

## **Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was held at Unitarian House with the following Trustees in attendance: Mark Tomlinson, President; Liz Dell, Vice President, Mac McMahon, Treasurer; Donald Zeilman, Clerk; Jane Schwarz; Gail Ward.

Excused: Matt Merriman-Preston. Ex officio: Rev. David McFarland. Invited guests: Ellen Kerr, Sabbatical Team Chairwoman; Rev. David Herndon, Minister at First Unitarian Church

### **I Gathering**

Mr. Tomlinson called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm, Rev. McFarland shared words for centering and the chalice was lit. A quorum was present at the call to order.

### **II Administration**

1. Minutes of the September 5 meeting were distributed electronically for review. No comments or corrections.
2. Financial Report: Mr. McMahon, statement submitted. Clarifications discussed, no corrections.
3. Minister's Report: Reverend McFarland. Proposed Covenant Renewal Policy to be discussed under Business.
4. Report of the Clerk: Mr. Zeilman reports 81 members on the roster.

### **Reports accepted by assent.**

### **III Business**

**1. Sabbatical Planning.** Ellen Kerr and Rev. Dave update Trustees on various aspects of sabbatical planning as guided by the sabbatical topics generated by the Exec Team:

**A.** Will there be a final version of the Sabbatical Agreement to execute? Ms. Kerr responds that a formal, executed agreement will not be necessary, and that the document/agreement developed by the team in concert with Rev. Dave was meant to be a memorial, not an agreement.

**B.** What is the status of the Sabbatical newsletter? Ms. Kerr and Mr. Zeilman report that the newsletter will be published bimonthly and that a process for content development is in place.

**C.** Status of the InReach Ministry, including preparing and planning to support congregation's pastoral needs during sabbatical? Rev. McFarland responds that the ministry will be reconvened and updated, that the other cluster UU ministers will be available, and that they are exploring the Covenant Circles as another vehicle for connecting congregants in need of pastoral care.

Mr. Tomlinson asks if the process for seeking pastoral help will be published. Rev. McFarland responds that only in the general communication around sabbatical, and that the congregation should be reminded to be aware and help one another.

**D.** New Member development. Ms. Schwarz notes that Rev. McFarland usually participates in the new- and prospective-member development process, and asks how this will be covered during the sabbatical. Rev. McFarland responds that the Membership Committee may want to develop a modified process, or make a recommendation.

Mr. Tomlinson suggests that the President (and/or Vice President) may be available to participate in the new/prospective-member process. He notes that the Church has a formal Expectation of Membership policy to help as a guide.

**E. Worship Planning**—How is it going? Rev. McFarland responds that he is comfortable with the progress made so far, and that he anticipates the worship schedule will be ready by Sabbatical.

**F. Procedure for expending budgeted funds during Sabbatical.** Mr. Zeilman notes that the Sabbatical Agreement document proposes that the Committee on Ministry can engage/recommend outside ministry under some circumstances, and further that we should be intentional around empowering non-Board entities to make contracts.

**G. Staff Supervision**—Is there a plan for supervising the staff and office? Rev. McFarland states that he sees a role for Jesse Landis-Eigsti in helping to lead/organize the Worship Ministry and Sunday morning efforts. He sees a role for Brian Byers in pastoral ministry and congregational leadership. Rev. McFarland will arrange to conduct both of their staff reviews before he goes on Sabbatical.

Note that Mr. Byers doesn't have a supporting team as does the Worship Ministry, and it may be advantageous to put one in place before the Sabbatical.

Mr. Tomlinson suggests that a "virtual" staff meeting could be set up to occur periodically that might include the Board or other leadership entities.

**H. Will we provide additional compensation to staff commensurate with the increased responsibilities?** Mr. Tomlinson notes that if staff (Brian and Jesse) take on additional responsibilities during the Sabbatical, an increase in compensation might be in order. Rev. McFarland asks if the Board desires an increase in staff time and compensation. Mr. Tomlinson notes that it is a question of need, not of budget, so that it remains a possibility.

**I. Board and Committee on Ministry Communications.** Mr Tomlinson notes Exec Team's desire for increased regular communication between the CoM and the Board, with discussion around how and when this will be happening. He further states that he has made some effort to establish those communications and will continue to do so.

**J. Communications:** Are there any planned sessions with the congregation to discuss the Sabbatical? Ms. Kerr responds that there are none scheduled, but that it is possible to do so if there is a need. Should there be more, formal Board and Sabbatical Team communications? Sabbatical Team will discuss at their next meeting (Mr. Tomlinson is also a member of that Team).

**K. Intentions around filling the staff position of Office Administrator.** Rev. McFarland states that he is comfortable recommending that the church not try to fill that position before the Sabbatical.

**L. General:** Ms. Dell notes that generally, "unknowns" are not a problem as long as some of the processes are in place.

**2. Partner Church Agreement.** Rev. McFarland (Allegheny) and Rev. David Herndon (First Church). Rev. Herndon graciously attended the Board meeting to provide his perspective around the proposed Partner Church Agreement.

Rev. Herndon: Districts in the UUA are disappearing as an entity at the same time that services to congregations are being provided regionally by groups of districts. As those services move to a broader level, local engagement becomes more critical for growing and supporting Unitarian Universalism. In particular, it is in the best interest of both congregations to promote growth within both and to strengthen both (providing positive impressions about UUism, providing choices, etc.). The international partner church program provided the model for this Partner Church Agreement. This is a year-to-year agreement.

These two urban churches remain “intact,” and understand urban ministry. They share a commitment to social justice, especially in the urban environment, and promote vibrant, diverse congregational life. The congregations are distinct, but share opportunities for urban ministry.

There is no expectation that resources as provided and shared under the Agreement would be equal.

Mr. Tomlinson notes that the Agreement appears grounded in the good relationship between the ministers, and is very positive.

Ms. Dell asks how the Board at First Church responded to the proposal. Rev. Herndon replied that it has only recently been presented to them and that they are cautiously curious, and are considering it. On the question of whether both Board should convene together, Rev. Herndon noted that the Boards only have a lateral relationship, but that the staff should have on-going interaction.

Rev. McFarland notes that both congregations face similar challenges.

Mr. Tomlinson notes that how the proposal is communicated to the congregation will be important in the perception of proposed relationship. As we move through the communication process, we should be aware of perceptions and be willing to promote a level of comfort with the proposal. It will be helpful for the congregations to “hear it” from the ministers.

Mrs. Ward notes that timing will need to be taken into account, especially with the upcoming Sabbatical leave at Allegheny.

The Sabbatical will extend the time for discernment, and allows some key opportunities for congregational discussion—one being the Mid-Year Meeting in January.

Rev. Herndon notes that Allegheny should “own” the proposal for its own reasons.

Board thanks Rev. Herndon for his time and efforts.

### **3. Covenant Renewal Policy. Tabled**

**4. Share the Plate Initiative.** Mr. Tomlinson notes that a partner should be selected for the November and December period. Noted that the program is more successful when the partner organization provides a spokesperson to present their mission at the Worship Service (either as a community moment or as part of the address). Worship schedule should be reviewed for both monthly spiritual focus and invited speakers with an eye toward potential partners.

Suggestions for upcoming partners include the Merton Center and the Young Men and Women's African Heritage Association (YMWAHA). YMWAHA's Director will be speaking in November, which would make this an ideal candidate for the next partner.

**Resolved:** The Share the Plate Justice Partner for November/December will be YMWAHA

Propose the Merton Center for March/April. Rev. McFarland will review the speakers for January/February to scout for potential candidates.

**5. Endowment Fund Contribution.** (Refer to Board of Trustees Minutes of 7 May 2013 for immediate past discussion). Mr Tomlinson notes that there have been continuing discussions with the Finance and Endowment Committees. Further, that we are unable to pinpoint a dollar amount for total savings assets, but that it is in the range of 150 to 200 thousand dollars.

Motion by Ms. Dell to transfer Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) from savings assets to the Endowment Fund. Second, Ms. Schwarz.

**Motion Carries**

Mr. Tomlinson will notify Mr. Luff, Endowment Committee Chairman, and Mr. McMahon will notify the Finance Committee.

**6. Finance Software Upgrade.** On the Finance Committee, John Luff is now leading the process and has developed a time line. A decision on product will be made by the end of the calendar year. Ms. Dell will be added to the upgrade taskforce.

**IV Adjournment**

Mr. Tomlinson adjourned the meeting and the chalice was extinguished.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be November 7, 2013. Ms. Dell will be excused due to PIIN commitments.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald G. Zeilman, Clerk 2013-14