

First Universalist Church Board of Trustees

May 21, 2015

Board Packet

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Date: May 13, 2015

To: First Universalist Board of Trustees

From: David Bach, President

Re: May 21 Board Meeting

This is the last Board Meeting before the Annual Meeting on May 31. We have some important items on the Annual Meeting agenda with high expectations for participation by the congregation. It will require 25% of our membership present to "call" Jen Crow with 4/5 of the congregation approving.

Let's start now to get the 235 members present at the Meeting that are needed. At every conversation with a congregant ask them if they are coming to the Annual Meeting.

Also on the agenda are the Rational Justice Resolution, Congregational Covenant and budget as well as voting in all our board of trustee, foundation board and nominating committee members.

I am expecting all of you present.

But first, see you all May 21.

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Board of Trustees Meeting
May 21, 2015
6:30 p.m. Cummins Room
Agenda

6:30 Call to Order

- Lighting of the Chalice
May this flame that burns before us light our way, informed by the wisdom of leaders gone before, and inspired by the trust that we have been given as stewards of this Church. May we have vision, compassion, and courage as we serve this congregation now and for the generations to come.
- Reading and check-in – Eric Cooperstein

6:50 Consent Agenda

- Approval of minutes from April 21 meeting
- Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers
- Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes

6:55 Items from the Senior Minister – Justin Schroeder

- Capital Campaign discussion
- Racial Justice discussion

7:45 Items from Monitoring Schedule

- Membership and attendance trends (moved to June meeting)

7:46 Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Karin Wille
 - Third quarter financials
 - Budget to present at the Annual Meeting
- Governance Committee – Cindy Marsh
 - “All voices heard” discussion
 - Process for review of Senior Minister
 - Board Self-Evaluation
 - Congregational Survey

8:20 Items from the President – Dave Bach

- Discussion of follow-up and next steps from Board Tenure Working Session
- Annual Meeting
 - Report on resolution signatures
 - Proposed wording changes and process to amend
 - Discussion of putting the resolution into action
- Conversations with the Congregation
- Other items
- Goals for FY 15

9:00 Executive Session

9:15 Adjournment

4/21 First Universalist Church Board of Trustees Meeting

Attendees:

· Dave Bach, Pamela Vincent, ~~Karin Wille~~, Dick Niemiec, Lark Weller, Jill Braithwaite, Eric Cooperstein, Richard Spratt, Cindy Marsh. Rev. Justin Schroeder, Rev. Jen Crow
Guests present:

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

Reading from Mary Wellemeyer-"Bending"

Check Ins

Consent Agenda

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.
Consent agenda as presented was unanimously approved.

Review of Revised Staff Structure

Further discussion of proposed staff structure and re-imagining of minister profiles to play to strengths. Board discussed the proposition to call Jen Crow as called minister. This call requires a vote of the congregation. Discussion that as a called minister, she would normally be supervised by the board, but in this case, the ministers are asking that Jen's supervision be delegated to Justin.

Action: moved and seconded that the board recommends to the congregation that Jen Crow be called as a minister of First Universalist Church, and to set in motion the steps to inform the congregation.
Unanimously approved

Other discussion around the staffing change, concerning the decision not to re-hire the Director of Operations, and use of MAP to assist with financial duties. This seems to be a good decision at this time.
Next steps: Dave to write article in Liberal and will do pulpit announcement. Add this to agenda for annual meeting.

Budget for 2015-16

Question regarding Ruth MacKenzie's reduction in position from 12 months to 10 months. In the new budget, Ruth will be at 35 hrs a week for 44 weeks a year, and the church will secure additional hours in her position for sabbatical support while Jen is on sabbatical.

Changes from finance committee reviewed:

- need to eliminate all RE fees: discussed with Lauren, recommendation is to remove fees, but include donations to cover trips. Discussion of asking COA and OWL families to make special donation to the church at the end of their child's participation in these programs.

Question on change in Chalice Camp fees. In the past, income for camp was tracked in two fiscal years- some families pay in March when they register, others pay in June when the camp is actually attended.

Staff costs for COA: Ruth's time, with administrative support. Lauren also supports some of this work.

- Clearer communication on 90/10 split for Holiday Giving experience, with matching change for expenses.

- Change in process for Jen's sabbatical: move from a three month chunk , to taking June off for the next three years. This reduces stress on staff and allows Jen to be present during entire budget process.
- Keep offering plate split at 60/40. Changed budget income to 90,000
- Adjusted health insurance amounts- incorrectly reflected a full time allowance for a staff member who is part time.

Request made to have more up to date pledge information when presenting the budget to the congregation, and to have more updated actuals at least through March/April (2014-15 church year).

This budget has been reviewed at Finance committee and board meeting, and will be presented with some additional changes to the congregation for review. Final budget will be approved by the board in May, and will be voted on by the congregation at the annual meeting.

Items from the Senior Minister

See Senior Minister Report for full details.

- The board shared their experiences with the reading assignment, sharing some details of their selected white allies.
- Black Lives Matter banner-- several congregants have approached Justin about placing a banner on our building. Does this require passing of a resolution? May not require a resolution according to bylaws, but passing such a resolution calls out a stronger commitment from the congregation as a whole. Motion: board will bring a resolution to the congregation at the annual meeting. This resolution will be voted on by the congregation.

David will consult with the racial justice leadership team and will write the resolution., 7 aye, 1 abstention.

Items from the Monitoring Schedule

Summarize the discussion for new issues, state the next steps and assign any action item. See agenda for bullet items-- no additional discussion

Committee Reports

Governance Committee

Finance Committee

- **Items from the President**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm

April Attendance

	2015			2014		
	9:30 AM	11:15		9:30	11:15	
Adults						
1st week	357	377	734	292	285	577
2nd week	258	207	465	208	245	453
3rd week	265	245	510	398	297	695
4th week	283	310	593	265	293	558
5th week			0			
Monthly Total	1163	1139	2302	1163	1120	2283
Average for April	290.75	284.75	575.5	290.75	280	570.75
RE						
1st week	20	10	30	107	106	213
2nd week	168	144	312	155	142	297
3rd week	172	127	299	24	15	39
4th week	68	48	116			
5th week						
Monthly Total	428	329	747	286	263	549
Average for April	107	82.25	186.7	95.3	87.7	183
Combined Average	397.75	367	762.2	386.05	367.7	753.75

**First Universalist Church
 APRIL 2015 Statistical Report
 May 21, 2015**

MEMORIAL SERVICES: 0

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT: 0

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 20

Renate Fiora, Minneapolis	Sheryl Fried, St. Louis Park
Douglas Gordon, Maple Grove	Joseph R. Jones, Minneapolis
Andrea McMartin, Minneapolis	Lena Vdakes, Bloomington
Kira Berglund, St. Louis Park	Joel Peterson and Angela Kieffer, Mpls.
Dan and Kristen Carberry, Minneapolis	Jeffrey and Kelsey Speaks, Oakdale
Judy Young, Richfield	Elizabeth Horton, Minneapolis
Charles Mac Luepke, St. Paul	Lillie Pang, Minneapolis
Bryana French, Minneapolis	Jeffrey and Karen Snyder, Minneapolis

MEMBERS REINSTATED: 0

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 5

Hal and Anne Ransom – Living in Palm Springs, CA
 Taylor Putz
 Frank Rivas – Minister in Nebraska
 Kent Saleska – Minister in Minnetonka

CHILDREN DEDICATED: 0

Spencer Devens, son of Scott and Christy Devens
 Finlay and Willem Birch Gordon, sons of Douglas and Lisa Gordon
 Julia and Ruby Gottschalk, granddaughters of Pat and Larry Gottschalk
 Margot Lukkasson, daughter of Sara and Brian Lukkasson
 Harriet Kristi Tralle, daughter of Claire and Andrew Tralle
 Aiden Zachary, son of Che and Tricia Zachary
 Anthony Huber, son of Jennifer and Andrew Huber
 Rohan Miles, son of Ben Miles and Portia Richardson
 Elijah and Riley Sunderlin, son and daughter of Shelly and Ben Sunderlin
 Amelie and Skyler Vdakes, daughter and son of Lena and Chris Vdakes

	To Date	End of Year Totals			
MEMBERS	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-11
(Fiscal Year)	52	46	110	76	98
TOTAL MEMBERS:	956	921	1030	953	927

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF THE LAST MEETING: 941

To be added: 20

To be removed: 5

TOTAL MEMBERS: 956

Racial Justice Reflections:

In her book, *Waking Up White*, Debby Irving writes (in Chapter 15, The Whole Story: The effect of swallowing one-sided stories. (Excerpt from Debby Irving's book):

ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL TOOLS of racism is stories. I used to think stories were neatly crafted tales— each with a beginning, a middle, and an end— packaged in books or speeches or told for fun around the campfire. But along with expanding my understanding of just about everything over the past few years, I've expanded my understanding of what stories are and how they function in our lives. Stories feed our belief systems. True, false, or somewhere in between, they are narratives we use to entertain and/ or instruct ourselves. We all tell stories all the time. They can be written, drawn, filmed, or spoken aloud, or they can even incubate silently in our imaginations.

I had an ongoing story in my head, for instance, about my husband, Bruce, in which he hadn't been raised as well as I had, hadn't learned that complaining was a sign of weakness, hadn't learned that constant work exemplified a life well lived, hadn't learned that not wiping the counter clean after doing the dishes meant he might as well have not done the dishes at all. My story about him came less from who he was than from my interpretation of him, as informed by my childhood values regarding right and wrong. My ideas created my story, and my story created my ideas. This cycle included a tendency to collect evidence in support of the storyline and overlook the multiple facts that didn't fit. Bruce unknowingly had been cast as a character in a role he didn't identify with at all, one that prevented me from seeing him in his truest light. This in turn put him on the defensive and made it hard for him to be his best around me.

It's no coincidence that the word "story" is contained in the word "history." Either way, we're talking about human-constructed narratives used to describe people, values, places, eras, and events. Stories are a primary way we connect to those around us and before us. But if my story about my dear husband was so susceptible to selective seeing and processing, wouldn't this mean the possibility existed that I'd taken in other stories in an equally distorted way? And if I did this, did others too? If we all do, where could I find reality? Whose "truth" defined the truth?

Each year my three sisters, one cousin, and I gather on the first weekend of April to hole up in a hotel and just visit. We love our family stories. In recent years we've

spent time shaking our heads at how differently we remember them. If there are five of us, there will be five renditions, each of us absolutely sure her own is the accurate one.

Last year we were nearly kicked out of a restaurant for laughing uncontrollably as we tried to reconstruct the tale of the time my aunt's dachshund, Maudy, peed through a knothole in the upstairs floor of our family's Maine cabin, delivering a stream of urine onto the head of my unsuspecting uncle relaxing by the fire on the first floor. The story is legend. Everyone in the family knows it. But between the five of us we had different relatives in the room, different reasons the dog was upstairs; one sister even had Maudy's gender wrong.

So what does this mean about the family stories I've relied on to shape my understanding of who I am and where I come from? If stories in my lifetime run the risk of being misremembered or distorted, how reliable are older family stories? A favorite of mine has always been the tale of my forebear Lydia Trask Putnam, who, in 1805, finagled to get a land grant to establish New Salem Academy in northern Maine. Because land grants were available only to white men, she did all the legwork and had the men sign on the dotted line. At least that's how the story goes.

She spent months hacking her way through brush and timber and crossing streams and bogs, through inclement weather, family in tow, their possessions on their backs. After months and months of trudging, they settled along Maine's eastern Canadian border. Lydia was in her sixties. Once established, she traveled the northern Maine woods on horseback as a midwife, bags of herbs and natural medicinal concoctions hanging off the saddle of her trusty horse, who, according to lore, would cross any stream or leap any felled tree. Lydia traversed the uncompromising terrain not only to aid mothers in childbirth but to tend to whatever ailment she encountered along the way. I love Lydia. I love this story.

More important than this story as I originally heard it, however, is the story it generated in my head and the way I used it to connect to the world around me. In the same way my education, elementary through college, taught me US history in a sugarcoated way, my family told the story of Lydia in a romanticized way. It reminds me of the way funerals rarely point to the deceased's flaws but instead send the person, surely as complex as the next person, off to rest with a set of immaculate stories.

Despite the fact that my story of Lydia may be incomplete, inaccurate, or flawed, I internalized both its content and all it implied. The story about Lydia told me women are strong, have great ideas, can be leaders, are resourceful, and can work until late in life. It told me my love of horses is in my blood. It told me I owe it to my rugged Yankee ancestors not to complain and to work tirelessly. It told me education was worth hacking your way through a forest to make happen. It told me that if she could persevere and do

great things, so could I. It made me feel special to be a part of this narrative. Believing I have the blood of this pioneering woman in my veins has served as a building block in my identity formation. Even if all or part of that story were disproven or somehow called into question, the fact would remain: this story is part of what made me who I am today. Like removing the forms from poured and hardened concrete, the shape remains even when what shaped it is removed. What if instead of a glorified history of family members connecting me to a glorified history of the United States, I'd learned a more balanced history in which humans and their endeavors are both imperfect and ever-changing?

What if, at a young age, because of a more balanced narrative told through history classes, I could have tied the story about Lydia and the land grant to the harsh reality that there was no such thing as "free land" to be given away, that land grants were parcels of land stolen from indigenous people who'd lived on them for tens of thousands of years? What if I could have learned how one person's windfall can be another person's downfall? Would I have suddenly rejected my country? Would Lydia have lost all merit in my eyes? I doubt it. The story of race is at the center of racism's entanglement. The very idea that the world's many peoples could be categorized by something called "race" is a story, one that has created a system of dominance for its storytellers.

The story of race has become a self-fulfilling, self-perpetuating prophecy as the story creates the ideas, which then reinforce the story. The tragedy is the individual and collective potential that has been crushed by the power of a single story.

What is it that makes facing mistakes, weaknesses, or regrets so terrible that they must be completely and utterly denied? As long as the dominant culture holds fast to a story of white as right, the possibility of hearing other truths gets shut out, and the cycle continues: white folks experience people of color's versions of events as incongruent and therefore inadmissible. How then does the dominant narrative become one of many, so that American history becomes a collection of short stories, as opposed to an epic told by a single author?

Question/Assignment: Think of a historical event in American history, perhaps the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the arrival of the Statue of Liberty, or any one of the wars Americans have fought. Where have you learned what you know about this event? Whose perspective did you learn? If you went in search of a fuller story, whose viewpoint would you seek?

Board Reflection Question: What historical event did you choose? What other perspectives are there around this event? What is the dominant narrative (white narrative) around this event? How do other viewpoints inform this event?

Development Plan for Next Year: I am working with congregants and outside development professionals to create a modest development/fundraising plan for the 2015-2016 church year, focusing on the auction/great gathering, pledge drive, and Holiday Giving Campaign.

In the Governing Policy Handbook, in the Senior Minister Limitation Policies, in the “Financial Condition” section, it says:

6. **<The Sr. Minister shall>** Perform the following only with the explicit prior approval of the Board of Trustees:

1. Borrow funds

2. Make unbudgeted transfers or “loans” between the general funds and the Legacy funds

3. **Solicit funds for non-budgeted purposes**

Given that we are looking at “out of the box” fundraising plans for next year, I’d affirm that we have Board approval to explore out of the box fundraising, including some fundraising that may not be for budgeted purposes (i.e., fundraising outside the budget for specific projects.)

Staff and Volunteer Changes: No staff transitions to announce. Joan Niemiec and Lisa Sinclair have joined the Planned Giving Team.

Is it time to plan for a Capital Campaign?

Imagine a brand new carpet in the sanctuary, or perhaps no carpet, and a beautifully finished floor. Imagine a number of church rooms that have a “living room” feel, like room 203 does. Imagine having additional Religious Education classroom space on Sunday mornings, so that we don’t have to turn families away at the 9:30 service. Imagine that our Cummins Ministerial Internship Fund is fully funded and that every year we have a full time Cummins Intern that supports our Faithful Action Ministries. Imagine every year we have a fully funded capital budget, because we’ve funded a \$1,000,000 capital reserve budget. Imagine we’ve paid off our \$700,000 mortgage, which frees up \$60,000 to use for mission and vision. Imagine...!

How might we arrive at this promised land?

Given that we've had a successful pledge drive this year, and there is a feeling of pride and excitement about our ministry; and given our unfunded capital needs, expanding Religious Education classes (especially at 9:30), building mortgage, and not yet fully funded Cummins Fund, I wonder if it's time to explore the possibilities of a capital campaign? The scope and size of this campaign would need to be determined through a feasibility study, so I'm simply imagining what this might look like with one tentative timeline sketched out below:

May/June/August – The Board enters into this conversation and in partnership with Jen and Justin, decides if this is the time to launch a feasibility study. Perhaps the full Board speaks with Jim Klote (a capital campaign consultant that Cindy Marsh, Dave Bach, Justin Schroeder, Jen Crow, Karin Wille, and Dick Niemiec meet with on Monday, May 10th), to more fully understand the process. [Jim Klote comes highly recommended from a number of UU colleagues. He raised \$10,000,000 for All Souls DC; he raised \$3,000,000 for River Road UU Congregation. He's worked in a number of UU churches.]

September/October – Assuming the church decides to move forward with a capital campaign, have a 4 week feasibility study in late September/early October. This would include focus groups after each service, mid week groups, etc. This would be led by Jim Klote and Associates.

November/December/January/February/March – If feasibility study indicates support and resources for a campaign, launch the campaign so that it syncs up and ends with the pledge drive. Congregants would make a pledge to both the campaign and the upcoming pledge drive.

Please remember, this is just one tentative timeline! The important thing is to think about the kind of future we'd like to create, and begin that discussion now.

First Universalist Church – Finance Committee Minutes
Wednesday, May 13, 2015
Cummins Room

Attendance: Present – Eric Cooperstein, Lianne Knych, Cindy Marsh, Dick Niemiec, Karin Wille, Rev. Justin Schroeder, Rev. Jen Crow

Dick Niemiec convened the meeting at 6:05 pm.

The committee approved the April 8, 2015 minutes.

Justin described Jen's new role heading finance and operations. Jen is excited to take on these new responsibilities. She expects to make changes to improve accountability, transparency and efficiency by creating systems and anticipating problems. She feels the next six months will be critical to her success.

Jen said she consults with Kurt Hochfeld from MAP for financial expertise and he will serve as a mentor for Brad Schmidt. The committee felt it would be worthwhile to meet with Kurt Hochfeld once or twice a year.

The committee reviewed the June 30 financial projection. Pledge income is expected to be about \$66,000 less than budget. Justin & Jen indicated calls are being made to make up as much of the shortfall as possible. Expenses are running approximately \$60,000 less than budget. Jen will reexamine expense projections for accuracy. Justin expects net income to be positive at the end of the fiscal year.

Justin & Jen discussed modifications to the 2015-6 budget since the April 21 board meeting and the two congregational budget meetings. Pledges are still about \$50,000 short of the \$1,165,000 included in the budget. Jen will direct further work to wrap-up pledging to close the gap. In addition Jen will review budget categories for reasonableness and will make final adjustments before presenting a balanced budget to the board for approval on May 21.

Justin has asked the board to allow latitude to solicit funds for non-budgeted purposes. The committee asked how the board would be informed of those efforts. The committee wants any additional fundraising and corresponding expenses to be included in the financial statements throughout the year.

The committee and Jen deferred monitoring of protection of assets including insurance and separation of duties

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Submitted by Dick Niemiec, committee chair

Governance Committee

Monday, May 11, 2015 — 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Attendees: Richard Spratt, David Leppik, Cindy Marsh, Karin Wille, Lark Weller, Jill Braithwaite

Reading + check in

Housekeeping and monitoring schedule items

- Congregational survey is open through ~June 1. Thanks to David for creating it and promoting it!
- Staff-volunteer grievances: none reported
- Ends outcomes review: see Justin's report in April Board packet + Senior Minister annual review materials
- Congregant grievances: none reported
- Staff survey: in process; GC will review for themes/trends
- Upcoming (June) items:
 - Staff performance reviews completed (report on completion; direct inspection of format and process)
 - Senior Minister evaluation

Senior Minister annual review

We reviewed the materials submitted by Justin, which included his review of his performance on: visionary goals, staff work plan (portion of strategic plan to be completed this year), and his own goals (development and church-wide goals). The committee greatly appreciates the timeliness and effectiveness of these materials.

We also reviewed the Board survey on Senior Minister's covenant in the GPH and his letter of agreements, and we reviewed the limitations policies. We identified key themes from all of these materials, and these themes will be communicated to the Board president for his use in creating the Senior Minister performance review for 2014-2015. The themes we identified were consistent across all of the review materials.

Regarding the Board survey on Senior Minister performance, it was suggested that we should add to the ratings an option of "Not enough information to assess."

Regarding the staff workplan, we noted that this wasn't revised per the updated strategic plan, which didn't get to staff till January, so it's completely understandable that it was not updated after that point. In addition, the updates to the strategic plan likely would not have resulted in significant revisions to the workplan. We also resolved to review the workplan early in the year next year.

Board self-evaluation: Cindy drafted a shorter version of the Board self-evaluation. We discussed and decided to do this shortened board survey at end of May, due by June 3 so its findings can be used as a part of the Senior Minister review. We will do the fuller survey, or an updated version of it, next year.

Congregational covenant: We made slight changes to the covenant's language and are submitting it for Board approval as the final version to be voted on at this year's Annual Meeting. See attached.

Review of GC goals

- Guidelines to ensure all voices are heard in committee and Board meetings: Lark has asked Dave to include this on the Board agenda for May. *Note: Lark will not be at the May Board meeting and requests that other GC members on the Board help facilitate that discussion, as Cindy does the GC report at that May meeting.*
- Congregational engagement, leadership development: Jen and Elaine would like to attend June GC meeting to discuss appropriate roles, responsibilities in meeting these goals.

- Long-range, strategic thinking and leadership: Cindy suggests that the GC begin to develop a list of strategic issues for Board attention/consideration in 2015-16 church year. We agreed to bring ideas and discuss them at the June GC meeting. We also briefly discussed a few ideas for strategic topics of discussion:
 - We note that it may be time to evaluate the congregational survey, as well as the Visionary Goals and mission. Do we want to shorten the survey?
 - We note that we're coming up on the "expiration" of the strategic plan, which is 6 years after the VGs were adopted. Plus, given the potential Capital Campaign, we may want to work through how these all fit together.
 - Revisit the dashboard – revise into something that would help us do strategic work better.
 - Digital ministry.
 - Racial justice lens and decision points.

Next meeting: Monday, June 8, 2015 from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

First Universalist Church Covenant of Right Relations

May 11, 2015

As congregants and staff of First Universalist Church, we interact and work together in ways that exemplify our spiritual values and honor our Unitarian Universalist principles as we strive to fulfill our mission and achieve our visionary goals. We abide by the policies of the Church and maintain a community of safety, security, and trust. We seek to work together in ways that help all contribute to our common vision and feel respected within our community. We share a collective commitment to analysis of racism and white privilege, and establish accountable, responsible and inclusive relationships with our entire community. We use this covenant as a framework for right relationships with others as we work outside our walls in the larger community.

We welcome, affirm, and protect the light in each human heart, creating a culture of mutual respect, trust, and care. We:

- Act with kindness and compassion toward one another.
- Treat each other with respect, even in times of confusion, misunderstanding, or disagreement.
- Work together to clarify and understand our own roles and to respect the roles and responsibilities of others.
- Actively listen to one another with openness and a desire for genuine understanding.

We communicate constructively demonstrating clarity, candor, and kindness.

We:

- Share our own views with openness and tact.
- Offer generous thanks and encouragement, thoughtful criticism, and constructive options, as appropriate.
- Speak directly to others when we have concerns.
- Avoid gossiping.
- Assume positive intent on the part of each individual.
- Deal with complex, awkward and difficult to resolve issues to the best of our ability.

We make thoughtful, wise, and sound decisions. We:

- Commit to examining where white privilege and racism may be informing our interactions, discussions, and decisions, and to discerning what a decision made from a racial justice lens would look like.
- Seek out reliable information, consider alternative viewpoints, contemplate intended and unintended consequences, and use critical thinking.
- Understand that not all decisions within the church are consensus decisions; some may be staff decisions and/or the decisions of elected or appointed groups.
- Strive for transparency in decision-making.
- Communicate and respect the stated process for coming to closure.

We recognize that we will sometimes fall short, failing to do and be all that we would wish. We:

- Acknowledge our own mistakes.
- Stay engaged in the process of reconciliation with each other.
- Practice forgiveness and begin again in love.

Techniques to ensure all voices are sought and heard during committee and Board meetings

December 4, 2014

Applying a racial justice lens to meetings, discussions, and decisions*

- Approach discussions with “both/and” thinking, rather than “either/or.”
Acknowledge a myriad of ways to “do” institutional life.
- Shift our understanding of our resources by approaching discussions from premise of, “We have an abundance of power. How do we want to use that power?”
- Maintain a spirit of cooperation and collaboration bound by a collective commitment to analysis of racism and white privilege. Establish an accountable, responsible relationship with our *entire* community (internal and external). When making decisions or holding discussions, commit to asking ourselves—as individuals and as a body—where white privilege and racism are informing the past/reality/decision, and what a reality/decision made from a racial justice lens would look like.

*adapted from Robette Ann Dias, Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training: “Transforming Institutional Values: Revisited.” Thanks to Richard for sharing this material.

Increase use of group facilitation techniques designed to give everyone a chance for input (these would be used on critical issues/decisions; everyone does not have to comment on every item)

- Employ more go-arounds, where *everyone* comments on an issue or decision.
- Be sure not to move on too quickly so that all members have an opportunity to weigh in. Leave a little space before moving on, so that those who have not spoken on a topic have a chance to. Assume that not everyone has a communication style of “jumping in” quickly.
- Have members silently write down responses/ideas on the topic, then go around the group - each member gives one of his/her ideas. Keep going around the group until there are no more new ideas. (This prevents a very verbal member giving 5 ideas leaving others with no way to contribute).
- Discuss issue/decision in groups of two or three and then report out.
- Use quick “voting” techniques like “fist of five” to test for consensus. Each member holds up the number of fingers indicating agreement - 5 = strong agreement, 1 = no agreement. Outliers can give opinions.
- Make sure critical topics with key questions are distributed well in advance - some members “think and talk easily on their feet” and others prefer to have time to prepare thoughts.

- Share/rotate meeting facilitation duties so that discussion benefits from multiple styles.

Ensure Leader/Facilitator draws out others (in addition to group techniques above)

- Leader/Facilitator needs to be active in drawing out quieter members, and perhaps (constructively) moving on from members who are taking up disproportionate air time.
- Employ a process facilitator who helps with making sure all voices are heard, suggesting use of various techniques (it is hard for the meeting leader/chair to focus on agenda and tasks and always being attentive to everyone - especially at full BOT level).

Discuss need for all take individual responsibility

- Quieter members need to “step up” and push themselves to speak (they are Trustees, this is their role)
- More verbal members need to monitor their contributions, commit to not cutting off others, limit the number of times and amount of time they speak. We all must acknowledge that our covenant is to listen to all and hear all voices.

Evaluate how we are doing

- After every couple of meetings do a quick evaluation of how well we are doing; process facilitator goes to flip chart and leads a quick verbal evaluation - makes a “what we did well column” and a “what could be improved” column - usually a “+” and a Delta at the top of the page. Group members just call out what they observed. This process keeps the issue in front of everyone even if the evaluation is just a “quick and dirty” one. Include examining racism and white privilege as fundamental elements of this evaluation.

**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Board and Board Committee Goals for 2014-15**

Board of Trustees Goals:

1. Determine what constitutes faithfulness to our mission and covenant, then monitor those elements.
2. Continue to refine and implement excellence in leadership as a policy governance board, including shared leadership with the Senior Minister and more discernment on “big picture” issues of the church.
3. Complete a comprehensive review and update of our current Strategic Plan.
4. Further define and refine Board linkage with the congregation, through meaningful opportunities to listen closely to needs and aspirations.
5. Create and implement a system to collect and make readily accessible policies of the Board not included in the Governing Policies Handbook.
6. Continue developing our spiritual connection to each other and as a Board “circle” through readings, reflection and deep listening.

Finance Committee Goals:

1. Create and maintain a meaningful dashboard to monitor issues such as pledges, pledge units, net worth, membership and other church statistics/activities.
2. Resolve divestment policy issue.
3. Verify that draft reserve policy is manageable prior to formal Board adoption.
4. Determine a goal for UUA and Mid-America dues, then develop a plan for attaining the goal.
5. Develop simpler and more transparent financial reporting for the Finance Committee, the Board and the congregation.

Governance Committee Goals:

1. Review use of congregational survey to determine how issues such as participation and communication of results can be improved.
2. Develop a simple congregational covenant to guide how we behave with one another as congregants.
3. Support Board efforts to focus better on big-picture and long-range thinking and leadership, mission and vision (e.g., are we monitoring the right things, are we doing our work with a racial justice lens). Create practices to regularly evaluate progress .
4. Create guidelines and practices to insure all Trustee and Committee voices are heard in discussions and decision making.
5. Work with Nominating Committee to coordinate with work of the Board, especially regarding leadership development needs.
6. Develop document management system (keeping records of Board actions, policies, documents, templates, etc.).
7. Work with staff on hiring a benefits consultant to review employee benefits; complete review of whole compensation system and determine next steps.