

First Universalist Church Board of Trustees
September 20, 2018
Board Packet

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First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Board of Trustees Meeting

September 20, 2018

6:30 p.m. Cummins Room

Agenda

I. Call to Order (6:30).

- 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 (see SCM report)
- Spiritual reflection question (see SCM report)

II. Consent Agenda (6:50)

- Approval of minutes from August meeting.
- Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers
- Monitoring: Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes
- SCM Report
- Senior Minister Report on the Visionary Goals, 2017-18.
- ***Important Dates:*** Please note these on your calendars:
 - **State of the Church, Sunday Feb. 10, 2019, 12:45 p.m.**
 - Congregational Budget meetings, Sunday April 28, 2019, 12:45 p.m. and Tuesday, April 30, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.
 - **Annual Meeting, followed by Board brunch, Sunday June 2, 2019, 11:30 a.m.**

III. Administration (6:55)

- A. Sacred Solidarity (*see information in packet*).
- B. Appointment of Suzann Wilhite as Chair of Nominating Committee.
- C. Needed: Board member to serve on Nominating Committee.
- D. Needed: Board member to serve on Change Team (*Last year, Karin and Richard served on the Change Team. Karin would like to continue to serve but she is no longer on the Board. Last year the consensus was that we should have two Board members on the Change*

Team). The Charge of the Change Team [from our April 2017 Board meeting minutes] is:

To develop, implement and monitor a process for addressing white privilege/white supremacy, whiteness and racism; setting clear standards for inclusion of racial justice at all levels of the organization; reviewing and ensuring accountability for the mission, vision, policies, procedures, budgets, board agreements, etc.; to ensure that the commitment to end racism is a consistent theme; to support First Universalist to live into its values and commitment to being a racially just community.

IV. Executive Session (7:05)

V. Financial (7:25)

- A. Review of 2018 Fiscal Year-End results
- B. Financials Orientation for new and returning Board members.

BREAK (7:45 – 7:55)

VI. Congregational Covenant. (7:55)

The packet includes a copy of the Covenant of Right Relations that was approved by the Board in May 2015 but tabled at the 2015 annual meeting, as well as an excerpt from the GPH about the Board's covenant and an article from the UUA website about developing a covenant.

- A. Review and discussion of the Covenant itself.
 - a. Do we as a Board follow these guidelines?
 - b. Does the Covenant adequately address racial justice issues?
- B. Designing a process for engaging the congregation in developing a covenant.
 - What are the logistics of putting a process in place?

VII. Grievance Policy (8:20)

The packet includes an excerpt from the GPH regarding the Board's grievance policy, which is mostly focused on complaints of the Board violating its own policies. It does not address complaints regarding how the ministers have carried out their responsibilities. We will discuss whether we need an additional policy to address such complaints and what the parameters of such a policy should be.

VIII. Adjournment (9:00)

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First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Board of Trustees Meeting
August 16, 2018

Trustees and Ministers present: Bryana French, Keven Ambrus, Eric Cooperstein, Jen Crow, Dick Niemiec, Lillie Pang, Richard Spratt, Cindy March, Christa Anders, Justin Schroeder

Missing: Kristin Siegesmund

I. Call to Order

- a. Lighting of the Chalice
- b. Welcome to Keven Ambrus!
- c. Reading and reflection

II. Consent Agenda

- a. Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers for June and July
- b. Monitoring: Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes
- c. Monitoring: Overview of draft staff annual workplan

APPROVED.

III. Budget

- a. Preliminary FY 2018 revenue and expense figures/budget recap

Good news. We won't have final numbers until September but Rev. Crow is expecting about \$20,000 more in income than expenses due to generosity of Close the Gap and tight expense control by staff.

\$1,077,000 = total received for last year

\$1,084,000 = pledges for this current year; expecting about \$50,000 additional new pledge income with a 5% loss.

Justin is working on implementing a "Sustaining model"—inviting people to set up an ongoing commitment for their pledge beyond the one-year period so that we don't have to do as much work and so that church has a better idea of a "base". There will be very targeted asks for increasing pledges.

- b. Approval of Housing allowance for Rev. Karen Hutt for 2018

The housing allowance is a non-budget item that benefits the minister's personal tax return. Pursuant to Federal law, housing allowances must be approved by the Board. Rev. Hutt has requested an allowance of \$3,636.38 for the remainder of calendar year 2018.

APPROVED.

c. Cemetery Plot Donation

Someone wants to donate 4 cemetery plots for us. Anecdotally they are very difficult to get rid or sell. The Board asked Rev. Schroeder to investigate if they might be worth anything and if we might be able to sell them. We could also look at using them for indigent parishioners or others who cannot afford their own plot.

IV. Board Tasks for Coming Year

a. Congregational Covenant

Several years ago the Board developed a Congregational Covenant that was presented to the congregation at the annual meeting. The congregation objected because they had not been involved in the discussion and development of the covenant. The Board did not immediately revisit the issue because of the attention needed for the capital campaign. The Board will consider looking at this again.

b. Grievance Policy

The Board does not presently have a policy that sets out when the Board will consider congregant complaints or grievances about the ministers or how the ministers have handled an issue. Having a policy in place would make it easier to respond to such complaints.

c. Additional Topics for Consideration this Church Year

- Nominating Committee recommendations from the Change Team
- Inviting Jean Hopfensburger to report on her research on the decline in church participation
- Board Retreat – Christa will send a Doodle about Saturday availability through the fall
- Change Team – need to appoint a new Board member and fine-tune expectations and processes for the year. Consider a joint meeting.
- Congregational Survey – how do we want to systematically gather feedback from the congregation?

- Systematize the work for Co-Minister reviews
- Systematize the financial processes for the Board, Reverend Crow. Do we need to go back to the Finance Committee model?
- Update on the volunteer survey – what are people interested in? Where are the gaps? Ask the staff to give the Board a brief report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 10:05.

August Attendance							
			2018				2017
Adults		10:00				10:00	
1st week		182				249	
2nd week		*				228	
3rd week		223				*	
4th week		235				394	
5th week							
Monthly Total		640				871	
Average for August		213.33				290.33	
RE							
1st week		35				28	
2nd week		*				27	
3rd week		23				*	
4th week		10*				14*	
5th week							
Monthly Total		68				69	
Average for August		22.67				23	
Combined Average		236				313.33	
Notes	*Lake Harriet Service, no attendance reported				*Lake Harriet Service, no attendance reported		
	*Backpack Blessing, multi-gen service				*Backpack Blessing, multi-gen service		

**2018 Statistical Report
August, 2018
Board Meeting September 20, 2018**

MEMORIAL SERVICES: 0

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT: 0

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 4

Andrian Thomas and David Hussman, Minneapolis

Autumn Huiras and Chad Kuha, Eden Prairie

MEMBERS REINSTATED: 0

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 3

Frederic MacDonald-Dennis - moved away

Kelsey and Jeffrey Speaks - moved to Boston

CHILDREN DEDICATED: 0

	To Date	End of Year Totals			
MEMBERS	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
(Fiscal Year)	4	66	109	54	58
TOTAL MEMBERS:	1037	1049	1,011	934	920

Total members as of the last meeting: 1037

To be added: 4

To be removed : 3

TOTAL MEMBERS: 1038

Opening Reading and Reflection:

No One But Us

by Annie Dillard (From the book, **Holy the Firm**)

There is no one but us.
There is no one to send,
Nor a clean hand,
Nor a pure heart
On the face of the earth,
Nor in the earth
But only us,
A generation comforting ourselves
With the notion
That we have come at an awkward time,
That our innocent fathers are all dead –
As if innocence has ever been –
And our children busy and troubled,
And we ourselves unfit, not yet ready,
Having each of us chosen wrongly,
Made a false start, failed,
Yielded to impulse
And the tangled comfort of pleasures,
And grown exhausted,
Unable to seek the thread,
Weak, and involved.
But there is no one but us.
There never has been.

Reflection Questions:

What speaks to you in this reading? What catches you? What rings true? What is frightening?

Monitoring Items:

Transitions in Staff and Volunteer Positions: We have several staff transitions to report. Meera Kannan, our Young Children's Program assistant, has left her position. Andrea Love, our Finances Specialist (and OWL Staff Support), is leaving her job on September 20th. We will conduct exit interviews with both them. In the meantime, much like we did several years ago, we are taking this time to reassess the needs of the office, gathering input from staff members about will best serve the office, and the needs of the congregation.

The new Annual Giving Team is comprised of Tim Gluszak (Chair), Elizabeth Short, Peter Kimball, and Diane Rose.

Our Worship Associates this year are Taylor Putz, Janell Hill, Pamela Reed, Daryn Woodson, Drew Rosielle, Emily Murphrey, Jason Berry, Juliet Ali Caccamo, Leila Ambrus, Richard Lopez, Suzan Klein.

Cummins Internship Update:

We have been hard at work putting pieces in place to begin the Cummins Internship in the fall of 2019. Specifically, this has meant beginning to assemble an internship committee (which will probably start meeting in early 2019), applying for a grant from the UUA to help fund this internship, and writing up the position description for the internship.

The intention is to have this Internship be for UU Seminarians of Color; the goal, of course, is to shape them in their formation into a successful and faithful UU minister. We aspire to do that shaping in a congregation - and an internship committee - that is able to hold space for the conversations about race, racism, and whiteness that will inevitably emerge. We intend for this to be a well resourced internship, both financially, and spiritually/emotionally, as we connect interns with mentors and support outside the church system.

As a reminder, Justin has spent the past year engaging with Colleagues of Color and others around the association who have been particularly supportive of the idea of starting an Internship designed for UU Seminarians of Color. The larger vision for this internship includes creating a learning table among 6-8 other congregations who are commitment to supporting interns of color, and in doing this, and learning and changing from these experiences, to ultimately transform our UU institutions so that POCI might be hired or called to serve our churches and have a positive experience, because the church has done much of its work around race, racism, and whiteness.

Next steps include deepening this conversation within the congregation, and possibly inviting back some of our former interns to preach in the coming year, so they can see our former interns, and be reminded of what it means to be a teaching congregation.

Annual Giving Update:

As part of our process of re-imagining annual giving, and moving toward a model of year round giving (as we unhook from the “Pledge” language, and a single campaign in February and March), we are launching a mini-annual giving campaign September 23, September 30, and October 7th. We’re calling this our “All-In Financial Check In” campaign, and the idea is to invite people who haven’t yet set up an annual gift to do that, or if folks have already set up a gift, we’ll invite them to make it ongoing, or if they are paying their gift by credit card, we’ll invite them to move that to checking (which saves us money), or we’ll invite them to make a one time gift to help us close the gap. The other goal of this mini-campaign is to educate the congregation about the budget, and where we stand in relationship to the budget, gifts given, etc.

We’re excited about this fall campaign, and believe that we’ve set it up in such a way that everyone will be able to participate.

Sacred Solidarity Network:

We are hoping that First Universalist might participate in the Sacred Solidarity Network again, with a team comprised of Board Members, Faithful Action Council Members, Racial

Justice Education Team Members, and Change Team Members. I've attached information about the Sacred Solidarity Network as well as the application form.

Report on the Visionary Goals, Self Evaluation, September 2018

Mission Statement: In the Universal Spirit of love and hope, we give, receive, and grow.

Visionary Goals:

- 1) First Universalist is a faith community committed to a transformational spiritual path guided by Unitarian Universalism's theology and Seven Principles. Our worship, spiritual practices, and rituals unify us, challenge our assumptions, provide comfort, and connect us to the holy.**

We began our 2017-2018 church year with a "Blessing of the Backpacks" service in August.

In worship, we explored such themes as "Intention," "Outsiders," "Sources of Trust," "Loving," "The Long Haul," "Forgiveness," and more.

We participated in the second White Supremacy Teach-In last October; also in October, we had a joyful celebration as we wrapped up the fundraising efforts of our Capital Campaign.

Once again, we offered "Remembrance Sunday" in early January; this is a powerful worship ritual meant to help us honor and remember our losses over the previous year.

Franco Holder joined us on staff in November, as Jerrod Wendland left for Maine. Franco quickly became a beloved part of our worship team. In April, he led the Children's Choir as they sang during our Easter service. Our children sounded great!

In April, Rev. Karen Hutt and I preached a dialogue sermon on "Forgiveness," and Karen stole the show, offering a different perspective on forgiveness, based on her identity as person of color.

Flower Communion highlighted the music of Give, Get, Sistet, singing in collaboration with our choir and others, as they shared an improvisational piece together. Over the course of the year, Give, Get, Sistet met with the worship team to help plan the shape of the services that they were involved in. These were dynamic and synergistic meetings, and our worship life was changed and shaped by their experience, questions, and song. This artist in residency program was designed as a time limited, one year program, with the possibility of extending the residency. However, members of Give, Get, Sister, due to personal and life circumstances, have moved their separate ways, and we have pulled

together the Soul Band, who will be with us multiple times during the 2018-2019 church year.

Several times during the year, we had a small group of singers, led by Ruth MacKenzie and Franco Holder, who led the congregation in song, and in singing without the hymnal. As a result of these various singing efforts, the tone, feel, and texture of our music and our singing has changed. We are moving beyond the hymnal!

Throughout the year, through music and message, we continued to weave in our Racial Justice commitment, looking to disrupt the dynamics of race, racism, and whiteness in our worship, and striving to center more voices of color in our worship services, whether as musicians, speakers, or performers.

In short, our worship team – ministers, worship associates, guest preachers, our choir and orchestra, pianist, and guest musicians – worked together to create Sunday morning experiences that healed, comforted, and connected us.

2) First Universalist is a multi-generational congregation where we connect to ageless wisdom, our ever-evolving religious tradition, listen for the call of love, and build meaningful relationships and community.

First Universalist has one of the largest Religious Education Programs in the country. From September through May, we offer Religious Education classes for children and youth in preschool through high school. We are home to 305 families and more than 550 children and youth! Between the two services, 300+ children and youth attend Religious Education/Faith Formation classes. Forty six teenage helpers in the classroom.

We were delighted to have Meera Kannan join our staff as the Young Children's Program assistant. Meera helped with curriculum, lesson planning, and was present in our classrooms, building connections with children and parents.

Lauren Wyeth, partnering with Rev. Karen Hutt and other congregants, helped write two new sets of Curriculum, one for OWL (Our Whole Lives) youth (with an RJ lens), and one called, "POCI Joy," a curriculum designed for youth of color, led by UUs of Color.

This past year, we offered 1st Grade OWL to families for the first time. Other classes taught the values and theology of our faith as they explored the origins/impact of racism, discussed family diversity, and leaned into the meaty topics of life, including death and grief

New this year, we offered the Rainbow Chapel for PreK-1st graders, similar to Children's Chapel for 2nd-5th graders, which gave our little ones a great start in worship on Sunday mornings.

Through the course of the year, our RE Program Focused on "Milestones," such as Middle School Memories for 6th graders and their parents, a stole ceremony for our Elementary School Kids, our Coming of Age Program for 8th grade, and a Bridging Ceremony for our Graduation Seniors.

Our Adult Programming this past year was deeply shaped by the newly formed Racial Justice Education Team (RJET), who help to create transformational racial justice learning opportunities, offering workshops on white fragility, various book studies, small groups on white privilege, movie screenings (13th) and Circles designed for parents to talk to kids about race.

Our Daytime Connections group continued to grow and thrive, offering monthly programming and shared meals. Members of the ministry team took turns offering opening words and reflections at these gathering, and I help lead an early spring session on "Keeping Your Spiritual Balance."

Under the guidance of Rev. Elaine Aron Tenbrink, we offered 21 Soul Matters Groups (bringing monthly worship themes into the lives of our congregants), 16 Spiritual Deepening Circles (focusing on various spiritual practices, and deepening one's racial justice practice and awareness), and 9 NewComer Circles. Wellspring continued to be a place for spiritual deepening and reflection.

All told, more than 400 people participated in circles!

This year, we brought back our "Pledge Day," (called "Gathering in Gratitude") celebration and this event brought together hundreds of people and families. Our "All In" Annual Giving campaign began to shift the paradigm on giving, as well, as we focused less on a particular amount and instead asked everyone to participate.

3) First Universalist is a multi-racial, multi-cultural, and intergenerational faith community of mutual caring and support where people bring all of who they are and welcome each other with joy. Our sense of who we are as a community of faith is ever expanding

This past year, the Racial Justice Change Team was created and met throughout the year. The Change Team began its work by centering and listening

to the voices of People of Color in the congregation. This ultimately led to the recommendation that the Staff hire a full time minister of Color; as a direct result of this recommendation, Jen and I put together a budget that brought Rev. Karen Hutt on board in a quarter time position. In the following year, we will work with the Board to create a 5 plan to create a full time position for a minister of color. These steps are helping us reimagine who we are, and who we might be, as we live into a multi-cultural, multi-racial future.

In addition to this recommendation, the Change Team issued recommendations around leadership structures in the church (including re-imagining how the Nominating Committee might work), and hosted a meal for POCl in the church, as a way for the Change Team and the POCl community to connect and better get to know one another.

Last October, in partnership with Congregants and Vail Place, we offered a Mental Health Sunday, crafting a worship services designed to lift up the reality of those living with mental illness, those accompanying those with mental illness, and removing some of the stigma around mental illness. The message was clear: here, at this church, you can bring your whole self; in the ritual at the end of the service, nearly everyone participated, indicating the profound impact this service had. Feedback from congregants was positive, and we will be offering this service again this fall.

Once again this year, the Pastoral Care Team delivered dozens of poinsettias to church members and friends who had lost a loved one over the past year.

Thanks to the singing and improvisational skills of Give, Get, Sistet, and thanks to the congregational singing efforts of Ruth MacKenzie and others, our self of who we are, as a singing congregation, is changing, and expanding.

4) First Universalist is a faith community that acts with humility, bravery, and compassion to create a racially just and sustainable world.

The Faithful Action Council, formed in 2015, continued its work of creating Faithful Action opportunities for First Universalist friends and members, with the goal of being transparent, accountable to our racial justice ministry, and ensuring that Faithful Action opportunities are accessible to all congregants.

Sanctuary and Resistance was a huge focus of the church this past year. We worked closely with ISAIAH and other congregations engaged in Sanctuary and Resistance work. In the Spring, the Faithful Action Council formally accepted ISAIAH as a new Faithful Action Partner, as they have been critical in our

Sanctuary and Resistance efforts, offering support, convening congregations, and helping to create a faith based dialogue around Sanctuary and Resistance. (Our other partners this past year were: Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, Emerge, Augsburg Fairview Academy, Simpson Housing Services, Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, and Beacon). In addition to this, the Sanctuary and Resistance Team sold bracelets to support an Emergency Fund designed to make one time gifts to families impacted by deportations, detainments, or some other disruption the their lives and livelihoods. The Sanctuary and Resistance Team also sponsored a number of workshops and panels discussion, including “Refugees & U.S. Asylum Seekers: Uncertain Shelter in the Age of Trump.”

Over this past year, the Faithful Action Council continued to refine its Racial Justice Lens, beginning a conversation with the RJET, and ultimately having a retreat with the RJET, as we find ways to work together and amplify each other’s ministry.

The Holiday Giving Team applied a racial justice lens as well, and selected Marnita’s Table as our Holiday Giving Recipient. We raised \$26,000 for Marnita’s Table, less than years past; the Holiday Giving Team attributes this to the recently ended Capital Campaign, and the fact that Marnita’s Table, and what they do, is more difficult to describe than Habitat for Humanity or Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative (our two previous recipients).

As a result of our relationship with Marnita’s Table, the IZI principles (Intentional Social Interaction) are alive in much of the programming we did this past year, including our RJET Potluck Gathering, and our Faithful Action, end of year celebration. These same principles are being applied to our once a month Community Meals (which will kick off in the new year).

This past year, our Earth Day services highlighted our relationship with the LeMoine family and the indigenous networks they are a part of, and the ways we’ve worked together to help restore the name of Bde Maka Ska. Our Environmental Justice team (and other church members) supported the launch of the 2nd year of the of the Mni Ki Wakan, Decade of Water Summit.

The UU Solar Garden is finally up and running and the Environmental Justice Team is planning a site visit with congregants in the Garden in the fall.

Application to Participate in the Sacred Solidarity Network as a Part of the First Universalist Team (for 2018-2019)

____ I have read the Sacred Solidarity Network overview (3 page) and agree with the Principles of the Network.

____ I understand I need to show up! I will attend the Opening Gathering, mini-retreats, and Zoom Conference calls.

Please Briefly Respond to the Following Questions:

What is your racial justice experience? What is your experience with working to dismantle systems of white supremacy?

Why is this work important to you as a person of faith?

How do you envision bringing the learning/dialogue of the Sacred Solidarity Network back to First Universalist? What communities/networks within the church do you touch?

Please note: Revs. Jen Crow and Justin Schroeder will review these applications and make the final determination of who is on the team.

Sacred Solidarity Network

Congregations, faith communities, and spiritual communities working to dismantle white supremacy in our institutions and in our practices.

Each year, MARCH gathers together a cohort of 12-15 congregations and communities to form a Sacred Solidarity Network (SSN). We build relationships, deepen our knowledge and understanding, and take concrete actions to co-create conditions from which collective liberation can grow.

Participants meet for an ongoing cycle of action, learning, and reflection. By engaging in a planned curriculum, groups come away with a customizable racial justice toolkit that includes a range of concrete plans and resources that can be used within their particular community.

Who Participates?

SSN is free and open to teams from any congregation or faith community who are eager to engage in this work and who are committed to our shared values. Teams should be actively supported by and include members who have leadership roles and who can meaningfully shape congregational or community decisions. Teams might include:

- members of a racial justice task force,
- board or governing council members,
- clergy, or
- any others who are charged with stewarding and leading the work of dismantling white supremacy and creating a racially just community and world.

The SSN primarily includes communities and congregations who have historically been predominantly white, and who have benefited institutionally from white privilege—even though their demographics may be multiracial. This is called “institutional whiteness.”

MARCH focuses on such communities because we know the significant impact that happens when institutionally white culture and actions *shift away* from reproducing white supremacy and *move towards* resourcing the direct

What is MARCH?

Twin Cities MARCH (Multifaith Anti-Racism, Change and Healing) is an open coalition of pro-LGBTQ people of faith. We come from diverse religious traditions and spiritual communities and act in solidarity with front-line movements for social justice.

MARCH: Coordinating Team

- Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, Center for Sustainable Justice
- Rev. Ashley Horan, Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA)
- Liz Loeb, Kaleo Center for Faith, Justice, and Social Transformation
- Rev. Dana Neuhauser, New City Church
- Rev. Terri Burnor, United Theological Seminary

MARCH: Learn More

Visit facebook.com/changeandhealingmn/ or join our MARCH Google Group by contacting Rebecca Voelkel at rmmvoelkel@aol.com.

leadership of Black, Brown, Native, Trans, and queer people who are leading front-line movements towards justice.

MARCH believes that white supremacy is created and sustained by white people. As such, predominantly white faith communities have a unique role and responsibility to leverage our spiritual and social power and infrastructure for the work of dismantling the dehumanizing system of white supremacy.

Joining the Sacred Solidarity Network 2018-2019 Cohort

We are thrilled you are considering joining this vibrant cohort that will be actively *leveraging* the power of our communities while also *questioning and interrogating* the power we hold in an unjust system.

The first step is to **contact the Rev. Dana Neuhauser at dana.r.neuhauser@gmail.com to schedule a conversation** with a member of the leadership team.

As you discern your congregation or community's capacity to participate in the SSN this year, please consider our shared commitments:

1. Send a clergy person or faith leader to the gathering on Sept. 5. This grounds our work in relationship, in our shared sense of purpose, and in our diverse exploration of spiritual practice intertwined with action. If you absolutely can't make it, please let Dana know.
2. Commit to a shared racial justice process within your congregation or community.
3. Commit to attending the five mini-retreats (listed at right) as a group from your congregation or community. Individual attendance will ebb and flow, but our shared work will be best served by having a majority of each team attend each retreat.
4. Commit to having a team representative attend the virtual check-ins (during non-retreat months). We will co-create these video conference calls so that they serve both your ongoing work and our ability to support one another in relationship.
5. Commit to the Principles of the Sacred Solidarity Network (see pg. 3).

2018-2019 SSN Cohort Meeting Dates

All meetings are held at Springhouse Ministry Center, 610 W 28th St. Minneapolis, MN 55408. The building is physically accessible to a range of mobility options, and is adjacent to a free parking lot and free street parking.

Opening Gathering for Clergy and Faith Leaders:

Wed., Sept. 5, 11:30am–1:30pm (lunch included)

Opening Retreat I:

Tues., Oct. 16, 5:30pm–9pm (dinner included)

Opening Retreat II:

Tues., Nov. 13, 5:30pm–9pm (dinner included)

Mid-Year Retreat I:

Tues., Feb. 12, 5:30pm–9pm (dinner included)

Mid-Year Retreat II:

Tues., Mar. 12, 5:30pm–9pm (dinner included)

Closing Retreat:

Tues., June 2, 2pm–6pm (snacks included)

In addition, we will host **video conference check-in meetings** (using Zoom) during non-retreat months.

Principles of the Sacred Solidarity Network

- We are uncompromisingly pro-LGBTQ.
- We recognize our work as spiritual work. We engage with our various theologies, philosophies, worldviews, and traditions.
- We believe that people are the experts on their own lives, and that social movements are best led by the people most impacted by the conditions of oppression that we seek to change.
- We act in solidarity, supporting work led by Brown, Black, Native, trans, and queer people towards collective liberation.
- We honor embodiment. We take seriously the way that systems show up in our physical beings.
- We support and practice reparations.
- We embrace a diversity of tactics and time-horizons. We reject the notion of a single answer or one best practice. We welcome all tools, and work to come into right relationship with the tools we use.
- We challenge Christian supremacy. We welcome people who practice various forms of the Christian faith, but we work against centering forms of Christianity as the norm, and we pay attention to dynamics of power and privilege. We name and resist anti-Semitism and Islamophobia when they occur.
- We know that oppressions are always intersectional and intertwined. We work against misogyny, classism and erasure. We are strongest when we recognize our multiplicity.
- We pay attention to assumptions, to inclusion and exclusion, to differences in identity, history, privilege, and oppression when we are together.
- We embrace emergence.
- We welcome children and life cycles.
- We show up.
- We listen to the truths within our diverse faiths knowing that none of us have the right answer for anyone else. We honor what has come before and yearn towards what will be.
- We support and care for one another, in this work and in our lives. None of us can do this alone.
- We make room for messiness. We hold patience and love with each other in hard moments even as we hold the work with fierceness and responsibility.

Financial Summary
Prepared by Rev. Jen Crow
September 16, 2018

Fiscal Year 2017-18

We are happy to report that while the official 2017/2018 year-end numbers are not yet finalized, it does seem clear that we will have ended the previous fiscal year in the black. Initial numbers show that we had roughly \$30,000 more in income than expenses for the 2017-18 church year. We believe the generosity that came forward in the Close the Gap effort, as well as the conscientious monitoring of expenses generated this positive result, and we are grateful to the congregation and the staff for their gifts and efforts. The preliminary report on Annual Gifts for 2017-18 shows a total of \$1,077,000, which is very close to our third quarter year-end estimate.

Each year, our accounting manager, Brad Schmidt, and our financial consultant, Kurt Hochfeld, complete an annual review that includes:

- Verifying the accuracy of the fiscal year 2017-18 financial statements
- Discussing all financial policies and procedures
- Ensuring that our financial practices are on par with GAAP/Non Profit standards.

Due to Kurt's schedule, this review will take place in early October and a written summary and final 2017-18 numbers will be available for the October Board meeting.

July 2018

July is typically a slower month for us financially, both in income and expenses. This year is no exception, with the only notable item being in rental income. Our large tenant, Southside Child Development Center paid their rent late for July, so you will see that our rental income number for July is lower than expected. The rent was paid, and we are on track for both income and expenses.

Annual Giving commitments for the 2018-19 church year currently total \$1,082,000. We expect to run a mini-campaign this fall as we continue to change over to a sustaining model of giving and membership, and new annual gifts routinely come in as new members join the church. We anticipate receiving an additional \$50,000 in annual giving commitments through these efforts, bringing us to an expected total of \$1,134,000 for the 2018-19 fiscal year. This is roughly \$40,000 shy of our hoped for total of \$1,174,500. Adjustments to the budget will be made throughout the year to address anticipated income and expenses so that we can end the year as expected.

Capital Campaign Income and Expenses

Our donors continue to be incredibly generous, and timely, in payment of their Capital Campaign commitments. As of July 30, 2018, we have received \$1,983,000 in capital campaign gifts. After meeting our expenses, (including fundraising, architect fees, etc.) we have

\$1,540,000 in Capital Campaign gifts in hand. A significant expense of roughly \$125,000 is anticipated as the tuckpointing and exterior repair work to the Sanctuary Building begins.

Building Update (*the article shared in the Liberal early in September*)

Many of you are participating in our capital campaign, Not for Ourselves Alone: Building an Inclusive Future, by giving of your resources as we strive to create a church home that better reflects our values and magnifies our mission. We've been dreaming about an updated worship space, with new carpet, fresh paint, an accessible chancel and assistive technology for those with hearing loss. We've learned that our Religious Education wing can support the addition of a third floor and we've sketched out ways to renovate our existing space to make better room for our children and youth, our small groups, and our offices. Tuckpointing work on the outside of our sanctuary building will begin any day, so that we can seal the envelope of our worship space and prevent further water damage now and in the future.

Your building team has been hard at work for over a year listening to your hopes, centering our values and our mission, and aligning what we want with our budget. During this time, we've also been in conversation with Shir Tikvah, the synagogue that purchased our old building over on 50th and Girard, our colleagues in faith and in our quest for justice, about sharing this space here at 34th and Dupont, together. We've been dreaming about what shared space would look and feel like, knowing that if we could make it work, not only would we grow in the depth of our relationship across congregations, but that we would magnify our missions, too, as we reduce our collective environmental footprint and share in the costs of maintaining this space.

Over the last months, the tone of those conversations has changed. At its last meeting, your Board of Trustees shared their enthusiasm for the potential of this possibility, and directed the ministers to fully explore this co-location opportunity, knowing that it has the potential to help us better serve our mission and fulfill our financial obligations to the future. This means that we are putting our current plans for renovation and construction on pause as we engage in a fast-track feasibility discussion with Shir Tikvah. We are moving forward, committed to engaging with Shir Tikvah with open hearts and hard work to see if we can co-locate for the greater good of both congregations and our unique missions. I'm beginning to find myself saying that our inclusive vision of Not For Ourselves Alone might be completed Not By Ourselves Alone.

Co-location raises a number of questions that your church leadership is committed to answering, questions like: How is First Universalist's mission enhanced (or challenged) by co-location? Can co-location magnify the social-justice work of the two entities or does it cloud our work? How do we optimally deliver distinctively Unitarian Universalist spiritual formation opportunities to children, youth, and adults in a shared facility? What might be the legal and financial structure of the co-located entities of First Universalist and Shir Tikvah? These questions and more have been raised and we will, over the next few months, begin to answer them. The board and a number of working groups will do our best to shape our responses and, working often with similar groups at Shir Tikvah, try to understand how co-located space could brighten our future. Given how fresh the decision to proceed in this good-faith exploration is, we have not yet designed the arc of and all the aspects of congregational engagement, but it will happen; we want to hear your questions, your excitement and your worries. And we hope you will share in our spirit of curiosity, possibility, and good faith discernment as we go forward.

Yours in gratitude,
Rev. Jen

2018-19 Operating Budget Overview for the Board

Income

Our two major sources of income are annual giving commitments (pledges) and rental income. Our Legacy Fund contribution continues to grow and provides significant income, as well.

Targeted pledge income has been targeted to reach \$1,174,500 for the past several years. Right now commitments are at \$1,083,000 with an expected increase of \$50,000 throughout the year to reach \$1,133,000. The 2018-19 budget was created with the expectation that we would end the 2018-19 fiscal year with \$1,116,000 in paid annual gifts. We typically assume a 3-5% loss between annual gift commitments and paid annual gifts.

Rental income - our largest source of rental income is our tenant, Southside Child Development Center, which brings in \$104,000 per year. There are costs associated with this tenant (facilities staff, utilities, realtor fees) that offset some of this income.

There are a number of items that are straight pass throughs with no net impact on the operating budget that you will see in both the income and expense sections of the budget. (YCE, Families Moving Forward, Holiday Giving, Offering Plate for Community, Youth Trips, capital campaign)

Expenses

Salaries and benefits make up the largest percentage of expenses (64%).

- An adjunct 1/4 time minister (17,000) is included in our expenses for the first time this year.
- A 2% pool for staff salary increases, targeted increases for positions below their salary range and annual health insurance premium increases are included.
- In this budget, as in last year's budget, we are allowing for up to \$25,000 of salaries to be paid from capital project funds for project management.

Building Expenses total \$247,636, which includes the principal (\$42,000) and interest (\$29,000) on our mortgage and line of credit. Total building expenses make up 15% of our expenses.

We have reduced general maintenance and repairs in the budget (from \$20,000 to \$11,000) during this renovation and construction period.

The principal payment on the mortgage and line of credit have been paid within and outside of the operating budget at different times. This year's budget includes payment of the principal within the operating budget, at a cost of (\$42,000). This will result in an overall deficit and a deficit of \$48,000 was presented and approved by the congregation at the annual meeting.

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Analysis of Revenues & Expenses - Summary
July 2017 to June 2018

Accounts	Current Balance (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)	Annual Budget (This Year)	Last Year YTD Actual
Revenues				
Pledges	\$1,077,318.46	\$1,115,775.00	\$1,115,775.00	\$1,056,665.45
Contributions Unrestricted	\$206,510.60	\$141,700.00	\$141,700.00	\$146,931.90
Contributions Temp Restricted	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contrib Released from Restr	\$270,625.34	\$115,445.89	\$115,445.89	\$378,046.24
Fundraisers	\$46,510.35	\$46,500.00	\$46,500.00	\$71,606.00
Program Fees	\$2,830.75	\$6,600.00	\$6,600.00	\$3,995.31
Dividends & Interest	\$14,483.90	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$10,646.01
Rental Income	\$138,496.37	\$137,742.00	\$137,742.00	\$119,814.20
Realized Gains & Losses	(\$3,667.23)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$567.26
Unrealized Gains & Losses	\$18,277.95	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,309.39
Other Income	\$6,871.70	\$3,333.33	\$3,333.33	\$10,744.81
Total Revenues	\$1,778,258.19	\$1,582,096.22	\$1,582,096.22	\$1,800,326.57
Expenses				
Salaries & Wages	\$805,353.00	\$809,361.00	\$809,361.00	\$756,092.37
Payroll Taxes	\$60,548.75	\$61,785.00	\$61,785.00	\$57,125.95
Employee Benefits				
Medical Insurance	\$76,638.83	\$70,001.00	\$70,001.00	\$64,835.88
Long Term Disability Insurance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$0.04)
Life Insurance	\$1,799.96	\$2,378.00	\$2,378.00	\$1,776.44
403(b)	\$65,681.39	\$66,088.00	\$66,088.00	\$63,022.73
Total Employee Benefits	\$144,120.18	\$138,467.00	\$138,467.00	\$129,635.01
Professional Expenses	\$25,669.99	\$24,900.00	\$24,900.00	\$30,843.04
Temporary Labor	\$38,031.32	\$33,600.00	\$33,600.00	\$30,203.85
Program Expenses	\$31,422.11	\$43,500.00	\$43,500.00	\$42,263.47
Miscellaneous Program Expenses	\$51,716.93	\$31,100.00	\$31,100.00	\$94,368.82
Membership Program Expenses	\$8,705.33	\$11,500.00	\$11,500.00	\$11,803.57
Fundraising Expenses	\$5,280.16	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$4,752.18
Administrative Expenses	\$89,064.70	\$80,300.00	\$80,300.00	\$80,884.09
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$5,871.88	\$6,200.00	\$6,200.00	\$7,012.36
Insurance	\$26,326.62	\$23,987.50	\$23,987.50	\$26,292.17
Dues & Memberships	\$45,202.50	\$46,002.50	\$46,002.50	\$43,784.00
Utilities	\$57,961.00	\$51,000.00	\$51,000.00	\$49,667.55
Repairs & Maintenance	\$20,605.84	\$30,800.00	\$30,800.00	\$23,458.73
Other Building Related Expense	\$203,081.00	\$72,075.00	\$72,075.00	\$345,888.82
Offering Plate for Community	\$43,143.90	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$66,131.27
Other Charitable Contributions	\$84,789.99	\$75,445.89	\$75,445.89	\$9,389.85
Total Expenses	\$1,746,895.20	\$1,588,023.89	\$1,588,023.89	\$1,809,597.10
Net Total	\$31,362.99	(\$5,927.67)	(\$5,927.67)	(\$9,270.53)

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Analysis of Revenues & Expenses - Summary
July 2018

Accounts	Current Balance (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)	Annual Budget (This Year)	Last Year YTD Actual
Revenues				
Pledges	\$100,316.10	\$150,037.64	\$1,115,775.00	\$86,152.09
Contributions Unrestricted	\$1,999.69	\$13,425.01	\$161,100.00	\$6,899.99
Contributions Temp Restricted	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contrib Released from Restr	\$500.00	\$9,416.67	\$113,000.00	\$10,551.30
Fundraisers	\$150.00	\$2,833.34	\$34,000.00	\$900.00
Program Fees	\$0.00	\$83.33	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Dividends & Interest	\$393.73	\$1,520.83	\$18,250.00	\$252.47
Rental Income	\$1,974.30	\$11,457.66	\$137,492.00	\$1,940.09
Realized Gains & Losses	\$604.47	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20.30
Unrealized Gains & Losses	\$912.46	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,147.43
Other Income	\$30.00	\$277.75	\$3,333.00	\$10.00
Total Revenues	\$106,880.75	\$189,052.23	\$1,583,950.00	\$107,873.67
Expenses				
Salaries & Wages	\$67,042.32	\$71,466.00	\$857,592.00	\$60,745.37
Payroll Taxes	\$4,940.80	\$5,466.84	\$65,602.05	\$4,625.54
Employee Benefits				
Medical Insurance	\$7,253.75	\$7,462.59	\$89,551.00	\$5,962.37
Long Term Disability Insurance	\$0.00	\$87.50	\$1,050.00	\$0.00
Life Insurance	\$108.70	\$198.16	\$2,378.00	\$108.70
403(b)	\$5,839.23	\$6,245.59	\$74,947.00	\$5,446.24
Total Employee Benefits	\$13,201.68	\$13,993.84	\$167,926.00	\$11,517.31
Professional Expenses	\$198.44	\$2,249.99	\$27,000.00	\$970.69
Temporary Labor	\$1,521.50	\$1,988.61	\$32,300.00	\$1,029.50
Program Expenses	\$1,266.50	\$2,424.99	\$29,100.00	\$1,570.31
Miscellaneous Program Expenses	\$3,182.78	\$2,570.83	\$30,850.00	\$900.00
Membership Program Expenses	\$297.51	\$941.66	\$11,300.00	\$779.54
Fundraising Expenses	\$0.00	\$416.66	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Administrative Expenses	\$5,631.84	\$7,020.83	\$84,250.00	\$5,086.89
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$31.27	\$516.67	\$6,200.00	\$790.25
Insurance	\$2,192.11	\$1,875.00	\$22,500.00	\$2,221.01
Dues & Memberships	\$0.00	\$3,766.88	\$45,202.50	\$0.00
Utilities	\$5,271.88	\$3,904.98	\$54,000.00	\$4,127.20
Repairs & Maintenance	\$1,036.47	\$1,858.34	\$22,300.00	\$771.41
Other Building Related Expense	\$4,409.67	\$9,997.06	\$129,144.00	\$6,114.99
Offering Plate for Community	\$0.00	\$2,500.00	\$30,000.00	\$1,188.78
Other Charitable Contributions	\$500.00	\$416.67	\$5,000.00	\$7,682.52
Total Expenses	\$110,724.77	\$133,375.85	\$1,625,266.55	\$110,121.31
Net Total	(\$3,844.02)	\$55,676.38	(\$41,316.55)	(\$2,247.64)

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Balance Sheet
July 2018

Headings and Account

Current Balance (This Year)

Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents		
Cash	\$	1,058,553.81
Total Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$	1,058,553.81
Investments		
Schwab- Church Operating	\$	587,395.14
Schwab - Church Reserve	\$	335,342.49
Schwab - Don Carter & Mary Carter	\$	79,650.50
Schwab- Legacy Fund	\$	839,745.05
Schwab - Temporarily Restricted	\$	124,316.24
Thrivent Mutual Funds	\$	10,733.84
Total Investments	\$	1,977,183.26
Cash & Cash Equiv - Foundation		
Sunrise Bank - Foundation	\$	11,220.46
Total Cash & Cash Equiv - Foundation	\$	11,220.46
Investments - Foundation		
Schwab - Foundation	\$	1,659,650.93
Total Investments - Foundation	\$	1,659,650.93
Total Current Assets		\$ 4,706,608.46
Other Current Assets		
Other Current Assets		
Mortgage Escrow Deposits	\$	5,009.22
Prepaid Expenses	\$	8,160.48
Prepaid Loan Expenses	\$	3,730.90
Prepaid Medical Insurance	\$	10,407.84
Total Other Current Assets	\$	27,308.44
Total Other Current Assets		\$ 27,308.44
Fixed Assets		
Fixed Assets		
Fixed Assets	\$	1,666,636.05
Total Fixed Assets	\$	1,666,636.05
Total Fixed Assets		\$ 1,666,636.05
Total Assets		\$ 6,400,552.95

Liabilities & Equity			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable			
Accounts Payable	\$	28,763.55	
Total Accounts Payable	\$	28,763.55	
Total Current Liabilities			\$ 28,763.55
Other Current Liabilities/Long-Term Liabilities			
Benefits Payable	\$	2,165.57	
Accrued Expenses	\$	15,735.31	
Deferred Revenue	\$	11,592.68	
Misc Other Liabilities	\$	13,000.00	
Line of Credit Advance Payable	\$	111,951.25	
Mortgage Payable	\$	550,545.11	
Total Other Current/Long-term Liabilities	\$	704,989.92	
Total Other Current/Long-Term Liabilities			\$ 704,989.92
Total Liabilities & Equity			\$ 733,753.47
Fund Principal and Excess Cash Received			
Fund Principal			
Undesignated Net Assets/Equity			
Church Equity	\$	2,409,420.67	
Total Undesignated Net Assets/Equity	\$	2,409,420.67	
Board Restricted Net Assets			
Contingency Reserve	\$	271,109.21	
Legacy Fund	\$	893,310.90	
Memorials	\$	6,781.88	
Total Board Restricted Net Assets	\$	1,171,201.99	
Temp Restricted Net Assets			
Capital Campaign Fund	\$	1,540,477.71	
Cummins Ministerial Fund	\$	224,450.26	
Miscellaneous Funds	\$	124,110.80	
Total Temp Restricted Net Assets	\$	1,889,038.77	
Permanently Restricted			
Don Carter Endowment	\$	61,679.68	
M E Carter Endowment	\$	16,371.46	
Total Permanently Restricted	\$	78,051.14	
Total Fund Principal	\$	5,547,712.57	
Excess Cash Received			
Excess Cash Received	\$	119,086.91	
Total Excess Cash Received	\$	119,086.91	
Total Fund Principal and Excess Cash Received			\$ 5,666,799.48
Total Liabilities & Equity, Fund Principal, & Restricted Funds			\$ 6,400,552.95

Capital Campaign 2016-2017 Budget Breakdown (As of 7/31/2018)

Division	Budget	\$	Remaining Budget
Revenue			
Donations/Legacy Fund Transfer	\$ 6,400,000.00	\$ 1,983,560.36	\$ (4,416,439.64)
Expense			
Consultants	\$ 230,000.00	\$ 229,030.00	\$ 970.00
Printing/Supplies	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ -
Launch Event	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 52,689.09	\$ (22,689.09)
Architectural Pre-Work	\$ 27,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Total Budget	\$ 295,000.00	\$ 291,719.09	
Remaining Budget	\$ 3,280.91		
Projects			
Full Compass Hearing Assist	\$ 3,664.34		
Architect Fee	\$ 87,664.86		
Staff Salaries	\$ 54,734.98		
Misc. Fees	\$ 1,915.38		
Consultant	\$ 2,500.00		
	\$ 150,479.56		
Total Loan from Legacy Fund	\$ -		
Net Income	\$ 1,541,361.71		

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.

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis Governing Policies Handbook

- 3.4.1.5. Disclose, at the earliest practicable opportunity, to the other members of the Board that a conflict of interest may exist and the nature of the conflict; and
- 3.4.1.6. Abstain from voting on any matters for which there is or may be a conflict unless the other Board members present when a vote is being taken unanimously agree to waive the conflict and authorize the Board member to vote notwithstanding the conflict.
- 3.4.1.7. The secretary will record in the minutes the disclosure of a conflict by any Board member, and whether or not a Board member then abstains from voting.

3.4.2. Authority

- 3.4.2.1. Individual trustees may not attempt to exercise authority over the Church. The Board will speak with one voice through its adopted policies.
- 3.4.2.2. Trustees' interaction with the Senior Minister or staff must recognize the lack of authority in any individual trustee or subgroup (e.g., committee or task force) of trustees.
- 3.4.2.3. Trustees' interaction with the public, media or other entities must recognize the same limitation and the similar inability of any trustee, except the president, to speak for the Board.
- 3.4.2.4. Trustees are encouraged to continually self-monitor their individual performance as trustees against policies, against the qualifications listed in the current trustee position description, and against any other current Board evaluation tools.
- 3.4.2.5.
- 3.4.2.6. Trustees are encouraged to participate as individuals in volunteer committees, teams or task forces, but all authority and accountability of such groups, as far as the Board is concerned, is considered the authority and accountability of the Senior Minister.

3.4.3. Board Covenant

Seeking to embody our religious principles and to create a culture in which all are encouraged to participate fully, we as Board members covenant to:

- 3.4.3.1. Promote and maintain a trusting, safe and fun environment in which we all are empowered to utilize our strengths and speak our truths, including hard truths, in the service of the congregation's mission and end statements.

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis Governing Policies Handbook

- 3.4.3.2. Seek out, encourage, celebrate and welcome diversity among Board members.
- 3.4.3.3. Welcome and build relationships with all Board members, actively including all new Board members.
- 3.4.3.4. Actively participate in the Board's and congregation's decision-making process, respecting the outcome when appropriate process has been followed.
- 3.4.3.5. Communicate Board decisions with one voice once a decision has been made, maintaining appropriate confidentiality regarding individual positions and comments on issues.
- 3.4.3.6. Follow all appropriate policies and procedures when in disagreement with a decision of the Board.
- 3.4.3.7. Remain in community through conflict and the work towards resolution.
- 3.4.3.8. Hold ourselves and each other accountable to our commitments.
- 3.4.3.9. Express genuine appreciation to all Board members for their commitment of time, energy and effort.
- 3.4.3.10. Be supportive of Board members' needs for self-care and step up, when possible, to take on responsibilities to balance the load.
- 3.4.3.11. Be open to new ideas and to new ways of doing things, including a commitment to change our position on issues.
- 3.4.3.12. Be knowledgeable about the congregation's bylaws, policies and procedures and actively seek means to align the congregation's governance with its mission and visionary goals.
- 3.4.3.13. Remember, always, that no one is perfect, that everyone makes mistakes.
- 3.4.3.14. Honor the sacred nature of our time together, our covenant and our shared purpose by illuminating and promoting the hopeful, helpful and enjoyable ways we can engage in the work of this Church together.

3.5. Committee Principles

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis Governing Policies Handbook

The Board may establish standing or temporary committees to help carry out its responsibilities.

This policy applies only to committees that are formed by Board action, whether or not the committees include non-Board members. It does not apply to committees formed under the authority of the Senior Minister.

3.5.1. Purposes

- 3.5.1.1. Committees will assist the Board chiefly by preparing policy and/or assessing policy alternatives, recommendations, implications and outcomes for Board deliberation.
- 3.5.1.2. Committees will be used only when other methods have been deemed inadequate so as to minimally interfere with or confuse the wholeness of the Board's job.

3.5.2. Authority

- 3.5.2.1. Board committees may not speak or act for the Board except when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes. Such authority will be carefully stated in order not to conflict with authority delegated to the Senior Minister.

3.5.3. Staff Relationship

- 3.5.3.1. Board committees are to help the Board do its job, not to interfere with the staff doing its job.
- 3.5.3.2. Board committees cannot exercise authority over staff and, in keeping with the Board's focus on the future, Board committees generally will not have direct dealings with current staff operations.
- 3.5.3.3. Further, the Board will not impede its direct delegation to the Senior Minister by requiring approval of a Board committee before a Senior Minister action. The Senior Minister works for the Board, never for a Board committee or officer. However, nothing shall prevent the Board from requiring a recommendation from a Board committee before taking action as a Board.

3.6. Grievance Policy

It is the intent of the Board to be responsive to staff and the congregation, but it is not the function of the Board to resolve complaints or grievances that are not directly related to the Board's policy-making and policy-monitoring functions.

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis Governing Policies Handbook

When individual Board members receive complaints about Board policies or violations of Board policy from members of the congregation, the following guidelines will be followed.

3.6.1. Complaints about Board Policies

- 3.6.1.1. Complaints concerning GPH or other Board policies shall be handled in accordance with the Church's mission and visionary goals, which encourages direct and open communications. Such matters brought to the Board's attention will be welcomed for consideration in on-going revisions to these policies.
- 3.6.1.2. If as part of a complaint a request for Board action is received, the complaint will be communicated to both Board members and the Senior Minister. After discussion with the Senior Minister, the Board will determine if a policy change is required. If not required, the Board will resolve the matter directly with the initiator.
- 3.6.1.3. If the Board determines that a policy change is required, the Board will make the required change and communicate the resolution to the initiator.

3.6.2. Complaints about Violations of Policy

- 3.6.2.1. If an individual believes a policy is being violated by staff or the Senior Minister, s/he should first discuss it directly with the appropriate staff or Senior Minister. If this is not possible or if the issue is not resolved by staff or the Senior Minister, it may be brought to the president or vice president for consideration by the Board. The Board will resolve the issue as appropriate, which may include clarifying policy or taking disciplinary action. The Board will communicate its resolution of the complaint to the initiator.

4. Board-Senior Minister Relationship Policies

The policies in this section address how authority is delegated to the Senior Minister and how the Board and Senior Minister should work together.

4.1. Delegation to the Senior Minister

The Board's job is generally confined to establishing topmost policies, leaving implementation and subsidiary policy development to the Senior Minister.

All Board authority delegated to staff is delegated through the Senior Minister, so that all authority and accountability of staff can be phrased, insofar as the Board is concerned, as authority and accountability of the Senior Minister. The Senior

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CREATING CONGREGATIONAL COVENANTS

General Assembly 2008 (<https://www.uua.org/ga/past/2008/index.shtml>) Event 3035

Presenters: Eunice Milton Benton, Connie Goodbread

What is a congregational covenant? Eunice Benton, District Executive of the Mid-South District, and Connie Goodbread, Program Consultant for the Florida District, answered this question, and gave some tips for creating a congregational covenant.

"It's about making respectful behavior the norm," said Benton, describing a congregational covenant in plain language. "It's about good manners, what your momma taught you when you were small.... It's about valuing your religious community."

Benton added, "It's a good investment" in helping maintain the individuals and the whole community.

"We've struggled with this word [covenant] for a long time," said Goodbread. "Why is this so?" Because Unitarian Universalists come out of the Abrahamic religious traditions, the idea of covenant can be traced back to the story of Abraham and Isaac in the Hebrew Bible. "We don't like this story," she said, because Abraham offers to sacrifice his son Isaac to Yahweh in order to maintain the covenant with Yahweh. "We don't want to be submissive in this way," she said.

But the definition of covenant has changed considerably in the thousands of years since the Hebrew Bible was written. Goodbread said that Unitarian Universalists directly inherit the definition of covenant set forth in *The Cambridge Platform*, a document drawn up by Puritans in Massachusetts in 1648. *The Cambridge Platform* (<https://www.uua.org/publications/skinnerhouse/browseskinners/titles/93746.shtml>) is available in a contemporary reader's edition through the Unitarian Universalist Association bookstore.

"The piece we understand completely," said Goodbread, speaking of the definition of covenant set forth in the Cambridge Platform, "is that you're not the boss of me." But the Cambridge Platform also defined covenant to include promises for mutual support. Goodbread said that means that covenant also means "We are all in this together, building a better world."

Today, Unitarian Universalists also understand covenant to mean that each Unitarian Universalist congregation is in covenant with all other Unitarian Universalist congregations. The Principles and Purposes of the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) explicitly state this, according to Goodbread.

"Covenant is a promise, not a statement of belief," Goodbread said. Unfortunately, the children's versions of the UUA Principles and Purposes often begin with the statement "We believe...", but this is incorrect wording which tends to make the Principles and Purposes sound like a creed. Instead, the Principles and Purposes are "a spiritual path we try to follow," according to Goodbread, "and when we fail to live up to them, we beg forgiveness and begin again."

After defining covenant, Benton and Goodbread then turned tips for implementing a covenant in a local congregation. Benton suggested that the first step to implementing a congregation-wide covenant is to begin by implementing a covenant among church leaders, specifically the governing board and staff. She suggested that church leadership start by naming "common values." She said that it is important to come to a common understanding of values, before putting a covenant into writing.

"A board and staff can practice and maintain a covenant," Goodbread said, setting an example for the rest of the congregation. Goodbread said that it is important to include newcomers who join the board or staff after a written covenant is implemented. "Read the covenant together regularly," she said.

Both Goodbread and Benton emphasized that establishing cultural norms takes time. Congregational leadership has to understand and practice covenant before the whole congregation can do it. "It ain't the finished document," said Benton. "It's the talking about it and the practicing it."

"This is a sacred document," Benton added. "Talk about it as new folks come join your congregation." Revisit a written covenant every five years or so, to be sure it still applies to the congregation.

After the congregational leadership has worked on establishing a covenant for a time, the rest of the congregation can be included in the process. Benton said that congregations should expect the whole process to take plenty of time. "People may feel that this is just a document to beat them over the head with, and that is not the point," she said. "Take time to do this."

Reported by Dan Harper; edited by Jone Johnson Lewis.

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Workshops and presentations at General Assembly (<https://www.uua.org/ga>) (GA), the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), have been provided by a variety of organizations and staff groups over the course of several decades. Not all presentations have been reviewed for accuracy or timeliness.

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