

TVUUC Board Meeting

January 28, 2018

Board Members Present: Denise Coleman; Debbie Ellis; Jeff Kovac; Ginna Mashburn; Robby McMurry; John McNair; Bill Myers; Wendy Syer; Elnora Williams
Ex Officio: Chris Buice; Claudia Pressley

Treasurer's Report and Other Financial Information:

Robby McMurry gave a brief Treasurer's Report, stating that expenditures are approximately on budget through December 2017.

Other financial issues:

Adjustments were made to the Share the Plate collections, due to the off-site multi-congregation service held on January 21, and to a special collection on February 4. All (not half) of the January 28 [non-designated] collection will go to the Tennessee Healthcare Campaign. All of the money collected on February 4 will go to the Abundant Love Congregation in Atlanta (the new UU congregation opening on February 11, headed by Duncan Teague). On February 11, all (not half) of the TVUUC collection will go to the Beck Cultural Exchange Center. This will result in a reduction of revenue for TVUUC for one month (losing approximately \$3-4000). This reduction will be reflected in next month's financial report.

The collection taken at the multi-congregation cluster service on January 21 was split, with half going to the UUA Black Lives Matter campaign and half to Bridge Refugee Services in Knoxville on behalf of the local UU cluster. The decision about this collection was made jointly by the presidents of the four participating congregations, and coordinated by the Oak Ridge church. Note that Bridge will also be a recipient of TVUUC Share the Plate collections in June 2018. This is not affected by the donation made in the name of the cluster. A question was raised about how much money was raised during the Jan. 21 cluster service, but that information was not immediately available. (Someone will find out and report.)

It was also noted that the January visit from UUA leadership, and related activities, involved expenses (approximately \$500) not anticipated in the annual budget.

Membership Report

Lauren Hulse gave a report on recent activities and concerns related to membership.

Highlights include:

- 21 people have registered for the next "UU 101" prospective member class.
- The purchase of the Creative Suite software has been an enormous help in creating publicity and other materials.
- Lauren plans to use the Realm software to collect and organize information on members' interests and skills. To better meet various needs of the church, individual members can be called on for specific volunteer opportunities.
- Lauren has noticed that one of the most effective tools in membership recruitment is the church's visible participation in local community events, such as the MLK Day Parade, or social justice events. One of her goals is to offer more support to members who are organizing church participation in these events.

Related to this, it was noted that the church banners may not be as attractive or informative as they could be (identifying us as “TVUCC” only, rather than using the full name of the church.) As the “Standing on the Side of Love” banner must be replaced to reflect the new slogan (“Side with Love”), this may be a good time to redesign and replace our banners.

- Lauren has also noticed that visitors and prospective members are arriving at the church for the first time with a better knowledge of the church, having already done research on our website or social media sites or even reading several issues of our newsletter.
- While recognizing the importance of keeping information on the website and social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc) up to date, Lauren finds it is hard for her to find time manage the sites by herself. She welcomes ideas for sharing this responsibility with others, such as having a different volunteer share responsibility for the TVUUC Facebook pages each week or month.
- Another goal is to increase the use of social media sites among those less comfortable with them. She is happy to give workshops, or individual tutoring (offered as an auction item), and welcomes ideas for further education.
- A church member has offered the services of his own business to manage church website and other technical infrastructure needs for a fee. Jeff suggested that offer should be discussed by the Technology Task Force. [The Task Force has not met recently, but there are plans to reconvene soon.]
- Lauren encourages feedback from all members about how the church staff can better meet their needs. How can we best solicit this feedback?

Some questions were raised about the Board section of the TVUUC website. Information about the Board membership still lists 2016-17 members. [That will be corrected soon.] Lauren currently shares responsibility of the TVUUC website with Claudia and Bill Pierce; she mentioned that she is only able to spend about 90 minutes a week on the website, and she welcomes input from church members and leaders when they notice that updates are needed.

Transition to *Realm* Database

Now that *Realm* is active, and the Board has access, we are encouraged to use it to post Board handouts. (Jeff will begin posting handouts in *Realm* before each Board meeting. Next month, he will try both posting in *Realm* and sending by e-mail.) The Board requested a training program on this and other *Realm* functions and one was scheduled for the evening of January 31. She also reminded us that training videos are available on the *Realm* website.

Claudia noted that she has adjusted Board access to *Realm* so it does not include access to everyone’s financial information.

The initial rollout of *Realm* to the whole congregation is scheduled for February 11. Board members agreed that it would also be useful to include some very brief *Realm* instruction in the “Cottage Meetings” or “Home Gatherings” to be held in March. Claudia will bring this up with Barbara Taylor and Kaci Clark.

It was noted that only one phone number is visible for each person in the *Realm* directory. (Two phone numbers can be entered into *Realm*, but only the primary number is listed in the public directory.) It is not possible to alter the program right now to show two numbers. Members should therefore be encouraged to list the cell phone as the primary phone, if that is the phone they usually answer.

Visit of UUA Leadership

Chris gave a short report on the activities related to the visit of the UUA President and national Board. All programs were well-attended, including a total of about 650 people at the Sunday morning service. Feedback has been generally positive. Many people appreciated the opportunity to meet members from other congregations; it was suggested that we should plan more cluster-wide programs (e.g. joint worship services, coffee houses, meals, etc.)

Suggestions for any similar events in the future include:

- Better coordination of responsibility for each event and better communication about who was in charge of what
- Involvement of all music directors
- Different questions to be used for a visioning activity
- Ensuring more diverse discussion groups (so that more than one church is represented in each group)

Chris hopes to prepare provide a summary from the visioning exercise and make it available to the congregation at a later time. He also welcomes further feedback from the Board about the weekend activities.

Congregational Poll for the UUA

The UUA has proposed a four-year study on one (or both) of two topics related to intersectional white supremacy and oppression. They have asked every UU congregation to vote Yes, No or Abstain for each of these topics. If adopted, the study will examine these issues both within UU congregations and in the society in general. A “Yes” vote means that we support the inclusion of this issue on the 2018 agenda at the UUA General Assembly (GA). The final decision about a four-year study will be made at the GA.

During the last week the proposal was sent to the TVUUC community with a request to send thoughts to Jeff Kovac. Jeff did receive 10-12 messages, all of which supported the proposals. Further clarification of the proposals was given to the Board before a vote was taken, including some explanation of the terms “white supremacy” and “intersectional oppression”.

Although several people felt there was substantial overlap between the two topics, **the Board voted, on behalf of the congregation, to approve both proposals.**

Sales in the Church Policy

Jeff reported that he still has received very few suggestions for the Sales in the Church policy. However, more than one Board member still felt that parts of the latest draft of the policy were unclear. Claudia felt that the final version of the policy should be prepared by the Board rather than the church staff. It was then decided to form an ad hoc committee (Bill Myers and Ginna Mashburn, in addition to Jeff Kovac and Claudia Pressley) to work on further editing of the policy. **Board members are again urged to send thoughts to Bill, Ginna and Jeff.**

Safety Concerns

Jeff had requested that Board members send their thoughts on church safety concerns, but he received almost no comments. The Leadership Team will discuss this issue on Feb.7 and decide how to proceed. Questions include:

- Do church members feel safe at church?
- How can we increase a sense of safety?
- Is there anything that can and should be done to improve security?
- Should we improve training and instructions for the sextons?
- Are members aware of what to do in case of an emergency of any kind (including fire, earthquakes, etc)?
- What training do the Ushers receive on emergency procedures, and is it adequate?
- How are emergency procedures communicated?
- Is there adequate lighting in the parking lot?
- Should we arrange for additional security during large or more public events (such as the auction, Christmas Eve service, etc.)?
- Does this issue warrant a committee to study these questions in greater depth?
- Will we need to increase budget allotments for security?

Claudia noted that Will Dunklin and John Montgomery did attend a local meeting on church security issues. Major points included the need for clearly posted diagrams of the church for use by emergency personnel, and the importance of calling 911 at the first hint of an emergency.

Board members were again urged to send thoughts to Jeff before the Leadership Team meeting.

Chili and Games Night

We were reminded that the Board and Program Council are hosting an Auction event on February 24. (The Ruth Martin Memorial Game Party and Chili Dinner) Elnora William agreed to coordinate the planning for this event, contacting Board members to arrange who will bring food, drink and games. (Note: The Board will meet again, 6 days before the auction event.)

Miscellaneous

Jeff Kovac signed the final version of a new charter for the Strategic Planning Committee. The charter had been approved by the Board at a previous meeting.

A decision was made to give a certificate of appreciation to John Mashburn for his extensive volunteer work on the December Auction. (Linda Randolph, the head of the Auction Committee, had been recognized immediately after the event.)

Claudia noted that two outside groups will be using church facilities:

- The cooks for the Shen Yun acrobatic group performing at the Tennessee Theatre will be using the TVUUC kitchen on January 31 to prepare dinner for the acrobats. They have difficulty finding a church to give them access to a kitchen, due to their Buddhist orientation.
- In May, a "Diversity Prom" for about 250 area high school students will be held at TVUUC. They will provide their own security services, but some help may be needed from Board members and other volunteers (such as rearranging furniture in time for Sunday morning service.)

Homework Assignments

- Feedback on the Sales in the Church policy are still encouraged. Send them to Bill Myers, Ginna Mashburn, Jeff Kovac, and Claudia Pressley.
- Elnora Williams will contact everyone to organize food, drink, and games to be brought to the Feb. 24 Games Party.