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| First Unitarian Church of Oakland BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES November 21, 2024 6:30 - 9:00 pm | Our Mission We, the members of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, unite to build a beloved community within and beyond our walls. Guided by individual conscience and wisdom from many sources, we gather in worship and service to nourish the spirit, work for justice, and celebrate the divine in all. <i>Adopted by the congregation on March 18, 2019</i> |
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| Board of Trustees: Dave Ruede, <i>President</i> Debby Kaplan, <i>Treasurer</i> Dennis Rowcliffe Evalyn Seidman, <i>Vice President</i> (task list) Janet McFarland (timekeeper & comms. facilitator) Judith Hunt Marilyn McMahon, <i>Secretary</i> Nicole Fitzhugh (chalice and readings) <i>Absent:</i> Patsy Wood | Guests: Rev. Laurel Liefert, <i>Contract Minister</i> Jorim Rhee, <i>Congregational Administrator</i> Jef Melcher, <i>DRE</i> Jody Mathies for Finance Team Bill Blakely |
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| 6:30 pm Open comment period (15 min) There were no comments. | <i>Congregation</i> |
| 6:45 pm “Deep chair discussion” (text: <i>Blessing the World</i> , by Rebecca Parker) Discussion of Rebecca Parker’s question: Accepting that we are living in a post-apocalyptic world, what is our religious task? | <i>Rev. Laurel</i> |
| 7:00 pm BUSINESS MEETING BEGINS | |
| Chalice lighting and opening reading | <i>Nicole</i> |
| Welcome and preview of meeting | <i>Dave</i> |
| Consent agenda A. Updates on Board activity and reporting actions taken since previous meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved minutes of October meeting • As Stewardship committee, phoned congregants individually about pledges • As of 11/19/2024, our stewardship pledge campaign has reached \$291,000 | <i>Dave</i> |

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| <p>B. Quick action items</p> <p>Short discussion of the relationship between the Operations Team and the congregational administrator. The revised draft of the charter calls for the OT to “provide guidance to the Administrator in performance of day-to-day functions and building issues”. The charter clearly says that the OT does not supervise the administrator. The word “guidance” indicates that the OT does not give mandatory orders to the administrator. Agreed that the charter language is consistent with the administrator being supervised by the Personnel Team.</p> <p>MOTION to approve the 10-16-2024 draft of the Operations Team charter (Janet, 2nd Nicole) - PASSED</p> | |
| <p>Minister’s report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sermon-writing class:</i> Six people are enrolled – so we should have six sermons ready to go by summer. • <i>Worship Associates:</i> Ten people attended the last meeting. The WA will hold a retreat. They will be discussing questions from the Soul Matters materials. • <i>Cathy Cade</i> memorial will be in February. • <i>Program Council:</i> Rev. Laurel is excited to start this up again. • <i>Justice Committee/Council:</i> Terrific attendance at first meeting (25 or 30 people). She will send notes from that meeting taken by Janet and Patsy. Rev. Laurel suggests using some unrestricted funds from the Justice Endowment to become a partner/member of Genesis again (\$500 suggested), and also the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, which works on issues of immigration and jails. • <i>Dec. 15 service:</i> Rev. Laurel will be joined by Rev. Jacqueline Duhart. | <p><i>Rev. Laurel</i></p> |

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| <p>Administrator's report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New member Beth Skinner is beginning to volunteer in the church office. She will ramp up to once a week. • The justice@uuoakland.org email has been reactivated for the new Justice team. • Assessed the mold damage from an old leak in the Table Room off Wendte Hall. Preparing to do repairs during a 2- to 3-week period in Jan-early Feb, when no major rentals are scheduled. Recommended course of action is full removal of ceiling, inspection of leak source, and potentially, roof repair/plumbing reconstruction (estimated cost \$5K-\$8K+). • This is a busy season for in-house and rental events. Additional \$3K expected from new one-time contracts, and return/expansion of pre-COVID renters like BOSS and SOUL would add another \$3K. Current events staffing: Frank and Zach, with backup by Jorim and Bill. • To continue covering our employees with the UUA retirement plan in 2025, we need Board approval before the end of the year. This seems to get automatically renewed every year, but for 2025 there are some changes to remain compliant with current federal law. Jorim confirmed with UUA that there is NO FISCAL IMPACT for us. The plan will be substantively the same as it is currently. <p>MOTION to enroll in the UUA 2025 retirement plan (Marilyn, 2nd Janet) - PASSED</p> | <p><i>Jorim</i></p> |
| <p>Religious Education report</p> <p>As always, lots is happening in RE. A couple of people will get training for the Faithful Fools Street Retreat. On April 25-27, at FUCO, there will be an exploration of Rev. Sam Wilson (of Hope for Us) to explore what reinventing church might look like. Jef is getting youth of four congregations together [when?]. And these days, Jef et al. are thinking a lot about what kind conversations to have with children of various ages about politics and fascism.</p> | <p><i>Jef</i></p> |
| <p>Approve RE charter</p> <p>The charter for the Religious Education Committee (known informally as the Spark team) is before the Board for approval. It is not a committee of the Board. Rather, it is part of the Program Council. So the Board's OK is not required, but Jef and the committee would like it nonetheless.</p> <p>MOTION to approve the RE Committee charter as submitted. (Janet, 2nd Evalyn) - PASSED</p> | <p><i>Dave</i></p> |
| <p>Sponsorship of Jef's career advancement</p> <p>MOTION to approve congregational sponsorship by First Unitarian Church of Oakland of Jef Melcher on his path to UU ministry, based on our knowledge of Jef and his work both in relative calm and under pressure, with high confidence in his potential and suitability for UU ministry. (Debby,</p> | <p><i>Dave</i></p> |

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| <p>2nd Janet) - PASSED</p> | |
| <p>Shared plate policy (process for choosing recipients)</p> <p>We need to agree on our policy and process for choosing the split-plate recipient each quarter, and a policy about special requests like Rev. Kevin Mann’s request to give the full plate of December’s first Sunday to our sister church in Okland, Transylvania.</p> <p>Also, we need to vote on Rev. Kevin’s request and to choose a recipient for half of the plate on the remaining Sundays in December. (The plate from the Christmas Eve service, as usual, will be designated in full for the Minister’s Discretionary Fund.)</p> <p>Nicole suggests that the plate receipts and amounts donated should be reported to the congregation (by the Finance Team), and Debby recommends publishing these figures for the annual congregational meeting.</p> <p>Dave proposes that December’s plates, other than the first Sunday and Christmas Eve, be given to Youth Spirit ArtWorks.</p> <p>From January on, Rev. Laurel and the Justice Council will choose recipients. Rev. Laurel wants to hand this over to the Justice Council when it is fully running and ready to do it on their own. She notes that the split-plate idea is all about fostering relationships with worthy community organizations, and so it fits with the Justice Council’s role of doing justice work in and with the Oakland community.</p> <p>MOTION to designate 100% of the December 1st plate to the Transylvania Unitarian Church, and 50% of the plates of the remaining Sundays in December to Youth Spirit ArtWorks (Nicole, 2nd Evalyn) - PASSED</p> | <p><i>Dave</i></p> |
| <p>BREAK</p> | |

2025 budget and priorities

Jody

The Stewardship campaign is on track to raise \$305,000 or more. Our rental income is good, plate receipts are good (they increased since we started our plate-sharing), the Women's Retreat made a profit, and so we are getting as much income as the 2024 budget expected.

Meanwhile, our spending is lower than projected by the budget. Facilities spent less than was budgeted, and we had fewer Administrator hours than expected before Jorim came on board.

By the end of the year, the Board must tell Jorim how much to send to the UUA this year.

Looking at the current draft 2025 budget:

- The amount from pledges is estimated, since the Stewardship campaign isn't over yet.
- \$80,000 for building maintenance: There are plenty of tasks to do, and we could accomplish \$80K of work next year if we are well organized.
- Our usual draw from the Wendte Endowment is 4.5%. We can draw up to 6%, which would mean an extra \$24,000. We prefer not to do that indefinitely, but the Board might want to do it for 2025. Jodie recommends using the extra draw *only* for facilities maintenance.
- The draft budget includes drawing \$4000 from the Reinhardt Social Justice Endowment and \$2000 from the Social Justice Restricted Fund.
- To help the board think about possibly paying Rev. Laurel more: Every 5% increase would be \$5900 and would be equivalent to 2 hours/week.
- The draft budget currently shows a \$30,000 deficit, but assumes drawing only 4.5% from the Wendte Endowment.

Discussion: It's wise to be conservative in our spending and endowment draws, given the very uncertain time we're in. However, we have operating reserves of \$70K and also keep three months' expenses in a checking account. Also, in each of the last 4 or 5 years we've budgeted a deficit but at the end of the year have come out about even.

Claire Eustace has been giving pastoral care far past the ending of her summer contract, which means without pay. There was \$3400 in the 2024 budget for that and Jodie has told Claire to send an invoice.

We could pay Rev. Laurel to do some pastoral care, or someone else, or use that budget item to hire chaplain services when needed (for example, at the community meeting right after the election, where it would have been helpful to Rev. Laurel).

The Board needs more budget study and discussion, but we're out of time. Marilyn will send out a doodle to schedule a Board "budget retreat." It will not be a regularly scheduled and publicly announced meeting, so the Board will not make any decisions. The retreat

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| will be to prepare for the final budget discussion at the December 19th regular meeting, where the Board will vote on the budget. | |
| <p>“For the good of the order”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board thank-you’s • Review task commitments • Check rotating tasks signups & worship welcome signups <p>In the interest of ending nearly on time, this portion was skipped. The Board will do these tasks online.</p> | <i>Dave, Evalyn</i> |
| Extinguish chalice & closing reading | <i>Nicole</i> |
| 9:06 pm END OF MEETING | |

BIKE RACK (Topics saved for future meeting)

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