

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING December 18, 2024

Present: Jeff Giddings, Nancy Backus, Diane Reed, Stephen Larrett, Rev. Beau Rivers, Vi Fairweather, Jim Bonnar, Lois Aldrich

Guest: Kelly Lownds

Meeting called to order by Jeff Giddings at 6:34 p.m.

Check-in

Opening Words - Read by Rev. Beau Rivers.

Business Issues

- Reports from Minister, Music, RE, Treasurer, Accountant, and Social Justice Team (SJT) were distributed in advance and accepted; no discussion necessary.
- Building Restoration Project: Potluck and presentation held on December 15 in the Parish Hall to introduce congregation to the project and fundraiser. The PC agreed it was a successful event. Great presentations provided by Alan Melchior, Norm Grenier, and Rick Benard.
- The office computer is in serious need of upgrade. Motion to fund and purchase an Apple Mac computer for the office made by Jim Bonnar and approved by the PC. Stephen Larrett estimates the cost to be around \$1,000.

Minister's Agenda

Rev. Beau discussed concerns related to post-election, especially potential impact on the more vulnerable groups of people, including trans, gay, immigrants, and disabled population. Many people of targeted minority groups have become used to not relying on established institutions for help, creating their own resources to draw on. Rev. Beau presented resources that are available to UUs to help congregations prepare for challenging situations, which could include harassment and acts of violence (as evidenced in the vandalism and destruction that occurred at the Kingston UU Parish this past year).

- The Revolutionary Love Project: Founded by visionary civil rights leader Valarie Kaur, the Revolutionary Love Project inspires and equips people to build *beloved community*, centered on the ethic of love and how to counter hatred and oppression with love, with joy as an act of resistance. The organization produces educational tools, training courses, art, films, music and empowers citizens from all walks of life “to harness love as a force of justice”. For more information: <https://revolutionarylove.org/>
- UUA offers community resilience resources. How does one prepare if they are a target in their community? How do we keep our buildings safe and secure? How do we ensure safety in our communications? How do we stay in the fight without being attacked? Some of the actions to promote safety and security include:
 - UUA has created a social media platform only accessible to UUA members. Sadly, many minority groups are trolled on social media, and the UUA is taking action to create a safe space for community interaction.
 - UUA wants to help us to be ready for any threats or attacks. The UUA has distributed two surveys to gather information for rapid protest response. The first survey is about assets of the congregation, and the second survey is about skills and experience of individual members. Rev. Beau is working with several PC members to complete the

surveys. More information on the surveys can be found at <https://secure.everyaction.com/T-BrDNTI1EGLU7k8-mGe0Q2>. The UUA has asked that we notify them of any threats in our congregation.

- UUA renewal of welcoming congregation has been modified to specifically include the trans community. This must come to a vote before it is final.
- For further information on UUA community resources:
<https://www.uua.org/safe/community-resilience>
- Believing that community is one key to safety and security, Rev. Beau informed the PC that she has been working with other churches to re-build an Interfaith Coalition. Lakeville UCC is on board. Kelly Lownds has also offered to reach out in this effort.
- Some members of the congregation have reached out to Rev. Beau wanting to learn more about the trans community. Rev. Beau has proposed providing education to those interested, which the PC supports.

Next steps re: safety/security:

- The PC agrees security of building, both internally and externally, must be a priority going forward.
- Complete UUA surveys. Jeff and Stephen will work together on the congregational survey (building facilities, etc.). Rev. Beau will urge members to complete the individual skills survey.
- We may need to consider changing our locks or installing keypad entrances.
- Security cameras are also needed and are a priority.
- Kelly Lownds offered to contact the State Police to see if they could provide a threat assessment of our building.
- Lois Aldrich informed the PC that one of the goals of the SJT is to coordinate another de-escalation training for the beginning of the year. Last year's training was well attended. SJT worked with Impact Boston to provide the training. Lois will check with the SJT to see where this is at.
- Rev. Beau will develop new content for the Wayside Pulpit with production assistance from Stephen.

Other Business:

- Membership Committee: In an effort to expand our membership, Rev. Beau is looking for volunteers to assist in reconstituting the Membership Committee. Please contact Rev. Beau if you know of anyone who may be interested.
- Policies: Diane Reed distributed a copy of the Table of Contents for the Policies for a UU church in Oregon, which appear to be comprehensive and well organized. Diane offered to review and compare with FUUSM policies. Stephen reported that Valarie Ortelt has a similar document, which he would like to review. Diane offered to work with Stephen on the Policies if needed. Stephen has distributed a thumb drive containing FUUSM policies to each PC member, which they can now review and comment on from their own computers.
- PC meeting schedule: Given the amount of work that needs to be done, the PC discussed the possibility of meeting more frequently. PC members are OK with additional meetings via ZOOM. Additional meetings should have a specific topic and clear objectives.

NEXT PC MEETING WILL BE JANUARY 22, 2025 (THE 4TH WEDNESDAY) at 6:30 p.m. via ZOOM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm

Parking Lot (items not discussed today that need resolution):

- Office Coverage
- FY 26 budget
- PC slate for 25-26 nominations
- Newsletter
- New member ceremony
- Policies
- Consolidate docs, archives
- Cottage meetings—summary, etc.
- Alternatives to using our personal email addresses
- Update phone system
- Organize Committees/Committee Fair