

FUSN Board of Trustees
Tuesday, 13 September 2016
Children's Chapel, 7:30 PM

<p>Staff Erin Splaine, Minister Rowan Van Ness, Director, Lifelong Religious Education (DLRE)</p> <p>Board Catherine Morocco, Chair Brian Burba, Vice Chair Gregg DiBiaso Sara Fazli, Youth Josie Greene Eric Haas Julianna Lakomski, Youth Lesley Sneddon Clerk Kit Ryan</p>	<p>Visitors Judy Curby, Operations Council</p>
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Meeting Highlights

Summary of the Fall Board Retreat
The Board's Three Open Questions

Invocation / Chalice Lighting/Reading of The Board Covenant: 7:35pm

Check-In

Procedural

The Board voted unanimously to accept John Nichol's housing designation request. Judy Curby, FUSN's Treasurer, laid groundwork for the vote by explaining that a Minister who owns their own home is to identify to the Board of Trustees the Minister's estimate of the fair rental value (furnished plus utilities) of the home. The Board then designates this amount of the Minister's total allowance (salary) as housing allowance.

Minister and DLR Update

Rowan Van Ness

- Over the summer, the Religious Education (RE) staff completed several 15-hour trainings: Rowan and Beth - Worship Renaissance Module; Rowan and Dani - Youth Ministry Fundamentals; Rowan - Adult Religious Education Renaissance Module.

- In September Rowan introduced the traveling chalice to the assembled children. Any family or adult can check out the chalice and take it home for a week to explore spiritual practices around chalice lightings, grace, and prayer at home.
- With help from Kim Shanks and Fran Clancy, Rowan repainted and cleaned the Youth Room and the Nursery and installed a new rug, flat screen TV, and white board in the Youth Room.
- Over the summer Greg Sullivan, Rowan, Fran and Anne Woodbury worked on the new website. Greg Sullivan is the primary contact for the new website, at Webster@FUSN.
- The first teacher training, with all classroom teachers and youth teachers was completed, with an Operations Council member present to address safety concerns. Make up sessions and further trainings will be developed and presented. Topics included classroom management, storytelling and others.
- New Coming of Age (COA) coordinators are Matt Cuddy, Katya Salkever, and Sean Konary. Nine COA teens will meet in Youth Room on Sunday mornings and attend Our Whole Lives (OWL) on Wednesday nights.
- Dani Lindstrom, Youth Programs Coordinator works 15 hours/week. The Board and staff need to do some strategic planning around maintaining continuity for the Youth Program.
- Adult Faith Formation Task Force (AFF-TF), now called Faith Development Team, including Jen Lerner, Devon Wells, Peggy Ellertsen and Andrew Morse, is exploring these questions: Why is Adult RE struggling at FUSN? How do congregants think about religious identity for their adult community? What do we need at this time and in this place? The goal is to use focus group, interviews and surveys and query other congregations to develop more Adult RE energy, passion, and capacity. The AFF-TF will return to the Board with the results.
- Brooke Wells and Julia Huston are coordinating discussion groups on Family Ministry (Parenting with UU values).

Erin Splaine, Minister

- The September 18th Order of Service will include information about Erin's sabbatical.
- The Search Committee seeking to fill Ash Engel's position has been doing great work. Members include Greg Sullivan, Lisa Carbone, Rachel Viscomi and Pat Rohan. The Committee is reviewing several strong candidates and has followed phone interviews with face-to-face interviews with two applications. A third phone interview is scheduled for Thursday September 15, followed by a face-to-face interview if the phone conversation goes well. Karen Davis is researching student loan forgiveness, which may be relevant for one candidate. The Search Committee may send its information to the Board electronically, or require an additional Board meeting. If a candidate is

not selected before Erin's sabbatical begins, the Committee will continue its work until they find a candidate with a strong fit for our congregation.

Generative/Strategic

Report on the Board Retreat

All of the Board members (except for one Youth member) and Erin were able to attend the day long Board Retreat at Brian Burba's home on the Charles River in Newton.. Kim Sweeney, from the UUA Regional Office, helped with facilitation.

Retreat goals included:

- Better understand our individual and collective leadership strengths
- Generate and discuss some big questions that face FUSN
- Enjoy each other's company

In the morning, each participant told a personal leadership story. Using the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument as a tool, participants charted their individual responses to conflict situations. The group then talked about the strengths and limitations of various styles of responding to disagreement and conflict. In small groups, we discussed and then shared our individual goals for our own leadership growth for the coming FUSN year.

The afternoon shifted to visionary work: generating big questions we see the church grappling with and the Board's role in those questions. We brainstormed and charted a list of questions and problem areas including what it means to be in "right relationship" with each other, desires for more spirituality, challenges of volunteerism, institutional memory, how people become engaged in FUSN, and many others. By consensus, we narrowed the list to our top three priorities for the year: Stewardship, growing as a Welcoming Congregation, and Engagement. Stewardship questions included, How are engagement and giving related? How to manage taking care of our building? How can we create a leadership pipeline for the Budget Drive?

Welcoming Congregation questions included, How should the assessment and implementation work be connected? How and when should the Welcoming Renewal connect to our multicultural work? Kim offered the concept: "Radical Preemptive Inclusion," which she described as practicing inclusion from the first moment we gather, and continually in all our interactions. It means operating from the assumption that everyone is always and already, "in the room."

Afterthoughts on the Board Retreat

Member comments included: "Found it energizing, 12 priorities were folded into three overarching priorities" "Issue merged into priorities such as volunteerism" "Enjoyed a sense of excitement" "The group came together, decisive, able to prioritize,"

Cathy was struck by some common themes across our personal stories about our leadership: persistence in the face of organizational breakdown, a leader's aloneness, the power of colleagues and a shared goal.

Refining the Open Questions

Cathy commented that the three "Open Questions" were mostly lists, and suggested four criteria for formulating a powerful question from the lists:

- Connects with FUSN's mission.
- Reaches beyond FUSN's walls.
- Embraces current and future goals and initiatives.
- Reaches into what we know and don't know.

She offered a graphic that included the three areas selected by the Board, Stewardship, Welcoming, and Engagement with some possible overarching questions. The group refined a question for each of the three areas:

Stewardship: Why do people give (more)?

Engagement: How can we enhance pathways to connection at FUSN?

Welcoming: How can we grow in including our differences.

Some comments on the questions included:

- On engagement, by starting the Nominating Committee Process earlier, we can draw members into leadership positions in a way that engages them.
- The idea of "pathways" suggests that there are many ways that people become active in FUSN and feel at home—Social Action, Care Crew, choir.
- How do we avoid redundancy in our efforts? Who are our partners in actualizing these priorities of the Board and/or the Adult Faith Formation?
- Erin, who suggested the wording, "including our differences," commented that one limitation of the "Welcoming" language is that it may communicate a we/they, insider/outsider perspective, when in fact we are all different and contain differences within ourselves.

Envisioning Goals and Partners Around the Open Questions

Board members divided into three small groups, with notes from the Board Retreat, and spent 20 minutes developing a question further in these areas, with the idea that this work will be iterative and will develop over time:

- What is our question now?
- Who are our partners in FUSN, and in the community beyond?
- What are the goals, steps, and strategies for this year?
- What is the most important or first step?

Follow-up comments included:

- The need to ask "How" and where best to focus time and energy and the importance of asking what the congregation's interests, priorities and values. The Board needs to decide how to share the open question work with the congregation as a whole, as well as specific partner groups in FUSN
- Rowan recommended a TED talk by Simon Sinek on How Great Leaders Inspire Action
https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action?language=en

Focus of Upcoming Board Meetings

In mapping our Board calendar for the year, we will include continuing work on the open questions that can include partners beyond the Board, as well as procedural work. (We will also look for ways that the work of the Developing Leadership team can contribute to the issues addressed in the Board's Open Questions.

At a later meeting, Lesley will report on the progress of the group that is developing a system for archiving Board documents from our Governance change and Conflict Transformation work. The group working on an initiative aimed at changing FUSN's official name to include "Universalist" will report to the Board at a later meeting.

For the October 11 Board Meeting, members will read "Life after Governance Change," an excerpt from Dan Hotchkiss (2016). Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership.

Close

Meeting adjourned: 9:48PM