

# UUFP Board Meeting, November 21, 2023

In attendance: Connie Shemo, Ursula Jones, Annette Wells, Kimberley Bertrand, Tana Hanley,  
 , Rev. Nicoline Guerrier, Jerry Bates (non-voting member) Mark Preston and Lisa Bulriss

Absent: Megan Morrissey

Notetaker: Lisa Bulriss

Item	Discussion	If a task is involved, who is overseeing it and deadline?
Check-in		
Minutes	Rev. Nicoline asked to edit the October 17, 2023 minutes to include the words "in 2024" in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> sentence, first paragraph of the 2nd page. Lisa will make this change. Motion to approve the change and approve the minutes of October 17, 2023 Board minutes – 1 <sup>st</sup> by Mark and 2 <sup>nd</sup> by Ursula, all approved.	Lisa to edit the minutes to include the words "in 2024" on page 2.
Business Arising	<p>Safety Committee Update – Connie stated the next Safety Meeting is scheduled for November 30<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting the Safety committee will be reviewing mask requirements and ventilation systems. An update will be given to the board at December's meeting.</p> <p>Letter to Allison – Connie state she will be sending the letter to Allison this week and apologized for not sending it earlier to her.</p>	<p>Safety Committee meeting scheduled for November 30<sup>th</sup>- update will be given at December's board meeting.</p> <p>Connie sending letter to Allison this week on behalf of the board.</p>
Treasurer's Report	<p>Ursula reviewed the Treasurer's Report. As of October 31st, 75% of revenue has been collected which includes 86% of pledges. Income is short of our budget projections due to a shortfall in general donations and interest income. Expenses are within the budget projections. Ursula stated she received an update from the realtor on the activity of the sale; no offers have come in yet. Rev. Nicoline asked if donations are made online for Share the Plate. Lisa stated some donations are given online.</p> <p>Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report – 1st by Connie and 2nd by Tana, all approved except Ursula abstained.</p>	
Worship Committee Update	<p>Jo El Miano and Angela Rotella from the Worship Committee updated the board on recent changes. Jo El stated to organize their thoughts they started with seven guiding questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the mandate of the Worship Team?</li> <li>2. How has the team responded to the events that took place during Allison Heard's service?</li> </ol>	



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. What does the team see as issues at play?</li> <li>4. What information have we gathered from the larger membership (that is feedback we've received)?</li> <li>5. What actions have we taken?</li> <li>6. What is the Worship Team's vision for the future?</li> <li>7. What do we see moving forward?</li> </ol> <p>Attached is the Worship Team's report that addresses each of these questions. After the presentation, a discussion took place regarding the open mic forum. Mark stated when he first started to attend the fellowship how surprised he was at the open mic forum and he wondered whether speakers were official representatives of the congregation.</p> <p>Jo El stated she is hoping our reflections haven't diluted the harm and the ripples of the harm that occurred at Allison services. It is important to be addressing as a congregation.</p> <p>Mark thanked the Worship team and that accountability is the key, acknowledge the harm done at our fellowship. As a congregation we need to grow, learn and be accountable for any harm done.</p> <p>Annette asked about the zoom services. Angela stated we will continue to offer dual-platform options for all services..</p> <p>Mark asked if other UU fellowships have an open mic forum like we do? Rev. Nicoline stated most congregations have had an open mic in their history but have stopped it after harm occurred. Larger congregations have no open mic forum.</p> <p>Annette and Connie thanked Jo El and Angela for coming to the board meeting and sharing their thoughts from the Worship Committee.</p>	
<p>Annual Giving Campaign</p>	<p>Ursula stated November 5<sup>th</sup> was kick off for the 2024 Annual Giving Campaign. Rev. Nicoline did an intro of the campaign to the congregation at the Sunday morning services. Appeals were sent by email and USPS mail to friends and members. At this time, we have 8 pledges at an approximate total of \$38,000. We had one testimonial, Eric Trotman. We have one more planned. Ursula encouraged board members to make a pledge. The 2023 annual giving campaign includes 51 pledges and we are aiming for 9 new pledges for the 2024 annual giving campaign. Mark asked about the matching funds. Ursula stated a few members have donated funds to match any new pledge or 13% or more increase of last year's pledge amount. The matching funds was a way to come up with different ways to increase pledge amounts. Campaign ends December 9<sup>th</sup>.</p>	<p><b>Ursula encouraged board members to submit their 2024 Pledges.</b></p>
<p>Revisions to Bylaws</p>	<p>Connie stated this is an open question Are there any bylaw changes we need to address? Rev. Nicoline stated that it has been on her list to review but has been pushed to the back burner. When Abby resigned from the board, she did offer her assistance to continue to work on bylaw changes. Rev. Nicoline stated she will start this project again. Ursula reminded the board any changes need one month of posting. Changes can be presented</p>	<p><b>Rev. Nicoline working on reviewing the bylaws but not in time to propose changes before the January congregational meeting.</b></p>

	at June's congregational meeting also.	
RE position	Rev. Nicoline stated there are enough youth to run OWL. Currently we have one facilitator but we need two. The RE team would like to hire an additional facilitator out of the OWL reserve funds. Mark asked if this would include the training. Rev. Nicoline stated yes, it would be from approximately March through May and then in the fall. A motion was made to recruit and train one paid OWL facilitator, 1 <sup>st</sup> by Ursula, 2 <sup>nd</sup> by Mark, all approved.	
BroadBand	Connie stated an email was sent to her regarding upgrading the bandwidth. Ursula stated this doesn't need board approval.	
Next Meeting	A discussion took place regarding the meeting date for December's meeting. Next Board meeting –December 13, 2023 @ 6:30 PM, bring snacks to share if you are able.  Future Board meeting dates – January 16, 2024, February 20, 2024, March 19, 2024, April 16, 2024, May 21, 2024, June 18, 2024. Meeting time 6:30 PM	
Check-out		



UUF Board Meeting 11/14/23  
 Treasurer Report as of 10/31/23

As of the end of October 83% of the year had elapsed and we had collected 75% of the projected income (\$84,605) excluding \$31,219 from savings. This includes 86% of pledges or \$76,262. The income by percentage and actual amounts includes the following:

Contributions	
Share the Plate	137% (\$5,477)
Other donations	10.5% (\$1,260)
Pledges	86% (\$76,262)
Interest income	1.29% (\$103)
Other income/fundraising	
Rental income	98% (\$490) includes zoom rental
Rummage Sales/other	42% (\$838) Art & Craft scheduled Nov
Total excluding Amt from Savings	75% (\$84,605)

In terms of expenses ,our total expenses so far this year are at 75% (\$108,384) of projections, with most costs being close to projected amounts. Expenses by percentage and actual amounts include the following:

Religious Life has expended 76% (\$17,664) distributed as follows:

Living Our Mission	118% (\$3,631) includes STP
Communicating	36% (\$1,178)
Religious Exploration	38% (\$337)
Worship	38% (\$1,950)
Professional Ministry	120% (\$4,795)
UUA Fair Share	83% (\$5,772)

Operating Expenses has expended 75% (\$90,720) of its budget including:

Admin Expense	71% (\$9,786)
B&G	87% (\$8,228)
Payroll	75% (\$72,706)

The total amount of Religious Life and Operating expenses spent so far is 75% (\$108,384). Our total amount of income so far this year minus the total about of our expenses gives us a net income of -\$23,529.

Cash Balances as of 10/31/23

Community Bank Checking Account	\$16,093.08
Glens Falls National Bank Checking Account	1,000.00
Glens Falls National Bank Savings Account	16,683.19
Oak View National Bank 12 mon CD	30,000.00
Oak View National Bank 15 mon CD	120,000.00
UUA Common Endowment Fund	47,531.70
<b>Total Cash</b>	<b>\$231,307.97</b>

As noted in earlier reports, while our expenses are close to projections, our income is not. We anticipated receiving \$12,000 in Donations which had come in

previous years from bequests that have not materialized so far this year and the interest income \$8,000 from our CDs will not be received until 2024. The rummage sale held in October only netted \$838 due to poor weather, being held late in the season and excluding clothing. Another fundraiser , a Fine Art and Craft Sale, is scheduled for November. The Annual Giving campaign begins in November with the pledge goal approved last month of \$100,000. CDC Realty company has been advertising our lot on Montana and Kansas Ave, Plattsburgh with no offers rendered so far. The Finance and Fund Development Committees continue to plan to reinvest in high yield cds when the current cds come due nwzt year as much as the budget and cash flow allow.

Ursula Jones, Treasurer

## Worship Team Report to Board (11-21-23)

$\frac{1}{3}$  of presentation for A&J  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  of presentation allotted to Q&A

### **Lisa Bulriss, Office Assistant:**

"The Board would like an update from the worship team on how things are going and educate them on steps to move forward from the incident at the Sunday Service when Allison Heard was the guest speaker."

### **JEM:**

Thank you for inviting us to represent the Worship Team tonight. Angela and I will alternate speaking. Then we'd like to linger to field any questions you might have.

I'll start out by saying that we've organized our thoughts tonight on a few guiding questions. And Angela will put these in chat for you all. And I will read them aloud now.

1. What is the mandate of the Worship Team?
2. How has the team responded to the events that took place during Alison Heard's service?
3. What does the team see as issues at play?
4. What information have we gathered from the larger membership (that is, feedback we've received)?
5. What actions have we taken?
6. What is the Worship Team's vision for the future?
7. What do we see moving forward?

I'll begin with the mandate of the Worship Team.

### **JEM**

**- Accountability to the worship team's mandate "what is the mandate"?**  
Appendix A of our Bylaws describes our committees and their responsibilities.

Here is a portion of the description of the responsibilities of the Worship Team:

**Services will be designed to be welcoming, consistent with UU principles and inspirational. A daunting responsibility, as it turns out!**



I just listened to an inspiring TED talk by Rabbi Sharon Brous. She was speaking about reclaiming religion from "religious extremism" and from "religious routine-ism" (that is, this is how we've always done things.) One of the trends she mentioned that will help reclaim religion is "Wakefulness." So that we do what we don't want to do . . . and see what we don't want to see." This is hard, hard work. And only one step toward reclaiming religion. But I believe that that is what is being asked of the Worship Team to imagine: how to design services that are "welcoming, consistent with UU principles, and inspirational."

## **ANGELA**

**- How has the team responded to the events that took place during Alison Heard's service?**

- The WT is in continuous discernment. We are hearing new perspectives that we want to learn from.
  - At each WT meeting together.
  - From input from other small groups.
  - From input from individuals who have bring up new perspectives that we want to learn from.

## **JEM**

**- What does the team see as issues at play?**

- Our commitment to the 8th Principle and understanding the ramifications of our covenant as a Beloved Community. We are beginning to unpack what accountability means. One part of that is holding oneself accountable.
- Cognizant that there are two spaces in our services where we have had an open mic: (1) Joy & Sorrows and (2) Congregational Reflections. We are asking whether we have articulated open mic guidelines? They each may require separate considerations moving forward.

## **ANGELA**

***Moving forward, are these possibilities?***

- (A) No more open mic.
- (B) Open mic with new guidelines.
- (C) Return to our past practices.

Joys and Sorrows

- (A) Lighting candles without specific voicing of J&S

(B) People write down their joys and sorrows on paper in sanctuary, in zoom chat, or online form ahead of time. Worship leader for service reads them during service so they are appropriate for the audience

Do we make space for marginalized voices? For example, (1) Some people are more apt to speak up and others more quiet until called upon; or (2) people from marginalized communities who may not feel welcomed to voice their perspective. This harkens us back to the question about what guidelines do we have in place for open mic moments in the service.

### JEM

- What do we do when we don't realize when we are causing harm? What opportunities do we offer our congregants to explore this big question? Most of these actions will fall outside of the purview of WT.

### ANGELA

The big topic here seems to circle back to accountability. The more we work on "self" (learning circles, reading circles) the more likely it is that we will understand if harm is being caused (that is, we are a bystander of harm) **or** if we have perpetrated the harm ourselves.

*If we do not recognize the harm being done, the person doing the harm may be "called out/called in" by the harmed person (or an ally) in order to bring the harm to our attention. But we do not want to rely on others doing the hard work of teaching us. We want to begin the process of learning and understanding, widening our lens, building empathy.*

### JEM

**- What information have we gathered from larger membership (that is, feedback we've received).**

- We are challenged with how we might transform the statement "I don't want to lose my voice" into a framework that allows for more empathy for others.
- Ongoing review of written feedback received by a number of people, including those who have stopped coming to service because of their experiencing in the past that open mic practice contained "harmful" moments that went unaddressed.
- Highlighting you won't be kicked out of UU for making a mistake. Don't need to be perfect. Remind the board that Rev. Nicoline repeated again during her message that we don't "ban" someone from making a mistake. We are reminded of two Lea Morris songs that we have sung during worship: (1) Good Enough (My



Hands Are) and (2) Be the Light, in which we sing of seeing the light, being the light, raising our eyes in the dark of night and, if we "climb this hill together," we will be the light. Working together to shine light on each other and build a beloved community.

## **ANGELA**

**- What actions have we taken? We are in continuous discernment and implementing change for future growth within ourselves and with our congregation.**

### **WITHIN THE PURVIEW of the Worship Team:**

- Two-month experiment of worship leaders relaying Joys & Sorrows that have been submitted in writing.
  - Giving time to allow to see how we settle into the change as a community
  - Takes time to observe how it's received before implementing further change.
  - Let me begin by saying that we are in the middle of this 2-month experiment. It's bad science to predict the outcome of an experiment when we're only halfway through.
  - One could ask if there are any safe places in this world? We can offer guidelines, remind ourselves of our principles, try new practices within services and group meetings– all in an attempt to create a safe space and lift up compassion for all. With combined efforts from the WT and other groups in the congregation, we strive for a culture in which safe spaces come out of a covenant with each other; a culture that is built upon our individual work that we continue to do. Personal growth and growth toward a beloved community.
  
- A pause with Congregational Reflections to allow time for more discernment together as a congregation. We notice that people are all evolving within this process.
- Hosted two congregational forums to provide opportunities for all to express themselves at that stage of discernment.

## **JEM**

### **OUTSIDE THE PURVIEW of the Worship Team:**

- Book group reading and working through the UUA Common Read for 2023-2024: "On Repentance and Repair." More workshops for "On Repentance & Repair" are planned for after the holidays.

- We recommend other events and spaces where people can be seen and heard, known and loved.

## **ANGELA**

### **- Worship team's vision for the future. What do we see moving forward?**

- A future where our worship space is safe not because the leaders make it so, but because we all enter the space with the commitment to hold it as a safe space.

One could ask if there are any safe places in this world. We can offer guidelines, share the principles repeatedly, try new structures within services and group meetings to invite safety and compassion for all. Through accountability we can find that safe refuge inside ourselves in which we each bring to the community.

- We suggest that we continue to explore how we can respectfully communicate with each other. In the moment and afterwards . . . a learning process. We see the need for training within small groups, training for larger forums. We are discerning what WT's role is and we ask how can the congregation share responsibility?