

# UUCOD Board Meeting Summary, November 18, 2025

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## Attending:

**Board Members Attending by Zoom:** Rod Belshee, President, Julia Alberg-Burbank, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Julia Bell, Treasurer, Claudia Simmons, Secretary, Walter Gendell, Director at Large, John Ressler, Director at Large

**Board Members Not Present:** Frank Riela, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Rev. Ian Riddell, Minister (vacation)

**Others Present by Zoom:** Carol Scanny, Barb Ketay

## Opening Reflection

- The meeting began with a reflection on the theme of **love** and its impact on actions and community spirit. A quote from Anastasia Birosh, via the UUA website, was shared to set a thoughtful tone.
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## Check-Ins & Member Updates

- Members shared personal updates:
    - Overall, the group expressed a sense of being busy but upbeat, with excitement for upcoming events and appreciation for recent successes.
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## Administrative Business

- **Minutes Review:** The October meeting minutes were reviewed with positive feedback on their format. Walter Gendell moved to approve the October Board Minutes, seconded by Julia Bell. With no objections, the minutes were approved by acclamation.
  - **Process Monitor:** Walter Gendell volunteered as process monitor.
  - **Voices of the Congregation:** No additional comments were raised from attending non-board members.
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## Expressions of Gratitude

- **Specific Acknowledgments:**
  - Jerry L'Hommedieu and Mel Wilkinson should be recognized for their efforts with the parking lot repaving project.

- Julia Bell felt that Rob DuWors should be thanked for his ongoing efforts with bequest outreach, resulting in 32 planned bequests for the congregation.
  - **Discussion:**
    - Debate on the best way to recognize recurring contributors to avoid diminishing the significance of gratitude notes.
    - Suggestions to celebrate major projects (e.g., Pride Parade, Breeze Directory completion) with congregation-wide acknowledgments, possibly during services or through special events (e.g., cake, slide shows, newsletter features).
    - Proposal to consolidate gratitude for the Breeze team until the project is fully integrated and then celebrate collectively.
  - **Action Items:**
    - Gratitude notes to be sent for specific, exceptional projects.
    - Board to develop a more structured process for recognizing contributions, including congregation-wide celebrations for major efforts.
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## **Overflow Task Team Report**

- **Purpose:** Address how to accommodate excess attendance at services.
  - **Findings:**
    - Current capacity: Up to 158 in the sanctuary, 40 in the community room.
    - Recommendation: Prioritize overflow solutions using AV technology before considering additional services or building expansion.
    - Phased plan for handling unexpected and expected overflow, with potential AV investments for regular high attendance.
    - Seating arrangement experiments to maximize capacity while adhering to safety codes.
    - No board adoption of the plan yet; it serves as a ready resource for future needs.
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## **Strategic Goals & Committee Updates**

### **Micro-Volunteerism Adoption**

- **Progress:**

- Most committees (e.g., Finance, Facilities, Grounds, Hospitality) are successfully adopting task-oriented, micro-volunteer models.
- The Social Justice committee has embraced the model after the Pride Parade’s success.
- Some committees (Membership, Stewardship, Worship, AV) are pending further feedback.
- **Challenges:**
  - Difficulty managing dual sign-up systems (paper and Breeze); need to promote Breeze for consistency.
  - Desire to shift language from “skills” to “passions/interests” to better engage volunteers.
  - Suggestion to allow event coordinators to update Breeze profiles for volunteers.
- **Next Steps:**
  - Encourage all members to update their interests/passions in Breeze.
  - Gather feedback on whether micro-volunteerism is solving previous volunteer shortages.
  - Plan to revisit and promote these efforts at future meetings and in the newsletter.

### **Lifespan and Chalice Circles**

- **Status:** Both areas need reinvigoration; Rev. Ian is recruiting and will make pulpit announcements.

### **Social Change & Meet the Moment**

- **Update:** Ongoing outreach to partner organizations; progress is slow due to a lack of established relationships.
- **Action:** Plan to summarize current efforts for the congregation to maintain transparency and manage expectations.

### **Financial Report**

- **Revenue:** Plate collections and contributions are slightly low but expected to improve with the season and new member pledges.
- **Expenses:** Higher than last year but within budget; some unbudgeted items (e.g., additional AED paddles).
- **Special Income:** Received a bequest and quarterly interest from CDs.

- **Staff Costs:** Accounting correction made for staff payments; overall, finances are stable.
  - **Sacred Grounds:** Received a \$500 donation from the Sun City Shadow Hills Garden Club, recognizing outreach and tour efforts.
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## Facilities & Grounds

- **Projects:** Installation of AED, successful Garden Days with high volunteer turnout, and relabeling of plants.
  - **Safety:** Shifted terminology from “security” to “safety” to avoid legal implications.
  - **Ongoing:** Experimentation with seating arrangements to optimize space.
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## Stewardship & Holiday Planning

- **Christmas Tree:** Decision made not to have a Christmas tree this year, instead highlighting diverse traditions throughout December.
    - **Communication:** Emphasis on framing this as an inclusive, expanded celebration to prevent negative reactions.
  - **Charity Events:** Christmas party for the CVUSD group reinstated and funded; donations for food boxes and toy drives encouraged via the website.
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## Ministerial Agreement

- **Review:** Minor changes made to align with bylaws; to be finalized in executive session.
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## Closing

- **Process:** Meeting ran on time with robust participation.
  - **Chalice Extinguished:** Expressed gratitude for members’ contributions and support of the congregation’s work.
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## Action Items & Follow-Ups

- Develop a structured recognition process for volunteers.
- Promote and refine the Breeze volunteer interest tracking system.

- Communicate holiday program changes positively.
- Finalize and distribute staff gift cards.
- Summarize “Meet the Moment” efforts for the congregation.
- Finalize Ministerial Agreement in executive session.

## **Executive Session**

### **Ministerial Agreement**

- In Executive Session, the Board made minor adjustments to the Ministerial Agreement to align with our Bylaws and UUA recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted,



Claudia L. Simmons, Secretary

Date Approved: December 16, 2025.

Attachments

Monthly Reports

Report to the Board  
November 18, 2025  
President Rod Belshee

**Meet the Moment**

Please see the reports on the team google drive, <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IL7-oq8vbhvWrIzW9J8covZpCqk-xEfk?usp=sharing>

- 10.16.2025 Meet the Moment.docx Team meeting minutes
- 10.23.2025 ICUC meeting.docx Inland Congregations United for Change
- Meet the Moment organization summary.xlsx consolidated report

**Worship Service Overflow**

Please the following, at the Board google drive

- Overflow Phased Plan.docx

**Sun City Garden Club**

I assume that John will cover this in his report, but the talk at Sun City followed by the garden tour on November 17 was very well received – and they donated \$500 to Sacred Grounds!

**Garden Day**

We are ready! This is going to be a big day!

**Safety**

We have one person stay in the lobby during the Sunday worship service, lock the doors about ten minutes after the service starts, and watch the parking lot. This person has a Safety role, not a Security role.

**Church Council Followup**

- Rod completed Breeze training for Event Organizers Jane and Joni. Fran has been working with Denise.
- Breeze Skills and Interests. We said we would resume trying to get these filled in, but have not done anything.

**DIB Ministry**

DIBM is trying to determine the focus for the next year.

**Leadership Development Committee**

Bob Rancourt chairs this and reports that the committee has not met yet this church year.

**Personnel Committee**

Walter, Rev Ian and I propose minor edits to the current minister contract.

1st VP Report

11.18.2025

Submitted by: Julia Alberg-Burbank

Attended the committee on Ministry meeting

I served as WA, briefly, at the service following the Pride Parade.

I will be preparing cut-outs for expressions of gratitude

**Denominational Affairs:**

The 2026 GA info is just out with some formatting changes. Stay tuned.

Jane is a committee of 1 and having dialog with her is unnecessary.

**Stewardship:**

Regarding the Stewardship Committee, we're teaming up with Membership to staff a table on Saturday 11/22. Rev Ian has new materials from the UUA for distribution.

On Sunday 12/23, we'll provide pizza and salad for lunch to celebrate the new members.

There's a notice in the December newsletter that Stewardship will not be sponsoring the Christmas tree.

On a Constant Contact we will be offering Reflections on December Holiday Traditions from some religions and cultural practices.

Something different for us.

Also we have a new member and another interested person.

**Social Justice:**

Denise feels good about task teams operating outside the main committee: e.g. Pride Parade was very successful and the task team was wholly outside the committee. Already someone to decorate next year.

Support: listening to all they do in a year. Asking her what the committee needs. Try to get new people on the standing committee. In person and on-line signups can cause problems. Promote use of Breeze. Online payments remain problematic.

Most recent agenda/minutes:

Pride Parade is Sunday, November 9th - Denise

- Our contingent will have 69 people collectively participating from Desert Outreach Synagogue, UU Church of Riverside, Hemet-San Jacinto UU Fellowship, & UUCOD
- 51 people will be walking & 18 people will be riding in one of the 2 vehicles or on the float.
- Church will be at 3pm with all congregations attending

10. CVUSD Migrant Education Christmas Toy & Food Box Drives and Party - Denise

- Jerry L'Hommedieu & Rob DuWors are the 2025 organizers

- Toy & Food Box Drives will be Nov. 7 - 30
- Food Box Packing Party will be Saturday, December 6
- Due to federal budget cuts, the Christmas Party, that's scheduled to be 12/10, has been cancelled
  - There is a group at UUCOD wanting to make it happen.

11. Transgender Day of Remembrance - Denise

- Thursday, November 20, 5-7pm

12. Galilee Center Thanksgiving Food Basket Volunteer Opportunities

- Monday, Nov. 24, 10am - noon: Fill Food Boxes with Thanksgiving dinner items;
- Tuesday, Nov. 25, 10am - noon: Fill Produce Bags with all the fixins;
- Wednesday, Nov. 26, 1 - 5pm: Thanksgiving Food Baskets to people as they walk up (arrive by 12:30pm - you must be able to lift up to 15 pounds.)
- Article in the Newsletter beginning 10/31
- Sign Up on Breeze until 11/16:

<https://unitarianuniversalistchurchofthedesert.breezechms.com/form/2bab61>

Greetings BOD,

I'm literally just back from 5 weeks in Mexico. If all goes according to plan, I should be at tonight's zoom board meeting, though I might be cutting it close due to having to go to Riverside and back this afternoon.

I reached out to Jane Zaun (Stewardship) and Barbara Storms (Membership) regarding any issues they want brought to the BODs attention, for this monthly report.

Jane informed me that Julia is now the Stewardship liaison. Barbara sent me the following info regarding the Membership Committee which I am copy/pasting here below for expediency:

"As of today, November 17, we have 131 active members. 13 people are joining on Sunday bringing our active members to 144.

Membership's main work during the summer has been contacting members and friends who had not chosen an option for inclusion in the Breeze directory. We reached out to over 60 people, most of whom have responded and most with a yes. This effort (which membership does each summer, also helps us update our member and friend lists, finding members or friends who who have left the church. We appreciate the help that the Stewardship committee did to reach out to some of the members who were more difficult to reach.

Also, we want to recognize Fran Hoag and Steve Thornton for their help following up with people who have needed help signing on to and using Breeze. Jules Smith is also one of our Breeze gurus. These folks are available after church on Sundays to help people with the app."

Please note recognitions for Fran Hoag, Steve Thornton, and Jules Smith in the last paragraph of Barbara's email update.

I look forward to being updated during or outside our meeting as to future plans, duties, etc.

Frank Riela

## OCTOBER 2025 TREASURER'S REPORT

**On the Revenue side.** Looking good. Revenues are higher than last year.

Plate Collections (4000) and Contributions of Record (4002) should increase in the next months with increased attendance and members/friends returning after the summer.

Pledges (4001) have increased with new members.

DOS Rent (4113) has been late and a reminder has been sent.

Misc Income (4900) represents a recent bequest.

Interest Earned (4910) has the quarterly interest from the \$50k CD at Columbia bank.

**On the Expense Side.** Total expenditures are higher than last year and still on track with this year's budget. This month we spent approx. \$7500 more than we took in because of unbudgeted expenses and increases in expenses overall.

Furniture and Fixtures (5043) includes the unbudgeted AED purchase.

Property Taxes (5096) first half of taxes were paid.

Music (5150s) Accompanists and Music Acquisition are a little over-budget for this 4-month period.

Men's Social Group (5329) has started collecting money, therefore the negative number. Their funds are not for the general operating funds.

UUA Dues (5500) are paid quarterly now. It shouldn't be over budget.

Staff Costs (5600s) there are paychecks written for one employee instead of automatic withdrawal. In my accounting it looked like I had paid this person twice. I had not and the accounting records have been corrected.

**On our Financial Position.** We had increases in our investments. MACLEAN fund increased by almost \$4000 and the Common fund increased by a little over \$6000. And with net revenue a negative \$7500. Total liabilities and Equity increased by \$2.6k, total is at \$2,107,249.

I am realizing what a dynamic budget we have. Revenues and Expenses occur regularly and irregularly. Overall, we are in good shape.

Respectfully,

Julia Bell, Treasurer

## Board Member at Large Report November 2025

### Hospitality

- All is going well with our Hospitality team.
- I asked Rob about micro-volunteerism and whether the idea of short-term task teams would work for Hospitality. Here is his response:
  - The Hospitality Team regularly helps out with events other than Sunday Coffee Hour. For example, when Stewardship hosts an event the folks from Hospitality partner with them. I think it's also true of the Men's Monthly Social with Patrick and me helping out. Whenever there is some sort of atypical gathering the Hospitality Team helps with set up, serving, and breakdown.
- Hospitality seems to be primarily task oriented – a need or request arises and the team partners with the requester to assist or get things done.

### Attitude of Gratitude

- I sent thank you notes to Claudia Lerner and Bill Mascoe.

### Worship Associate

- I was Worship Associate on November 9<sup>th</sup> and will be WA on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

### UUCOD Men's Social

- Rob, Patrick and I coordinated our second Men's Social on November 8<sup>th</sup> and it was again a huge success with 25 people confirming and 23 attending. Donations more than covered the cost of the breakfast – people are being very generous.
- At some point we are hoping that there will be sufficient funds from the donations made each month to be able to make a contribution to the church in the name of the Men's Social. That may take a little while but if the trend continues that is something the coordinators would be recommending to the group.
- We encouraged people to mingle, move around and get to know each other even better. We had everyone write on their name tag their favorite hobby which was a great conversation starter. Some folks are even bringing food – Rob brought a casserole and Daljit brought samosas.
- Everyone had a great time with lots of conversation and camaraderie.

### Ministerial Agreement

- Rod Belshee, Rev. Ian and I met on October 30<sup>th</sup> to review the current Ministerial Agreement and the updates made by the UUA.
- Minor changes were made to the agreement and will be presented to the Board at the November meeting.

- **As a reminder there are three notable amendments that have been made by the UUA having to do with Comprehensive Health Insurance, Extended Medical Leave and new guidance under Work Week.**

**Submitted by:  
Walter Gendell  
Board Member at Large  
November 11, 2025**

**Liaison with Facilities and Furnishings Committee:**

I was unable to attend the November 4th meeting of the Committee owing to a personal time conflict. Personal communication with Mel Wilkinson, Committee Chair, informed me that there was little of substance discussed: Update on the Parking Lot resurfacing project, updates on the two Garden Days scheduled for later in November, the need to rearrange the several storage closets in the church building, the scheduled acquisition and installation of an AED (Automatic Emergency Defibrillator) in the church lobby, and smaller issues related to furnishings.

In my dual Liaison roles with Facilities and Sacred Grounds Committees, I was several times in communication with Mr. Salvador Moreno Ramos our landscape maintenance contractor concerning inattention to problems with our irrigation system—We have had several ruptures in supply lines over the past 2 months—and the health problems of the Palo Verde trees in the gardens and parking lot. To his credit, Mr. Moreno has assigned two members of his crew to to examine and repair any irrigation problems on a regular basis.

**Liaison with Sacred Grounds Steering Committee:**

Attended the Committee’s meeting preparatory to its chairperson’s participation in the General Council meeting on October 18, 2025.

For the past month the Sacred Grounds Team has been consumed with planning for the two forthcoming Garden Days on November 17th and 22nd. On the 17th we expect up to 40 members of the Sun City Shadow Hills Garden Club to visit. Wanting to put our best blossoms forward, the team has been engaged in preparing the grounds for these visits:

- Re-labeling and replacing the small plant identification labels that add so much to the visitor experience in our gardens.
- A SGSC-sponsored Tidy Garden day of cleaning up the grounds and removing invasive non-native plants such as the Schismus grass and Sahara Mustard. Turn-out from congregants was substantial. About 20 people showed up on Tuesday morning, Nov. 11th., and worked until early afternoon on various tasks. It was a great example of Task-team cooperation.

**Other Activities:**

Since July I have been working with the Pride Parade Planning Team to prepare for UUCOD’s participation in the Palm Springs Annual Pride Parade on November 9. My role in the effort has been to design a float and a centerpiece image for our contingent of 72 people from four congregations (see my Sept/Oct Report for details). Although I did not personally participate in the Parade itself, I assisted with last minute float prep and after-parade take-down.

In our post-parade Zoom discussion we determined that our participation was a success. For next year there are a few things that we intend to do differently to streamline the preparation process and reduce the inconvenience and fatigue of contingent participants.



Respectfully submitted, 16 November 2025—John Ressler, Director-at-Large #2

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

November 18, 2025

The Rev. Ian W. Riddell

### Board Strategic Goals Update

3) **LifeSpan**. Re-establish our Lifespan Spiritual Growth program to provide opportunity to learn and grow in individual and community spiritual depth and understanding, with at least two offerings. Consider promoting the offerings outside of the church.

**Ongoing: I have a notice going in the newsletter for the next few weeks seeking volunteers for collaboration in visioning and planning. I will also seek out a few individuals one-on-one after my week away**

4) **Social Change Now**. Conduct a Lifespan series using the workbook Social Change Now (the UUA common read).

**I offered the first session of this last month. I had to cancel the second class due to illness. I have put on the calendar two new offerings: one in person and one in Zoom. This is in the newsletter for the next few weeks and I'll announce it from the pulpit on Nov 23. Participants in the first offering who missed the second class due to my illness will attend one or the other of the second class from the other offerings.**

5) **Meet the Moment**. Given the harm inflicted by the federal government on the immigrant community in our valley, and our call to live out our values in response, we will discern and establish a Meet the Moment program—developed in partnership with front-line organizations—to help reduce harm. Last month: Rev Ian and Rod hope to establish contacts on Oct 23 to identify potential partners for the Meet the Moment team to review.

**Rod and I attended the meeting of the newish interfaith group in the east valley and I intend to keep joining those meetings.**

**Our Board and others rallied quickly to provide funding for the Christmas Dinner for the CVUSD Migrant Education Program. Their funding was cut off by the federal government. We are also working closely with them, through Denise, to keep our eye on safety for participants and providing our volunteers with some orientation around safety issues—all following the lead of the organizers.**

*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**

- 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. I am especially grateful for how you cared for each other during my sabbatical.
- This was a difficult month in the congregation with deaths of members and immediate family members of members.

- I continue to have conversations to plan celebrations of some kind for Marian Ellson and Derek Moore.
- We will hold a Celebration of Life for Terry LeMaster on Saturday, January 17, at 1:00pm.

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

- I continue my regular meetings with our staff: Pam Bibo (Office Administrator) and Jim Tong (Choir Director).
- You will be discussing a few adjustments to my Letter of Agreement with the congregation (my minister's "contract") at this meeting. I'm grateful for the time and care put in by Rod and Walter on this.

## **Membership and Committees**

- I continue to meet regularly with several committees. I participate monthly with Worship, DIBM, Stewardship, CoM, the Board, and Chalice Circles (when they are meeting). I participate in alternate months with Membership and Social Justice.
- I have attended the monthly crafting gathering since my return. This group is pondering ways to share the results of their crafting and perhaps raise some funds.
- The DIBM Team continues to explore together what our work for the coming year is and how we might refocus.

## **C. Lifespan Faith Development**

- Due to illness, I had to cancel the second class in the first offering of a workshop focused on the UUA's Common Read for the year, Social Change Now. 13 people participated (including two new to the congregation) in the first class. I will share two more offerings of this two-part workshop in Deember, one in person and one on Zoom. Participants who missed class two from the first offering will join the second class of these new offerings.
- We currently only have one ongoing Chalice Circle. We have a need to develop new leadership and work to broaden our offerings to the congregation. I will be meeting with Steven Toporoff soon to begin planning.
- **I have a notice going in the newsletter for the next few weeks seeking volunteers for collaboration in visioning and planning our Lifespan Ministry. I will also seek out a few individuals one-on-one after my week away**

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## **D. Worship**

- Except for the first Sunday of January, we have service leaders planned through February 15.
- We have worship associates and piano players planned through December. I will begin planning for the first quarter of the new year soon. The choir is scheduled through the rest of the calendar year and Jim and I are making plans for the winter and the spring, including our annual Choir Sunday, likely in March 2026
- I led or participated in worship twice since our last meeting.
  - November 2 — "Answering the Call: Meeting the Moment" with Walter Gendell.
  - November 9 — "Pride and Possibility" with Rabbi King and Julia Alberb-Burbank.
- What a joy it was to celebrate Pride this year by marchign in the parade and then offering a joint UUCOD/DOS Pride service in the afternoon! We had members of our congregation, DOS, and

members of two other small UU congregations in the area. I'm grateful to all of our usual worship teams (AV, Hospitality, Greeters and Ushers) for their flexibility in moving the service to the afternoon..

- The Worship Team is hoping to rethink the way that we pay our speakers. We decided that we would pay all speakers the rate we've been offering UU ministers. We will submit a proposal for next year's budget increasing the amount we pay to match UUMA guidelines better..
- The Worship Overflow Task Force met in early November and is offering a proposal for your perusal at this Board meeting.

#### **F. Denominational Activities**

- I regularly consult with local and regional colleagues on issues affecting our congregations.
- I have been meeting monthly as a mentor to a new minister as he works through his Preliminary Fellowship.

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

- I will be meeting with some Palm Springs clergy at their regular lunch on Tuesday and having coffee with another local colleague later in the week.
- I participated in Orm Hamidar's annual interfaith Pride service on the Friday of Pride weekend along with colleagues from several other denominations.

#### **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 am grateful for the sick time that allowed me some space to recover from a painful illness that continued into this month. I am on the mend, though my energy is still a little limited.

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

My day off is Monday. My writing/reading day, which I try to keep free of meetings, will be Fridays and I will work in the office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

#### **Upcoming Travel Schedule:**

- I will be away on vacation from Saturday, November 15, to Saturday, November 22.
- I will be away on vacation from Monday, December 29, to Sunday, January 4, visiting family in Canada.

in peace and deep love

