

Minutes of Meeting of Board of Trustees of  
Westside Unitarian Universalist Congregation

May 14, 2014

The meeting was held in the administrative office of the congregation's church building at 7141 California Ave SW, Seattle, Washington, and was called to order by President Joe Rettenmaier at 7:03 pm with words from Peg about how our joy draws people in.

Present were President Joe Rettenmaier, VP Matt Aspin, Treasurer Eric Winiecki, Secretary Lisa Maynard, and Trustees Amy Hance-Brancati and Shannon Day, as well as Rev. Peg Morgan and DRE Betsy Lowry. (John Britt was sick.)

Thank You Notes

Thank you to Shelby Greiner for running the grand finale rummage sale (pricing and sorting) and to Amy (virtual note!) for recruiting many volunteers. Thank you to Lorelei Amato, Steve Burrows, and John Monahan for time and dedication to our youth in the Coming of Age program (planning, retreats, ropes course), which will be something the youths will remember their whole life. Thank you to Liz Bucklew and Lisa Maynard (virtual!) for their children's choir leadership.

Minutes

Moved, seconded, voted to approve the April minutes without changes.

Treasurer's Report

Eric distributed a hard copy of the report. It is our last monthly report for the fiscal year.

INCOME: General fund income is at 96% for the year. We are short \$15K and we still have \$5K to deposit.

EXPENSES: General fund expenses are at 100% for the year. Peg reviewed expenses and thinks we may be in the hole a little bit. Overall shortfall right is \$13,850. Compared to our total budget we're only off by a small percentage (~2%) in target vs. actual for the full year. Peg says the staff has been holding the line on spending.

Reports

Betsy handed out her DRE report for April. Lewis Brancati, Mia Shaughnessy, and Shelby Greiner will be going to GA in Rhode Island in June. Lewis will be getting 'bridged' at GA (among other bridging activities he is participating in). We're starting new traditions with our bridging ceremonies and outgoing seniors, so a lot of focus on Lewis (our only senior this year).

Joan Whitley has agreed to manage the nursery remodel project with Betsy.

No written minister's report this month.

### Architect's Walk-Through on Social Hall Bathroom Options

Rose Shepherd arranged with SMR Architects to do a walk-through specifically for accessibility of restrooms and some storage downstairs (not understanding that we hadn't approved the money for the drawings yet). She told the architects that we were approved to spend the money, so they are working on the drawings now. Their estimate is \$1K, which is the low end of what Rose had told the Board in April.

Joe asked for a motion to approve spending \$1K from the Building Fund to pay for these drawings. Matt asked whether there might be code changes later; discussion that changes could be accommodated. Unanimously voted to spend that money.

### Bert's Credentialing

Joe got a message from the UU Musician's Network (UUMN) telling him that Bert is now fully credentialed and giving a glowing report of his leadership. They suggest that we recognize him as a congregation. Peg and Lisa will work together (bringing in Ruth Herman, because she supported his credentialing process) to figure out the way of celebrating him in the June 1 service – perhaps a song after the anthem.

### Plaques

Peg showed us the new plaques for the narthex (building dedication and legacy giving). She is planning a brief ceremony for 10 am on June 1.

### RE Summer Strategy

Joe said that lots of questions were raised at the budget discussions last week about the need to have RE programming over the summer. There are going to be some extra funds coming in due to Joe's emailed requests. Supply coordinator is Betsy's #1 staffing need, and summer coordinator is #2.

Shannon asked Betsy to explain what other churches do over the summer. In our cluster, two of ten congregations typically don't have RE over the summer. From listservs she reads, there is a wide range of summer activities. From her research with other DREs, the main area of agreement is that the DRE is not delivering the RE in the summer, because 1) there has to be some break from the ongoing pressure to put out a program so that you can bring your best energy to the fall program and 2) there is a need to step back and reflect. Our RE programs have grown so much in recent years. There are a lot of kids and families floating around. Betsy has big projects lined up for the summer: redo the Coming of Age (CoA) program, plan to offer Our Whole Lives (OWL) annually (needed to accommodate the number of kids we have now). She is thinking a lot about 24/7 UU faith development. A good deal of what happens in RE is not happening on Sunday mornings (e.g., music rehearsals, CoA, youth group, etc.). This summer she is stepping back to look at the non-Sunday-morning aspects, including how we are using the web, what resources can we provide families, how to build community, and how to inspire our teachers to engage more deeply.

If Betsy can't rejuvenate over the summer (if we can't hire a summer coordinator but still need summer programming) then she will have to do her job differently next year, and scale back her efforts. And yet we are growing into a program-size congregation, and it feeds her to keep growing herself and the RE program.

In most cases, other churches hire someone to run the summer programming for about \$1K. Betsy has someone in mind (Will Haggerty, who is getting his masters in divinity at SU). In some cases, one or two volunteers will take over the whole program.

Important aspects of summer: greet families and parents, build community, have fun, if possible have content around UU principles. We want to be ready for visitors. We need to keep RE programming over the summer so that families stay in the habit of coming to church.

As far as budgeting: RE supply coordinator (was Gabby) is set to be funded at \$3,800. Since we are resetting the hourly rate at \$15 (was \$10 this year), we will have 6 hours a week (down from 8 hours). RE summer coordinator is \$1,000, and summer childcare is \$780.

#### Budget Prioritization (executive session)

Joe announced that the Board had balanced the budget in late April with \$252,000 in pledges for the year, but since the recent budget emails (pleas from Joe for people to reach deeper and help prevent some of the worst cuts in programming) and discussions we have received additional pledges making our total \$275,360.

Pledges in hand	\$242,235
Projected from current pledgers who haven't pledged yet	\$18,885
New member pledges	\$21,240
Lost pledges (pledged last year but not this year)	\$7,000

We have \$23,000 more to work with than that 'balanced budget' we ended up with last week. Thank you to Peg and Shannon tracking and coordinating the new pledges. Big thanks to Joe for excellent messaging.

Board members individually prioritized the unfunded line items and then we averaged our rankings (lowest number indicates highest priority; dollar amount shown is the amount it was expected to cost, although we adjusted some of these numbers as we decided how to put them back into the budget):

1.85	Minister's medical	\$2,000
4.29	Admin assistant	\$6,552
5.14	Minister's prof expenses	\$1,000
5.42	DRE prof expenses	\$2,000
5.57	Music director prof expenses	\$1,000
6.14	RE summer coordinator	\$1,000
8.14	Childcare	\$1,000
8.57	Building cap fund	\$9,000

9.0	Janitor	
12.7	Building maintenance supplies	\$1,000
13.0	Worship Council	
14.14	RE supply coordinator (getting back to 8 hrs a week from 6)	
14.29	RE admin support	
15.16	RE lead training	
15.57	Facility rental expenses	
16.00	Pianist (getting back to three Sundays every month)	
16.00	Marketing	
17.71	Technology management	
19	Stewardship expenses	
19.28	Rummage sale expenses	

Discussion that we have neglected to include raises for our staff. Bert has requested that we take money from his retirement funding so that he can give raises to John and Larry.

As of tonight (may change in future), for the things we were not able to fund with the \$23,000 that came in just before this meeting in response to request, if additional money comes in, we would fund in this order:

1. Pianist back to same hours as this year
2. RE supply coordinator
3. AV tech
4. Marketing
5. RE youth coordinator

#### Annual Meeting on May 18

Shannon and Amy will help get the wireless microphones to speakers in the audience. Lisa will staff the sign-in table at back of sanctuary and give Joe the quorum count (229 members so need 25% = 57).

Revised budget has to go out to people soon. Eric will prepare for Shannon to send on Friday.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

## **RE Report to the Board May 2014**

### **Highlights**

- Offered two Chalice Chapels for kids of all ages, in April
- Celebrated Easter with an egg hunt for pre-K through middle school
- Collaborated with Bert to plan and deliver a multigenerational service on Race and Mindfulness
- Closed a successful COA program with a shared dinner, youth credos, and a family connection ceremony
- Our high school Youth Group is working hard to prepare their youth-led service for May 18th
- Held a Spirit Play story basket workshop with our Spirit Play teaching team
- Rose Sheppard and Regina Brennan have helped us develop our children's garden for the spring
- Many of our families with elementary age children participated in the Seabeck retreat
- Our 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade class learned to advocate for a social justice issue – they chose Kitty Harbor
- Our Children's Choir performed "Let Me Be Your Mirror" with our multi-age Uke Band
- We formed an ad hoc girl's youth band to prepare "Let It Go" for the June 8<sup>th</sup> service
- The YAC and Youth Group have been planning for two youth and one advisor to attend GA in June
- The RE Council and the YAC have productive meetings each month
- Joan Whitley has agreed to project manage the Nursery Refresh initiative
- I was not able to attend the training module I had scheduled in the end of April due to an illness in my family

### **RE Ministry Updates**

- Chalice Chapels (worship for children and youth) –
  - We held two Chalice Chapels in April on the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> – the weekends of spring break for Seattle Public Schools. We planned this to allow our teachers to take that time off with their families.
  - We held five Chalice Chapels this year, with a focus on spiritual practices including yoga, meditation, breathing, and music. Each chapel experience is designed to engage multiple age levels, and to bring multi-age groups together as friendship circles.
  - April 13 Theme – The Easter Story. This Chalice Chapel was led by Gabbie Guncay, and Keo Capestany joined in to tell the Christian Easter story.
  - April 20 Theme – Easter Fun. I led this Chapel which included singing around the piano in the Social Hall. Claire Bucklew, a 6<sup>th</sup> grader, led everyone in a spring craft, and several RE volunteers helped us to have a multi-age egg hunt.
- Multigenerational Services –
  - The 4<sup>th</sup> of our five multigenerational services for the year was held on May 4<sup>th</sup>. This was the Race and Mindfulness service that Bert and I had planned for February, which was cancelled because of Seattle snow. Bert and I collaborated for months to discern the focus and approach we wanted to take with this compelling and sometimes delicate topic. We engaged all ages in delivering this service. We are happy with the outcome.
  - The final multigen service for the year will be RE Celebration Sunday on June 15<sup>th</sup> where we will recognize teachers; honor the transitions of our kids into kindergarten, middle school and high school; and have a bridging ceremony for our graduating senior.

- Youth Ministry –
  - COA Program – Five of our high school youth completed their intensive Coming of Age program on May 4<sup>th</sup>. We held a dinner and closing ceremony in the evening where the youth shared their credos, and participated in a family connection ritual. Close to 40 people attended this event including other teens from Youth Group, COA families, COA teachers and mentors, Youth Group advisors, Reverend Peg and myself. We all agreed this was a good format to use as the closing event for COA each year.
  - Youth-Led Service on May 18<sup>th</sup> – One of the goals our youth and other stakeholders identified in our visioning process over a year ago, was to continue to offer a youth-led worship service each year. This takes months of planning and preparation, as the youth identify the theme, write the sermons, select the readings and the music, prepare the Story for All Ages, and plan for leading the whole service. They've been working hard on this one, and will wrap it around a set of ten commandments they developed this year, which will be a treat for the congregation.
- Elementary Activities –
  - Spirit Play – Our Spirit Play program uses a Montessori approach to engage preschool children in questioning and their own wonder as a pathway for their spiritual development. Each class wraps around a story that has a script and a basket of props to support the teacher in telling the story. This year, we were able to borrow several boxes of story packets from Olympia UU Church to add to our collection. On Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, our Spirit Play team met for a workshop to expand our own story collection for next year.
  - Children's Garden – In our curriculum for early elementary children, we have many activities that engage them outside or with nature, including gardening. While we have not had good luck in making that happen on days that weren't filled with rain, we did benefit from the generosity of Rose Sheppard and Regina Brennan, who set up our children's garden beautifully with flowers and with herbs we can grow to donate to the White Center Food Bank.
  - Elementary Family Connections – Growing the connections between families with young children is an important part of our RE ministry. The Seabeck retreat offers a perfect opportunity for that connecting to happen, and many of our families did just that. A number of families created stronger bonds through the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade OWL program, and it's carrying over to events like the Seabeck retreat.
  - Social Justice Project for 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class – In their curriculum this year, the 4-5 class learned to identify their passions and carry them into social action. They went through a discernment process to determine a focus for their collective class passions, and they chose a local, volunteer organization to work with called Kitty Harbor. They learned about the organization, met with one of the volunteers, and created a presentation and display to share with the congregation. Our Collections Committee was very supportive of this project, and allowed us to offer collection funds to Kitty Harbor from two Sundays in early May. The kids will give a check for \$441 and a hand-made card to Kitty Harbor next week.
- Music for Children and Youth –
  - Children's Choir – Our multi-age Children's Choir performed "Let Me Be Your Mirror" as the anthem for our Mother's Day service on May 11<sup>th</sup>. They rehearse three times before each performance, in a fun and welcoming environment created by our directors, Lisa Maynard and Liz Bucklew. The choir was accompanied by the Uke Band, who both sang and played.

- Girl's Youth Band – An ad hoc girl's band has been created (by the kids) to perform the award-winning theme song "Let It Go" from the movie, *Frozen*. Girls of all ages have been eager to be a part of this band! We meet weekly in the Sanctuary with both Bert and Betsy. Bert has developed scores for all of the varied instruments we have in this band, including flutes, clarinets, guitar, keyboard, and drums. Gracie Bucklew worked with Martin Sherry to learn the electric bass for this song, and Martin wrote an entire score for her to use.

### **Administration Updates**

- General Assembly 2014 –
  - The Youth Adult Committee has been planning for two youth -- Lewis Brancati and Mia Shaughnessy, and one advisor – Shelby Greiner, to attend GA this June in Providence, RI. Lewis will participate in the bridging ceremony at GA this year, and he and Mia will be part of the incredible Youth Caucus experience through GA. I learned about Youth Caucus when I attended GA last year, and I believe it has significant value. It is a youth-led and youth-organized event with participants from all over the country and beyond.
- RE Council and Youth Adult Committee –
  - These two groups meet at least once every month. The agendas are created jointly by the co-chairs of each group and the DRE. The REC focuses on our infant to 8<sup>th</sup> grade programs, and the YAC focuses on our high school youth ministry. Both groups have dedicated members who are currently engaged in clarifying the best way these groups can support our Westside ministry for children and youth.
- Nursery Refresh Team –
  - Our team has met several times on Sundays after church. We have done some research to guide us in designing our early childhood spaces, and now we're focusing on addressing structural needs. Stina Lane-Cummings has been providing leadership with this piece.
  - In order to keep things moving to meet our target of completion by September 2014, we decided we need a project manager. Joan Whitley, a Westside member who brings two decades of early childhood experience, has kindly agreed to fill this role!

### **DRE Professional Growth Updates**

- April Training Module –
  - I was scheduled to attend a module on Teacher Development in Ohio in April. Due to an illness in my family (in Florida) I was not able to attend! I am waiting to hear if they will refund my registration fee.
  - I am exploring options for future training modules in the areas of teacher development, curriculum, multigenerational worship, and youth ministry.

RE Data for April 2014

Class Name	Class count	Apr			
		6	13	20	27
Nursery	6	3	0	3	2
Story Time	8	2			3
Spirit Play	10	5			3
K-1	21	7			2
2/3 grade	18	5			9
4/5 grade	18	9			6
6/8 grade	20	7			7
High School	6	2			5
Multigen Estimate			16	43	

Average for each class	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14
Nursery	1.0	0.5	1.5	2.8	2.0
Story Time	3.3	3.8	3.0	2.5	2.5
Spirit Play	4.8	4.0	3.3	5.0	4.0
K-1	8.7	8.3	6.7	6.8	4.5
2/3 grade	4.0	5.0	3.7	6.8	7.0
4/5 grade	7.0	8.8	5.3	7.3	7.5
6/8 grade	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.8	7.0
High School	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	3.5
7/8 OWL	16.0	16.0	15.0	15.0	-
4/5 OWL	-	-	18.0	18.0	-
Youth Group	4.0	5.0	4.0	5.0	4.0
% of students present per class	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14
Nursery	17%	10%	25%	47%	100%
Story Time	41%	54%	38%	31%	83%
Spirit Play	48%	40%	33%	50%	100%
K-1	46%	43%	32%	32%	90%
2/3 grade	22%	29%	20%	38%	78%
4/5 grade	39%	49%	30%	40%	83%
6/8 grade	30%	30%	30%	34%	78%
High School	67%	100%	100%	100%	70%
7/8 OWL	94%	94%	88%	88%	-
4/5 OWL	-	-	95%	95%	-
Youth Group	50%	63%	50%	63%	50%
TOTAL Average # of students	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14
Average # each Sunday	38.7	37.5	34.5	42.8	38.0
% present each Sunday	39%	44%	38%	37%	37%



Avg # OWL and YG	20.0	21.0	37.0	38	33.5
Avg # RE, OWL and YG	58.7	58.5	71.5	76.6	42
Avg % RE, OWL and YG	55%	55%	67%	72%	40%