

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Jackson
Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 16, 2021**

Attendance

Past President: Eric Saulters-Wood
President: Stacy Callender
Secretary: David Morgan
Trustee: Bob Keller
Trustee: Patricia Ice
Quorum Reached

Justin McCreary, Minister

Guests: Jim Snowdancer Becker, Katie Coates

Agenda

1. Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting
2. Covenant
3. Check-In
4. Approval of Reports
5. Intentional/Strategic Planning
 - A. Where Are We Now?
 - B. Where Do We Want To Go?
 - C. How Will We Get There?
6. Process Observer Report Out
7. Extinguish the Chalice
8. Set Next Meeting

Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting

The chalice was lit at 6:40 p.m., beginning the meeting. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, members met using the Zoom video conferencing app.

Minutes, Treasurer Report; Minister's Report; Ministry Teams, Advisory Councils, and Task Forces Reports

Eric Wood motioned to approve the February 16, 2021 board meeting minutes as presented. Bob Keller seconded. All members approved.

New Business

Congregational Town Hall: Review annual priorities with the congregation. Go over goals and plans to achieve them. Ask for suggestions and help. Reports from the teams, advisory councils and task forces. The announcement of the Shenefelt award.

Intentional/Strategic Planning

The board resumed the discussion that had been tabled from the strategic planning session (see Page 3 - attached minutes of 3/6/21). The big goal was to fully occupy the new facilities. This includes: Restarting live services; Working on hospitality and inclusion; Improve grounds and facilities and use them to engage with the larger community.

Resume in-person services: Eric – Can CUUPS chapter have a drum circle after Earth Day?
Justin – Why? Need the connection and it has become safe. How? Simple policy involving what safety parameters are. Posting signs, dividing area with tape. Who? Exploring Our Beliefs or adhoc committee. Walk through. When? When can we open up each area. 3rd week of April for small in-person outdoor or indoor service.

Dave – Drum circles could begin immediately. Worship services in a few weeks. Live attendees by reservations. Need to research equipment needed. RE much later. Worship committee can cover the organization of it.

Bob – Provide more support and communication and family within the congregation. Be more welcoming and inclusive. Have limited live congregations attending by reservation.
Patricia – Wants to see live services again but folks are still being vaccinated. Could start with services inside with reservations.
Stacy – How: maintaining a virtual presence while we do this.
Snowdancer — Follow UUA guidelines and monitor congregation attendees for sickness. Err on the side of caution.
Katie – To be there and to serve the community. Temp checks?
Stacy – Evidence: Policy with procedure in place. Mechanisms including volunteers to implement the changes in order for services to be held in person every week. Exploring our beliefs, Ministry council can facilitate.
Bob – Who? Specific people doing specific things. Need to make sure there are folks willing to help out.
Patricia – Temperature.
Snowdancer – Engaging Our Beliefs and Worship Teams can do it. RE is on the back burner right now.
Stacy – Assign and empower the EOB to do the work rather than a task force.

Working on Hospitality and Inclusion Eric – Make sure space is clean and we have the needed equipment. Protective equipment. Maybe a sign saying we're open. Allow folks to stream in parking lot if they can't fit inside. What do we do with guest info?
Justin – Who? Welcoming Community to handle guest contact or tell minister. Evidence. Better engagement from visitors if hospitality is done right. Introduce church to Widening the Circle info. Survey for guests to see why they came, etc.
Dave – ADA bathrooms. Outside greeters.
Bob – Welcoming community. Execution of ideas. How?
Snowdancer – Some of the recommendations are too much for a church our size. Scale them down to something we can do as small church.
Stacy – How do we communicate and welcome all who come through our doors?
Katie – List could be simplified and focused. Not as large as it looks.
Stacy – These are long term goals, but it needs some real goals to work towards.
Eric – Only a handful filled out how they wanted to serve. Need to hear what folks want to do to contribute to the church.
Justin – Make a simple bullet list so folks know what to do to make guests feel welcome.

Improve Grounds and Facilities and Use Them to Engage with the Larger Community

Eric – Why? Give us a broader presence in community. Greater engagement. How? Empower teams (Katie and Leslie). When? In process. Non-profit status.
Justin – Living our Values team. Katie and Leslie in that.
David – Good.
Bob – Good.
Patricia – Thinks that what we've been doing is a strategic plan, but is also ambitious for our church. Strategic plan is long term. Start with basics and work toward the goal.
Snowdancer – Churches receive a 501(c)(4) status and have great latitude using it. Should be checked on to see if what we need is already covered.
Patricia – As a UUA member, we have 501(c)(3) status, but our church doesn't. But we can apply for a particular church.
Katie – need agricultural number that shows a farm but need a guarantor. If someone has bolt cutters.
Stacy – Changing our World team project. Board would need a proposal from COW or Living Our Values to fund the Farmers Market and Community Garden.

Extinguish the Chalice

The chalice was extinguished at 8:44 pm. The next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Jackson
Board Strategic Planning Session
Saturday, March 6, 2021**

Attendance

Past President: Eric Saulters-Wood
President: Stacy Callender
Treasurer: David Voisin
Secretary: David Morgan
Trustee: Bob Keller
Trustee: Patricia Ice
Quorum Reached

Justin McCreary, Minister

Agenda

9. Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting
10. Covenant
11. Check-In
12. Intentional/Strategic Planning
 - A. Where Are We Now?
 - B. Where Do We Want To Go?
 - C. How Will We Get There?
13. Extinguish the Chalice

Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting

The chalice was lit at 9:53 a.m., beginning the meeting. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, members met using the Zoom video conferencing app.

Intentional/Strategic Planning

Where Are We Now?

Governance: Eric – Strength; those members doing the work. Weakness: no one else is volunteering.

Bob – Strength – people Weakness – overestimating what we're capable of. Need clear goals and objectives reasonable to size.

Dave – agrees with Bob

Justin – Hold congregation accountable to help. Simplification.

Stacy – Problems with church are similar to all churches i.e. volunteerism. Overstructuring of governance infrastructure - committees and task forces. Current structure is simpler than before last bylaw changes. Assign tasks to appropriate groups. Go back to four core ministry teams along with MRC, Leadership Development, CALM, Personnel Counsel.

Members and Friends: Eric - Good diverse crowd. Weakness – losing members. Need more. Strength – post covid there might be more outreach.

Bob – How to motivate people to want to help the church? Better clearer leadership.

Dave – Covid hit us hard. Need to involve new members in church volunteerism and leadership ASAP.

Justin – Should how we define voting member be altered?

Stacy – Too few members., too loosely affiliated. Not engaged. Summer will help as live services open up. People will want to come. One weakness is how to engage families and children. RE has become a weakness during COVID.

Facilities: Eric – Lots of space, needs TLC along with longterm planning.

Bob – Need to reoccupy space.

Dave – Lots of space. We need to get back. How can we keep rest of building in shape while fixing sanctuary?

Justin – Reopening group to get building in shape for post-COVID occupation.

Patricia – The building is a strength. Renovations should begin funded with rent money . Reopen ASAP. Lot of room for small group services at first. Need the kitchen addition. Exterior dingy looking.

Stacy – Lots of space and potential. Outdoor space. Flexibility of use and outside appearance. Money is issue. Building needs ADA access, restrooms, safety.

Finances: Eric – Need a more straight forward accounting that is easier to understand. More transparency. There's a tendency to horde finances rather than spend it on budget.

Bob – Need treasure, someone with accounting skills, and clear objectives.

Dave – Agrees. Need new budget reporting system.

Justin – Centralize and simplify finances. Apply for non-profit status.

Patricia – Agrees with Justin. Thinks the board should have more access to financial info. Good opportunity to get accounts sorted and finances straightened out.

Stacy – Do have reserves, that's a positive. Our church is not wealthy, but it's not poor. Because of a poverty mentality, we tend to not spend on potential positive things. We can be too frugal. Opportunity to seek grants are sometimes lost due to a lack of info.

Community Connections: Eric – Gaining momentum during covid. Brian's death was a big loss of community connections. We don't want to become insular group. The church should get itself in a place of health.

Bob – How can we harness the strength of the local community?

Dave – Good community potential. Post-COVID, we need to get our boat in order. The stronger we are the better partner we are to the community.

Justin – Community outreach, even a small bit, can help with growth. The opportunities are there when we are ready.

Patricia – We have community connections but they need to be strengthened. We should reach out more to the community.

Stacy – The church has connections, but has lost some in past. They tend to be sporadic. At times, there are joint actions with other groups. These tend to be more informal alliances based on one member's involvement. Tenuous connections like these fall apart more easily. In the new area, we have the potential to be good community member, but there is threat of overextension. If we do connect, we must be consistent and strategic so we do it well.

Eric comments that our youth and young adults were a great group with a lot of potential. How can we engage them — especially when Zoom services aren't their thing?

Where Do We Want To Go?

Stacy – Shared list from the Community Outreach Taskforce report of ways to use our space to help the immediate community. The use of facilities and space, the administration of space, sustainable facility development.

Justin – The list is a variety of ideas that could be rolled out over 5-10 years with the easiest first: A farmers market, OWL classes (the Southern region has expressed interest in having Owl classes at UUCJ), the garden (cover crops would be planted first to break up the soil) . The church needs to get non-profit status first in order to apply for grants.

Patricia – Fairly certain the church is already considered a 501(c)(3).

Stacy shared the Widening the Circle slide containing info from the UUA on how to engage and involve people of all interests in church. The Retooling for New Realities meetings were working out how to bring in ideas from Widening the Circle: Member engagement, member demographics, burnout and resilience, inclusive decision making. We have made progress on our annual priorities.

So how can the church prioritize these options in a way that best achieves our goals? How do we address weaknesses and strengths?

Eric – Worship committee is taking care of business. One current opportunity of growth: Garage sale. We should give volunteers freedom to go and get stuff done.

Bob – We need to lock goals down and identify folks for leadership roles. Where are we now, and how do we get where we want to be? Set one or two objectives specifically to work toward. For example: Talking about facilities, important to deal with, but no priority or structure for how to deal with the retaining wall, ADA bathrooms, etc.

Justin – need to replace TTT with another task force, structure the congregations.

Stacy – Resuming use of facilities, building renovation, grounds use, people connections. Making the new church home – how do each of the four ministry committees move toward the central goals. How can specific goals be assigned to committees with accountability?

How Will We Get There?

Continued planning will occur at next board meeting on March 16, 2021.

Extinguish the Chalice

The chalice was extinguished at 12:45 pm. The next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021.