

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana

Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World

Approved Board Minutes

March 18, 2020



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Board members attending: Stuart Yoak, Abby Gitlitz, Steven Gilbert, Rich Slabach, Julie Lawson, Jane McLeod

Board members absent: Sharon Wiseman

Ministers attending: Revs. Mary Ann Macklin and Emily Leite

Present by invitation: Amy Makice

Submitted by: Steven Gilbert, Secretary

Attached Documents:

 A. Senior Ministers Report

I. Call to Order

President Stuart Yoak called the meeting to order over the Internet at 7:05 p.m., conducting the meeting on the Internet using Zoom technology.

II. Chalice Lighting and Reading

Stuart Yoak conducted the chalice lighting and reading.

III. Check-in (All)

IV. Approval of the Minutes

President Yoak moved for the approval of the February 19 board meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and carried without discussion.

V. Senior Minister's Report

Rev. Macklin discussed the current state of the church in light of the Covid-19 suspension of in-person services. Some UU ministers elsewhere are suggesting a greater need for more personalized ministry, even one-on-one for some parishioners, in light of the increased anxiety some of them may experience. Rev. Macklin plans to move in that direction, but wants to feel her way forward based on her perception of the real needs of the congregation. Meanwhile the online service will continue to be her main ministerial focus along with other normal activities. Staff members are largely working from home at present. The church is also receiving extra cleaning. See Attachment A for the written report.

A. Budget Requests for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year

Rev Macklin expects the budget for the 2020 fiscal year to be much the same as for 2019. Though some excess may appear, additional expenses the church may incur in dealing with Covid-19 are unknown.

B. Internet Access Problems

Rev. Macklin reported that some of the congregants who came to the service last Sunday despite her request to stay home lacked internet access. She is trying to resolve this situation quickly.

C. Staff Salaries

UUCB will continue to pay salaries for regular part-time staff as long as funds permit, including for the Child Care Coordinator. Staff are largely working from home and were advised to stay within their allotted hours. Child care workers who are normally employed "as needed" will not receive pay.

VI. Monitoring (per Board Policies, Section V)

A. Right Relations Committee

Stuart Yoak reported that Rev. Scott McNeill failed to work with the RRC to the degree expected by the Board. Amy Makice has carried much of the burden of leadership and development. Amy reported that the RRC would like to add two additional members and has suggested candidates to the LCC. The RRC is also developing a book club for parties interested in developing healthy communication skills. The planned starting date for the club is March 29. They will conduct meetings over Zoom for now. Around 20 congregants have expressed interest in the club and more may join as they learn about it.

VII. Old Business

A. Effect on Finances of UUCB's Settlement with Rev. McNeill

Rich Slabach reported that the expected difference between the costs of the settlement with Rev. Scott McNeill and the amount budgeted for the remainder of the year under his contract is around \$11,500. UUCB will draw funds for part-time ministers to replace him from this difference over the balance of the fiscal year.

B. Proposed Bylaw Changes: Filling Vacancies for Elected Board Positions

Steven Gilbert, with Julie Lawson, presented proposed revisions to the church bylaws 4.2-4.4 and 5.2-5.4. Several minor changes were suggested including the elimination of reference to concurrence of the LCC in the revised 4.4 and 5.4, and the question of whether an at-large member who assumes the position at an irregular time should finish out the whole two year term before running for election in their own right, or should run for election in their own right at the next spring congregational meeting, should that be different (bylaw 4.2).

C. Plans for Pledge Drive 2020-2021

Julie Lawson and Jane McLeod expressed some uncertainty about the scope of their task with regard to collecting/obtaining 2019-20 and 2020-21 pledges, specifically whether they should engage in actions to collect pledges from the past year as well as to obtain more pledges for FY 2020-21. Rev. Macklin replied that Carol Marks takes care of collecting past-due pledges, so they should create plans for collecting pledges from unpledged congregants for the FY 2020-21 fiscal year. She recommended that they coordinate with Carol Marks and Ann LeDuc and focus both on those who pledged last year

but have not yet renewed their pledge for the coming year, and on those who have never pledged.

D. Update on Rev. Sharon Dittmar's Visit and Exit Interview

Stuart Yoak reported that Rev. Dittmar will not be visiting UUCB on March 29th as originally planned, nor will she conduct the exit interviews she plans online at this time. However, online interviews may be necessary should in-person meetings continue to prove infeasible due to concerns about Covid-19.

VIII. Housekeeping

Rich Slabach will provide the reading at the next board meeting. Rev. Macklin suggested that the board make an effort to provide three members for the scheduled Sunday service as long as the current hiatus lasts. Stuart Yoak, Steven Gilbert and Julie Lawson will work next Sunday.

IX. Executive Session

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:35 pm

X. Adjournment

President Yoak adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:50 p.m.

ATTACHMENT A

Senior Minister Report to the Board March 2020

First Board Report as reality of COVID 19 sets in.

We now have taken the following measures in face of the novel coronavirus

- 1) Worship services will be live-streamed, asking congregation to stay home and view
- 2) Staff will work from home
- 3) Church Building essentially closed
- 4) Hourly staff will be paid their average weekly working wages
- 5) Meetings encourage on Zoom and other possible virtual ways
- 6) PayPal is now available for Digital Donations
- 7) Board President and Senior Minister maintaining exchange of information
- 8) Memorials are postponed until further notice
- 9) Pastoral care, Social Justice and Chalice Circles are being attended to by our Minister Emerita Reverend Barbara Child, Minister Emeritus Reverend Bill Breeden, and former Sabbatical Minister, Reverend Barbara Child due to the negotiated resignation of Associate Minister Reverend Scott McNeill.
- 10) Kudos to Connections Coordinator Ann Leduc for her connection and technology savvy as well as Church Administrator Carol Marks for her adaptability and persistence in the wake of so much change.
- 11) Reverend Leite recently returned from picking up her son at Brown University due to college closure. Music Director Susan Swaney is in Iowa with her brother, who had emergency heart surgery, and his seven year old twins. Reverend Macklin is in daily contact with her. Director of Religious Education, Adrienne Summerlot began on Facebook story hour.

As part of my Board Report, I shared a guiding and sobering message from UU colleague in the Seattle area, Cecelia Kingman.

My dear colleagues, I want to ask you all to work less right now. I mean it. We have a long and difficult road ahead. Some learnings from Seattle, where our situation gets more intense each day:

-Just when you figure out how to do worship live from your sanctuary, with a skeleton crew, it will be time to shift to doing worship from your home.

-Just when you figure out how to do so many things to replicate "church" as we know it on line, you will realize that what your people need most of all is straight up pastoral care, and time to connect with one another. Not programming. And definitely not perfection.

-Just as you figure out how to minister during a pandemic, the ground shifts and you have to find a new center.

I'm realizing quickly that our people don't need us to deliver the things we used to deliver every week. They need small group ministry and pastoral care--but the simplest of these things. They don't need curricula-they need to see each other's faces. They don't need polished preaching and music-they need to hear that they are not alone.

The most important thing we can do right now is tend to our own spiritual health and get enough rest. This is going to be a long haul, and there is much loss and grieving to come in most of our communities. Do less in order to do what will be necessary all too soon.

I believe we need to slow way down, because if we are already exhausted we will have no reserves when the worst of this pandemic arrives and we start having deaths in our own congregations.

Please take good care of yourselves right now. We will need all our reserves in the weeks and months ahead.

And so we shall do our best. Still we will allow ourselves to wean away from livestream services as needed in our area. We will keep music as part of our interactions throughout; it is part of this congregation's spirit and ministry. We will strive to pace ourselves.

Lastly, I close this report with an excerpt from my Prologue column from this week:

Seeking the Spirit. Building Community. Changing the World.

Please do not allow this statement to become a platitude in the weeks and months ahead, but rather let it maintain its place as the foundational connection of our congregation; it is a bold vision, a touchstone to return to again and again, to remember who we are, why we are, and how we are called to be. Please read the full Prologue to learn more about what we are doing in the short-term and for-the-long-haul as we encounter a new way of living on this earth.

At this time, may our prayers be with all those who are suffering in mind, body, and spirit throughout the world, especially those who are experiencing exhaustion and trauma as a result of the pandemic.

Peace and Love, Mary Ann