

**Board of Trustees Meeting  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Santa Rosa  
January 18, 2018**

**MINUTES**

**Voting Members Present:** Natalie Brundred (President), Gretchen Vap (Vice President), Sara Jones, Michael Randolph (Treasurer), John Jaffray, Gretchen Paradis, Melinda Napier (Corporate Secretary), Sean Freese.

**Voting Members Absent:** None

**Non-Members Present:** Rev. Chris Bell, Linda Stabler, Susan Thollaug

**Meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m.**

**Chalice Lighting, Reading of the UUCSR Covenant, and Opening Words:** Rev. Chris and Natalie

**Check-in**

**1-on-1 Activity:** Rev. Chris

**Agenda review:** The meeting agenda was approved without modification.

**Minutes:** The December Board Meeting Minutes were amended and approved.

**Open Mic:**

A brief Executive Session was requested by a board member, which lasted approximately 12 minutes.

Board Retreat:

Natalie is beginning to plan for the board retreat in August. There was a brief discussion about purpose, dates, location, and costs. Natalie observed that going away for the retreat allows participants "time out of time" in a supportive environment to bond and to do good work. Some board members suggested meeting at a location in Santa Rosa to reduce cost; others thought the Bodega Bay site used last year would be comparable in cost. August 17/18 was the preferred weekend. The matter was tabled for further discussion next month.

Activity Fair:

Rev. Chris reported that there is limited availability of the building for an activity fair in April. The last one was in 2016. The board agreed that, given other initiatives the church is launching this year to encourage members to participate in the church's activities, there will be no activity fair this year.

John noted that one of the TIE groups has volunteered to participate in a Saturday Work Day at the church. He suggested that other activities to support the church could be done as service projects by TIE groups.

## **REPORTS:**

### **Treasurer's Report — Michael Randolph**

In December, revenue was up by \$65k. December is typically high, and January low. The church is operating in the black. We have no deficits.

### **New member/volunteer team — Sara Jones**

Two members have been recruited and the team is in process of setting up. This will be a standing committee. It will clarify its vision and details regarding how it will work. Sara will head up the committee and be the board liaison.

Natalie said the board would like to hear periodically about its progress. Sara agreed to provide a more extended quarterly liaison report.

Sara asked for input on naming the team. Rev. Chris observed that the team will be mission-focused on members being more engaged, empowered, enriched, and enjoying that engagement.

**The board unanimously approved the creation of the "Member Engagement Team."**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Congregational Meeting (CM):**

The Agenda was approved and will be sent to congregation on January 26.

#### Main Agenda Items:

- Assistant Minister
- Draft 2018/19 budget
- Bylaws change

## Naming policy Appreciations

### Assistant Minister:

Natalie read aloud her article, "The Case for an Assistant Minister," intended for the February newsletter. It was well received. Natalie will make a presentation about the Assistant Minister and why it's important to have one at the CM.

### Draft 2018/19 Budget:

Michael shared the new 4-page format that will be used to present next year's budget to the congregation. There will be a 2-page "traditional" budget, with standard categories. There will also be a 2-page "mission-based" budget, organized by what we want to accomplish. Pie charts will provide a picture of money flows for both types of budget.

The budget will reflect recent pledge history, and will be based on actual expenditures for last 12 mos. We don't know for sure what that number will be going forward. On the expense side, the Finance Committee talked with church staff and committee chairs for input in constructing the budget.

We'll have higher expenses next year to cover health, merit raises, and a part-time assistant minister.

We will need to set a pledge goal with the Stewardship Committee. There are about 355 pledging members. A general increase in pledges by about \$15/month would cover it.

UU's historically contribute at among the lowest levels to their churches, as a percentage of income. Member households meeting the "5 to thrive" goal are less than 10% of our congregation.

### Naming policy:

Natalie and Rev. Chris summarized the proposed new naming policy, which would apply to naming anything at the church — room, area, program. In the interest of time, the policy proposal was to be sent by email to the board members after this meeting and approved via email. If it is approved by the board, it will be included in the CM packet and will be voted on at the February meeting.

### Changing the Bylaws:

Natalie has inventoried the Bylaws. The major change she's recommending, based on board discussions in recent months and input from the Financial

Committee, is to move from three to two CMs per year, in January and June. This will allow the church's budget to be prepared later in the year, and thus have a more solid basis. The proposed change foresees that a draft budget would be mailed to all members at the beginning of May. Several forums would be scheduled in May for members to ask questions and provide feedback. The budget would then be approved at the June CM, and would be effective starting in July.

Natalie read aloud a short article on this proposed change for the February newsletter. **The Board voted unanimously to put to the Congregation the question of going from three to two Congregational Meetings.**

A task force will review the Bylaws and recommend allocation of functions between the two meetings and new language to be adopted. The task force will be appointed by the board.

Sara raised a concern about something coming up between meetings that needs congregational input or approval. The Bylaws currently say that a special CM can be called by the board at any time.

#### Appreciations:

We'll be recognizing the contributions of four elders and four others at the CM. The board agreed that it's important to let people know in advance that they're to be recognized so they will be sure to attend the meeting.

The board agreed that a list of everyone who's been honored in the past is needed. Sara will look back at the CM minutes and compile names. Rev. Chris suggested that a list of all those who've been honored be posted on a bulletin board.

Slides: Most will be from Michael and Natalie. They should be sent to Linda Stabler by Wednesday, January 31.

#### **Assistant Minister Survey:** Rev. Chris

To get a deeper insight into the congregation's wishes and expectations for the assistant minister, Rev. Chris has put together a survey that members will be able to fill out online. He passed out printed copies of the survey, and asked the board to send him any feedback about the survey.

The division of ministerial responsibilities hasn't yet been determined, and will be decided based on the person's strengths. Rev. Chris said that he'll be open to having the new person take over corresponding parts of his (Chris's) job.

## **ONGOING BUSINESS**

### **Staffing Update:** Linda Stabler

The Assistant Minister position is being advertised now.

Director of Religious Education (DRE) position description will be finalized January 19. We will post it widely, but not on Craigslist or Indeed because familiarity with UU principles is a minimum qualification. Familiarity with UU is so essential that a UU site is needed to reach qualified candidates.

The interview team is about set, with several people from the RE Steering Committee who will probably function as a tag team.

Human Resources Team: Linda distributed a handout showing the new HR team, which she coordinates.

### **Executive Session**

#### **Talk to a Board Member - Scheduling and Report**

A new signup sheet was circulated for the Ask a Board Member rotation.

Discussion on the pros and cons of Ask a Board Member included a variety of opinions. Natalie said that the regularity of Ask a Board Member is important in the overall effort to make sure that the board and congregation are connecting. A concern was raised about dealing with the information adequately. It was generally agreed that the report needs to indicate more clearly whether an item has been addressed or is still pending, and that not all items require follow-up.

#### **Liaison concerns**

Sara is updating a pamphlet about the church's committees and wants to know if information about each committee is correct. She asked that when board members next contact their committee chairs for the liaison report, they ask for specific information and include it in their committee reports next month.

#### **Questions/comments/concerns**

The Fire Fund has continued to receive donations. The total collected exceeds \$70k. It is intended for members and friends. A second disbursement will happen soon.

**8:58 — meeting adjourned**

***Next Board Meeting: Thursday, February 15, 2018, 6:30 pm in Board Room***

Respectfully submitted by Susan Thollaug, Recording Secretary