

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Charlottesville
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
March 22, 2023

Meeting hosted on Zoom at 6:30pm.

Major focus for Board in 2022-23

Action on our Developmental Goals:

- 1. We want to define a broad shared vision of our purpose for being a congregation so that we can feel energized, dedicated, and aligned in the use of our resources.*
- 2. We want to be a more welcoming, inclusive, and anti-racist congregation, cultivating greater diversity in our membership and stronger engagement with the broader Charlottesville community.*
- 3. We want to strengthen our Stewardship Ministry to manifest passionate support of our mission with time, wisdom, and finances.*
- 4. We want to strengthen our internal processes and communication skills, build trust, and become more emotionally and operationally functional than we have been historically.*

In attendance – Pam McIntire, President; Bev Ryan, Vice-President; Kay Frazier, Treasurer; Hayley Owens, Secretary; Renee Brett, Chris Little, Steve Brecker, Breck Gastinger, At-Large Members; Tim Temerson, Lead Minister; Rev. Leia Durland-Jones, Minister of Faith Development; Sean Skally, Director of Admin and Finance

Absent – Jimmy Gorham, At-Large Member

Guests –

I. Opening - (20 min)

- Opening and Closing Words: Kay
- Reporter: Renee
- Time Keeper: Chris
- Process Observer: Breck

Reporter When you are the Board Reporter you can post your notes directly to the website with this link: <http://uucharlottesville.org/post> and someone from the communications team will review it and put it online. You can also send the text to Caroline and/or let her know there's a post on the website.

1. Opening Words -
2. Check-In: one to two minute check-in:
3. Community Time / Public Comment -
4. Acceptance of Agenda

MOTION: Bev made the motion to accept the agenda.
Motion was seconded by Steve.

The Board approves the agenda with a change. Added Extending Rev. Tim's Contract to the beginning of business.

5. Written Correspondence:

- a. Received a letter from Greta Dershermer and The Caring Circle of 8 on 02/22/23 with a plan to improve the procedures for identifying new recipients of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet. Included at the end of the meeting packet.
 - i. Board appreciates the Caring Circle of 8's work and effort to widen the circle!
- a. Laura Wallace sent an email asking the board to read [this article and comments](#) (*Senior care is crushingly expensive. Boomers aren't ready*) and address how we might take care of one another (see ElderNet proposal).
 - i. The board discussed what role our congregation might play. Chris Little and Rev Tim to discuss further. Noted that our monthly Food Sharing Sundays are meant to support those in our congregation that are struggling financially.

II. Electronic Motions (1 min)

- 1. Approval of the February 2023 minutes happened electronically.

III. Developmental Goals Action Plans and Reports (25 min)

- **Goal 1: Chris**
- Cottage Conversations are finished and were very active. 16 total conversations. Over 115 people participated (not including the children). Authentic, valuable insight from many people. The taskforce will meet in the coming week to begin translating this rich material into a report and draft some statements. There was a strong theme of enriching our congregational community and reaching out to our wider community.
- **Goal 3: Hayley and Kay**
- So far, there have been 20-21 new and returning pledgers (pledges totalling 25K) We have used all of our matching money to date. 430K Pledged total. 9K match. About 50 people that pledged last year that did not pledge this year yet. It has been going very well. On average there has been a 5% increase in pledge amounts. The feeling around the drive has been really positive and pleasurable to speak with people and see their reaction to the drive this year. Plan to survey people after the drive to understand what aspects of the drive were effective.
- SSC is working on doing research on setting up planned giving, facility assessments, and what a capital plan would look like. Interested in doing a service fair in September that highlights the different groups at our congregation.

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

IV. Reports (20 min) - Written reports can be found at the end of the minutes. *Votes mentioned in reports will be taken in the business portion of the meeting.*

1. **President's Report** (Written)- Pam McIntire
2. **Vice President's Report** (Written) - Beverly Ryan
 - a. Excited about fun multicultural events to come.
 - b. Retirement information is in the policy manual.
 - c. Connie Cheatham Award committee is meeting with a notice going out this Sunday to encourage nominations. They will award the recipient in May at the volunteer appreciation service.
3. **Treasurer's Report** (Written) - Kay Frazier
 - a. Have a Budget draft and will finalize once we have the pledge drive numbers.
 - b. Drafting the budget has been a more collaborative process this year. Working with Rev. Tim and the Personnel Committee.
4. **Lead Minister's Report** - (Written) - Rev. Tim
 - a. Rev Tim and Leia are excited about the April 16th Sunday. This will be our 80th birthday party, the sign dedication, and a celebration of the wrap up of the stewardship campaign. Feels like a new beginning. Scott has asked John Derth to play that Sunday with a special musical exit to the portico for the sign dedication.
5. **Minister of Faith Development's Report** (Written) - Rev. Leia Durland-Jones
 - a. There is no RE committee this year as there is no volunteer capacity.
6. **Director of Administration and Finance Report** (Oral) - Sean Skally
 - a. Fire escape at the Summit House is done and we are ready to go!
 - b. The new retirement plan is more complicated than it used to be.
 - c. The non-profit tax status paperwork needs to be finalized before submission. Bev and Sean need to meet to finalize this.
7. **Building Use Task Force:** (Oral)
 - a. Last night's meeting has been rescheduled. This will be the last meeting till the taskforce is called upon again.
 - b. Two people reached out with concerns about the changes in the Mask policy.
8. **Membership Report** (Written) - Beth Jaeger-Landis
Membership stands at: 311
9. **Board Liaison Reports**
 - Nom Committee: (Oral) Breck Gastinger

- Very busy! Meeting every few weeks to tie down a slate for nominations. Talking to a lot of folks.
- Nominating committee can help rebuild the RE committee by suggesting this opportunity to people and sharing information with Rev. Leia
- Personnel Committee (Written) - Beverly Ryan
- Communications Committee (Oral) - Steve Brecker
 - The Communications Committee is doing an amazing job. Pledge Drive, the website, updates happen so quickly!

IV. Business (25 min)

- **Extending Rev. Tim's Contract (Bev): 5 min**
 - **Motion:** The board voted unanimously in favor of renewing Rev. Tim's contract for another year.
- **Masking Update Follow-up (Pam): 10 min**
 - Discussed in Building Use Task Force
- **Summit House Repairs Update (Sean): 5 min**
 - HVAC system is installed! February the utility bill went down almost \$200.
 - Ramp railing needs to be repaired. Bristol fund may be able to fund this.
- **General Assembly Delegates (Pam): 5 min**
 - UU C'ville gets 8 delegates at the GA
 - **Motion:** Board unanimously votes to approve sending Wayne Arnason, Kirstin Fritz (seminary student), and Christine Gresser as delegates to the 2023 General Assembly
 - Confirm if they would be interested: Mike Baldwin, Frank and Linda Dukes, Kim Grover
- **Next Board Meeting (hybrid or online?) (Pam): 5 min**
 - Should meet at least once in person for a celebratory event. Final meeting together as a board.
 - April meeting will be on Zoom, May or June we will meet in person with potluck before meeting.

V. Review Agenda Items for Next Meeting (5 min)

- Would like to invite Kirstin Fritz to next month's meeting. Have her on the agenda at the beginning of the meeting
- Budget for next meeting
- Start prepping for congregational meeting

VI. Closing Activities (5 min)

1. Process Review –
2. Things to do / communicate
3. Closing Words

Dates to remember

Next UU Charlottesville Executive Board Meeting: April 13, 2023

Next UU Charlottesville Board Meeting: April 26, 2023

*Minutes respectfully submitted,
Hayley Owens, Board Secretary*

Reports to the Board**President's Report to the Board: March 2023**

This month I want to write about all UUCville has accomplished since July in our current fiscal year. I wanted to list some of those things, so we can appreciate how far we have come in a few important areas of our congregation life: supporting each other and developing our sense of community, being good stewards of all our resources, and supporting the larger Charlottesville community. There are so many things going on, I cannot list them all, but here are some of the things we have accomplished.

Supporting Each Other and Developing our Sense of Community:

In the three long years of the pandemic, no one has become sick with COVID while participating in congregation events. This is truly an impressive record! Many thanks to our Building Use Task Force for their excellent guidance. Thankfully, we are now at a low enough COVID rate in our community that masking is now optional in our facilities.

Rev Tim, our Developmental Minister, started with us August 1st. Rev Tim is a joy to work with! He leads with vulnerability, vision, wisdom, commitment and hard work. He is inspiring and we are grateful to have him!

Our expertly led multi-platform services have been accessible and inclusive. Many people have expressed appreciation for being able to come in person and to also zoom in when they are traveling or have moved away from Charlottesville. Videos of the sermons are available through our website on Youtube.

Our fabulous Communications Committee works daily to keep the website up to date and relevant. It is easy to find out what is happening and check on all aspects of congregation life. Our Wednesday and Friday emails keep us connected with both heartening and informative posts.

We have had 16 Cottage Conversations related to our Developmental Goal 1 of defining a broad shared vision of our purpose. Well over a hundred congregants have participated! We have many groups that meet varying needs of our congregants: UU Parents Weekly Conversation Circle, UUCville Women's Friendship Group, UUCville Young Adult Group, Youth RE groups, Children's RE classes, Adult RE classes, the CareNet Team, the Active Hope Faith Development Group, the Active Minds Discussion Group, and the Interweave LGBTQ+ Fellowship Group. We have seven active Covenant groups, once a month newcomers circles, and weekly zooming with Rev Tim.

Our Pastoral Care team is there for us when we most need love and support. We have had so much fun with the pool gathering in August, the Auction Party in September, social dancing for all ages and numerous soup and cake luncheons on Sundays. Our hospitality crew really knows how to celebrate!

Being good stewards of all our resources

We appointed a Stewardship Steering Committee with a charge to develop both short and long-term priorities in enabling and expanding the Stewardship Ministry to care for all our resources.

Our Facility Rental Task Force worked to improve rentals in order to stabilize and improve revenue stream. They have done extensive work from researching and benchmarking our fee schedules and evaluating our facilities, to promoting our facilities with beautiful pictures on our website and updating our rental agreements and policies.

<https://uucharlottesville.org/renting-our-facilities-and-grounds/>

Our Vice President (Bev Ryan) and the Personnel Committee have developed policies, salary guidelines and recommendations for staff benefits after thoroughly evaluating the UUA values based policies and practices.

Our Treasurer (Kay Frazier), Our Director of Administration and Finance (Sean Skally), and the Finance committee have been working extremely hard to ensure that we have up to date information on our finances and transparent record keeping. The Finance Committee's excellence in not only figuring out the numbers, but in also considering the heart of our congregation, has led to respectful, thoughtful conversation and support.

The Grounds Committee has kept our campus looking beautiful and well maintained. We now have a new Building Committee to provide oversight and care of all our structures. Summit House has a new HVAC system and we are beginning repairs on Summit House's fire escape and ramps.

In June and July, thanks to the wisdom and action of Sean, we survived the lightning strike and thanks to quick thinking (and acting) members and staff, we survived the basement flood.

We had a fun and lucrative yard sale in July and a terrific auction in September.

Supporting the larger Charlottesville Community

We have many groups that support numerous parts of the Charlottesville Community. We host PACEM, supply lunch at the Haven Soup Kitchen on Sundays, host the Friday Food Pantry, engage in IMPACT, participate in the Charlottesville Pride, Food & Cleaning Supply Drive with Ebenezer Baptist Church, assist with the Warm Clothes Drive for the Haven and sponsor a refugee family from Afghanistan.

We have a monthly Social Action Collection to support 12 local groups each year. Since July, we have supported B.U.C.K. Squad, RISE Foundation, IMPACT, New Beginnings Christian Community Food Ministry, Meal Packets, Birth Sisters, PACEM, African American Teaching Fellows and Charlottesville Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR).

In the Cottage Conversations we have heard about numerous small kindnesses and the friendships people experience through UUCville and how much all these things mean to us. Participants have spoken about how coming to UUCville allows them to be a part of something bigger in the world and how that makes all the difference to them. We are truly a loving community doing good in the world.

Submitted by, **Pam McIntire**, President

Vice President's Report to the Board: March 2023

Committee budget process:

Meetings with the Finance Committee, Treasurer, Minister, Personnel Committee chair, Carol Gardner, and Board Rep Bev Ryan continue. The Finance committee hopes to have a budget to present to the Board this month. A short video about the budget process was completed with the star appearances of Bev Ryan, Kay Frazier, and interviewer Hayley Owens.

Personnel Committee:

Personnel committee is meeting on Tuesday the day prior to the Board meeting. Agenda Items include monitoring yearly staff evaluations. Upcoming business includes discussions of yearly staff evaluations: the process, assignments, and next steps. We will also be reviewing the UUA rules for enrollment in the retirement system, and review of the Employer Participation Agreement which includes what we have agreed to concerning the amount of our contribution to staff retirement.

Fundraising Events:

The live, in person spring auction will be on May 13th. There will be an online auction of items and meals prior to this, from April 21-May 5. A group of individuals met to discuss fundraising

endeavors for the FY 24. Currently we are planning for both a fall and spring services auction, and some form of yard sale in August. We discussed other events that we used to have, such as bingo and Pi Day that can bring in money and provide great multicultural gatherings.

The Connie Cheetham Award Committee is being formed and will be posting a notice for nominations. The date of the award is yet to be determined.

Annual Reports:

A notice will be sent out to committee chairs in early April, and be completed by May 15th for posting on the Web and included in the Congregational meeting June 4, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by, **Beverly Ryan**, Vice President

Treasurer's Report to the Board: March 2023

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee continues to work on the FY 23-24 proposed budget. The committee will meet again on April 11th to finalize their work. Several factors have influenced the early drafts of the budget, including:

- Review and consideration of the new UUA salary and benefit recommendations.
- A concerted effort to reach out to all groups and committees to ask for funding requests.
- Escalating operational costs. i.e., ground maintenance, utilities, accounting services.

Similar to previous years, the funding requests outpace the projected revenue streams. A collaborative effort between Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, and Ministry led to productive and insightful discussions, helping to close some of the funding gaps. To date, there is still a projected deficit in revenue projections to cover all the requests. The Finance Committee plans to submit a balanced budget to the Board, probably not fully funding all the requests. This is a work in progress and largely influenced by the final pledges for FY 23-24.

Financial Information – Year to Date February 2023 (66% of FY)

Link to the Financial Dashboard <https://uucharlottesville.org/budget-information/> for an overview. See the DAF report for detailed monthly reports.

Highlights:

- The pledged and non-pledged donations are on track to meet the adopted projections. We have reached 71% of the projected budgeted pledges and non-pledged donations. This category of revenue continues to be the mainstay of our financial wellness. **The continued honoring of pledges, plate collections, and non-pledged donations is the bedrock of our financial wellness. Honoring pledges is essential to end the Fiscal Year with revenues meeting expenditures.**

- The Social Action Collections are exceeding the adopted projections. The fiscal year projection was \$25,000 and to date, \$26,781 has been donated. **These funds are designated and can only be used to fund the social action groups, and cannot be used to fund operational expenses.**
- Fundraising and Other Revenues are below adopted projections. The positive news is that both are above the amounts of from last fiscal year and are recovering from COVID lows. Building Rental Revenues are tracking to meet or exceed projections and have recovered from COVID lows.
- Expenditures are tracking at 62% spent of the adopted budget. Utility costs are well above the budgeted amount, as are expenses related to payroll management and accounting. **End of year expenditures tend to escalate so close management of expenditures is needed to close out the fiscal year with a positive net balance.**
- One of the factors influencing expenditures is that we had two unexpected emergencies. A lightning strike caused significant damage to the copier, projector, and IT equipment. A flood in the lower hall required cleanup and remediation. The cost of repairs, replacement, and remediation from these two events is \$21,744. We received an insurance reimbursement of \$11,210, leaving an unbudgeted expense of \$10,534.

Submitted by: **Kay Frazier**, Treasurer

Lead Minister's Report to the Board: March 2023

It has been another busy and eventful month at the UU Congregation of Charlottesville, and I am very happy to say the congregation continues to move in a very positive direction. I will long remember Sunday, March 12, when we enjoyed the completion and installation of our new sign and experienced the end of our three year-long mask requirement. Although I'm very cautious about Covid and will continue masking, I must say it was good to see your beautiful faces and it felt like I was seeing many people for the first time. March 12 was both a turning point and a new beginning and I am so glad to be sharing both with all of you!

Worship – our worship life continues to be varied and meaningful. Rev. Leia and I adjusted the monthly worship theme for March to line-up with the pledge drive theme – “Together We Build.” Attendance remains solid and I am very curious to see how or if the numbers change both in person and on zoom now that the masking requirement has been ended. On March 12 we had a number of new families with young children and, although it's always impossible to pinpoint the causes, I hope the trend continues. I'm looking forward to upcoming services in April, including an Earth Day service on April 23 that I hope will create energy for a renewed environmental/climate justice ministry, a service at the end of the month in which two UUCville members will share their spiritual journey stories from the pulpit, and Rev. Leia's service on the 16th which will be the kick-off of a huge celebratory day in which we will dedicate the new sign, celebrate the success of the pledge drive, and have a big ole birthday party for UUCville as we turn 80! It's gonna be quite a day!

Howard Thurman Class - I'm looking forward to starting my next AFD class, "With Head and Heart," which focuses on the life and spiritual vision of Howard Thurman. As of today I believe 25 have enrolled and I'm hoping for more before the class begins on 4/3.

Membership - Our previously scheduled New Members and Friends was moved from March 11 to April 15. We only had 3 people signed up for March 11 which still puzzles me so I'm very interested to see how we do in terms of registrations for 4/15. Attendance at the March Newcomer circle was solid (7 or 8). The New member welcome ceremony will take place during the service on June 11.

Developmental Goals - I think we are doing very good work in Year One of our shared ministry on the developmental goals. The cottage conversations have been a huge success and have provided a wonderful foundation for building a shared sense or purpose. I am also very impressed with our work on Goal Three in terms of both the pledge drive and the plans being formulated by the Stewardship Steering Committee. The Communications ministry has also been doing amazing work, both in terms of overall church messaging and the pledge drive. I think our website is really solid and I hope the increased use of all church texts and emails is helping get our message out. I think Goal Two will really begin to come into focus next church year as we get racial justice, LGBTQ+, and other important ministries energized.

Environmental Ministry - speaking of getting ministries energized, I'm convening a very preliminary conversation about Environmental ministry the day after the March board meeting. One asset in getting this ministry going again might be the UUA's Green Sanctuary renewal process, which could provide the structure and focus we need to set goals and get going!

Food Ministry - I have been in very preliminary conversations with Elizabeth Breeden and Lorie Craddock about how we might transform our existing food programs (Food Pantry, Soup Kitchen, etc) into a wide-ranging food ministry. I hope to convene a meeting in the coming weeks.

Activities/Ministries Fair - I'm delighted the Stewardship Steering Committee is putting energy into the congregation holding an Activities Fair in September as we launch the new church year. I am a big believe in emotional vibes and energy in congregations and I think having September feel like a beginning in which there are so many options for getting involved is a great thing. I look forward to being part of organizing this event and I think it will help us connect more UUCville folks to our growing ministries and programs.

Rev. Tim, Lead Minister

Minister of Faith Development's Report: March 2023

SUNDAY PROGRAMMING

CHILDREN'S FAITH DEVELOPMENT (11:00-12:15pm)

What a delight to have many new families visiting and participating in our faith development program. In our elementary groups we're learning about stewardship and connecting to this month's ministry and pledge theme, "Together We Build." Some of the activities have included:

- the children participating in their own Cottage Conversations about our congregation's mission.
- a day of cooperative building projects with blocks, Legos, Lincoln Logs and hot cocoa.
- a special tea party with longtime church leader, Sally Taylor, as she shared stories and showed photographs of our congregation through the years. We learned about Sally's time as a child in our Sunday School!
- decorating our congregation's sign for the IMPACT Nehemiah Action.
- a treasure hunt around the building identifying features unique to our congregation and connected to our 7 UU principles and the rainbow chalice.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES (12:30-1:30PM)

We continue offering supervised childcare most Sundays from 12:30-1:30 for children 5th grade and younger. This second hour time together on Sundays allows for both parents and children to socialize with peers.

*****We need additional paid childcare providers and/or volunteers to meet our adult/child ratio for safe congregation guidelines and to provide quality care. Please let me know if you are aware of anyone who might be interested in this position or in helping. *****

Our weekly UU parents' conversation and support circle meets from 12:30-1:15 in the parlor with rotating facilitation support from Amy Nash, John Griffith, Liberty Powers, and Yvonne Chadwick-Mehta.

Our "Mindful Parenting using Systematic Training for Effective Parenting" class begins April 16.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING (6TH-12TH GRADES, 12:15-1:30pm)

Neighboring Faiths is exploring Christianity and its vast range of practices and traditions. On March 19th they visited Cornerstone Community Church (Regal Theater, 10am). On March 26th they will reflect on prior visits and begin preparing for April visits to the Friends Meeting House and Mt. Zion African Baptist Church.

Our 9th & 10th grades, the Coming-of-Age class, continue to meet weekly both in class and with their mentors to explore topics relevant to our faith, UUism and more. 11th & 12th grades, YRUU, is a safe space for youth to check-in with caring adult advisors to talk about life experiences as well as topics of interest and meaning. Preparations are underway for the 9th-12th grade service trip with the Appalachian Service Project this July.

WORSHIP

Rev. Tim and I continue to have fun collaborating on the content of the first twenty minutes of the service each week. I was happy to be the Worship Weaver on February 26 as Rev. Tim

preached from home due to contracting COVID. I am preaching on March 19 with Caroline Landis as the Worship Weaver.

ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Our AFD The Winter/Spring semester has been a great success. The Winter Retreat in February had 30 registrations with requests for additional retreats to be offered throughout the year. Our 14th annual Women's Dream Quest was a powerful experience for all. My "Holding Space as Spiritual Practice" has been well received by the 16 participants and wraps up with a retreat on April 29. Rev. Tim's class "The Spiritual Wisdom of Howard Thurman" currently has 25 registrations and is still open to more participants. I am hearing great things about "Coming Together: How we can heal the divide class" with leader/author (and UUCville member) Sean McCutcheon. Dream Journeys with Alan Kindler & Rev. Susan Karlson is going well.

Other classes this semester include: Tai Chi, Creation Spirituality on the Labyrinth: A Dance of Four Powerful Paths (Mary Ann Warmhoff), Women's Friendship Group, Insight Meditation, Women's Book Group, Kundalini Yoga (Amy Epp), Afroflow Yoga (Katherine Jenkins).

PASTORAL CARE

I am grateful for our wonderful Pastoral Visitors team and the support they as well as the CareNet team offer our community. I continue to meet with individuals and couples regularly for pastoral conversations and wedding planning. I also work with Rev. Tim and the Pastoral Visitors team to make sure and offer support as needed within our congregation and sometimes, beyond.

TIME AWAY

I will be taking vacation March 27-April 6.

In faith and with love, **Rev. Leia**, Minister of Faith Development

Director of Administration and Finance's Report: March 2023

Finance

Finance Recap

	As of Feb 2023	As of Feb 2022
Total Revenue	\$410,589.80	\$383,097.60
Total Expenditures	\$375,583.12	\$349,574.04
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$35,006.68	\$33,523.56

Financial Reports

- [Budget Vs Actual](#)
- [Statement of Activity](#)
- [Statement of Financial Position](#)
- [UUCEF Statement](#)

Administration

Safety & Security

- New policy on masking by choice implemented

Regulatory

- Refocus on Tax status and Policy

Attendance

YEAR	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Jan	152(175)	91	194	288	208	265
Feb	153	94	183	154	229	208
Mar		120	179	100	205	238
April		131	158	175	199	258
May		135	123	182	191	207
June		132	118	112	170	139
July		110	98	105	137	135
Aug		134	107	137	165	136
Sept		128	83	107	215	250
Oct		160	60	92	116	161
Nov		159	99	134	214	202
Dec		141	84	146	161	169

Jan 2023 number in parenthesis is without Jan 1 Online only sermon

Information Technology and Computers

- No news to report

Personnel

- Completed transfer to new retirement system

Buildings and Facilities

- Repairs to Summit house fire escape are complete
- Scheduling the repairs to the porch.
- Still looking for second wheelchair
- [Vijay Iyer concert on Thursday 3/22](#)

Repairs

- Handrail to Summit house it broken, looking for contractor to fix

Sean Skally, Director of Administration and Finance

Membership report for March 22, 2023

Membership as of February 18, 2023: 313

Additions: None

Drops: Two: Neil Marrin and Caroline March-Long have both moved and have been marked as inactive

Membership as of **March 11, 2023**: 311

Respectfully submitted, **Beth Jaeger-Landis**

A Plan for Expanding the Variety of the Recipients of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet

From the Caring Circle of 8

Introduction

Edith Good initiated the idea of passing the Birthday Bouquet along to another Elder UU having a decadal birthday, so this new tradition was named to honor her. The Caring Circle of 8 members developed the idea, identifying the responsibilities of recipients (to keep the fragile bouquet in good condition and to pass it along to a new eligible recipient when one is available), and determining the eligibility requirements for new recipients (i.e., a UU Elder celebrating a decadal birthday, specifically the 70th, 80th, 90th, or 100th birthday, and a person who is well known by the current caretaker of the bouquet because they have participated in one or more congregational groups or activities together). In addition, the Caring Circle of 8 designed a ritual to be followed in the Passing of the Birthday Bouquet.

The Caring Circle of 8 had two main goals in mind when they began this tradition. They wanted to honor and publicize the contributions elders have made to develop and strengthen our congregation as a whole. They wanted to highlight for newer and younger congregational members the value of individual participation in various congregational activities (small group ministries, service activities, leadership activities, educational activities), participation which helps individuals form friendships and connections with other members and builds a sense of community for the congregation.

During the year 2022, the bouquet was passed to five elders who were (or had been) members of the Caring Circle of 8 and/or the Active Minds group. Two elders who were former members of the Active Minds group and were **older** than 100 were initiated as “Honorary Recipients,” and were presented with a photograph of themselves receiving the bouquet. They did not get to keep the bouquet itself.

As we enter a new year, it seems appropriate to evaluate how well this new tradition has done in relation to the original goals. The recipients and their contributions have been publicized

on the church website in the new “Elders Connect” announcements, on the big display board on the wall of the ramp from the sanctuary to the Social Hall, and through the public presentations of the bouquet to recipients in small group settings. The shared activities which helped to develop the relationship between the “passer” of the bouquet and the recipient have been highlighted as part of the ritual, and included as information in all three of these publication settings. But the recipients have all been members of a fairly small segment of the elders in our congregation, namely the Active Minds group.

We have decided that eligible recipients should be identified from a wider group of congregational elders, in order to expand the number of elders honored and to perpetuate this new tradition. Two changes are proposed to rectify this problem. First, we are asking more older members of the congregation to post their birth dates in the church directory, so we know when an elder is approaching a decadal birthday. Second, we are changing the selection of a new recipient from a decision by one person (the “passer”) to selection by one or more small groups, the “sponsors”.

To illustrate the difference between the initial procedure and what is proposed for 2023, there were two other people in 2022 who we knew were having a decadal birthday, one was 70 in August, and the other was 70 in December. However, neither was well known to the person who was holding the bouquet at the time. Both of them have been involved in important service activities within the congregation over several years, and have developed strong social connections with other congregational members, so they would be strong eligible recipients in relation to the main goals. Both of them could be sponsored now (belatedly) as “Honorary Recipients,” by the small groups with whom they interact, as were Virginia James and Tom Crowell. A presentation of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet could be made to them in the presence of the appropriate sponsoring groups, photographs could be taken, and copies made for them of the event. These events could be publicized in the church website and on the big display board on the ramp to the Social Hall. Information to be displayed would focus on their particular contributions to congregational strength and development, and the particular connections they have made with other church members.

Going forward, the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet will probably reside in the Church Parlor, and all “Honorary Recipients” will receive a photograph of themselves being presented with the bouquet. All new recipients of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet will be identified by sponsoring groups rather than by former individual recipients. All former recipients will be identified as “Honorary Recipients” as well, and the information publicized earlier will be edited to focus more specifically on the goals identified above.

All congregational elders (70 and older in 2023) are urged to ***become an eligible future recipient*** of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet by registering their date of birth and contact information (telephone and email address, if they have one) in the Breeze Directory. Currently, only four congregational elders appear to be having a decadal birthday in 2023, and four more in 2024, according to the Breeze Directory.

The Plan for 2023

Eligibility Requirements

In addition to being a member or friend of UU C'ville who is celebrating a decadal birthday, to be eligible to be initiated as an "Honorary Recipient" of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet an individual must be sponsored by one or more small groups that are active within the congregation, and must be known by one or more members of the sponsoring group(s) because of (non-financial) contributions to the church that the person has made over some period of time in the past and/or is making currently. Such contributions might include strengthening the congregation as an organization, for example, by taking leadership roles, service roles, or educational roles. Alternatively, they might include contributing to development of a congregational sense of community by building social connections with other congregation members in varied ways. A group that chooses to sponsor a new Honorary Recipient will mention during the initiation ritual the specific contributions that person has made.

Procedural Responsibilities

In January each year, the Active Minds group (or some other entity such as manager of the Breeze Directory or chair of the Membership Committee) will identify eligible candidates to become Honorary Recipients in that calendar year, based solely on decadal birthdays of 70 or more years, and will publicize that list to the congregation as a whole.

Any congregational small group can then decide to sponsor a person who is eligible to be initiated as an Honorary Recipient on the basis of a decadal birthday. They may choose to sponsor an eligible member of their group, or someone who is not a member of their group, after determining that the person is eligible in relation to the additional requirements stated above. More than one small group may sponsor the same person to be initiated as an Honorary Recipient. If so, the two groups could work together to organize the initiation event.

It will be important for the sponsoring group(s) to ask the person they wish to sponsor whether they want to become an Honorary Recipient of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet. Hopefully, this will be seen as a welcome recognition of the recipient as a valued member of the congregation. That has been the case with all former recipients of the birthday bouquet. But not everyone may feel that way, so it would be wise to ask that question before beginning to plan an initiation event.

The group or groups sponsoring a person celebrating a decadal birthday of 70 or more years to be initiated as an Honorary Recipient of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet will be responsible for:

- Informing the Active Minds group of their decision;
- Identifying the required examples of contributions to the church;
- Scheduling the date and time of the initiation event, to be held in the Church Parlor, by contacting the office administrator;
- Inviting members of relevant groups as well as friends of the honoree to attend the initiation event, and publicizing the event to the congregation as a whole;
- Planning who will make presentations during the event based on the Ritual for Passing the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet;

Taking a photograph of the presentation of the bouquet to the recipient, and a group photograph of the attendees at the event;

Preparing a short summary of information about the event, including specific examples of the contributions to the church made by the Honorary Recipient, and copies of the two photographs, for publication on the Elders Connect website and the big display board on the ramp from the sanctuary to the Social Hall; and

Submitting the information and photographs to the Active Minds group.

The Active Minds group will be responsible for:

Submitting the summary information and photographs for posting on the Elders Connect website;

Posting the summary information on the big display board on the ramp; and

Providing framed copies of the two photographs to the Honorary Recipient.

The Active Minds group is the longest established group of elders in the congregation and it typically includes some members who are younger than 80. Most of the members are active both mentally and physically. They are a good group to support or assist sponsoring groups and publicize initiation events. There will ordinarily not be very many events to initiate new Honorary Recipients of the Birthday Bouquet in a given year, so it should not be a lot of work. Greta Dersheimer is a long-time member of the Active Minds group and will volunteer to advise the sponsoring groups as needed in carrying out the tasks allotted to them for the year 2023. That role would be passed on to a new facilitator for 2024. (Approval of this arrangement by the Active Minds group still needs to be negotiated.)

Initiating New Honorary Recipients Who Had Decadal Birthdays in 2022

Carol Saliba had her 70th birthday on December 15, 2022. Ed Barber was then the holder of the birthday bouquet. He did not really know Carol well, so she did not seem to be an appropriate person for him to pass the bouquet on to, given the original decision about eligibility status. Carol is a member of one of the new Friendship Circle groups that the Caring Circle of 8 helped to form in the spring of 2022. Johanna Woodchild was the organizer for that group, and Edith Good is another group member. The group has already celebrated Carol's birthday, and have been concerned about the fact she was not automatically included in the ritual of passing the birthday bouquet. Carol has already expressed an interest in becoming an Honorary Recipient of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet. The Friendship Circle group will be supportive of sponsoring Carol, and willing to participate in the planning and conduct of the initiation event. Carol has been working for about fifteen years with the monthly Food Bank distribution program organized by Elizabeth Breeden. Elizabeth will vouch for Carol's long service with this important outreach program of the congregation, and will invite other volunteers working in that program to participate in the initiation event as well.

Vicki Shackford had her 70th birthday on August 25, 2022. Vicki and her husband, John Shackford, have been members of the congregation for about ten years, and one of their strong

interests is Tai Chi exercise. Vicki is a very experienced “master” teacher of Tai Chi, and the two of them decided to offer Tai Chi classes as part of their financial contribution to the congregation. They charge a minimal amount for each class session, and give the proceeds to the church. They provide two classes weekly throughout the church program year. The first is for beginners and is called Tai Chi for Health. It focuses on development of strength and balance, using a variety of Tai Chi exercises. The second class is for more experienced Tai Chi exercisers, and focuses on learning a full Tai Chi routine, and practicing this routine together regularly. These classes have been presented annually over more than five years, except for a period during the early Covid pandemic, when such group activities were restricted. They have provided a valuable opportunity for congregation members to improve their health; since people outside the congregation are also accepted into the classes, they have introduced new local residents to our church and members; new connections and friendships have developed between and among the Tai Chi class members; and class fees have been a welcome addition to the church budget.

Greta Dersheimer has talked with Vicki about the change in eligibility being made with regard to the passing of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet, and explained the new requirements and procedures to be used going forward, and Vicki has agreed to be initiated as a new Honorary Member. As a former participant in the Tai Chi for Health class, Greta will now talk with individuals from each of the two current class groups, and ask them to talk with other group members about supporting Vicki’s nomination to be so honored. (This approach worked well in forming the two new Friendship Circle groups that the Caring Circle of 8 added last spring, and we think it would be appropriate here as well.) Since this will be a new procedure, Greta will be available for advice and assistance, as needed, as the two groups work together to plan and conduct the initiation event and write the summary.)

Summary

This plan is an attempt to transfer the responsibility for maintaining the relatively new tradition of Passing the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet to a wider group of people within the congregation, as one possible way to maintain the tradition while expanding it to include a wider variety of congregation members. We are building on the history of our own development of the initial idea within the Caring Circle of 8. This plan was developed gradually over a period of time as a result of recommendations by a variety of people within and outside of our Circle.

Our plan puts the responsibility of deciding who will be initiated as an Honorary Recipient in 2023 on any group within the congregation which decides that they want to so honor someone whom they know. It identifies future eligible recipients as church elders who are having a decadal birthday within the current calendar year, and who have made valuable contributions to the church over time which have strengthened the church as an organization, or built connections with other congregation members, contributing to a congregational sense of community. It outlines the tasks that need to be carried out to prepare, conduct, and publicize the initiation event. It suggests a system for a minimal amount of general assistance during this initial year of change in the overall procedures. It should be expected that there will be ongoing

future evaluation of the procedures and further changes as time goes on. It is our hope that our congregation members, younger and older, will learn more about each other and more about the activities that are available to us, to engage our interest, develop our capabilities, and increase our commitment to this community.

A New Ritual for Honoring Recipients of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet

Introduction

A member of the sponsoring group(s) reads the Ritual Introduction:

On Edith Good's 90th birthday her sister-in-law gave her a cheerful tissue-paper bouquet. It stood on her counter for a couple of years as she wondered what could be done with it. In September 2021 when Greta Dersheimer was having her 90th birthday celebration, Edith remembers, "It just clicked – I'll pass it on – it's so happy!"

Greta thought Edith was a model of active participation in the congregation and the local community. She felt very honored when Edith gave her the beautiful paper bouquet at her 90th birthday party. She thought that passing it on to other UU Elders would be a really nice congregational tradition.

Greta and Bayard Catron had both joined a new "Caring Circle of 8" in April 2021. On January 11, 2022 Greta was hosting the Circle meeting and it was Bayard's 80th birthday. She wondered what to do to help the group celebrate, noticed the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet standing on her piano, and decided it was the perfect time to begin the tradition of passing the bouquet. She told Bayard he had to take good care of the bouquet and pass it on to a UU Elder friend who was having a decadal birthday. He pledged to do so. She gave him the bouquet, and the tradition was born.

The purpose of this tradition is to honor our Elders on their decadal birthdays, remember the ways they have strengthened the church as an organization, and highlight the ways they have built connections to others and fostered a congregational sense of community.

Recipients of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet must be celebrating their 70th, 80th, 90th, or 100th birthday; be a participating member or friend of the congregation; and must be sponsored by one or more groups that are active within the church and that want to honor the contributions the prospective recipient has made to the church.

Sharing Information

Informant: A member of the sponsoring group(s) congratulates the Recipient on their decadal birthday, notes the specific ways the Recipient has contributed to the church, and invites other members of the sponsoring group(s) or invited participants to make brief comments about the Recipient's contributions to the church or about their own connections to the Recipient.

Presentation

Another member of the sponsoring group(s) presents the Birthday Bouquet to the Recipient to hold.

Presenter: "It is a pleasure to give you this beautiful bouquet to hold as we celebrate this significant birthday with you, and honor your contributions to our congregation."

(Hands Recipient the Bouquet)

"Would you like to make a brief comment?"

Recipient Speaks

Conclusion

Presenter: Thank you, (Recipient).

(To audience) And thank you all for being here for this traditional ritual of Honoring the Recipients of the Edith Good Birthday Bouquet. Please stay here for a few moments as we take photographs to commemorate this event.

Photographs

Informant photographs the Recipient receiving the bouquet from the Presenter. Presenter takes photographs of Recipient and the other event participants.