

April Meeting Minutes:

Unity Church Unitarian: Meeting of the Board of Trustees April 13, 2019

The meeting took place at Unity Church-Unitarian, 733 Portland Ave, St. Paul, MN.

Board of Trustees (BOT) members present: Jennifer Tong (chair), Jill van Koolwijk (secretary), John Steiner-Manning, Nila Gouldin, Ruth Kirkland, Clover Earl, Jackie Smith, Justin Cummins, Nancy Evert

Executive Team (ET) members present: Rob Eller-Isaacs, Janne Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman, Barbara Hubbard

Guests: Laura Park, Kathryn Jay

Jennifer Tong called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

An opening reading was offered by Nancy Evert.

A journaling prompt was offered by Kathryn Jay:

- What do you feel good about that you do as a Board/ET member?
- What do you feel the other group does well?
- What do we do well together with each other?

Board Discussion about the proposed change to the ET structure:

As KP is joining the ET to be the liaison between Team Dynamics and the church to work on our multicultural end, his responsibilities are changing. He has already delegated some of his work to other staff (e.g. Junior High worship to Ray, Drew and Sarah Cledwyn). With this shift, K.P. will join the weekly ET meetings. He has already been part of the Beloved Community Staff Team and the weekly staff meetings, so he is well positioned within the ET. His salary won't change and there won't be a new contract written, since he is ministerially aligned with the Methodist Church.

It is exciting to have KP on the ET as he is connected to the younger generation in the church, which might become more visible with him on the E.T. He will act now as minister of faith formation. To have him on the ET during our transition time will be an asset to the church and will provide continuity and strength.

The Board raised a concern that K.P.'s new position will wear him out. Rob mentioned that they are going to have more discussion among the ET to make sure that work load is balanced for all ET members.

Jackie Smith moved that the board make a decision to add the Director of RE and Manager of Multicultural Ministry (KP Hong) to the Executive Team. The motion passed unanimously.

(Discussion: This ET configuration will be reevaluated after the interim period.)

Transitions Subcommittee Update:

Jen Crow, Jennifer Tong and the Transition Subcommittee, John Steiner-Manning, Clover Earl, and Jackie Smith met to discuss three major areas of the upcoming ministerial transition: How to arrange a good good-bye for our senior ministers, the search for an interim minister and the search for a new senior minister.

To start the search for a new senior minister, there will be an independent congregational search committee of members appointed by the Board, which involves a lot of outreach to the congregation to develop a slate of candidates. Some of the outreach can be done online. There is a certain protocol on how to form a search committee: There will be slate of nominees and self-nominees, then the board selects the members to create a committee that has broad credibility with the congregation.

A good-bye committee needs to be formed by this summer.

Jen Crow will join us at the June Board meeting to explain further steps.

Executive Team Interpretation of the 2019-2013 Ends

It is hard to create these interpretations and to develop strategic priorities.

In the interpretation of the first End, the meaning of “multicultural” is left open to resist a narrow definition and to make room for many approaches and stories.

In the interpretation of the second End, the focus was on deepening our spiritual experience. Less emphasis was put on the interpretation of “wonder”. The question was raised how this end could induce change in our congregation or just continue the work that is currently going on.

The Board greatly appreciates the effort that went into these interpretations. Emotions ranged from excitement to relief and gratitude. Everyone felt that this approach is very helpful and will inform our future discussions about the monitoring calendar. Because only the first 2 Ends were addressed so far, the ET will provide interpretations for the other Ends by the June board meeting.

The primary way to assess progress toward the Ends is the Congregational Survey. As a way to understand more about this progress Laura Park suggested the possibility of holding small focus groups to discuss the new Ends further within the congregation to see how church members perceive the changes.

Break

Monitoring Reports – ET report

Proposed Monitoring Calendar for Policy I B. (Ends Statements):

At the March meeting the ET agreed to review the schedule for the IB monitoring reports (Program Outcomes). The primary measurement of the outcomes is the Congregational Survey. There is also a report scheduled to be provided annually but has been split up to do portions on a more frequent basis. Given the new Ends, the ET proposes that going forward in the first year of the new Ends, they'll report on Program Outcomes in September, supplemented by a midyear report in March. This can be changed in future years, if needed, as we grow into them. Jennifer will update her monitoring schedule of reports to reflect this update.

There was brief discussion of the placement of the Membership report in the monitoring structure but no final conclusion.

Policy II.E. Financial Condition:

Jackie Smith moved to accept the Executive Team report as in compliance with policy II E. The Financial Condition here refers specifically to the January and February financial reports. The motion passed unanimously.

(Discussion: The new comptroller Ying Yu is working on a new format for the financial reports that will include forecasts and cash flow projections which will be share at the May Board meeting (March financials). The 2019 budget is larger than last year, largely due to the work on our multicultural end/initiatives. Pledges are coming in lower than budgeted, so the ET is doing some additional review and will be providing a proposed course correction with an updated forecast in May to reflect current conditions. The Currier gift funds have not been received yet but are anticipated to come in soon.

Policy II H. Communication and Counsel to the Board:

Nancy Evert moved to accept the Executive Team report as in compliance with policy II H (Communication and Counsel to the Board). The motion passed unanimously.

(Discussion: Above Every Name will rebrand as an “Afrocentric, Christ Centered, Universalist Congregation”. Their relationship with Unity will be strengthened by shared programming in a women’s and men’s group and Wellspring Wednesdays in the fall 2019. On April 24th, there will be a celebration of Above Every Name’s Eighth Anniversary as a congregation.

We are pursuing publishing efforts with Reredos Press, a Unity publishing initiative led by Shelley Butler and Laura Park.

There is a need to develop a plan for pastoral care as interim ministers don’t generally do this. Discussions are taking place with Karen Hering to replace the role of the Hallman Intern, which we will not have during the 2019-20 church year and thereafter during the transition. Her responsibilities are in negotiation around taking on Pastoral Care, Wellspring Wednesday worship and the Newsletter throughout the interim period. The donor is willing to provide the gift even though we will not have an appointed Hallman Intern.

There was some discussion of the work of Team Dynamics. There was a general sense that we’d like to see the results in a more concrete way, such as a report on their findings to date and on their mapping work. KP is managing the initiative and will be working with them to ensure we receive clear findings and insights. One thing we’d like to get out of the engagement is to understand how other groups do this work. The Trustees asked again that the monthly written Communication and Counsel to the Board report include an update on the Team Dynamics work.

The ET has a list of people who they think would be good Trustees and can provide them to the Capacity Subcommittee as they are making a list of recommendations for new Board members. The Capacity Subcommittee is working on what skillsets and attributes would be desirable to add to the Board, so it was agreed that Barbara would meet with the subcommittee on Tuesday for further discussion to ensure the Trustees and ET are working in partnership.

Consent Agenda:

Nancy Evert moved to put policy II B (Staff Changes), the decision on Ray Hommeyer's request on aspirant status and Approval of March minutes on the consent agenda. All were approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Prophetic Leadership – Subcommittee Reports

No reports were given.

Meeting evaluation

We went around the table with a short comment on how the meeting went.

Nancy Evert offered a closing reading.

Jennifer Tong adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jill van Koolwijk, secretary.