

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE DESERT  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes  
May 16, 2023

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**Attending:**

Board Members Attending by Zoom: President Linda Savard; 1st Vice President Bill Masco; 2nd Vice President Fran Hoag; Treasurer Jerry L’Hommedieu; Secretary Bob Rancourt; Director at Large Dave Carter; Director at Large Carol McDaniel

Minister Attending by Zoom: Rev. Ian W. Riddell

Congregational Members Attending by Zoom: Julia Alberg-Burbank; Rod Belshee; Walter Gendell; Sarita Gonzales; Diana Leslie; John Ressler; Barb Storms; Mel Wilkinson; Jane Zaun

**Meeting Minutes:**

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting: Linda called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. PST by Zoom. Rev. Riddell offered an inspirational reading as the chalice lighting.
2. Welcome and Check-in: Linda welcomed everyone, and she and everyone checked in.
3. Approval of Board Minutes: The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes for the April 18, 2023, Board Meeting.
4. Process Monitor and Timekeeper: Fran
5. Voices of the Congregation:
  - Rod Belshee spoke about the Sacred Grounds Initiative (see Continuing Business, Item b.);
  - Barb Storms voiced the Board being out of compliance in terms of Board communications; Barb stated that agendas for Board meetings should be posted on the website and available in the church office on the Sunday before Board meetings (Directory, p. iii); Barb also stated that abbreviated minutes from Board meetings should be printed in the monthly newsletter with official copies of minutes available on the website (Directory, p. iii); Barb found neither policy to be in compliance at this time;
  - Jane spoke about the proposed revisions to Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association’s By-Laws and Rules (see New Business, Item a.); and

- Sarita Gonzales reminded the Board that no one project of the church has its own funds; rather, all money raised for this nonprofit religious organization belongs to the church, not particular projects of the church. Some discussion ensued and further discussions were encouraged to occur later.

## 6. Board Reports:

- President Linda Savard: Linda submitted a written report. She also commented and answered questions.
- 1st Vice President Bill Masco: Bill submitted a written report.
- 2nd Vice President Fran Hoag: Fran submitted a written report. She also commented on the website.
- Secretary Bob Rancourt: Bob submitted a written report. Bob commented about the Choir's trip to Pam Maher's home.
- Director at Large Dave Carter: Dave submitted written reports for the Facilities and Furnishings Committee and the Sacred Grounds Initiative.
- Director at Large Carol McDaniel: Carol submitted a written report. Asked about her report, the Board approved a motion to authorize the Social Justice Committee to select recipients for the three summer Share the Plate collection contributions. The Board asked the Social Justice Committee to bring the Board input next month about the possibility of having year-round Share the Plate collections instead of nine recipients or other suggestions for better sharing our collections.
- Minister Reverend Ian W. Riddell: Rev. Riddell submitted a written report. Bill asked about Bryna's resignation from the Care Team.
- Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu: Jerry submitted a written report and answered Bill's question about depreciation schedules for UUCOD equipment.

## 7. Old Business:

- Attitude of Gratitude: This month, the Board acted to have cards sent to: Leslie Gebhart for her recent Day Camp and gathering of individuals over 80; and all Choir members, plus Sheryl Eaton, who organized and participated in the recent personal performance of songs bedside to Pam Maher on hospice.

## 8. Unfinished Business:

- "Do the Work! An Antiracist Activity Book:" Rev. Riddell led a discussion of Chapter Four of the workbook. Linda mentioned being more cognizant of where she spends her money and patronizing minority-owned enterprises. Bill mentioned the learning curve of previously focusing on women's rights or

LGBTQ rights and neglecting a focus on antiracist work. Bob identified an instance of inappropriate treatment of a person of color in the congregation and voiced regret at not doing more in response to the incident. Rev. Riddell asked for us to have Chapter Five completed for next month.

b. Sacred Grounds: Rod Belshee discussed the status of projects within the Sacred Grounds Initiative. A Steering Committee has been formed; planning the Celebration Garden continues; demonstration plant communities are planned; congregational engagement efforts are underway; and groundskeeping needs updating considering these plans.

c. Settled Minister Appointment Meeting Planning: Linda reported that the meeting is scheduled for June 4 at 11:30 a.m. after service. Linda drafted a proposed agenda to include a chalice lighting, a reminder why the meeting is called, a review of the executive summary of the Settled Minister Selection Committee, a time for questions and answers, and then voting. Linda suggested having two Board Members open the absentee ballots, separate them from their certifications, cross-reference, and put aside the ballots to be counted with live voting.

## 9. New Business:

a. Unitarian Universalist Association By-Laws and Rules Article II Revisions: Jane discussed UUCOD's attendance through herself, Julia Alberg-Burbank, and Linda, at the upcoming Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly and the proposed revisions to Article II of its By-Laws and Rules. Jane reminded us that representatives to the General Assembly generally are encouraged to vote their conscience, but she asked for the Board's input before attending. Board Members and Congregational Members discussed.

b. Allocation of Excess Revenue: Jerry brought up excess revenue at the ending fiscal year to be approximately \$41,000 that most likely will end up being closer to \$25,000 to \$30,000 once accounting is finalized. Of whatever excess reserve we have, Jerry suggested moving \$10,000 to the Facilities and Furnishings reserve account and \$8,500 be placed in a new reserve account for a ministerial sabbatical conditional upon the calling of a Settled Minister. Motion was made and approved.

c. Annual Congregational Meeting Summary: Linda asked for feedback about how the meeting went. Sending out the materials ahead of time for review was lauded. There was some trouble with audio feedback and hearing speakers well.

d. New Board Orientation: Linda reminded Board Members that the Board scheduled a tentative orientation and transition meeting for the incoming Board for July 8, 2023, from 8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the church. Linda

said she would e-mail Members for suggestions to be added to her working agenda.

10. Process Monitor Report: Fran advised that the Board ran a little over on time but we had a lot of good, in-depth discussions and conversations with many voices of the congregation, in furtherance of the Fifth Principle.

11. Extinguishing Chalice and Adjournment of Regular Board Meeting: Linda adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:17 p.m. PST and extinguished the chalice.

**Respectfully Submitted:**



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Robert L. "Bob" Rancourt, Jr.  
Secretary

JUNE 13, 2023

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Approval Date

**Attachments:** Written Reports Addendum

Addendum to Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes  
Written Reports of Board Members and Committees

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**Written Reports of Board Members and Minister:**

- a. President Linda Savard's Written Report
- b. 1st Vice President Bill Masco's Written Report
- c. 2nd Vice President Fran Hoag's Written Report
- d. Secretary Bob Rancourt's Written Report
- e. Director at Large Carol McDaniel's Written Report
- f. Minister Rev. Ian W. Riddell's Written Report
- g. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu's Written Report

**Committee Reports:**

- a. Facilities and Furnishings Committee
- b. Sacred Grounds Initiative

## Written Reports of Board Members and Minister:

### a. President Linda Savard's Written Report:

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert  
President's Board Report  
May 16, 2023

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

This month Daljit Singh joined our group. Linda shared the information she obtained regarding recertification for the UUA's Welcoming Congregation program. She will get a small group together to work on what needs to be completed. The Ministry will have a summary of our progress on our goals to present to the board at the June board meeting.

**Leadership Development Committee** - Nothing new this month

**Personnel** - Nothing new this month

#### **Hospitality**

The hospitality chairs, Margaret and Sandy, will be away July – mid October. They have reached out to congregants and have several that have agreed to take on the kitchen duties through the summer months.

#### **PWR Southern CA President's Meeting**

The President from Tapestry UU, shared about their legacy giving. They had some good ideas. If we decide to investigate legacy giving, they would be a good resource. I asked for advice on bringing in families and children to our church. The advice I got was to concentrate on the community that is drawn to our church. One suggestion was to offer OWL classes for older adults. We could also encourage those who want to work with children and youth to volunteer in the community.

Upcoming events in the UUA and PWR:

UUA Presidential forum with candidate Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, Saturday, May 20, 2023  
Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara: 1535 Santa Barbara St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 1pm Pacific

General Assembly in Pittsburgh and online - June 21-25  
UU Youth Camps in the West – QUUest and Camp Blue Boat – July 2023  
2024: GA will be online-only, anticipate a PWR Regional Assembly

## **Annual Congregational meeting**

I chaired the Annual Congregational Meeting. The revised bylaws were approved by the congregation. Annual reports were presented by the Minister, the Standing Committee Chairs, and the Board President. The 2023-24 annual budget was presented and approved. The nominees for the open board positions were presented. All those presented were elected, as was the board's nominee to the Leadership Development Committee. Thank you to all those willing to serve the church.

## **Additional**

The contract to call task force has completed its work. They have presented their findings to the board. As a result of those findings a congregational meeting will be held June 4, 2023, to vote on Rev. Ian as the settled minister. A summary of the task force's findings has been completed and sent out to the congregation. Absentee ballots were sent out on Saturday, May 13, 2023.

I attended production meetings, ran V-mix for services, attended DIBM meeting, the stewardship committee, and organized materials for the special congregational meeting for the Contract to Call vote. I continue to keep the records of those who attend Sunday service and to meet monthly with Rev. Ian and Bill to plan our board agenda and to discuss business of the church.

Submitted by: Linda Savard, Board President

## **b. 1st Vice President Bill Masco's Written Report:**

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Report  
May 16, 2023

## **Return Updates**

Returned from 5 weeks in Indonesia. Tested positive for COVID on return and isolated for 10 days per CDC's guidelines, attending community functions via ZOOM including the annual Congregational Meeting. Resumed in person activities on May 3, 2023.

## **Activities**

Continued participation in AV and meeting with the Rev Ian and Linda Savard on the agenda for this Board Meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Bill Masco

c. 2nd Vice President Fran Hoag's Written Report:

**Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Report**  
**May 16, 2023**

I participated in the **Lifespan Spiritual Growth team meeting** on April 20. We reflected on the success of the UUA Common Read "Mistakes and Miracles" While many congregants read the book, participation in the discussion groups were low. The discussions during the sessions were deep and fruitful, though. The team decided that the work of looking within our congregational life should continue. It was suggested that Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Ministry take the next step in this important work.

Lifespan discussed future offerings including book discussions and courses focusing on spiritual development and personal relationship building. The Chalice Circles will be using the monthly themes of Rev Ian's sermons as topics for discussion. Lifespan would also like to create activities and classes around those same themes.

I led the **Stewardship Meeting** on May 4. On the topic of Outreach within, we reflected on the people who have not been participating in services or events recently. Members of the committee will reach out to them. We also discussed ways to recruit volunteers. We came up with some new ideas like creating a central list of volunteer opportunities on the website that would include clicking a button to sign up for a job. We also created an initial list of opportunities and will reach out to Committee Chairs and other leaders for more ideas.

I participated in the **Congregational Meeting** on April 30. President Linda has a more thorough report on the meeting.

The website is running slow, and the **Communications Team** is in discussions to change hosting providers.

Respectfully submitted by Fran Hoag

d. Secretary Bob Rancourt's Written Report:

**Monthly Report**  
**UUCOD Secretary Bob Rancourt**

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- A memorandum addressing AB 506 (revised requirements for adults working or volunteering with a youth organization effective 01/01/2022) remains in progress
  - An accompanying lobby flyer/poster is drafted
    - My apologies for failing to complete this task in a timelier fashion
    - I intend to finalize and submit this memo to the Board for our next, last meeting of the Board year



- Further review and implementation are pending
- At the Board's request, on April 23, 2023, Linda, Jerry, Fran, and I met as the Board's Settled Minister Appointment Task Force to plan strategy and execution of moving forward with the Settled Minister Appointment Meeting
  - We scheduled the meeting for June 4 in person and online
    - At our suggestion, Rev. Riddell prepared a long biography for Members' consideration as deliberations proceed
      - Links to Rev. Riddell's short and long biographies are being circulated to Members
    - Monthly and weekly newsletter articles are prepared and being circulated
    - An event calendar description is drafted and should be posted on the website's calendar
    - Absentee ballots are prepared and being mailed on May 15
      - They must be returned and submitted by May 29 to be counted
    - Concern has been expressed for making the 50% threshold for quorum
      - Board Members should be promoting announcements and attendance at every opportunity
    - We are working on a proposed Ministerial Agreement should Rev. Riddell be called
    - An agenda of our tasks and other materials concerning our work is available on the Board Meetings Google Drive folder under 2022-2023 Board Meetings/Settled Minister Appointment Resources to which all Board Members have access
- On April 30, 2023, we held the Annual Congregational Meeting
  - Quorum was established
  - Linda and Rev. Riddell presented "State of the Church" reports and the Standing Committees presented "State of the Committee" reports
  - Jerry presented the 2023 – 2024 Budget
  - A waiver of Article VII.B. (Terms of Office for Board of Directors Members) permitting Jerry to serve a third consecutive two-year term as Treasurer was presented
    - The same By-Law provision allows for certain Board Members, including the Treasurer, to serve "until their successors are elected" in any event, and no one other than Jerry has been willing to serve as Treasurer
  - Candidates were presented to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors and the Leadership Development Committee
    - Following the meeting, Members overwhelmingly voted approval of all matters
- The Choir is on summer hiatus until the fall
  - However, on May 10, a group of eight Choir members, spearheaded by Katy Faas, and including Margaret Beaman, Barbara and Jonathan Fast, Sheila Goldner, Barb Ketay, Jim Swanson, and myself, at Sheryl Eaton's suggestion, went to Pam Maher's Indio home and sang two songs for her at her bedside to try to lift her spirits
  - She genuinely seemed to appreciate the gesture and was "all smiles"
  - Many have suggested making such smaller travelling choral renditions a regular practice in conjunction with the Care Team

- Worship services are planned through June's end
  - The Worship Committee re-instituted welcoming first-time visitors during services
    - The consensus seems to be that the change is appreciated
  - The Worship Committee is considering adding church-related advertisements and announcements in written slide form on the overhead display screens during the short time before service begins each Sunday
  - On April 30, 2023, Fran spearheaded a special "Dancing Queen" postlude to service in honor of Member Pam Maher, who appreciated and watched from home

e. Director at Large Carol McDaniel's Written Report:

Board Member at Large Report  
May 14, 2023

1. Social Justice (SJ)

Their activities are slowing down. The last Share the Plate (STP) is in June. The congregation voted on nine local non-profit organizations for 2023-'24. SJ voted on giving 2 Summer STP's to Galilee Center and 1 STP to an organization to be decided later.

Upcoming articles will suggest wearing orange for anti-gun violence day (June 2nd).

SJ is not supporting buying a red nose from Walmart due to their abortion position.

In June & July, SJ will have a backpack/school supply drive. They are contacting Galilee to find out what school supplies will be needed at the beginning of Aug.

May 11, 2023 9 members attended the Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast.

2. Audio/Visual

They've found things can be perfect one minute and not the next. Therefore, it was suggested to have a slide noting, we are having difficulties, for those online.

One of the headphones is out of order.

No new volunteers have been added.

Submitted by Carol McDaniel

f. Minister Rev. Ian W. Riddell's Written Report:

**Minister's Report to the UUCOD Board**

May 16, 2023

The Rev. Ian W. Riddell

*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.*

**I have also attached my written report from the Annual Congregational Meeting to the end of this report.**

#### **A. Counseling and Pastoral Care**

- The Care Team met for our regular meeting in person 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.
- Bryna Blum has announced that she will be leaving the Care Team after many years of leadership. We are so grateful for all she has brought to the team and the love and care she has brought to the congregation.
- The Care Team will begin working with me to plan for a renewed approach to our work in the fall.
- I continue to meet with congregants in need of connection and conversation by phone and Zoom and in person.
- This month, I continued making phone calls with the goal of calling all members and friends for a pastoral check in.

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

- I meet weekly with Pam Bibo to check in on work expectations and how things are going.
- I will work with the Board and choir to make plans for filling our choir director position for the fall.
- The Committee on Ministry presented two workshops: "Living into Right Relations in our Congregation" [April 20 and 27 at 6:30pm on Zoom] and "Microaggressions and Loving Communication" [May 7 in person after Sunday service]. The workshops were appreciated by those who attended (about 20 members total) and we are planning to offer these sessions again in the fall as well as offering new trainings in collaboration with the Lifespan team.
- I meet monthly with President Linda Savard and First Vice President Bill Masco to plan the agenda for the monthly Board meeting and coordinate on other issues.
- I work monthly with Sue Caspari to update our reporting of copyrighted music use through our Christian Copyright Solutions account.
- I attended and presented a report at the Congregation's annual meeting on April 30.
- I met with our Safety Task Force to do a physical walk-through of the building to assess safety and maintenance issues.

#### **C. Membership and Committees**

- I met with the DIB Ministry team for our monthly meeting. Our team welcomed new member Daljit Singh to the team. We will provide the Board with a report on our goals for the past year and plans for the coming year.
- I participated in the Social Justice Committee meeting and potluck this past month. My practice has been to attend these meetings every other month.

#### **D. Lifespan Faith-Development**

- No activities this month. I am beginning to plan my offerings for the next church year.

#### **E. Worship**

- We have service leaders planned through the end of July and the Worship Team and I continue filling the calendar for the summer and early fall.
- I continue to lead 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.
- I led or participated in worship several times:
  - April 23—The Interdependent Web: Earth Day and Hope with Julia AlbergBurbank as Worship Associate and a presentation by David Emmerson on Sacred Grounds
  - May 14— Principles and Promises: Living into our Values with Joni Paddock as Worship Associate
- Our Affiliated Community Minister preached on Sunday, May 7, and Rod Belshee—one of the students in my preaching class—preached on April 30.

#### **F. 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.
- I will be attending UUA General Assembly and UUMA Ministers Days June 19-26. I will attend virtually from home.

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

- I am part of the Desert Interfaith Council and am Zoom host for our monthly meetings.

## H. Personal and Professional Growth

- I am grateful for the opportunity of a week of vacation in April, which Mark and I spent in San Diego.
- 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.
- I also meet weekly with my therapist and continue weekly Spanish lessons.

in peace and deep love



### **My weekly schedule is as follows:**

Currently, my days off are Friday and Saturday.

### **Upcoming Travel Schedule:**

- o Study Leave: June 12-18
- o UUA General Assembly and Ministers Days: June 19-26 (I am attending virtually from home)

## **Lead Minister's "State of the Church" Report**

April 30, 2023

My friends, as I prepare for annual reports, I often look back at the year just passed and feel called to list everything that happened, every moment of connection, every new idea tried, every way we have lived into our vision and mission. I did that last year, and I was grateful for the perspective it gave on what we had been up to as a congregation.

This year, I am called to a different kind of report, a different kind of accounting for the year. In the services over the next months, I'll take up the opportunity to express gratitude for our accomplishments and our successful work.

Today, I want to reflect on the feelings that arise when I think of our last year together, our last year living into our mission of being a sanctuary for diversity, spiritual growth, and social justice.

When I think of our past year of worshiping together, I can feel in my heart and body the joy we shared in dancing together, the love we shared in holding each other in care and tender hope, the passion we shared as we pondered and explored the ways in which we face cruelty and injustice and learn how to respond with resilience and steadfast faithfulness and hope.

I am grateful for the growing diversity and energy in our music in worship. We welcomed Jeffrey Lesser as our new lead pianist and he and our other Sunday musicians brought us a rich and passionate variety of music that spoke to our hearts and got our toes tapping. Our choir grew in skill and passion under the leadership of Vanessa Ament. And the congregation began to sing together with confidence and power and such beauty. The music we all made brought healing and hope. It has been a great joy to have Jeffrey join our staff. And we are so grateful for the work of Vanessa with our choir this year. Her departure is a sadness, but the choir will continue under new leadership in the coming years. What that will look like is in the works.

I am so grateful for the diversity of voices in our pulpit this year. Again, we welcomed UU and non-UU clergy and local professionals speaking about their community work. Many of our services this year were lay led, either by individual members and friends sharing their experiences and passions, or by groups of congregants sharing the ministry of leading worship for our community. Our worship leaders came from a wide range of professions and experiences, and we continue to grow in the cultural and ethnic diversity of people in our pulpit when I am not leading worship. I am especially proud of the voice we gave to the fight against antisemitism and the way we welcomed our trans kin and neighbors as they shared their stories.

More gratitude from me for the work and love shared by our volunteer audio visual team. Every challenge was faced with a commitment to figuring things out so that we could provide access to our worship services to those who were unable to be present in our sanctuary or chose to stay home for health's sake. Not every week was perfect, but every week showed this team's commitment to the important work of sharing our voice beyond our walls. This team modeled reflective practice each week, reflecting on what happened the week before and collaborating on solutions and improvements.

I think with appreciation for the work of our volunteers who care for all of us, who welcome newcomers and pay attention to how we are engaging us all and reach out with a listening ear or a helping hand when things are hard. Our Membership, Stewardship, and Care Teams all hold the thriving of our members and friends in their hearts as they do this work. Ministers are called to the care of communities, but we should not and cannot do this work alone. This is truly a shared ministry.

I want to hold up the work of what has been our Nominating Committee which will soon be our Leadership Development Committee. Throughout last year and this, this group has sponsored and led several congregants through exploration of the spiritual dimensions of leadership, using a UUA-created program and other activities to help individuals find their passion and values in the ways that they volunteer. To help grow new leaders from within. Already we have seen this new leadership result in explorations of our congregation's history, in new worship associates, and soon new board members.

Thank you to those who have shared opportunities for learning and deepening of our spiritual lives through classes and workshops, book discussions and field trips, film series and chalice circles. And thank you to those who have nurtured opportunities for social connections through outings and concerts, bridge and Scrabble and crafting and shared meals. We grow more richly as individuals and as a community when we invite each other to be companions on the path.

Your Committee on Ministry has spent this past year deepening our understanding of right relations in general and in our congregation. We have been learning together and hope that you'll join us in that learning over the next months as we explore and learn how we can all live together in right relation in our community.

And I am deeply grateful to the many members of our Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Ministry Team. The creation of this group a couple of years ago signaled that UUCOD was serious in its commitment to change and growth and that it was a priority of the Board, the ministers, and the congregation to do this work in accountable and sustainable ways. The DIBM Team this year saw the end of terms of service of some of our founding members and we're thankful for their vision and service. New members are joining the team and we are discerning what is next. We spent some time this past year assessing our congregational life and pondering together where we can grow and deepen our practice of being and becoming the beloved community.

We have continued to be engaged in the life of our movement and denomination, exploring how to more deeply move into the work that our newly adopted 8th Principle calls us to as well as beginning to explore what it would mean to revise and renew the language at the heart of our movement: our values and principles. I hope that we will continue to explore what these changes might mean for us and stay engaged in the life of our larger faith.

There is so much more that we have done and explored and grown together. I know I have missed a lot. I hope you will listen over the coming weeks in worship as I share more stories of our year and more gratitude for our shared ministry.

Our current mission, as I said, is to be a sanctuary for diversity, spiritual growth, and social justice. As we move into the coming year, and as we explore new vision and mission together, I hope that we can move from being just a sanctuary toward being champions, promoters, builders, sharers, and prophets for the beloved community in our hearts, our congregation, and the wider world.

As always, I am honored and grateful to serve you as your minister.  
in peace and love  
Rev. Ian

g. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu's Written Report:

UUCOD Treasurer's Report

May 2023

As of May 31<sup>st</sup>, UUCOD held deposits of \$278,277 which includes \$155,338 invested with UUA in its UUCOD Investment Fund. Of the total amount, \$257,416 is held in either dedicated or restricted funds. This leaves \$20,861 in available, unrestricted funds.

Excluding changes in fund values, UUCOD's May revenues were \$11,584 and expenses were \$18,418, a deficit for the month of \$6,834. Year to date, UUCOD has excess revenues of \$28,510.

As agreed at the May board meeting, \$8,500 of accumulated excess revenue for the year was moved into a new 2312 Minister's Sabbatical Reserve account which will allow UUCOD to begin saving for Rev Ian's future sabbatical leave. An additional \$10,000 will be moved into 2310 Building Maintenance Contingency fund provided additional excess revenues are available at the end of June.

Julia Bell has volunteered to work with the treasurer and assume responsibility for processing some UUCOD financial transactions. Julia and Jerry L'Hommedieu have already met and are scheduling continued informational sessions. Ginger Hemingway has indicated she will continue to support inputting contributions into MemInfo, our membership management system.

In May I worked with Linda Savard, Reverend Ian, Bob Rancourt, Fran Hogue, and Walter Gendell in developing the compensation and benefit package for our settled minister and completed the Letter of Agreement between the congregation and our new settled minister.

Jerry L'Hommedieu  
June 6, 2023



## **Committee Reports:**

### a. Facilities and Furnishings Committee:

Not much went on.

Both doors are fixed.

Facilities have undertaken the addition of the patio.

Moving it from the Sacred Grounds Committee to assume responsibility for it.

The mister nozzles are extra-large and are putting out too much vapor. They will be changed to medium nozzles to adjust the airflow.

The asphalt in the parking lot will be getting estimates and will be repaved in the fall.

Thank you  
Mel

### b. Sacred Grounds Initiative:

Sacred Grounds Report to the UUCOD Board  
May 2023

Lots is happening with Sacred Grounds!

## **Steering Committee**

We have now formed a Steering Committee, composed of Rod Belshee, Diana Leslie, Mel Wilkinson (Facilities), Dave Emmerson, John Ressler, and Jack Fitzsimmons. We also encourage a member of the new Board to join the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee has met several times and is functioning well, with a partition of responsibilities. Diana is organizing the meetings, Mel represents Facilities, John is leading the Celebration Garden design, and we are leveraging the work of Dave, Sue, and Mel for the Demonstration Native Communities.

## **Celebration Garden**

We have selected a contractor for the Celebration Garden concrete (Desert Concrete). We have also finalized the materials and process: we will be creating custom stamps with John's Encelia design which the contractor will apply and then we will color with an acid stain and seal with a penetrating sealant. That combination has the least maintenance and especially the least

impact if in the future maintenance is not done. We highly prioritized that if future sealant maintenance is not performed then there is no failure such as peeling or cracking, just a gradual fade in colorant which can always be restored and resealed.

Given the increasing temperatures we have moved the concrete pour date to October, and we will apply the stain and sealant in November.

We have some partial costs now in place. The cost for concrete in the Celebration Garden is \$4,062 plus additional stamping labor. The cost for the four custom stamps themselves is expected to be under \$1,000. We are currently reviewing the items that we need to do with volunteers or pay the gardener to do, such as dig out 4 inches of grade (the dirt will be used to fill in the ditch along the building outside the kitchen wall) to assess a cost.

If UUCOD wants to complete the patio extension, the cost for a salt finish extension is \$3,625. It would be advisable to also repair a few sections of cracked concrete at the same time at an additional cost. The Sacred Grounds Steering Committee has removed the patio extension from the Sacred Grounds project list so funding would need to be from the UUCOD Board and labor (such as moving the plants) organized by Facilities. The Patio Extension will not be included in future Sacred Grounds reports.

### **Demonstration Native Plant Communities**

The target is three plant communities to be planted in October-November (plus the existing fourth community, the blow sand area with endangered milk vetch, that we will not disturb). In each community there will be 5-9 species with signage (\$60 each) plus one sign explaining the plant community. The actual planting cost is highly variable at this point. We have an agreement to acquire 1-gallon plants at a non-profit wholesale cost of just \$4-\$8 (!) each through the California Native Plant Society (thank you Katie Barrows), but we may also want larger specimen plants that are over \$100 each. There is a substantial trade-off of low-cost for smaller bushes versus immediate effect with larger plants.

The Demonstration Plant Communities, being native plants, will require little maintenance or water after the first year. In fact, native plants do best with no fertilizer, little attention and just water when they show the need, which after the first year can be very infrequent. We plan to install irrigation for them to ensure a healthy first year but can then throttle it back in subsequent years. Another key component is substantial rock placements, which will be partially met with rock collection (legal on BLM land up to 10 per day) but will also likely incur substantial cost for larger rocks.

The Steering Committee will work during the summer to produce landscape plans and budgets, with a fundraising drive in September and October to meet those plans. Ideas include plans for "purchasing plants," "lizard condos," and other choices ranging from \$20-\$250. Hopefully many people will participate.

### **Congregational Engagement**

We all recall how the Labyrinth brought the community together. We hope that Sacred Grounds projects will do the same. We've started a Plant of the Week article in the weekly newsletter that

includes a photo and brief description of a native plant found on UUCOD grounds. In the coming months we will also include animals, amphibians, birds, and insects.

We have held a couple of weed pull events this spring, and in the fall the congregation will be invited to help with planting and other activities. We also promote other events on our Community Facebook page, such as the UCR Bringing Nature Home presentation last week, which had a number of UUCOD congregants in attendance.

We plan frequent newsletter articles as we finalize the plans for the Celebration Garden and the Demonstration Native Plant Communities to build excitement for the October-November implementation.

We also want to revive purchasing stones for the Celebration Gardens and are working with Randy Steele and Jane Betts-Stover who led these efforts earlier.

### **UUCOD Grounds Keeping**

The Sacred Grounds Committee requests that UUCOD adjust grounds keeping to benefit native species. In particular, the yellow bat and two species of orioles nest ONLY in the native palm fronds. Currently we cut the palm skirts, destroying that habitat for these critical species. The Sacred Grounds Steering Committee strongly recommends that we stop pruning the palm trees, but is unsure what process is required for UUCOD to take that decision, so we forward that request to the Board. There are other questions regarding the balance of creating habitat for native species versus a pristine park-like appearance as well, so the Sacred Grounds Steering Committee asks the Board to advise on how we make those decisions and how Sacred Grounds can provide input.

With the addition of the Demonstration Native Plant Communities the number of plantings will increase. That might increase the cost of grounds keeping (or, as natives, perhaps not). The Sacred Grounds Steering Committee is strongly focused on developing new additions to the grounds, as capital improvements through donations outside of the UUCOD budget. Sacred Grounds donations are not being made to provide for future operating costs. We need to make sure that the UUCOD Board and the Sacred Grounds Steering Committee are aligned on this assumption.