

Minutes for Board Meeting, November 15th, 2022

Present: Kurt Merkle, Jolena James-Szanton, Michael Amy Cira, Alesia Hutto, Laurie Reed, Ben Baxter, Shannon Maples

*Barry Ahrendt and Joseph Spencer were present as observers

Not Present: Paul Wilson, Lisa Hagen, Samantha Visco, Rev. Lisa Bovee Kemper, Kelly Greene

*Call to order:

- Chalice Lighting words
- Vision Statement
- Mission Statement
- Leadership Covenant

*Discussion of last month's conflict

- The involved parties have had further discussion and returned to relationship, with the ability to continue working together. They would like to recognize the impact the discussion at the prior meeting may have had on others present.

*Check in

* Eyes and Ears: Concerns have been heard about the following:

1. Recent services are not resonating/reaching some members of the congregation at a spiritual level. Perhaps the educational parts of the service are necessary for the transition but the congregation still needs the larger spiritual component. Discussion:
 - The Worship Team or Transition Team might send a survey to the congregation.
 - Rev. Lisa will probably know how to speak to this concern based on her experience. Alesia will convey what we've heard to the people who need to know.
 - Communications could be sent about the transition process and why it is being done this way. The communication could also note that concerns about the spiritual component have been heard and are being considered.
2. The aesthetics of the plant behind the pulpit. This is already being addressed. Scott Royal is building a credenza to match the pulpit. Judy Love and John Herrick are at work redecorating the space.
3. Calendaring has been an issue, particularly with the youth events, e.g. a multi-generational service occurring at the same time middle and high school youth were offsite, and a youth-led pancake breakfast at the same time as the Erika's Closet presentation. Staff acknowledge the unfortunate timing of these events, which resulted from decisions being made without other staff present who had relevant information.

*Approval of minutes from October 2022 BOT meeting

- Approved as amended

*Current business

1. Coordinating Team report
 - Alesia highlighted staff's participation in the UUA's Large Church Staff Conference.

- It focused on the concept of creating communities within the larger congregational community - fostering the growth of smaller communities within and a part of the larger congregation.
 - Staff learned that we are not alone: Most other large congregations at the conference were in an interim period and in policy governance. Others are also experiencing membership attrition. However, our financial position is better.
 - Staff connected with staff in similar positions at other congregations - allowing them to feel they now have a village. They received a lot of information that they will use to guide us through the interim process.
 - Questions about the definition of an affinity group vs. programming? Affinity groups do not necessarily have staff resources to support them and may not directly align with the UUCC's vision/mission/ends. Affinity groups have more flexibility and provide members space to pursue other interests.
 - Questions about BOT vs. staff decision-making authority?
 - Policy governance, if done correctly, can work well in a larger congregation. BOT is responsible for finding the "ends" - vision, bylaws, etc. Staff are responsible to produce the means to which the ends are aligned; have freedom to make the daily decisions; and free up the BOT for other work.
 - BOT needs a better understanding of the borders between the means and ends - topic for our upcoming retreat.
 - A concern was expressed that we currently have a patriarchal model with leadership coming from the ministers.
 - Emergent Strategy was suggested as an influence.
 - Staff want to hear feedback to help them see their own blinders. Concerns about day-to-day decisions should first be brought offline to the staff/team responsible for those decisions, rather than the BOT.
2. Presentation of new bylaws language governing the election of new members to the Board
- The document sent for tonight was not the most current version. Vote tabled until next month.
 - Reminder that we need to rename "Nominating Committee" to "Recruiting Committee" (as discussed last month).
 - What are the parameters for committee selection? Agreement to create a job description for committee members that will not need to be in the bylaws, which would require a congregational vote each time it changes.
 - The bylaws should focus on the *process* of the recruiting/elections with a desire for equity.
 - Barry Ahrendt noted that the proposed cutoff for nominations one month before the Annual Meeting may tie the BOT's hands in case of the unexpected withdrawal of a candidate at the last minute. Such would then require a candidate to be appointed by the BOT, in contrast to our goal of a more democratic process.
 - Discussion of accepting nominations from the floor only if a slate of less than 3 candidates is presented at the Annual Meeting. This raises concerns about how to manage that vote, and absentee voters not having the ability to vote on all candidates. Ben is drafting language regarding nominations from the floor.
 - Agreement not to specify technology in the bylaws. We would like to investigate options for inclusivity, but we don't have staff/BOT resources to pivot on technology on the day of the vote.

- Barry also reminded the BOT of the length of time needed to amend the bylaws, call a special meeting for approval, select a recruiting committee, recruit potential BOT members, and vote at the Annual Meeting. Decisions must be made by June 30, if not by the Annual Meeting. Therefore, communications about the revised bylaws must begin around the first of the year.
 - Michael and Paul will reconnect about the bylaws revision and update the current document.
- 3. Covenant of Right Relations - Tabled to allow additional time for Kurt and Jolena to work on this. All BOT members are asked to review the current draft and submit questions/ comments.
- 4. BOT Retreat
 - December 17 is too soon to establish an agenda and find a moderator
 - Alesia will send a Doodle Poll to solicit available dates
 - Proposed times are 9am-1pm or 9am-2pm
 - The group likes the idea of an outside moderator to keep us on task. Suggested possibilities:
 - Rev. Hugh Hammond
 - Rev. Byron Tyler-Cole
 - It would be helpful to have a moderator knowledgeable on policy governance
 - Possible topics:
 - Decision-making processes
 - BOT role in the transition
 - Leadership Covenant Statement
 - Jolena will create a Google Doc to collect potential topics and moderators
- 5. Issues for the holiday season
 - The UUCC office will be closed during winter break (12/26-12/30). Staff have established a plan to ensure necessary work is done (pastoral care and the deposit of the collection). This is always a quiet week and this year we do not have volunteers to fill in.
 - BOT is asked to host the Christmas Eve reception (5:30 PM)
 - New Year's Day will offer a gathering with brunch and messages about starting the new year; no service.
 - One Board member recommended that staff communicate with young adults who would usually be asked to lead this service, to ensure they understand the reason for the change.
 - Another asked that we keep inviting back these young adults to lead a service, but at a time when more are in attendance.
 - Several noted that we want to be sure to invite back all recent CYRE graduates, not only those who went on to college. Are we maintaining contact with all of our youth?
 - Eyes and Ears: We have heard about the need for inclusivity in services:
 - Yom Kippur was celebrated after the actual holiday
 - Pagans have told us that we don't recognize their spirituality
 - Rev. Lisa was not present to speak to any plans for celebrating Hanukkah
 - Jolena will notify Rev. Lisa and John Herrick about the concern that all religions be represented in services
- 6. Development of a brief report on BOT activities
 - Alesia suggests monthly messages from the BOT and Transition Team in Currents

- Paul is submitting the first BOT message before the end of November. Kurt will check in with Paul. It will be important to mention the upcoming vote on the bylaws.

*Meeting adjourned at 9:16pm