

**Board of Trustees Meeting
Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Santa Rosa
March 21, 2019**

MINUTES

Voting Members Present: Natalie Brundred (President), Sean Freese (Vice President), Michael Randolph (Treasurer), Cathie Wiese (Corporate Secretary), Joe Como, John Jaffray, Gretchen Paradis, Karen Simmons, Gretchen Vap.

Voting Members Absent: none.

Non-Members Present: Rev. Chris Bell, Dawn Silveira (Administrative Manager), Linda Stabler (Human Resources - via Facetime), Susan Thollaug (Recording Secretary).

Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm

- Executive Session -

Chalice Lighting, Covenant, Opening Words: Rev. Chris and Natalie

Minutes: February minutes were approved without changes.

Open Mic:

An interfaith service commemorating the mass shooting in New Zealand is scheduled for 6:00 pm on Friday, March 22 at the Glaser Center.

Karen would like to get going on landscaping work for the front breezeway area as soon as weather permits. She will contact Bill Foshee to request use of his truck.

Because of the interfaith service, Natalie will accept awards at an event sponsored by the *Bohemian* newspaper on Friday, March 22. Rev. Chris was voted the best minister in Sonoma County for the second year in a row, and UUCSR was voted best church.

The Finance Committee is currently in good shape, but the addition of someone who's strong in accounting would be welcome.

Ministers' Report - Rev. Chris; Rev. Dara

Rev. Chris noted that things are going well.

Rev. Dara is continuing to shepherd a new group for people in their 20's and 30's, which is gradually expanding.

Update on Rev. Chris' Sabbatical – VOTING ITEM

Members of the Sabbatical Committee are: Bob Anderson (COSM), Jen Freese (DRE), Dawn Silveira (Administrator), Sharon McCarty (Worship Associates) , Rev. Dara and Rev. Chris. Deb Mason will be asked to join the group, and Natalie will be an *ex-officio* member. The committee has started looking at questions, tasks, funding, and how to structure coverage. It's likely that a part-time sabbatical minister will be hired and will preach three Sundays each month.

The Board voted unanimously to designate the sabbatical committee as the hiring committee for a sabbatical minister. This will allow the committee to accomplish preparatory steps in a timely way. Michael reported that approximately \$11,000 is already earmarked for this purpose.

Rev. Chris' sabbatical will be an opportunity for members of the Congregation to "step up and step out" into new leadership, teamwork roles and involvement. The sabbatical committee expects things to go smoothly.

Talk to a Board Member - Review of Feedback

- Computer security for UUCSR systems should be reviewed and updated. Sean and Dawn will follow up.
- We're a predominantly white Congregation, and we need to make a much bigger effort to reach out to people of color and of other cultural backgrounds. Natalie observed that we need to show extraordinary graciousness, and that the Board should lead on this. Rev. Dara suggested that the Diversity Project may be able to help the Congregation with both the learning and the unlearning that needs to occur.
- We will look into buying renewable energy from Sonoma Clean Power. Installing solar panels on the roof would be difficult and cost-prohibitive now.

Liaison concerns

Natalie urged that Board members think seriously about recruiting people from the Congregation to assist with organizing the annual auction and running the kitchen.

Transgender Inclusion & Affirmation: Sean Freese

UUCSR aspires to be a welcoming Congregation for transgender people, and toward that end, needs to assess how it has been doing to date. Sean led the Board through the following series of questions.

1. *Any intentional steps in last 5 years?* Yes: Included in Hot Topics; A Trans 101 class was offered, about 50 people participated.

Discussion points: There are those who want to go beyond the basics, but many who need them. All of the people who think it is most important are already going beyond. There could be a whole-month emphasis on transgender issues. There is also a connection to the cross-border work that we're beginning. Trans-identifying people are trying to cross the border to escape persecution in their countries of origin. There will be a trans march and rally in Santa Rosa on Sunday, March 31.

2. *Are trans people explicitly welcomed?* Yes: LGBTQ are welcomed from the pulpit; our rainbow flag; sometimes invitations to participate in UUCSR activities are re-framed to be inclusive, rather than using traditional cis-gender (male/female) categories.

Discussion points: We have fears of committing micro-aggressions, of screwing up. However, you can go back and apologize. This is learning work; we're growing in spirit together. Repairing relationships matters. TRUUsT (Transgender Religious professional UUs Together) states that who tells the story matters. "Nothing about us without us" is key. If you take a statement about gender and then make the same statement about race, what's offensive may show up more starkly.

3. *Gender-neutral bathrooms?* Yes: In Room 545, next to the RE wing, and upstairs.
4. *Rituals available?* This was referred to Rev. Chris for follow-up.
5. *Gender-specific groups and events explicitly trans-inclusive?* That could be more explicitly stated. Cathie W will bring this up with the Women Together group.
6. *Do we have a non-discrimination policy inclusive of "gender identity or expression"?* Referred to Rev. Chris.
7. *Policies and procedures, forms, etc. take gender diversity into account?* More work to be done.
8. *Religious education inclusive of issues related to gender diversity?* Yes.
9. *Greeters and/or membership leaders trained in multicultural welcoming and reducing unconscious bias?* Some training for Worship Associates,

but not yet for greeters.

Discussion points: It's helpful to take an unconscious bias test. Good to approach it with "beginners mind" to see more clearly our biases. It would be helpful for each of us to take it and then talk about it. Some tests are available online. Dara will help us locate a good one.

10. *Inclusive language guidelines for leaders and speakers?*

Discussion points: We could adopt a practice of sharing pronouns in introductions, TIE groups, and new meetings. That can help signal and open us up for broader inclusion and acceptance. Cathie will follow up.

11. *Minister trained to provide pastoral care to trans people and family members?* Ministers - yes. Lay chaplains - not yet.
12. *Congregation participates in social justice or service impacting transgender populations?* Carol Kraemer, of the Diversity Project, is enthused about working on this. At this time, our Congregation may have more gender diversity than racial diversity.
13. *Affirmation of transgender issues and history during the congregational year?* Rev. Chris will put the Transgender Day of Remembrance on the calendar.
14. *Provide main worship space and ministerial services for transgender people, e.g., offering gender-affirming ceremonies?* These can be done with the congregation.

It was noted that it would be good to give best practices in introductions with pronouns to committee chairs. Rev. Chris or the Diversity Project could do this.

Treasurer's Report: Michael Randolph

At the end of February we were up \$18k in terms of the 2018/2019 budget. However, we're projecting \$28k less in pledges than budgeted for the year, and a big expenditure is pending: principal payments on member notes of about \$25k.

We are up about \$48k in new pledges this year, which is close to our goal. The pledge drive has been fairly successful.

Glaser Center revenue is under what was projected in the budget. It was noted that with the various transitions, the committee tabled efforts at promotion, but that's expected to improve now that we have a full-time administrator on board.

Our annual auction netted about \$18k, somewhat under the projected amount.

All-in-all, it looks like the crunch won't be as bad as we thought a few months ago. We may yet save money in the area of repairs to the building.

Budget development for 2019/2020 is underway. FinComm plans to finish its review and present it to the Board at its April meeting. In early May there will be two Town Halls for the Congregation to review and discuss the proposed budget in advance of the vote at the June Congregational meeting.

Google Drive Tutorial: Sean Freese

Using Google Drive for document management will help in terms of version control and having a clear record of documents the Board considers.

Administrative Manager's Report: Dawn Silveira

Dawn is streamlining multiple processes in the office, and use of Google Drive is part of that. "Institutional Gmail" may be an option so that people don't have to use personal email addresses or set up a new personal account to access UUCSR's Google Drive.

Update on Naming Room 545: Gretchen Vap

20 names have been submitted for consideration so far. Gretchen will receive proposals through the end of March. At the April meeting, the Board will consider all of the submitted names and select one to present to the congregation.

Final questions, review of action items, and closing words

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm.

Next Board Meeting: April 18, 2019 at 6:30 pm in the Board Room

Respectfully submitted by Susan Thollaug, Recording Secretary