

FUSN Board of Trustees
Tuesday, September 12, 2017
Children's Chapel, 7:30 PM

Attending:

<p>Staff Erin Splaine, Minister Rowan Van Ness, DLRE</p> <p>Board Catherine Morocco, Chair Eric Haas, Vice-Chair Brian Burba Josie Greene Chris Krebs Leah Lakomski, Youth Brooke Foucault Welles Asst. Clerk Linda Ross</p>	<p>Visitors Sam Foster, Membership Andrea Kelley, Ops Council Alan Hartman Jackie Rohan Dick Bail Lynn Holbein</p>
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Meeting Highlights

The Board met with the two members who have been preparing the congregation to vote on a resolution to add "Universalist" to our name.

The Board discussed and voted a conditional approval of FUSN's participation in the Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM) program.

Meeting called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Invocation / Chalice Lighting/Reading of the Board Covenant

Staff Updates

Erin Splaine

Erin announced the peaceful death of Marion Bullitt this morning.. A memorial service will be held later, possibly February 2018. Memorial service will be held Oct 28 for Roberta Humez' daughter, Ellen Humez.

Multicultural Ministry retreat, held Saturday September 9, was thought provoking and engaging. It was a chance to assess what has been and needs to be done. A major discussion focused on the question of how much to respond to issues in the world at large and how much to examine ourselves internally. The multicultural initiative is evolving as its leaders consider how to engage the larger congregation and Religious Education program.

Erin hopes everyone will come to Ferry Beach. A board member asked if Ferry Beach registration forms could be updated to include more than two genders; another asked about including allergies on the registration form. Erin will contact Vern about these requests.

Finally, Erin noted that 243 people were at the ingathering service last week, an increase over last year. FUSN is evolving and will look different in the future.

Rowan Van Ness

Rowan reported on results from a series of June parent meetings. with RE parents of children in three age groups. Each person was asked the same three questions concerning what we are providing parents that they feel is essential. Some of the responses from parents mirrored what was in the monograph, “The Death of Sunday School,” which the Board has discussed in previous meetings. We need to understand many kinds of diversity in our families, for example, many people were raised in religions other than Unitarian Universalism.

The next stage of Faith Development is unfolding. Two members of the task force--Andrew Morse and Devon Wells—have offered to help. A goal is to make worship more multi-generational. Parents and children are separated on Sunday mornings and are looking for opportunities to stay together as a family. Some families were asked last year to leave a service because children were perceived as being disruptive. The RE staff are thinking about ways in which such challenges can be handled more preemptively and calmly.

New initiative starting this year: Living with the Principles program, one of the seven UU principle each month starting in October (skipping December). Planning to add events focusing Principle of the month, including social action. Erin is trying to match the theme of the month to the Principle. Planners for the monthly Vespers service will be finding poems related to the monthly theme and principle.

A board member asked if we knew how many pledging units had children in RE. Neither DLRE nor Membership Coordinator could answer that precisely; databases have not been integrated yet. This lead to further observations and questions about RE demographics. Most years there are some 150 children in RE by the spring; DLRE doesn't know how many family units this represents, but it could be determined. At this time, 101 children are registered in RE, a little more than usual for this time of the year.

An optional new question was asked of parents this year – race and ethnicity. Surprisingly, 23 children were listed as non-white, which seems to be substantially higher than our adult congregation. Rowan has been thinking about ways to support children of color. And Erin observed that if we are more diverse than we think, it must change our sense of identity. Rowan further noted that a similar number of children were identified as having learning difficulties.

Upcoming Meetings

Cathy provided a brief update on the upcoming Board retreat Saturday 9/16 at Laurel Farnsworth's house. Cathy and Erin have been working with Sandra Greenfield, who will be facilitator for the day. The day will focus on Board membership as faith development. Work will move through three levels: what each participant believes, working as a group on a new Board covenant as an exercise in faith development, and how to apply faith development as we look at our interactions with congregants [and others] outside the Board. A handout with additional information and suggestions for preparation was available if desired, but not mandatory. Cathy also had a handout detailing initiatives and projects already underway with the Board's guidance, supervision, or direct participation, as well as a new matters needing attention.

Visiting Groups

Name change resolution: Alan Hartman and Jackie Rohan

Several meetings have been held and discussions have been conducted on the Business and General electronic listservs regarding formally incorporating "Universalist" into the congregation's name. Another discussion meeting is scheduled for 9/24. The expectation is that the matter will be brought up at general Congregational meeting on Sunday Oct 1.

Alan and Jacki reminded the Board of its responsibility to decide whether to put the existing resolution on a warrant to be voted on by the Congregation, or to amend it, or to take no action, effectively ending the discussion of a proposed change. After some discussion about our proper role in this matter, the Board decided to take no position on the question and to submit the proposed resolution—which calls for an amendment to the By-laws—to a congregational vote. An informal poll of the Board suggested that members held varying opinions about the name change and that the primary concern was that this issue not be the cause of any unnecessary discord within the congregation.

FUSN participation in Refugee Immigration Ministry [RIM]: Lynn Holbein, Richard Bail

Background: RIM is an interfaith eastern Massachusetts organization founded in 1986 to provide community-based support to people uprooted by violence. It helps to foster local cooperative

“clusters” of congregations who can offer concrete support in the form of housing, employment training, ESL, transportation, child care, clothing and furniture, and the other essentials for a refugee family adjusting to a new culture. FUUSN has been invited to join the churches and synagogues comprising the Newton cluster, comprising Grace Episcopal Church, Newton Center Minyan, First Baptist of Newton, Temple Reyim, and Temple Beth Zion. The cluster has been active for about a year, and has helped three mothers with children fleeing Uganda, Ecuador, and Cameroon. One family has already become self-supporting.

Lynn noted that Dick Bail deserved much of credit because he has been working on this for years and observed that general support for joining this effort seems to have increased dramatically since last November’s election. FUUSN’s involvement would not require any financial obligation. People could donate individually, and time, housing, and household support are at least as important as financial contributions. The co-chair of the Newton cluster was coming to FUUSN the following Sunday (Sept. 17) to speak at noon about the initiative.

Lynn and Dick agreed with the Board that this would be too large an effort to simply fall on the dedicated members of the Social Action committee. A team of around a dozen committed volunteers will have to be assembled to manage the work [although several long-term FUUSN members recalled that the congregation, which was much smaller in those days, supported a 17-member family of Vietnamese boat people in the late 1970s without help from any other group]. With this proviso, the Board enthusiastically and unanimously supported the proposal.

The Board decided that the idea would be formally presented at the congregational meeting planned for October 1. If enough congregants indicate their firm intention to work on the project, it will proceed.

Financial Summit

Because the meeting had already run overlong, a discussion of what information and orientation Board members felt they need to prepare for the October 14 Financial Summit could not proceed. Josie indicated that she would poll the Board by e-mail.

Adjourn 9:35 pm

