

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting, Sep 15, 2020  
Minutes

**Attending:**

BOD Attending by Zoom Meeting: President Jane Zaun, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Carol Lavoie, 2nd Vice President Linda Savard, Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu, Secretary Rod Belshee, and Director-at-Large Mack Rogers.

BOD Absent: Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt, *<on his honeymoon!>*

Congregational Members by Zoom Meeting: Marion Ellson, Barbara Storms, Sarah Gonzales, Glenn Yamaguchi, Rob DuWors, and Mel Wilkinson.

**Meeting minutes:**

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting:

Jane called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:00 pm PDT by Zoom Meeting, led a reading from the UUA Leadership Council, and lit the Chalice.

2. Check-in:

3. Approval of the Minutes: The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes as written for the July 21, 2020 regular meeting of the Board.

4. Time-keeper and Process-observer: Mack Rogers

5. Voices of the Congregation:

Marion expressed concern about Children's Religious Education. We have a dozen people, ages 2 through 18. Marion offered to organize a conversation with the parents to see what they might want, and reported that Denise will support but does not have time to pursue this herself.

The other members are present for items on the agenda.

## 6. Reports:

### a. President Jane Zaun:

Jane submitted a written report. In the meeting, there were no questions.

### b. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Carol LaVoie:

Carol submitted a written report. In the meeting she added that Linda offered to help with the Church Council for now.

### c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Linda Savard:

Linda submitted a written report. In the meeting she added that she is working with Joni and production on the monthly testimonials. She reached out to include the Membership Committee in her report since that Committee did not have Board coverage.

### d. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu:

Jerry submitted a written report regarding our financial position and notable financial events.

Jane asked about the deficit spending in July and August. Jerry reported that this is due to unusual though not exceptional items. The \$700 A/C bill is not included yet. Overall, we continue to project a \$20k deficit for the year, due primarily to loss of rental income.

Jerry reported that the \$8,000 grant mentioned in July will be received soon.

### e. Director-at-Large Mack Rogers:

Mack submitted a written report. He added a discussion of the Veterans for Peace upcoming activity and informed the Board all Board Members are invited to the meeting.

Mack also informed the Board that the Pride Parade this year will consist of a parade of vehicles. There will be more information soon.

### f. Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt:

<on honeymoon!>

g. Minister Reverend Barbara Fast:

Reverend Barbara submitted a written report.

She added that she will modify her written report to add a couple of more thank yous. She also discussed occasionally using UUA services on Sundays as a means to give the Production team breaks.

She also discussed the note in her report that she might propose a music fundraiser on Nov 7 to celebrate the 20 year anniversary of her ordination.

Board discussion includes a huge appreciation for Jonathan and the UUCOD choir for this Sunday Service. It was a lovely expression of our members.

7. Old Business:

a. Attitude of Gratitude.

The Board sent a card of gratitude to Sheryl Eaton for hosting the Saturday 5pm Happy Hour

The Board sent an e-card of gratitude to the entire UUCOD choir for magnificent virtual sound results particularly last Sunday! We loved seeing and hearing our own members!

The Board sent a card of gratitude to Jonathan Fast for bringing the choir to the next level of community and performance.

The Board sent a card of gratitude to John Hammond, Joyce Adams and their family for the joyful performance of "This Little Light of Mine" during the September 13 Worship service.

b. Solar Update, Rod

Rod reported that SolarGem has materials on hand and expects final written approval from IID any day. Installation will take about one week.

Discussion also included irrigation challenges with our gardener, which is in the Facilities report.

c. Report from the Communications Overview Task Force, Jerry

Communications has been recognized for several years as an area that we need to examine, formalize and implement. The Board in July proposed creating a communications team (5-6?)

which sets strategy and does implementation. A few Board members put together a guiding document for a subsequent group of people to develop procedures and policies

Jerry read the document 8.18.2020 Communications Program Development Guidelines:

Develop recommendations for an overall communications program that includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Review and revise the current Communication Policy, incorporating the existing Facebook Policy, to reflect a comprehensive communications program. Facebook policy and Communication Policy should be in agreement.
- b) Establish procedures for various forms of communication
  1. Vetting and approval for publication (i.e. individual permission, copyright)
  2. How to submit information for publication (within and without UUCOD)
  3. Styles Guides (formatting, etc.)
  4. Committee reporting and sharing of information to the Board and inter-committee communication
- c) Identify roles and responsibilities for individual(s) who lead the communications program as well as other individuals on the committee
- d) Identify key stakeholders, audiences, contributors, etc. including sub-groups
- e) Establish guidelines for creation of communications and strategies to support UUCOD strategic goals
- f) Inventory existing forms of communications and categorize with associated platforms such as Zoom, the website, and Constant Contact, etc.
- g) Establish a catalog of communications and repository where documents are stored
- h) Identify existing issues with communications and develop solutions
- i) Create contact lists for specific communication types and audiences (Emergency communications; neighborhood lists; members; friends)
- j) Determine what needs to be communicated

The Board approved a motion to establish a group of people to start exploring the items defined in the Communications Program Development Guidelines.

#### d. Budget Update, Jerry

The Treasurer submitted a written report. In the meeting he reviewed many of the line items and highlighted the overall picture. He emphasized the generosity of our members, friends, and new visitors attracted to our online Worship services. Even so we currently project a \$20K deficit for the year, largely due to the loss of rental income.

#### 8. New Business

#### a. Widening the Circle at UUCOD, Jane led community discussion

Sarah Gonzales has been leading a UUCOD BIOPOC (Black, Indigenous and Other People of Color) group, growing from 5 to 7 and now expanding to include people who were prior members or visitors. Sarah has also been a member of a UUA people of color group since 2017. Observations so far: 1) UUCOD music is very white, and 2) worship does not represent even the little bit of diversity we have in our membership.

Glenn Yamaguchi reports that the BIOPOC group has been good, looking at diversity and inclusion. UUCOD lacks much diversity. The group has shared stories of black people who came to our services but never felt like they fit due to music, lack of diversity in the pulpit, and even lack of diversity in décor. "It really felt like a church of old white people". We might be repelling people, or at a minimum we are not attracting and welcoming them. Glenn emphasized that progress is possible, referencing the great progress ICD has made by tapping into Dhamma Dena which has a large BIOPOC emphasis. Glenn emphasized that the burden of educating white people is not the job of POC, but is up to white people.

Sarah pointed out that within our community there is considerable work to do, as there is White Fragility and denial of the POC experience. It will take time to educate and develop members into allies. She highlighted a Beloved Conversations class, <https://bcvirtual.meadville.edu/> (with registration closing September 20).

Rob DuWors emphasized that cultural change occurs in small groups. Rob has been leading a small group of people reading through the Widening the Circle report two chapters at a time. It is a safe space to reveal ignorance and grow. Barbara Storms is part of that little group, and emphasized that we need to work through lots of the material in the report and spend time with it. Reading and digesting Widening the Circle takes time and work, and is necessary to change the culture of the church, and she cautions that we not just quickly skim through it and think we have transformed ourselves.

Jane summarized that we have heard three sermons from the pulpit and input from the BIOPOC group, and suggested that the Board form a group to look at implementing at UUCOD recommendations from the UUA Report from the Commission on Institutional Change. Jerry added that this is an important element for the Strategic Goals, and is perhaps our major long-term goal coming into focus from many different directions.

Jane requested that the Board establish a new Ministry of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, and the Board approved a motion to create such a group. We will use our Board Retreat on September 19 to work out the structure of this group.

#### b. Proposed UUCOD Copyright Policy – First Read, Rob

We reviewed the recommended Policy and Procedures for Copyright, which has become a much larger issue now that we are streaming. The first page of the document is Policy, which needs Board approval. The second page is Procedure, which we want the Worship and Production teams to have the flexibility to change. Discussion focused on clearly separating Policy and Procedure.

c. Approve Assistant Minister Housing Allowance per IRS regulations, Jane

The IRS allows Ministers to take part of their compensation as a housing allowance. The Board approved a motion to allow Rev Ian to take part of his compensation as a housing allowance.

d. Re-opening, Rod

Jane asked Rod to form a group to look at the first incremental steps toward re-opening, such as meeting outside on the patio. Linda Morretti and Glenn Yamaguchi have agreed to form such a group. Glenn mentioned familiarity with detailed protocols in Colorado. Glenn suggested that others might be Diana L, Steve K, Sheryl E.

Jane suggested that the group refer to the UUA Covid-19 advice on re-opening. The initial focus of the group will be meeting on patio and the auction, with a plan to present to the Board in October.

e. Board Retreat, Jane

Jane will issue an agenda tomorrow for the September 19 Board Retreat.

9. Extinguish Chalice and Adjournment

Jane adjourned the meeting at 7:41pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rod Belshee

\_\_\_\_\_, 2020  
Date Approved

## Addendum to Board of Directors Meeting Written Reports of Board Members and Committee Chairs

### **Attachments**

#### Written Reports of Board Members and Minister

- k) President Jane Zaun's written report
- l) 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Carol Lavoie's written report
- m) 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Linda Savard's written report
- n) Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu's written report
- o) Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report
- p) Director at Large Mack Roger's written report
- q) Minister Reverend Barbara Fast is on vacation

#### Written reports of Committee Chairs

- a) Facilities Committees

#### a. President Jane Zaun's written report:

Since our July Board Meeting, these are my activities and contributions to UUCOD:

Met with the Covid19 Subgroup in weekly meetings. Led by the Treasurer, during the pandemic this group aims to maintain a consistent overview of the entire workings of the Church.

Participated with a brief "cameo" in the third of Rev. Don's sermons on "Widening the Circle of Concern".

Along with the Treasurer, I met with Representatives from S2S2S in working to complete an Agreement between S2S2S and UUCOD Board of Directors. The S2S2S Executive Committee will review the agreement before it is brought to the Board.

Participated with the Interview Team in the process of a decision for the Assistant Minister position.

Attended a UUA online orientation to UUA Committee's.

In lieu of an August Board Meeting, led the Board in a review of the work done last year towards revision of our Strategic Goal Plan. We then engaged in a lively discussion of the direction this year for updating our multi-year Strategic Goals.

Met with the Communication Overview Team to prepare a recommendation to Board for forming a Communication Task Force to address needs of the Church.

Administratively:

Met with the Administrator, Chair of Personnel and Treasurer to review and explain the new Personnel Policy and Employee Handbook.

Weekly, supervise the Administrator in production of the Newsletter, and other administrative tasks.

I extend much appreciation to Linda Savard and Fran Hoag for assistance during the Administrator's vacation.

**b. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Carol Lavoie's written report:**

The Lifespan Spiritual Growth committee has been meeting since Jan. Our first 'semester' offered 4 classes-Diversity 101, Build Your Own Theology, Poetry and History of UUCOD. Planning is underway for the Winter/Spring session. 49 friends and members have enrolled as of 9/14.

Preparations for the Oct. Church Council are still in the works. A list of invited committees has been created along with an 'agenda'. Goals from each committee will be presented (along with names of active committee members) followed by a discussion of the UUCOD Vision.

Auction Notes: Peter Mathews has agreed to be our auctioneer with Glenn Yamaguchi as his 'assistant'. We are in the midst of collecting donations for our 'Drop-In Silent' and 'Zoom Live' Auctions. We are behind our usual pace in acquiring items. Descriptions of items need to be to us by Oct. 7 in order for the catalog to be printed and sent out. The next step is informing our members on how to attend and bid. Fran H. and Rod B. have offered to help with Zoom technicalities.

**c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Linda Savard' written report:**

**Stewardship Committee**

We met in August and September. In August our discussions centered around the use of the survey results and making sure we got the information out to all of the stakeholders. In addition, we continued our discussion on finding and touching base with anyone that did not seem to be involved in the current UUCOD offerings including Sunday Services. There are a few people on the

committee working with individuals from membership and the care team to consolidate our lists and make sure we are not missing anyone. We also continued our discussions around different ways to engage more individuals, including inviting new people to join existing committees.

In September we discussed whether or not to resend the current survey. The team decided that it was wiser to do a new survey in a couple of months that will include possible new offerings from the Lifespan Spiritual Education group.

We discussed Sundays Together. We would like to put together a list of people to rotate through as host of Sunday together

We discussed other ways to keep people engaged and how to help people relieve some of the stress they are feeling. To that end we will work with someone to speak to the topic “Under these virtual circumstances, what/how are you staying connected UUCOD folks and how does that sustain your spirit”. This will be filmed for an October Sunday Service. In place of a committee fair we will have a monthly break out from the Sunday Together time to have people come hear about one or two committees work. We also will plan a time for people to gather on zoom to talk about how they are doing after the election.

In addition, we are working on the pledge drive and continuing with the survey results. We discussed whether or not to resend the current survey. The suggestion is to wait a couple of months and send out a new one with new information and questions.

### **Care Committee**

The Care Committee is starting to meet regularly with Rev. Ian. The first meeting was held this past week. The Care Committee is looking at ways to be more supportive to our members and friends. We also want to help identify those people who are feeling alone or left out during this time of Covid-19.

### **Membership Committee**

Membership is working on the new directory that will be out in November. They are working on how to present New Member Orientation Classes virtually this fall and checking with folks that did not make last Spring's classes who had signed up and a few new potential members

They also did a little clarification on Membership activities since there was a bylaw change in May.

Membership—welcomes visitors, (In the building identifies and supports greeters and ushers) offers membership classes and induction of new members, tracks Contact information for members and friends, maintains a church directory and member count, informs the Care Team if a member or friend needs support

Here's what they think happens once people are established in the church

Stewardship—encourages participation And shared ministry through personal contacts, information and activities

Care Team—provides support to members and friends in need.

d. Treasurer Jerry L’Hommedieu’s written report: (as of July 9)

As of July 31st, the church had cash assets of \$222,814.24 in its bank accounts. Reserve and restricted funds totaled \$160,374.67, leaving a balance of \$62,439.57 in unrestricted funds. We have collected \$66,313 in pledge payments for the current fiscal year against an annual budget amount of \$170,000. Year to date non-pledge collections are nearly twice the amount of last year’s totals; largely driven by additional contributions from members and new visitors. UUCOD received a \$5,000 donation for the Audio-Visual Fund. Retailer rebates are strong due to purchases through Network for Good. The MacLean Endowment Circle fund ended August at \$80,128; \$3,127 higher than July and an all-time high.

Although we saw a net loss of \$822 for the month, this was driven by increased worship expenses normally seen in the summer and a one-time legal expense for review of our endowment policy. We have some small expense reductions in facilities’ expense due to the church closure. In July, we were able to send \$463.00 to Veterans for Peace through our Share the Plate (STP) collections. At month end we were projecting an annual deficit of approximately \$21,000 although that is expected to increase with anticipated new budget requests.

e. Director at Large Bob Rancourt’s written report:

*<None submitted – on honeymoon!>*

f. Director at Large Mack Roger’s written report:

**Attitude of Gratitude:** Note cards sent (from entire board)

Gloria Kapp, For co-chairing with Bryna on the Reclaim the Vote postcard writing campaign

Bryna Blum, For co-chair with Gloria on the postcard writing campaign, and for paying personally for the Postcards

Jonathan Fast, For organizing the choir to sing Spirit of Life, virtually for our Sunday service

Rueben Gallardo, For helping with part of a Sunday service and assisting Robert with video production

Peter Mathews, For his commitment to adult Religious Education and hosting the Friday Coffee and Conversation group virtually

### **UU the Vote:**

Last month and recently, I wrote 45 postcards for our UU the Vote activities, and will participate in our next phone bank. (Denise and I are still organizing the next phone bank party.) UU the Vote has a lot of pre-election activities that we are looking at currently to include our congregation volunteers.

### **Social Justice Committee:**

We have met every month this Summer, and have a great deal of stuff in the works. Carol and I are planning the next Share the Plate with the Galilee Center, and have already spoken to them. We are securing their video and creating our introduction for the service on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Denise took us through a SHARE THE PLATE workshop to give the committee liaisons a thorough, consistent training on how to handle our STP organizations.

On Sept 21<sup>st</sup>, our Social Justice committee and UUCOD board has been requested to attend the Veteran's for Peace ZOOM ceremony and give a short talk (Denise). The time is 6:00 to 7:40 pm on Monday, Sept 21<sup>st</sup>. We will also be given an award at that time for our support of their organization. The award will be given by the Veteran's for Peace founder and President, Tom Swann Hernandez. Dale Olansky from Center for Spiritual Living, and Joy Silver will be the 2 keynote speakers. The sign-on and passcode for the ZOOM meeting will be available shortly. Please give me your names if you would like to plan to attend and I will forward the ZOOM sign-on specs to your email.

### **g. Minister Reverend Barbara Fast's written report:**

#### **Big Gratitude**

Reverend Ian Riddell is our Assistant Minister focused on Pastoral Care. He brings his years of experience, his gifts for worship and his love of ministry to our community! He is already working with the Care Team to organize and support them and all of the members and friends of UUCOD.

#### **WORSHIP: Stewardship- Sustaining Connection, Widening the Circle**

Thanks goes to the Worship Leaders, so many gifts from Rev Don, Rev Ian, Brian Joyner, Cantor Weiss and Hon. Mark Johnson.

The Worship Associates this summer were Joni, Bryna and Bob. Thank You!

Vikki and Michael, Margaret, Sandy, Jack, Jonathan, Ingrid, and Rob and Rod, kept the creative and tech side going. Who'd I miss?

At the Summer Worship Meeting, there was a consensus that having diverse voices presenting \*\*, having variety in the music played, and seeing each others' faces were all important aspects of worship to help us widen our circle and sustain our connections.

\*\* It is important at this time to make room for the voices of those who are impacted most directly by issues about full inclusion and the rights of marginalized people.

\* Social Justice added the video of STP recipients, to connect us to Community.

\*Folks have created a zoom hour after worship, with rotating hosts.

\* After Rev Don's sermon, closed captioning was added, which moved up the weekly sermon recording timetable.

\*We now have the license from Christian Copyright Solutions, (CCS) which holds the license for some of our hymns already and makes millions of other titles available to us.

\*We introduced the Spanish "Spirit of Life", with Raul Valenzuela (and a friend of mine, Alex Wintz)

\*We will continue to add our choir singing with visuals as we are able.

\*We now will have regular hymn/song vocal leadership, modestly compensated when needed, as well as sharing the talents of local folks such as seen last Sunday's John Hammond.

\*Jon, Katy and Mel held choir zoom meetings bi - weekly this summer, and now have gone to weekly gatherings. There are plans for Christmas caroling.

\* I am the staff person responsible for staying in budget for Music.

\* I am working with Joni on forecasting the worship budget needs. The UUA has increased their Honorarium for credentialed ministers to \$315.

TBD: We are reflecting on to bringing some changes into the worship service in this new season. Ideas are welcomed. What we are thinking of will require additional coordination by the team.

Multiple folks lighting their chalices and leading the Aspiration

Re filming the SOL signing and other parts of the Service.

Adding some personal testimonies once a month on a non-STP Sunday.

MUSIC- Since I am the Staff person responsible for the quality of the Worship Experience I have taken on responsibility for Sunday Music offerings, performers and the budget. The goal is to become more diverse in music offerings, use local talent as much as possible and help people feel inspired and connected through our music. I want to tell you that Jonathan is now working as Music Producer, and he puts many of the hymns and vocal together with the choir and our other performers.

Possible Facebook Fundraiser for music. I am happy to take the anniversary of my ordination (Nov 5) and offer to make it a Facebook fundraiser. I do not want to interfere with the Auction. So I am asking you to give me an indication about whether you think it useful.

### **September Worship**

Sept 6 *Beyond the Water's Edge, GA Service* – Rev. Joan Javier-Duval

Sept 13 *A Free Heart; Part 1* – Rev. Barbara Fast

Sept 20 *Change & Certainty. The Transient & the Permanent* – Rev. Ian W. Riddell

Sept 27 *A Free Heart; Part 2* – Rev. Barbara Fast

### **Sustaining Connection, Widening the Circle**

**New: BIOPOC Group:** For our Black, Indigenous and Other People of Color to have a safe space to hang out and have time for self-care and honest loving conversation. The group meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, for spiritual practices that refill, renew, and support their wholeness. It is a joy for me to be able to say that here at UUCOD we have such a vibrant group. Facilitators rotate. For more information, reach out to Sarah Gonzales.

**Social Justice:** I will return to SJ meetings in October .

**Lifespan Spiritual Growth:** The Chalice Circles have now got a creative team and administrator, Diana Leslie. It was decided not to do a major expansion of CC this fall, in light of the several Lifespan programs being offered. The Lifespan Group has organized a great array of opportunities for folks here. I will offer a six session Building Your Own Theology.

**Membership-** I did not meet with membership this month. I will alternate months.

**Pastoral:** Rev. Don Provided Coverage for me in July. Rev. Ian is now actively working with the PC Team. We are going to share individual Care needs as they arise.

Sad news: Carol Lavoie's father passed away last week. Chris Eager's mother died about ten days ago.

**UUMA SWPD** – Is meeting Sept 28-30 virtually.

In light of our upcoming Retreat I am happy to see that we will begin taking up the Commission Report and learn how we can implement the recommendations at UUCOD.

### **Written Reports of Committee Chairs:**

a. Facilities Committee Chair Rod Belshee's written report:

### **Rooftop Solar**

SolarGem completed the IID on-site review in July, received the City of Rancho Mirage approval a couple of weeks ago, and is awaiting final IID written approval. SolarGem has materials on hand to start the installation once approval is received. Installation is approximately a week long.

### **Handyperson Team**

Steve Kerr is resuming the Tuesday handyman team, working on outdoor projects safely distanced.

### **A/C repair**

A failing bearing was replaced for \$700. That was the source of the intermittent noise.

### **Irrigation System**

Many plants (including native encelia and creosote bush) are in bad shape from lack of water this summer. As well, we had at least one instance again of a sprinkler emitter shooting water into the air. While the existing gardener agreement delineates monitoring and fixing the water, it has been a problem for at least four years despite conversations. At one point we put the landscaping out to bid but to get reliable service would more than double our landscaping cost. We don't really have a solution at this point.

### **Sunday Service - Future**

Rod duWors and Rod have held sharing and listening sessions about the future of AV in UUCOD. Groups included the worship team, the production team, numerous individuals, and Rev B. The input has been nearly unanimous support for both continuing live streaming and for adding large screen displays in the sanctuary.

Rob and Rod will draw up a proposal for the Board. Rob is concentrating on the what and why – what are we trying to accomplish. There are potential ties to enhancing worship, to staying connected, and to widening the circle. Rod is concentrating on the how – what training, equipment, volunteers and capital is required.

We are in conversation with the Digital Arts Technology Academy at nearby Cathedral City High School about interns.

### **Building and Grounds Use**

We need to start talking about the initial phases of using the grounds and building again, and establishing safe protocols. There are likely many small incremental phases that we could map out, well ahead of any large-scale return to the sanctuary. For example, we could meet as groups of up to ten on the front patio, with safety protocols in place for sanitizing chairs, door handles, restrooms, etc..

Linda is asking for volunteers from Stewardship and Rod is asking for volunteers from Facilities to put together a plan. So far, Glenn has agreed to participate.