

## USG Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, January 22, 2013

**Members present:** Tom Ott, Betsy Gabriel, Treva Burger, Walt Ceglowski, Linda O’Gwynn, Marina Patrice Van Gossen, Leni Windle, Andrea Parry, Dennis Strain.

**Non Members present:** Rev. Kent Matthies, Joan Javier-Duval

### December Minutes

**Motion:** To approve the December minutes

**Motion approved:** 7-0-0 (Andrea Parry and Dennis Strain were not present for this vote.)

**President’s Report:** Tom Ott would like to begin a process to update Rev. Kent Matthies’ contract because he has been working under his original contract which is now 10 years old.

**Stewardship:** There will be an All Church Dinner March 9, all Board members are requested to attend. Leni Windle is seeking table captains, not for recruitment or discussion leading. Appetizers and dessert will be provided, the rest of the meal needs to be coordinated by the table captains. Board members should email Leni Windle if they are willing to be table captains.

**Buildings and Grounds Task Force:** Linda O’Gwynn reported on the goal of reigniting thinking about the Master Plan. She has a very helpful letter to the congregation from Berdine Whedon, written when she was President, outlining the Master Plan process that is still very relevant and helpful. Phase one included finding an architect to draw up plans and other items all of which were completed and an elevator, which has not been completed. She feels we need to start working on the elevator, both fundraising and deciding exactly where it will go. Phase two steps need to include input from the congregation, designating a capital campaign committee and engaging an architecture firm. The Board needs to take the lead on this. Key players on Buildings and Grounds need to be involved. Linda O’Gwynn would like the Board to approve reconstituting the Master Plan Implementation Committee, maybe with a different name, and develop a proposal for members and a set of guidelines. She offered to chair and the Board enthusiastically accepted her offer. Budget and Finance should definitely interface with the capital campaign piece. She will come to the next meeting with a proposal. The Board thanked Linda O’Gwynn for her enthusiasm and efforts.

**Budget and Finance:** The Budget and Finance Committee has agreed to take on the development of the proposal for a Finance Council and will have a proposal to present at the February meeting. They will also have a proposal on ideas for how to use the Edna Jones request. They will outline categories of designation and bring it to the Board before it goes to Buildings and Grounds.

**Treasurers Report:** Rev. Kent Matthies feels strongly that we can substantially increase our rental income. He feels very good about the pledge income, though we are not sure yet what it means.

**RE Fees:** There are very strong opinions about charging for RE. There was a one year plan and Andrea Parry had a meeting with Susan Doering and DRE Jody Whelden to develop a plan for next year and beyond. They agreed to call it a materials fee rather than a registration fee. In general the RE families were happy the fees were lower this year. The RE Committee doesn’t want to base fees on fair share giving. They would like the goal to be no RE fees when that is possible. They would also like a change in the way Family Fun events appear in the budget. There was conversation about how much RE costs and that the amount of the materials fee is insignificant, and that it’s not really possible to charge different groups for services that they are not contributing towards such as worship, choir participation, etc.

**Motion:** The Board approved the Proposed RE Fee Policy Beginning Church Year 2013-14 that appears on page 2 of the document labeled Proposal for RE Fees dated January 6, 2013.

**Motion approved:** 8-0-1

**JPD/UUA Dues:** We are currently budgeted to pay half of what we owe the UUA and JPD in dues because of the financial difficulties we were having. Tom Ott proposes reinstating our full dues which would increase our deficit by \$13,140. Money will likely have to come from savings because this is a very lean budget. There were Board members who were uncomfortable with this, but agreed that this should ideally be handled as a philosophical question on the importance meeting our obligations. We do not have a tradition of being fair share members. We had planned to pay a full share last year and then reneged. Walt Ceglowski understood the desire to meet our obligations, but doesn't want us to pledge to be fair share and be unable to do it again. Rev. Kent Matthies feels that there were unusual financial pressures last year between the recession and the hurricane and that we are in a better position to commit to paying these dues this year.

**Motion:** The Board reinstate full dues to the UUA/JPD for this year to be paid from the endowment if the money is not available in the budget.

**Motion approved:** 7-0-2

**Decarcerate PA:** Leni Windle and Marina Patrice Van Gossen will bring a proposal for USG to endorse Decarcerate PA for the March meeting.

**Mission Statement:** Leni Windle asks that the mission statement be read at the beginning of all meetings and incorporated into a consistent call to worship or other place in the worship service. It should be front and center in all areas of church life. Andrea Parry recommends we set the mission statement to music. There was much enthusiasm for this idea.

**Minister's Report:** Thanks and much gratitude for the MLK Day festivities, especially to Nancy Dearden, Carolyn Scott and Co-Chair Kevin Donahue who is a member of Wellspring congregation. He asks that all Board members thank Nancy Dearden and Carolyn Scott from the Board.

The staff and Ending Racism Committee would like good attendance for the Paula Cole Jones meeting on February 2.

Rev Kent Matthies and Joan Javier-Duval are staff liaisons for a town hall meeting promoting multicultural and diversity issues on Saturday March 2 to look at what we are doing well and solidify that and look at what else we could be doing and would like Board members there as well.

Two issues were addressed in Executive Session.

**Motion:** Authorize the Strategic Staffing Team to reconstitute the DRE Search committee to begin a search for a new DRE.

**Motion approved:** 9-0-0

**Motion:** To adjourn.

**Motion approve:** 9-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Treva Burger

### **Minister's Report for January, 2013**

I bring big news in terms of staffing. Jody Whelden has told me that she will not continue in her position as DRE after June of this year. Jody and I had numerous professional, heartfelt and honest conversations between January 2<sup>nd</sup> and the time she told me this news on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Jody wants to clarify with the congregation important aspects of why this won't be a long term engagement. She originally took this position knowing that she also feels called to serve in chaplaincy. She intended to establish herself as our DRE for 25 hours per week and then look for part-time chaplaincy work. After a few months she realized that she did not have the energy to perform this job and another. This was an important turning point in her realizing that our DRE job was not a viable long-term position for her.

Throughout my conversations with Jody I have conferred with Tom Ott, Betsy Gabriel, Committee on Ministry, Personnel Committee and the Staffing for the Future group. I will complete my evaluation of Jody's performance, as I am formally obligated to do for all staff.

I recommend that the board consider bringing together the recent DRE Search Committee (Beth Lazer, Ilene Klein, David Bernstein, Shawn Craig Parker and myself) and charge us with assessing short and long term needs and possibilities for staffing the Religious Education position. One of the principal questions we need to address very quickly is do we want to look for an Interim DRE, or a permanent person. I look forward to discussing any aspects of this situation at the upcoming board meeting.

Going on to other USG ministries, I was proud and grateful for our strong **worship services throughout the Holiday Season**. Including the choir holiday service, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, Christmas Eve services, and Jazz Funeral we had spiritually moving services with great energy, participation and feedback. Attendance for all services was strong, with a tremendous combined attendance of 595 for the two services on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

As I write we are making final preparations as headquarters for **MLK Day of Service**. I am serving for my eighth and final year as co-chair with Kevin Donahue from the WellSprings congregation. As always, Nancy Dearden and Carolyn Scott are also providing truly amazing leadership and efficiency. I am pleased to report that I recruited Anne Gwynn and Mel Streib and they have agreed to come on our steering committee for next year's MLK Day of Service.

This year we have created over 500 volunteer job opportunities with approximately 30 projects in education, service and advocacy. Before the end of the weekend I will send you a final list of projects. This year MLK Day of Service has helped us to continue developing our exciting relationship with the CW Henry School on Carpenter Lane. We are placing over 100 volunteers there for cleaning and repairs.

I am working with Joan Javier-Duval, Beth Lazer, Eli Scarce and the entire Ending Racism Committee in efforts to move towards improved coordination and efficiency in our **multi-culturalism and anti-oppression**. Our Ministries and Programs Council has constructed a draft proposal recommends the formation, by the Board of Trustees, of a Transformation Team to report to the Board and the Ministries and Program Council. We are in our final stages of reviewing our proposal, especially with input from Ending Racism Committee, before we submit it for your consideration next month. The Transformation Team would be charged with coordinating USG's work toward transforming the Unitarian Society of Germantown into an **intentionally welcoming, multiracial, multicultural, beloved community**.

I want to thank you all for helping USG take the lead in the community-wide fundraiser to support x-staff of the Neighborhood Interfaith Movement. Up to this point over \$18,000 was raised to support 15 people. Rudy Sprinkle has been doing a tremendous job of administering the money. The first round of checks is being sent out this week. We will send a second round of checks, including any late donations by late January/early February.

**Rev. Kent Matthies**

## PROPOSAL FOR RE FEES

Submitted by Andrea Parry (MPC and Board member)

Worked out and agreed with Susan Doering (RE chair) and Jody Whelden (DRE)

January 6, 2013

## RE FEES

**Background:** The MPC and the Board revisited USG's policy for RE fees in 2012. The RE program was universally recognized as important to USG and integral to the church program. RE fees help (but do not cover) the costs of the program, and there are budgetary implications. Some believed that fees help to build commitment from families whose children participate in the program. Others, significantly including many if not all on the RE Committee and the minister, believed that USG should not charge for RE. As the RE Committee had not had a chance to discuss this issue with the incoming DRE, the MPC recommended, and on June 26, 2012 the Board adopted, the following policy for church year 2012-2013 only, with a new policy to be adopted for 2013-2014 forward:

- RE families who identify themselves as fair share givers, who volunteer as RE teachers, or who serve on the RE Committee should not pay user fees
  
- USG members who do not meet the above criteria should pay the following as a registration/ materials fee. This fee is for the entire church year.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> child: \$25
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> child: \$20
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> child: \$15
  - All additional children free
  
- Non-members who do not volunteer as RE teachers or who serve on the RE committee should pay the following as a registration/ materials fee. This fee is for the entire church year.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> child: \$35
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> child: \$30
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> child: \$25
  - ALL ADDITIONAL CHILDREN FREE

**RE Committee discussion:** Susan Doering (Chair RE) and Jody Whelden (DRE) met with Andrea Parry (MPC/Board member) and discussed various approaches, with the following take-aways:

- Consensus that USG should not charge RE families for the overhead and staff expenses required for an RE program. That leaves USG budget line items 5440-5467. These are largely materials fees.
- Consensus that materials fee is a better approach than a registration fee and is truer to the concept of what the charge is for.
- The RE committee decided not to effect the policy that families who identify as fair share givers not be charged an RE fee. They did not feel comfortable discussing people's pledging status with them.
- RE has not charged families who register in the spring so as not to create a barrier. Families who are satisfied come back and register in the fall.

RE committee thereafter discussed the issue and reached the following consensus:

- It appears the new fee was much more tolerable for the RE family community
- Naming the fee as a materials fee is a very good clarifier
- Working toward a goal of zero fee for RE when the church is running in the black on an annual basis is our goal
- Funds collected for family fun and other events will be used to offset our costs. If it cannot be done through the church budgeting structure we will do it ourselves by running expenses through a committee member and seek reimbursement for the difference. The reason we are so adamant about this is that if it is not done this way we will way overspend our budget for the year in expenses for family fun night events. For example, we spent about \$550 for the pumpkin carving night, and brought in \$300 in donations. Under our budget we can afford to host 4 \$250 events, but we certainly cannot afford to host 4 \$550 events.
- All in all the committee was very pleased that the Board and MPC are looking to support the RE families.

#### **PROPOSED RE FEE POLICY BEGINNING CHURCH YEAR 2013-2014**

- RE families who volunteer as RE teachers or who serve on the RE Committee should not pay user fees
- USG members who do not meet the above criteria should pay the following materials fee. This fee is for the entire church year. Families who register in the spring shall not be charged the fee.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> child: \$25
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> child: \$20
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> child: \$15
  - All additional children free
- Non-members who do not volunteer as RE teachers or who serve on the RE committee should pay the following materials fee. This fee is for the entire church year. Families who register in the spring shall not be charged the fee.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> child: \$35
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> child: \$30
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> child: \$25
  - All additional children free
- This policy shall be revisited when a balanced budget is attained and it becomes economically feasible for the church to reconsider whether a materials fee should be charged.

**Budgetary implications:** The receipts from this policy should be substantially similar to that for church year 2012-2013. The USG Treasurer (then Lee Meinicke) advised that monies collected for miscellaneous events like family fun nights have been included in the general church income, rather than designated for those events. Such income should not be included in the church budget, as the RE committee finds it necessary to supplement its budget by soliciting contributions towards such events; they otherwise are unable to provide the events within their budget; and they find that people contribute more when it is directly to offset the cost of pizza etc.

**Additional budgetary data:** The 2012-2013 budget allocated a total of \$3,150 to RE (excluding staff and overhead). As of Nov 6, 2012, a total of \$783 had been deposited in RE fees.