

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana

Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World

Approved Board Minutes

August 30, 2017



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Board members attending: Von Welch, Steven Gilbert, Helmut Hentschel, Michelle Monroe-Cook, Pat Bratlinger, Sandra Churchill, Sharon Wiseman

Not attending:

Present by invitation of the Board: Hans Kelson

Ministers attending: Reverend Scott McNeill

Submitted by: Steven Gilbert

Documents attached:

Minister's Report (Reverend Scott McNeil)

Report to the Board (Von Welch)

I. Call to Order

Call to order by Von Welch, President, at 7:00 PM.

All members of the board were present.

II. Chalice Lighting and Reading (Von Welch)

III. Check-in

IV. Approve Minutes (Steven Gilbert)

Motion to approve the July 19 minutes by Sharon Wiseman was seconded by Patrick Bratlinger. Approved unanimously.

V. Minister's Report (Reverend Scott McNeil)

Presentation focused primarily on progress on our Sanctuary Congregation (See Minister's Report, attached). Approximated 20-25 UU churches have become sanctuary congregations and some have looked to UU Bloomington for guidance. The Methodist Church in Nashville has also assumed Sanctuary Congregation status but no other churches in Bloomington. A few individuals have been arrested by ICE in Bloomington thus far, with none being candidates for sanctuary.

Reverend McNeil reports that the church is running well in Reverend Macklin's absence.

VI. Old Business

1. Right relations next steps (Von Welch)

No new information as committee has not met. See Reports to the Board, attached.

2. Status of Ministerial Letters of Agreement (Von Welch)

Both letters have been signed (Reports to the Board, attached)

VII. Monitoring (per Board Policies, Section V)¹

1. Summary of insurance policies, limits and coverage (II.F.1-2 Asset Protection) (Von Welch)

Discussion deferred.

2. SPF Report (Sandy Churchill, Helmut Hentschel)

SPF Report was reviewed, showing \$12,377.47 in actual expenses with \$80,000 returned to investments. Some money in the SPF account will be used for a needed mortgage payment. SPF has also found \$7500 available for campus ministry. Von Welch noted the SPF fund has nearly tripled since 2012 (from ~\$135k to ~\$380k).

3. Youth Liaison Report (Hans Kelson)

A Youth Group with 5-6 high school age participants has met twice after services to play games and plan future activities and service projects. Hans reports that the group is running smoothly. Plans are being made to attend a Youth Con, a gathering of Youth Groups from the Heartland Region, in Ann Arbor in November. In addition, UU Bloomington will host a Social Justice Youth Con in February, 2018. Youth Cons tend to run 40-80 participants in size.

4. Report from “Coffee with the Board” (Von Welch)

The board generally agreed that it would be useful for the church to have a vehicle for various purposes. Kalamazoo has a small bus and several vehicles, according to Von. Insurance could be the big challenge. Michelle will ask Carol to look into variables related to insuring such a vehicle should the church acquire one (See Reports to the Board, attached).

VIII. New Business

1. Finance Committee (Sandy Churchill)

Sandy Churchill has been working on constituting the finance committee. Two possible members have been identified. More time is needed to meet with them and to seek more members per by-law 5.7. Sandy will continue working on this issue. (See Reports to the Board, attached).

2. Strategic Stewardship Committee Charge (Von Welch)

(See the proposal for a strategic stewardship committee in Reports to the Board, attached). The board generally supported the charter as written by Von. Much discussion centered on whether the charter could be folded into existing committees, specifically either the Finance Committee or the current Stewardship Committee, which would be reconstituted under these new

provisions. Von will further explore this latter possibility and bring his findings back to a future board meeting.

3. Youth Board Liaison Definition (Michelle Monroe-Cook)

See Reports to the Board, attached. Informational item only.

4. Bylaw Change for December Congregational Meeting (Von Welch)

See Reports to the Board, attached. Informational item only. No discussion at this time.

5. Email from SPF (Von Welch)

See Reports to the Board, attached. In general, the by-law changes proposed by Chris Hayne's in his email were favorably received by the board, but concerns were raised about the provision in 4.12 requiring an equal distribution of undirected endowments into the four proposed funds. Some saw this requirement as being too inflexible, while others felt this would help prevent unwise allocations among the funds by a future board. After considerable discussion, the matter was deferred. Von will report our discussions to Chris Haynes.

6. Grant Proposal (Sharon Wiseman)

Sharon Wiseman sought a letter of support from board president Von Welch for a grant proposal being sponsored by the Adult Religious Education program, the UUCB Racial Justice Task Force and the Bloomington-based 501(c)(3) Living Earth Television. A grant from UUA is being sought to fund a film series focused on providing Americans with positive and realistic views of African life and culture. Films made by African film makers would be sought and presented at local UU churches, both to members and to the community, and possibly licensed nationally to UU congregations. Board members strongly supported the program's goals and Von said he would be pleased to provide such a letter.

IX. Executive Session

The board met in executive session at 8:57 PM.

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn by Von Welch was seconded by Michelle Monroe-Cook and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Minister's Report

Sanctuary Update – UUCB Board of Directors, August 30, 2017

In the 5+ months since the congregation voted to become a “Sanctuary Congregation,” the primary focus of our work has been to make connections within populations likely to be targeted for deportation. Since January 2017, there has been a specific focus on immigration issues related to (a) people who are (or appear to be) of Latin descent and (b) people who identify as Muslims.

Given the good and growing relationship our congregation has had with the Islamic Center in Bloomington, we have a good connection to leaders in the local Muslim community – some of whom have been affected by the travel ban in various ways but do not feel their presence in the US is currently at stake.

When we first began discussing the possibility of becoming a “Sanctuary Congregation”, Rev. Mary Ann and myself met with individuals throughout Bloomington, to identify ways we could let people concerned about deportation know that our congregation might be a setting for them, should the need to find sanctuary arise. Those meetings have developed into partnerships with individuals like Gracia Valliant – who has organized trainings (held at UUCB and elsewhere) regarding immigration issues, as well as how individuals can help people facing deportation (such as witnessing the actual encounter with Immigration officials, holding onto important documentation in the event individuals are deported, lobbying/witnessing/letter writing to encourage legislators to change laws around immigration). In addition to Gracia, we have worked with two other people with deep connections to the immigrant communities in Bloomington (whether Latino/Latina/Latinx or folks who have immigrated from Asia/the Pacific Islands). Very recently, word spread through the Bloomington Latino community that ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) was present and preparing to deport people; I stayed in contact with a particular member of the community as he received information and was able to verify/deny what was going on. We have discussed hosting a very informal and low-key social gathering for some Bloomington families to get to know myself, Mary Ann, and some of the leaders of UUCB; this would happen as a way to demonstrate hospitality and begin to build connections in case we ever needed to provide sanctuary.

In the late Spring, Mary Ann and I convened a meeting of 3-6 local attorneys who were interested or active in immigration cases, and would offer to be a sounding board regarding Sanctuary/issues related to deportation and immigration. This group has agreed to convene as needed, and has coordinated some work with Christie Popp, a local immigration attorney.

I've spent a fair amount of time, over the past few months, discussing Sanctuary and immigration issues with different individuals and groups in the Bloomington area. A member of Beth Shalom has started an interfaith group to work on these issues together; and, some churches that have discussed their involvement have called upon us to offer assistance or learn more about immigration. Similarly, I've been in contact with many UU ministers – some of whom have gone through the same discernment process we used in the Spring (and some who are still debating or learning about the issue).

When I first arrived in Bloomington, our community was very focused on welcoming refugees to the area. The political climate and legislation changed, and the focus on refugee resettlement shifted. I worked with Harold Ogren and Deb Fish to begin a Social Justice Task Force (before the process was scuttled) and we provided some information to the congregation. Then, Kris Roehling and I worked on Sanctuary issues and spoke with Jackie Hall about creating a Sanctuary Task Force. About a month or so ago, I suggested we combine the two groups – and now we have a “Refugee and Immigration Services and Education” (RISE) Task Force. It can work on those two issues, as well as integrating those who are seeking asylum – which has become the renewed focus of the Bloomington Refugee Resettlement Network. Deb and I met two weeks ago, and Deb and Kris met last week; I know that on their radar is an event in the fall to engage people of the congregation interested in setting our strategy for involvement, including offering more education opportunities.

Providing sanctuary for a person or small family may still be an important ministry we can offer – we won’t know unless something drastic happens. So, the current course of action is to focus on educating ourselves about issues related to immigration and working with the broader community to do this work together (rather than coming in to save the day).

Submitted,

Rev. Scott McNeill

Reports to Board

Von Welch, President

August 30th, 2017

Old Business

Right Relations next steps

The LCC has agreed to our request to nominate three members for the Right Relations Committee. Their next meeting is on September 6th.

Status of Ministerial Letters of Agreement

Both ministerial letters of agreement have been signed and are on file with the Church Administrator.

Monitoring

Report from “Coffee with the Board”

Von

I was approached by Rosemary Hart representing the Bloomington Refugee Support Network. Someone wants to donate a vehicle to them (a 10-year old Rav4 if I recall correctly), but they do not have their 503c status yet and are exploring options as to who could legally own the vehicle for them until they are incorporated. Mentioned uses of the vehicle were delivering supplies to Indianapolis and helping people get to Chicago for legal matters.

[Von: I don't believe UUCB has ever owned a vehicle and I'm sure there are numerous legal and financial issues with doing so that would need to be understood before committing to do so.]

New Business

Finance Committee

Per Bylaw 5.7: “The Church shall have a finance committee consisting of the Treasurer, who will be chair, and three or four members appointed annually by the Board of Directors. Paid staff members are not eligible to serve on the Finance Committee.”

The nomination of a committee has historically been done by the Treasurer. I see no urgency in forming the committee but plan to keep this on the agenda until completed so we don't forget it.

