
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2023

Attending:

A meeting of the UUCOD Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, October 17, 2023.

Board Members attending in person: Julia Alberg-Burbank, 1st Vice President, Fran Hoag, 2nd Vice President, Jerry L’Hommedieu, Treasurer, Claudia Simmons, Secretary, Rev. Ian W. Ridell, Minister, Walter Gendell, Director at Large, Carol McDaniel, Director at Large

Board Members attending by Zoom online: Bob Rancourt, President.

Others Present attending by Zoom: Sarita Gonzales, Denise Janssen Eager, Rod Belshee.

Welcome and Call to Order

Bob called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:15 PST.

Chalice Lighting

Rev. Riddell offered inspirational sentiments and lit the chalice.

Check-In

Bob welcomed everyone and he and the Board checked in.

Process Moderation

Process monitor was assigned to Julia Alberg-Burbank

Consent Agenda

- The Board approved a motion to approve the September 19, 2023, Meeting Minutes [Moved by Jerry L’Hommedieu and seconded by Carol McDaniel]

Voices of the Congregation

- Sarita Gonzales reviewed the Social Justice Committee’s CVUSD Migrant Education Center Holiday Charity Drive Fundraising Plans. She shared the background of how UUCOD came to work with the migrant program 23 years ago. The program grew exponentially over the years both from the number of migrant families participating as well as the number of UUCOD congregants donating, time, food, money and serving the holiday meal. Social Justice wants to continue to collect funds for food boxes and for the toys. Joni Paddock and Bill Masco spearhead this campaign. There was discussion around the start date for the UUCOD Coachella Valley Holiday Campaign, and it was decided that it would begin on November 6, 2023, right after the UUCOD Annual Auction. The Board approved the motion to move forward with the

toy and food drive as described by Sarita [Moved by Fran Hoag and seconded by Claudia Simmons].

- Denise Janssen Eager talked about Social Justice Committee’s “Share the Plate” collection for young people at Safe House that UUCOD supports during the holidays.
- Denise also shared that Social Justice has a new Co-Chair in Gloria Kapp.

Old Business

- Final Review, Discussion, and Planning of First Church Council:
 - Julia Alberg-Burbank has sent several emails to attendees letting them know the in-person Council Meeting will be held Saturday, October 21, 2023, at 8:30 in the Community Room. Thirteen people are expected to be present, including the Board members, and Julia will send out one last email reminder. Danish and coffee from Panera will be provided.
- Review of Recruitment Status for Choir Director Replacement:
 - Rev. Ian has received 7 formal applications for Choir Director, plus he has had conversation with 3-4 other people. He has had formal interviews with two people, and will be holding an audition on Wednesday evening, October 18, 2023. Assuming a positive outcome from the audition, Rev. Ian will come to the Board with a recommendation for Board approval or questions. The Choir Director’s hours will be 6 hours per week for 42 weeks per year. Walter Gendell will be checking California law regarding requirements around providing sick and vacation leave for this level of employee wages and hours.
- Review, Consideration, and Discussion of AB-506—Related Revisions to Child and Youth Safety Policy:
 - Rev. Ian, Bob Rancourt and Walter Gendell worked on revising the Youth and Child Policy. The suggestions that Jerry L’Hommedieu made at last month’s Board Meeting have been incorporated into the policy, and the wording and clarification changes have been made. Rev. Ian reported that Livescan fingerprinting is ready to go and stated that UUCOD will be cover the costs of all background checks. Current UUCOD employees are not grandfathered, and hence the Church Administrator and the new Choir Director will need to have their Livescan fingerprints done soon. Rev. Ian will be the Custodian of Records for this portion of the Policy. The Board approved the motion to adopt the Child and Youth Safety Policy [Moved by Jerry L’Hommedieu and seconded by Walter Gendell].
 - The next step is to review the Personnel Manual and make any necessary corrections, after which time, the Board will be done with AB-506.
- Review and Consideration of Sacred Grounds Initiative for Outreach in the Community and Among Members and Friends:
 - Fran Hoag, along with Rod Belshee (online) opened conversation about their view for Sacred Grounds going forward.
 - Sacred Grounds has been developed to foster a relationship between people and land that nourishes people. What can stewardship do to nurture that?
 - How can the Board help to bring Sacred Grounds more into an awareness of the whole congregation? It is felt that there is much the congregation can do to leverage Sacred

Grounds within the larger Coachella Valley community. Various events can be held to bring people together.

- Rod encouraged the vision of Sacred Grounds to not be viewed as a separate group of people, but that Sacred Grounds be considered as part of the infrastructure of the Church. As such, many groups should leverage use of Sacred Grounds for a myriad of purposes.
 - With a Volunteer Coordinator, Sacred Grounds would be a good opportunity for helping people volunteer to tour interested parties around the grounds.
 - No action regarding Sacred Grounds was taken at this Board Meeting. The vision and charter will be revisited to determine how Sacred Grounds and the congregation can operate together.
- Attitude of Gratitude:
 - Jerry L’Hommedieu asked that a note be sent to Sandy Sladen and Margaret Manson to thank them for presenting an excellent salad potluck this past Sunday.
 - A note of thanks and recognition should also be sent to Tracy Flynn who is on the Membership Committee for her outstanding efforts in welcoming newcomers who attend church services.
 - A note of thanks and deep appreciation should also be sent to John Ressler who spent hours and hours building the stamps that were used in the newly poured concrete.

Unfinished Business

- Final Review, Confirmation and Discussion of Status of Settled Minister Installation:
 - Event date and time: Sunday, November 12, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.
 - Rev. Ian reported that Linda Savard, Jane Zaun and Bob Rancourt will be included in the formal portion of the installation.
 - Sarita Gonzales, Shirley Lemaster and Joni Paddock will play a role in the service as well.
 - Rabbi Jules King has a prior commitment, however Bryna Blum will deliver Rabbi’s speech in his absence.
 - Clergy will make up the rest of the service.
 - Joel Baker will be the pianist.
 - Carol Lavoie and Jerry L’Hommedieu are planning the reception which will include a sit-down meal. There will be flowers and rentals. \$5,000 has been budgeted for the event.
 - Anticipating 120 people in attendance.
- Review and Discussion of Board Reading: “Transforming Conflict, The Blessings of Congregational Turmoil”:
 - Rev. Ian led the Board in conversation of its readings of the introduction and Chapter one, in particular how the members feel when confronted with conflict. Assignment for the November Board Meeting: Read Chapter 2, 16 pages, The Physiology of Conflict.
- Review and Discussion of Board Presence During Worship:
 - The Board agreed last month that a Board Member would assist in the pulpit once a month by delivering the welcoming words. Each Board Member will have an opportunity to participate.
 - Rev. Ian created a schedule, as follows: November--Julia Alberg-Burbank, December--Walter Gendell, January--Jerry L’Hommedieu, February--Claudia Simmons, March--Carol McDaniel, April--Bob Rancourt, May--Fran Hoag.

- Review and Discussion of Communications Issues: COVID-19 Information on Website, Official UUCOD Business Email Account Usage, New Communications Team Formation:
 - COVID-19 Information on Website: While UUCOD no longer has COVID-19 restrictions, it was felt that there should be some rewording under the COVID-19 button on the website in the event newcomers to the UUCOD website might be looking for some guidance. It was proposed that Walter Gendell create new wording, distribute same to the Board members for feedback, and forward to Fran Hoag to upload to the website.
 - Official UUCOD Business Email Account Usage: By January 1, 2024, all Board communication should be routed to/from the UUCOD Webmail server. Board members' Webmail address will be listed under their names in the Members Directory.
 - New Communication Team Formation: AD HOC committee has met, and another meeting is scheduled for October 23, 2023, for the purpose of drafting a policy.

New Business

- President Bob Rancourt: Bob submitted a written report.
- 1st Vice President Julia Alberg-Burbank: Julia submitted a written report.
- 2nd Vice President Fran Hoag: Fran submitted a written report
- Director-at-Large Walter Gendell: Walter submitted a written report.
- Secretary Claudia Simmons: Claudia submitted a written report.
- Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu: Jerry submitted a written report.
- Minister Reverend Ian W. Riddell: Rev. Riddell submitted a written report.
- Review and Discussion of Monthly Report:
 - Jerry L'Hommedieu reported that the UUCOD property and liability insurance has been reviewed in depth and has been renewed for the coming year. Jerry also reported that Charles Schwab has recently purchased TD Ameritrade, and thus a new Schwab account has been created. As such a new signatory card is required for this transfer and a Certification by the Board authorizing this change of investment is required. Document needs to be signed by President Robert Rancourt, after which it needs a notarized signature of Board Secretary Claudia Simmons.
 - Jerry L'Hommedieu conveyed that Rob DuWors and Julia Bell would like to send a sample charitable bequest solicitation letter to the Board of Directors and to the Finance Committee to get feedback, before the official launch in April 2024. The Board members had no objection.
- Process Review
 - Julia reported that the Board Meeting ran 2 minutes over the schedule time, and that everyone had been heard.
- Rev. Riddell extinguished the chalice with words of gratitude.
- Bob adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Claudia L. Simmons, Secretary

Date Approved: November 14, 2023

Attachments

Monthly Reports

President's Report



MEETING DATE:	October 17, 2023
REPORTING PERIOD:	Sept. 18 to Oct. 15, 2023
TYPE:	Monthly Board
AUTHOR:	Bob Rancourt

My assigned Board liaison constituencies are the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Ministry (DIBM), Leadership Development Committee, and Personnel Advisory Committee. Additionally, I prepare agenda for and preside over Board meetings, and, as time permits, I volunteer as a greeter and usher for the Membership Committee.

DIBM

DIBM met once during this time. Presently, members are studying neurodivergence via educational UUA videos and an informative “Neurodivergence 101 Handout.”

Leadership Development Committee

No meeting convened during this time.

Personnel Advisory Committee

No meeting convened during this time. Revisions to the Child and Youth Safety Policy based upon recent legislation remain on the Board’s agenda to finalize. Employees already have complied with the new legal and policy requirements. The Committee’s next project is drafting a ministerial evaluation form and process for the new Settled Minister.

Additional Information

During this time, I wrote a President’s Column article for the October newsletter summarizing our recently finalized goals and Board communications procedures. After my monthly Board planning meeting with Rev. Riddell and Julia, I prepared the agenda for and presided over the September 19 Regular Meeting, at which the Board adopted its “Board and Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024 Short Range Goals” and “Board and Fiscal Year 2024 – 2026 Strategic Goals,” which I later communicated, described, and transmitted to leaders of the committees and auxiliary and activity groups in an e-mail message.

Tomorrow, Minister Riddell is facilitating a meeting between the leaders of our Sacred Grounds Initiative and Jerry and me as Board representatives to address its role vis-à-vis the Board and church.

As President, I updated the UUCOD contact information for and attended a meeting of the Palm Springs Community Leadership Council, a LGBTQI-focused community group with which UUCOD collaborates. During this meeting, the new Palm Springs Fire Chief introduced himself to the group, and preparations for the annual Palm Springs Pride Parade were discussed.

To: UUCOD Board
From: Julia Alberg-Burbank, 1st VP
RE: October 2023 Board Report

Church Council: An additional email message was sent to committee chairs announcing the Church Council for October 21, 2023. The message contained an agenda to support the reporting out of the committees at the meeting.

Board Business: I went to the bank and took care of the additional signature card.

Denominational Affairs: There will be a meeting of the Pacific Western Regional Assembly April 19-20, 2024. More information to follow.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Alberg-Burbank

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
2nd VP report to the Board
October 17, 2023

Stewardship

This question was asked at the October Meeting: **Why is the Sacred Grounds important to the Stewardship Committee:**

The charter of the committee is to

- strengthen the quality of belonging and connection within and between members of our community
- work with committees to support their efforts to engage Members and Friends more fully in our church community.

The SGI provides us many opportunities to leverage both outreach and inreach. Some of the ideas we discussed were:

- When we receive certification from the National Wildlife Federation we can publicly announce that on TV and the Desert Sun.
- Reach out to the schools to tour our demonstration gardens

Support the goal of people developing a relationship with the land will nourish them.

- Offer tours of the grounds after the worship service
- Encourage people to sit on the land individually or in groups for Plein Air painting, meditation, writing poetry and other introspective activities
- Offer Life span classes that focus on key concepts behind the Sacred Grounds

Membership

- Plans to distribute printed directories at the silent auction.
- Is conducting New Member Orientation Classes on October 22 & 29 with an induction on November 19
- Continues to enter information into the Instant Church Directory database.
- I continue to work with LeGrand on new website content.
- Are developing methods to easily track numbers of people attending worship services.

Website

- On the front page, I created a new calendar view of featured events for the week. There is also a link to view the full calendar.
- I continue to train volunteers to edit the worship service videos before posting on the website.
- I am republishing the front page weekly to highlight news and events.
- I am working with the Ad Hoc Communications Development team to create the charter and structure of a Communications Team.

Submitted by Fran Hoag

UUCOD Treasurer's Report

September 2023

As of September 30, UUCOD held deposits of \$272,918.19 which includes \$208,194.42 invested with UUA and a CD with Pacific Premier Bank. Of the total amount, \$228,171.34 is held in either dedicated or restricted funds. This leaves \$44,746.85 in available unrestricted funds.

In September, S2S2S donated \$1,900 to UUCOD for use of the building, and we transferred \$2,452 from the Sacred Grounds reserve fund to pay for work associated with the new Celebration and Desert Canyons gardens. We also received \$3,000 in new donations for the Sacred Grounds reserve fund. The UUCOD Investment Fund decreased \$4,450 in value and the MacLean Endowment decreased \$4,018 in value. Thus far, UUCOD has received \$91,696 in pledge payments against a budgeted amount of \$182,000.

There were a few exceptional expenses in September. We incurred an additional \$515 in gardening expenses for the removal of a tree damaged during the recent hurricane and replacement of an irrigation valve. In addition to the expense incurred by the Sacred Grounds team, we also paid a deposit of \$593 toward the extension of the patio. Finally, we incurred \$3,240 in unbudgeted expenses for Rev. Ian's installation celebration which was posted to Other Board expenses.

For the month, expenses exceeded revenue by \$11,886. Contributing factors are the decrease of \$4,450 in market value of our investment account and \$3,240 in expenses for Rev. Ian's installment ceremony.

Julia Bell continues with her training on the treasurer's role and Ginger Hemingway continues to help with inputting information into MemInfo. Our Administrator, Pam Bibo, continues making deposits, processing most payments to our accounting software, and processing invoices for payment. Rob DuWors and Julia Bell have outlined a strategy for the Charitable Bequests program - one of our short-term goals - and are in the process of validating bequests we have previously received. The Sacred Grounds team made a request for donations to its special interest mailing list and, to date, has received \$3,500 in donations from seven donors. The team has been asked to delay a broader donation campaign until later in the year.

Jerry L'Hommedieu
October 5, 2023

Monthly Report – October 17, 2023
UUCOD Secretary Claudia Simmons

1. I was present and took the minutes of the September 19, 2023, Board Minutes. The draft has been prepared, reviewed by Board members and is awaiting approval at the October Board Meeting.
2. On Thursday, September 21, 2023, I met with Rev. Ian and Treasurer Jerry L'Homedieu to begin sorting through files for review by Jerry and Rev. Ian. They will pull the necessary documents which need to be maintained in fiscal and fiduciary archives.
3. During this month, I facilitated the Pacific Premier Bank's paperwork requirement for them to prepare the new Signatory cards for 3 of the 4 UUCOD Bank Accounts. New signatory cards are required anytime there is a change in Officers of the Board of Directors. All signatory cards are now signed, and accounts have been updated.

Minister's Report to the UUCOD Board

October 17, 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.

A. Counseling and Pastoral Care

- The Care Team continues to check in and share our contacts with congregants and offer each other guidance and support in our support of congregants' needs.
- The Care Team has drafted a document outlining our responsibilities, boundaries, and the scope of the care we offer congregants and friends. We will finalize this at our next meeting and share with the Board and then the congregation. We hope to use this clarity to help us recruit congregants for the Care Team and for some specific helping tasks.
- I continue to meet with congregants in need of connection and conversation by phone and Zoom and in person.
- I am heartened, as always, by the ways I see you all take care of each other when people are in need.

B. Administration, Governance, and Staff

- I meet weekly with Pam Bibo to check in on work expectations and how things are going.
- The choir will be participating in an audition of one candidate for Choir Director tomorrow evening (Oct 18). The committee reviewed applications from 7 applicants and also fielded several more conversations with folks interested in the position. We have chosen so far to interview 2 candidates. After these interviews, we are auditioning one candidate this week.
- Because of travel, the Committee on Ministry did not meet this month. We are looking forward to meeting next month!
- I continue to meet monthly with President Bob Rancourt and First Vice President July Alberg-Burbank 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.
- We have been fully approved for LiveScan background checks for new hires. I have received instructional and set up materials and will work this week to get things set up. We will put our new Choir Director hire through the process (when we are at that stage with a candidate) and I will also work to have Pam Bibo do the check (all current employees must also have had this check done). There will be a cost to the congregation for these background checks (there always have been).

- I met with Treasurer Jerry and Secretary Claudia to begin work on consolidating and organizing congregational records.

C. Membership and Committees

- I met with the DIB Ministry team.
- I am working with the team planning our presence in the 2024 Pride Parade.
- I participated in the monthly Stewardship Committee and Social Justice Committee meetings.

D. Lifespan Faith-Development

- I offered two classes in the last month
 - “Conversations and Covenant” was attended by 7 people for our 3-session class
 - UUA Common Read: On Repentance and Repair”: I prepared this class to be held on Saturday, October 14. No one showed up to attend.
- I meet monthly with the Chalice Circle Facilitators. The Chalice Circles will follow our monthly themes based on the newly articulated Article II values.

E. Worship

- We have service leaders planned through the beginning of February
- I continue to lead the weekly Production meetings, though others take the lead when I am out of town or away. 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:
 - September 24 — Atonement and Forgiveness us with Bryna Blum as Worship Associate.
 - October 1 — Warp and Weft: Woven into Life (Article II: Interdependence) with Steven Toproff as Worship Associate.
 - October 15 — Ingathering: A Mingling of the Waters with Denise Jansen Eager as Worship Associate. This service was followed by a fabulous potluck to celebrate our ingathering.
- We welcomed Rev. Jackie Conley to our pulpit to speak about gun violence.

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 have taken on the role of mentor to another new minister as he enters Preliminary Fellowship. Both of these mentoring roles together will take about 2.5 hours a month of my time.

G. Prophetic Outreach, Interfaith Activities, and Local Collaboration

- The Desert Interfaith Council is on hiatus this fall as the group determines the future path of the organization. I attended the final regular meeting this month.
- I communicated regularly with Rabbi King of DOS in the aftermath of the Hamas attack on Israel and Israel's military response. I spoke at the DOS Shabbat service on 10/13 and offered our congregation's support for them in their grief. Many people let me know how much DOS appreciates our opening our spiritual home to them.
- I reached out to another local clergy colleague for support/resources for a pastoral issue.

H. Personal and Professional Growth

- I am grateful for a week of study leave this week, though I will be attending several meetings this week.
- 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doe', is written on a light-colored background.

My weekly schedule is as follows:

Currently, my day off is Friday. Thursday continues to be my writing/reading day, which I try to keep free of meetings.

Upcoming Travel Schedule:

- Study Leave: October 16-22