

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church - Unitarian Universalist  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES DECEMBER MEETING  
December 18, 2019**

**5:30-6:30PM Holiday Open House  
Volunteer Recognition  
Meet Sean Skally**

**6:45-9:30PM Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**Major focus for board in 2019-20:**

- **Money & Stewardship**
- **Staff Support** (safety, morale, compensation, trusting staff leadership, managing expectations, what are we asking remaining staff to do?)
- **Articulate church's vision**
- **Communication**
  - Increase communication between committees, board and congregation
  - Broad communication tools and strategy

**In attendance** - Lorie Craddock - President, Ann Salamini - Secretary. Sean Skally - Ex Officio, Leia Durland-Jones - Ex Officio, Stan Walker - Treasurer, Pam McIntire, Breck Gastinger, Liberty Powers, Elizabeth Breeden – Vice President, Alex McGee - Ex Officio, Kelsey Cowger, Beth Jaeger-Landis

**Absent** -

**Guests** - Al Reynolds, Bev Ryan, Mary Beth Wiley, Jim Souder, Jude Bias

**I. Opening - Opening/Closing Words (Pam), Snacks (Elizabeth), Timekeeper (Breck), Process Observer (Kelsey) (40 minutes through Consent Agenda) - (20 min)**

Opening Words - Pam

Community Time / Public Comment - (limit 2 minutes/person verbal, otherwise written)

- None

1. Acceptance of Agenda

**MOTION:** Accept the agenda.

**Unanimously approved.**

2. Correspondence (see text at end of minutes)

- Laura Wallace
- Christine Gresser

## **II. Reports (20 min)** - written reports can be found at the end of the minutes.

1. President's Report (written) - Lorie Craddock

The Racial Justice Committee will partner with the Religion, Race and Democracy Lab to screen **American Heretics** about a UU church and its relationship with a conservative church in the same town. It will show March 23 at Vinegar Hill, 6PM.

2. Vice President's Report (written) - Elizabeth Breeden

2. Treasurer's Report (written) - Stan Walker

3. Lead Minister's Report - position vacant

4. Assistant Minister's Report (written) - Alex McGee

5. Director of Faith Development's Report () - Leia Durland-Jones

This month has been too busy to write a report.

6. Director of Administration and Finance's Report (written) - Sean Skally

- The Appalachian Service Project kids may be able to do some carpentry repairs around the church.
- Kay Frazier has asked for a list of things that need to be done with a monetary calculation so she can solicit volunteers to take them on.
- Sean is looking for another cleaning crew that would include deep cleaning and some light repair. (We are currently paying \$300/week.) He is creating a master list for purposes of taking bids.

6. Membership Report (written) - Sally Taylor

Membership stands at 363.

7. Board Liaison Reports

- Personnel Committee - Elizabeth

(See VP report.)

They will have Alex and Scott's offer letters and the Office Assistant job description for Caroline for the January board meeting.

- Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia (written) - Pam

They have posted a new document answering questions generated by the last congregational conversation. Another conversation is scheduled for January 12. Tabling will occur all Sundays through January. The task force hopes to bring a final report to the January Board meeting.

- Glenn Short Sanctuary Capital Endowment Fund Committee (written) - Sally Taylor

The group hopes to add painting the tin roof below the steeple to the painting contract. A number of doors in the original building will be replaced. After cleaning of windows and replacement of non-original panes, storm windows will be installed.

- Stewardship/Pledge Drive (written) - Lorie/Danny Gray

At a meeting two weeks ago, the theme of “Extraordinary Possibilities” was chosen. The logo will be an acorn and oak tree.

Board members should attend stewardship meetings if possible as we have pledged to help get our financial house in order. The pledge drive will kick off with PJs and Pancakes event. The middle of the drive will have a soup luncheon with hosted tables and facilitated conversations. Child care will be provided. There will be a pot luck meal to celebrate the end of the drive.

Discussion -

- It tends to be leadership people doing the work. Having them in the kitchen while the conversations go on may be a problem. - Please talk to Linda Dukes and Amy Wissekerke about this concern.
- There will be a facilitated conversation following prompts on stewardship to get the table talking about the intention of the event. There will be a training meeting for facilitators (one facilitator per table).

- Volunteer Coordinator - Kay Frazier  
(See VP report.)

- Music Committee - Kelsey

- Kelsy met with Kay Frazier who has a plan for highlighting various committees each month. January is music and art month with increased choir visibility.
- Looking to add new choir members, especially tenors, and expand music committee size.
- Scott's job description is still in the works. He wants to explore the idea of spreading his salary over 12 months instead of 10 as he looks toward retirement from UVA..

- Scott and the committee are seeking clarity on the status of the money in the instrument and Abrahamse music funds. Who is the trustee?

### **III. Consent Agenda / Electronic Motions**

1. Approve November 2019 Board Draft Minutes
2. Accept verbal and written reports as submitted

**MOTION:** Approve the Consent Agenda.

**Unanimously approved.**

### **IV. Old Business**

1. Consultant to work with the board - Leia, Kelsey (15 min)
  - Leia and Kelsey had a phone consultation with Christine Gyovai on December 5, 2019. She is the Principal of Dialogue and Design Associates and an Affiliated Associate at the UVA Institute for Environmental Negotiation. She was a student of Frank Dukes at UVA in 2005 and was recommended by him.
  - Her background is in organizational development and strategic planning, local economic development. She also has expertise in community based collaboration, has worked with one other church and has experience with board coaching.
  - We shared with her a bit about what we have gone through recently as a congregation. She suggested that it might be helpful for her to work with the Board for two meetings – 1 ½ hours each with homework for Board members in between.
  - We talked about the theme of the pledge drive (Extraordinary Possibilities) as a way to envision the most wonderful things that might happen for our faith community and as a way to access our hopes. She talked about the need to engage with the larger congregation and shared ideas of ways to draw the congregation in so that we could develop shared goals.
  - She suggested possibly helping the Board create a three-fold process:
    - 1) Closure and acknowledging our differences;
    - 2) New ideas – maybe generated through the pledge drive;
    - 3) Ideas gathered from the congregation in a facilitated meeting.
  - She suggested thinking in terms of goals for the next 4-6 months and goals for the next 1-3 years as well as a strategic planning process with action plans.
  - She wondered if a “closure” event for the congregation might be helpful, perhaps a ritual, for the congregation to mark the beginning of a fresh start together.
  - Her rates are \$150/hour but she charges \$95/hour for non-profits.
  - Her one caution is that whatever we do, we need to be sure and do it well.
  - She made it clear that her goal was not for us to hire her. If we want to get someone else, she has recommendations.

Discussion –

- When is she available? – In the new year; not weekends or late nights.

- Did you discuss racial issues? – Racial justice work was mentioned in the conversation.
- What would closure mean regarding racial justice issues?
- Would a rate of \$95/hour for two 1 ½ hour sessions come to about \$300? – Please clarify with her.
- What money does the board have to spend? – The board discretionary fund is \$500.
- This seems like a reasonable price. We need professional guidance to set us on the right track. Charlottesville Mediation Center's rates are double hers.
- Please circle back with her to clarify some points and check for possible times.
- The board agrees to ask Beth and Kelsey to help Leia plan this work and set up a doodle poll to set times. Offer \$300-500. We can have the first session in January.
- One idea for a closure ritual is a sand mandala. There are people who can do this for us.

## 2. Ministry update - Lorie (40 min)

After a Zoom meeting with Keith Kron, Transitions Director at UUA, the strong recommendation is that we get an Interim minister rather than Developmental for one year. He heard us say that our previous experiences were not the best. He assured us that the training and selection process are completely different now. There are trained, accredited interims and more agency on the part of the congregation to choose. The Interim would help us define our goals for developmental ministry and get congregational buy-in. The Developmental minister would help us work on those goals.

Discussion –

- The book on interim ministry entitled **in The Interim** by Child and Kron is worthwhile. Interim ministry allows an outside, experienced observer to see things we might not, analyze the systems of church life and help the congregation be comfortable with change.
- The UUA sends candidates but we interact with them and make the choice. Leia, Elizabeth and Pam did an exercise on choosing a minister. This exercise needs to be done with the congregation as a whole during a one year interim ministry.
- It seemed like the interims we have had weren't just neutral but were detrimental. The church is thriving right now; another interim seems like a risk. We have new people who don't know about past staff problems and don't want to be bogged down by it.
- Why the switch in recommendation from developmental to interim minister by the UUA? - A possible reason for the 180 is that we heard developmental was next but the Southern Region meant the interim was implied. Should we ask for an explanation?
- We have a task before us to set our goals. If we get a developmental minister right away, they will be doing interim work at first. When the goals are set correctly, we can choose the right developmental minister for our needs.

- I've come around to accepting the UUA recommendation. We may be putting too much weight on our past experiences, though picking a wrong person is always possible.
- Keith Kron is aware of our past problems and who the interims were. He seems to be working to get us a good experience.
- What will thriving mean during an interim? The interim won't know every elderly member and family and every racial justice group in the congregation. How do we want to use other staff and lay leaders to address some of these "perceived deficiencies?"
- An interim doesn't bond the church to them. You want the church to bond with the longer-term developmental minister.
- As a person who experienced our past interim ministries as a congregant rather than as a leader, I experienced very little sense that the interim was working with congregants. They may have been working with leadership, but it felt like baby sitting to me. We should make it clear that the congregation needs to be engaged this time.
- Remember that the last interim happened after a failed search, necessitating a third year of interim.
- Keith will be coming in January for a sermon (worship) and some kind of workshop or Q&A session.
- The UUA runs the interim ministry program. The Southern District runs developmental ministry.
- The Board has been through an educational process on what an interim is. Now we need to pass that along to the congregation.

**MOTION:** Give the executive committee the power to proceed with the next steps to apply for an interim minister.

**Approved with two negative votes.**

At the next executive meeting we will discuss forming a committee and inform the UUA.

## **V. New Business –**

### **1. UN/US flag placement - Lorie and Ann (10 min)**

The US and UN flags were moved from the foyer to the second floor initially by staff decision because one of the stands was wobbly and there were safety concerns. There were also concerns about them being a reflection of dominant culture which would affect the initial impression of our church by people of color. When questions arose, the flags were moved to Summit House where the PAUN group holds its regular meetings. The thought was that they could be moved to the Social Hall for the larger Blue Ridge United Nations Assn. meetings.

Al Reynolds thanked the board for taking up this issue and made the following presentation:

TJMC has long supported the United Nations due to the UN's importance in promoting peace, liberty and justice for all, as embodied in our Second (justice, equity and compassion in human relations) and Sixth (the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all) Principles. The UN is an essential platform for collective action and global progress.

The UN flag was displayed at TJMC along with the U.S. flag for the last half of the 20th century and the first decade and a half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The UN flag is a companion in design to the U.S. flag, both being especially attractive flags. The flags' location was prominent. Since the building of the new offices and social hall, both flags were located in the Jefferson Foyer.

A year or two ago, members of the TJMC Group, Peace Action - United Nations (PAUN), became aware that the UN flag had been removed, and was placed mostly out of sight. We never discovered who removed the flag or who made the decision to move it or what might have been the reason for its removal. **Our members agreed that the UN flag ought to be returned to its earlier location, so we are asking the Board to give us a directive, or permission, to return it to its earlier location in the Jefferson Foyer.**

The United Nations is strongly consistent with Unitarian-Universalist values. For example, the UN is a strong supporter of the following:

- Human rights. "International Declaration of Human Rights"  
(Proclaimed in 1948 under the leadership  
of Eleanor Roosevelt)
- Women's rights. CEDAW: "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
Discrimination Against Women", a UN treaty instituted in 1981, having been ratified by  
189 states (though not yet by the U.S.)
- Children's rights. "Convention for the Rights of the Child", a UN treaty which sets out  
the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children.
- UNICEF. Humanitarian and developmental aid to children around the world.
- Environmental protection. Notably, including the UN organization of scientists (UN  
International Panel on Climate Change) that has effectively alerted the world of the  
growing crisis of Climate Change.
- LBGTQ rights. Since the UN's founding in 1945, the UN's first consideration of gay  
rights began in 1994 in the UN's Human Rights Committee (UNHRC), and it has  
received increasing debate ever since. Much has been contributed to this debate by the  
UUA's organization UU-UNO (discussed below). In 2016, a long-term mandate by the

UNHRC was initiated to discuss with governments how to protect LGBTQ people. This mandate has been seen as the UN's "most overt expression of gay rights as human rights".

**Unitarian-Universalist official connections with the UN:**

The UU-UNO (Unitarian Universalist - United Nations Office) is an official part of the Unitarian-Universalist Association (UUA). The Office is located on the plaza in front of the UN Building in Manhattan in New York City.

- The UU-UNO has consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which grants UUs the ability to contribute to the UN agenda, voicing issues that are of concern to UUs.
- The UU-UNO is also formally associated with the UN's Dept. of Global Communications (DGC). Through this association, UUs work to extend the DGC's mission to explain and gain support for the UN's mission in the world.
- The UU-UNO's advocacy at the UN on human rights, climate change, peace, and security all fit into this consultative status.
- The UU-UNO was started by Adlai Stevenson, a Unitarian-Universalist and early U.S. Ambassador to the UN, during the 1960s. It started as an organization separate from the UUA, but associated with the UUA. It became (and is now) an integral and official part of the UUA, starting a few years ago.
- The UU-UNO annually recognizes congregations for especially strong support of the UU-UNO, such as high membership in the UU-UNO, specifying such congregations as "Blue Ribbon Congregations". The UU-UNO awards each such congregation a plaque. TJMC qualified for Blue Ribbon Congregation honors in the two years 2010-11 and 2011-12. Plaques recognizing these awards are on the billboards in the Edgewood Lane entrance hall.

**TJMC connection with the UN beyond the UU-UNO:**

TJMC has supported the local Blue Ridge Virginia Chapter of the national United Nations Association (UNA) since the chapter's establishment in 2003, by providing space in the church's Social Hall for the chapter's six monthly meetings per year and for two recent fundraising dinners (each raising \$6000 to \$8000) for UN education programs for refugee children (predominantly in Africa). A number of TJMC members are also members of the Blue Ridge Virginia Chapter of the UNA and often attend its meetings. Total meeting attendance ranges generally between 40 and 70 people.

We appreciate the Board's attention to this question of the display and location of the United Nations flag.

Discussion –

- The UN has six rich voting countries and the poorer countries have less say. Do we want people coming in our door to see symbols which send conflicting messages. (AI – The UN and US flag should be displayed together. The right wing is trying to take over



the US flag.) - Are there alternatives to the entrance foyer, such as the social hall. Or both could stay at Summit House and be brought to the main building for special UN occasions.

- There is the question of separation of church and state which makes many uncomfortable having the US flag in a church at all.
- There are layers of mission and values in this discussion. There are art and history lessons in our foyer relating to slavery. Could we address the issues around the US and UN flags in a similar way?
- Could we set aside this question for a month and think about it?

PAUN should keep the conversation going. Can you develop a couple of paragraphs for an explanatory placard to accompany the flags to explain why they are important for us? Please discuss other placement options. Ask UU-UNO for suggestions on how to resolve these issues.

People of color have expressed concern about the UN/US flag placement as a reflection of dominant culture. Ask Racial Justice committee for input.

Thanks to AI for supplying all the info on UN and UU-UNO.

## 2. Guaranteeing wages for cancelled work hours - Lorie (10 min)

There was a scheduling disconnect in November when choir had planned rehearsals which weren't on the calendar. The DAF scheduled a renter which was prepaid for the month and choir couldn't use the sanctuary. That situation is now resolved. As a result James, who is employed to play piano during rehearsals, didn't receive payment for the canceled rehearsals.

- What about child care providers if there is a snowday? Are they paid anyway? – Not for a snowday, but if they come for an event and no kids show, they get at least an hour of pay. Often with piano lessons, a canceled lesson is paid for, though rescheduling is attempted.
- This is a question of how we treat people who are relying on us. It seems wrong to save money this way.
- Could Personnel Committee consider this? – We need a plan for how much lead time you need for canceling something. - Two weeks advanced warning should be enough time.
- James is hired by Scott to play anytime that Scott is not playing, including when Scott is directing. He is a subcontractor, not staff. Should we ask him for his thoughts?
- What is the person's expectations? Are they counting on the income? - We need a written agreement for subcontractors with expectations laid out.
- Scott hires James depending on need in any given week. James also plays for every rehearsal.
- We should make a decision with Scott's assistance. But we need to make a cancellation policy for subcontractors.

- We need an equitable policy for hourly people. We also need to think about James' contributions to the community. The agreement should include Scott and James and be on file.
- Ask Personnel Committee to make a subcontract agreement with James, including Scott's recommendations.
- The DAF should pay James for the canceled rehearsals.

## VI. Closing Activities (5 min)

### 1. Process Review –

- Could do better abiding by time limits and arrange for extra time if necessary.
- Hope the audibility was better with the portable microphone.

### 2. Things to do / communicate

Lorie – ask Scott to look over his job description for the Personnel Committee

Lorie – reach out to RJ about flag situation.

Beth and Kelsey will help Leia with consultant.

Lorie – send letter from board to congregation on choice to hire interim minister.

Sean will research the music funds situation.

Sean will pay James for the missed November choir rehearsals.

Exec will notify the UUA and proceed with the interim application process.

### 3. Closing Words - Pam

Dates to remember -

- January 8, 2020 - Exec meeting
- January 22, 2020 - Board meeting
- January 26, 2020 - Keith Kron (UUA Transitions) in the pulpit
- March 5, 2020 - IMPACT Rally 6:30-8:30PM
- March 23, 2020 (Tuesday) – showing of **American Heretics** at Vinegar Hill 6PM (sponsored by Religion, Race and Democracy Lab, UVA, Ashley Duffalo)
- March 31, 2020 - IMPACT Action 6:30-8:30PM
- May 5, 2020 - IMPACT Celebration 6:30-8:30PM
- February 15 – March 15, 2020 – Pledge drive dates (approximate)

For January -

- Offer Letters (LOAs)
- Alex's request for sabbatical dates
- Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia
- Status of music funds

Future topics -

- June - reconsider two services

Parking lot -

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## REPORTS

### **President's Report**

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DECEMBER 2019

Season's Greetings to one and all.

Although the Board had hoped to make a decision on choosing a minister for August 2020, we are committed to learning as much about our options as possible and taking the necessary time to gather information from every available source. Earlier this month, we had a virtual meeting with Keith Kron, the Ministerial Transitions Director of the UUA. Here is a summary of the meeting:

*\*\*Keith is supporting the recommendation from the Southern Regional Staff that TJMC have an interim minister for the next year. He discussed all the ways an interim can help a congregation prepare for a longer term minister (either developmental or settled) and how the interim selection process has changed since TJMC last had an interim (approximately eight years ago).*

*\*\*It seemed like Keith was recommending a one-year (not two) interim followed by a developmental minister. The core of his message seems to be that we need congregational buy-in and engagement in order to name the goals for a developmental minister. We would use the interim time to do that work.*

*\*\*Our interim minister would not be able to become our developmental minister. They are necessarily two different people.*

*\*\*The TJMC Board would select the interim. Again, the process is very different from the last time we had an interim. In the old selection process, the Transitions Director would select 4 names to go to congregations based only on verbal information (at best) from regional staff. Now there is a free market system where up to 8 interims can have their name sent to a congregation. The 8 are selected based on accredited interim status and length of time in ministry. But any minister in good standing can apply for any interim congregation. Keith meets with the candidates and interim congregations and describes what he knows about the interim needs. Additionally each congregation now gets to list what it feels it needs to work on during the interim time. There is much more information given to potential applicants. Keith believes*

*TJMC-UU would be attractive to candidates because we are a larger congregation (over 300) and in a great part of the country.*

*\*\*Keith said both interim and developmental ministers can be experienced ministers at the end of their careers who want one last assignment before retirement. We replied that TJMC has experience with this particular minister profile and many congregants felt those ministries at TJMC were not especially successful or satisfying.*

*\*\*There are regular interim ministers and there are accredited interim ministers. The accredited interim has done at least 3 years (usually more) of interim ministry, been evaluated by UUA regional staff, the interim ministry chapter leadership itself and Keith's office to become accredited. Not everyone wanting to do interim work has gone through the accreditation process, though some candidates would be actively working toward it.*

*\*\*We mentioned our fear that some congregants, especially those who have been most dissatisfied, would check out during the interim year and wait for something "real" to start happening again before becoming engaged. We need to make sure everyone in the congregation commits to the interim year.*

*\*\*We also discussed widespread distrust of the UUA and Southern Region offices. Several members of the Board and many people in the congregation recall our experience with the past three interim ministers with much dissatisfaction. One Board member offered the critique that our previous interims had done very little and non-leadership congregants felt like nothing was happening. We are skeptical of the process and therefore reluctant to hire another interim. We stressed that we absolutely must have a great interim experience this time around.*

The Board will continue our discussion of TJMC's future ministry at the December Board Meeting. We are doing our best to make progress and new information is coming to light every day. We appreciate time is a factor in making a choice but we want to be as thorough and deliberate as possible in this work.

Stewardship and the Pledge Drive is a top priority for the Board this year. Our congregation passed the 2019-20 budget and we now look to the future and improving our financial situation. We will be having a Pledge Drive to finance the 2020-2021 budget. Danny Gray has agreed to chair the Pledge Drive Committee but more volunteers are always needed and welcomed. The Pledge Drive will take place from Sunday, February 16 to Sunday, March 15. Here is a list of some of the key events:

Feb. 16 - Kick Off Sermon + PJs and Pancakes in Social Hall

Feb. 23 - Testimonials during worship

March 1 - Soup Sunday with intentional guided conversations about stewardship

March 8 - Testimonials during worship

March 15 - Wrap up with Potluck Lunch

Also at the December Board meeting, the Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia Durland-Jones will give us an update on their progress and I expect happy news with regard to the renovations of the church building from the Glenn Short Sanctuary Capital Endowment Fund Committee.

Although the world may slow down with the colder weather and shorter daylight hours of December, this is a busy time at church. I am grateful for the dedicated staff and many volunteers that make our church a warm and welcoming place and I look forward to sharing this wonderful time of the year with our church family.

Happy Holidays and See you at Church!!

Lorie

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### **Vice President's Report**

Vice President's report: Board meeting 12-18-2019

Personnel:

Personnel is meeting with both Alex and Scott to update their offer letters. We hope to present them to the Board for signatures at the January meeting. We also are reviewing Caroline's offer letter as Office Secretary to assure it is in place.

Volunteer Coordination Report: Kay Frazier- December 2019

Work in Progress

- Revamping the hallway bulletin boards to improve communication, better utilize the space and highlight pertinent and timely information.
- Creating monthly communication packages to highlight one or two volunteer/service opportunities. The initiative began in November with
- Greeters and will continue from Jan-August 2020. The highlights will include use of the webpage, announcements, weekly email, bulletin boards, social media, etc. The purpose is to build awareness and increase interest where it is most needed.
- Beginning planning for a Time and Talent Pledge Drive and Service Fair in September 2020. This effort will be coordinated with the Stewardship Committee and staff.
- Building a photo library to use for communication efforts. Storage and access is an issue, but we are moving forward with collecting the

photographs.

- Revamping the website to better direct and connect people to volunteer/service opportunities.
- Developing a short list of one time, doable projects for small groups or individuals to take on. Working with a few interested individuals and staff to develop the list, provide resources and coordinate the efforts. The idea is to have a one stop clearing house for individuals or small groups wanting to take on one time projects, without a long term commitment.
- Developing a template for Resource Manuals for the Yard Sale and Auctions. The purpose is to facilitate sustained leadership, volunteer training and aid for organizers.

#### New Committees

Three new committees applications are being made: an Environmental Committee led by Jean Umiker-Seabok, The Emotional Wellness Committee led by Carol Saliba, and a Women's Committee led by Elizabeth Breeden. No one has responded to the plea to join a Grounds Committee (bubbling).

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### **Treasurer's Report**

#### **Treasurer's Report - December 2019**

As expected, donations fell off somewhat last month. This is normal for this time of year. Fortunately we currently have enough of a year-to-date surplus that we aren't having the cash flow issues that we saw last year.

We still have quite a way to go to rebuild our reserves to a more comfortable level. On that point, I am optimistic about the upcoming canvass. The positivity and energy of those involved bodes well for the outcome.

The Finance Committee is currently working on revising the Finance portion of the policy manual. I hope to know more about their progress next month.

Stan Walker  
Treasurer

## **Assistant Minister's Report**

Report to Board for meeting on December 18, 2019

Rev. Alex McGee, MDiv. Assistant Minister

Report written 12/14/2019

**BEAUTY** In the five minutes previous to sitting down to write this report, three things happened that I decided were perhaps meant to be shared with the board: 1) A member made a special moment to tell how a certain sermon has helped her and she has shared that with others and gave me a tiny memento. 2) I received a card naming successes of a person who has been sober for 60 days, working, exercising, and in stable housing, as a result of a loan from the Ministers Discretionary Fund. 3) I received a holiday card from an elder who stays connected to this community and inspires others. This is a vibrant, thriving congregation with gifts happening in many seen and unseen ways.

**WORSHIP** Since the last report, Sunday services have been: Leia leading Multi Bread Communion; Pastor Bates; Alex; Leia leading Giving Tree. Coming up in the next five weeks we have lay led services and interfaith speakers. I trained two new worship weavers, and the Worship Weaving team continues to adapt as we learn together and people's life situations change. Please note that their work behind the scenes involves many details, hospitality, and planning alongside other teams (sound crew, slides people). In the late winter we will have some services focused on Stewardship and on the local IMPACT initiative. We have been reaching out to UUA special programs (such as Partner Church Program, College of Social Justice) to see if staff are travelling in our area that could do pulpit fill. Our interfaith initiative has been good for community building locally and there is also benefit to the congregation hearing many different UU voices. Planning the special holiday services is new for me and has been a learning curve. Many thanks to the many people working together. Worship planning has been about 50% of my time.

Thank you very very very much to the monitors who have shown up and been supportive to handle big picture questions on Sunday mornings and be a support amid the swirl. It makes a difference.

**ADMINISTRATION** Extraordinary thanks to the Personnel Committee, Sean, and Lorie for hammering out together a nearly final draft of a letter of agreement that has needed to be updated for some years. I hereby officially ask the board to consider dates when I might be able to take a sabbatical. The letter of agreement requires that I ask at least six months in advance. I know that Leia is also due for a sabbatical, and it probably makes sense to schedule these so we are not gone at the same time. I will be taking vacation and comp time in January to help my father move into assisted living, so you will not see me in the pulpit on the second Sunday in January (I usually preach on the second Sunday.) The letter of agreement stipulates four weeks of study leave (contiguous or not as best suits everyone), and I will work with Lorie and staff to consider dates in March and April for when to attend clergy retreats and learning activities. I am finally using a church computer and church email account and that is easier and better practice to have my laptop mostly at home and my personal email separate so that when I am away from church I can truly be away. I have raised the question with Lorie, staff, and some of the Personnel Committee about what expectations you will set with the incoming minister and whether you will be asking them to share an office. I believe the next six months could be a valuable opportunity to look at the office space we have and what we want to accomplish in it. Coordination with other staff and board and Personnel has been about 25% of my time this past month.

**PASTORAL** I will be attending Active Minds (elders group) next month, and may make this a quarterly tradition. Patty Wallens and Shirley Paul have stepped up even more than usual and done lots of pastoral outreach as people have life changes, and offered listening and connection to community resources. I continue to do some individual pastoral meetings. We are seeing an increase in people joining, and need to make sure that we are keeping Covenant Groups and Membership Committee well supported to integrate them. I see people experiencing healing and reconciliation on some levels in an organic way. But I still hope the board will work on efforts toward reconciliation. I have heard that members appreciate the financial updates that have been published and hope for more. Pastoral care and coordination has been about 25% of my time.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE** I hope to shift my obligations to be more involved in social justice and community collaboratives, because that is in line with the values of this congregation and my



own. As we look to the year ahead when a new minister comes, perhaps my time and talent could be reassigned there.

**SPIRITUAL HEALTH** I hope each board member will allow yourself to experience renewal and sustenance through spiritual practices, community, and whatever gives you a sense of present moment acceptance, hope, and love.

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### **Director of Faith Development's Report**

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### **Director of Administration of Finance's Report**

1. DAF Position
  - a. DAF Hours for November: 125 of 120 hours worked
  - b. Approximately 15 to 20 hours of meetings attended
  - c. Created [DAF Schedule of Activity](#)
  - d. Created a 2019-2020 [Social Action Collection Recipients by Month](#) which has descriptions of each organization and contact information.
2. Finance
  - a. October 2019 Reports: Statement of Activity

	Jul – Nov 2019	Jul – Nov 2018
Total Revenue	\$ 265,106.85	\$ 177,935.79
Total Expenditures	\$ 241,460.35	\$ 210,963.34
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ 23,646.50	\$ -33,027.55
  - b. Rental updates:
    - i. New Renters : Aiman Khan Sanctuary use for music school application, Julia Martinez Birthday Party, Community Roots Co-op
    - ii. Donated Rentals: Resolution Virginia (Conflict Resolution Advocacy)
    - iii. Returning Renters: CHEC, Karen and Dan Foley, We Agnostics AA, C-ville Time Exchange,
    - iv. Rental Income for October: **\$1,885.00**
  - c. All back-owed insurance payments are paid.
  - d. Attached finance reports are still pending some expense account information
3. Human Resources

- a. Per Personnel, we are now tracking vacation and leave time for all paid staff.
    - i. Vacation and PTO accrual is tracked by our payroll system and recorded on paystubs.
    - ii. Time is approved by the staff member's immediate supervisor
    - iii. Time off is put on the Staff Out of Office Google calendar.
    - iv. DAF enters leave time the week it occurs to reflect remaining amount on the next paystub.
4. Facilities
  - a. Grounds
    - i. Cleaning crew is asking for \$1350 per month instead of \$1200.
  - b. Building
    - i. Front of Summit house porch is rotten and needs repairs. Looking to complete 1/20, cost is \$500
  - c. Completed Repairs
    - i. Repair Document Link:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OLkvJvRcT-esb9nMaP78AIPyTCcsWvocCZlorFnX0tc/edit?usp=sharing>
    - ii. Broken chair from Summit house Fixed 12/13/2019
    - iii. Door on cabinet in mailroom need to be Fixed 12/13/2019
    - iv. Garbage Disposal not working Completed 12/6/2019
    - v. Lights behind the low brick wall are out. Completed 12/6/2019
    - vi. Added locks to drawers in DAF office Completed 11/25/2019
    - vii. Recycling system is not fully functioning. Paper in office not getting recycled. What can be recycled at this point? LDJ Ordered new recycling can 11/15/2019 Arrived 11/20/2019, placed signs in office and kitchen with correct recycling procedures. New procedures in effect.

Wins:

- All Insurance back payments are complete.
- Staff Open enrollment went smoothly
- Paychecks for staff now more accurately reflect tax status and exemptions
- Working with the AUUA to understand position needs in more detail.

Opportunities:

- PayPal account is in my control but in Christina's name. Will fix ASAP.
- Rental follow up – will create a sheet by month to track rentals, payments, communication (1 week out) and issues.
- Facilities need major work – looking for new cleaning crew.

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**Membership Report**

To: Board members

Re: November 30, 2019 Membership report  
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of October 31, 2019: 357

**Add:**

Helen Ruth Wilson, Nov. 3, 2019  
Dave Stackhouse, Nov. 3, 2019  
Taverna, Kristin, did not resign, mistaken report, restore to Membership  
Tori Goodloe, Nov. 17, 2019  
Anne Allison, Nov. 17, 2019  
Kara Miller, Nov. 17, 2019  
Barbara Trebby, November 24, 2019

**Drop:**

Christine Lotze, resigned via email, Oct. 24, 2019, archive

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of November 30, 2019: 363 members

Sally Taylor, Membership Tracker for TJMC Membership Committee

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**Personnel Committee**

**Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia**

Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia  
Report to the Board  
December, 2019

The Task Force has continued to meet to explore ordaining Leia.

This whole process has been incredibly heartening with everyone approaching discussions with kindness and curiosity. Congregants have asked so many excellent questions and we have provided documents with the questions and answers. Overwhelmingly, people have been supportive, open, and even joyous as we have talked about how much Leia brings to our congregation and the possibility of honoring and celebrating her leadership with ordaining her as our Minister of Faith Development, Reverend Leia Durland Jones.

Our plans to continue the discussions include:

1. A second Congregational Conversation on January 12 in the sanctuary after church.
2. Offers for individuals who would like to talk one on one to contact us through Pam McIntire at pem3x3@pmcintire.com
3. Individual one on one meetings between Task Force members and congregants.
4. A summary of the process, questions, and answers snail mailed to congregants in January. The summary will include a QR code so congregants can easily access the complete documents online.
5. A Task Force table in the social hall on January 5, 12, 19, and 26 so congregants can talk with Task Force members and pick up hard copies of the documents we have prepared.
6. Following the Congregational Conversation on January 12, we hope to bring a final report to the board for consideration and affirmation at the January 22 board meeting.

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**Glenn Short Sanctuary Capital Endowment Fund Committee**

To: TJMC Board of Trustees

From: Sally Taylor, Chair Glenn Short Sanctuary Capital Endowment Fund Committee

December 4, 2019 Report

United Painting Plus signed a contract for \$13,900 to do the lead paint remediation and to paint the outside of the original building using the original colors as approved by the Aesthetic Committee. They are in the process of doing this and should be finished by mid-December. They are a local minority owned company who has done similar work for UVA.

Two of our proposed projects require approval from the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) because the church is located in a Historic Conservation District. We need approval to remove the scuppers and install continuous downspouts and add more downspouts to remedy intrusion of water into the sanctuary during heavy rains. We also need approval to replace the Edgewood Lane door with one which is American Disability Act compliant. The present door is 2 inches too narrow and the threshold is ½ inch too high. We have filled out the forms and Breck Gastinger has created the needed diagrams to accompany the applications. We hope to get approval this month. Once we have approval we will be asking for bids for the downspout project.

We have met with three glass/door contractors who will be giving us bids on the following projects on or before Dec. 16: interior storm windows for the sanctuary windows (which will be sealed permanently before installation and the mismatched panes of glass replaced and the windows cleaned), interior storm windows for the parlor windows (also sealed and cleaned before installation), replace the Rugby Road entrance door, replace the door to the Chapin

garden, replace/enlarge the Edgewood Lane door to make it ADA compliant and replace the glass panels on either side of the door, replace the foyer door to the playground which is broken.

We met with a window treatment representative who will be giving us a bid on installation of electronically controlled shades for the first three large sanctuary windows.

We reviewed the bids from 4 HVAC contractors. The system to be installed consists of 3 Mitsubishi heat pumps for the sanctuary and their outdoor units, a large fan to circulate the air and three Mitsubishi ductless heat pumps (similar to the one in the parlor) and their outside unit for the upstairs classrooms and a 5 year service agreement for the newly installed units. We have chosen to work with Beck Cohen whose bid was 10% lower than competing bids. Beck Cohen is a local company who has an arrangement with Costco who supplies the equipment. We will be getting a \$2700 gift card rebate from Costco by paying for the work in advance.

Dick Somer or I have been at church whenever contractors are working. I have been working closely with Sean about scheduling the work to minimize the impact on church activities.

Respectfully submitted, Sally Taylor

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## **IMPACT Report**

### **IMPACT EVENT SCHEDULE Spring 2020**

Sunday February 9 – TJMC IMPACT Network Meeting, 11:45 to 1:30; select people to invite to Action

Begin issuing invitations to attend Action (mail, phone calls, in person conversations)

Thursday, March 5 – IMPACT Rally, 6:30 to 8:30; Network Members updated on “asks” for Action

Sunday, March 8 – TJMC IMPACT Sunday Service suggestions/requests

Sermon by Karen Foley, Bob Gross worship weaver

Introduce/charge Network members

Distribute tickets to the Action to congregation members who want them

Begin sign-ups on commitment to attend Action (in Social hall after service)

Sunday, March 15, 22, 29 – continue sign-ups in Social Hall after services; tickets available as requested

Tuesday, March 31 – IMPACT Action, 6:30 to 8:30, MLK Performing Arts Center

TJMC Attendance Goal, 130 attendees

Sunday, April 5 – (Palm Sunday) Request announcement in service

Attendance at Action; brief results on commitments by community leaders on all three issues

Tuesday, May 5 – IMPACT Celebration, 6:30 to 8:30; Network Members invest in IMPACT

**Ministers of member congregations also asked to invest in IMPACT (fund-raiser for next year)**

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## **CORRESPONDENCE**

From Laura Wallace:

Dear Board,

I've been following the December 5-6 thread on our new minister options on the public group Facebook page with interest. Most importantly, I agree with 90% of Christine Gresser's heartfelt thoughts and know her intention is good and springs from deep love of TJMC. I'd like to share one main thought in which I focus on smaller parts of a post of Christine's (only used as an example, no shaming of Christine is intended or deserved; I believe she is passionately frustrated by the pace of change) because I believe it illustrates a very important broader issue at TJMC. I do not belong to Facebook but also didn't want to limit my response to a sideline correspondence because I hope the Board and hopefully, a new minister, might assimilate the perspective I describe here into future reconciliation work.

I was saddened by the FB depiction of a "... rampant willful refusal of *many members* to learn about white supremacy and racism and white privilege....". I reference this post only as one recent example of a trend that I've observed multiple times in different venues as TJMC in recent years.

I think talk such as this about "many members" has become part of the biggest problem we have at TJMC today. In my view, frequently statements about "many members feel/think XXX," and "long-term/older members believe/don't believe XXX" are extrapolated from scanty direct knowledge. These characterizations feed estrangement and lead to negative memes, often expressed in public venues such as social media, meetings (even by past leaders) or documents, that have the potential to alienate both

people who have long loved and supported this church and hesitant newcomers who might be considering it. This is my personal opinion. I know "hurt feelings" are sometimes viewed with contempt these days, but expressing pain over loss of community doesn't make one a snowflake.

I recognize a wonderful change in tone and transparency from the new Board and its current leadership. Yet I'm still disheartened by a sticky sub-climate of uninformed judgement and blame. I believe repetitive generalizations about "many" that occur in quite a few different TJMC settings may offer one reason why some people who love this church may no longer feel welcome. I would hate to see our faith's radical inclusion of current members (of any age) and seekers alike recede at this church, as TJMC has been my beloved and only extended family for a very long time. That may change, but my eventual home will still be our Memorial Garden. I'd like the arc of my life to end there.

That this FB dialogue later leaped to a benevolent proposal that a second, separate church could resolve incompatibilities after earlier mischaracterizing (in my view) "many members" shocked me. What I remember about "old times" here included joyous, affectionate, cross-generational love, support, delight and respect. Our Spiritual Journeys services a few times a year in which three members of any age were invited to share 7-minute stories of their journeys to TJMC-UU were among the most popular that Worship "Associates" ever arranged. They deepened inter-generational bonds and allowed the full congregation a new sense of multiple individuals' diversity and depth.

I think a reference such as "many members' *willful refusal to learn* about racism" is unfair and based on assumptions about others' inner thoughts rather than facts. If one does not know what "many members" are reading, discussing or seeking out or doing in their own time and their own personal or community settings, in my view one cannot make this accusation fairly. A few comments by disgruntled or resistant people put off by a shaming-and-blaming subculture that has blossomed at TJMC do not indicate a rampant (many members') "willful refusal to learn...." I think Christine knows this anyway, and also don't believe she necessarily meant that she sees "many members" as willfully uninterested in our First Principle. I am certain she would never mean to harm anyone

and CC this to her with much respect. Christine is someone I'd openly share hopes and concerns with any day and do so here rather than on FB.

What I'd like to ask of the Board generally is to be aware that some people might be pursuing racial justice topics with deep interest but not at church because for some, it may have become too forbidding to learn about them here. Even a lifelong passion to understand and combat racism doesn't seem to offset a blame-shame chorus of generalizations about older members, which I perceive as only happening at TJMC in recent years. To me, it's a tragic breakdown of bonds that once held all ages together, before repeated new demands that older people step back. I don't want people of *any* age or diversity at TJMC to feel shoved away or neglected or unappreciated. Ever.

My experience is relevant only to offer one example of what one ordinary "long-term member" has lived, but fwiw:

- C'ville childhood (non-Southern parents) affected deeply by local racist incidents, attitudes and class issues; direct witness to poverty, cruelty, exclusion and injustice
- adolescence tutoring in Rev. Henry Mitchell's program for Cville's poorest AA kids
- youth watching the city destroy the Vinegar Hill neighborhood, where some people I knew lived
- youth experience as co-leader of a mass student protest over racism at Lane HS (spat on later in the halls by some kids calling me an "N-word lover")
- adulthood teaching poetry in Baltimore's and Louisville's most devastated inner-city communities; participating in Baltimore workshops beside AA leaders who marched with Dr. King
- two years participating consistently in the city-wide Dialogue on Race
- learning from long-term TJMC members who've acted (far more than I) for racial justice for many decades
- ongoing engagement in volunteer work for and dialogue about marginalized communities, black and brown

I believe it's possible that some passionate justice advocates at TJMC may look at white hair or length of membership and leap to unjustified conclusions about others' character, inner beliefs or intentions. I think this truly damages our long-term chances of healing.



Blame-and-shame is now nationally, and I personally believe at TJMC too, embedded in an idealistic pursuit of purity that has become destructive *not in its intention*, but its execution. All the love-talk in the world won't sugarcoat this. Only rigorous care with messaging and, going forward, avoidance of **degrading generalizations about groups of people** can help us heal.

Isn't this part of what justice is about? I look at some of TJMC's struggles in the light of our entire culture's splintering into sub-groups detached from each other. I would love to hear more inspiration and messaging about this in future.

The power of language has guided my life. I hope this insight might be useful in some way.

With love,  
Laura

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From Christine Gresser:

Thank you for your heartfelt letter and your shared love of TJMC. I feel good about my Facebook post, and, I respect that you take issue with some of the wording. I love that you and I have a genuine respect and caring for one another so that even when we disagree with one another's words or actions, there is always the goodwill and the caring that keeps us in community and in relationship with each other. I also wholeheartedly respect and affirm your addressing your thoughts and concerns to me and to the Board. I know how much time, love, and effort, they are spending and expending thinking about, listening to, and making plans and carrying out leadership efforts around, these issues of church community, racism and undoing racism, communications, social media, and conflict & conflict resolution in our church community. I think when people like you, and me, and others, share our thoughts, feelings, concerns, and wishes, with our Board, it makes our whole community stronger. This is a GOOD thing.

I know that you and I both take to heart the saying "we do not have to think alike to love alike." Thank you for making your fondness and respect clear in your email below and in all of our communications together.

I love and respect you so much, Laura, and I am so glad you shared with me and the Board what your reaction and response was to what I had said on Facebook. Of course you know it is never my intention to hurt you or anyone.

I do see that many members of our beloved congregation hold racist views, and I still love them as humans, and, I do hear much willful refusal to examine white privilege and how one accidentally, with good progressive intentions, but nevertheless consistently, lives and works and talks in ways that actively maintain the status quo which upholds the supremacy of whiteness. I do not see YOU doing this, Laura, I see you as someone who is actively seeking to unlearn and undo racism in yourself (as I am) and in society. I do see and hear others who are too busy insisting that they are “not at all racist” but then who go right on to say “but...” phrases that belie their point. I don’t see this only in one particular age demographic.

It is absolutely true that people can and do engage in unlearning racism work and undoing racism work away from the church. We all have multi faceted lives. It is a wonderful thing. Just because someone is not seen going to TJMC Undoing Racism or Racial Justice Committee meetings certainly doesn’t mean they’re not committed to racial justice. I personally am not on those committees or in those groups either, nor am I active in a Name Change effort in any formal way, although I do support a name change. I am just a regular ol’ long term member, who sees a lot of racism in our beloved community. People I love. I’m comfortable saying that out loud because I’m also comfortable calling out my own racism out loud too. I catch myself saying and doing and thinking things all the time that reflect the racism and white supremacy (i.e. the supremacy and privilege of whiteness in our society) that is woven into every inch of fabric of our American society. It’s impossible for any one of us NOT to be raised with, and have in us, this racism that we eat, breathe, and sleep as white people in America. I’m not talking cross burning racists. I’m not talking active hateful bigots; I’m talking about the modern definition and understanding of what racism is.

Anyway, I love that our congregation is making progress by beginning to talk about these issues.

I am not a “point by point” email responder to very complex and detailed topics like these, so I don’t have more detailed thoughts to share with you about your email at this time (and I don’t think it should be our goal to necessarily change each other’s minds about wording or FB posts or to try to get the other to come around to our point of view about how to engage with these topics...) but rather I feel like the important thing I can do right now is to say clearly and lovingly, \*I hear you,\* and, you have given me a lot to think about. I look forward to talking more with you (and sharing a hug with you if you’re up for a hug) in the months to come.

I’m not getting out as much as I’d like to, because I am shepherding my younger kiddo, my son Grey, through healing from a trauma he suffered this summer, and I’m now homeschooling him, so my hands are pretty full. But maybe I’ll get to see you soon? - I am at church most Sundays now and I will make every effort to try to come to any and all community meetings and cottage conversations this year about all the issues you’ve raised here (regarding racism, the perception

of ageism or assumptions about age and racism, church community, real life conversations about our church's social media channels, etc.) These are all very important topics to me, as they clearly are to you as well.

I would love it if we had two UU churches in Charlottesville. I don't see that as a bad thing at all. Heck, I'd love it if we had three. Or four! And if we had so many committed UUs that we could fill them all up every Sunday. And Saturday nights, and Wednesday eves, and... I didn't mean at all to suggest that anyone should flounce off with their ball and jacks and split the darn church. I heartfully love the idea of there being so much dedication to various wonderful ways of being UU that we have enough leadership and energy and resources in Charlottesville/Albemarle/Crozet/Nelson/etc. to have multiple UU churches and fellowships. I think that would be fantastic for all the congregations, for Charlottesville, and for the world, for there to be more variety of UU churches, each church being robust and diverse in and of itself as well as multiplying in number in every city and town. Each attracting everyone who would be a part of one of our congregations if only it fit them just a little better. One UU congregation in the Cville area is not enough, in my opinion. I am so curious to see what the coming years will bring. I'm too lazy/busy with my own stuff to start one, though. :)

Thank you for giving me too much to think about and reflect on. I so appreciate you.

Love,  
Christine