

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis Policy Board Meeting
Monday, September 16, 2024, 6:30-8:00 PM – via Zoom

Minutes

President Charles (Chuck) Eby called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Others in attendance: Larry Dusenbery, Vice President; Kathy Wilke, Treasurer; Chris Kocher, Trustee; Betty Neill, Trustee;

Absent: Rebecca (Becca) McBride, Trustee; Sidney Watson, Secretary (who listened to the record Zoom of the meeting to write these minutes)

Staff: Rev. Kim Mason and Lynn Hunt

Other attendees: Mike Bray

Opening Words by Chuck, two Harvest Moon poems by Carl Sandburg and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Reading of Board Covenant by Larry is available at

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cBWTB1BODfNv4Xks6vuDCH0RmnF5brnV/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=105183447557092303738&rtpof=true&sd=true

Process Observer – Larry

Check-in: We shared our favorite thing about fall.

Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of August Policy Board Meeting
- Report of the Minister - Kim Mason
- Report of the Administration - Lynn Hunt
- Report of the Board President – Chuck Eby
- Treasurer's Report & Financial Statements
- Church Council Report (no report this month)
- August 12th, 2024 Policy Board Minutes
- August 24 Board Retreat Minutes
- UU Retirement Plan Restatement Resources

Chuck noted two corrections to the August Policy Board minutes: The meeting date was changed. The Board retreat was not on Zoom but in person. The Board did not vote to approve the minutes.

Church Insurance:

The church has a building insurance policy, and the premium is set to increase by 138%. The new premium will be \$53,000, about \$30,000 above the budget for building insurance. The increase is not about anything specific to First U. The increase reflects across-the-board increases in home and building insurance premiums because of high claims for natural disasters and consolidation in the insurance industry. There are only a few companies that write policies for church buildings.

We have liability coverage and loss coverage for the full replacement value of the building in case of damage to the building. The deductible is \$5,000. Treasurer Wilke discussed some options she, Kathy Wire, and the Finance Committee plan to investigate and discuss with our insurance broker, including a

higher deductible and insuring the building for less than full replacement value. The premium is due in November, so that this issue will return to the Board as an action item for the October meeting.

Visioning:

- Retreat summary – Chuck

At the retreat, the Board discussed that the church has a mission statement but has not developed a vision statement incorporating our mission and values. A values statement is aspirational, looking to the future, and grows out of our mission statement. In the years ahead, we look to develop a vision statement to "imagine, inspire, and invest" in the future.

- Preliminary Process for thinking about and developing a vision statement – Rev. Kim

Kim provided the Board with training on UU church vision statements, covering issues including

- What is vision?
- How are vision, mission, values, and covenant separate but interrelated?
- What are the criteria for a good vision statement?
What processes might a church use to create a vision?

Kim's PowerPoints, with more details, are attached as part of these minutes.

Kim showed us an example of a vision statement on the Pathways Unitarian Universalist Church website. It says, "We aim to be a thriving voice for Unitarian Universalist values in Northeast Tarrant County with inclusive, intergenerational programs."

After Kim's presentation, the Board had a wide-ranging and thoughtful conversation about the purpose of a vision statement. After that discussion, Board members agreed that developing a First U vision statement would be healthy and positive, generate enthusiasm, and help members envision a future church. For a long time, the congregation has been in survival mode. To get out of survival mode, we need to envision what is next and what we are working towards. We have already adopted the phrase "inspire, imagine, invest" to describe this church year, and that phrase also describes the goals of a visioning process.

Discussion also centered around how the minister, Policy Board, and Council might engage the congregation in a visioning process that concludes with a congregational vote during the May 2025 Congregational Meeting. At the October Board meeting, Rev. Kim will present an outline and timeline for a visioning process based on this month's discussion. It will include sermon topics, guided reflections that members can do independently, conversation at the Mid-Winter meetings, and other small group work leading up to a May vote.

Staff openings:

- **RE** – Rev. Kim reported that the church has hired an experienced, trained interim director of RE. We are working to hire a Sunday coordinator for RE. The Sunday coordinator position is critical to making the remote RE work out.
- **Music director and organist** – Rev. Kim reported that the Music Committee has a candidate and will meet this week to discuss their candidacy.
- **Sabbatical Committee** – Chuck reported on behalf of Steve Wilke, Chair of the Sabbatical Minister Search Committee, who has made an offer to a Sabbatical Minister candidate and is negotiating terms.

The Board discussed the parameters for the compensation package the committee could offer the candidate.

New Business:

The UU Organizations Requirement Plan (UUORP), sponsored by the UUA, is updating its Plan Document to comply with recent federal law changes and to make it easier to administer. Retirement Plan 2025 Restatement.

Chuck recommended , and the Board voted to approve, the following motion, using the language recommended by the UUA Office of Church Staff Liaison:

Whereas the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis is committed to assisting all of its employees 18 years and older prepare for their retirement years, and;

Whereas the Unitarian Universalist Organizations Retirement Plan (the "Plan") is the retirement plan sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association, therefore;

Be It Resolved that the [insert congregational or organizational name] hereby adopts the 2025 Restatement of the Unitarian Universalist Organizations Retirement Plan with an implementation date of January 1, 2025 and commits to complying with all the provisions of the Plan and the elections made by the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis in the 2025 Employer Participation Agreement that we submit to the UUA Retirement Plan Committee and they acknowledge receipt and approve via counter signature of same.

Checking in with the process observer: Larry noted we went 15 minutes over, but the discussion was good, and no one seemed to object. He called it "a good meeting with good participation."

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The next Policy Board meeting is on Zoom on Monday, October 14, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sidney Watson, Secretary

See next page for Kim's PowerPoint