

Minutes for the Board Meeting of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, March 19, 2024 **APPROVED**

In attendance, virtually and in person (in alphabetical order):

David Asbury, Rob Bray, Bill Cherry, Eddie Chin, AB Coleman, Denise Coleman, Steve Drevik, Mebbie Jackson, Ted Jones, Heather Kistner, Catherine Farmer Loya, Jeff Mellor, Mark Mohundro, Claudia Pressley, Mary Rogge, Ken Stephenson, Bella Thomas-Wilson

1. **Opening Words - Mebbie**

Mebbie opened the meeting with an inspirational reading.

2. **Announcements - Eddie**

a) Approve Feb Minutes

Bill moved, Mary seconded approval of the Minutes of the February Board Meeting. Passed.

b) Congregational Mtg

Eddie reviewed the outcome of the Congregational Meeting, noting that the 93% approval of the proposed bylaw changes indicated that broad consensus in the congregation that we were ready for change.

c) BMOD

He reminded Board Members to sign up via Sign Up Genius for Board Member on Duty noting that this is one of the duties of Board Members to cover 52 weeks of services.

d) Rummage Sale

Arrangements for the Rummage Sale are in progress and more volunteers are needed to ensure support for the work Leslie Gengozian and other volunteers have been doing.

e) Good Friday Service

Survey of Board Members who will be present and helping at the upcoming Good Friday service revealed a good number will be available to help.

f) Ministerial Intern

The possibility of our having a ministerial intern was discussed. There was consensus that the presence of an intern should coincide with times when the Senior Minister will be present. The funding of such a position was touched on and a possible candidate had been identified but detailed discussion was postponed until Chris and the Executive Team were available.

3. **Stewardship - Ted**

Ted brought the Board up to date on the Stewardship Campaign for the coming year. So far, 174 pledges have been received, 50 of which included an increase, averaging \$2700, which is \$400 more than last year. In this group are included several new pledging units. Currently \$471k in pledges has been received. This is \$56k less than last year at this point, but not all expected pledging units have responded to date. Approximately 37 more are expected to come in, as in previous years.

4. Minister's Report - Chris

In Chris's absence, Claudia reviewed the report Chris had previously distributed:

Minister's Report March 2024

My report will be abbreviated this month as I am going out of town for vacation. You can blame the church auction for my absence at the board meeting because I bid on and got a Gatlinburg condo.

Membership

In line with the goal of the Board "Identify, develop and grow the necessary human resources essential to TVUUC's growth and influence as driven by its mission." which I have reworded to say, "Fan into flames the gifts that are within each person so as to empower all to find their ministry." I have created the below program which I will offer on first Sundays and as guest facilitator for SGM groups.

Small Group Ministry Session - Get in Where You Fit In

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs." wrote Howard Thurman, "Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who are alive." This meeting (based on the format of Small Group Ministry sessions) is an opportunity to get to know each other better and explore how our unique gifts can make a difference in the world. Together we will explore how to, "Get in where we fit in" both at TVUUC and in the larger world.

Reflection

- I recommend the below article as we engage in long range planning for TVUUC. While some of the predictions are pessimistic, I think you will see that our congregation is in creative relationship with the challenges involved. It also illustrates the importance of recruiting leaders/members under the age of 40 so we can pass the torch to the next generation. The staff team is coming up with some ways we can improve our strategies toward this goal. [The Death of the Baby Boomers: 7 Things That Will Take Place in Your Church \(A Church Answers Research Article\) | Church Answers](#)

Public Ministry

- Below is a guest column I wrote for the Knoxville News Sentinel in honor of Women's History Month. In it I highlighted the leadership role of Unitarian women, local and national, Lizzie Crozer French, Bee DeSelm and Susan B Anthony. <https://www.knoxnews.com/story/opinion/2024/03/14/opinion-for-womens-history-month-honor-trailblazers-and-aim-high/72933377007/>
- I also wrote a short piece about Bob Booker, civil rights leader, state legislator and former director of the Beck Center (which is behind a paywall and so no link) where I focused on what he taught me about the role of Unitarians in the civil rights movement.
- I was interviewed by the paper on the question, "Why are there so many churches on Kingston Pike?"

KICMA Good Friday Service

- This is a great opportunity for us practice the 8th Principle of dismantling racism by building stronger ties with local African American Churches. We are looking for volunteers to serve as greeters and ushers for the Good Friday Service at noon on March 29. If interested email me at chrisbuice@tvuuc.org
- The TVUUC choir is well represented in the multi-church choir that will be a part of this Stations of the Cross service. Thanks to David Asbury for all his help!

- The Memorial Service Reception Committee is putting together food/drink for a reception after the service. Thanks to Cindi Moffet for organizing.

Rev. Chris Buice
Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church

5. DFO Report - Claudia

Claudia reviewed her report to the Board previously distributed:

Director of Finance & Operations Board Report Feb. 19, 2024

Budget Planning is underway

An Excel spreadsheet has been sent to all staff & members of programs with budget responsibilities. The Finance Committee will begin meeting in April to develop the 2024-25 Operating Budget to present at the June Congregational meeting

Welcome Garden

The Welcome Garden Task Force completed their directives on time and submitted information to the Finance Committee

General Assembly

The following people have asked to be delegates at General Assembly this year. They are Mark Mohundro, Chloe Aroldi-Watters and Patsy Farmer. We can Have a total of 8 voting delegates.

Misc. Updates

1. The Management Team has begun weekly Huddles (30-minute meetings).
2. The first meeting of the Management Team and the “coaches” was on Monday, Mar. 18
3. A Management Team Responsibility Matrix is in process.
4. 16 new people were added to the REALM database in the last 30 days.
5. Mark Mohundro and I are continuing to work together to update REALM records.
6. Our first CD matured today (March 19). Steve Drevik & Bill Cherry can share more information.
7. I am in conversation with a cleaning company to see if hiring an outside vendor might be a good fit for us. This would be a minority-owned local business.

6. Membership Committee - Mark

Mark presented the results of his work on developing a Path to Membership for people wishing to join our community:

Path to Membership

A. Purpose of this Policy/Procedure

This policy/procedure addresses:

1. requirements for membership in Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church
2. procedures for welcoming and embracing new members into the TVUUC community
3. procedures for resigned members to rejoin the TVUUC community

B. Scope

This policy will apply to all members and all persons who wish to become members of the TVUUC congregation.

C. Responsibility

The membership services coordinator and/or the chair of the membership committee will be responsible for seeing that the terms of this policy/procedure are carried out.

D. Policy Statements:

- a. Membership Eligibility – A person may become a member of TVUUC who is at least sixteen years of age, who subscribes to the mission and values of TVUUC, who considers TVUUC their primary place of worship, who intends to actively participate in the activities and programs of the church community
- b. Register of Members – There shall be a register of all members. Membership shall be reviewed annually. Members who have requested resignation shall be removed from the register immediately.
- c. Resignation of Membership – Any member may resign at any given time by giving written notice to the church office.
- d. Reinstatement of Membership – Anyone who has been dropped from the Register of Members may be reinstated by requesting the New Membership Coordinator and/or the senior minister for reinstatement.

E. Procedure

1. Becoming a member

- a. If a person has been a member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation and is interested in joining Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, that person will be offered an interview with the senior minister and/or a representative of the new membership committee to discuss the transfer of their membership from their previous congregation.
- b. All other persons wishing to become members of TVUUC who have met membership eligibility as stated above (Section D, 1a):
 - 1) Attend one or more QUQuestions and Landing Points sessions (recommended).
 - 2) Attend the Starting Point sessions. This class will include an introduction to TVUUC, an exploration of individual spiritual journeys, an introduction to and discussion of the church's mission statement, as well as a discussion of opportunities to have deeper connections to the church.
 - 3) If the membership services coordinator or anyone else on the membership committee or any member of TVUUC has any concerns about offering membership to any candidate, these concerns should be conveyed to the senior minister before proceeding further.
- c. Only by signing the membership book does one officially become a member of TVUUC.
- d. New members will then be offered an opportunity to attend a membership recognition service on a Sunday following the date they sign the membership book and become members. At this service, they will take part in a membership ritual and be officially welcomed by the congregation.

2. Reinstatement of Membership

If a former member wishes to be reinstated, they will arrange a meeting with the senior minister and/or a representative of the New Membership Committee to discuss it. After which they may be reinstated

3. New Member Orientation

- a. As soon as possible after the new member signs the membership book the membership services coordinator will present the new member with a new member packet. Contained in the packet may be letters of welcome from the senior minister, the president of the congregation and the chair of the Finance Committee. Also included in the packet may be a statement of Unitarian Universalist principles and purposes; instructions on how to access the Let's Connect survey from the TVUUC website, a list of Board of Directors members and Program Council coordinators and instructions on how to contact the church administrative assistant for the purpose of signing up for the newsletter, the discussion and announcement lists and any other resources which may be accessible.
- b. The Membership Services Coordinator will send an email notice to the senior minister, president and president-elect of the Board of Directors, and the chairs of the Stewardship, Spiritual Care Team, Membership and Religious Education committees. The notice will contain the name(s) of new members, contact information, and signing date. Within two weeks after a new member joins, a member of Let's Connect will phone (and meet, if possible) the new member.
- c. Within two weeks (if there are children in the new member's family) a member of the Religious Education committee will contact the new member and make them aware of programs offered.
- d. Within the second two-week period a member of the Spiritual Care Team committee will contact (and meet, if possible) the new member.
- e. At the end of one month after signing the Membership book, the President-elect will ask the Program Council chair(s) of committee(s) the new members have expressed an interest in to contact the new member.
- f. Finance chair and Stewardship chair will contact the new member after a month has elapsed, first assuring that the above-mentioned contacts will have been made.
- g. New members are not eligible to serve in church leadership until ninety days from their signing the membership book. Exceptions may be made by the Senior Minister in consultation with the New Membership Coordinator.

Ken moved. Steve seconded acceptance of the Path to Membership document Mark had presented. Passed.

Further discussion left open the refinement of wordings in subsequent revisions to be discussed at future meetings.

7. Music Director Report - David

Despite internet connection difficulties, David was able to present an impressive outline of his plans for developing a long-term, robust musical program, emphasizing the development and recruitment of younger members to the voice and instrumental ensemble and incorporation of newer music. Much of this had occurred as a result of his inspiration from a UUA sponsored program for music directors, for which he expressed his thanks. Expansion and enrichment of the music program would include developing skills in the group allowing members to take on roles for independently leading programs and teaching new skills to present and prospective ensemble members. He noted how he had also broadened his own skills in arranging for the array of instruments we currently have and expressed his pleasure in these growth opportunities. The Board responded with sincere appreciation of the progress he had already made.

8. Religious Exploration - Catherine

Catherine highlighted some of the aspects of her report to the Board, emphasizing the growth in the RE Program and its potential for incorporating parents of children in RE to the congregation at large:

TVUUC Staff Report March 2024

Adult RE Programming: We had a wonderful turnout for our first Foundations of Our Faith session on March 3rd, with nine people participating in “An Incomplete and Utter History of Unitarian Universalism.” Three sessions remain, and all are welcome!

- o **April 7** – UU Theology: Cathedral of the World
- o **May 5** – UU Theology: Our Theological House
- o **June 2** – UUism: A Social Justice Story

RE Enrollment Data: We currently have 64 children and youth registered in our RE program. There are a handful of additional participants who we don't have registration paperwork filled out for yet, and a large number of visitors who have visited 1-3 times and haven't yet officially enrolled. We have a growing program! There are 80 adults associated with our 64 registered RE participants; 40 are members or friends of TVUUC already, a small number are non-member second parents of enrolled kids with one member parent, and 32 are visitors/prospects who are potential new members of TVUUC!

Planning for 2024-25: The RE Leadership Team met last week to discuss our program's budget proposal for the next year. I'm submitting that proposal this week, including an explanatory document that gives context for the numbers we're entering into the budget spreadsheet, which the Board is encouraged to review as well. It is available at <https://tinyurl.com/rebudgeting24-25>. I encourage all Board members to read the proposal, not just because of the numbers but to give you a deeper sense of our RE programmatic priorities and an explanation of how they align with the Board's stated goals.

Camp Critter: Plans are underway for this year's RE Summer Camp Week at TVUUC! We'll be focusing on our connections with animals, and will be running camp from 8am-2:30pm on Tuesday, May 28th through Friday, May 31st. It takes LOTS of adult helpers to make camp happen, and we'd be delighted to talk with any of you about taking part – for as little as a couple of hours on one of our camp days or as much as the whole week! Registration has been open for a couple of weeks, and we are already half-filled, with 12 campers (rising Kindergarten-5th grades) and 3 junior counselors (6th-12th grades) signed up.

Multigenerational Connections at The Mountain: While we were very disappointed that The Mountain cancelled all of their spring youth cons, the delightful outcome of that was that our young people who would have attended the Elementary Con and the High School Con (as well as their advisors) joined the TVUUC church retreat instead. We had a fabulous weekend of connecting with TVUUC friends, with adults of all ages as well as a baby, a toddler, four elementary-schoolers, a middle-schooler and five high-schoolers!

Furniture Improvements in RE Spaces: We have now purchased all of the major furniture upgrade elements from our Endowment-funded RE Room Upgrade project! These include bookshelves with much more room for the CDJ Library, chairs for Room C, new couches for Room G, and adjustable-height folding tables for Rooms D, E and F to replace the very heavy non-folding (and in two of the

rooms, trapezoidal) tables that we've been using. This will be a BIG improvement in these rooms. Thank you to the Endowment folks, as well as the Board, for approving this project.

UUA General Assembly: I will be attending the virtual General Assembly in June and look forward to its opportunities to participate in our association's democratic process, connect with and learn from fellow UU religious professionals, gain access to resources for our programs and our TVUUC community, and come back with lots of ideas for the year to come at TVUUC. As a Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) member who is employed by TVUUC as your religious educator, I am eligible for delegate status as an RE professional, without using one of TVUUC's member delegate spots.

9. Life after Congregational Meeting - AB, Denise

AB outlined a series of steps to refine and re-organize the procedures under which the church will function as we transition to the new bylaws, as summarized in the following Power Point slides:

Board Goals

1. Create a **Fast, Focused, and Flexible Structure** to optimize and focus TVUUC's resources on accomplishing its Mission and Shared Vision.
2. Identify, develop, and grow the necessary human resources (stakeholders) essential to TVUUC's **growth and influence** as driven by its Mission.
3. Grow TVUUC's financial resources to provide **secure and predictable sources of funds and a reasonable cost structure**.
4. Improve TVUUC's ability and focus to **connect generations** through Common Goals and Initiatives.

A Clear and Executable Strategy



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Next Steps

1. **Form and Develop the Management Team**
2. **Prioritize Volunteer and Staff Training and Development**
3. **Develop Policies and Charters for Board and Elected Committees**
4. **Fit Current Groups into Proposed Bylaws Structure**
5. **Reconfigure Realm to Support New Structure**
6. **Continue to Update Website**
7. **Update Policies and Charters for Personal Committee**
8. **Execute TVUUC Shared Vision and Strategy**
9. **Form Primary Volunteer Teams for Board Support**

Next Steps

Form and Develop the Management Team

- Create a Responsibilities Matrix that clarifies individual responsibilities and the Management Team's relationship with TVUUC's Governing Committees
- Develop the Management Team Charter
- Begin Training on the Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX)
- Prioritize Church Improvement efforts based on MT input and input from the congregation

Prioritize Volunteer and Staff Training and Development

- Management Team
- Board Members
- Elected Positions
- Staff

Next Steps

Develop Policies and Charters for Board and Elected Committees

- Develop Policy for Committees
- Prioritize Church Policies for Update
- Develop Sample Committee Charters
 - Desired Results (Purpose)
 - Standard Agenda
 - Decision-Making Process
 - Measures for Success and Scorecard
 - Methods to Track Progress and Keep Each Other Accountable
 - Escalation Process for Decisions and Conflict
 - Linking Objectives to Board Goals

Next Steps

Fit Current Groups into Proposed Bylaws Structure

- Governance Committees
- Standing Teams (Process)
- Volunteer Teams (Projects)
- Programs

Reconfigure Realm to Support New Structure¹

- Change Top-Level Ministry Areas
- Change and Archive Current Groups
- Modify/Update Groups and Sub-Group Descriptions and Information
- Configure Website Widgets
- Change Uses Security Defaults

Next Steps

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Next Steps

Continue to Update Website

- Publish TVUUC Governance Page
- Update Website Governance Manual
- Display Realm Widgets on the Website
- Create a SharePoint Internal Site and Link to the Website

Update Policies and Charters for Personal Committee

- Add Co-Chair
- Recruit Additional Experienced Members
- Revise Personnel Committee Charter
- Submit New Job Description for Senior Minister
- Submit New Job Description for Director of Operations and Finance
- Define Roles and Objectives for Staff Members

Next Steps

Execute TVUUC Shared Vision and Strategy

- Core Values - What is at our core? Why are we here?
- Covenant - How will we bring those values into the world through relationships?
- Mission - What are we here to do? What is our work?
- Vision - What do we want to be?

Necessary Conditions	Primary Purview
Core Values	Senior Minister
Covenant	Committee of Shared Ministry
Mission	Board
Vision	Congregation
Strategic Planning and Goal Setting	Board and Board Committees

Next Steps

Form Primary Volunteer Teams for Board Support

- **Leadership Team**
 - Assist the Board in Bucket List Prioritization
 - Act as the Board's "Sounding Board" for the Congregation
 - Make Board Agenda Suggestions
 - Help Groups Develop and Modify Charters
 - Accept "Strategic Board" Assignments as Appropriate
- **Presidents Advisory Team**
 - Provide Historical References and Incites to Church Officers
 - Gather Relevant Documents for Church Policy and History Files
 - Work with the Management Team on Process Improvement Efforts
 - Assist the Board with Decisions that have Long Term Ramifications

10. Closing Words, Adjournment - Rob

Concluded the meeting with a reading to mark our progress and the meeting was adjourned.

**Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Mellor, Secretary**