

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 26, 2022

**Attending:**

BOD Attending by Zoom Meeting: President Linda Savard, 1st Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi, 2nd Vice President Barbara Storms, Secretary Rod Belshee, Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt, Director-at-Large Rob Duwors, and Minister Reverend Ian Riddell.

BOD Absent:

Congregational Members by Zoom Meeting: Interim Bookkeeper Jerry L'Hommedieu; Members Sandy Sladen and Sarita Gonzales.

**Meeting minutes:**

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting:

Linda called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. PST by Zoom Meeting. Rev. Riddell offered an inspirational reading.

2. Welcome and Check-in:

Linda led a check-in of Board Members.

3. Approval of Board Minutes:

The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes for the March 15, 2022, regular meeting.

4. Process Monitor and Timekeeper: Hiroshi

5. Consent Agenda: Linda Savard

The following were approved by Board members by email between the March and April meetings.

- a) All contributions received at the Earth Day Sunday Service on April 24<sup>th</sup> will be given to Sacred Grounds. In the meeting it was noted that dedicating the plate collections to a specific purpose is to be rare outside of Music Sunday and the Minister's Discretionary Fund.

b) UUCOD Board will sponsor a table at the Harvey Milk Breakfast in May 2022. In the meeting it was noted that all ten seats were sold immediately and perhaps next year we should consider a second table.

c) Proof of vaccinations within the past 9 months against Covid 19 is required for in person attendance at Sunday Services for anyone attending in-person for the first time.

## 6. Voices of the Congregation:

Members raised no topics that are not on the agenda.

## 7. Appoint Treasurer:

The Board approved a motion to appoint Jerry L'Hommedieu as Treasurer through June 2022. While the by-laws do not generally allow a third consecutive elected term in the same position, the By-Laws allow the Board to fill a vacancy until a congregant is elected by the congregation and we have been unsuccessful in recruiting other nominees for the position.

We will resume the effort to get an Assistant Treasurer in Fall.

## 8. Board Reports:

a. President Linda Savard: Linda submitted a written report.

b. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi: Hiroshi submitted a written report.

c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Barbara Storms: Barbara submitted a written report.

d. Secretary Rod Belshee: Rod submitted a written report.

In the meeting, he thanked Rob for taking on leadership of the AV team for the next month. In response to a question, Rod clarified that Sacred Grounds projects will resume at the pace at which volunteers step forward, perhaps during the summer or perhaps in the Fall.

e. Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt: Bob submitted a written report.

f. Director-at-Large Rob DuWors: Rob submitted a written report.

g. Minister Reverend Ian Riddell: Reverend Riddell submitted a written report.

h. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu: Jerry submitted a written report regarding our financial position and notable financial events. In the meeting, he highlighted that we have Pledges of

\$177,274 with 3-4 pledge units outstanding against a goal of \$175,000.

The UUA requested contribution, based on our budget, is \$10,523, which is \$800 more than last year. The Board unanimously approved a motion to pay the requested amount.

Investing Reserves. Jerry submitted a written proposal to create a new investment fund for \$165,000 of long-term reserve accounts that do not have immediate needs. The investment fund is through the UUA, has a variable interest rate (mutual funds), and no restrictions except minimal time notice before major withdrawals. The Board unanimously approved a motion to accept the proposal.

## 9. Old Business:

### a. Attitude of Gratitude: Rob

Card of Gratitude will be sent from the entire Board:

- Randy for his years of service as Membership Committee Chair
- Jane, Sheryl, and Chris E for service as zoom hosts during Sunday worship
- Fran for new website
- Jane and Carol L for the Yard Sale

### b. Facilities Update: Hiroshi

Hiroshi's written report covered progress on the Creative Arts project in the Community room and the Cultural Corner in the foyer.

Jerry has two bids for a gardening company. The Board approved contracting with Evergreen Landscape for \$925/month. Evergreen will do whatever we want, and can also contract for tree trimming. Jerry commented that the Facilities Committee needs to manage the gardening service.

### c. AV Update: Rod

Rod provided an AV update in his written report.

Streaming the worship service through the website was very successful. Linda added that the attempt to share the website service through Zoom temporarily was problematic and we will just direct people to the website stream.

Rod explained the capability for bi-directional Zoom meetings.

### d. COVID Protocols: Rev. Riddell

Rev. Riddell discussed the current Covid protocols. We will shut down coffee hour when it is too hot to do it outside (we will not serve food or beverages indoors).

## 9. New Business

#### a. 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Update: Sandy and Hiroshi

DIBM chartered the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle team (Hiroshi, Sandy, Walter, Denise, Rob). The team has produced weekly newsletters starting in January and included the 8<sup>th</sup> principle in worship services to raise awareness. To take the temperature of the congregation, the group led one large group of 27-30 people in January and another with about 30 people in March with Long Beach UU. Additionally the team has staffed an info table on the patio, produced Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), sponsored four small group sessions in April, and contributed to an extensive blog on the uucod.org website.

The large group meetings were very good, and the info table has been good and positively received with questions that were anticipated and in the FAQ. The small groups had very scant attendance. Still unsure of the sense of congregation, the team engaged the Beloved Conversations Among Team to make phone calls to get more feedback, and produce a survey.

The purpose of the survey was to see how effective the outreach has been, and assess feelings on approval of 8<sup>th</sup> principle. With 53 responses, 70% were familiar and 11% not, indicating good outreach. Regarding adoption, 74% would vote yes today and 8% no, a very positive rate. Note that the 14 people involved in DIBM and the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle were ineligible to take the survey.

Hiroshi discussed the many inputs to determine readiness, and the strong support to adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> principle. More than 50 people have attended a large or small group meeting with zero opposition, including at table. The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle team recommendation is for the Board to put the 8<sup>th</sup> principle on the ballot at the annual meeting. There is momentum now.

Sarita gave a strong endorsement for the recommendation. Rev Ian emphasized that approval of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle is the beginning not the end, and that we need to stay one community in right relations regardless of the vote outcome.

The Board unanimously approved a motion to put adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle to a vote at the Annual Meeting.

Sandy presented a specific resolution for the congregation to vote on. Discussion included dropping the recommendation to the UUA to adopt the resolution, and to emphasize the paragraph that we direct the DIBM to focus on this as a top priority.

The Board unanimously approved the resolution as amended.

#### b. Congregational Meeting Agenda: Linda

Linda led a brief discussion of various items on the agenda.

Rod expressed disappointment that the Nominating Committee is still a nominating committee rather than a Leadership Development Committee.

#### c. Pavers for large contributions to UUCOD: Jerry

Jerry reported that we have received two large contributions and have done little to acknowledge them. Should we acknowledge large donors? At what level? The Board agreed to request Finance to make a specific proposal.

#### 11. Process Monitor Report: Hiroshi

Stayed on track with just the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle taking considerable time.

#### 12. Extinguish Chalice and Adjournment of Regular Board Meeting

Reverend Riddell offered closing thoughts and Linda adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:19 p.m. PST.

Respectfully Submitted by Rod Belshee, Secretary. Approved by the Board on May 17, 2023

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

### Written Reports of Board Members and Minister

- A) President Linda Savard's written report
- B) 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi's written report
- C) 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Barbara Storm's written report
- D) Secretary Rod Belshee's written report
- E) Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu written report
- F) Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report
- G) Director at Large Rob Duwors written report
- H) Minister Reverend Ian W. Riddell's written report

a. President Linda Savard's written report:

**Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Ministry (DIBM)**

At this month's meeting we reviewed how things were going with the 8th Principle rollout and what next steps are planned. Fran shared the new website with us and asked for additional help on filling in information on the pages relating to the DIBM ministry. Hiroshi shared with us how the development of the Culture Corner was going and the feedback he has received. He is also looking for ideas and things to put in the Culture Corner that represent other cultures in our society. Barbara Storms joined us for a discussion of what Stewardship has been doing and how their committee can and does support the DIBM work.

**Beloved Conversations, Among (BCA)**

At our last meeting we discussed where BCA fits within our congregational life. The overall consensus was that we can help with the work of the DIBM. It is still unclear how that will look. For now, the members of BCA have agreed to help with the 8th Principle roll-out.

**Nominating Committee**

The committee was able to make recommendations to fill all vacant positions and vacant nominating committee positions for the coming year.

**Personnel**

Nothing new to report.

**Additional**

I attended the monthly PWR President's Meeting. I met with a small group of other presidents for a discussion on the status of our congregations with the 8th Principle adoption.

I continue to participate in the AV class being offered at UUCOD. It is excellent and I highly recommend it to others in the future. Rod and his co-presenters are fun and make the learning accessible.

I volunteered at the yard sale, participated in an assessment of our UUCOD ministry, participated with Women's Night Out, and helped conduct the budget review with the congregation. I continue to participate with the Covid Response team and keep the records of those who attend Sunday service and their vaccination data.

I continue to meet monthly with Rev. Ian and with Hiroshi. I participate in a Chalice Circle and the stewardship committee. The restructuring of the Treasurer's position has come to completion, for now. I've continued to work with a small group on updating our facilities policy, procedures, and fee schedule for rentals.

b. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi's written report:

The focus of my work since our last board meeting has been on the 8th Principle process. Sandy and I have been co-chairing this effort working with Sue, Walter and Denise through various ways of informing, information gathering and assessing the readiness of our congregation to vote on adopting this proposed principle. Sandy and I will be presenting a brief summary of our efforts and findings that our recommendation is based upon.

I have completed the patching and painting in our community room and the gallery display system has just arrived from Gene Kain in Wisconsin. I hope to get this installed in the next couple of weeks so that our congregation can begin sharing their work in our newly designated creative space...our "Creative Arts Ministry". A few congregants have already contacted me about this opportunity and hopefully we will be able to begin displaying their work soon.

Our "Culture Corner" is up and I have received some suggestions for items to be displayed. I hope to receive more submissions on various types of oppressions.

Other than the above, I continue to remain active on the Facilities and Stewardship Committees, the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Ministry (DIBM), BIOPOC Group, DRUUM (API Caucus), Covid Response Team, Board Agenda Planning, Chalice Circle Facilitator and Chalice Circle.

Lastly, I planned and facilitated our Church Council Meeting on 4/23.

c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Barbara Storm's written report:

**Stewardship = strengthening our community by deepening our quality of belonging and connection within and between members of our community.**

- Representatives of Stewardship met with DIBM to discuss how the committee is working on inclusion and belonging.

**Plan, offer and assist with social activities to encourage fellowship**

- John and Diane Ressler presented about hiking in France after church in March. About 15 people attended.
- Social BUUterflies continues to provide information about free, outdoor community activities to encourage people to gather safely.

**Provide volunteer opportunities and encourage volunteer participation in activities in order to build relationships with other congregants**

- Stewardship helped with the Yard Sale, recruiting about 40 volunteers.
- The help wanted/volunteer board does not seem to be getting much attention. We are rethinking and discussing a Committee Fair in October.
- We began discussions about how to bring new members onto the committee.

**Strengthen connections with the Care and Membership Committees to better define how each committee is connecting with and supporting members and friends.**

- Our efforts to collect participation data have fallen behind, but we hope to catch up soon.

**Membership**

- LeGrand Velez has taken over as chair of the committee
- Eight (8) people joined the church in April bringing our current membership to 141. Note about 6 people will go inactive as of July 1.
- Membership continues to coordinate the check-in table, greeters and will also begin staffing the Welcome table. Discussions are underway about reinstating passing the plate and how that will be organized.
- Membership worked with the current attendees who have physical limitations to ensure that they feel comfortable and have what they need to enjoy the in-person services.

- The committee is beginning work on the 22-23 Directory and established a timeline for the effort.

**Additional efforts I'm engaged in**

- Working with a subcommittee of the Board to revise the Facilities and Grounds policy, fee schedule and forms.
- Cleaning up our membership database to produce an accurate listing of members for the annual meeting.

d. Secretary Rod Belshee's written report:

**SECRETARY**

**Successor**

A successor has been nominated for the next Secretary term and I look forward to having a couple of months for a smooth hand-off.

**Mortgage Retirement**

The Reconveyance to remove the mortgage has been recorded and we have the original on file. That completes the process.

**COVID**

We adopted a change that people registering for the first time need to be vaccinated within the past nine months. That caused some initial confusion with the greeters as it was misunderstood that we were requiring all attendees to update their Covid information.

We continue to monitor weekly data from the Palm Springs wastewater testing, Riverside County Public Health, and Eisenhower Medical Center.

**SACRED GROUNDS**

LeGrand led a successful Earth Day Sacred Grounds worship service on April 24, 2022. Katie Barrows was a guest speaker, and Jane Betts-Stover and Leslie Gebhart set up and staffed information tables on the patio.

Approved projects are shovel-ready and awaiting volunteers to drive them. Future projects are also awaiting volunteers to refine them. The hope is that the Sacred Grounds worship service will inspire a few volunteers to step forward, perhaps now or perhaps in the Fall.

**AV**

**Streaming Worship Services**

We switched to streaming through our website (via Vimeo) on April 24, 2022. 47 people viewed the service either live or within 24 hours. Viewers found it to be much higher quality than Zoom, and it also simplifies AV operation

The services are simultaneously uploaded to the UUCOD YouTube channel. While we have not communicated the UUCOD YouTube channel to people, a few people have found it (it shows up in google search) and the prior services have 6-12 views. That shows the opportunity for future Social Media efforts such as outreach, playlists and search engine optimization.

## **Volunteers**

Huge thanks to Rob DuWors for taking over the leadership of the AV team for next month.

The AV Training Course was completed by eight students, bringing our volunteer crew to twelve total. The course included Lectures (recorded for future use), Labs and independent study for seven weeks. The last two weeks of labs were programming the actual service. Some students are fully ready to go and others will require a couple more months of practice.

Given the number of and skills of people in the AV Training Course I am much less worried about summer coverage. Regardless we created a fall-back plan to conduct a less robust service if there are no programmers and just a single operator.

As always, stream audio remains the biggest challenge. We took steps to improve the quality on April 24, 2022 and that seemed to help.

## **Hybrid meetings with bi-directional Zoom**

The Insight Community of the Desert runs a hybrid service in our sanctuary as a bi-directional Zoom meeting providing an interactive discussion with remote participants. The remote participants are seen on one TV screen and heard through the room speakers. The teacher is pinned on the other screen. This does create a much better sense of inclusion for those who are remote. If UUCOD wants such an arrangement Adrian is willing to show us how.

## **Listen Everywhere**

Listen Everywhere has been running successfully now for two months. It provides a great capability for those who are hard of hearing, though I'm not sure how many people are using it.

#### e. Treasurer's Written Report, Jerry L'Hommedieu

As of March 31, UUCOD held deposits of \$272,434.91 of which \$254,662.20 were either dedicated or restricted funds, leaving a balance of \$17,772.71 in unrestricted funds.

With the return to in-person services, we saw a rebounding of plate collections and contributions of record as well as strong rental income for the month. In addition, UUCOD received a \$20,000 bequest from the estate of Vivian Penniman and a \$2,000 donation for a pledge to last year's campaign to pay off the mortgage that are reflected in the 4900 Miscellaneous Operational Revenue account.

On the expense side, UUCOD paid \$5,648 for repair and upgrading of our irrigation system and pest control and fertilization of our Palo Verde trees. Including the \$2,400 for tree trimming we incurred in February, we spent slightly more than \$8,000 for care of our Sacred Grounds. Other exceptional expenses included payment of the second half of our property taxes at \$3,023.54 and \$600.89 for our luncheon to celebrate the end of our annual Pledge Drive and a return to in-house services.

As agreed at the March board meeting, \$30,000 was moved from 3000 Accumulative Net Revenue to 2310 Building Maintenance Contingency Fund bringing this reserve to \$45,000 for future repair and replacement of assets. As of March 31, UUCOD has received pledges of \$176,774 against a goal of \$175,000 with several additional pledges still anticipated. We were able to provide FIND Food Bank with \$395.60 from our March Share the Plate program. The UUCOD Board approved a proposed budget for FY 22-23 of \$303,097 which will be presented to the congregation for approval in May at the congregational meeting.

f. Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report:

CHOIR

- Director Ament continues leading weekly rehearsals and planning presentations for upcoming services
- Performances continue and seem to be well received

WORSHIP

- Hybrid in-person worship has resumed and seems to be working
  - Attendance is good
- Services are planned through June's end
  - Worship is being led mostly by Rev. Riddell, with one service by Rev. Stouder and another by lay leader Roddy Biggs
  - "Share the Plate" recipients are the Community Food Bank at the LGBTQ Center of the Desert and the Galilee Center

g. Director at Large Rod Duwors's written report:

**Diversity Ministry**

The work of this ministry continues to go well. We are working with Reverend Ian and Linda to incorporate the BOD Goals, DIBM Goals, and Beloved Conversations Among priorities.

**Liaison with Social Justice Committee**

No updates.

**Attitude of Gratitude Notes**

All the notes outlined in last month's meeting minutes were written and sent.

**Other**

- My work with the group working on rationalizing the Treasurer position has concluded. Both Jerry and Pam seem happy with the new arrangement. The Finance Committee has agreed to develop and implement an audit plan. Outstanding issues include planning for volunteer support for Pam during peak periods and convening all the folks involved with financial management to make sure everyone understands roles and responsibilities.
- Attending the Covid Response Team Meetings on Wednesdays.
- Participating in programming, operating, and training on the audiovisual system. This is where I spend the bulk of my volunteer time for UUCOD.
- Working with Linda and Barb on the Facilities policy.

## h. Minister Reverend Ian Riddell's written report:

Hello, friends,

I write this after a restorative and reconnecting week with my family in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. It was good to be with them, reconnecting with my niece and nephew and making health plans for the future with my brother, sister-in-law, and parents.

We have so much going on in our congregation, so much change and transformation that we are working toward. This past month, it's been shared that while we do this work, we sometimes neglect our commitments to transparency and consistent communication and decision-making practices. This has the potential to trip us up in the work that we want to do and also to erode trust in each other and in our institution. Over the coming months, I'd ask that we (I am included in that "We") pay close attention to how we are making decisions and to being sure that we ask ourselves "is everyone who needs to be part of this decision here now." This is an ongoing issue for any congregation and I plan to spend good time thinking and talking about this with you all.

We seem to be headed into that time of year when people are traveling or returning to their summer homes for the season. The work of the congregation continues, but our volunteer base shifts and we are offered less time for doing and more time for conversation, thinking, and planning. I hope that we will all use these coming months in ways that sustain and inspire us. And I hope we will remember that the work of the congregation continues, even when the temperature rises.

I am, as always, grateful to be in this work with you all.

in peace and love  
Rev. Ian

*Summary Outline of the work I've been involved with for the past month. This is not an exhaustive list, but is meant to give you a general idea of what I've been up to as your minister.*

### **1. Counseling and Pastoral Care**

- The Care Team held our regular meeting this month.
- We continue to check in and share our contacts with congregants and offer each other guidance and support in our support of congregants' needs.
- We continue to encourage congregants to complete "Emergency Contact Forms" so that we have the information we need to help in times of challenge. We had a table outside on the patio and several times have provided links in the newsletter and on the website. We have handed out many blank forms but have so far only received 12 completed forms.
- I continue to meet with congregants in need of connection and conversation by phone and Zoom and in person again, which is a wonderful change.

## **2. Administration, Governance, and Staff**

- I continue to meet as needed with our Covid Response team and monthly with the DIB Ministry team.
- I meet weekly with Pam Bibo to check in on work expectations and how things are going. We continue to work well together. We have spent some time in the past couple of weeks preparing for and working on the changes in weekly duties with the new website launch.
- I continue meeting weekly with our choir director, Vanessa Ament, to check in on how things are going with the choir, make plans for the future, and continue to communicate about her role and our collaboration.
- Because of workload issues and schedules our acting Committee on Ministry did not have our regular meeting this past month, but I met with Jane Zaun to continue to edit and prepare a new Destructive Behavior Policy which the whole team will discuss at our next meeting.
- I participated in a joint meeting of the 9th Principle team and participants in our Beloved Conversations Among. It was clear that, as I mentioned above, our communication and decision-making patterns could bear some attention and change over the coming months so that we can all continue to have trust in each other and the processes by which we are navigating change together..
- I meet monthly with President Linda Savard and Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi to plan the agenda for the monthly Board meeting and coordinate on other issues.
- I helped plan and lead and participated in our annual assessment of our congregation's larger ministry over the past year. It was a fruitful and inspiring conversation that will help us make plans for the coming year.

## **3. Membership and Committees**

- I attended the Chalice Circle facilitators monthly meeting.
- I attended the Social Justice monthly meeting in April where we honored the many years of service that Sue Caspari has given to this important part of our congregation's life.
- I consulted with Fran Hoag as she built and planned the roll-out of our congregation's new website.

## **4. Lifespan Faith-Development**

- I participated in UUCOD's new member classes, sharing about our UU history with a good-sized group of participants interested in membership in our congregation or just learning more about who we are.

## **5. Worship**

- I continue to lead the Worship Team meetings and the weekly Production meetings. In our production meetings, we continue the practice of reflecting on the service the day before and noting any issues we need to address.
- With the advent of the new website, we are now able to stream directly to our congregation website which will allow us to bring more variety to our music while honoring our copyright commitments. It will also significantly improve the stability of the sound on our stream as well as streamlining the process for our AV volunteers. I continue to work with Fran Hoag to plan for how we will archive and share recordings of past services.
- I led worship several times this past month:
  - I shared Rev. Mariela's March 13 sermon on Zoom for those who were unable to attend or watch live due to technical difficulties.
  - March 20 - In the Balance: Celebrating the Spring Equinox (Tess Philips-Martinez, WA)
  - April 10 - The Stories We Tell: Learning and Possibility (Denise Janssen Eager, WA)
  - April 17 - Easter: Awakening from Fear (Joni Paddock, WA) - new member welcoming!
  - April 24 - I worked with LeGrand Velez to plan this Earth Day / Sacred Grounds service
- I am participating in the training sessions offered for our AV volunteers and am now able to do programming for our Sunday services.
- I met with Rod Belshee and Rob DuWors to assess where we are with our AV volunteers and to make plans for the summer schedule.

## **6. Denominational Activities**

- I regularly consult with local and regional colleagues on issues affecting our congregations..
- I continue meeting monthly as a mentor to a person in the ministerial formation process for feedback, support, and context setting as they move through the credentialing process.

## **7. Prophetic Outreach, Interfaith Activities, and Local Collaboration**

- I am part of the Desert Interfaith Council and am Zoom host for our monthly meetings. Our team planning a prayer vigil at the Salton Sea is proposing a date in October for this event.

## **8. Personal and Professional Growth**

- I continue meeting monthly with a coach for ongoing support, learning, and accountability as I minister to the congregation in our diversity transition work. My coach is Rev. Julica Hermann de la Fuente.

- I meet monthly with a small group of colleagues in our region in reflection, sharing, and collegial support and learning. This group grew out of attendance at a workshop at the February gathering for Excellence in Ministry.
- I am grateful for the week of Study Leave at the end of March. This was my last of three contracted weeks of Study Leave for this church year.
- I am very grateful for the week of Vacation last week which gave me the opportunity to see my family in Canada for the first time since before the Covid pandemic began. It was a wonderful week! This was my second of three contracted weeks of Vacation for this church year.

in peace and deep love

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dee", written in black ink on a light-colored background.

**My weekly schedule is as follows:**

Currently, my days off are Friday and Saturday; I'm in the office Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and available for meetings/appointments on Thursday and Saturday.

**Upcoming Travel Schedule:**

- I will be taking a week of vacation from May 23 to 29. Mark and I will be traveling to Mammoth Lakes, CA.