

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Board of Trustees Meeting
August 20, 2026
6:30 - 9:00 pm
First Universalist Church
Cummins Room & [Zoom](#) (multiplatform)

Start	Duration	Topic	Lead
6:30 PM	5	Call to Order	Marc
		<i>Lighting the Chalice</i> <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	Agenda Approval	Marc
6:40 PM	20	Executive Session Somatic Grounding Spiritual Community Building	Marc Jen
7:00 PM	45	Retreat recap and 2026-27 board goals	Marc
7:45 PM	15	Sunday morning changes update	Jen
8:00 PM	5	Consent Agenda Approval of June 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 grievances	Marc
8:05 PM	10	Break	Marc to bring snacks
8:15 PM	10	Sabbatical planning	Jen
8:25 PM	5	Finance Committee Report	Cameron
8:30 PM	10	Finish The Promise update	Marc/Jeanne
8:40 PM	5	Governance Committee Report	Lou
8:45 PM	5	Executive Committee Report Senior minister review update	Marc
8:50 PM	5	Meeting review and Gratitudes	All
8:55 PM		Adjourn	

DRIVE model for decision making:

D: Who is the decision-maker? If not an individual, how will the decision be reached (e.g., consensus, majority vote, etc.)

R: Will there be a recommendation sought, and if so, from whom?

I: What input will be solicited? How? From whom?

V: Does the decision need to be vetted with anyone before it is finalized?

E: Who is responsible for executing the decision?

Helpful questions to consider, given our intercultural orientation of minimization, to promote equity and inclusion in moving our goals forward:

- What is our role in obtaining this goal?
- What are our values we need to consider as we think about our approach, particularly concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion?
- How have we structured our approach to ensure we are considering all points of view?
- How conscious, intentional, and transparent are we about our guidelines for interaction in our meetings? How might we be reinforcing a “go along to get along” approach?
- What do we think we already know about this topic? What assumptions are we making? What is the data to support what we think we know?
- What else do we need to learn? How are we going to get this information? From whom?

Roles, Responsibilities, and Resources for Board Members

[2025-26 Board Handbook](#)

Preamble

As members of the Board of Trustees of the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, we bind ourselves together, willingly, in this covenant in order to form a more beloved community rooted in our UU values of interdependence, pluralism, justice, transformation, generosity, and equity, with love at the center.

We covenant for moments of peace and conflict, and recognize the continuous need for reconciliation.

Board covenant

Love is the spirit of this church

1. Honor the sacred nature of our collective work and engage in it with a perspective of hope, gratitude, humility, and joy.
2. Empower each other to use our universal wisdom and to speak our truths.
3. Approach each other with an attitude of appreciation for the energy, time and commitment to this community.
4. Be an active and engaged member of the church community, tending to the work of our spirits, individually and collectively.

And service is its law.

5. Ground ourselves and our actions in the trust that we have been given as stewards of this church.
6. Keep with the spirit and letter of the board's formal governing documents (bylaws, governing handbook) when forming policies, procedures, and practices, all in pursuit of its mission and visionary goals.
7. Actively participate in discussions and decision-making processes and integrate the diverse perspectives of the larger community we serve.
8. Communicate board decisions to the congregation with care and clarity.
9. Hold ourselves accountable to our commitments and share the work.

This is our great covenant:

To dwell together in peace,

10. Remember that peace is messy and creating peace among us is a challenging, ongoing practice that helps us build trust, belonging, connection, safety, and security.
11. Commit to staying in community, knowing that conflict is inevitable when humans come together.
12. Conduct ourselves with respect and dignity towards each other, practicing dialogue that is truthful, kind, necessary, and timely.
13. Seek to build a trusting relationship with the congregation by using with discernment communication, disclosure, transparency, and confidentiality as tools.
14. Apologize for harms inherited and those that will inevitably happen as we work toward peace, and be accountable for repairing and changing behaviors.

To seek the truth in love,

15. Recognize differences as the inherent goodness of our community and that diverse perspectives hold the strongest degree of truth.
16. Seek out and encourage intercultural diversity among Board members.
17. Form policies, procedures, and practices with the understanding that truth and meaning are ever evolving.

And to help one another.

18. Trust that the board cooperates as a system that is more than the collection of its contributions, in its challenges and opportunities.
19. Value the varied ways people engage.
20. Offer and receive – not too much, not too little.
21. Seek joyful ways to give, learn and grow.

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Board of Trustees Meeting
June 18, 2026
6:30 - 9:00 pm
First Universalist Church
Cummins Room & [Zoom](#) (multiplatform)

Start	Duration	Topic	Lead
6:30 PM	5	Call to Order. Absent: Katherine Harrell, Zoe Olson	Marc
		<i>Lighting the Chalice</i>	All
6:35 PM	5	Agenda Approval. Approved	Marc
6:40 PM	20	Executive Session	
7:00 PM	30	Governing Policy Handbook revisions Review and approval of proposed revisions from Governance Committee. Reviewed main questions remaining from the Governance Committee. They include: 1) Should the Beloved Community definition be included in the GPH. Yes. 2) Discussion around the definition of "Congregant" in Section III J. The GPH Committee will review. 3) Discussion on "limitations" language for the Sr Minister 4) Stewardship is part of the Sr. Minister's responsibilities. 5) Section III E. The policy should apply to the called Sr Minister and not other called Ministers 5) Discussion around the conduct of the Sr Minister as pertaining to the UU Values and Mission. Keep this section subjective and not too detailed in a listing of actions.	Marc/Jeanne
7:30 PM	20	Sunday Morning Changes: Jen outlined how she will socialize this possibility with the congregation. Liberal Article, survey sent out, listening sessions in person and online. A board member should attend these listening sessions as well.	Jen
7:50 PM	5	Consent Agenda Approved Approval of May meeting minutes Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers & trends Monitoring: Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes Monitoring: Congregant grievances Monitoring: Staff & Volunteer grievances	Marc
7:55 PM	10	Break	Marc to bring snacks
8:05 PM	10	Stewardship Committee Report Update on capital campaign discussions. Paying off the construction loan review. Should it be a capital campaign review? Let's make this a focused fundraising effort to pay off the \$1.3M or part of it. Target individuals who can make substantial donations. Can we do this over the next 3-4 months? Name it Finishing the Promise. Have a kick-off event with 40 in attendance in July. \$390K in commitments to date. Maybe have a second event. The board to discuss an off-cycle fundraising effort at the request from the Finance Committee. Motion to have an off-cycle fundraising effort. Approved	Emily W
8:15 PM	10	Finance Committee Report (see Finance report)	Cameron
8:25 PM	20	Senior Minister Review Process (see attached)	Marc
8:45 PM	5	Executive Committee Report (Summer Retreat--team building, self assessment, planning for 2026/2027)	Marc
8:50 PM	5	Meeting review and Gratitudes	All
8:55 PM		Adjourn	

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Roles, Responsibilities, and Resources for Board Members

[2025-26 Board Handbook](#)

**Senior Minister Board Report
Prepared by Rev. Jen Crow
August 12, 2026**

Spiritual Grounding

As part of my own continued intercultural development and growth, I've intentionally expanded the daily and weekly sources I turn to for learning, news, and inspiration. One of those sources is *The Anti-Authoritarian Playbook* by Scot Nakagawa. Scot Nakagawa is a political strategist and organizer with over four decades of experience exploring questions of structural racism, white supremacy, and social justice. He is the co-founder and director of the 22nd Century Initiative, a national strategy and action hub building power at the intersection of opposition to authoritarianism and expanding democratic governance in the U.S.

In his recent substack post, [The Cure for Loneliness](#), Scot shares the history and learnings of the LGBTQ rights movement, especially as it relates to the power and experience of belonging. Given the Board's focus on trust and belonging as key themes for its work in the year ahead, these reflections may be especially relevant. In particular, I lift up this excerpt:

Joy is infrastructure and it has to be resourced like infrastructure.

We fund the campaign, the rally, the legal defense, the communications shop. We treat the dinner, the dance, the choir, the parade, the potluck as the soft stuff - the nice-to-have, the thing volunteers will handle for free if there is time and money left over, which there never is. The LGBTQ movement got this priority exactly backwards from how our field thinks about it, and that is precisely why it worked. The party was not the afterglow of the organizing. The party *was* the organizing. A movement serious about curing loneliness has to put real money and real staff into building the conditions for connection and joy and has to stop apologizing for it as though belonging were an indulgence rather than the entire point.

In our own lives and in the life of the congregation, how might we encourage experiences of joy as the essential elements of community building, resilience, resistance, and spiritual living that they are? What would joy as infrastructure look like in terms of our attention, planning, and resource allocation - individually and collectively?

Monitoring Items

Attendance and Membership Trends

Please see attached information.

Staff and Volunteer Transitions:

After receiving more than 35 applications for the Community Connections Coordinator position, we are excited to have hired Caswell Bur. Thank you to Kit Ketchum and Kate Guin who assisted in the initial screening process, and to Amelia Marquez and Rachel Rott who participated in the interview process with Revs. Laura and Jen. Rev. Laura Smidzik led the hiring process in accordance with the church's hiring policies.

We celebrate the promotion of Hirut Hedge to Assistant Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries. This promotion recognizes the supervisory and leadership roles that Hirut has already been playing and allows for some transfer of responsibilities from Allison to Hirut, thus freeing Allison to provide increased pastoral care to children, youth, and families in the congregation. We also welcomed three new childcare staff this summer, El, Nancy, and Ava. You can read more about these updates [here](#).

Since mid-summer, Rev. Laura Smidzik's role as Assistant Minister has increased from 30 hrs/wk to 35 hrs/wk, and will continue at that level for the foreseeable future.

Staff Workplan and Goals

Draft -  2026-27 Theology, Themes, Workplan, Resources

Congregant Grievances

There have been no congregant grievances.

Staff & Volunteer Grievances

There have been no staff or volunteer grievances.

Information Items

Leadership Lunch, Sunday, September 13, 2026 11:30-1:30 at church

This year, church staff will host 2 Leadership Lunches - one in September and one in January - for everyone engaged in church leadership. This will be an opportunity for staff to share the larger themes and goals of the church year, update church leaders on staff responsibilities, and share current systems of how things are done at church. This will also be an opportunity for church leaders to know each other and the many expressions of shared ministry in our congregation. RSVP to [Rev. Jen Crow](#). We hope you will join us.

Next Steps for New and Religious Education Worship Time and Themes

After introducing the idea of an adaptive change in our Fall-Spring Sunday morning worship and Religious Education times, and following robust engagement with the congregation through a worship input survey, Rev. Jen has made the decision (in conversation with the Board), to the following schedule:

Sundays at First U, Beginning this Fall:

9:45-11:15 am Childcare

10-11 Worship in the Sanctuary and via livestream

10-11:15 Religious Education classes for Kindergarten-8th Grade

11-11:30 Food for everyone in the Social Hall

11:30-12:45 High School Programs & Adult Spiritual Programs

11:30-12:50 Childcare



Worship:
One service at 10 am
Every Sunday!

You can read more about what we've learned together [here](#).

UUA President's Volunteer Service Award - and Recognition Gathering Saturday, 9/26

This year's President's Award for Volunteer Service to the Unitarian Universalist Association honors our twenty-six congregations in Minnesota, the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA), Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU), and countless others who answered the call to public witness and action this spring in Minnesota. We also are grateful for the leadership of MARCH, Multifaith Antiracism, Change & Healing, and the Chicago-area congregations who shared their experiences and learnings resisting the injustices and violations of ICE.

Leaders from our Unitarian Universalist Association will be in the Twin Cities to celebrate and honor Unitarian Universalist congregations and organizations from around the state with an evening of gratitude and spiritual refueling on the evening of Saturday, September 28th. Please mark your calendars and join us.

[illegible]

June Attendance									
				2025					2024
Adults	Sun. 10a Sanctuary	Sun. 10a Livestream	YouTube	Totals		Sun. 10a Sanctuary	Sun. 10a Livestream	YouTube	Totals
1st week	170	23	104	297		175			175
2nd week	151	27	82	260		106			106
3rd week	GA	33	105	138		156			156
4th week	72	24	70	166					0
5th week									
Monthly Total	393	107	361	861		437	0	0	437
Average for June	98.25	26.75	120.3333333	215.25		109.25	0	0	109.25
RE									
1st week				N/A					0
2nd week				N/A					0
3rd week				N/A					0
4th week				N/A					0
5th week				N/A					0
Monthly Total				0					0
Average for June				0					0
Combined Average	98.25	26.75	120.3333333	215.25		109.25	0	0	109.25

July Attendance											
Adults											2026
1st week			Date:	SUN 9 AM In-Person	SUN 11 AM In-Person	SUN 10 AM In-Person	SUN Livestream	Youtube Views	Date Youtube Views Counted	Weekly In-Person Worship Total	Weekly Worship Total
2nd week			07/05/2026			131		25	07/08/2026	131	156
3rd week			07/12/2026			128	32	43	07/15/2026	128	203
4th week			07/19/2026			115	34	53	07/29/2026	115	202
5th week			07/26/2026			124	28	34	07/29/2026	124	186
Monthly Total				SUN 9 AM In-Person	SUN 11 AM In-Person	SUN 10 AM In-Person	SUN Livestream	Youtube Views		Monthly In-Person Worship Total	Monthly Worship Total
Average for July		Monthly Total		0	0	498	94	155		498	747
		Monthly Average				124.5	31.33	38.75		124.5	186.75
RE											
1st week			Date:	SUN 9 AM & 11 AM		SUN 10 AM	Non-Sunday RE	Date of Non-SUN RE/s		Weekly Sunday RE Total	Weekly RE Total
2nd week			07/05/2026							0	0
3rd week			07/12/2026							0	0
4th week			07/19/2026							0	0
5th week			07/26/2026							0	0
Monthly Total				SUN 9 AM & 11 AM		SUN 10 AM	Non-Sunday RE			Monthly Sunday RE Total	Monthly RE Total
Average for July		Monthly RE Total		0		0	0			0	0
		Monthly RE Average									
Combined Average				SUN 9AM & 11 AM		SUN 10AM				Total Sunday In-Person Combined	Total Combined
		Combined Total		0		498				498	747
		Combined Average								62.25	93.38

July Attendance									
				2025					2024
Adults	Sun. 10a Sanctuary	Sun. 10a Livestream	YouTube	Totals		Sun. 10a Sanctuary	Sun. 10a Livestream	YouTube	Totals
1st week	109	18	62	189		130	n/a	43	173
2nd week	147	30	13	190		122	n/a	48	170
3rd week	127	28	20	175		no slip	22	79	101
4th week	124	34	73	231		128	30	29	187
5th week									
Monthly Total	507	110	168	785		380	52	199	631
Average for July	101.4	22	33.6	157		76	10.4	39.8	126.2
RE									
1st week				N/A					0
2nd week				N/A					0
3rd week				N/A					0
4th week				N/A					0
5th week				N/A					0
Monthly Total				0					0
Average for July				0					0
Combined Average	101.4	22	33.6	157		76	10.4	39.8	126.2

Statistical Report for June and July 2026

Board Meeting August 20, 2026

MEMBER MEMORIAL SERVICES:

Doug Hannan, June 13, 2026

Phyllis Stenerson, June 20, 2026

Harry Pontiff, June 27, 2026

Wendell Vandersluis, August 14, 2026

MEMBER MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT:

Emma Ganion & Laura Hermansen, July 17, 2026

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL:

7

MEMBERS REINSTATED:

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL:

CHILDREN DEDICATED:

MINUTES

First Universalist Stewardship Committee

Thursday, 25 June 2026, 6:30 pm | Room 209

Attendees

Lynn Broaddus (chair), Rev. Jen Crow, Clyde Derrick, Ginny McAninch, Sigrid Nielsen

Notes

Update on “Finish the Promise” campaign: Last week the Board authorized the campaign to pay off the \$1.4 million balance on our construction loan, ideally before October 1st when the interest rate is expected to increase significantly. Though we have only recently been authorized to fundraise for the effort, \$390,000 has already been committed from four households who came to Jen in advance of the formal campaign. The team overseeing the campaign will be asking for one-on-one conversations with approximately 40 households in advance of a July 30th event hosted by Ralph Wyman and Jim Foti. Clyde offered to review a campaign letter that Lynn has drafted.

Calendar for 2026-2027 church year: We reviewed last year’s activities and discussed them relative to the calendar for the church year. A few items of note:

- *Metrics and tracking.* We’d like to come up with a handful of metrics that we can use to keep tabs on year-over-year trends as well as within-year status.
- *Give to the Max:* (November 18th, 2026) Last year we focused on operating costs for supporting our sanctuary and resistance work – this was quite successful. For 2026 and beyond we’d like to select focused needs within the church’s budget. We will explore how music within the church – something frequently mentioned during the spring 2026 “dreaming” process – could be supported by Give to the Max. Jen will talk with Paolo about this. A future year could focus on raising funds for the youth trip to Boston. Ideally, we’d have a cycle of ~ four that we could cycle through for Give to the Max. We will need to designate one person to spearhead this year’s effort.
- Other fundraisers:
 - Lynn will take the lead for the scrap metal event.
 - Music – we anticipate Emma’s Revolution and Lori Dokken to return. It would be fun to incorporate a broader array of music offerings, including something that would be attractive to R.E. families. We’d like to create a separate team, operating as a subgroup of the Stewardship Committee, to oversee these events. That would include the scheduling, staffing, etc. Though we’ve thought of these as fundraising events, in truth they are important as community building events

as well. With that in mind, we recognize that some may have a modest net income. Clyde offered to take the lead on this, recognizing that we should treat it as a pilot project and modify as we learn.

- Pledge drive:
 - Launch January 31st, end on March 14th. Rev. Jen will be in the pulpit for the January 31st event but is likely to begin her sabbatical a few weeks later.
 - We'd like to have a celebratory event on the last day of the pledge drive. This may take the form of a festive event after Sunday service.
 - Testimonials: We'd like to have them throughout the year, perhaps once a month or so, and then weekly beginning mid-January as we lead up to pledge launch, through March 14th. Sigrid offered to take the lead on recruiting and supporting people to do this.
 - Theme: Try to coordinate with sabbatical programming which is likely to focus on congregational reflection – looking back, looking forward. Look for ways to incorporate with Sunday and Wednesday activities at church (church suppers, and other small circles or activities underway).
- Communications & cultivating generosity
 - We'd like to have monthly missives in The Weekly Liberal.
 - Coordinate with other groups at church to promote our Sunday offering recipients, Foundation grants etc., and other ways the church is supporting the larger community.
 - See comments in "Pledge drive" section above.

.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm

Next meeting:

We will meet on August 27th at 2:00 pm, recognizing that this may be difficult scheduling for Drew and Unique. Brad will join us for this meeting (and future meetings) and will give us a Breeze tutorial.

Lynn has a conflict with the September 24th meeting, but we will wait until August 27th to reschedule it.

166th Annual Meeting of the Members
First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Sunday, June 14, 2026 | 11:30 am

Call to Order

Presiding: Marc Gorelick, President

Quorum present.

Chalice Lighting and Opening Words

Led by: Rev. Jen Crow

Appointment of Parliamentarian

Appointed by: Marc Gorelick, President

Authorization of Board of Trustees

Authorization of the Board of Trustees to approve the minutes of this meeting.

Motion approved.

Senior Minister's Report

Presenter: Rev. Jen Crow

See attached report.

Rev. Crow presented on the possibility of moving to one service. Opportunities for congregation feedback will be provided.

President's Report

Presenter: Marc Gorelick, President

See attached report.

Marc defined the role and responsibilities of the church.

Questions & Discussion

Q: Will the congregation be able to comment on the updated Governance Policies Handbook (GPH)?

A: The GPH is a board document; the board will review it.

Q: How and will the Cyber Coffee Hour be replaced?

A: The new position of congregation will help shape and give it a platform.

Financial Report

Presenter: Cameron Smithers, Treasurer

See attached report.

Questions & Discussion

Q: What happens to the surplus from 2025/26?

A: Per board policy, the board discusses with the minister on the appropriate use of any surplus.

Q: Why is there a positive variance in Administration of \$24K?

A: Savings on the Boston trip, software, and professional development.

Q: Why is the projected surplus ending at \$16,000 instead of the current \$142K surplus?

A: The timing of giving accounts for the difference.

Consideration and Vote on Annual Budget

Questions & Discussion

Q: What is the impact of having 2 ministers with one going on sabbatical?

A: Shared staff will have additional responsibilities during that period.

Q: Is the construction loan fixed or variable?

A: There is a balloon payment due in 2031. The current rate will increase in fall 2026.

Comment: It would be helpful to see side-by-side comparisons of the current and upcoming year budgets.

Q: Is the full-time music director a ministerial position?

A: No.

Q: How does our annual UUA giving compare to congregations of similar size?

A: We are at 60%.

Q: If the UUA is no longer considered a non-profit, what would we do?

A: This needs to be on our radar for monitoring.

Q: How is the board held accountable?

A: The congregation holds the board accountable.

Q: Does the UUA include Mid-America?

A: Yes.

Note: Pledges are \$1.4M of the \$1.7M total budget (question raised about pledges as a percentage of annual revenues).

Vote: Motion to approve budget. One abstention. Motion passed.

Special Recognitions

Outgoing Nominating Committee Members

- Ray Dillon, Chair
- David Bach
- Evelyn Brown
- Sandy Culpepper

Outgoing Foundation Members

- Isabel Quast, Chair
- Ingrid Moe
- Ginny Belden-Charles

Outgoing Church Trustees

- Emily Bijangte

Report of the Nominating Committee and Elections

Chair: Ray Dillon

The following were elected:

- Trustees and Officers, First Universalist Church — Approved (Executive Committee)
 - Marc Gorelick, President
 - Emily Wallace, Vice President
 - Cameron Smither, Treasurer
 - Matt Keller, Secretary
 - Kirk Cozine
 - Jeanne Guignon
 - Katherine Harrell
 - Lou Quast
- Directors, First Universalist Foundation — Approved
 - Kaitlin-Hallett-Pugh

Carol E. Jackson

Robert Kimball

- Members, Nominating Committee — Approved

Katie Fox

Maria Heath

Amelia Danielle Marquez

CT Neal-Herman

Raelyn Rassett

- Delegates to the 2026 General Assembly of the UUA (see Additional General Assembly Delegates section)

Motion re: Additional General Assembly Delegates

Motion to allow the Board to appoint additional delegates to the General Assembly — no action needed this year.

Closing Words

Led by: Rev. Jen Crow