Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair
February 16, 2015
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Meeting began at 7:35 pm

Staff: Charlie Ortman, Judy Tomlinson

Visitors: Dan Silver, Patrick Lahey, Silke Springorum, Paul Nick

Members: Arlene Dodge, Dorothy Sommer, Jerry Fried, Chris Corbett, Sue Raufer, Dottie Hiebing, Judith Rew, Mike Mernin, Laura Kushner, Mary Moriarty

Laura: Statement of Guiding Principles

Opening Words: Sue
Lao Tzu

January Board minutes:
Motion to approve Dorothy/ seconded / approved

Mike: President's Report
Began with some historical research in honor of February Focus month. Started noodling around the Internet, searching UU Montclair in the *New York Times* archives and got a reference to a Unitarian society in Montclair and a minister James B. Harrison, from 1868 to 1876, when it went out of existence. But it formed again a few years later. Checked the Compendium of Christian Registries. Found a discussion about Montclair: "In the Roaring 70s, why shouldn't they roar as well as the 40s? Montclair was not quite the summer and winter resort as it is now." Harrison was apparently an inspiring preacher. Talked about another minister in town of the Congregational Church, which became the Universalist Church. A writer at the time John Chadwick (ironic) called UUs "Lunitarians…. Just as well to put away the spoons." There was another letter from an African American man who attended there. This letter seemed like a "bridge to our congregation that didn't start until 1897. He also discovered a play about the Women's Alliance—some of them were, some were not already Unitarians.

Minister's Report: Charlie
16 visitors sign one form of welcome or another. Number of the New UU Class was the smallest we have had ever (8?).

Malcolm Campbell's memorial will be a week from this Saturday. Steve Schoenwiesner continues to improve and will be home Thursday. Discreetly want to say thank you to those of you who helped them through me. I was thinking about the birth of my grandson Rowan, makes me appreciate young children so much. On Jan. 29 I participated in a National Council of Jewish Women's event on Roe v. Wade at the Congregational Church. Also in attendance were Executive Director and another

representative of Catholics for Choice, a Jewish Rabbi, and an Episcopal priest. It was very interesting hearing the same kinds of conclusions from so many different backgrounds. One of the upshots was that there could be a time when we may lose Roe v. Wade. It should concern us. The poor will again be the most affected. We should prepare us for the next battle towards justice. In terms of this being a month in which we are celebrating our history, my two favorite historical moments:

During my tenure I think my favorite movement was following a board meeting in this room, the board agreed to stand for marriage equality; the following Sunday the board came up to the front of the sanctuary and we all sang *Standing on the Side of Love*: Truly a celebration of our call to justice.

Other one: Michael mentioned the fire that occurred on May 19, 1917 and the following Sunday the congregation dedicated itself to our wellbeing and our future. There was one small fire during my tenure [which led to a more formulated process for fire drills and procedures].

Minister's Report: Judy Tomlinson
Judy had a six-week sabbatical and has had quite a generous welcome back. The Sabbatical mostly focused on renewal of body and spirit with a significant amount of time spent researching interim ministries and the process. I would recommend a couple of books. The UUA has published a book called In *In the Interim: Strategies for Interim Ministers and Congregations* by Barbara Child. Dottie recommends the book called *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes* by William Bridges.

Harvest the Power: Patty and I are going to do Harvest Light for the Council member committee chairs on March 7 Saturday, 10-2. We are about to set up dates for the info session. So I would like to extend an invitation to any Board members who have never done Harvest to attend these sessions or the whole program. Sunday, April 26 will be graduation. We are beginning to build a facilitator team for next year.

RE Committee Retreat will be Saturday, Feb 28, and the theme will be "recruitment" and the survey.

Silke Springorum and Paul Nick presentation: Green Sanctuary budget
We are about 10 people strong at this point. Very steady. When we were looking at the budget proposal for this year we were kind of going back to the foundation. So we went back to the three pillars of the UUA: Spirituality; greening our operations; working for sustainability in our wider community. We've done:

1· Deep Ecology Literacy program: six successful events
Attendance was between 15-60 people. In April we will hold an event.

2. Paul: there are literally two movements: Transitions and now a Transitions Newark, which is formed and growing. We are asking for money to bring this movement more into the community.

3. We have tried to set up a composting program. But at the end of the day it seems to be too challenging. So we should put our heads together.

4. We are exploring our place in the web of life, with a strong emphasis on environmental justice. We have purchased the curriculum already. We are thinking of partnering with the UU Orange Congregation.

5. How can we green our operations more? Start using recycled paper produced throughout. The offices are now; the bathrooms are not; we are at the mercy of our vendors. Potentially change to electric hand dryers and do away with the paper in the bathrooms. Still need a few more recycling bins . Now we are in the happy position of people wanting to recycle more than we have provided bins for.

6. Rain garden: It seems to be moving to behind the big wall behind Fletcher Hall. Repurpose the area to make it beautiful, make it educational.

7. Library DVDS for educational workshops. We would like to start a library similar to the Undoing Racism library.

Three points what we are not asking for:
--Coffee hour: We have had conversations with Charlie and Michael. It needs to be in a bigger framework. Hoping that we can help with the coffee hour people…
--Green materials: Boiler, kitchen stove, etc. The proposal is that we work more in tandem with the committees to just help them.
--No more money needed to pay for greener electricity. Instead of asking for $1,000 we have saved $1,000 by already switching to more sustainable electricity.
--Buildings and Grounds has made direct requests. A number of items belong in other budget lines and are being requested directly by other entities.

Dottie: can we get more of this available electronically?

Jerry: Would like to talk about connecting with the environmental commission of the town and the Interfaith Environmental Coalition. Also transportation, he is talking to Norma and Laura.

Mary: Everybody knows that paper towels are replacing electric dryers. Would be better to do that or towels?

Silke: Because we now get renewable energy, electric dryers is a plus. But we need to do the research.

Charlie asked where those two movements came from: We had a speaker for two hours and these two movements formed right then and there. On Feb. 28 is a four-day workshop.

Thank you notes:
Sue Reinhardt for writing the two plays about our history.
Kathie Morrow Reilly for putting together the display case. (Jerry asked: the big table in the Narthex…can it be permanently repaired or be moved on?)

Rev. Gwen Parker Ames who spoke last Sunday.

Office Administrator's report: None

Treasurer's Report: Chris Corbett

January and February are usually slow but we're doing pretty well. Last month it was $23,000 less than last year; but this year about $30,000 is higher than last year. Expenses are high but our strong income is overcoming that.
Year to Date: We are well on our way to meeting our budget.
Our expenses are higher than they should be; but these are a lot of already completed expenses. A lot of it is facility. Our really successful auction made a big difference. Our short term rentals have been pretty well. And our long term rentals rent went up a little. Our pledge income is basically where we want it to be.

Charlie: With this discrepancy in the expenses is there a point in the next few months when the Board will have to relook at the budget?

Chris: I was worried a couple of months ago but right now we are coming around.

The final sheet: The funds have not been doing really well. They are kind of flat and slightly down. The big thing is the music endowment because the music committee depends on that to fund the assistant music director's salary.

Challenges:

--Last year we used some of our non-recurring funds to accomplish things: hiring the senior youth coordinator; hiring a music assistant; extra hours for music director; employee bonuses; green sanctuary. So we're down $24,000 again. But a 3% increase in funding would cover that.

--Interim minister: Have to give that person a moving allowance. Our search committee needs a budget. Mostly it happens in the second year when we start moving toward the real minister.

--Maintenance budget: Our current budget is only $11,000. We'd like to move that up, too, and stay there. We need to get up to $20,000 if we want to keep the place in good shape. Remember, we depend on this place for rentals, etc.

Keep your ears open for what other committee's priorities are.

Arlene asked about medical insurance for our part-time employees. Would the staff perhaps prefer that their bonuses go toward medical insurance?

Chris: Looked at UUA about the interim minister; read the UUA's policy for all employees and realized we need to do some work. The UUA has a process that you become a congregation that is bringing treatment of employees in terms of compensation up. I'd like to propose that we go into this process. You have to commit to getting it right. We do not currently have the money in the budget but we could commit to it.

There is no one paid less than $15 a hour. All of our employees are covered for medical somewhere—spouses, etc. If we have a fairly good pledge drive we may be able to cover all the stuff at the top. The income you're seeing there does not include spending our surplus funds ($11,000 last year; $13,000 the year before). We may need it. We may not.

Jerry: Question: Is there going to be a process of you/the Board doing some long range 3-5 year planning around what will change over the last few years of transition? We have no plans, but we should.

Charlie: I have been told that healthy congregations tend to maintain and even grow during a transition and unhealthy congregations tend to lose. I would maintain we are more a healthy congregation.

We had a poor experience last time because we chose the wrong interim minister.

Mike: The pressure is on all of us.

Dottie moves to receive/ sue second/ pass receive the treasurers report

Recurring business:

Pledge drive: Mike
Everyone should pledge now. Let's stand up with the Felixes soon and be able to say the whole Board has pledged. If you feel like you cannot increase your pledge then increase it 2 or 3 percent. If you can, increase it 10 percent.

Chris: The message has got to be out there that if we fall below this point we are in danger of losing our Assistant Music Director; our Senior Youth coordinator, etc.

We have $7,200 match. From the top quartile there is an anonymous matching pledge for anyone who brings up their pledge.

Mary: Somebody should enlighten me about the relationship between the Pledge chairs and the Board. Is there any oversight? I think there should be discussion and maybe even a vote.

Charlie: This is the Felix's second year. In the first year they came to the Board and had a sit down meeting with a bunch of people, leadership. They came to the Board and said here's their plan. The Board didn't sign off on it but we were informed. And this year we operated on the assumption that they were okay.

Chris: There were a couple of small missteps… All this stuff that we learned at the fundraising workshop wasn't incorporated. There were very few people at the kick off. So we haven't hit those types of people.

A new team has not been chosen for next year.

It would be good to have a little script for when we talk to a committee or individuals. This is our wish list of what you will say in the following weeks.

Mike asked for fresh data in terms of tonight. I guess they'll get new information by tonight. Let's continue this conversation via email over the next few years.

Mary asked that the pledge conversation begin in October of next year.

Chris should look at member of the Finance Committee for potential pledge chairs.

Interim minister search: Arlene Dodge
Interim ministers taskforce, each has his/her responsibilities:
Arlene (chair, working on packet)
Jerry Fried
Laura Kushner
Judith Rew.

Some questions that we thought the Board should be in on, like our "five strengths" and challenges. The answers to these questions are actually a key part of the application, which is due April 17, but we'd like to get it in April 10.

We have to provide demographics of our community and congregation. This is the paper that shows the personality of the congregation.

Judy: There can be a discrepancy; we are stable but we have not had really dynamic fund drives.

Charlie: The interim ministers are trained to look at how related these questions (the five strengths) are: How self-aware are the congregations. Sometimes the disparities are really glaring.

Meeting next Wednesday.

The UUA transitions office will suggest some names. We ask for the packets of three and interview them May 3-4. We will get together and do it as a Skype interview. If someone is close enough we will interview him/her in person.

Charlie: I'm not allowed to say anything negative about my colleagues.

Before we offer the job to one of the interims, we present our first choice and the Board, which says yes or no. And if the Board doesn't like any of them you can go back to the drawing board.

Charlie: Sometimes the good guys are in reserve. Don't take second choice. Ask for more names if you're not satisfied. Someone less than what you need should never be discussed.

UU Orange: Sue Raufer
They have decided to create a Steering Committee for the First UU Essex for the 501c3 application: 3 from Orange; Gordon; Becky Doggett and Sue Raufer. We are scheduling another meeting. A short-term steering committee that would only be in existence in order to get a 501c3. We've already gotten some guidance. Darcy has already discussed the possibility of hiring someone. The decision has been been to move away from being a religious organization and just become a nonprofit. What it would look like is yet to be decided.

Communications Committee: all is going okay, some growing pains.

The PROM: Judie's email. If it's going to exist someone else has to step up; and solve the problem of the end of the night clean up. Markus was in the kitchen until 3 am. There was a miscommunication about what needed to happen in Fletcher Hall the next morning. The event is pricey but we've always offered scholarships. It is a little exclusive. We need to make it more evident that there is a scholarship. Charlie has not been asked. Moving forward we need to find something else. Will follow up with Judie and Nick about what to do. Is there someone to draft.

Defib: Ordered and supposed to come in.

New business: we need a policy about meetings and fees.

Charlie: It was brought to my attention today that a member of the congregation questioned a member of our assistant staff that didn't merit a dress down. If you are ever in earshot please step up and say something. This is not the way we do things.

Sue: Exit interview: I started working on that.

Jerry and Charlie: Started doing an oral history.

Board moments:

Something with the Felixes.

Something about the Interim Task force process where we are. In two weeks.

Judy asked Chris: Are you looking for budgets from other committees?

Chris: Sure, we may miss something. We are not telling committees to come up with a wish list, but we are willing to listen.

Executive session:

Interim minister compensation.

Will talk about process observation next month

Motion to adjourn
Mary moved / Dotty seconded / Passed

Adjourned 9:50.