

# MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**September 18, 2025**  
**6:30 - 9:00 pm**  
**First Universalist Church**  
**Cummins Room & Zoom (multiplatform)**

Start	Duration	Topic	Lead
6:30 PM	5	<b>Call to Order</b>	<b>Marc</b>
		<i>Lighting the Chalice</i> 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.	<b>All</b>
6:35 PM	25	<b>Executive Session</b> Somatic Grounding Introductions and Welcome of Youth Representatives Spiritual Community Building and Check in	<b>Marc</b> <b>All</b> <b>Jen/Ashley</b>
7:00 PM	5	<b>Agenda Approval and Approval of Minutes from June 19, 2025</b>	<b>Marc</b>
7:05 PM	5	<b>Consent Agenda</b> Approval of the following Congregational Dates: - Mid-year Meeting: February 8, 2026 - Annual Meeting: June 14, 2026 Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers & trends Monitoring: Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes Monitoring: Congregant grievances Monitoring: Staff & Volunteer grievances Monitoring: Protection of assets	<b>All</b>
7:10 PM	40	<b>2025-26 Annual Board Goals</b>	<b>All</b>
7:50 PM	10	<b>Break</b>	
8:00 PM	20	<b>Governance Committee Report and Future Role</b>	<b>Lou/All</b>
8:20 PM	10	<b>Minister's Report and Annual Work Plan</b>	<b>Jen</b>
8:30 PM	10	<b>Finance Committee Report</b>	<b>Cameron</b>
8:40 PM	10	<b>Stewardship Committee Report</b>	<b>Emily</b>
8:50 PM	5	<b>Public Comment</b>	
8:55 PM	5	<b>Gratitudes</b>	<b>All</b>
9:00 PM		<b>Adjourn</b>	

**Roles, responsibilities, and resources for Board Members**  
[2025-26 Board Handbook](#)

**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**June 19, 2025**  
**6:30 - 9:00 pm**  
**First Universalist Church**  
[Cummins Room & Zoom \(multiplatform\)](#)

Start	Duration	Topic	Lead
6:30 PM	5	<b>Call to Order</b> <b>Absent: Sarah Hedge, Ilo Leppik. Present: United Theological Seminary student</b>	Jeff
		<b>Lighting the Chalice</b> <i>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.</i>	All
6:35 PM	5	<b>Agenda Approval. Approved</b>	Jeff
6:40 PM	40	<b>Spiritual Community Building</b> - Somatic Grounding - Spiritual Community Building/IDI	Jeff Ashley/Martha
7:20 PM	5	<b>Consent Agenda -- Approved</b> - Approval of May meeting minutes - Approval of Annual Meeting minutes - Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers & trends - Monitoring: Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes - Monitoring: Congregant grievances - Monitoring: Staff & Volunteer grievance - Monitoring: Protection of assets - Ends Outcomes Review - Staff Performance Reviews	All
7:25 PM	10	<b>Finance Committee</b> - Current Year Budget Status - final thoughts/lessons learned <b>Need to clean up our membership. Active giving or not. We need to build a process going forward to keep our records up to date. Priorities for the Finance Committee in 2025/26: Audit policy; options for our construction loan balloon payment; work with stewardship to promote greater financial literacy for the congregation.</b>	Marc
7:35 PM	10	<b>Stewardship Committee Report</b> - final thoughts/lessons learned <b>Need to establish goals/workplans for 2025/26</b>	Emily
7:45 PM	10	<b>Governance Committee Report</b> - status of Jen's evaluation. <b>Establish a refined process for 2024/2025 year for Jen's review. (Lou and Karen Willie)</b> - final thoughts/lessons learned	Lou
7:55 PM	10	<b>Break</b>	All
8:05 PM	15	<b>Discussion on Board Orientation</b>	Marc
8:20 PM	15	<b>Next Year's To Dos.....</b> - Appoint Nominating Committee Chair (Ray Dillon is interested in staying) - Review/update monitoring schedule in August? - Review/update governance handbook? - Congregational Health? (Matt) - Board Visibility? - Staff/Congregation Thank You's as a regular practice? - Continued thought on "Four Pivots"? - Ways to promote/increase "shared ministry"? - Youth Leadership Team apology meeting (Matt) <b>Set Macro Goals for Jen for 2025/26 (who to lead)</b>	Jeff/All
8:35 PM	10	<b>Signoff on updated Bylaws</b>	All
8:45 PM	5	<b>Approve New UUA GA Delegates...</b>	All
8:50 PM	5	<b>Gratitudes</b>	All
8:50 PM		<b>Adjourn</b>	All

Need to proofread the bylaws for finalizing (Emily B)

**Roles, responsibilities, and resources for Board Members**

[JOB DESCRIPTION: First Universalist Board of Trustees](#)

[Church Bylaws](#)

[Governing Policies Handbook](#)

[2023-24 Monitoring Schedule](#)

**Senior Minister Board Report**  
**Prepared by Rev. Jen Crow**  
**September 15, 2025**

**I. Spiritual Reflection**

The Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed - parish minister, collector and keeper of Black history within Unitarian Universalism - wrote a piece years ago that many of our congregations return to - it's #580 in our hymnal - in it he says this:

The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.

It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.

Alasdair MacIntyre, the Scottish-American philosopher, in his book, *After Virtue*, describes the historical task of religious community in an earlier era of societal uncertainty and collapse - "What they set themselves to achieve...was the construction of new forms of community within which a moral life could be sustained."

Church has always been a place of aspiration and practice. A place where we can see each other's faces and hear each other's voices. Church is a place we practice Beloved Community - community free of poverty, racism, and violence that arises out of experiences of unconditional love - community that supports the mutual thriving of all - community that comes out of and catalyzes transformation, both individual and collective.

We are inheritors of this church - alive in this moment to fashion and craft a new form of community in this particular moment within which a moral life can be constructed.

I hear the voices of our ancestors speaking in the language of this day:

When we say - when we all share what we have we all have what we need - this is a statement of faith - a foundation on which a new form of community can be built in which a moral life can be sustained.



When we say each and every being, whole and holy and worthy, welcome and wanted, all with room to grow - no exceptions - and then we act like it - we are laying the foundation on which a new form of community can be built in which a moral life can be sustained.

When we say here that we want to live into the kind of Universalism Dr. Mark Hicks describes as a love so powerful it will not let us go, will not let us down, and will not let us off the hook - we are laying the foundation for a new form of community in which a moral life can be sustained.

When we say - you are not alone, we are holding it together - we are laying the foundation for a new form of community in which a moral life can be sustained.

We are inheritors, sustainers, and creators of the church in this moment.

What would it look like if we grounded ourselves in the kind of hope that Cornel West has described as the tragic hope that many Black communities know? "A hope that knows fully what the history has been, what the failures have been, but also what the successes have been, and thus what remains possible." (*Love at the Center*, 104)

What would we do if we embraced the feminist ethic of risk that scholar Sharon Welch describes as "the decision to care and to act although there are no guarantees of success"?

How might our church look and be different? How might our city look and be different? How might we look and be different?

## **II. Monitoring Items**

### **A. Attendance and Membership Numbers - see included documents**

### **B. Staff and Volunteer Changes -**

Nico Van Ostrand, Cummins Ministerial Intern

Katherine Harrell and Tami Eschult - Sunday morning lead RE adult volunteers

Lynn Broadus - co-chair of the Stewardship Committee

Jane Jordan, along with Emily Bjingate, Laurel Browne, David Leppik (with Rev. Harness and Rachel Rott) - Community Connections Hub

Sara McMullen and Christine Markle (with Rev. Crow) - Trans Refugee Direct Support Core Team

Susan Hoffman, Debbie Easterling, David Leppik (with Rev. Harness) -  
Trans Refugee Direct Support Core Team

**C. Staff/Volunteer/Congregant Grievances**

There have been no volunteer or congregant grievances.

**D. Protection of Assets**


The church has all relevant insurance policies in place and paid to date.

- Commercial Package - Premier
- Commercial Umbrella
- Workers Compensation and Employers Liability

**E. Strategic Plan, i.e. Staff Workplan - for Monitoring and Approval**

Twice a year, in September and February, the staff share their current workplan and progress toward achieving it with the Board. In these conversations, the Board is monitoring whether the annual workplan is a reasonable interpretation of the visionary goals, and whether reasonable progress is being made toward their achievement. This item is for information, consultation, and approval.

You can view the current staff workplan here:

 [2025-26 Theology, Themes, Workplan, Resources](#)

## August Attendance

[illegible]

				4th week Youtube (added Sep 7th)			
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## **Statistical Report for August 2025**

**Board Meeting September 18, 2025**

**MEMBER MEMORIAL SERVICES: 0**

**MEMBER MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT:** Wedding of church members Noa Kim and Gwendolyn Neumeister, ceremony performed by Rev. Jen Crow

**MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 0**

**MEMBERS REINSTATED: 0**

**MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 2?**

**CHILDREN DEDICATED: 0**

**Total members as of the last meeting: 1,017?**

**To be added: 0**

**To be removed: 0**

**TOTAL MEMBERS: 1,017?**

**First Universalist Board of Trustees**  
**2025-26 Annual Goals**  
**DRAFT 9/4/25**

<b>Board Goal</b>	<b>Congregational Health Survey Theme</b>	<b>Visionary Goal(s)</b>	<b>Annual theological theme(s)</b>
1. Strengthen Board governance practices to enhance trust	Trust, Governance		
1a. Develop and practice a Board covenant		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Beloved Community among us</li> <li>• Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Beloved Community</li> <li>• Humility (truly knowing ourselves)</li> <li>• Building resilience for the long term</li> </ul>
1b. Review and update Governing Policy Handbook		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building resilience for the long term</li> <li>• Humility</li> </ul>
1c. Expand communications with the congregation through a regular Board column in the Liberal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Beloved Community among us</li> <li>• Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Beloved Community</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide meaningful presence to one another in times of joy, grief, and change</li> </ul>	
2. Deepen the sense and practice of belonging among members of First Universalist	Welcoming and Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
2a. Follow up on survey results through individual follow up and small group discussions to better define “who are we”		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Beloved Community among us</li> <li>• Provide meaningful presence to one another in times of joy, grief, and change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Beloved Community</li> <li>• Humility (truly knowing ourselves)</li> </ul>
2b. Increase participation in shared ministry		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> <li>• Practice Beloved Community among us</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Beloved Community</li> <li>• Humility (truly knowing ourselves)</li> <li>• Building resilience for the long term</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

# Six Styles of Congregational Governing Boards



By David Pyle (<https://www.uua.org/people/david-pyle>)  
January 17, 2018

Every Unitarian Universalist Congregation is designed differently. How each congregation functions is a blend of congregational experience, culture, and history. Congregational structures are also affected by whether and which other congregations members have attended or been a part of before. We are over a thousand differently designed institutions, with some similar needs but often with radically different responses to those needs.

Congregational Governing Boards are no different. In each of our congregations, the expectations, assumptions, and structure about the role and functioning of the Governing Board in the congregation and community are different. In some cases, the Governing Board is called upon to lead. In others, they function more to coordinate and represent the leadership of the members. In some cases, they have a pro-active and co-operative relationship with Religious Professionals and Staff, and in others they have an intentionally separate relationship from them. Some even serve to supervise Religious Professionals and other staff. Some



operate according to a strict understanding of Robert's Rules of Order, while others use a more consensus approach to making decisions together.

The clearest distinction among our congregations that I have seen has been in how the Governing Board focuses its time and attention. Our congregational Governing Boards exist in a spectrum between those that focus their time and attention towards the congregation's operational and program concerns, and those who focus their time and attention towards the congregation's strategic direction, vision, and mission.

An Operationally-Focused Governing Board is one who manages the institution of the congregation. For these Governing Boards, their time and attention are spent making decisions about the congregation's property, its operations, and even its programming. They serve the congregation as the "deciding-body", and are often the "court of last appeal" for any issues that cannot be decided elsewhere in the congregation. If you have ever sat in a board meeting discussing who should and should not have a key to the building, then you have experienced an Operationally-Focused Governing Board.

At the other end of the spectrum are Strategically-Focused Governing Boards. These boards spend all of their time and attention on understanding the congregation's vision, mission, culture and identity, and asking what is required of the congregation to fulfill its mission and goals. They serve the congregation as the "discerning-body", and have delegated the operational and programmatic decision making somewhere else in the congregational system. Sometimes operational decision making is delegated to staff, and sometimes it is delegated to other lay-leadership structures, such as an Executive Team or a Program Council. A Strategically-Focused Governing Board studies the congregation itself, asking who the congregation is, and how the changing world and communities the congregation is a part of changes the congregation's mission and vision. They provide guidance and direction for the congregation, while maintaining overall responsibility for the fiduciary and overall health of the congregation. Since they have delegated the

operational and programmatic responsibilities elsewhere in the system, they serve as the source of accountability for those who manage the congregation.

Almost all congregational Governing Boards have some elements of both Operational and Strategic responsibilities in their design and functioning. Over my years of consulting on issues of governance with congregations, I have identified several broad categories of congregations along this spectrum. While I express these as discrete categories, the truth is more fluid. Congregations tend to move between categories on the spectrum based on specific issues or the amount of stress or pressure the Governing Board is experiencing. For the sake of understanding, I express these categories this way:

## Operational Boards

These Governing Boards make all major and many of the minor decisions within a congregation. Congregational members know that, if you want something to happen, you need the Governing Board's approval. They focus their time and attention on making sure that the congregation functions. Some decisions may be made by board leadership on behalf of the Governing Board between board meetings, always subject to approval by the board itself. In this structure, the Governing Board has the most direct control, but often feel frustrated that the majority of their energy is spent reacting to events in the congregation.

## Managing Boards

These Governing Boards maintain both authority and responsibility for all major and many of the minor decisions within the congregation, but in specific areas have either formally or informally delegated the authority and responsibility to others, such as committees or Religious Professionals. Any areas not delegated remain under the board's direct responsibility and authority, and the board may over-rule the decisions of anybody they have delegated some authority and responsibility to. An example of a managing board is one that maintains direct authority over all financial matters, but has delegated authority to the Religious Education Committee for all program decisions within the Children's



Religious Education program. If there is a dispute between congregants and the Religious Education Committee about that program, a Managing Board would be the “court of appeal” for that dispute. They would also serve as the “court of appeal” for any disputes between committees or teams who have delegated authority from the Managing Board.

## Portfolio Boards

These Governing Boards maintain both authority and responsibility for all major and many minor decisions within the congregation, and have delegated that authority to specific board members, who also serve as the “chair” or leader of areas of the congregation’s program and operations. The board functions as a coordination body of those who directly lead an aspect of the congregation’s operations and program. For example, the Trustee of Social Justice serves as the chair of the Social Justice Committee, and the Treasurer serves as the Chair of the Finance Committee. Portfolio Board Members may make decisions in their specific operational or program areas, subject to being reviewed by the whole Portfolio Board. This structure ensures that all of the key leaders are in the room for board decisions, however the time and attention required to both serve on the board and lead a major area of congregational operations and program mean very little energy is available for board work. It also has the dynamic that Portfolio Board members tend to look at issues before the board through the interests of their particular operational or program area, rather than from the perspective of the health and mission of the whole congregation.

## Liaison Boards

These Governing Boards maintain accountability for the effectiveness of the operations and program of the congregation, but have delegated both authority and responsibility for the operations and the program of the congregation to the committees and teams of the congregation. Board members serve as official communications representatives on these committees and teams of the congregation, while not serving as the chair or leader in these operational or program areas. The Board serves primarily as a coordination and de-confliction body, as well as the “court of appeal” for conflicts between congregational committees and teams.

The Board does not usually intervene in disagreements that congregation members have with a specific committee or team. Often, Liaison Boards develop from Portfolio Boards, but not always. Liaison Boards also shift some of their time and attention towards discerning congregational identity, culture, vision, and mission, in order to further their role of coordinating the activities of committees and teams within the congregation.

## Strategic Boards

These Governing Boards maintain accountability for the effectiveness of the operations and program of the congregation, but have delegated both authority and responsibility for the operations and program of the congregation to another entity. Sometimes this delegation is to a Religious Professional or Staff member, sometimes this delegation is to another lay-leadership structure. Often it is to a combination of these two. Strategic Boards develop structures for the operational and programmatic authority (such as an executive team, program council, or congregational executive) to be accountable to the Strategic Board. Unless an action by the operational and programmatic authority is deemed to be fiduciarily unsound, counter to the congregation's vision and mission, or outside of policy and other guidance given by the Strategic Board, the board does not intervene or overrule decisions made by the operational and programmatic authority. Strategic Boards focus their time and attention on discerning the congregation's identity, culture, mission and vision. They develop good policy guidance for the congregation, and insure that the assets of the congregation are protected and utilized to achieve the vision and mission. Strategic Boards regularly assess how well the congregation is achieving the mission and vision, and with the operational and programmatic authority create goals and plans for achieving that mission and vision.

## Policy Boards

These Governing Boards maintain accountability for the effectiveness of the operations and program of the congregation, but have delegated both authority and responsibility for the operations and program of the congregation to an Executive that is clearly defined by Governing Policies.



Policy Boards create a formal relationship between the Executive and the Governing Board, and define clear roles and responsibilities for each. There are several models for Policy Boards in Unitarian Universalist congregations. The two most common are Carver Policy Governance and Governance and Ministry as created by Rev. Dan Hotchkiss. All of these systems have in common the expectation that the relationship between the operational and programmatic authority (Executive) and the Governing Board is clearly defined by Governing Policy approved by the Governing Board. How these policies are formed vary depending on the congregation and the model they are using. Each operates within the principle that the Executive is accountable to the Governing Board within a set of expectations set in policy, and the Executive can exercise authority and responsibility over congregational operations to achieve the congregation's goals (ends), vision, and mission within the limitations and expectations of Governing Policy.

## Different Styles for Different Congregations

All of these styles of how congregations make decisions together seek to bring order out of the sometimes chaos that is living religiously in community. What style of congregational governance is appropriate for a congregation at a particular time is determined by the congregation's goals, history, culture, and community. Congregational size also plays an important role, in that the larger a congregation grows, the more pressing its need to have a body focusing on discerning the congregation's identity, culture, vision, and mission. I have seen all of these styles of congregational boards function both well and with health in congregations, just as I have seen all of them function poorly.

The question I ask congregations is how well their particular "style" of Governing Board is serving the congregation and its mission. How well does it function, and in what ways does the style of a congregation's governing board become an obstacle? Answer that question can help a congregation to discern what is the best way to make decisions together.

## About the Author



**David Pyle** (<https://www.uua.org/people/david-pyle>)

The Rev. David Pyle is the Regional Lead and a Congregational Life Consultant with the MidAmerica Regional Staff. Rev. Pyle holds a Masters of Divinity from the Meadville Lombard Theological School and a Bachelors of Arts in History and Political Science from East Tennessee State University. He...

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# First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

## Balance Sheet

	Actual As of 06/30/2025
<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Cash	\$66,771.77
Investments	\$3,322,401.76
Accounts Receivable	\$118,150.38
Other Current Assets	\$55,873.63
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$3,563,197.54</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>	
Fixed Assets	\$5,213,340.19
<b>Total Non- Current Assets</b>	<b>\$5,213,340.19</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$8,776,537.73</b>
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable	\$94,358.93
Benefits Payable	\$33,064.98
Other Current Liabilities	\$151,510.31
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$278,934.22</b>
<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>	
Loan Payable	\$1,431,541.02
Interfund Transfer	\$0.00
<b>Total Long Term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,431,541.02</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,710,475.24</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>	
<b>Unrestricted Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,716,113.07</b>
<b>Donor Restricted Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,349,949.42</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$7,066,062.49</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$8,776,537.73</b>

# First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

## Income Statement

### Operating Budget

	Actual 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025	Budget 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025	Variance	Annual Budget 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025
<b>Revenues</b>				
<b>Support</b>				
Annual Giving	\$1,332,871.54	\$1,314,350.00	\$18,521.54	\$1,314,350.00
Donations/Fundraising	\$235,998.29	\$206,000.00	\$29,998.29	\$206,000.00
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>\$1,568,869.83</b>	<b>\$1,520,350.00</b>	<b>\$48,519.83</b>	<b>\$1,520,350.00</b>
<b>Earned Revenue</b>				
Service/Rental Income	\$108,861.03	\$114,000.00	(\$5,138.97)	\$114,000.00
Investment Income	\$7.35	\$0.00	\$7.35	\$0.00
Other Income	\$8,765.74	\$2,000.00	\$6,765.74	\$2,000.00
<b>Total Earned Revenue</b>	<b>\$117,634.12</b>	<b>\$116,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,634.12</b>	<b>\$116,000.00</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,686,503.95</b>	<b>\$1,636,350.00</b>	<b>\$50,153.95</b>	<b>\$1,636,350.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Personnel Expenses	\$1,300,299.31	\$1,285,898.00	(\$14,401.31)	\$1,285,898.00
Administrative Expenses	\$168,791.92	\$149,009.00	(\$19,782.92)	\$149,009.00
Program Expenses	\$86,133.78	\$78,063.00	(\$8,070.78)	\$78,063.00
Building & Grounds	\$142,480.37	\$116,800.00	(\$25,680.37)	\$116,800.00
Other Expenses	\$793.99	\$6,500.00	\$5,706.01	\$6,500.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,698,499.37</b>	<b>\$1,636,270.00</b>	<b>(\$62,229.37)</b>	<b>\$1,636,270.00</b>
<b>Investment Activity</b>				
Realized Losses	(\$891.29)	\$0.00	(\$891.29)	\$0.00
Unrealized Losses	(\$3,832.88)	\$0.00	(\$3,832.88)	\$0.00
Dividends & Interest	\$1,994.53	\$0.00	\$1,994.53	\$0.00
Realized Gains	\$341.33	\$0.00	\$341.33	\$0.00
Unrealized Gains	\$9,462.30	\$0.00	\$9,462.30	\$0.00



First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Income Statement

Operating Budget

	Actual 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025	Budget 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025	Variance	Annual Budget 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025
Total Investment Activity	\$7,073.99	\$0.00	\$7,073.99	\$0.00
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(\$4,921.43)	\$80.00	(\$5,001.43)	\$80.00

# First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

## Income Statement

### Building & Capital Reserve Budget

	Actual 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025	Budget 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025	Variance	Annual Budget 07/01/2024 to 06/30/2025
<b>Revenues</b>				
<b>Support</b>				
Donations/Fundraising	\$3,730.02	\$155,500.00	(\$151,769.98)	\$155,500.00
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>\$3,730.02</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>	<b>(\$151,769.98)</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$3,730.02</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>	<b>(\$151,769.98)</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Administrative Expenses	\$2,258.36	\$0.00	(\$2,258.36)	\$0.00
Building & Grounds	\$71,776.63	\$155,500.00	\$83,723.37	\$155,500.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$74,034.99</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>	<b>\$81,465.01</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>
<b>Investment Activity</b>				
Unrealized Losses	(\$19,614.24)	\$0.00	(\$19,614.24)	\$0.00
Dividends & Interest	\$5,813.43	\$0.00	\$5,813.43	\$0.00
Unrealized Gains	\$14,751.79	\$0.00	\$14,751.79	\$0.00
Unrealized Losses	(\$7,885.37)	\$0.00	(\$7,885.37)	\$0.00
Dividends & Interest	\$2,169.91	\$0.00	\$2,169.91	\$0.00
Unrealized Gains	\$13,862.79	\$0.00	\$13,862.79	\$0.00
<b>Total Investment Activity</b>	<b>\$9,098.31</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$9,098.31</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(\$61,206.66)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>(\$61,206.66)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**September 11, 2025**

**6:00-8:00 pm | in-person at the church**

Purpose: Kickoff finance committee meetings for FY2025-2026

Members present: Cameron Smither, Dan Berg, Amelia Marquez, Dick Niemiec

Staff present: Brad Schmidt, Jen Crow

Stewardship liaison present: Ginny McAninch

Members not in attendance: Marc Gorelick

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Meeting convened at 6:05 pm

**1. Chalice lighting and grounding led by Jen**

**2. Introductions and backgrounds shared by all present**

**3. Committee charter review and annual calendar led by Cameron**

- Members reviewed and discussed the church's governing policies handbook, sections 3.3.4 (Treasurer) and 6.1 (Finance Committee). Major topics of discussion included:
  - Formal and informal communication/storytelling roles of the Finance Committee
  - Responsibilities re: the budget and fundraising, and their evolution over time
- Members reviewed and discussed the expected topics the committee will work through together, by month. Major topics of discussion included:
  - Undertaking budget development earlier and strengthening its connection to pledge activities, timelines

**4. An overview of First Universalist's finances led by Brad**

- Members were presented to and discussed topics including accrual accounting, restricted and unrestricted church funds, revenue sources and expense categories, financial timeline and milestones in the church's financial year, and specific roles and responsibilities of the Finance Manager and Senior Minister re: finance. Major topics of discussion included:
  - Rationale for a June-July fiscal year and potential trade-offs in adjusting to a calendar year fiscal year

**5. 2024-2025 Fiscal Year in review led by Brad**

- Members were led through the church's financial statements reflecting the full 2024-2025 fiscal year, including an up-to-date balance sheet, detailed operating fund income statement, and detailed building and capital reserve income statement.
  - The final result was a deficit of \$5,001 vs a budgeted \$80 surplus; this closely matched the projected year end values shared at the last annual meeting. Total revenues were

\$50,154 greater than budgeted; total expenses were \$62,229 greater than budgeted; total investment activity was \$7,074 greater than budgeted.

- Positive variance in revenues was driven by better-than-expected pledge fulfillment (approx. \$18,500) and higher Donations (approx. \$29,500).
- Negative variance in expenses were driven by categories that the committee had observed earlier in the year: health insurance, software & support (including the costs of maintaining two donor databases), child care (primarily non-recurring youth staffing costs), property tax (delayed payments from existing agreement with T-Mobile), safety/security (now built into FY2025-2026 budget), and water & sewer (primarily the denied stormwater credit, which is not settled).
- A second Employer Retention Credit (federal funds related to COVID) was received in the time since the annual meeting and was able to be applied to FY2024-2025; as planned, those funds were applied toward operating reserves, which now stand at \$53,229.

#### **6. Goals / Considerations for the coming year led by Cameron**

- The meeting wrapped up with a short discussion of potential goals and general considerations for the finance committee to keep in mind for FY2025-2026. These included:
  - Undertake a financial audit
  - Explore the pros and cons of aligning the fiscal year with the calendar year
  - Don't over plan; leave time to check-in on the big picture each meeting

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm

Next meeting scheduled for October 9, 2025, online from 6:00-7:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Smither, Treasurer

# MINUTES

## First Universalist Stewardship Team

Thursday, 28 August 2025, 6 pm | Zoom

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### Attendees

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Lynn Broaddus (chair), Ginny McAninch, Velma Wagner, Emily Wallace

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### Notes

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- Interviews with others:
  - Emily gave a recap of her conversation with **Unity Church's** Executive Director and shared the following notes:
    - They ask their top donors for "tea" well before their pledge season begins (as in weeks) and they have information about the financial needs of the church coming into that fiscal year.
    - They send out physical letters as well as emails during pledge season, but Laura believed that the physical touch point of actual snail mail was important. They asked their congregants for an 8% increase in their giving and many congregants met that ask.
    - They do not do 1:1 conversations during pledge season, they focus on reminders from the pulpit and in their weekly publication, as well as testimonials.
    - Each Sunday at the beginning of pledge season, they give a piece of paper and pen to each person attending the service, and they ask 3 questions (1 per week):
      - Why me?
      - Why us?
      - Why now?These questions get folks to start thinking about what church means to them and how they interact with church.
    - They have a dinner to honor their heritage circle/planned giving folks every year. It's very appreciated and she highly recommends that (which we know we want to do).
    - They don't individually thank folks for pledging. There is an automatic email acknowledging their contribution that is pretty much stock language.
    - They always send a **giving guide** with their pledge packets

- They talk a lot to members about financial literacy and what it means to give until you feel "generous".
- Lynn interviewed two of our long-time members who were part of the Stewardship Committee in recent years, Tom Saterstrom and Will Hegeman. Her notes are appended to these minutes. Tom will be supporting the Stewardship Committee's work this year by leading the Heritage Circle revitalization.
- Gift acknowledgements: Ginny will be meeting with Jai shortly to review and document pledge and gift acknowledgement processes. We want to make sure that nothing is falling through the cracks, and that we have a process that alerts us when personal acknowledgements are appropriate.
- Events: For the most part we postponed our discussion of events until Jen can get input from Jen, there was a robust discussion about the dual role of events, particularly an auction, to raise money as well as to create community. We have a tradition of successful annual auctions, raising as much as \$35K per year, but it's been many years (10?) since the last one. Velma suggested that we start forming a team that would plan an eventual auction, or other fun gathering that could meet our dual goals of fundraising and creating connections. perhaps drawing on people who have worked on past auctions.
- Membership Team: A team or committee committed to member engagement, which we had in past years, would give us a natural place to turn for volunteers to help with events.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm

Next meeting – 26 September, 6 pm.

#### Action Items:

- Update the Stewardship and Fundraising Project Plans for 2025-2026. *Ashley*
- Meet with Jen re: fundraising and event revenue. *Emily*
- Update on membership roster review – *Ginny and Jen*
- Update on pledge / gift acknowledgement protocols – *Ginny*

# MEMO

To: First Universalist Stewardship Team

From: Lynn Broaddus, Stewardship Team Chair

Date: 28 August 2025

Subj: Conversations with Will Hegeman and Tom Saterstrom

## SUMMARY OF CONVERSATIONS:

I had been tasked by the Stewardship Team to meet with Will and Tom individually to debrief on their work with the Stewardship Team over the past two years and obtain input on our work moving forward. Each of them was excited about the opportunity to meet with me in person and both were a delight to speak with. The summaries follow:

*Will Hegeman – 5 August 2025.*

Will has been a member of First Universalist for decades and has worked for at least two UU churches as executive directors or similar roles.

Messaging: He feels that the Liberal, in its current format, doesn't allow us to be nimble with stewardship messaging. He'd like to see a second messaging tool that would allow us to speak to people's hearts more directly regarding generosity. It's partly the structure of the Liberal (long, text-heavy, messages are buried deep in the chain) and the logistics of having an editor in California.

Data: We need better segmentation of giving data and then target our invitations by those segments. He thought we would get that from Arif, but obviously that didn't happen. Examples of ways to segment could include:

- Elders
- Trans & gender expansive
- BiPOC
- Daytime Connections (though its program team doesn't make it easy for us)
- R.E. / parents of school-age kids
- Earth Justice
- AUW
- Sanctuary & Resistance
- Finance Committee
- Young Adults
- Music



It's been a challenge to get data, but hopefully Emily B. can get access for us. He suggests having representatives of the different segments (whatever they may turn out to be) included on ST.

Also need financial data like "how much of our income arrives at the end of the calendar year"?

New Members: Stewardship and an explanation of how we support our church with financial gifts (not to mention, it's a requirement of membership) should be included in new member classes.

Stewardship at other churches: White Bear has a traditional pledge drive each year; First Unitarian (where Will used to work) rolls over people's pledges from year to year unless they intentionally indicate a change. In other words, if someone doesn't update their pledge during the pledge drive, they're kept at their current level.

Developing a generous congregation: There was talk of getting the UUA's curriculum on generosity, but he's unsure of whether staff purchased it. He thinks it would be good to follow up on this.

*Tom Saterstrom – 10 August 2025.*

Tom has been involved with "Heritage Circle" work, i.e. a group of people who have stated that First Universalist is included in their estate plans, at the church for many years and is committed to continuing his involvement. He came to the meeting with notes he took after meeting with Rev. Jen. Those notes are pasted into the end of this memo as an appendix.

About ten years ago there was an effort to gather member stories which have been recorded in a notebook that is now stored in the church library. The goal was to capture stories of why First Universalist is important to them, and why they've included it in their estates. Velma and Ginny were involved with this as well as Margie Smith. He's hoping to recruit Dan Berg. The effort went "subterranean" about five years ago when Rev. Justin offered to take it over.

Currently Rev. Jen's role has been to raise the visibility of the Heritage Circle and to make sure that people now about it "for times we shall never see". She might also have conversations with prospects, particularly those in the 55-75 age group.

His current goal is to identify who is in the Heritage Circle by reviewing the existing list, which hasn't been updated in some time. There are people on the list who are now deceased. He'd like to connect with each of the living Circle members to verify that their estate intentions remain intact.

I shared with him that Rev Ashley would like the Finance Committee to review the Bequest Policy (per a discussion I had with her a few weeks before meeting with Tom), and Tom offered to also look at it. He mentioned that some bequests have restrictions tied with them and cited Stu Hansen's wife's bequest that was designated entirely to our Legacy Endowment.

He'd like to launch (revive?) a Heritage Circle luncheon, an invitation-only event for everyone who has submitted a "letter of intent" to the church indicating their intent to include the church in their estate.

We also discussed his thoughts regarding the Stewardship Team. He offered the following:

- The acknowledgement process has improved greatly, but we need to make sure that the auto-acknowledgements are made (i.e. for pledge receipt, automatic deductions, offering, and special gifts as well). The auto-acknowledgements fall within Jai's responsibilities.
- The ST's staff contacts have been ministers, but if we had an office manager that is likely to be the better connection for us.

- He stepped away from the ST because he was looking for more purpose and productivity, which he thinks he can get from focusing on the Heritage Circle.

## FURTHER THOUGHTS:

Will sent me five undated documents (template pledge letters, that sort of thing) that seem to originate in 2023 or 2024. One of them has the following description of the Stewardship's purpose. Is this in keeping with what we think we're supposed to do?

The **Stewardship Committee's** charge is *primarily programmatic*. In general, this committee works from the annual and long term financial template provided by the Finance Committee.

### The Stewardship Committee

- ✓ This committee plans programs, events and congregational education to facilitate meeting the proposed revenue goals of the annual budget. This includes sponsoring revenue-generating events (e.g. auction, great gatherings, performances) to augment pledge income to meet annual budget goals.
- ✓ In coordination with Board/Ministers/Staff, facilitates the Annual Pledge drive.
- ✓ Develops a congregational education program that clarifies the real costs of running a church: staff salaries, building maintenance and utility costs; programming expenses (especially RE); exterior grounds maintenance. Given these ongoing expenses, what does "my fair share" mean?
- ✓ Promotes congregational participation in Heritage Circle and related Legacy programming including; testimonials during services; Daytime Connections presentation; Liberal articles; Social Hall information table; and re-instituting an annual Heritage Circle Recognition Luncheon.
- ✓ Articulates a concept of spiritual growth through intentional generosity and commitment to the church and the many ministries.

## FOLLOW-UP:

- Follow-on acknowledgement process (already on ST's task list).
- Ensure that the Bequest Policy is being reviewed, and that Tom is involved in that review.
- Check in with Tom later this fall to see how things are going, whether the Heritage Circle has been updated, whether a luncheon is scheduled, how the Circle can be promoted more broadly.
- Decide which congregational giving data that would help us with our work, and ask Emily B for her help in generating it.
- Follow-up on generosity curriculum, plan classes around it.
- Incorporate stewardship into new member classes.
- Look at last year's messaging and see how it fits with "generous spirit" and whether it works for various segments of our membership.
- Review "Stewardship Committee charge"

## APPENDIX:

### *Planned Giving – First Universalist Church of Minneapolis*

*Random thoughts from a conversation with Rev. Jen Crow, Aug 5, 2025.*

*Submitted by: Tom Saterstrom*

- *A macro goal for the Heritage Circle Program should be to increase congregational awareness and importance of the program to the long term financial stability of this community.*
- *Share stories of past Heritage Circle congregant bequests and impact.*
- *Prioritize one-on-one personal contacts with potential new Heritage Circle members – it is THE most effective recruiting strategy.*
- *Keep the planned giving “sell message” simple by giving examples of how other Heritage Circle members (anonymous) have included First Universalist in their will/estate. (e.g. assign the church as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy upon the death of the insured; set up a separate 401K or IRA account # with a specified dollar value and the church being the beneficiary).*
- *Schedule a specific date **soon** for the annual April Heritage Circle member appreciation luncheon, including selected prospective Heritage Circle members.*
- *Target the 55-75 age demographic for Heritage Circle membership.*
- *The planned giving team, as an ad hoc branch of the Stewardship Committee, should be composed of at least 3-5 total members.*
- *Promote and educate the congregation in the concept of “trifecta giving” by thinking about three separate pledges to First Universalist – annual pledge; capital gift; and planned giving.*
- *Develop outcome measurements for planned giving program annual success (e.g. 5-10 new Heritage Circle members/year).*
- *FYI – Current balance in the Legacy Fund per Jen’s estimate \$750,000; the majority of gifts and bequests coming to the church are “unrestricted”, thus are automatically directed into the Legacy Fund; church bylaws state that up to 7% of the Legacy Fund principle can be annually withdrawn from the Legacy Fund for use in developing the budget. The larger the balance in the Legacy Fund the more that can be realized for achieving a balanced budget each fiscal year.*
- *Next steps: roll out a fall launch for the Heritage Circle program reincarnation; contact all past Heritage Circle members to determine who is still “in” and who is “out” utilizing the “ancient list” and encourage those who are in to complete a new Letter of Intent for and submit to Jie; recruit additional Heritage Circle committee members.*