

TVUUC Board Meeting

May 19, 2020

Board Members Present: Matthew Blondell; Eddie Chin; Denise Coleman (President); Debbie Ellis; Justina Hyfantis; Viren Lalka; Ginna Mashburn; Ryan McBee; Robby McMurry; Wendy Syer; Jamie Watts; Erven Williams; Alice Woody

Ex Officio/Visiting: Chris Buice; Claudia Pressley had a schedule conflict but joined for the last part of the meeting

[Meeting held by Zoom Videoconference]

Stewardship Committee Report

Taylor Thomas, Chair of the Stewardship Committee gave a report on pledges received for the next fiscal year. As of last week, pledges total about \$474,000, from 213 households. This is similar to, or even higher than, the amount pledged this time last year. The stewardship committee has now personally contacted all pledging units who pledged last year but had not yet pledged this year. The stewardship efforts now move into the next phase of continuous support for the church.

The Board enthusiastically thanked Taylor for chairing the Stewardship Campaign.

Financial Report

Robby McMurry (Treasurer) gave a brief report of the church's finances through April. Both income and spending continue to be within the budgeted amount, and the church has been able to cover all expenses.

The Finance Committee is starting to draft a budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year. They will begin with an assumption that the church building will remain closed for much or all of the fiscal year, resulting in reduced income (or none at all) from an auction, a rummage sale, or rentals.

The U.S. Government Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan of approximately \$71,000 has not yet been spent. Repayment of this loan will not be required, provided the church continues to pay full salaries of all staff through mid-July. (All staff members have been employed and paid without break since the loan was received.) It appears that any loan less than \$200,000 will be automatically forgiven without the need to prove continuous salary payment. The budget will, therefore, be developed with the assumption that the \$71,000 will be available for the next year, to compensate for loss of income and to assist in buying equipment and supplies made necessary by the pandemic.

Another budget consideration is that staffing needs will inevitably be affected if the church building remains closed for much of the next year. Some staff needs will be reduced, while additional staff may be required to assist with technical and communication needs of on-line services, meetings, and other programs. It was suggested that employees whose jobs may be eliminated or reduced should be notified as soon as possible to allow them to make plans.

Viren Lalka (Treasurer-elect) suggested that the \$71,000 PPP loan continue to be kept in a separate “restricted account” (that he is calling a “Re-imagine Fund”) to be used specifically for pandemic-related expenses; this fund would not be touched until the loan is officially forgiven. The church’s application for an additional loan under the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (up to \$150,000), has also been approved, and may also be forgiven if certain requirements are satisfied; this amount could also be placed into the restricted account. (We have already received \$10,000 of this loan.) Robby suggested that we, instead, reserve part of these loans to contribute to the operating expenses as stated in the budget, to compensate for the anticipated lost income. We could also choose to do some additional fundraising to add to the “Re-imagine Fund”. This might include services offered by members, for a fee to be donated to the church. Viren cautioned that we should not spend the loan money until we are absolutely sure the loans have been forgiven. (There may be political concerns about tax-exempt churches receiving these loans.)

A draft of the new budget must be completed and approved by the Board in time to be sent to the congregation by June 6 (eight days before the congregational meeting.) The Finance Committee understands that some decisions must be made about opening the church building before the loan funds are allotted.

Opening the Church Building

The UUA Safe Congregations Team has issued guidelines on church services and other in-person gatherings during the coming year. They are currently recommending that churches plan to continue virtual services and meetings through May 2021, but recognize that each church must make its own decision based on local circumstances. While not planning to open the building in the coming months, TVUUC has not yet made definite plans for opening the building. The Strategic Planning Committee has recommended a phased-in opening. Possibilities include holding Sunday services for small groups only or opening the building only 1-2 days per week. Adjustments will be needed to minimize the touching of any surfaces in bathrooms and other spaces. It was the opinion of the Board that these decisions should be made by the Leadership Team, as needed, with approvals by the Board, as appropriate. [The Leadership Team consists of the Church President, the President-elect, the immediate Past President, the Program Council Chair, the Program Council Chair-elect, the Treasurer, the Treasurer-elect, the Senior Minister, the Director of Administration and the Director of Lifespan Religious Education.]

Viren suggested that we survey the congregation in some way to get input on these plans after sharing the UUA guidelines. After some discussion, the general consensus of the Board was that the congregation should be given a link to the UUA guidelines through several channels, including the weekly newsletter and social media. At some point, they should be given a chance to offer opinions about re-opening the church building. It was suggested that the congregational meeting would provide an opportunity to get this feedback.

Having a congregational meeting by Zoom, including opportunities for discussion in a large group, presents new technical challenges. **A team was formed to look into the technology and procedures needed for this. (Matthew Blondell, Justina Hyfantis, Ryan McBee, and Robby McMurry).** Chris suggested that Catherine Farmer Loya is another resource, as she has become quite familiar with Zoom. The Board felt that a notice should be sent to the congregation immediately that the congregational meeting will be held on June 14 by Zoom.

In addition to the UUA guidelines, the staff and Leadership Team will be referring to recommendations from the Knox County Public Health Department, and conferring with other local churches (such as

members of KICMA) to see what their plans are to open buildings. Claudia has been designated as the official COVID-19 Coordinator for TVUUC and will participate in a group of such Coordinators assembled by the city of Knoxville. Related to this discussion, Chris suggested that concerned church members urge the County Mayor to work with the County Public Health Director as he makes decisions about the opening of Knox County businesses.

Evaluation of Associate Minister Jametta Alston

Assistant Minister Jametta Alston began her position on July 1, 2019. As a Contract (or Non-called) Minister, she was hired for one year with a Letter of Agreement. The letter stated that the church will conduct a performance evaluation before the end of the year before making a decision about an extension of employment beyond the first year. However, the unexpected interruption of normal operations caused by the pandemic has delayed this evaluation.

The Board voted to extend Jametta's appointment for two months to August 31 to allow time for this evaluation before a decision is made about further extension. New letters of agreement should be prepared for these extensions, one before June 30, and the other (if another extension is approved) before August 31.

Ryan McBee, who is the Board liaison to the Personnel Committee, agreed to inform them of this decision.

Ginna Mashburn offered to assist with the evaluation process, including surveying several relevant constituencies of the congregation.

Nominations for Elected Positions

President-elect Matthew Blondell gave a report from the Nominating Committee. They have identified the following candidates who have agreed to run for election:

President-elect:	Ryan McBee
At large- Board Members:	Heather Kistner
	Linda Randolph
	Alice Woody (beginning a three year term after serving one year to complete Matthew Blondell's term)
Endowment Committee Member:	Gail Anderson

They are still seeking candidates for the positions of Program Council Chair-elect and Secretary to the Board.

Miscellaneous

- A church member has suggested that the church give some public recognition to members who have given additional services to the church during the pandemic. It was decided that this could be done in some way through the weekly newsletter, as well as on the day of the congregational meeting. **Denise asked Board Members to send her names of anyone they thought should be included on this list.**

- It was noted that some committees have suspended their normal meetings during the shutdown. The Board would like to remind committees (through their liaisons) that they should continue to meet, and that Claudia or Mark Mohundro can provide technical assistance with Zoom.
- So far, three persons have registered as TVUUC delegates to the annual UUA General Assembly (to be held this year on line.) As we are allotted up to nine delegates, Claudia urged Board Members to consider participating as delegates. The church would be able to assist with the \$150 registration fee if desired, and Claudia can help with the registration process if necessary. Denise Coleman stated that she will be registering as a fourth delegate.
- Claudia also announced that she has signed the church up for a “Virtual Academy”, a five-week on-line training program in managing virtual services and meetings. We are allowed up to 10 participants. Several staff members will be attending this, but they are seeking a few church members to join them.
- Claudia reported that the Buildings and Grounds Committee has met and discussed equipment which may be needed to continue and enhance on-line services. During the coming year they will also be making a recommendation about the solar panels on the roof of the church. Our leasing contract with the solar company will end in 2022 at which time we must buy the current panels from the company, purchase new panels, or abandon the use of solar panels. Income received from the solar company panels is currently being deposited into a restricted account which now totals \$10,500; this money can be used toward the purchase of the current or new panels.
- Eddie Chin reported that the Worship Committee has been meeting and they have speakers lined up for Sunday services through August 2.

Submitted by Wendy Syer, Secretary to the Board.

5/31/20