

USG Board of Trustees Minutes - 01/26/21

1. **Ryan Hurd, Director of Spiritual Development**, presented updates on Children's Spiritual Development and Adult Spiritual Development at USG. Ryan reviewed trends in the larger UU World.

CSD - Ryan noted that in addition to programming, there was more of a need to just connect with one another. Zoom has become a major teaching tool and we were able to pivot quickly as an organization to the new reality of the pandemic. Celeste has really stepped and been a tremendous help with all the new technology needs thrust upon everyone. Ryan also noted that he has also been able to make use of his background in digital marketing. He explained that there has been a trend of reduced attendance as people have had to focus more on work and family. In an effort to support folks who want connection, as well as folks who are falling through the cracks, Ryan has increased his pastoral role. Beginning last fall, people seemed to become more involved and more able to participate. He used examples of the Greens kits (Greens workshop) and Imbolc celebration. In previous times, 50-80 families participated in CSD; that has been reduced by about 75%. A UU Regional cohort is being created. Ryan has been using Minecraft, a very popular online game, for programming purposes. He ran a program for middle school kids over the summer. Eight congregations are involved in the Minecraft program and 2nd through 9th graders can play together and about 25-30 kids participate weekly. Kids learn life skills by playing the game. In February, stay-at-home packets will be sent to families. Andrea brought up the idea of having a family service (children's chapel). We did this early in the pandemic, but the appetite to continue evaporated in the summer, due to Zoom overload/fatigue. Programming has to be fun for kids and/or very impactful for parents.

ASD - Mindfulness has blossomed during the pandemic. Howard Silver and Gerry Whelan have provided strong leadership for these programs during the past year. We now have 3 weekly mindfulness programs with 3 teachers (in rotation). Participants offer deep emotional sharing and there is no charge for the programs, but dana is requested, as participants are able. Maggie Beaumont will be offering the popular and well received Death Cafe program again in February. The Earth Spirit group is now working as a team and planning events. Gerry W. stepped down as ASD head and Howard S. stepped down as Mindfulness chair last summer. Gerry has initiated the Braver Angels program at USG. There is also a Women's Spirituality initiative for older women exploring Crone Power and goddess spirituality. Ryan mentioned an online course about Trans inclusion offered by the Transforming Hearts Collective that leaders could take together and asked for Board input about pursuing this program. General agreement was expressed that this effort is important. Ryan also expressed a desire for more interactions with the Board.

2. **Nominating Committee** - Upcoming Board and Nominating Committee vacancies need to be filled. Shobhi Kanal requested input from the Board regarding what skills, strengths, interests, etc. are important in a board member. Recommendations included: Pandemic skills (therapists), younger members, financial experience, connections to larger UU World. The idea of committee meetings via Zoom, even post pandemic, was discussed as an appealing option.

3. Proposed Monthly Financial Statement - Eric Foster, MET member, presented a monthly financial statement requested by the Board. The admirably thorough and detailed presentation addressed Pledging, the Budget and the Endowment. We had \$383,000 pledged for 20/21 (10.5% increase over previous year). We're on track with pledge receipts. We have a fulfillment rate of 95-97%. We are in the fortunate position of continuing to have the resources to support our mission during these very difficult times.

4. Approval of Minutes - December minutes approved with following change: race changed to racism in item 7.

5. USG Treasurer position - Nomination needed: Tom Smith, Treasurer of operations & CIF, would like to resign & has requested a replacement. It was noted that we need to update the job description and better define the position. Further discussion required.

6. Endowment Policies and Procedures working group - the group developed a draft policy and sent it to MET. MET reviewed the draft. Dev and Lee would like to meet with MET to discuss the policy draft. One recommendation is that an investment committee be created.

7. Covid Relief Committee - John Davis reported that the committee recently approved 3 new grants to organizations and 3 new grants to individuals. To date, the fund has awarded a total of \$59,825.

8. Announcements:

a. **Widening the Circle of Concern:** first meeting is planned for 2/3/21; participants are expected to read the chapter on "Theology."

b. **Dennis Brunn is looking for a replacement for his position** as chair of the Local Organizing Committee linked to POWER & his position as local co-leader to UUJustice PA (formerly UUPLAN). Suggestions should be sent to Kent

c. **The USG annual meeting (Zoom) has been scheduled for Sunday 5/16/21** after the service. Board members are asked to mark your calendars and plan to attend.

d. The Bylaws require that the Board president, vice president or secretary be appointed as a **second signature for the CIF on checks >\$5,000**. **John Davis** has agreed to assume this responsibility. **Celeste** is handling the paperwork.

e. **Andrea Barsevick would like to serve on the Board for another 1-year term so she can continue as Board president for another year. Andrea received unanimous and enthusiastic support from the Board to serve as President for another year.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Sam Stormont - USG Board of Trustees Secretary