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# Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert

## Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2023

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### Attending:

A meeting of the UUCOD Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, November 14, 2023.

**Board Members attending in person:** Bob Rancourt, President, Julia Alberg-Burbank, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Jerry L'Hommedieu, Treasurer, Claudia Simmons, Secretary, Rev. Ian W. Riddell, Minister.

**Board Members attending by Zoom online:** Fran Hoag, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Walter Gendell, Director at Large, Carol McDaniel, Director at Large

**Others Present:** Diana Leslie

### Welcome and Call to Order

Bob called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:00 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 Carol McDaniel.

### Consent Agenda

- The Board approved a motion to approve the October 17, 2023, Meeting Minutes [Moved by Jerry L'Hommedieu and seconded by Julia Alberg-Burbank].
- The Board formally approved ratification of employment of Choir Director Jim Tong. It was reported that 12 people have signed up to come to choir practice.

### Voices of the Congregation

- Consideration and Approval of Sacred Grounds Initiative's Updated Fundraising Plan:
  - Diana Leslie requested that Sacred Grounds be given permission to send an email to the Constant Contact list the first week of December to ask for donations.
    - Reported that a good portion of the reserves has been spent, and Sacred Grounds is contemplating future projects, after which time they will be finished with independent fundraising.

- Anticipating: 2-3 more habitat gardens; completion of Rev. Barbara's contemplation area; additional plantings around the church; benches; trees along the back wall of the sanctuary to cut down on the heat.
- Looking to raise an additional \$10-\$15,000.
- Motion made to send letter via email via Constant Contact [moved by Jerry L'Hommedieu and seconded by Julia Alberg-Burbank].
- Additional comments by Rod Belshee: Reported that all irrigation is completed at habitation garden; still needs signage; upper garden is having sealant applied now; December 3, 2023, will be the blessing of Sacred Grounds; January 7<sup>th</sup> will be public dedication and celebration of Sacred Grounds, and Rev. Barbara will be doing that service and dedication. Conservation groups will be present and marketing communications will include social media and will be communicated around the community.
- Rod Belshee asked that a thank you note to Katy Barrows, as she was responsible for all the plants that were donated by the Living Desert and also received wholesale prices elsewhere. Also suggested that each of the wholesalers have a booth at the January 7<sup>th</sup> event. Rod indicated that he would draft language for said thank you note.

## Old Business

- Nomination of Board Attitude of Gratitude Note Recipients:
  - Sacred Grounds to give a list of names for notes
  - Pam Bibo's daughter, Charlotte, was a runner at the Auction
  - All the volunteers for the Auction
  - Membership requested that a thank you note be sent to Marty Gronewald for his excellent work on the new directory.

## Unfinished Business

- Review, Consideration, and Discussion of the Status of Proposed Board Recognitions:
  - Bob Rancourt presented a personalized UUCOD 8"x10" plaque to acknowledge the good works of 4 past UUCOD presidents: Kevin Brandt, Sarita Gonzalez, Jane Zaun and Linda Savard. Total cost would be \$350 for all the plaques. Approval was unanimous by the Board and Bob will move forward to order.
    - Presentation will be coordinated with New Member Induction and/or acknowledgment of volunteers in early or mid-April.
  - Walter Gendell put forth the idea of also acknowledging other retiring Board Members.
  - Feelers are being put out about Lifetime Achievement Award recipients. Leslie Gebhart will be next up, and those plans are moving forward.
- Review and Discussion of the Status of the UUA's Final Proposed Revision to Article II of the UUA By-Laws:
  - Rev. Ian reviewed the proposed revision to Article II. The Commission took the amendments and worked them into the previously shared statement to make sure the Article flowed correctly. The proposed revision to Article II language will go to the General Assembly I June for another vote. There must be a super majority to pass. If the language passes at the General Assembly, the Article will be discussed as a congregation. The General Assembly will be virtual this year—all online. The proposed

Article II language is in the Google Board documents and Rev. Ian asked the Board to read it.

- Review and Discussion of Board Reading: “Transforming Conflict: The Blessings of Congregational Turmoil” (Ch. 2)
  - The Board took time to discuss. Assignment for December is to read Chapter 3. January’s assignment is to read Chapters 4 and 5.

## New Business

- President Bob Rancourt: Bob submitted a written report.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Julia Alberg-Burbank: Julia submitted a written report.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Fran Hoag: Fran submitted a written report.
- Director-at-Large Walter Gendell: Walter submitted a written report.
- Director-at-Large Carol McDaniel: Carol 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.
- Sacred Grounds submitted a Board Report.
- Review and Discussion of Monthly Reports:
  - Each member reviewed their involvement for the month. Of note:
    - Fran Hoag requested a letter from UUCOD in support of the Chuckwalla National Monument. Reported that Katy Barrow suggested this letter to be sent to the President in support of the National Monument. Fran indicated that she would send information about this monument to all the Board Members.
    - Walter Gendell reported that the Hospitality Committee is trying to find congregation members who would step up to replace them, and that Eddie Cardoza has talked about taking over that role.
    - Rev. Ian reported a very busy couple of weeks with Celebration of Life for Pam Maher, Pride, DOS and Settled Minister Celebration.
    - Jerry L’Hommedieu reported that total proceeds from the Auction will not be known until the first or second week of December due to after-event sales. As of November, Board Meeting \$26,200 is in, with an after-Auction projection of \$29,800.
      - Regarding Charitable Giving, Julia Bell submitted an email about doing a soft launch of this program to get a sense of what kind of questions might come up when released to the full congregation. Launch is anticipated in late March/early April.
- Review, Consideration, and Discussion of the Safety Committee’s Earthquake Procedures:
  - Jerry L’Hommedieu reported that the members of the Safety Committee seem satisfied with the report as written. There will be safety training on January 27, 2024, from 2:00-4:00, with a follow-up on February 3, 2024 from 2:00-4:00. Training will be for Membership, Worship and Board Members. Fire and medical emergencies will be covered at those sessions. Earthquake and active shooter training will happen later.

- Review, Consideration, and Discussion of the Care Teams Charter Revisions:
  - Rev. Ian reports that the Care Team is reevaluating its charter, and that Julia Bell will head the team. The team are defining the scope of work to share with the congregation, and are basing additions, changes, etc., on a Wisconsin UUCOD's Care practice. Rev. Ian will be preaching about this on January 21, 2024, as Care as justice work, and is hopeful to receive feedback from the congregation to see how the church can care for members, both short-term and long term. The Board was encouraged to also give feedback and responses and send along to Rev. Ian.
  - Jerry suggested that it would be helpful to tell people how they can get ahold of the Care Team, and to do better at educating the congregation as to where they can go to find this and other important church information.

### Process Moderation

- Carol reported that the Board Meeting ran 20 minutes short of the scheduled time, and that everyone had been heard.

### Chalice Extinguishment

- Rev. Riddell extinguished the chalice with words of gratitude.

### Adjournment

- Bob adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:10 pm

### Respectfully Submitted,



Claudia L. Simmons, Secretary

Date Approved: December 19, 2023

### Attachments

Monthly Reports  
Sacred Grounds Updated Fundraising Initiative  
Safety Committee's Earthquake Procedures

## President's Report



MEETING DATE:	<b>November 14, 2023</b>
REPORTING PERIOD:	<b>Oct. 16 to Nov. 12, 2023</b>
TYPE:	<b>Monthly Board</b>
AUTHOR:	<b>Bob Rancourt</b>

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. Members continue to study neurodivergence. DIBM is also working on reviewing the assessment completed in the last Strategic Goals cycle toward making recommendations to enhance diversity and help our beloved community continue to work on being more welcoming.

### **Leadership Development Committee**

No meeting convened during this time.

### **Personnel Advisory Committee**

No meeting convened during this time. The Board approved revisions to the Child and Youth Safety Policy based upon recent legislation. Employees already have complied with the new requirements. Another project on the Committee's agenda 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 November newsletter highlighting the myriad of forthcoming significant church activities and events. After my monthly Board planning meeting with Rev. Riddell and Julia, I prepared the agenda for and presided over the October 17 Regular Meeting. On October 18, I attended the audition of and met the new Choir Director, Jim Tong, which proved productive and successful.

On October 19, I attended the Pacific Western Region's Presidents' Meeting, an ongoing regular gathering of sitting Presidents from the region who try to brainstorm and collaborate on administrative issues. On October 21, I attended the year's First Church

Council in which Committees, Councils, and Auxiliary and Activity Groups discussed their goals and plans, which we discussed and synchronized to the Board’s Short- and Long-Range Goals (see below attached summary).

Members of the Board’s Ad Hoc Communications Team Creation Committee had a productive meeting on October 23, and a charter and ideas were drafted, considered, and discussed. Additional work and meetings will continue to finalize an outline for approval of the new Communications Team.

Vikki Porter, Carol Lavoie, and I communicated via e-mail and met and prepared for the auction, for which Vikki and I served as the auctioneers on November 4. It was a (another) record-breaking financial success. Many thanks are due to many people.

During Pride Weekend of November 4 to November 6, I assisted with renting a large platform truck, decorating it as a UUCOD float, and driving it during the annual Palm Springs LGTBQ Pride Parade, on behalf of the Social Justice Committee. By all accounts, it was well received and a huge success with 33 participants showing up for UUCOD!

## First Church Council

October 21, 2023

UUCOD By-Laws (Art. VIII(A)): “There shall be a Church Council which shall serve as a mechanism for sharing information about Church activities and programs, and coordinating activities within the Church.”

Committee, Ministry, Auxiliary or Activity Group	Group’s Goals	Alignment to Short- and/or Long-Range Goals
<b>A/V Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate communal worship</li> <li>• Execute, facilitate, and maintain streaming of worship services and meetings as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Broaden and diversify musical offerings in worship</li> <li>• Long-Range: Explore new ways and formats of worship</li> <li>• Long-Range: Make physical facility more welcoming and accessible to diverse groups</li> </ul>
<b>Care Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update charge of the committee</li> <li>• Follow the health and wellbeing of Members and Friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach for engaged Members and Friends</li> </ul>

Committee, Ministry, Auxiliary or Activity Group	Group's Goals	Alignment to Short- and/or Long-Range Goals
<b>Committee on Ministry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help implement the Right Relations Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Continue to raise awareness of our Right Relations Policy through education and training</li> </ul>
<b>Denominational Affairs Liaison</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring congregants UUA and PWR current information to promote connection and education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Identify, involve, and develop lay leaders</li> <li>• Long-Range: Build relationships and collaboration with groups in the larger community</li> </ul>
<b>Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Ministry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at neurodiversity</li> <li>• Review the assessment of the last Strategic Goals cycle to identify and develop more diverse and welcoming behaviors or practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-Range: Use the assessment completed in the last Strategic Goals cycle toward recommending actions to enhance diversity and help us be more welcoming</li> <li>• Long-Range: Make physical facility more welcoming and accessible to diverse groups</li> <li>• Long-Range: Continue to support, consult, and ally with BIOPOC and other marginalized groups as judged by them</li> <li>• Long-Range: Establish an antiracism policy</li> <li>• Long-Range: Explore ways to live more intentionally into the Eighth Principle</li> </ul>

Committee, Ministry, Auxiliary or Activity Group	Group's Goals	Alignment to Short- and/or Long-Range Goals
<p><b>Facilities and Furnishings Committee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care for and provide a clean, well-functioning building and adjacent facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-Range: Review our Green Sanctuary certification and determine necessity for any recertification and/or updates (with Social Justice Comm.)</li> <li>Long-Range: Make physical facility more welcoming and accessible to diverse groups</li> <li>Long-Range: Continue to develop a natural, ecologically balanced Sacred Grounds (with Sacred Grounds Init.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Finance Committee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in, propose, and organize one new fundraiser</li> <li>Sponsor a robust annual Pledge Drive</li> <li>Create a treasurer team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach for engaged Members and Friends</li> <li>Long-Range: Identify, involve, and develop lay leaders</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hospitality Team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide opportunities for new Members and Friends to become engaged</li> <li>To contribute to fellowship among new and long-term Members, Friends, and visitors</li> <li>To help identify and develop volunteers and volunteer leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach to increase membership and enhance community integration</li> <li>Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach for engaged Members and Friends</li> <li>Long-Range: Identify, involve, and develop lay leaders</li> <li>Long-Range: Build relationships and collaboration with groups in the larger community</li> </ul>



Committee, Ministry, Auxiliary or Activity Group	Group's Goals	Alignment to Short- and/or Long-Range Goals
<b>Leadership Development Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on finding and developing new leaders within the church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Identify, involve, and develop current and undiscovered lay leaders</li> <li>• Long-Range: Promote and develop and culture of volunteerism</li> <li>• Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach for engaged Members and Friends</li> <li>• Short-Range: Develop an outline for a new Volunteer Coordinator position and seek out appropriate candidates</li> </ul>
<b>Membership Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greet and welcome new people and orient new Members</li> <li>• Create and distribute Members and Friends Directory annually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach for engaged Members and Friends</li> <li>• Long-Range: Develop and implement an outreach program to increase church membership and enhance integration into our community</li> </ul>
<b>Personnel Advisory Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement legal requirements to become compliant with new state law and able to serve youth and children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Establish programming for families, youth, and children</li> <li>• Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach to increase membership and enhance community integration</li> <li>• Short-Range: Implement AB 506 and make any necessary related changes to the Employee Manual</li> </ul>

Committee, Ministry, Auxiliary or Activity Group	Group's Goals	Alignment to Short- and/or Long-Range Goals
<b>Sacred Grounds Initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building community, promoting volunteerism, identifying and developing lay leaders, and providing spiritual education related to the Seventh Principle</li> <li>• Creating safe habitats on our Sacred Grounds for endangered desert plants and animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Identify, involve, and develop lay leaders</li> <li>• Long-Range: Make physical facility more welcoming and accessible to diverse groups</li> <li>• Long-Range: Focus on climate change and the environment through education and action</li> <li>• Long-Range: Continue to develop a natural, ecologically balanced Sacred Grounds</li> <li>• Long-Range: Promote and develop a culture of volunteerism</li> <li>• Long-Range: Build relationships and collaboration with groups in the larger community</li> </ul>
<b>Social Justice Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in community events</li> <li>• Give to community organizations whose mission and work are consistent with our covenants and principles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Promote and develop a culture of volunteerism</li> <li>• Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach to increase membership and enhance community integration</li> <li>• Long-Range: Build relationships and collaboration with groups in the larger community</li> </ul>

Committee, Ministry, Auxiliary or Activity Group	Group's Goals	Alignment to Short- and/or Long-Range Goals
<b>Stewardship Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase volunteerism in general and keep track of volunteers</li> <li>• Develop and implement an outreach program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Establish programming for families, youth, and children, including building volunteer support</li> <li>• Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach to increase membership and enhance community integration</li> <li>• Long-Range: Develop and implement outreach for engaged Members and Friends</li> <li>• Long-Range: Promote and develop a culture of volunteerism</li> </ul>
<b>Worship Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity all facets of service</li> <li>• Increase volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range: Broaden and diversify musical offerings in worship</li> <li>• Long-Range: Explore new ways and formats of worship</li> <li>• Long-Range: Promote and develop a culture of volunteerism</li> </ul>



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

**Church Council:** Church Council was held on 10/21/23. It was well attended and goals were shared. Additionally, dates and events were added to the calendar. Finally, *outreach within* was a topic of discussion, thoughtfully led by Jerry L'Hommedieu. Everyone's attendance and participation is greatly appreciated.

**Board Business:** I met with Rev Ian and Bob Rancourt, to help support the creation of the agenda for this meeting.

**Denominational Affairs:** The final draft of the proposed Article II has been released. Use this [link](#) to read the text. This language will be voted on at this year's General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Alberg-Burbank

**Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> VP report to the Board**  
**November 14, 2023**

In-Gathering Salad Luncheon

October 15 was In-Gathering Sunday which is the day that we formally welcome back the members and friends who live in other locations during the summer. It is also the beginning of the church year when, as our President said in his blog, the church is in full swing. In the 2 weeks before the event, I as Chair of the Stewardship Committee, helped pull together an impromptu potluck luncheon to celebrate the day. The Board provided rolls and lettuce, congregants brought salad toppings and some desserts. It was a very successful potluck with great conversations and much community building. We were able to expand seating out to the newly expanded patio which made it feel not as cramped in the community room. The buzz in the kitchen as almost all who attended were cleaning up was "When will we do this again? It was fun."

Church Council

As a Board Member I attended the Church Council on Oct 18. I was impressed with the feelings of camaraderie between Committee Chairs and the Board and the dedication to getting church work done this year. I will leave it to others to evaluate the event, but I will add that I helped provide the format for creating an annual Church Calendar which includes major Committee and Board events. It can be accessed at [UUCOD 2023-24 Annual Calendar](#). This is a document shared on google docs and should be considered the most recent version.

Communications Team

I continue to meet with Rev Ian, Bob Rancourt and Pam Bibo to discuss the formation of a communications team.

Celebration of Life for Pam Maher

Pam was a member who brought much vitality to our church life. I attended her celebration as a friend and as a Board Member which honored her contribution to our spiritual growth in accepting her as a transgender woman.

Silent and Live Auctions

Carol Levoie (Stewardship Committee Member) and the team she assembled are phenomenal. Need I say More? We also raised the \$29,000 to fund our projects for the upcoming year!!

Stewardship Meeting

We celebrated our successes in engaging members and building community at the Salad Potluck Luncheon and the Auctions. We also started planning for the Pledge Drive Kick-off on January 28 and the Pledge Drive Celebration on March 3. The Kick-off will be a Chili Cook-off and the Celebration will be another Potluck Salad Luncheon. More details will be forthcoming.

### Outreach Opportunity

Over the past many years, about a dozen members of our congregation have been building relationships with local environmental, educational and conservationist organizations as either citizen scientists, volunteers or donors. UUCOD members are recognized as important members of that community. UUCOD has also gratefully received advisory and financial benefits from those organizations in the creation of our sacred grounds.

Katie Barrows is member of the team working to establish the Chuckwalla National Monument. It will stretch from Joshua Tree southward to Mecca and eastward to the Arizona Border. The National Monument would protect natural habitat for turtle and lizards, preserve native spiritual lands and provide easy access to public lands for East Valley communities.

Within the last week I was approached by Katie requesting that UUCOD write a letter to the President supporting the establishment of the and the expansion of Joshua Tree National Monument. I suggest that the Board take up discussion of this important topic. I will, as requested, forward the resources that Katie sent to me.

### Membership

I will provide details at the meeting.

### Addendum:

Membership: Nine people completed the New Member Orientation and will be signing the bok at a ceremony on November 19.

Justin Aguilar

Denise and Chuck Stevens

Simone Best

Cyndi Bolander

Eddie Cardoso

Jane Hillegas-Stommel

Liz Mediavilla

Bob Haas.

Submitted by Fran Hoag

## Director at Large Board Report November 2023

### Hospitality

- I met with Sandy Sladen and Margaret Manson to review any issues or concerns they had regarding Hospitality. Several items were discussed to include:
- Both Sandy and Margaret have decided to step down from their current roles as heads of Hospitality effective June 30<sup>th</sup>. They are reaching out to people to try and identify a replacement, but at this point no one has stepped forward. I let them know that I would bring this to the Board's attention so collectively we can try and find replacements. June 30<sup>th</sup> is a hard stop for them.
- We discussed the budget shortfalls last year and probably this year. The 22/23 budget was \$750, and they spent \$900. This year the budget is \$600, and they have already spent approximately \$425. Jerry is aware of this and has suggested that we will need to give Hospitality a bigger budget next year to cover these very basic expenses.

### Human Resources

- Rev. Ian and I met on November 9<sup>th</sup> to begin reviewing and creating a Ministerial Evaluation Form (assessment). We intend as part of our due diligence to contact other ministers to learn their evaluation and assessment process .
- We will be starting with the review process – who approves Ian's objectives, how is feedback provided and by whom, who delivers the feedback and the frequency of review. Our recommendation will be presented to the Board no later than the January Board meeting.
- We will then begin crafting the essential components/areas of Ian's evaluation. Areas he would be evaluated on may include how well he performs his essential functions, his core competencies and how well he has achieved the goals linked to the Church's long and short-term strategy.
- We will report back to the Board as we progress in each of these areas.

### By-Laws

- No activity in October.

### AB-506

- Completed
- The policy was written and approved by the Board at the October Board meeting.
- The Employee manual was updated to reflect changes to the new policy and the requirement that employees within the first 3 months of employment must complete government-mandated child abuse awareness and prevention training.

### Covid-19 Policy and Protocol

- The Board asked that I review and update our Covid-19 Policy since the current policy is no longer in effect and was going to be removed from the website. It was recommended that there still be a statement as to our practice for those who may be new to the church or visiting for the first time.



- I crafted information for the website that was reviewed by the Board and approved in October and will now be posted on our website.

### **Attitude of Gratitude**

- Prepared thank you cards for the following individuals:
  - Margaret Manson and Sandy Sladen for their salad potluck
  - Tracy Flynn for her work outreach to guests and visitors
  - John Ressler for his many hours in creating the beautiful stamping in the Celebration Garden

**Submitted by:  
Walter Gendell  
Director at Large  
November 14, 2023**

## DIRECTOR AT LARGE MONTHLY REPORT BY CAROL McDANIEL

This has been a busy month for the groups I check on,

1. Audio: Services, a memorial and an installation have all occurred. Volunteers are still needed.
2. Facilities: 2 large folding tables and a hose trolley have been trashed/salvaged. The chairs have been moved numerous times. Paint has been added to the front/sides of
3. Social Justice: They are getting ready for the holidays. Refer to the newsletter for Food Basket and Toy Drive information. Other drives continue (Food 1st, Socks 2nd, Share 3rd, Formula 4th).

Carol McDaniel  
11-14-2023

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

November 14, 2023

The Rev. Ian W. Riddell

What a glorious time we had this past Sunday! I was deeply moved by the way we all came together to celebrate my installation and the formalization of our shared ministry together. I am honored, delighted, and humbled to be serving as your settled minister and our celebration on Sunday was just absolutely fabulous. It was wonderful to have so many of my ministerial colleagues here to celebrate with us and to help us be clear about what we're doing together. The love in the room was tangible. I'm so grateful for everyone who made Sunday evening possible and wonderful.

*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 are presenting this to the Board this evening and will host an after-service conversation with the congregation about the Care Team and about how we all care for each other. 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 Bibb to check in on work expectations and how things are going.
- We have hired our new Choir Director, Jim Tong. His first day was November 6 and his first choir practice will be this Wednesday, November 15.
- The Committee on Ministry has been having trouble finding times when we can all meet regularly. We continue to communicate with each other regularly and talk about issues and plans.

- 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 every three months with Sue Caspari to update our reporting of copyrighted music use through our Christian Copyright Solutions account.
- I am working with Walter Gendell in his HR/Personnel role to develop a practice of regular assessment and evaluation of my ministry and of the shared ministry of the congregation. We hope to present ideas to the Board at our December or January meeting.
- The Safety Team met and are presenting an Earthquake plan to the Board this evening. We are planning safety awareness and procedures trainings for the congregation early in the new year.
- I thoroughly enjoyed attending our annual Auction on November 4. What a wonderful success! Kudos to Carol and her team—especially Bob, Vikki, Randy, Chris, and Barb—for creating such a successful and enjoyable community evening.

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

- I participated in the New Member class on October 29, sharing information about ministry and about Unitarian Universalist values and how the way we have expressed them has changed over the decades.
- I meet monthly with the DIB Ministry team. We are educating ourselves about issues of neurodivergence as we explore a broad view of inclusion and welcome. We are also working with the assessment last year's team did of our congregation around ARAOMC issues in the ways we live out our goals in community.
- I participated in our delegation in the Pride Parade on November 5. We had a record turn out and our advanced planning paid off in spades. Having the truck and the car allowed many more people to participate and for us to be seen better. Kudos to Michael Allen who brought his sound system and shared our UU message with the crowd while we marched. Kudos also to Denise, Chris, Reuben, Sheryl, and Bob who did so much work to organize and plan – and drive vehicles.
- I participated in the Stewardship and Membership meetings this month

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

- 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**

- I participated in the Celebration of Life for Pam Maher on November 2.
- We have service leaders planned through the beginning of April
- 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:
  - October 29 — They Are With Us Always: Stories of Our Ancestors with Michael Allen, and Daljit Singh and Ginger Hemingway as Worship Associate.
  - November 12 — Long Live the Legion! or How our Differences Make us Stronger [A2: Pluralism] with Julia Alberg-Burbank as Worship Associate.
  - November 12 — INSTALLATION!!
- We welcomed Rabbi Jules King and Lauren Nile to our pulpit this month.

## **F. Denominational Activities**

- I participated in a UUA-sponsored webinar/Zoom gathering: Why We Cannot Turn Away: Resources for UU Leaders Engaging on Israel and Palestine
- 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 preached about pride and diversity at their regular DOS Shabbat service on November 10—several of our members attended this service as well.

## **H. 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.

- I also meet weekly with my therapist. I have put my weekly Spanish meetings on hold for the time being.

in peace and deep love

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David", written in a cursive style.

**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:**

- Saturday, December 2, I will be in San Diego representing our congregation and attending the Celebration of Life for Rev. Dr. Carolyn Owen Towle at First UU San Diego
- Saturday, December 9, we will be in LA exploring an exhibit at the Getty. I will move hours around this week to make up for this time
- I will be on Study Leave from December 25 through December 30
- I will be on Vacation out of the country from January 6 through January 13
- I will be on Vacation visiting family in Canada from February 5 through February 11

## UUCOD Treasurer's Report

October 2023

As of October 31, UUCOD held deposits of \$249,752.59 which includes \$203,022.68 invested with UUA and a CD with Pacific Premier Bank. Of the total amount, \$223,022.68 is held in either dedicated or restricted funds. This leaves \$26,451.93 in available unrestricted funds; down from \$44,746.85 in September.

The decrease in available unrestricted funds is due to significant expenses and a decrease in value of investments. The patio extension came in at \$6,975 and we incurred an expense of \$3,084 for property and liability insurance. Both expenses were near budgeted amounts.

The value of the MacLean Endowment Fund and the UUCOD Investment Fund, in total, decreased by \$10,582 in October. Monthly variations in value have been highly volatile with losses in value over the past two months from our highest fund values in August. The funds are long-term investments and should not be needed in this fiscal year.

The Sacred Grounds team incurred \$7,727 in expenses in October for the walkway in the new Celebration Garden and development of the Desert Canyon Garden near the Labyrinth. Fiscal year to date expenses total \$12,779. Funds for these expenses are drawn from the Sacred Grounds reserve fund and are represented in account 4400 Transfer from Restricted Accounts on the Statement of Activity. With nearly \$5,000 in recent donations to Sacred Grounds, the reserve balance stands at \$14,788. Facilities incurred expenses of \$6,382 for extension of the patio.

October ended with a net operating loss of \$17,745 for the month but, year to date, our excess revenues total \$28,091. The annual auction will help replenish our unrestricted funds.

Rob DuWors and Julia Bell plan to send a charitable bequests donor letter to members of the Finance Committee and Board members as a sampling to identify ways to best solicit Members and Friends to include UUCOD as part of their estate planning. They anticipate launching a broader campaign to all Members and Friends in April. This effort is one of our goals for FY 23-24.

I have been working with Linda Savard and the Leadership Development team to identify new members for the Finance Committee. Chris Eager has indicated he wants to step down as chairman of the committee or identify a co-chair to assist him. He intends to remain a member of the committee and has indicated his willingness to continue as lead of the annual pledge drive. Sarita Gonzales has conveyed she is leaving the Finance Committee to focus on family members with significant medical problems.

Jerry L'Hommedieu  
November 5, 2023

Monthly Report – October 17, 2023  
UUCOD Secretary Claudia Simmons

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1. I was present and took the minutes of the October 17, 2023, Board Minutes. The draft has been prepared, reviewed by Board members and is awaiting approval at the October Board Meeting.
2. I was present and took the minutes for our first Church Council Meeting on Saturday, October 21, 2023. Completed minutes were sent to the Board and posted to the Google Drive.
3. Still to do: Make appointment with Pacific Premier Bank on El Paseo to sign and have notarized the Charles Schwab financial document.



October, 2023

Dear Members and Friends of UUCOD,

The first two Sacred Grounds Projects are rapidly being completed and are amazing!

This letter is about what is next. We are beginning to plan for Fall 2024 projects, and as a completely self-funded effort, we rely on your donations. We are asking for donations at this time so we can properly plan for next year. Tentatively, we hope to create two more native desert habitats for the plants and animals who make our Sacred Grounds their home. We invite you to join us in supporting our efforts. [Donate Now](#)

For more than three years, a group of us at UUCOD dreamt about creating safe habitats for our endangered desert plants and animals. We also envisioned spaces where people could wander, reflect, celebrate and feel a greater part of the natural world.

In a few weeks:

- A new Celebration Garden will be created next to the patio to celebrate those we love and honor. A circular walkway stamped with John Ressler's colorful design of *Encelia farinosa* (brittlebush) blossoms will surround one of Gene Kain's beautiful sculptures and be ADA compliant. The commemorative stones will be placed around the circle.
- Our first demonstration habitat, a Desert Canyon with meandering pathways, native trees and plants, numerous boulders and plentiful habitat for our resident animals will be completed.

This winter we will plan our next steps for creating additional Native Habitats. You will be invited to join these conversations.

Please go to [this link](#) to learn more about the plans and see photos of work in progress.

We invite you to join us in supporting these efforts as a volunteer and as a donor. If you would like to make a gift, please click this link: [Donate Now](#). If you need additional information and would like to volunteer, please contact [SacredGrounds@uucod.org](mailto:SacredGrounds@uucod.org).

Sincerely,

The Sacred Grounds Steering Committee,

Rod Belshee, David Emmerson, Sue Engle, Jack Fitzsimmons, Diana Leslie, John Ressler, Mel Wilkinson and Jerry L'Hommedieu, board liaison

November 9, 2023

**To:** The Finance Committee and UUCOD Board

**From:** The Sacred Ground Steering Committee

Rod Belshee and Diana Leslie co-chairs, David Emmerson, Sue Engle, Jack Fitzsimmons, John Ressler, Randy Steele, and Mel Wilkinson. (Jerry l'Hommedieu, board liaison)

**Re: Request to send an email/letter to the UUCOD Constant Contact list in early December asking for donations to the Sacred Grounds Initiative**

**Background:**

- Two major Sacred Grounds projects are nearing completion – the Celebration Garden and a Desert Canyon Habitat Refuge.
  - These projects expended about \$15,700 of the Reserve, which was \$21,197 in June 2023.
  - (The projects came in about \$3,600 under our project plan!)
- The next projects may include 2-3 additional native habitats, the completion of Reverend Barbara's meditation garden, more benches for meditation and reflection, colorful plantings on the plaza, and screening the back wall of the sanctuary to lower energy costs. Project ideas will be socialized with the congregation this winter.
  - The guesstimate for these projects is \$20,000-\$25,000.
- We need to raise about \$10,000-\$15,000 more to undertake the next projects.
  - Emailing our 62 Sacred Grounds subscribers generated \$4,650 from 17 donors.
  - A number of new orders have also been placed for Sacred Stones totaling about \$2,500 (net).
  - These bring the current Sacred Grounds reserve balance to approximately \$10,000.
- We'd like to complete the next projects within two years. Since the Initiative is self-funded, we must have the funds in place before we begin.
- We'd like to solicit donations in December from the 300 people on the Constant Contact mailing list.
  - The full congregation has never been approached for Sacred Grounds gifts.
  - With the high enthusiasm right now we'd like to give our members and friends the opportunity to contribute financially to this important work.
- Bob Rancourt, Chris Eager, Jerry l'Hommedieu and Reverend Ian support the December donation request.

- Once these projects are completed, we do not anticipate the need to do further fundraising. The annual costs to maintain the grounds will increase minimally. The new plants will require additional watering until they are established. After a few years, the mesquite screening along the SE wall will require trimming by the gardeners at a cost of approximately \$500 per year.



## Earthquake Response Procedures

This procedure outlines UUCOD's recommended response if a significant earthquake occurs in the Coachella Valley during church activities. A significant earthquake is defined as one which may result in physical injuries, substantial damage to buildings or roadways, or damage to infrastructure such as utilities or communications. Since the San Andreas fault line parallels much of the lower Coachella Valley, there is a high likelihood of a serious earthquake occurring and, consequently, a need for UUCOD to be prepared.

Minor earthquakes occur multiple times a day in the Coachella Valley; most of which go unnoticed. Significant earthquakes can be identified by the force and/or duration of the earthquake. Most residents can quickly decipher if the earthquake is minor or major. For purposes of this document, we deem a significant earthquake to be one with violent shaking for a protracted time, which may result in furniture moving/toppling over, objects falling to the floor, or damage to the building.

### First Response

Upon determining that the event is a significant earthquake, church leaders should instruct individuals to **Duck, Cover and Hold On**. This involves kneeling and covering one's head with hands and arms and bowing to the floor, holding on to anything that is secure. If an individual is adjacent to a heavy piece of furniture such as a desk, they should crawl under the desk and cover their head. If in the Sanctuary, individuals may lie under chairs, between two aisles of chairs, or tip a chair over themselves. This may offer some protection from falling items.

Individuals should avoid remaining near windows, furnishings that may tip over, glass doors, or exterior walls if possible. If there is nothing under which a person can kneel, kneeling next to an interior wall is advisable. Individuals should **not** attempt to exit the building until after the shaking has subsided nor attempt to move to a more distant point in the building.

### Once the Shaking Has Stopped

When the earthquake is over, evacuation coordinators should advise attendees to exit the building in an orderly fashion using the closest undamaged or unobstructed exit and proceed to the Labyrinth. Evacuation coordinators should assist children and individuals with mobility challenges to exit the building. Subsequent aftershocks will occur and may cause further damage to the facility or additional injury to attendees.

All evacuees should be identified by name when assembled at the Labyrinth. An evacuation coordinator should be assigned to take a photo of every individual and secure a name for

individuals who are unknown visitors to the church by adding their names to an email prepared by an evaluation coordinator.

Many individuals will wish to go home immediately to determine if there has been any damage to their homes or harm to their families. Since the epicenter of the earthquake and extent of the damage may be unknown, individuals should be encouraged to remain at the Labyrinth until further information can be obtained. Church leadership cannot prevent someone from leaving the premises, but individuals wishing to leave should be reminded that there may be damage to roads or blocked areas.

Regional emergency management teams will generally issue a text message to all mobile phone users as soon as possible to address the status of the emergency. Church leaders should also tune their car radios to local channels to receive updates. Any reliable information should be relayed to individuals gathered at the Labyrinth.

Once it is determined that roads are clear and it is safe to travel, advise evacuees that they may proceed to their homes.

### **Caring For The Injured**

Evacuation coordinators should be assigned to search the building for any attendees who are injured or need assistance in exiting the building. Injured individuals should be assessed to determine if they can be moved. If they can be moved, they should be relocated to the area near the Labyrinth with picnic tables to ensure some level of privacy. A record should be made **of** any individuals who are unable to be removed from the church and **someone** should be assigned to care for the injured party as well as possible.

First aid supplies should be taken from the kitchen to the outside medical station. Also, pull cloth and paper towels from the kitchen to stop bleeding injuries. Ask evacuees to bring any first aid supplies they might have in their vehicles to the medical station.

For severe injuries, attempt to call 911 to request medical assistance and provide what medical assistance you can. Provide as much privacy as possible for the injured parties. It is likely that phone lines will be jammed, and you will be unable to readily contact emergency medical assistance but keep trying. If it can be determined that roads are clear, consider transporting severely injured individuals to Eisenhower Medical Center by car.

### **Facility Damage Assessment**

Once attendees have been safely evacuated to the Labyrinth, church leadership should identify individuals to complete a damage assessment of the facility. The inspection should include:

- A thorough inspection of the exterior of the building to identify any damage including cracks and loose mortar, broken/shattered/jammed windows or doors, detached or damaged components of the patio cover, buckled concrete on the patio or walkways, broken electrical cables or water lines, etc.

If there is significant damage to the outside of the building, no one should be allowed to enter the church until the building is inspected by City of Rancho Mirage building inspectors. If no significant damage is identified on the outside of the building, members of the Facilities

Committee or other designees should enter the building to complete an interior damage assessment. This inspection should include:

- A thorough inspection of all walls, floors, ceilings, windows, and doors to identify any cracks or other damage.
- An inspection of all appliances, restrooms, storage rooms, and the kitchen, to determine any damage.

After a thorough inspection of both the outside and inside of the building is completed:

- Review the damage assessment to determine if the electricity to the building should be shut down at the electrical box at the back of the building, **the** water shut off at the meter, or the solar panel system shut down at the controls at the back of the building. Unless there is a fire, disarm alarms and shut off the sprinkler controls in the Community Room storage area if fire sprinklers have activated.
- If there is no apparent damage, individuals may be allowed back into the building to secure personal belongings or to shelter in place pending updated information regarding travel, etc.
- At some point, a thorough report detailing all damage should be completed and provided to the Board President.

### **Sheltering In Place at UUCOD**

Individuals may not be able to reach their homes. Roads may be damaged, or some areas may be cordoned off due to damage or other threats. In such instances, individuals may remain where they are since other facilities such as hotels may not be immediately available.

UUCOD is not currently able to provide long-term accommodations for congregants at the church. Provided the building's integrity is not compromised and water and electricity are available, congregants could conceivably stay at the church in the short term. Water and restroom facilities would be available but only limited food is available and there is no accommodation for sleeping arrangements other than the Sanctuary floor or on chairs.

Church leadership and the Care Team would need to quickly poll the congregation to determine which Members and Friends might have available lodging to support displaced congregants and visitors.

### **Call or Text Emergency Contacts**

During an emergency, phone lines may be blocked locally so advise evacuees to contact an out-of-state friend or relative by phone or text to explain where they are and that they are safe. Ask these individuals to contact other local family members. Many families identify this out-of-state contact in advance as part of their safety training.

### **Authorized Leadership**

Generally, the most senior board member **or** the Minister will serve as the emergency coordinator, or they may assign a designee to fill this role. Otherwise, any Member willing to

assume the role may do so. Evacuation coordinators have been trained to serve in various roles and will do so at the direction of the emergency coordinator.

Draft