

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2013**

Meeting began at 7:38

Staff: Charlie Ortman, Judy Tomlinson

Members: Teresa DeSousa, Chris Corbett, Dennis Drew, Judith Rew, Jerry Fried, Laura Kuschner, Mike Mernin, Mike Premo, Dorothy Sommers, Dennis Kurtti, Teresa DeSousa; Silke Springorum visited

Presidents report:

- An IT committee has been formed.
- Council Meeting was held and they got feedback on the High Coffee and the IT changes. Feedback on High Coffee was pretty good; plan is to have a meeting early in the new year to find someone to run it.
- Emails and calendar changes were introduced and folks were favorable. Committees were encouraged to send us events and meetings to add to the calendar. Having a chat room for each committee was discussed. The feeling was that there must be real parameters on the discussion.
- Meeting will be Dec. 7 9:30-12:30 in Fletcher Hall to continue our discussion about membership.

A concern was brought to our attention that the leadership leaves committee, led by Brandon Doemling, has not been functioning for two years. Charlie believes that's not really accurate but agreed that we need to have representatives on that committee.

Mike Premo will be leaving to work in Ohio on marriage equality "Why Marriage Matters Ohio" and will start full time in Columbus Jan. 1. It will be a multi-year project. We have reached out to Laura Wilson (Nomination and Leadership Development Committee) for a replacement for the Board position. The Board thanked him for his amazing service at the UUCM and in the state of New Jersey and wished him well in his new endeavor.

Charlie's report:

Since last we met 15 folks have signed the guest book; we welcomed 11 new members to the congregation. They are: Robert Bolder, Jessica Burr, Lauretta Freeman, Bruce Hart, Sam Kontogiannis, Karen & Louis Plaskow, Patrick Preblich, Jody Springer Seidenberg

We had 1 death of long-time member Lakshmi Kripalani. Many health concerns in the congregation, especially: Mary WanderPolo, whose health status in treating her

complex cancer is not encouraging; Kiara Kharpertian, who has struggled with breast cancer for a few years (she is now 28 years old), has developed a brain mass.

Coffee hour: We made a decision in staff meeting as there has no one responsible the last couple of weeks, no volunteer clean up, our commitment to going green has fallen on Danny, which he is not prepared to do. We have to return to paper on Sundays, as we don't have clean up crews. Green Sanctuary is aware of this. Silke is very tuned into the need to recruit and develop a strategy and policy to fix it. Brad Hyson has been in the kitchen every Sunday of the year and shouldn't have to.

A request has come from the fifth grade RE class to make a collection for the World Wildlife Fund on January 12. It will be something of a flash mob. They voted on what they wanted to take action on and endangered species was what they decided they cared about the most.

Since we met last, we had the Sunday service celebrating the legalization of same sex marriage in New Jersey. It was a great event. Got good press. Judy and Charlie have done six weddings since; Charlie has one more on tap this Saturday. This afternoon he married an 87 year-old woman to a 73 year-old woman, who have been together for 30 years. Today is the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address and the 50th Anniversary of the death of JFK. We must stay hopeful.

Judy's report:

Went to Saint Paul, MN for the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Fall Conference. We looked at the UU Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago's Sophia Fahs Colabratory—based on the work of Fahs, the “grandmother of liberal religious education,” experimenting with new ways to educate children and to use technology. They are giving out Fellowships for people to do this development.

In RE we are working on Undoing Racism Day in January; followed by February Focus month, for which we are developing. We are wrestling with this very challenging material. RE insert in the order of service. We are trying to keep what our children and youth are doing in front of the congregation. So in spring people will know what has been going on.

Just got home from COA Boston trip, which was fabulous as usual. We are recruiting mentors through the holidays.

We are anticipating that in two years that we will have a class of 20-25 youth, followed by a second year of 20-25 youth. We are likely to have 50-70 kids in our senior youth group. So this should be on the front burner. If we don't have a good program in place than we will lose these kids. It should be in place more than a year before—next year. We need paid leadership, specifically a youth coordinator; 15 hours a week.

Right now we are recruiting youth to participate in the Pageant; trying to organize around that.

Membership: We had a membership meeting this past weekend, massaging the materials; wrestling with the different elements that lead to membership; what does it mean to have expectations of people as we move along that path. Membership will have conference call before meeting and another face to face meeting.

Thank you cards: Laurence Ramsey, Shannon Gattins, Kathy Morrow-Reilly, Jason, Exhibitology (Richard Rew).

Donna's Report given by Teresa:

Preschool is doing well with 16 kids, trying to get on the list with the Montclair School Board. Outpost continue with their concerts; we are working on how to better handle the logistics. Jerry McCart has been a welcome addition. Mamo Simberg coming on board; want to add a part-timer. Internal procedures review happening in December. Mark and Nancy Felix will be talking about the pledge campaign. Several building issues have been taken care of. Boiler issue.

Treasurer's Report

Things are going well. We are on course. But this Saturday we are supposed to raise 85% of our budget at the auction. The interesting part is that our budget is 7% up; our income is 12% ahead; expensed slightly down.

Year to day balance: We are having a bit of trouble with our small, nightly rentals; everything else is on track. We are way below last year. Still saving from not having had a facilities manager for a month.

Year to date we are \$80,000 ahead; last year we were only \$50,000 ahead at this point. Funds are in good shape.

Chris gave a summary of the funds and what they mean. Some highlights:

- Charlie brought up the music fund and the funding of the music assistant Stearns Matthews. It was a new thing and was appropriate because it was visionary; as it will actually grow and nurture the program.
- Bylaws give us protection but we are responsible for keeping the funds safe. At a later meeting Chris will explain where they are kept—at the UUA; a very safe place.
- The new by-laws state that Chris must report every six months to the congregation.
- The Minister's Discretionary Fund was a gift from Pete and Doris Williams.

We have a proposal to repair the facility and Gerry McCart put together his list: windows in Samantha B. room; repair our roof, which has been on the lead list for years through Gary Sanderson, Ed Billy, and now Dennis Drew. We need to spend

about \$8,500; if we do this we can make the roof last for a very long time. We'd like to take it out of our Capital Campaign. It fits within the rules of the Capital Campaign.

Motion to approve the expenditure of \$8,500; Chris moved; Dennis seconded.

Discussion: Dennis affirmed that Gerry is very knowledgeable and this seems like a very intelligent approach; we've been spend \$2-3,000 a year on little fixes (for the roof). We think \$8,500 will fix it for a bit longer. Last year Judy put in the budget that about 10% of our funds go in the Capital Fund each year; which will keep us in good shape.

Motion passed.

Dennis talked about Fletcher Hall; Silke came review the plan with us. See attachment. Dennis drew a diagram. Highlights:

- Curtains: (\$2,000+) good for aesthetics, three levels of curtains on the stage;
- Electric box: Step 2 would be to run wires up over the house area in order to be able to light the stage; \$3,500-\$5,000. Would be great to put pipes to make the lights function better, but not necessary immediately. Curtains would help acoustics considerably.
- Aesthetic committee has to get involved because of the way the pipes look.
- Chairs: Not good to store the chairs on the stage. Not appealing to rentals; could create big wagons on the floor to store the chairs, or in back of the coffee hour window.
- Alliance Room: The other solution is to create a Green Room by splitting the Alliance Room. If we move the couch two feet, get rid of the table; it could be a very nice room. Everything rolls out very quickly for Outpost in the Burbs and other things. Could be a little drop leaf table. Could be made into two rooms—for dressing rooms, etc. Make a way to get to the Alliance Room from the stage through the storage room. There is no longer room under the stage. The wall to be built in the Alliance Room will be controversial. Teresa brought up that we sometimes want people to be able to move from room to room. Maybe these sales would have to be moved.
- Bathroom: Without a bathroom we can't effectively rent that space. But bathrooms are at least \$20,000. Maybe for now we can figure out a space if nothing else. Unisex bathroom, handicapped accessible would be best. Charlie thought maybe the storage area. Silke brought that bathrooms should be near kitchen; toward the back of the house. Kitchen could be smaller. Though MESH does use the kitchen to capacity. So possible locations are Alliance room, part of kitchen, library. But Melcher library is 'sacred space'.
- Drywall: We have a bid on the drywall. Ropes on stage are rotten so we have to spend \$1,000 to repair.

Teresa summed up: We have pricing for curtains; electrical is pretty reliable; wall in Alliance Room need a little more room; curtain and rope need a slightly more specific estimate but \$1,000 would be safe. The rolling banks of chairs are about \$500 each and would have to be rolled somewhere or sitting right in Fletcher Hall. Covered things are \$2000 or 3 or 4 or 5 to be pretty. Wall in Alliance Room is cheaper. Shorter racks.

So we can vote on drapes and electrical, the two most immediate and not so costly needs.

Chris: Long term vision: \$10,000 this year and \$10,000.

Motion to approve the money for the curtains: up to maximum amount listed up to \$4,015: Mike Premo moved; Chris seconded.

Motion to spend up to \$5,000 for electrical: Dennis moved; Mike Premo seconded. Passed.

Chris proposed that we use our surplus for this. Typically, around August or September, we allocate it for other things.

Motion to take up to \$10,015 out of the surplus; Jerry so moved; Judith seconded; passed.

Up to \$1,000 to replace ropes: Chris moved; Mike M. seconded. Passed.

Merger with Orange Congregation (Essex County UU)

Orange Congregation came a couple of weeks ago. Had meeting last Thursday and are pretty much on board. One of their members who is an attorney is drafting a letter of intent. Should come by Friday.

Members of Merger Committee (from UUCM):

Cheryl Crawford, Sue Rawfer and Markus Hauck: Worship

Chris Corbett and Judy Strachan: Finance

Andree Laney and Shirley Matthews: Governance

Jason Brome: I.T.

Irene Sanderson: Process Observer

CBO and Teresa DeSousa: At large

Charlie expressed that concerns brought up by members of the congregation: It's good we are having people ask now. The letter of intent might answer some of those concerns. But as early as the Sunday after Thanksgiving we should have another discussion. We need to ask the hard questions now, not in the future.

Chris expressed that something has to be done with their sanctuary fairly early. It is not conducive to growing a vibrant place. It's dingy, dusty. Parish Hall is wonderful.

But the sanctuary needs work. How do we get capital in there? This place was beautiful at one time but not now.

Merger committee will have to come up with a plan. Dorothy brought up: Need a statement in the Order of Service. Should we wait for the Letter or Intent? Charlie said the sermon in September outlined it well, but maybe a short statement should be put out there. Some people really aren't aware. Key points to make sure our congregation is aware of: They are a financially sound congregation; this is a visionary process for us and them.

In terms of the worship experience there: Having Gordon Bailey on board is important. The Worship subcommittee has looked at that question and have reached out to the congregation.

In terms of a special membership meeting: We have to send out everything 15 days before the actual meeting where we will vote on the letter of intent. Can it be done before Charlie goes on sabbatical in January?

Auction update by Mike Mernin

Donation levels were stalled; the online process was a little rocky. But now we are up to raw numbers of items, up to 145 items against 180 last year but we had a lot of chaff that didn't sell. Our quality of our offerings are new and good; we are up to "bread and butter" dinners and parties with 35 dinner parties against 33 last year. We only had three vacation rentals. We used to have many more. Scott Seale is throwing a pool/barecue for 50.

Karen Fried and Debroah Graham are once again taking the lead on decorations; Kathy Szmak and Nicole Rinklin and Randi Hawkins managing the kitchen; blasts out to senior youth and COA to help. Only missing links will have to meet Gerry McCart in order to put up the walls, arranging the space.

Payment: We are looking at a card swipe plan to make the process more streamlined and easier on the office.

Folks from Orange are invited.

Jerry Fried mentioned opportunities for Super Bowl b&b type rentals. Judy brought up Carol McGough's b&b program. The organization that does this has a website: UU b&b. Charlie mentioned creating an ad that we would email to congregations.

Scheduling for Board Moments:

Sunday Teresa will reintroduce the Amazon Associates programs. We have made some money, each month a little better. This is the time to promote it. Teresa will do the Board moment. Jason has magnets to hand them out at the auction.

Board moment on December 8 about membership. We will all as a board will do this one.

Dorothy processed observation: Started off with talking about Jason and IT; discussion about High Coffee; going to be a necessity to look for more leadership; calendar is interesting; Green issues: Silke recruiting; 5th grade supporting wildlife; many same sex weddings. February Focus month is about race issues in commemoration of MLK. Merger is about aspirations and vision for being a presence in that community. We did everything well, active, everybody contributed. Issues of repression: Celebration Sunday and weddings; February Focus month curricula; merger, sending Michael off to his new post.

Motion to adjourn: Chris; passed.