



## Cultivate Courageous Connections

### **Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting**

October 17th, 2023, at 6:30 PM in the Bernstein Room and via hybrid set-up.

### **Board members in attendance:**

Kurt Merkle, Michael Amy Rodriguez Cira, Laurie Reed, Shannon Maples, Gwynne Movius, Bob Gorman, Ben Baxter, Kathleen Carpenter, Craig Miller

**Staff in attendance:** Kelly Greene, Lisa Bovee-Kemper, Alesia Hutto

**Observers:** Barry Ahrendt

### **Call to Order**

Chalice lighting

Vision, Mission, and Leadership Covenant Statements

### **Approval of Minutes from September 2023 BOT meeting**

Approved with no modifications.

### **Recognition of New Members (September 2023)**

- Nancy Fuller
- Karen and Steve Jackson

### **Eyes and Ears**

We've heard positive feedback about Rev. Lisa's service, "The Only Way Out is Through," and about the service led by Rev. Dr. James Kubal-Komoto from Raleigh.

Members commented positively on last Community Sunday's session about the Principles and would like to see more of this. Rev. Lisa expects there will be upcoming sessions regarding the proposed changes to Article II of the UUA Bylaws.

The new member recognition service was postponed due to after-service discussions about the petition to change the bylaws. Due to timing issues, Rev. Lisa and Paula have proposed incorporating the new member recognition into the beginning of the senior high service, and offered that "belonging" might a good topic for the youth to consider. Combining the two services might also bring a different group of members to the high school service. However, one BOT member has heard grief expressed by both youth and advisor(s) over the loss of the full high school service. Rev. Lisa asked that the members

expressing grief speak to her or Paula directly so that they can be heard. There may also be opportunity for change.

Members are happy to see Scott Whitesell back at the piano.

### **Board Presence at Upcoming Events**

Suggestions from staff and BOT:

- Oct. 29 – Trunk or Treat and Halloween activities.
- Common Read discussion on Thursday nights; there are two more sessions.
- Credo this Sunday.
- GreenFaith curriculum on Environmental Justice – 10/23, 10/30, 11/13.
- Lunch Around the World was great this month and Board members might enjoy.

The BOT will continue ensuring at least one member is present after each Sunday service. It was noted that Freeman Hall can be loud and distracting, so the BOT considered whether to offer open sessions in Bernstein instead; however, previous Boards tried this and the sessions were not well attended. We also prefer the visibility and availability of the weekly presence. BOT members will continue to sign up for each Sunday in Freeman Hall, and if it is too difficult to carry on a conversation, we can move to the vestibule. It was requested that Rev. Lisa remind members of our presence from the pulpit.

### **CT Report**

A tree near playground #2 is dead and mitigation efforts have been ongoing for years. The tree could fall at any time and has been recommended for removal. Alesia received two cost estimates and is obtaining a third. She requested approval for up to \$4k (highest cost estimate). The motion passed unanimously.

Job duties have been restructured as Paula has been settling in. The original plan was to hire a part-time admin for lifespan education. Instead, Belinda will support lifespan education while continuing some of her current responsibilities, and an admin will be hired for general office duties (doors, phones, email, etc.) The part-time admin will sit at the front desk, working 15 hours per week and supplemented by volunteer assistance. The position has been advertised in *Currents*.

Ron Macaroni is retiring from his long-time role as treasurer. Chip Dickerson, current chair of the Finance Team, will take on the role and will be training over the next few months.

The Transition Team's report called out several upcoming interim tasks including updating the organizational chart with clarified roles/responsibilities and preparing for the policy review. Rev. Lisa is gathering all the policies she can find and will share the full list with staff and BOT when complete.

### **Settled Minister Search Team Update**

A summary of results from the congregational survey will be available in November. Focus groups are going well and include specific populations such as new members, parents, and children/youth. The BOT focus group was held October 4.

The contract-negotiation subcommittee has met with the UUA compensation consultant. Alesia will also meet with her to discuss our budget for the settled minister's salary along

with the benefits provided by the UUCC. The minister's contract from the UUA is largely boilerplate. We need to include an expected salary (akin to a job announcement) although the actual salary may be negotiated.

- The UUA recommends salary ranges based upon congregation size and local cost of living, and the salary amount we have budgeted is very close to the recommended level. (Rev. Lisa noted that congregations tend to assume the negotiated salary will be at the lower end of the range, while ministers tend to assume it will be at the upper end of the range. If we are looking for a minister with some experience, she recommends that we be willing to approve at least up to the midpoint of the range.)
- The contract also includes a component for moving expenses, which have a standard recommendation but may be negotiated.
- The contract must be finalized and approved by the BOT by November 15.

The *Beyond Categorical Thinking* workshop is scheduled for the first Saturday in December. The Search Team asked that the BOT and staff do everything they can to encourage attendance.

The Search Team is looking for a realtor who could talk to potential ministerial candidates (on a volunteer basis) about the local housing market. To maintain confidentiality, the realtor cannot be a UUCC member. We would also want a realtor aligned with UU values (e.g. not steering candidates towards predominately white, higher-income neighborhoods and schools). Recommendations for potential realtors should be sent to Kathleen. Members of the Search Team are also likely to take the candidates on tours around Charlotte, which will inform candidates' own research.

The Search Team is glad to begin moving forward now that the vote on the petition to change the UUCC bylaws has been completed. One BOT member noted that, as a result of the petition process, members now seem more educated about and engaged in the ministerial search process.

### **Healing Circle Update**

The Healing Circles have been paused so that we do not cause confusion with the Search Team's focus groups. Takeaways from the Healing Circles to date were included in the September meeting minutes.

The BOT Healing Circle is scheduled for Thursday, 11/16, 7-9pm (in-person). BOT members from the past couple of years will also be invited.

### **Right Relations Policy**

BOT and staff reviewed and edited the current version of the policy. BOT members will provide a final review and submit any comments by Saturday, 5pm. We agreed to then review all comments by Monday morning. Kurt will schedule an electronic vote on Monday.

One BOT member noted that the timing of the Right Relations Policy release may be seen by specific UUCC subgroups as targeting them in particular. Other BOT members countered that work on this policy has been ongoing for years and was announced earlier this year as a specific focus of the congregational year. We acknowledge that the way the new policy is communicated is critical.

Craig will draft an article to include in next week's *Currents* regarding the final, approved policy. Next steps will include education of the congregation (by Rev. Lisa and others) and selection of Right Relations Team members. The Right Relations Team will be responsible for developing a communication plan, which we expect will include an in-person information session following announcement of the final policy.

### **Board Leadership Covenant**

Rev. Lisa developed a new draft leadership covenant based upon discussion at the BOT's August retreat. BOT members agreed to review the revised draft prior to the November meeting.

### **Communications**

A BOT member wondered whether the UUCC is fully utilizing all of its communication channels (e.g. Instagram; posting announcements on the screen prior to the service). Staff discusses communication a lot and has been considering these specific issues. Additional questions should be directed to Belinda (staff liaison to the Communications Team).

### **Potential Bylaws Changes**

When preparing for the vote on the bylaws changes, we identified that absentee voting is prohibited in the bylaws (members must be "present and voting" to change the bylaws). We also noted that absentee balloting would not be permitted by the bylaws in the vote for the settled minister.

The Board agreed to have a conversation in November about whether or not to change these bylaws provisions. If changes are needed, it will require an additional membership meeting, with required advance notice.

Also according to the bylaws, the full UUCC bylaws need to be reviewed every five years. We do not know the last time a review was completed. Rev. Lisa noted that a full bylaws review can take a year (including legal counsel) and there is already much on our plate.

### **Article II Update**

Staff expects an announcement any day of additional proposed revisions to Article II resulting from discussions during General Assembly. All proposed amendments must be submitted by Feb. 1 and supported by 15 congregations in order to be considered.

Staff is already discussing ways to educate the congregation about the proposed changes, and to allow opportunities for members to discuss and be heard. The BOT will need to decide whether we will take a position (discussion topic for November).

### **Transforming Conflict**

The BOT previously agreed to participate in this book discussion. Rev. Lisa recommends using 20 mins at the beginning of each meeting for a conversation about one chapter. Discussion questions are in the book. The first discussion is planned for November.

## **Executive Session**

Discussion to follow-up on concerns we have heard from several members (longer term and previously active) who are now disconnected. Some BOT members felt that a direct invitation to join a team or participate in other ways could be what is needed to make these members feel valued and to make a choice about committing or leaving.

Kurt will ask the Membership Team for a report on the specific actions that have been/are being taken to connect with formerly active members.

## **Summary of Action Items**

### Board Engagement

- Check ability to attend upcoming events.
- Sign up [here](#) for Freeman Hall after services.
- Rev. Lisa will issue a reminder from the pulpit that Board members are always available in Freeman Hall after the service.

### Ministerial Search

- The contract-negotiation subcommittee will finalize a contract that must be approved by the BOT by November 15.
- BOT and staff should encourage attendance at the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop (12/2).
- Realtor recommendations should be sent to Kathleen.

### Right Relations Policy

- BOT members will submit any final comments by Saturday, 10/21, 5pm.
- BOT members will review any final comments by Sunday night, 10/22.
- Kurt will schedule an electronic vote on Monday, 10/23.
- Craig will write an article for inclusion in next week's *Currents* regarding the final, approved policy.
- BOT members should begin thinking about potential team members. Kelly has offered to provide suggestions.

### Other BOT Work

- BOT members will review the draft covenant prior to the November meeting and come prepared to discuss.
- BOT agreed to have a conversation in November about whether or not to change the bylaws provisions about voting.
- BOT will read chapter 1 of Transforming Conflict and come to the November meeting prepared to discuss.
- Kurt will ask the Membership Team for a report on the specific actions that have been/are being taken to connect with formerly active members.

## **Meeting Adjourned**