

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church - Unitarian Universalist  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES APRIL MEETING  
APRIL 22, 2020**

**6:00-9:00PM Meeting**

**Board 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
  - Board communication tools and strategy

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

**Absent** – none

**Guests** – Margaret Migas, Beverly Ryan, Christine Gresser, Marian Wendelin, Marlene Jones

**I. Opening - Opening/Closing Words (Breck), Snacks (BYO), Timekeeper (Kelsey), Process Observer (Breck)**

Opening Words - Breck

Community Time / Public Comment - no comments were made (limit 2 minutes/person verbal, otherwise written)

1. Acceptance of Agenda

**MOTION:** Accept the agenda. **Unanimously accepted.**

2. Correspondence (see text at end of minutes)
  - Linda Dukes-wrote concerning all church survey for congregant needs, volunteer efforts and church directory update.
  - Laura Wallace wrote concerning the church discontinuing our participation in the use of Facebook.

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

1. President's Report (written) - Lorie Craddock
2. Vice President's Report (written) - Elizabeth Breeden
  - PACEM will not be coming in May but they are still anticipating that they will be starting their overnight stay in Summit House in June (or later if the Governor has not yet re-opened the state).
3. Treasurer's Report (written) - Stan Walker
  - Pam asked if this report represents a balanced budget including the \$40K borrowed last year to cover one-time costs. Stan explained that this money is still owed but over a 10 year payment plan that will be part of the budget proposal.
4. Lead Minister's Report - position vacant
5. Assistant Minister's Report (written) – Alex McGee
6. Director of Faith Development's Report (written) - Leia Durland-Jones
  - Leia added that she wants to share a video she found that is hopeful about framing for the future during this uncertain time. She will share the link of the video with us.  
  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uAKQXagwms&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2oLpDlxbYkn1Yc\\_vfJ0U10yv\\_6vzi7wVihW4zOltesRk6TOBD2TkJiENA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uAKQXagwms&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2oLpDlxbYkn1Yc_vfJ0U10yv_6vzi7wVihW4zOltesRk6TOBD2TkJiENA)
7. Director of Administration and Finance Report (written) - Sean Skally
8. Membership Report (written) - Sally Taylor
  - Membership has not changed since March 31, 2020.  
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of Feb. 29, 2019: 377  
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of March 31, 2020: 377 members
9. Board Liaison Reports

Interim Ministry Search Committee (written)---Pam, Kelsey, Beth, Greg Townsend, Larry Moulis, Matt Diasio

- The committee is in a “holding pattern” until May 5, 2020, when the names of interested candidates will be released to the committee.
  - Volunteer Coordinator - Kay Frazier
    - Elizabeth mentioned that Kay is going to help with the Yard Sale in August
- Stewardship/Pledge Drive (written) - Lorie/Danny Gray
  - Linda Dukes wrapped up the Pledge Drive and almost everyone was called who donated in 2019 and did not pledge in 2020. Linda and Leia are still working on making the final asks or making sure that every person has been reached.
  - Margaret Migas recommends that we may want to put a reminder in the Friday email for individuals to donate their stimulus checks if they are able.
  - Lorie: Linda has a great deal of enthusiasm regarding stewardship, but is not interested in chairing this committee. We do not have a stewardship chair or committee at this time.
- Glenn Short Sanctuary Capital Endowment Fund Committee (written) - Sally Taylor
  - There have been AMAZING things that have been done transforming the church especially the parlor (new floor and new paint). The committee is about 60% of the way through the money that was donated.
  - Liberty asked for pictures to share in the newsletter.
- Personnel Committee - Elizabeth
  - 6 month Evaluation for Sean will be using a new format, which the personnel committee has developed. .
- Music Committee - Kelsey
  - The choir is trying to stay connected virtually but Kelsey reports that this has been hard.
  - Elizabeth shared that the feeling of community within the choir may be more important than the actual singing together. Kelsey shared that a ZOOM call with the choir may be possible but having an actual vocal experience singing together is extremely difficult technologically .
  - Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia (written) - Pam

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

1. Approve March 2020 Board Draft Minutes.
2. TJMC will not reopen until the Executive Committee deems it healthy to do so with the Board approval in collaboration with the Medical Advisory Team.
3. Approve revisions to pages 31-39 and the Cheetham Award section of the Policy Manual. (sent to Board)
4. Accept verbal and written reports as submitted.

**MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda.**  
**Unanimously approved.**

### **IV. Old Business**

1. Spring Auction (5 minutes)
  - Leia sent an email last week after meeting with Carol Gardner and Sean about the fact that we cannot feasibly have a Spring Auction due to the social isolation restrictions making gatherings in people's homes impossible. These gatherings/dinners are the highest money making donations for the auction.
  - We should invite people to donate to attend an on-line party similar to what they would have donated to the Spring Auction.
  - We should be cautious about promoting this as an alcohol related event. It would be much better to promote it as a social event and not have it mentioned as a "Happy Hour".
  - Was there any conversation about an alternative money making event.
    - there was a conversation about different options that could raise money.
  - Leia invited Elizabeth to spearhead a virtual Spring Auction and Liberty and Breck said they would help.
2. Yard Sale (5 minutes)
  - Kay Frazier, Elizabeth, Sandy Brooks, and Bev Ryan feel that we could have the yard sale especially if we placed items on our web site and only sold furniture.
  - Flea market spaces could be sold to individuals to sell their stuff with a percentage to go to the church
  - Furniture is very easy to sell, low labor as compared with the small items. Using flea market spaces means all the volunteer hours for storing, sorting, pricing and schlepping smaller yard sale items would be saved.

3. Soup Kitchen / Food Pantry / PACEM update - Elizabeth (5 minutes)
  - Soup kitchen is moving along providing bagged lunches for approximately 60 people each Sunday.
  - Food Pantry will take place on May st and clients will stay in their cars. Volunteers will work outside.

**BREAK AND GRATITUDE CARDS** (5 min) - Please think of people the Board should recognize for their recent contributions to our church community.

Linda Dukes and Danny Gray

Margaret Migas: providing tech support for on-line church service and training

Amy Davis: for working with the choir

Greta Dersheimer: making MANY phone tree calls, listening and conversing with many of our most vulnerable congregants

## **V. New Business –**

1. Budget shortfall strategies (30 minutes)
2. Interim minister/ budget - decisions making process (20 minutes)  
(These two items merged in the actual discussion.)
  - We are currently at a \$42,000 shortfall for this year's budget. Stan explains that with the uncertainty of when we may be able to reopen we still are not receiving any rental income. We will not have the income from the Spring Auction, yard sale, etc.
  - Loans are available : Sean has applied for these loans: The Payroll Protection Program (PPP) is for staff salaries that we do not have to pay back. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) has a very low (1%) interest rate. We have to use 75% of the PPP Loan for salaries in order to convert it to a grant.
  - Two different proposals were offered for us to consider:
    1. Ask staff what they feel is necessary with going forward with hiring an interim minister.
    2. Ask for a half-time minister
  - We finished payment to the former DAF already. The former lead minister has one more paycheck in May.
  - Our treasurer recommends looking at a 30% revenue shrinkage.
  - What would things look like without hiring a full time interim minister? What would our budget look like since we will have finished paying salaries for the former DAF and lead minister .
  - Alex asks us to consider the implications of advertising for a half-time minister, especially if we were to get someone who is not at the "top of their game".

- Leia feels strongly that we need an interim minister to help us figure out who we are and where we want to go as a congregation.
- Pam, chair of the interim search committee, will gladly call Keith and Christine at UUA Transitions Office to discuss what happens in an interim ministry search during a dire financial situation like we have at this time.
- Can we look at starting an interim minister later in the year?
- Alex: There are skilled ministers who might be happy to advise for ~20 hours per week via virtual consultation.
- Full-time interim's get about \$120,000 total compensation. We are \$40,000 short at this time plus we have to think about a possible 30% shrinkage with the economy..
- We need to go ahead with the application process even though we need to look at the worst case scenario, where we do not hire a full-time minister.
- The entire salary for the interim minister includes housing and the minister decides how much they put toward housing vs their salary.
- The burden of what is going on falls hardest upon our only full-time staff member, who is Leia.
- Is every church applying for an interim sharing these same unfortunate experiences with budget shortfalls.
- Sean: We are doing a preliminary "what would things look like when we reopen?"
- What if we hire a contract minister at this time? We need to be honest with what we are able to offer.
- We need to at least look into what it may look like to hire an interim before looking at changing what we have previously decided was needed for our congregation.
- We would have a surplus if we did not hire an interim this year.
- Is it possible to go through the application process to hire an interim minister but then not have them start employment with us until January.
- How much negotiation is manageable with an interim.
- Leia: It is a dis-service for our staff to have multiple people come to join the staff because of the transition period with orientation. We (the staff) are not interested in contract ministry.
- Our staff and interim search committee should have a discussion with the UUA representatives to help understand and resolve our dilemma.
- What would a budget look like without out of pocket donations? We need to check in with members if feel able to make their pledge.
- When talking with Keith or Connie: what creative ways can we offer a job?

Stan: Interested in hearing about alternative options.

Leia: we may want to go back to the congregation and share with them what our budget shortfall

Actions:

-Pam is being asked to speak with Keith Kron or Christine, Director of Transitions and Connie Goodbread of the UUA Southern Region

- May 4th we will have names of those who have applied for interim ministry. We will need to meet again after May 4th as a Board.
- Alex wants us to trust our clergy colleagues at this time that we are in discussion with during the application process.
- The board will come together for an additional meeting, once more information is gathered from the UUA, to reconsider next steps.

3. Supporting the music program during the pandemic (20 minutes)

Kelsey reports that the choir has not been really successful connecting during this time of social isolation.

- What work is Scott doing? Scott is wondering how to contribute to Sunday service. Kelsey and Scott are in discussion about how to connect people together who are in choir and not able to meet in person.
- The technology team for Sunday worship is learning along with Scott. Scott's presence and our hymns are vital to the Sunday Worship experience.
- Supporting the music program may involve getting Scott a microphone. Are we continuing to pay James?
- Sean: We paid James' last invoice but we are not paying him for April. The last time we paid him for time he did not work he donated it back to the church.
- Leia: We are using Scott's recordings on Family Worship. The UUA Worship Web is going to launch a catalog of resources for us to use during Worship.
- Lorie: Asking for a plan from Scott to direct music during this time. We have asked Scott to do certain things and she hasn't heard back. She has asked Scott to come to this Board Meeting.
- Alex: Thinks that giving Scott honest feedback after Sunday Worship. She asks that he bring many different elements to our Sunday Worship. Ask Scott to get feedback on a regular basis,
- Kelsey: Wants to be honest that we may not reach our music goals.
- Margaret: Scott was in a planning meeting for Sunday Worship. It is very easy for him to upload music in Co-Lab and not as easy to upload into ZOOM.

4. Conversation on alternatives to in-person congregational meetings. - Lorie (20 minutes)

- Lorie: There are new instructions at the UUA on How to hold Zoom Congregational Meetings. Bylaws state that you must be present at the Congregational Meeting to vote. There is a very great chance that there will not be an in-person Congregational Meeting.
- Stan: handling the discussion may be a nightmare.
- Ann: it may be difficult for some people but there are ways to conduct this meeting in Zoom. One key point: having a white board sessions about the budget on-line. She recommends working with a version that is as friendly as possible.
- Pam: Working with Larry Moulis on Election Buddy, which allows us to make a ballot with an individual number for each member. We can print out numbers and mail them out to members who are not on-line and they can mail the ballots in. We could mail out information along with a ballot with a number. They could mail that ballot back or call their vote in. Whoever is going to be at the meeting can vote at that time.
- Liberty: if you mail out a ballot it would be very different than what our by-laws state about being present at the meeting.
- Elizabeth: If you attend by telephone you can do it without too much technologic expertise.
- Ann: However we frame this we need to be careful of using the word "proxy". However we decide to go forth we are not offering a proxy vote. Proxy is about collecting votes on a slip of paper in isolation without attending a meeting and being educated during the meeting about the issues at hand and form an opinion after the discussion.
- Lorie: There is no congregational meeting on the calendar at this time. Not using proxy voting is stated in the Bylaws. It is under the Membership article: Members need to be present at the meeting.
- Stan: Concerns around Proxy will remain even if there is a call in vote.
- Margaret: In regards to "call-in" Zoom voting. I believe that we would need to iron out the call in option before a full-on real vote is called. I talked with Sean about having difficulty getting into some Zoom meetings due to a password restriction. I am pretty tech savvy, but I couldn't figure it out. Secondly, as a Sunday Zoom Tech Person, I can tell you that it is very difficult to keep track of everyone on a Zoom meeting, especially if they call in. Often their names are not on their screens and they don't know how to change that. I would recommend that people who want to vote call ONE person who is designated to tally up all PHONE votes only. Thanks for letting me join you all tonight!



Racial Attitudes Survey for Faith Communities-Update (1 minute)

This was on our agenda parking lot in February. The professor who was asking permission to conduct this survey in April, has obviously not been able to move forward. We will let her contact us.

5. Social action collections/ Sunday plate: update on process (5 minutes)

- Elizabeth: We have been working on the process to appeal to the congregation and donate during on-line Sunday worship. There will be the continuation of sending information about the Social Action Collection to the weekly email the week prior to the Social Action Sunday.
- Sean: We have a new donation site 'Give Lively', which is a free organization that helps non-profits with donations. Using this site we can send specific donations: one for plate cash and one for Social Action collections.
- Breck thinks that a slide should be present during the Sunday Worship so we can see the number and it should be in the newsletter. Liberty and Sean offered to help the SAC committee with graphics and posting this information.

6. Catching up with all the changes since lock-down (10 minutes)

- Lorie: It is harder to communicate with other members and friends of the church.
- Breck: many people are enjoying the staff's contributions during this time.
- Sean: Thank you to Patrick for his power washing! Church mutual should notify Sean now if something catastrophic happens when nobody is in the building.
- Sean has found a better software program than Power church and is exploring it.
- Let Sean know who is coming and going in the church. There is some traffic coming through the building and Sean would like to know who is coming and going.
- Kelsey: Recommending that we sign in and out of the church.
- Sean: will get a sign-up sheet up for all people coming into the church.
- Pam: Loves getting the emails from the staff about all the different ways the church is reaching out.
- Alex: Caroline Heins is growing and stewarding her gifts during this time.

**VI. Closing Activities (5 min)**

1. Process Review –Breck: Thinks we worked amazingly tonight. There was a use of nodding and waves. Lorie did a good job directing traffic especially when people raised their hands.
2. **Things to do / communicate**
  - Pam proposes that we put the Congregational Meeting and on-line voting on the next Board Agenda
  - Sean: sign-up for people coming into church and asks for people to let him know when people are coming and going.
  - Executive Meeting: looking at the closure of the FB page. The Communication Committee is wanting to have discussions on a more private venue on our website. Our website's blog posts can be open for discussion. Further discussion at Executive meeting. Lorie will send an interim response to both Linda and Laura about their correspondence.
  - Pam: Calling Keith Kron and Connie Goodbread
  - Liberty: communications for Social Action
  - Kelsey and Alex: improve communication with Scott and feedback accomplishing music goals.
  - Elizabeth: Social Action Collection
  - Lorie: gratitude cards
3. Closing Words - Breck

Dates to remember - next month Board Meeting May 20th

Future topics -

- May - vote on congregational meeting plans, discuss facebook thoughts, stewardship considerations, budget choices
- June - reconsider two services
- Policy Review Board -More Pages to come!!!
- Exploration of making Wayne Arnason a minister emeritus
- Endowment policy, who pays what, etc.

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## REPORTS

### President's Report

Stay safe. Stay healthy. Stay home. This is advice that I hope we are all able to continue to follow during this difficult time.

I'd like to add one more line to this mantra---Stay Connected. The staff and volunteers of TJMC are doing more than ever to help us keep in touch. Online Family Worship, Sermon Worship and Coffee Hour on Sundays, Monday Zoom Meeting training with Sean, Tuesday church chats with Leia, the TJMC News and Views blog, a phone tree for church elders, and enhanced emails throughout the week. I encourage everyone to take advantage of these many options and stay connected even though we are physically apart.

The Pledge Drive has now ended. TJMC has received pledges for \$372K toward a goal of \$415K. This represents a \$43K shortfall. Members of the Pledge Drive Committee have spent the last month personally contacting church members who pledged for 2019-20 but did not pledge for 2020-21. I am grateful to the Pledge Drive Committee for doing everything possible to maximize the final pledge amount. The pledge revenue numbers will now go to the Finance Committee where a budget for 2020-21 will be created. We will vote on the budget at the next Congregational Meeting.

The Spring Auction will be indefinitely postponed due to safety concerns and uncertainty about the timeline for public events and gatherings. This loss of income (approximately \$15K) will be reflected in the 2019-20 budget.

In light of the Pledge Drive, the auction and the events of the past six weeks, the Board will be discussing budget shortfall strategies at this meeting. There have been several remedies suggested including asking for donations of the \$1200 economic stimulus check and revisiting our plan to hire a full-time interim minister.

TJMC Bylaws state that we must have a Congregational Meeting every spring. The Board is looking into the possibility of holding the meeting online in the event that isolating-in-place prevents us from meeting at church. We will also investigate online and/or mail-in voting in order to vote on the budget and elect new Board members.

Also at the April Board meeting we will discuss how to support the Music Program and the Director of Music while the church buildings are closed,

enhanced fundraising with the August Yard Sale and PACEM using Summit House for women during May and June.

This month's Board Meeting will, once again, be held as a Zoom Meeting. The meeting will be Wednesday 4/22 at 6PM. The link to the meeting will be available next week. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Thanks to all.

Lorie Craddock  
President, Board of Trustees

### **Vice President's Report (including Personnel)**

#### **Yard Sale**

We are moving forward with the Yard Sale. Kay Frazier has led us (Kay, Beverly Ryan, Sandy Brooks, Janice Walker) to create a furniture only yard sale in late August with flea market tables available for those who would pay for a table to sell their "small yard-sale items." Folks can donate all of their proceeds to church or a percent of sales. Anyone could buy a flea market table. We envision a rolling yard sale, perhaps a page on our website, with pictures of furniture for sale and an occasional big sale through an online auction marketing site. Kay will have a full report of our plans at the next Board meeting.

#### **PACEM**

PACEM has decided to house the ladies in the sanctuary at the Haven until the governor's shelter in place order is lifted. (June 10th?) They would like for us to continue our offer of a site for the ladies for June and warmly appreciate our former offer to host the ladies for longer. We, as a church, hosted the ladies in the HAVEN on the last week of the official season, April 4-10. Members of our church provided food each night, delivering it to the Summit House Parking lot, where Jim Souder and I took it over to the Haven and put it in individual servings. The Women's group of the Islamic Society provided dinner on Friday night and their generosity of food and gift bags assured the ladies that we noticed that the summer hosting will be a more bare-bones necessary service.

#### **Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen**

The Food Pantry disbursed food from the yard of Summit House on April 3rd with great success. WE had about 15 church volunteers and one community volunteer. Margaret Gorman provided masks. We served about 1/3rd more clients than we usually do. WE plan to serve again, in the same way, in May and June, adapting our volume to meet the need. We adapted our distribution so tightly that we actually had leftovers, but karma being kind, we were able to disperse vegetables to the restaurant workers (who had plenty of meat and no vegetables) and meat to

New Beginnings storefront ministry (who had plenty of vegetables and no meat...and served 400 people!)

The 6 Soup Kitchens don't seem to need the church kitchen for assembling their lunch bags, but they are using the Summit House parking lot to receive food from their volunteers. They may be using the tables we have left on the Summit House porch as well.

Aesthetics Committee

Sally Taylor will give a full report of the work of the Glenn Short Committee elsewhere, but behind their hard work is an Aesthetics' Committee who are making the choices about the Parlor color, floor and curtains AND are working towards publicizing the color choices of the Sanctuary and making the decision about it. We say this to make sure that the Glenn Short Committee receives all the accolades for this tremendous work and none of the strong opinions about tasteful and appropriate. Maybe we will keep the members of the Aesthetics Committee secret?

Submitted by Elizabeth Breeden

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### **Treasurer's Report**

### **Treasurer's Report - April 2020**

After a challenging March, I have to say that we are in better financial shape at the end of the month than I expected. We expected that income would suffer with the Church closed for the duration, and it has. However, a large number of people have been making their donations via PayPal or by mailing in checks, and that has made a huge difference. We no longer have a surplus for the year, but the deficit at the end of March was only \$602. Given that our approved budget for FY20 implies an expected deficit at this point in the year of over \$20,000, that small deficit is still good news

The funding for the Payroll Protection Plan loans ran out last week, and more funding is mired in politics as of this writing. We

have, however, NOT been denied yet, and Sean has been told that it is "still in the works". The Economic Impact Disaster Loan is also still being processed.

Pledges for FY21 continue to rise slowly, but we are currently (4/20) short of our goal by \$39,600. I can hope that we might still achieve our goal, but we can not base our budget on hope. Given the other uncertainties in our income it makes sense to postpone the budget process temporarily until we have more clarity. I don't expect any issue having a budget ready in time for a congregational meeting (when we are able to have one), but do want to make it as accurate as possible under the circumstances.

Finally, I can't praise Sean highly enough for all of his work during this difficult time. Along with his work on the loan applications, he has also been trying to get many of our regular bills deferred or reduced during this time. In between all of this he is still performing his normal duties admirably. He has even managed to conduct the research and sign us up for a text-to-donate service, which collected \$76 this Sunday. (Which is, as far as I know, the first time it was publicized.) I can't even imagine how many Zoom meetings he has arranged for congregants this past month!

As relatively good as some of the news is, there are still trends and unknowns that are very concerning. Unfortunately, there are very few of the income issues that we have control of right now. Sean is doing as much as we can proactively at this point. For the rest, we will just have to wait and hope, along with everyone else.

Stan Walker

## Treasurer

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### **Assistant Minister's Report**

Report to Board from Rev. Alex McGee, MDiv, BCC, serving as Assistant Minister  
Written on April 20, 2020 for board meeting on April 22

#### **NUMBERS for March 25-April 20 my time spent:**

4 Meetings per week about getting worship up and running online  
4 New teams organized to support and implement on line worship  
20 Asks for people to be on teams  
10 Total people in process of training  
2 sermons written, delivered by video  
6-8 pastoral outreach per week by phone, card, or email  
1 staff meeting per week, plus a check in with Leia and/or Sean, or Scott  
Plus various other

#### **NARRATIVE for March 25- April 20 church well-being**

In my original call to ministry, I signed up to journey with people through times of unknown and to stay connected to the sacred. That is what we are all doing. Hurray and thank goodness.

Many church members are showing great resilience and courage by learning new tools in order to live out their values of justice and connection. Many other members are showing faith by showing up with vulnerabilities and trusting that their spiritual hungers can be met. We don't have many members unaccounted for, and we do have people looking for those who might be. Thank you to Greta Dershimer and Sandy Brooks. Although it is never complete, I think the leadership is doing a good job of looking out for those seen and unseen; those technologically oriented and those not; those staying home and those required to work. These are our pastoral values in action. Members are living out justice values by engaging in a variety of projects to serve people in our society who are more vulnerable and have new needs at this time. Examples are the mask-making, PACEM, food pantry.

The paid leaders are learning new ways of working together as we adapt to new needs and tools. Weekly meetings are useful. Caroline and Leia have been great role models of online worship and shifting communications to be both pastoral and logistical. Sean has focused on logistics that will make connections possible.

When the Exec Committee made the decision on March 11 to close the church, I soon realized that getting online worship up and running would take three stages,

which I outlined in the March board report: A few weeks of looking into Feasibility; a few weeks of setting up Infrastructure; and online Implementation. We have succeeded in this, and April 12, was our first online worship, especially meaningful for those who value Easter.

\*Thank you to Liberty Powers and Margaret Migas who did research and shared ideas in weekly meetings with me for the past month.

\*Thank you to the "Physical Sanctuary worship weaver team" who reviewed the changing situation and decided whether or not to commit to being the "Online worship weaver team." Bob Gross and Margo Gill have stepped aside, opting out of online worship leadership during this pandemic. Please give them your gratitude for their leadership so far. The new online team is: Frank Dukes, Laura Horn, and Debby Norton.

*Challenges* are: new visual and audio setting; file sharing.

*Strengths* are: courage and willingness to experiment together.

\*Thank you to Margaret Migas, the new leader of the Tech Team, which has two roles: "Sunday morning A/V" (audio-visual), and "Sunday morning Gatekeeper". She has been blazing the trail and integrating Julia Landis, Achsah Carrier, and that team will be joined by Sean Skally, Bailey Reed, and perhaps some others. They continue to learn.

*Challenges* include: knowledge of file sharing tools; home internet bandwidth.

*Strengths* are: time for rehearsals, sense of humor, sharing knowledge.

\*Thank you to Christine Gresser for offering to help and accepting a brand new role of "Online Joys and Sorrows Coordinator." She and I agreed to a plan for creating and monitoring this new system, which she has done over the past two weeks. We have a plan going forward for rounding out the team and implementing a system with maintenance.

I have adjusted my goals for sermons in this new online format during the pandemic. Previously, in the sanctuary, I had hoped for the congregation to see many faces in the pulpit of local faith groups and diverse UU ministers. This was generally successful for July through January, as we lived through many emotions after the departure of the lead minister, with interim. Now, in this first six weeks of church being closed, due to need and the new flexibility of video, I will have offered the sermon three times. In May, I will not give a sermon, because other voices are available. After that, I'll be back to once a month usually. I think the important thing is for me to do sermons once or twice a month, and to have UU messages coming in the online sermons, especially speakers familiar with our national UU movement, to bring us messages of what is working well. As a result, I hope the congregation will feel bolstered that it is connected to others who are coping by relying on values of love and justice. Another result of seeing various UU leaders is that the congregation will be educated/exposed about the many ways a clergyperson can look/feel when considering future calling of an interim or settled minister.



I continue to do various things that are part of the life of ministry: answer questions about marriages and burials; respond to news of sickness and death; collaborate with and support colleagues in the region and the country. I seek for all my organizational interactions to cultivate spiritual development in congregation members, no matter the task at hand.

I hope that the board will, as ever, read the newsletters and articles from national UU leaders to consider new ideas and best practices during the pandemic. Two items of note: 1) many UU leaders are encouraging boards to realize the time and energy of learning to do online worship and to support staff in finding renewal time while meeting this challenge; 2) as churches face financial issues, there are excellent resources available from the UUA.

Please do your own spiritual practices to nourish your well-spring of wisdom. Please ponder what your values and deep wisdom tell you about how this congregation can live in love and justice during this time. The way we respond to this challenge sets the tone for how we live into the future. What do we want the next generation to receive?

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

#### **Report to the Board**

**April 2020**

Leia Durland-Jones, Director of Faith Development

Your church staff continues to work diligently to keep our church community safe, connected and supported during this surreal time.

Our **online Family Worship** services at 10:15 on Sunday mornings are creating connection while offering spiritual nourishment and faith development. These multigenerational services last about forty-five minutes and are designed to reach across the lifespan with story, song, images, sharing and ritual. The weekly at home **#chalicechallenge** is a fun way to invite participants to create a chalice out of found items at home and submit an image that is shared during worship. Our weekly meditation hymn, *There is a Love*, includes photos of our church families/members that they submit as well as the names of those we are holding in our hearts and circles of concern. All ages are participating in this service and using the chat box as well as participating in breakout rooms to share joys and sorrows.

Caroline does a great job with technical and in the moment support for these live services.

We offered Family Worship on March 22, 29, April 5, 12, 19 and plan to do so indefinitely.

Attendance has ranged weekly from 76 to 126 people.

I continue to **meet weekly** on Mondays with Sean and also have a regular check-in with Alex. Our weekly staff meetings on Wednesday mornings, attended by all staff, help keep us connected and able to identify ways to support and assist each other in our work. It is wonderful to have all of the staff contributing inspirational/pastoral articles for the church emails and blog.

My Tuesday afternoon weekly **church chats on Zoom** have 6-8 participants each week and offer a consistent opportunity for people to check-in and connect with others from church.

Our weekly virtual **coffee/social hour** attracts between 20-25 participants. I have been serving as the manager/technical support/gatekeeper and created a handout for group leaders to use to facilitate small conversation groups via Zoom. Breck Gastinger, Christine Gresser, Caroline Heins, Gayle Floyd, Frank Dukes, Achsah Carrier and Shirley Paul all agreed to host the breakout rooms. I have received positive feedback about having breakout rooms—although this past Sunday we ran into a Zoom glitch and had to stay in one big group (of 25) and that worked too.

**Caroline** and I have a daily check-in to assess priorities and tasks for the week/day. She has taken the lead on producing both the Wednesday inspirational email as well as the regular Friday email. We work together on the assessing and curating the materials for the Friday email and she does a great job of assembling them. I echo those who have expressed appreciation for Caroline's articles in the church emails. In support of our RE families, Caroline recorded two Spirit Play stories for families to access and use at home. She is also packing up Summit House in preparation for our hosting of PACEM in June.

**Creating Family Worship** takes a chunk of my time each week as does **resources curation** (for worship and or supporting church life online.)

I continue to write and edit the **weekly Faith Development e-newsletter** that comes out on Saturday mornings.

As church life is virtual for now, I am paying more attention to the church **Facebook** page and posting there more frequently as well as send more to Achsah for inclusion on the **church blog and webpage**.

The virtual **Talent Show** on April 10 was great fun! Achsah is working to upload the acts of those who gave permission for their performance to be shared on the webpage—so there will be on demand performances available soon. Thanks to everyone who participated!

I met with the **RE Committee** virtually in April and we plan to meet again in May. While I include family faith development activities in the weekly Faith Development e-newsletter, it is clear from checking the click-throughs on Constant Contact that only a few families are accessing these materials. Feedback I have received from families with younger children is that they continued to be maxed out managing the details of day to day life and trying to do schoolwork from home.

**Our youth programs continue to meet online successfully!** Neighboring Faith, Coming of Age and YRUU continue to meet weekly. It is a joy to pop into their Zoom rooms and connect with them. I am thankful to the advising teams for the willingness to continue meeting with our youth. **Linda Dukes**, our mentor support liaison, and I had two meetings with **Coming of Age mentors** to support them in their continued efforts to mentor COA participants this spring.

Our **Special Friends** church pen pal program has had modest interest expressed with about ten participants. We will have a special gathering for the Special Friends participants so that they can meet in person once we can gather again.

Regarding **Stewardship**, I am working with Linda Dukes to continue identifying people we can ask to pledge who might not have been asked directly yet. Our hope is to continue to close the gap even though the pledge drive is officially over. Caroline and I will be meeting this week to go over some database updates. Sean is working to help us improve our current database woes. I am thrilled that we have added giving by text to our fundraising tools. Yay Sean!

To give my mind and body a break from so much screen time, I have been working (with help from Annalee!) on cataloging the **Faith Development library** in Summit House. It is a big project that we are tackling a bit at a time. It allows for a sense of accomplishment and we will have a lending library for parents when we can be together in person again.

**Pastoral support** continues to be a need as well as **resource curation** for congregants going through various challenges. I am grateful to be called upon for these requests.

There has been such a **tremendous response from volunteers in our congregation** to help create ways for us to stay connected to one another during this scary and strange time. Thanks to everyone who has stepped up and said, “yes!” whether by running an errand, making a mask, making a phone call or by staying home (which can sometimes feel like one of the hardest things to do!)

I was reflecting with friends and family the other day about the pandemic. I shared that one of my hopes and prayers is that when people in our congregation look back on this time they say, "It was my church that really helped me make it through." Thank you for being that church.

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

1. DAF Position
  - a. DAF Hours for March: 150 of 120 hours worked
  - b. Approximately 55 hours of meetings attended

2. Finance

- a. March 2020 Reports: Statement of Activity

	Jul – Mar 2020	Jul – Mar 2019
Total Revenue	\$403,923.72	\$376,165.35
Total Expenditures	\$404,525.94	\$380,651.90
Net Operating Revenue	\$ -602.22*	\$ -4,486.55

\*The expenditure is over for the month due to spending \$3790 on Summit House porch.

3. COVID-19 Financial Info: Applied for the EIDL and the PPP. EIDL application accepted. PPP application submitted, waiting to hear back on acceptance.
    4. Saving Money
      - a. Created a Give Lively account to help raise funds. It allows text to donate and is free to use for non-profits.
      - b. Migrated all three Zoom accounts to the UUA main account. Our fees are reduced, and we can support up to 300 participants.
      - c. Looking to work with utilities and other bills to potentially defer or delay payments
    5. Rental updates:
      - a. Income for March 2020: \$2,790.00
      - b. New Renters: None
      - c. Donated Rentals: None
      - d. Returning Renters: CHEC, C-ville Time Exchange, We Agnostics

- e. CFOOT donated \$1500 to say thank you for allowing the use of space.
- f. Rent significantly down due to COVID-19 closure. No renters have asked for a refund.
- 6. Human Resources
  - a. Emailed and displayed Employee rights under the CARE act
- 7. Facilities
  - a. Buildings
    - i. Patrick Migas graciously donated his time to power wash the church building entrance, remembrance garden, and Summit house porch.



- ii. Worked with GSTC on flushing the drains to the sewer

- iii. Repair Document Link:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OLkvJvRcT-esb9nMaP78AlPyTCcsWvocCZlorFnX0tc/edit?usp=sharing>
- iv. Grounds - Nothing to report, other than Thank you to Jim S and Walter H. for their hard work on the grounds.

8. Safety

- a. No safety incidents
- b. COVID-19 Response
- c. Tracked three requests through the volunteer tracker spreadsheet
- d. Trained over 40 people on how to use Zoom
- e. Created a leadership training for worship
- f. Created a consistent Zoom training time, 11 am every Monday.
- g. Created a third account for Sermon Worship

Wins:

- Zoom Training
- Proactive in working on COVID-19 issues

Opportunities:

- Behind on repair projects

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**Membership Report**

\_TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of Feb. 29, 2019: 377

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of March 31, 2020, 2020: 377 members

Sally Taylor, Membership Tracker for TJMC Membership  
Committee

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**Personnel Committee**

Personnel Committee

Both Scott and Alex's Contracts have been renewed and approved by the Board and signed. We will roll out the new Staff Evaluation process next month by providing a shortened version for Sean's 6-month Evaluation. We are doing research on providing a contract for the Interim Minister.

Submitted by Elizabeth Breeden

**Interim Ministry Search Committee**

TJMC Interim Minister Search Committee Report

April, 2020

The interim search committee has successfully submitted the application for an Interim Minister to the UUA on their Ministry Search Application Portal. Keith Kron Reported that our application has been received. He said that the Transitions Office will release the record sheets of interested ministers via the MinistrySearch system on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

In the meantime, search committee members are reading the Transition Ministry Handbook and getting ready to review records.

[https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/transitional\\_ministry\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/transitional_ministry_handbook.pdf)

Interim Search Committee

Pam McIntire  
Beth Jaeger-Landis  
Kelsey Cowger  
Matthew Diasio  
Greg Townsend  
Larry Moulis

### **Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia**

Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia  
Report to the TJMC UU Board  
April, 2020

The Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia has been in a holding pattern since TJMC cancelled the Congregational Meeting to vote on Leia's ordination which was scheduled for March 29. We hope to reschedule the congregational meeting as soon as is possible.

Below is a summary of Task Force's actions since the first meeting on July 30, 2019.

We facilitated Congregational Conversations on  
November 17, 2019  
January 12, 2019

We conducted tabling on  
January 5, 2020  
January 12, 2020  
January 19, 2020  
January 26, 2020

We wrote News and Views Posts on

10/9/2019

10/28/2019

12/16/2019

2/27/2019

We made monthly reports to the board

Beginning August 2019

We prepared and distributed documents to present information to the congregation

Posted online on Uucharlottesville.org

Handed out in church

Summary snail mailed to congregants

Available at Task Force Table

1. Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia First Report –  
Vision, Questions and Answers
2. Task Force Document with Updates in response to conversations with  
congregants
3. The Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia  
Questions from Congregation Conversation, November 17, 2019
4. Summary Document
5. Letter to congregation snail mailed to all congregants

We hosted Tea and Conversation with Leia on

February 2, 2020

March 11, 2020

Perhaps the most important activity of the Task Force has been numerous one-on-one conversations with congregants throughout these last 9 months.

We look forward to the Congregational Meeting to vote on whether to ordain Leia.

Task Force Members:

Lorie Craddock

Elizabeth Breeden

Larry Moulis

Dawn Dirks,

Laura Horn

Elaine Chapman



Karen Prairie  
Mary Rose Curtis (honorary member)  
Pam McIntire (Chair)

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**Glenn Short Sanctuary Capital Endowment Fund Committee**

To: TJMC Board of Trustees      From: Sally Taylor, Chair GST Committee  
April, 2020 Report from the Glenn Short Trust Committee

We have asked Sean to arrange for Beck Cohen to drain the pipes for the old HVAC system and disconnect the boiler since that is connected with doing the spring maintenance of all the church heating/cooling systems. We also want to discover how much it will cost to remove the boiler and create a locked storage room in that space. There are too many electrical panels there to allow any other purpose.

Whitley Roofing and Sheet Metal Company completed the installation of the new downspouts and has been paid. We are waiting for an estimate from them to put gutter guards on the sanctuary gutters. RotoRooter cleaned out the underground pipes that take the water from the downspouts through the underground storm drains.

Commonwealth Glass and Mirror has replaced the damaged panes in the parlor and comfort room but is waiting for the glass for the sanctuary panes to arrive from the supplier. The interior storm windows are installed in the parlor. The foyer door to the playground arrived damaged and had to be sent back to the manufacturer. The other doors have been ordered but have not arrived.

The Aesthetics Committee has approved the paint colors for the parlor and the flooring material for the parlor. They are discussing the sanctuary paint colors and would like to get input from the congregation. They plan to propose 3-4 paint combinations and encourage congregants to indicate which one they prefer. They have not yet figured out this process. They have decided that the parlor windows will have light blocking curtains. They have asked Robyn Fogler to give us an estimate on the cost. The Aesthetics Committee has decided to paint the parlor mirror and recover the parlor pillows. They are considering what church artwork would be most appropriate in the parlor.

United Painting has sealed and painted the parlor windows. Commonwealth Glass installed the parlor storm windows. The contents of the parlor cabinets and the

parlor artwork were removed and stored. United Painting Plus has painted the parlor  
woodwork, walls and ceiling. Dick and Don removed the parlor rug and cut it into  
pieces small enough to transport and dispose of. We ordered the flooring from  
Lowe's and hired United Painting Plus to install the flooring on April 13 & 14.

Attached below is a summary of the Financial status of the Glenn Short Fund.

Dick Somer, Don Landis or I have been at church whenever contractors are  
working.

Respectfully submitted, Sally Taylor

#### **April 2020 Report from the GST fund**

<b><u>Starting fund:</u></b>	<b><u>\$287,970</u></b>
<b>Beck/Cohen (new HVAC units)</b>	<b>\$85,202</b>
<b>United Painting Plus (exterior painting)</b>	<b>\$15,100</b>
<b>Painting metal roof</b>	<b>\$ 1,200</b>
<b>Audio Visual Services (new equipment and labor costs)</b>	<b>\$5,702</b>
<b>Commonwealth Glass (CNW Company LLC)</b>	<b>\$43,699</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Includes playground door</li><li>- 3 interior hexagonal storm windows</li><li>- Sanctuary storm windows</li><li>- Storm windows for comfort room &amp; balcony stairway window</li><li>- Edgewood Lane door replacement</li><li>- Rugby Road/Remembrance Garden doors</li></ul>	
<b>Whitley Services (gutters and downspouts)</b>	<b>\$14,957</b>
<b>United Painting Plus (interior painting)</b>	<b>\$14,500</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Includes sealing and painting windows (3500)</li><li>- Church parlor (2500)</li><li>- Sanctuary including ceiling (8500)</li></ul>	

Roto-Rooter		\$ 592.48
United Painting Plus (church parlor new flooring)	pending	\$1300.00
Purchase of parlor flooring	pending	\$2565.48
Robyn Fogler (curtains for church parlor)		
estimate		pending
Whitley Services (gutter guards for downspouts)		
estimate		pending
Insulation in attic space above classrooms		pending
Edgewood Lane entrance flooring repair		
Painting pew ends		
<b><u>Balance of GST as of 4/12/2020</u></b>		<b>\$ 103,152.04</b>

**(this total does not take into account pending estimates)**

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#### **Stewardship / Pledge Drive**

A very small group of us have continued to work on wrapping up the pledge drive. As of this morning, we have \$375,408 (177 pledge units), leaving a gap of \$39,582 from the goal of \$415,000. Cathey updates the Give Lively total as she receives pledges:

<https://secure.givelively.org/donations/thomas-jefferson-memorial-church/2020-2021-stewardship-drive>

We have called or emailed the people on the list that Cathey generated of folks who pledged last year but not yet this year. That was worthwhile, as a number did pledge.

Yesterday I emailed the 13 RE families who haven't yet pledged, as identified by Leia. As you can see, the vast majority of RE families have already pledged.

The only other idea (presented by Leia) is to contact people who gave one-time donations last year but who did not pledge.

A positive result from the contacts has been that a number of people have responded to me about how they are doing during this stressful time.

Please realize that the Pledge Drive team is pretty much finished (though I'll continue to follow up with any leads) and that there is no functioning Stewardship Committee.

--submitted by Linda Dukes

### **Music Committee / Director of Music**

TO: TJMC Board

FROM: Music Committee

RE: Activities during COVID-19

The music committee has had its basic activities radically curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic. The choir was essentially shut down when its rehearsals were cancelled on March 12, and we expect them to be inactive for the duration. Other musical “events” have to be submitted electronically: these are either solo performances or music created by people housed together in semi-quarantine.

Over the past few weeks, we have submitted recordings for musical elements of the online services (hymns and meditative selections). This has inevitably involved technological difficulties, some of which you have undoubtedly experienced in attending those services. Our plan for the coming Sunday (4/19) is to switch to live performance. If that doesn't work, we will regroup and continue to work on recordings.

We are aware of UU musicians who have created lovely videos during this time, many of which have been released for the use of the general UU public. One of those (“Spirit of Life”) has already been used. We have been keeping Alex McGee, Leia Durland-Jones, and other members of the on-line task force aware of other excellent videos, many of which will presumably begin to appear very soon in subsequent Sunday services. The AUUMM (Association of UU Music Ministries, the new name for UUMN, the UU Musicians' Network) remains a source we will continue to exploit.

Creating our own musical material has been a challenge. To produce new recordings and videos will require acquiring the proper hardware (e.g., computer microphones) and software (new programs, like A Capella). Over the past few weeks, we have tried producing things with equipment we have: for example, the video Kelsey created for the Talent Show, or multi-voiced recordings submitted by Scott. We hope to continue such efforts. Please be aware, though, of the challenges we've experienced in editing and polishing such recordings.

Many people have requested a “virtual choir” through Zoom. Our sense is that the current technology won’t support it. Singing in a choir requires in-the-moment precision, and the various inconsistencies in computer connection thus far have resulted in garbled musical performances. We’re well aware of “virtual choirs” posted on-line, but those choirs are not live but recorded and carefully edited to bring timings into alignment. They also tend to come from larger congregations that can draw on performers of professional quality. If we learn of any new ways to do choral performance technologically, we’ll pursue it. Otherwise, since the choir year normally ends in mid-May, we will probably have to wait until the fall.

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## **CORRESPONDENCE**

To the Board,

There are a few of us still working on the Pledge Drive wrap-up but we still have over a \$42,000 gap between the total of the pledges and the goal of \$415,000.

I know this is a very challenging time and everyone is experiencing this pandemic in different ways. Most people I've talked with feel less productive and focused than usual and yet feeling the need to be connected. I've seen a major gap in the church information systems for years (while working on the canvass ages ago ) that we might be able to begin addressing now.

I propose we do an all-church survey with three purposes:

- 1) to gather information on how congregants are doing and their needs during the pandemic and funneling the information to the appropriate teams (e.g. pastoral, RE, membership, volunteer coordinating, covenant group formation, etc.)
- 2) to gather historical information on how individuals have participated in the church in the past/present (e.g. committees they've served on, participation in RE as teachers or for their children, projects they've participated in, etc.).

This information would be very useful both for pledge drives and for volunteer recruitment. It is hard to make cold calls to folks we don't know if we have no information about who they are and their history with the church. (Also, I heard when a congregant died recently there is no record of congregants' involvement in the church to help in preparing memorial services.)

3) to help update our church directory.

I don't think this survey needs to be a formally-designed one that uses up-to-date tech systems (just adds layers of complexity and expertise and volunteer/staff time). A few of us could draft some questions, submit them to the board for editing, and the office could email it out. These are not the type of questions that require automatic tabulation, so a small group could read the responses (realistically, I think we'd be lucky to get 50?), and forward them to the proper teams. As for entering them into a data base (which we'd need eventually), that could wait a few months.

Thank you for all you are doing to help the church survive this crisis and to re-envision who we are and how we serve each other.

Please let me know if you have an interest in this project. I could work on recruiting a few people to help with it. (Now that our anti-racism curriculum is finished and on our church's website--yea!, I have a bit more time.)

Thanks for considering this idea.

Linda Dukes

2/13/2020

Dear Achsah and Board:

I appreciate the information on the sudden closing of the public group Facebook page--thanks to Achsah. History: I objected to the idea of a TJMC group FB page when it was first launched on ethical grounds for two reasons: 1) FB's exploitative business model, and 2) its effects on TJMC based on published research on how in the aggregate, FB increases division and loneliness and undermines actual participation in community. Both reasons are mainstream knowledge in media now. Given FB's indifference to truth and its profiting from advertising that endangers our democracy, I believe it would be ethically more appropriate for TJMC to close its FB account now. So I hereby would like to make that request to the Board.

If open online dialogue is needed for TJMC to function or grow, we could explore an ethical form such as [the Indie Web](#) or a members-password forum in its own section of the TJMC main website.

At first, when Erik began to promote FB, I raised concerns about FB's lack of ethics and how to ensure that FB would not divide the congregation into an "in crowd" who use it and those who do not (sometimes for ethical, sometimes for internet access, reasons). Erik was very enthusiastic about using social media to attract new people to TJMC, and promised it would never become a faction or private group page, because its purpose was to build community, not subdivide it or force members to join FB to remain aware of key developments. He also promised that only all-church announcements and light posts would be permitted on that page, and that there would be *no substantive discussions of TJMC life or issues allowed to take place there*. Otherwise, FB would silo congregants into those who use it and those who don't or who boycott FB, so parts of the congregation

would miss out on significant sharing and group communications and understandings.

It has become what some members have been concerned about. (Though without discussion, it could be fair to assume "some" might be only me!) If that turns out to be the case, I lovingly maintain that a lone voice can still be prescient at times; others' voices often have been so for me. Overall, factionalizing the church into FB users and nonusers and/or boycotters, with minimal moderation of posts, has undermined comity for our congregation, I believe.

I recommend that TJMC FB use be disbanded entirely for its anti-democratic character, but if the Board decides otherwise, I disagree with a unilateral decision to shut out those who try to follow what's happening there. So I'll CC the Board for their consideration. (Please include this correspondence in Board Minutes.)

Thanks again. I appreciate the information and all responses.

With love,

Laura Wallace

*Sally Taylor's thoughts: The congregation never contemplated a pandemic which closed down the church for a long time and interfered with the spring congregational meeting. There is nothing in the bylaws which specifies an in person congregational meeting mainly because it was unthinkable for it to be otherwise. All of our congregational meetings have been in person. We*



*believe in the democratic process. We have debated in the past whether or not people had to be present to vote and time after time the congregation and board have decided that you have to be present to vote--no proxy voting. And we have in the past voted on the budget and voted it down and then went for months without an approved budget and instead operating on the old budget. Board vacancies can be filled by the board temporarily until the next congregational meeting is called. A poll would not be acceptable. That would mean no debate, no opportunity for discussion, no chance for anyone to object to what the board proposes. Not democratic and I will say again that we believe fundamentally in democracy. It would be possible to have a zoom congregational meeting but that would exclude people without access to computers and zoom. And I would think it would be a nightmare to run a meeting like that. The bylaws do require that notice of the meeting be announced from the pulpit the Sunday before the meeting---until we meet again we won't be able to fulfill that requirement but I doubt that anyone except me would care about that. And it specifies using Robert's Rules which only apply to in person meetings. How would you handle a secret ballot request? It only takes 5 people to make a vote on the budget (or anything else!) a secret ballot and I would think that would tank an on-line meeting. And there may be more than 5 members who would object to an on-line meeting but then I do tend to look for potential problems so that they can be addressed beforehand. I would advise against doing any form of on-line congregational meeting and call an in person one as soon as we are back in operation again. So my only caveat is what is the board going to do about hiring an interim minister? I don't think the congregation has to vote on that. It is strictly a board decision--Am I right? The rest could wait until the congregation can be together again. But that is only my opinion. There is nothing in the bylaws that prohibits an on-line meeting because there were no such things when it was written..... Sally*

*Hi Lorie,*

*I appreciate the opportunity to collaborate on this. And I am looking forward to hearing what others think. (Hi, Sally.)*

*I agree, Lorie, with your interpretation of "presence." I would be comfortable interpreting online presence as presence per our bylaws. And:*

*The thing I think we have to be really careful of here is to not exclude those for whom an electronic meeting or electronic voting isn't accessible. So I think we would need to allow another kind of voting.*

*If we come up with a clever way to allow all members to vote (privately/secretly) then we probably needn't address proxies, but something tells me that good governance would let a member give their proxies to other members for purposes of voting at any congregational meeting. So maybe we fix that now, too.*

*Yours, with appreciation and optimism,*

*Laura*

**From Larry Moulis:**

**I can offer a few technical opinions, and I am not a lawyer either.**

**First my general thought is that the bylaws are silent on exactly how a meeting is to be conducted.**

**If, during a pandemic, the board decides to move towards online meetings, I can see no legal or moral objection as long as the online meetings are not constructed to be an impediment to voter participation – meaning a deliberate attempt to exclude those who are not online citizens.**

**Second, with respect to Sally's opinion below I can offer these technical opinions – not commenting on her opinion.**

**Zoom meetings:**

- **No one needs to have Zoom other than the host – the church in this case.**
- **Anyone with a telephone can join the audio of a zoom meeting – I think that technological bar is sufficiently low.**

- Anyone with a computer and current web browser, or an Android or Apple or Windows mobile phone and an app from their respective app stores (Zoom Cloud Meetings) will be able to see video (and audio as well) – but I do not see video as required for your purposes unless you make video a requirement (hold up your voting card would not be recommended)
- Secret ballots – there are lots of ways to do this. Emailed google forms would be one, a Survey Monkey type poll would be another – but these would exclude telephone only users. I think however that the church has the capability to organize an answering service to take calls from the few people that insist on using a telephone. The voter can provide a unique identifier that identifies the vote as valid, but does not tell you who voted, and their vote would be recorded. I suspect there are answering services that would do this if church members do not or should not man the phones. Others can use a survey monkey or google form poll.
- Lastly, I think that churches all over the country would define ‘from the pulpit’ to mean whatever they transmit over zoom or youtube on Sunday mornings.

Thanks and stay healthy!

-Larry