

**Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing**  
**Board of Trustees**  
268 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road  
Titusville, NJ 08560



**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED**  
**June 12, 2024**  
***Multi-platform Meeting***

*President Wendy Stasolla called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini, Treasurer Denny Rodgers and Secretary Colleen McCourt; Trustees: Karen Kent, Michelle Zechner and Maria Baratta; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang, Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh and Ministerial Intern Lisa Schilansky. Absent were Trustees Gina Turner and Michael Waas.*

*Also in attendance were oncoming Board members Dave Thomas and Bob Busch.*

# First Hour

## **Consent agenda (no vote):**

Rev. Kim welcomed the new members and explained how we will inform and support them during the onboarding period during the first few months of the new term to make everyone feel included and ease the transition. She also explained terminology, meeting prep, agenda, pre-reads, etc., and the consent agenda.

Discussion around the consent agenda included:

- **Executive Team Report:**
  - Retreat will be on July 20 in person, location TBD.
  - **ACTION:** Colleen will work with staff to look into Google Board folder ownership.
  - We talked about potentially having the pre-reads available earlier to provide more time for review.
- **Treasurer Report:** Treasurer Denny Rodgers reported that things are looking positive since the annual meeting. We have 7.5 months in the reserve fund, and it was discussed that theoretically we only need 3 months since we have a steady income stream and don't need to be quite as conservative as other non-profits. President Wendy Stasolla expressed that it's good to know we have reserves, even if we're not committing to using them immediately. Denny also observed that it was good to see the "one church" budget philosophy in effect at the Annual Meeting Among Endowment, Capital, Operations, etc.

### **Annual Meeting Debrief**

Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang and Wendy provided a brief summary of the Annual Meeting including timing, attendance (90 people checked in, quorum was 71), voting, content and flow. Key points included:

- The mood was one of celebration with no contention, which is part of our strategy to be intentional about providing information and communication to the congregation in advance. New members were positively impressed.
- Even with a lot of planning and lead time, there's still some last-minute scrambling that could be improved on, especially for the sake of the tech team. Next year it's recommended that there should be a rehearsal and some more clear direction in the script.
- We talked about whether there should be more discussion around the budget, leadership, etc., but also concluded that we should remind members about their opportunity to review the packet and attend the budget meeting in advance. Remind people that we value their opinion and offer opportunities for transparency; the idea is not to shut down conversation but to build up an informed knowledge base.

## **2nd Hour**

### **Brief Building Issues Update**

Susan reported that before the annual meeting, we had our quarterly well water testing and the result came back with unusual bacteria levels. She contacted our well compliance company for guidance. They initially advised that the issue wasn't dangerous and retesting would just be a formality. However, the second test also showed bacteria, which has now triggered a level 1 assessment from the state. Luckily, the well company will handle this for us and try to determine the cause and corrective action. It's likely that shock chlorination of the well will be needed, and future ongoing retests will be necessary. If this turns out to be an ongoing issue, we'll need to investigate things like cracked pipes. This process can be costly, with lab tests costing \$500, and the assessment around \$800. It's not clear if this is related to the construction.

### **RJM Funding & Budget**

Rev. Kim provided a summary/background on the history of different ministries at UUCWC that used to be separately organized and funded but have moved relationally under CFA and FEFT as part of an intentional change. This included Food Ministry and Earth and Climate Ministry among others and involved pastoral care and a shift in mindset to a more "one church" structure, now funded by the plate and not separate reserves. Historically RJM has remained a separate line item from a budget standpoint, largely because it represents our church's public commitment to the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle.

- Some of RJM's educational program budget needs to be moved under adult RE, similar to how the worship budget has split categories in order to demonstrate financial commitment to 8<sup>th</sup> Principle resources.
- At the budget meeting and annual meetings, we showed a collapsed budget, and because it was a truncated version, it wasn't clear where RJM money was allocated, so there was some confusion and concern especially from RJM leadership, which led to 2 abstentions on the budget vote.
- Rev. Kim has spoken directly with members of RJM, who have requested clarification and public acknowledgement of this as a correction to the congregation in the weekly email, which went out this week.
- We should be aware that there is energy around these budget conversations and framing and there may be ongoing discussion and engagement. In the meantime, Rev. Kim will continue to communicate any relevant information to the Board.

### **UUCWC Involvement in UUA's Climate Justice Revival**

Wendy and Trustee Karen Kent provided a summary; key points and discussion included:

- UUCWC has historically been a green sanctuary but the parameters have changed. There are new guidelines and a denomination-wide climate revival in September. These are 2 separate but related initiatives.
- The Earth and Climate Justice Ministry has asked for Board support in exploring and participating in these efforts. The Board supports their participation and use of their budget for this purpose.
- Regarding the Climate Revival, overall, we need a better understanding of what is needed and involved in supporting this denominational effort.
- The Earth and Climate Ministry are well-prepared with a presentation and will share it with the Board at the next meeting.
- We should also talk about this as part of strategic planning at the July retreat.

### **Congregational Pulse Check-in**

- Rev. Kim discussed the depletion of volunteers. We are getting creative on how to manage/recruit but it's challenging, partly due to COVID and demographic shifts.
- She also noted that there are various rumors spreading, which can be a signal of distrust and dishealth; we need to be aware of this movement in the congregation.
- Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh noted that people came back in person for flower communication in large numbers. Some have expressed that the congregation is important even when their physical presence doesn't reflect that.
- Trustee Dave Thomas suggested that maybe resources can be dedicated to online-only participants as a cohort.

### **Thank You to Outgoing Board Members & Board Exec beginning July 1**

Wendy and the Board and staff recognized the outgoing members of the Board and the Executive Board and thanked them for their service.

### **Housekeeping & Action Items**

- The next meeting will be multi-platform.
- We need to think about new executive and possibly liaison roles.
- Secretary Colleen McCourt will send the Annual Meeting Minutes out for Board approval before they are sent to the congregation, per protocol.

Open Forum & Check-out

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Colleen McCourt***

Secretary, Board of Trustees

***Jamie Evanini***

Vice President and Scribe, Board of Trustees

## **Appendix: Executive, Staff and Treasurer Reports**

Executive Team Meeting-June 6, 2024

In Attendance: Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Wendy Stasolla, Jamie Evanini, Denny Rodgers, Colleen McCourt, and Lisa Schilansky

It was decided that the best day for our board retreat is July 20<sup>th</sup>. It will be from 9am-2pm either at Gravity Hill Farm (if available) or Maria Baratta has graciously offered to host as a backup.

There are some things to debrief about from the annual meeting that was held on Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> that we will bring up at our full board meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

Colleen wondered who “owns” the Google Board Folders and we want to figure out how they should be handled for easy access to those who need them. Wendy will reach out to MJ Hansen to ask about best practices for using shared folders on Google Drive.

We talked about the placement of RJM funding in the overall budget, why it's listed under Adult RE, the reasons behind it having its own line in the budget, and why other ministries are curious about that.

**Staff Report delivered at the Annual Meeting, June 2,2024, by Rev. Kim Wildszewski**

***The Church That Doesn't Matter by Kelly Weisman Asprooth-Jackson***

*In the church that doesn't matter, there are no quarrels, no arguments, and no one ever says anything they regret at the meeting to discuss the sanctuary's new paint color. There is nothing to inspire such passionate intensity because none of the decisions of the church touch anyone's heart, and no one lives or dies by its choices, or even feels for a moment like they might. Everything is easy as pie.*

*In the church that doesn't matter, no one has to ask for money, or even talk about it much: there is always enough to go around. There is always enough, because no matter how much there is, there is always less to do with it than that. The vision always shrinks to under-match the means. So canvas season is always a breeze.*

*In the church that doesn't matter, no one ever disagrees with the preacher's sermon. The music is always just fine. There is never a fight about the liturgy, not even if they do joys and sorrows (and not even if they stop doing joys and sorrows). There is never any controversy because no one ever says anything they really care about, and no one else ever seems to care. Because of this, the service is always equally inoffensive at both 9 o'clock and 11.*

*The sounds of children during worship, the recruitment of Sunday School teachers, the compensation of professional religious educators and the size and condition of space dedicated to religious education; none of these things are ever talked about, or thought about, in the church that doesn't matter. Those issues just seem to take care of themselves, somehow.*

*No one ever has to clean up in the church that doesn't matter. Or figure out the old electrical system, or consult the building codes, or climb a ladder. If no one bothers to make coffee on Sunday, no one complains, and if no one greets the visitors, no one seems to mind. Everything is easier in the church that doesn't matter.*

*The total solution to all the frustrations of congregational life requires no consultants, manuals, or webinars. Simply avoid, at all costs, meaning and purpose and anything that might lead you to either or both. Whatever you do, do not let yourself care about the people around you, or the covenant you share.*

*Yet, knowing this, we still decide again and again to ask tough questions, to take real risks, to do work that needs doing, and to tell the truth. We get out of bed on Sunday morning, we answer that email, we make something imperfect but still sweet for the bake sale and we give our time and attention to a meeting every third Thursday. We ask each other how we're doing, and mean it, we make phone calls and craft projects for the first grade class – we offer our gifts, both humble and great. And we do these things,*

*sometimes in joy, and sometimes not in joy, because they are done in the service of a church that matters to us.*

**Here is the State of the Church by the Numbers:**

We have **280** Adult Members, who have signed our membership book and paid a pledge. When we add our Church Members, Friends (those who pledge but haven't signed the membership book), Participants and Attendees (those in or new to the community, taking classes and exploring UUCWC), we actually serve or are in community with **347 people**. This fiscal year, we also celebrate that we welcomed 13 New Members.

From September (Water Communion) to April 30 our average Sunday attendance was 158. In person average attendance was 98 or 62% of the total, while remote participation on average was 60, or 38%. This reflects the embodiment of our commitment to a multiplatform congregation.

Anecdotally, we are a bit anomalous with these numbers; most congregations that report this info are seeing 80% in person attendance and 20% online. What we are finding that other congregations have not necessarily experienced is this: many folks who can't come and must be joining us remotely due to geography or physical ability and so are our standard group that have to be on zoom. What is different for us is that many are toggling back and forth between in person and online attendance due to travel or illness or maybe just because it's a rainy day, so many who could be in person are choosing to be online some Sundays.

Only once, when an internet cable was cut in early construction, did we meet without the entire community. We prioritized both in person *and* online worship, creating rituals for each space, mailing out earth teachers we engaged with this year, and investing in high level technology.

**Like in many churches throughout the country, we have experienced a small decline in membership. But unlike others, we are in a time of rebuilding and dreaming rather than constricting and closing. We are healthy.**

Our Choir currently has 24 members. Over the course of the year they sang 23 pieces. We welcomed 10 guest musicians over 8 services - including 3 for next week's flower communion. There were 7 services featuring musicians from our congregation, reminding us that there is excellence right here. The South Philly Big Band returned, bringing in 119 people from within and outside our church community, and many of us humbly received Dynasty Battle's mini concert just a few weeks ago. Erin Busch and I co-wrote 8 centering songs, essentially creating a new mini-hymnal for us and for Unitarian Universalism. We offered you two meditation services. In addition to it all, the Wildflower commission provided opportunity and money to underrepresented artists.

**Our music program has grown these years. And we have become a more embodied, and I think proud, people because of it.**

This year in Children's Faith Engagement, we introduced the PrayGround, where children can crawl and play with soft toys while their grownups sit nearby. The activity table and binders help keep hands busy with coloring pages while listening to the service.

Julie Rigano made bringing Unitarian Universalism into our homes manageable and easy through her Taking the Learning Home emails that helped parents stay up-to-date with what their children were doing, while also giving conversation starters and activities families can do to deepen their faith together throughout the week. (It's hard to realize that Julie was brand new last year and spent last summer onboarding).

We experienced the new Palm Sunday pageant, and rejoiced once again in our annual Christmas pageant. There were 34 children registered in religious education this year, raising our total number of people we serve to 381.

**We are committed to intergenerational living. We are working tirelessly to imagine a faith engagement program that meets the needs of our children, and the capacity of our parents.**

To Robin Pugh's ministry, in our smaller circles, we had 71 people participate in Chalice circles where five participants became facilitators. Lisa Schilansky introduced *Breathe*, an opportunity to pause and slow down in a world that's constantly forcing us to speed up. We offered book groups including the UUA's Common Read *On Repentance and Repair, Making Amends in an Unapologetic World*; *Black AF History: The Un-Whitewashed Story of America*; and *White Women: Everything You Already Know about Your Own Racism and How to Do Better*.

I offered a Write Your Own Memorial Service class. We had 16 people take two different Wellspring classes. 21 folks moved through Pathways, our path to membership. Tending the Flame, our small group for parents, continued monthly and Lectio Divina continued weekly. We offered numerous Article II sessions. We gathered for puzzles, games, stand up comedy and improv after delicious potlucks for Welcome Table Wednesdays.

**We prioritize our need for connection, learning, and meaning-making as an expression of practicing our faith.**

We lived our values in the public square in numerous ways, most recently at the Pride parade, but also by rallying in Newtown, PA, for the people of Palestine; at the Poor People's Campaign in Trenton, NJ; with the NJ Social Justice Institute's Reparations Say the Word work; at a recent Lobby Day, a legislative breakfast and at a one-on-one meeting with the Assemblywoman where I spoke, and then later testified on behalf of all of us.

We began a formal relationship with the Lenape Tribe with the presence of Bluejay, their Chief, on a Sunday morning. We tended to our history with the Boy Scouts. Lisa spoke



about Unitarian Universalism at Mercer County Community College, and also organized a Religion and Life small group at The College of New Jersey. Earlier in the winter, I led the prayer at the Hopewell Community Trans Day of Remembrance vigil, which was separate from the Trans Day of Remembrance and Resilience vigil that Lisa led here, and the vigil honoring the life and death of young Nex Benedict, that Lisa and I offered. I also received an email yesterday from Ewing Township inviting me to bless the Pride Flag that will go up for the first time in their history.

In your annual meeting summary, you'll see so much more to be proud of on this not that was entirely lay-led. Please take time to read through this. Too often I hear people not knowing or understanding the depth of justice work this congregation does. From the Food Ministry's meals, to Faith Action Ministry's sponsored refugee family and ESL program, to Earth & Climate Justice Ministry's speaker series, to the over 300 postcards written by this congregation to the Governor and PA legislators. Between the Auction surplus and your weekly plate, we've given out around \$13,500 to community organizations whose mission and work we support in the world. It matters that we are here, it would matter if we weren't.

**Our congregation is known. We make a difference in the lives of the larger community.**

Lastly, there were just a few small other things. Like, the construction project literally unearthing our foundation. And the complete gutting of our offices. A healthy number of new rentals, like the sweet 16 here in the sanctuary a few weeks ago. Concerts and Breathwork, and the return of our transportation fundraiser. According to the annual report, 1/3 of the congregation volunteers on a committee, team or ministry.

Susan Irgang launched "This Month at UUCWC " to keep you informed. Roberto Santiago responded to ever changing needs; Lynne Quinto and Rachel Hansen kept our books and communications in order, while Ariel Schwartz with the Tech Team continued to elevate our multi platform services. We're now half way through our time with Lisa. And of course, this was the year when Susan and Robin reduced their hours to help last year's deficit, but continued a high level of work. Which meant I learned what it meant to be the only full time staff person. **It wasn't always fun, or easy, but with this team it was worth it.**

### **So What's Next?**

Here's what we know from some informal data among UU colleagues. The congregations that are growing have four components: dynamic preaching, excellent music, a solid religious education program, and low conflict or a capacity to address conflict.

We will never again be the church that so many of us left in 2020. But we have the right formula to see ourselves into the future and for the future.

What's next? So much. So much of what is needed and good in the world. Because this place matters. Thank you, everybody, for a remarkable year.

## Treasurer's Report to Board for May 2024

### May Actual vs budgeted

Total gross revenue for the month exceeded budget by \$11,000 due to pledges being at 148% of budget. Expenses were \$4,906 under budgeted amount.

Investment income totaled \$1,884 **and exceeded budgeted amount by \$572.**

### July - May YTD Actual vs May YTD Budget

Gross revenue is at 104.6% of budget.

Expenditures remain short of budget at 93% .

### Cash Analysis & Financial Statement

\$357,362 (adjusted for known restricted transfers) Non-restricted/Reserve Cash Available will cover 7.2 months budgeted expenses, far exceeding our goal of 3 months or better. Project near 7.0 by end of year.

**I project we will begin Fiscal Year '24-'25 with almost \$200,000 reserves AFTER leaving \$150,000 to cover 3 months of budgeted expenses. We need a strategic plan to put that to good use.**

### Forwarding Notes

Things are even better than the Fiscal Year **Expenditures** line reflects because \$14,488 new construction debt service budgeted for the fiscal year will not be incurred until '24-'25.

On the **Revenue** side, Richard Knight's NJ tax refund will be deposited for Lisa's '24-'25 stipend. Amount not yet known.

## Notes for May 2024

Escrow account closed, money transferred to operating account, where it was initially drawn from.

### Merrill Lynch:

Transferred \$50K from Northfield Operating Account to the ML operating account. ML annual account fees were waived for both accounts. Joe Schenk confirmed that they will always be waived, but we may need to remind them each May when they are assessed.

### Fundraising Plant Sale:

Income \$620.00 – received in June  
Expense (\$299.70) – paid in May  
Net total \$320.30

### Fundraising: Music

Mr. Gone concert (5-04-24)  
Income \$190.00  
Band share of tickets (\$95.00)  
Dinner for band (\$60.17)  
Net total: \$34.83

Cosmic Crossing (5-25-24)  
Income: \$125.00

Fundraising Auction: Through the end of May, have received the bulk of the proceeds and expenses. There are still some coming in, will have a final number soon.

### Received this month:

Prepaid pledges \$7,300.00 (and \$1,000 shifted via journal entry from current year to prepaid pledges for a donation made in March)  
Prepaid plate \$100.00  
Capital Campaign donations \$1,156.00

Staff retirement contributions: These are below budget this month. Our contribution for the May 31 payroll hasn't been submitted yet, as the program administrator's (Empower) website is down for updates. The contributions will be submitted when the website is live after June 10. (They will be considered timely if submitted by June 15.)

### Exchange:

Knight estate: \$5,653.54 (being held for FY25)  
Payroll tax adjustment in process: \$28.80

# Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

## Financial Summary Report YTD May 2024

July 2023 - May 2024

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
<b>Revenue</b>				
A1. Plate Collections	32,969.17	31,248.00	1,721.17	105.51 %
A2. Operating Pledges	383,370.29	430,840.00	-47,469.71	88.98 %
A3. Other Misc Gifts/Contribs	51,767.75	50,000.00	1,767.75	103.54 %
B. Fund-Raising	42,494.99	32,550.00	9,944.99	130.55 %
E. Other Income	28,097.11	20,800.00	7,297.11	135.08 %
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$538,699.31</b>	<b>\$565,438.00</b>	<b>\$ -26,738.69</b>	<b>95.27 %</b>
GROSS PROFIT	\$538,699.31	\$565,438.00	\$ -26,738.69	95.27 %
<b>Expenditures</b>				
A. STAFF	314,534.84	361,160.00	-46,625.16	87.09 %
B. OPERATIONS	78,537.20	95,164.04	-16,626.84	82.53 %
C. PROGRAM	39,120.71	46,387.00	-7,266.29	84.34 %
D. DENOMIN	17,069.25	22,759.00	-5,689.75	75.00 %
E. DEBT SERVICE	23,342.88	39,952.96	-16,610.08	58.43 %
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$472,604.88</b>	<b>\$565,423.00</b>	<b>\$ -92,818.12</b>	<b>83.58 %</b>
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$66,094.43	\$15.00	\$66,079.43	440,629.53 %
NET REVENUE	\$66,094.43	\$15.00	\$66,079.43	440,629.53 %