



Cultivate Courageous Connections

Board of Trustees Meeting

February 20th, 2024, 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, Gwynne Movius, Bob Gorman, Ben Baxter, Craig Miller, Shannon Maples

Board members not in attendance: Kathleen Carpenter

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

Observer: Barry Ahrendt (Search Team member)

Call to Order

Chalice lighting

Vision, Mission, and Leadership Covenant Statements

Discussion of Transforming Conflict, Chapter 4

Approval of minutes from January 2024 BOT meeting - Approved unanimously

Recognition of New Members (December 2023) - No new members in January.

Eight members were removed. Board members were disappointed to see this, but Rev. Lisa and Kelly noted the positives that there have not been surprises in our recent resignations, and many members now tell us their reason for leaving (which we often did not hear in the past).

Eyes and Ears

- Rev. Lisa reported that the service she led about Article II was well received.
- The member Facebook page has been less contentious lately. Staff continue to discuss options for managing future group moderation, including becoming clearer about the group's purpose and goals.
- There was some discussion about ways for the UUCC to connect with new members, since we stopped passing around the yellow cards after our return from Covid. Staff will continue to discuss.

CT Reports

One Board member asked why staff felt the need for a pet policy. Staff noted that more people than one might expect are showing up with pets and we do not have a current policy in place.

MET grant season is underway. All teams and groups (including the Board) can apply for a grant to fund one-time capital or operating expenses. \$48,300 is available for funding. Applications are due March 31 and must include due diligence (e.g. current and thorough pricing). Application guidelines are published.

- Board members discussed a need for training dollars to support next year's Board and new minister. Rev. Lisa noted that regional staff will provide the congregation with a start-up (open to the entire congregation) when the new minister begins. She suggested we find a facilitator who could come to the UUCC in the 2024-2025 congregational year to support the entire congregation, rather than sending several Board members out of town to leadership training. Michael, Craig and Rev. Lisa volunteered to investigate options.
- Michael noted that Freeman Hall would be more welcoming with comfortable seating (e.g. cushioned loveseats). Alesia noted that Freeman is multipurpose (Open Door School, wedding rentals, etc.), which limits our ability to have permanent seating. We can order new, portable cafe-style tables from the operating budget.
- Kathleen (via email) asked about opportunities to make the building more accessible (e.g. ramp for the stage in the sanctuary; hearing loop). These conversations have been going on for years and would involve expensive changes to the sanctuary. Rev. Lisa tries to think about accessibility when putting together worship and we already find some opportunities to make services more accessible (e.g. moving the pulpit down from the stage). Conversations are ongoing with individual teams (including Worship and the (dis)Abled Support and Advocacy Group).

Leadership Training in Atlanta (March 17 weekend)

- At least two Board members are interested in attending.
- Rev. Lisa heard that home stays and scholarships are still available.
- Interested board members should contact Alesia (for the finances) and Rev. Lisa (to connect us with home stays).

Board Presence at Upcoming Events

- Game night this Saturday, 2/24.
- The next Article II Discussion is March 3 after the service. Several Board members plan to attend.
- Family Fun Nights (second Fridays) - dinner and breakout groups.
- Difficult Conversations co-hosted by Kelly - Sunday March 10
- Men's Potluck - March 18
- Talent competition - April 6

- Saturday, April 27 – regional event called “Beyond the Binary” (morning and some afternoon). Several congregations in the southeast are hosting, including UUCC.
- Board members should sign up for dates to be present in Freeman Hall. A printed sign has been created and is in the storage closet.

Settled Minister Search Team (SMST) Update

Barry noted that the team is making good progress and is on schedule. February and March are the months that the SMST meets with and listens to sermons preached by a small number of “pre-candidates.” Barry asked that Board members try to attend as many candidating week events as possible.

Full report: <https://uuccharlotte.org/minister-search-team-february-update/>

Right Relations Team

The Board is pleased to announce that four members have agreed to serve on the inaugural Right Relations Team: Susan Cox, Naomi Irvine, Peter Huxtable and Ann Doss Helms. Rev. Lisa will meet with the group to get them started. Laurie will draft an announcement to publish in next week’s *Currents*.

Bylaws Change to Allow Absentee Voting on the Settled Minister

The current bylaws require members to be “present and voting” in several instances, including votes to change the bylaws and to call a settled minister.

The Board’s subcommittee (Gwynne, Kurt, Bob) sought feedback from the SMST, which reflected a variety of considerations that were consistent with prior Board and subcommittee conversations. The subcommittee also reviewed proposed amended language with member Richard Pratt, an attorney.

After reviewing the subcommittee’s proposed revisions with the Board and staff, and making several additional edits, the Board unanimously approved the revised language. Kurt will finalize the bylaws amendments, share with the SMST by tomorrow (2/21), and draft an announcement for this week’s *Currents*.

The Board will call a meeting of the membership to vote on the bylaws March 24 (to be supported by all Board members). Two information sessions will be held prior to the vote:

- March 7, Thursday Zoom session @ 7pm
- March 17 - Sunday in person after the service - Bob, Gwynne and Craig

Craig noted that we should encourage members who must miss candidating week to seek out as much information as possible prior to the vote.

Alesia offered to research options for voting software.

Board-Led Service (March 10)

Kurt, Michael, Laurie, Craig, Kathleen, and Shannon will participate in the planning. Rev. Lisa will reach out to us.

Board Goals

Discussion of the goals set at the retreat will be tabled for the next meeting. Rev. Lisa noted that a reasonable way to set future Board Goals would be to select an Ends Statement and focus on it for half of the year.

Sybil Bernstein and Charlotte Watkins Award Nominees

The Sybil Bernstein Award is presented to an outstanding UUCC volunteer.

The Charlotte Watkins Award is presented to an outstanding volunteer in the community. Each reward is not required to be presented annually (e.g. the Watkins Award has been presented only about 3 times). The names of all winners are saved in the Board files.

Shannon will create a nomination form to share with the group. Nominations are requested by the next Board meeting. Alesia needs three weeks' notice to order the award. The date for presenting the award is TBD.

Summary of Action Items

- The Board will read chapter 5 of Transforming Conflict for discussion next month.
- Michael, Craig, and Rev. Lisa will look into applying for a MET grant for 2024-2025 Board/congregational training.
- All board members interested in the Atlanta leadership training weekend (March) should contact Alesia and Rev. Lisa.
- Board members should sign up for dates to be present in Freeman Hall. The new printed sign can be found in the storage closet.
- Kurt will finalize the bylaws amendments, share with the SMST by tomorrow (2/21), and draft an announcement for this week's *Currents*.
 - The Board will call a meeting of the membership to vote on the bylaws March 24 (to be supported by all Board members).
 - Information sessions:
 - March 7, Thursday Zoom session @ 7pm
 - March 17 - Sunday in person after the service - Bob, Gwynne and Craig
- Laurie will draft an announcement about the Right Relations Team to publish in the Feb. 29 edition of *Currents*.
- Alesia offered to research options for voting software.
- Rev. Lisa will connect with Kurt, Michael, Laurie, Craig, Ben and Shannon to begin planning the Board service.
- Shannon will create a nomination form (Bernstein and Watkins) to share with the group. Nominations are requested by the next Board meeting.

Meeting Adjourned

Executive Session - Board Candidate Recruiting Team Nominations

Board members discussed nominations for the recruiting team to actively recruit new members for next year's Board.

Staff asked that the recruiting team coordinate with Kelly to prevent members from being asked to participate on multiple teams, which happened last year when there were several recruitments happening at the same time.