the profound work at TJMCUU. This letter is about our deep concerns about our lead minister. Members for Ministry Change (MMC), was formed to face these concerns honestly and with support. We love this church very much and accept the risks of being mischaracterized.

Transparency does matter, but it has taken us time and private struggles to discern next steps. Our truth is, we believe that after seven years it is time for a sober look at Rev. Wikstrom's ministry, and that his overall performance has been more harmful than beneficial to TJMCUU. This dialogue could evolve into a congregational vote on ending our agreement. It is also possible that Rev. Wikstrom could choose to resign.

Average attendance at Sunday services has declined steadily year over year since Rev. Wikstrom came. Attendance totals are down one-third, from the first half of 2012 to the first half of 2018. Current average attendance is 139, one-third of current members.

Membership is stagnant, a second deficit budget has been proposed, multiple volunteer positions are going unfilled, and 2014-2018 Strategic Plan goals remain out of reach. We believe that Rev. Wikstrom's performance, while positive or popular at times, has been overall unreliable and, at times, even reckless. Some MMC supporters find too many of his sermons lackluster; others no longer attend for this reason. Others have been hurt by broken promises and neglected commitments. Most are concerned about his capacity for good judgement and, especially, his impulse control.

We are trying in good faith to discern how to help and support the Board and congregation most constructively. Many of us participated in Paula Cole Jones' workshops. We hope the Board can follow through with her recommendations to form work groups around many issues, including leadership in governance and ministry. We are working on a process for outreach and will follow up shortly with more detail. We hope you will participate in this important discussion as more information is shared, and we welcome your questions. You can email **mmc.tjmcuu@gmail.com** or contact any MMC Steering Committee member. We are mailing this letter in order to include all congregants, online or off. We will also email it to as many as possible.

We love our church deeply. We believe in this community, which has weathered hard challenges before. We believe our congregation can face difficulties together, whenever they arise. Yet we believe the fulfillment of this vision is not possible with our current lead minister. We wish it were not so; we have come to this conclusion painfully and in good conscience.

In covenant and in faith,

*Sharon Baiocco
Cindy Benton-Groner
Susan Bremer
Jen Caswell
Anne Clark
Thomas Colbert
Pete Deer
Holly Dilatush
Gayle Floyd
Colleen Green
*Dan Grogan
May Guenin
*Marlene Jones
Elizabeth Lowe
*Stephanie Lowenhaupt
Michael Manto
Pat Millman
Kip Newland
Sarah Peaslee
Joan Rudel
Carol Saliba
Glenn Short
Rosalie Simari
Dick Somer
Natalie Somer
Jim Souder
Janice Walker
*Laura Wallace
Carol Wise

*MMC Steering Committee

Forwarded email to Adam and Erik, July 11, 2018:
Dear Adam and Erik,

Please let me know if TJMUU wants to sign the attached letter to the ACRJ board.
Apologies for the short time window.

Peace,
Mark Heisey

Hello,

Please see the attached letter from Diantha McKeel and Martin Kumer regarding the jail board's voluntary ICE notification policy and our planned letter in response.

This letter will be given to all members of the jail board as well as Kumer at Thursday's jail board meeting, as well as released publicly as an open letter.

I apologize for the short time frame, but we are seeking organizational endorsements for the letter.

Please respond "yes" or "no" by Thursday at 11:00 a.m. for whether or not your organization would like to co-sign the letter. If you want to sign, please include your organization's name as you would like it to appear in the signatures.

Also, please share the FB event for Thursday's jail board meeting with your members:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1936606403037039/>

Also, as an FYI, here is the press release that SolidarityCville put out today regarding Thursday's meeting:
<https://solidaritycville.wordpress.com/2018/07/09/solidarity-action-july-12-albemarle-charlottesville-regional-jail-board-meeting/>

Thank you all for your work.

Peace,
Mark Heisey

To Concerned Citizen,

Thank you for bringing forward your concerns regarding the procedure of the Albemarle Charlottesville Regional Jail (ACRJ) staff to notify federal ICE agents in advance of the release of incarcerated individuals whom are undocumented. As you may know, ACRJ is required to notify ICE of undocumented individuals upon entry into the facility but is not required to either notify ICE upon the release of individuals or hold them beyond the time of release, both actions requested by ICE. The practice of ICE notification is not new, having been in place for years. The ACRJ staff is currently polling all jails in Virginia to determine if they follow this practice. To date, over half have responded back affirming they do participate in the voluntary notification procedure. To date, no jail has indicated they do not call. The ACRJ staff will continue polling the remaining jails and report this information to the Authority Board once it is completed.

During 2017, the ACRJ Authority Board voted to decline ICE's request to hold individuals beyond their scheduled release and in January 2018 voted to continue with the ICE notification procedure. Accordingly, ICE must be present at the time of release in order to take custody.

The ACRJ Authority represents the citizens of Charlottesville, Albemarle County and Nelson County, with a blend of elected, appointed and citizen representation on the authority board from these localities. We feel comfortable in stating that the ACRJ Board Authority representatives do not believe that undocumented immigrants pose an inherent danger to this community. The ACRJ Authority Board and ACRJ staff are empathetic to both the residents of our community and to these affected individuals and their families. However, important decisions regarding incarcerated individuals have to be made and the application of policies and procedures must be consistent. We are sure members of the community would agree there are individuals who have committed specific crimes that should not be released back into our community. It would not be reasonable or realistic to form a community consensus on specifically what crimes those would be. (A few examples: domestic violence?, driving under the influence?, possession or distribution of illegal drugs?) Additionally, it would be impossible for the ACRJ staff to develop objective criteria that could be applied consistently to each individual when making the decision to comply with ICE's request for notification of release. Doing so would require the jail staff to pick who is then subject to the ICE notification and who is not, based on a subjective list of convictions.

It is important to note that two of the three jurisdictional Commonwealth's Attorneys rejected the idea that they could make the determination on behalf of their locality. Therefore, the choice really becomes one of notification in every case or no notification at all in order to apply the policy in a fair and evenhanded manner.

An even larger concern is that neither the jail staff nor the Commonwealth's Attorneys have access to enough information or selective criteria regarding each individual's history and background to determine if they pose a risk to the community. Simply put, we do not know what we do not know regarding each individual with an immigration detainer. While the argument can be made that all citizens who are released from this jail go back to this community without applying any criteria, the jail staff is legally required to release these inmates at the conclusion of their sentence. In immigration detainer cases, the individuals have been personally screened by a criminal justice agency and it has been determined that they need to be detained until their case can be administered by a Federal Immigration Court. The ACRJ staff and Authority have a responsibility for the safety of the community upon the release of inmates with immigration detainees.

The ACRJ Authority's decision to continue the current policy, while not unanimous, was made after thoughtful and deliberate discussions, including recommendations from ACRJ staff and Albemarle and Nelson County's Commonwealth Attorneys. It should be acknowledged that, while the Charlottesville Commonwealth's Attorney was unable to attend the meeting, his position that his office would participate in providing selective notification, was conveyed to the Authority. Ultimately, the Authority determined that all three localities needed to operate under the same ACRJ policy based on the current regional configuration of the ACRJ.

Because this matter was considered and acted on in January and no new substantive information directly relevant to this policy has been presented, there has been no compelling reason to place this matter on agenda for another vote. It is certainly within the purview of individual Authority board member to request further consideration at a meeting. It should be noted that the ACRJ Superintendent will be presenting to the Authority at its meeting on Thursday, July 12th specific information regarding the status of undocumented individuals that have been housed as inmates in the ACRJ facility and have been subject to an ICE detainer, triggering the voluntary call to ICE. That information, once finalized and released as part of the ACRJ Authority meeting packet, will be available to the public.

In closing, our obligation to fulfill our role as a criminal justice agency impacts families in our community and we try to minimize those impacts in a responsible and informed manner.

We would be more than happy to sit down and discuss any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Colonel Martin Kumer, Superintendent Albemarle Charlottesville Regional Jail

Diantha McKeel, Chair
Albemarle Charlottesville Regional Jail Board Authority

To:

Diantha McKeel
Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

Martin Kumer
Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail Superintendent

Copied:

Stephen Carter
Albemarle County Executive

David Hill
Sheriff, Nelson County

Cyndra Van Clief
Resident, Albemarle County

Kathy Johnson Harris Resident, Charlottesville

Doug Walker
Albemarle County Executive

Chip Harding
Sheriff, Albemarle County

Mike Murphy

Charlottesville Assistant City Manager

W. Lawson Tufts Resident, Charlottesville

Wes Bellamy
Charlottesville City Councilor

Dear Ms. McKeel and Col. Kumer,

Thank you for the response to the petition, emails, and phone calls that members of the community have made to you regarding the Albemarle County Jail Board (ACRJ) decision to continue voluntary notifications to ICE about the release dates of detained community members. We'd like to respond to your letter to clarify our position and explain why, despite your explanation, we adamantly believe this harmful policy must be terminated immediately.

While we understand that this policy is not new and is widely practiced in Virginia, that in no way makes it justifiable. Just because a practice is pervasive does not mean that it is moral. There are many examples throughout history of evil practices, including ones that are technically legal, becoming commonplace. In fact, the more pervasive an immoral practice is, the more likely it is to be codified into law, and the more urgent it becomes to oppose it. If no other jurisdiction has taken a stance against voluntary ICE notifications, then the ACRJ ought to have the courage to be the first to do so.

Additionally, as representatives of our counties, you are accountable to us, your constituents, and not the jail boards or people of other localities. If we request a change in the policy of our own jail board in our own community, our elected officials have an obligation to prioritize our interests and demands.

By making notifications to ICE, ACRJ is effectively facilitating extrajudicial incarcerations based on citizenship status. If a judge has decided to release someone on bond, or if someone has already served their sentence, that indicates that a judge has decided that the person is no longer a "danger" to the community. By calling ICE to incarcerate someone for civil immigration infractions, ACRJ is subjecting undocumented community members to additional incarceration based solely on their legal status and not on the crime they have been accused of committing.

You have justified your position by claiming that you have no way of determining which undocumented inmates "pose a risk to the community," and that therefore you must

notify ICE in all cases and trust them to make that determination. We agree that notifications should not be determined on a case by case basis. Rather than notify ICE in all cases, we call on you to end ICE notifications altogether. The notion that ICE is competent to determine who puts our community at risk is absurd. ICE is an organization that incarcerates and deports infants and toddlers without regard for their well-being or safety. Numerous incidents of children being abused and neglected while in ICE custody have surfaced in the last few weeks alone. Furthermore, there is a long-standing notion in our justice system that it is better that 10 guilty people go free than for one person to be wrongly convicted. We implore you to adopt that line of thinking and abandon the argument that trusting ICE to keep “dangerous” people out of our community while tearing families apart and subjecting people to inhumane detention and deportation is just or in any way keeps us safe.

You’ve repeatedly claimed that “we do not know what we do not know regarding each individual with an immigration detainer.” Subjecting all undocumented inmates at the ACRJ to ICE’s cruelty on the pure speculation that they may present a danger that only ICE is aware of is reprehensible. Furthermore, while you may not know everything about undocumented inmates at the ACRJ, we do know a lot about ICE. We know they’ve killed migrants along the border. We know they imprison people in the most inhumane for-profit prisons in the country. We know they separate families and lose children. We know people have died in their custody. We know they are constructing internment camps on US military bases. We know they sexually assault people in their custody. And, with more troubling information coming out almost daily in the mainstream media about ICE, we know that we don’t know what we don’t know about the full extent of ICE’s human rights violations in this country. And we don’t know what we don’t know about the specific human rights violations suffered by individuals who are picked up by ICE upon being released from the ACRJ.

Even if your position is that voluntarily collaborating to place undocumented ACRJ inmates in ICE custody does not violate those inmates’ human rights, it is undeniable that ICE is an organization that systematically violates human rights. ICE must face consequences for their human rights violations, and we call for an end to ICE notifications at the ACRJ as one of those consequences. By doing so, the ACRJ can send a message to the rest of Virginia and the country that ICE’s human rights violations will have repercussions in jail boards’ willingness to collaborate with them.

We demand once more, for the sake of the most vulnerable members of our communities, and for the strength of our communities as a whole, end ICE notifications now.

Sincerely,
[ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSEMENTS]