

FUUSN Committee Chairs Meeting

March 18, 2023

Children's Chapel and Zoom

Attending in person: Susan Bartlett, Jud Leonard, Bill Holland, Gayle Smalley, Wendy Haskell, Connie Stubbs, Laurel Farnsworth, Connie Adkins, Pat Rohan, Jackie Rohan, Peter Smith, Linda Ross (clerk), Helen Jordan, Curt Lamb, Kit Ryan Demie Stathoplos, Barbara Niles

Attending on Zoom: Brian Gill, Eileen Kurkoski, Sandy Jones

Representing:

Bill Holland – racial justice

Wendy Haskell – Over 60s

Laurel Farnsworth– Ops council, finance

Susan Bartlett - Ops Council

Jud Leonard– Technology, lay minister, Ops Council

Connie Stubbs - Membership

Pat Rohan– services auction

Gayle Smalley – preservation

Brian Gill – finance

Sandy Jones – yard sale, holiday fair

Peter Smith – social action

Helen Jordan – Plant-based eating

Demie Stathoplos– BOT, climate action task force

Barbara Nile – Budget drive

Jackie Rohan – Rainbow umbrella

Eileen Kurkoski – social action

Wendy Haskell, Connie Adkins - Over 60s

Curt Lamb – summer services

Laurel – Building and grounds

- Climate action attended a seminar by Interfaith Power and Light; various congregations are pledging to achieve energy net zero by a certain date. She pointed out a leak in the ceiling of the chapel from a slit in the rubber roof and an ice dam. She believes this means

that we cannot put solar panels on the flat roof because it would make it difficult to find and repair such leaks. FUUSN could build a canopy if a parking lot is built in the back of the building. FUUSN uses a lot of electricity; we are part of Newton Choice and use 100% green energy.

- Long discussion of options for increasing energy efficiency of the building.

Committee Reports

Barbara Niles – Annual Budget Drive. The pledge drive is a little bit behind where it was last year at this time, but a number of pledges have come in since Thursday email. Evening pledge parties are popular. They are trying to get the word out about what is going on,

Demie - BOT and Climate Action

- BOT priorities have been getting the ministerial selection committee selected. Stephanie Kendall and Chris Krebs are working on this.
- History project – Parisa found an app so that things can be put on a timeline and posted.
- Ministerial pictures project -a proposal is being developed.
- Working on the possibility of digging out a second entrance to basement, which would be required for rental of the space. A parking lot would also be needed for such rentals. A second entrance and a parking lot would cost about \$1 million.
- Working with communications committee on policies.

- Climate action team - working on building awareness of what is going on in Newton and the state. UU Mass Action has climate action team, and she is a representative.

Helen – Plant-based eating.

The plant-based eating group has 70 people on their mailing list; most are UUs. They have a web site, lots of activities and meal events. Most meals are small groups in people's homes. 24 people attended the meal last week in the Parish Hall. They sponsor one outdoor picnic in the summer. They have movie nights and have watched many documentaries, and also have book group.

Curt Summer services - Passed around the list of this coming summer services; half will be on Zoom, half in person.

Gayle - Preservation

- They recently had history sessions as part of the search for a new minister.
- They are working on the final details of transferring the Women's Alliance archive to Harvard divinity school (official repository of UUA).
- The oral history project has been rejuvenated. It has two parts:
 - Bringing old oral presentations into current technology.
 - Going forward with new interviews.
 - Considering some audio only recordings.
 - Looking at "permissions" for putting presentations online.

Peter – Social Action

They are in the initial stages of re-visioning the social action committee. Many UU congregations are doing this. One suggestion is to consider focusing on one or two projects. This might make

people become more invested, and the funds may have more impact with a larger amount going to each group. Having the social action table at coffee hour has been beneficial to new people.

Connie Stubbs – Membership

There are four teams of smaller numbers of people working on different projects; this has been working well. The full committee only meets 1-2x/year. They are aware of the decreased number of pledge units and the need to increase member numbers. Discussed the various teams and their work. They are working on replacing entrance board, and are looking for input on whether to it be electronic or printed.

Bill Holland – RJM

- Our purpose, as the FUUSN Racial Justice Ministry, is to inspire, educate, support, and equip FUUSN's leadership and membership, including ourselves, for vital and vibrant racial justice and anti-oppression engagement in our congregation and in the larger community.
- Our primary activity recently has been the Living the Pledge to End Racism workshop. 83 of us have taken the workshop and we have 9 more enrolled to start next Wednesday. Three of those are from First Parish Waltham.
- We also create programs to support graduates and others of us in continuing to develop our racial awareness. We have facilitated book groups, a monthly table in coffee hour, and next week, Rev. Kevin Peterson talking about reckoning with our racial past (e.g. renaming Faneuil Hall).
- Last month, as you likely know, we engaged with the larger community, particularly with Black members of our Newton community by supporting them in producing "An Evening of Blacknificence". Also in January we had an information table at the Newton MLK event.
- At our meeting last week we welcomed Lisa Carbone to our Steering Committee and said goodbye to Hattie Kerwin Derrick. In that meeting we took time to begin to review what our mission is and how we are distinct from Social Action. We are also working on replacing the BLM banner.

Brian – Finance Committee

- The finance committee meets monthly.
- FUUSN's annual operating budget is approaching \$1 million/yr. The largest portion of income is from pledges; there is other income, such as that from rentals. The biggest expense is staff; second is maintaining the building and grounds.
- Overall financial situation good; biggest concern is declining number of pledge units. Demi – staff is falling behind on COL raises; will need to be addressed.

Eileen – asked if we know what other UU congregations are doing to increase membership. Brian – the finance committee hasn't looked at it. Demi - BOT has looked at it. FUUSN is in the top 1/3 of congregations in this regard. Pat noted that Devin has been doing a great job in trying to promote membership; he has been taking new attendees out for coffee and talking to them.

Jackie – Rainbow Umbrella

- FUUSN is checking off the boxes for Welcoming Congregations (UUA has a recommended checklist).

- There will be a Pride Parade in Boston this year, and she has started the application for FUUSN participation, hoping to get a team together.
- There are about 40 people on the RU mailing list.

Music committee – she is on Anne’s sabbatical committee. Anne will be going on sabbatical from April 1 through end of the church year. The committee has split up the rest of the services and will be the contact people if there is an issue.

Pat Rohan – Services Auction, UU Urban Ministry

- The services auction was held this year and was a big success. Netting about \$17,000.
- Lois Shapiro will be giving a concert, on April 2; they are still advertising for this.
- The UUM concert raised about \$2000.
- They have a proposal to help sponsor the Pews Project for UUUM; their goal is to raise \$1000.
- They are trying to raise the congregational awareness of UUUM.

Over 60s

Wendy H The Over 60’s group has been having programs since last summer. They have up to 176 + FUUSNites registered on our Over 60 listserv. For the first event this Spring with Karen Wasserman on Senior Housing Options, 10 to 15 people attended in-person and 55+ people registered on Zoom, some from the wider community outside of our congregation

Connie Adkins– the Over 60s have had discussions about getting a hearing coil for the Alliance Room and the Parish Hall. Laurel – to use a coil, a person needs to use a microphone. It would cost about \$20,000 to install a coil in the Parish Hall; she is not sure if it is possible to install one in the Alliance Room. People need to adjust their own hearing aids to access a coil. Laurel suggested buying a speaker for the Alliance Room (about \$200) and assess the benefit.

Wendy H

- FUUSN is losing people who go to residential housing communities; it would be nice to have a mechanism for more connections.
- Sheila Ardery has taken over the Care Crew.
- Next semester they will be focusing on health.
- They are always happy to get new ideas.