



Cultivate Courageous Connections

Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting

March 19th, 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, Kathleen Carpenter, Shannon Maples

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

Stewardship Canvass Message

Glen McLaughlin spoke about the reasons he gives generously and encouraged Board members to do the same. "If you are still giving at 2020 levels, you are 25% behind."

Discussion of Transforming Conflict, Chapter 5

Approval of minutes from February 2024 BOT meeting - Approved unanimously.

Recognition of New Members (February 2023) - No new members or removals.

Eyes and Ears

The group received positive feedback on the Board of Trustees service. One Board member noted that the personal nature of the reflections was different from the typical "Board service" ... it's good for members to get to know Board members better in this personal way.

CT Reports

- The Right Relations Team had their first meeting. They would like to recruit a fifth member right away and suggested members for Board consideration. They plan to make decisions about staggered terms in January.
- Rev. Lisa, Craig and Michael are working on a proposal for a MET grant to fund congregational training next year. One of the facilitators from SOUUL Summit, who

spoke about managing change, could be a great option to come to the UCC (perhaps in July, prior to the start of the new minister). MET decisions are announced at the June congregational meeting.

Leadership Training in Atlanta (SOUUL Summit - March 17 weekend)

- Rev. Lisa, Paula, Kurt, Michael, Kathleen, and Ken Smalley (from the Denominational Relations Team) attended. They found it inspiring and received good information about different approaches to leadership and the importance of being open to change. Kathleen noted that it was one of the best such trainings she has ever attended. They also brought back some ideas for worship.
- Kathleen will draft an article for Community Compass and include highlights from other attendees.

Settled Minister Search Team (SMST) Update

- The Search Team has settled on their preferred candidate. Options will become available 3/25 and we can make an offer on 3/28.
- Barry said the team has had amazing, meaningful, and spiritual precandidating weekends. He noted that the UUA has some wonderful, talented, compassionate, and brilliant ministers and he feels fortunate to have met some of them. These ministers have also seemed enthusiastic about us. Kurt requested that the SMST provide that inspiring perspective in their next update in Currents.
- The SMST is optimistic about our chances to engage a settled minister. Approximately 30 congregations are in settled search, along with 50-60 ministers.
- Interested ministers want to know that the SMST, BOT, and church leadership in general are committed to them and will not let them become an unfair target of members who are dissatisfied with the UUA. The BOT needs to have additional conversations about how we would accomplish that.
- Further, the Board needs to determine contingency plans in case we do not make a successful match or if the vote to call a minister is not successful.
 - If the *initial search* is not successful, the BOT voted unanimously to enter a second round of search:
 - This timeframe would begin immediately after the first round (early to mid-April) and candidating would take place in late May to mid-June. June 30 is the deadline to call.
 - Rev. Lisa noted that she has seen very successful matches come out of the second round of search.
 - The SMST would continue to manage this process and would have the option to back out if they do not like the candidate options.
 - Potential downsides of a second round of search include extra costs for a second pre-candidating weekend (~\$2k) and increased anxiety in the congregation.
 - The BOT will discuss options in a future meeting in case the *ministerial call* is not successful. Options include:
 - Interim ministry – an option for a short period of time. Interim ministers cannot be called. Rev Lisa recommends against a third year of interim ministry due to the high level of anxiety in our congregation.
 - Contract minister – can be for any predetermined period of time. A

contract minister can be called as a settled minister in the future, but Rev. Lisa said contract ministers are less likely to have the skills and qualifications needed for a congregation of our size.

- Developmental minister – longer term than an interim (up to seven years) - but cannot be called in the future. Rev. Lisa recommends developmental ministry if we don't match in the first or second rounds. Developmental ministers are more experienced and have transitional training. And, with the median tenure of a settled minister now 6-7 years, that timeframe is not dissimilar to developmental ministry.
- The Search Team is still finalizing the calendar/itinerary for candidating week, to include a Sunday evening meal with the Board.

Prep for Vote on the Bylaws Amendments

- The ballot is ready. We will have before and after versions of the bylaws available, plus a version with markups.
- Kelly will provide a membership list and the number required for a quorum.
- Gwynne, Kathleen and Bob will check people in by last name. Gwynne has the alphabet signs. We will bring in a table.
- Laurie and Craig will work the booth. They will need to continue to post the voting link in chat (pinning it does not work for people who join after it is pinned.)
- Shannon will take minutes.
- We can use the stewardship box to collect ballots and Belinda will provide writing utensils.
- The notice included language that voting will end when the meeting ends.

BOT Recruiting Teams

Shandra Stout and Greg Schropp have agreed to serve. We will discuss other options in Executive Session.

Board Orientation Handout

The Board circulated a prior-year version updated by Rev. Lisa. Kathleen, Bob, Gwynne will review for edits prior to the July board orientation.

Board Goals

The Board already has a number of tasks to work on for the next few months.

Stewardship Report

- Alesia is pulling together budget information. We don't have income numbers yet because we are in the middle of the spring stewardship campaign. She will present a preview budget in April and final budget in May.
- To date, we have a 50% response rate for pledges, with a net loss of \$21k over last year. This year was already in a deficit budget. The biggest losses this year were seen in the winter pledge group (8% decrease in pledges).
- Leadership must continue to remind members that the UUCC requires financial support and volunteer support; now is not the time to pull back. We must lean into what we have to prepare for the new minister. Pledge packets just went out March 15 so there is opportunity in the spring pledge group. And anyone can increase their pledge at any time. There is also hope that the message of a new minister will bring people in. Some

have been waiting to see what will happen.

- Alesia anticipates presenting another deficit budget for next year, but we still budget to save \$24k per year for reserves, so that provides room to work with.
- Kurt offered to draft a “why I give” statement for Currents. We also always need volunteers to give that message from the pulpit; email Alesia with interest.
- The Board typically has a small budget for an in-house retreat, awards, and some small incidentals. Alesia will send data on what we have spent this year and the deadline for our budget request is March 28.

Summary of Action Items

- The Board will read chapter 6-7 of Transforming Conflict for discussion next month.
- Kurt will post a reminder about the bylaws vote on the member Facebook page. It will also be in Currents.
- Kurt and Michael will provide Alesia with draft language for the vote results ASAP.
- Rev. Lisa, Craig and Michael will submit the MET grant proposal for congregational training.
- Kathleen will draft an article for Community Compass about the SOUUL Summit.
- Kathleen, Bob, and Gwynne will review the Board orientation document for edits.
- Kurt will draft a “why I give” statement for Currents.
- The Board will submit its budget request by March 28.

Meeting Adjourned

Executive Session - Sybil Bernstein and Charlotte Watkins Award Nominees