Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana

Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World

Board Minutes

September 16, 2026

I. Call to Order and Chalice Lighting 2
II. Check-in 2
III. Powerful Questions 2
IV. Calendar Review 2
V. Approval of the Consent Agenda 2
VI. New Business 3
A. Special Purposes Fund Committee Liaison 3
VII. Congregant Feedback 3
VIII. Safety Training 3
IX. Executive Session 4
X. Adjournment 4

Board members attending in person:

Corrin Clarkson, President

Mary Craig, Vice President

Bill Lonnberg, Treasurer

Sarah Kopper, Secretary

Doug Anderson, Board Member at-Large

Regina DiLavore, Board Member at-Large

Pam MacLaughlin, Board Member at-Large

Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray, ex officio Board Member

Board members absent:

None

Guests attending in person:

Stephanie Kimball, Director of Religious Exploration

Maria Renner, Ministerial Intern

Submitted by: Sarah Kopper

Attached Documents:

A. Religious Exploration Report

B. Lead Minister's Report

I. Call to Order and Chalice Lighting

Corrin called the meeting to order at 7:02 with a quorum present. Sarah lit the chalice.

II. Check-in

III. Powerful Questions

The Board decided at its retreat to use the powerful question time to explore questions that will guide its work on the congregation's vision. This meeting's question was: Practicality of information gathering aside, what would you want to know about this congregation to be an effective board member and to set our vision?

IV. Religious Exploration Report

Stephanie Kimball shared highlights from the Religious Exploration report (see Attachment A for full report). Her discussion with the Board included:

- Strength of the current program, with 75 kids registered and full roster of guides
- Efforts to provide yearlong support for OWL facilitators
- Need to support the growing OWL program and keep class sizes manageable
- Appreciation for new RE assistant Priscilla Borges
- Ways to ensure solid recruitment for RE going forward

V. Calendar Review

Corrin reviewed upcoming events and gave a tour of the calendar spreadsheet. The Board decided to move Perspectives and Sunday Rep sign-ups to this spreadsheet instead of using sign-up genius to consolidate information in one location.

Corrin noted the need for a Board member to take on the role of recruiting delegates for the General Assembly in June. She will provide further clarity on the scope of the role at a future meeting.

VI. Consent Agenda

The consent agenda consisted of the following items:

- August 2026 draft board meeting minutes
- Treasurer's report

Sarah moved to approve the consent agenda, Mary seconded the motion. Motion passes 7-0.

The Lead Minister's report was moved off the consent agenda.

VII. Lead Minister's Report

Mary moved to approve the Lead Minister's Report (see Attachment B for full report), seconded by Regina. Motion passes 7-0.

VIII. Review Annual Goals

Corrin led the Board in a discussion of the Annual Goals document. Mary suggested waiting to approve it until next month, which will give the Board more time to review the document, prioritize goals, and ensure the goals are achievable.

IX. Congregant Feedback

Maria shared feedback about pronouns which led to a robust discussion around modeling correct pronoun use, correcting one another, and how to support the congregation in this work.

X. Executive Session

Board entered executive session at 8:30.

XI. Adjournment

Mary moved to adjourn at 9:03, seconded by Bill. Motion passes 7-0.

ATTACHMENT A

Religious Exploration Board Update
September, 2026

Stephanie Kimball

Summary

The year is off to a strong start! At a glance:

- We have approximately 75 children and youth registered for religious exploration so far this year;
- We have a full roster of 38 volunteer guides, plus a team of 3 substitutes
- 4 youth are enrolled in Coming of Age
- We're gearing up to offer OWL for 7th and 8th graders starting in January
- We have 14 program offerings for adults

Children and Youth Sunday Morning Religious Exploration

Each Sunday, our children and youth explore the congregational theme through stories, discussion, and activities. This year, in keeping with our overarching theme, *Be Seeds of Change*, we also have a plant of the month that in some way exemplifies the theme, providing a hook for otherwise abstract ideas and remaining in the classrooms as reminders of the concepts we've explored.

Our volunteers seem to be embracing their new role as *guides*, emphasizing companionship and leadership rather than passing along information. We are doing our best to support them with optional monthly "theme exploration" meetings as well as monthly teacher breakfasts.

Coming of Age

Although this year's group is small, I am excited about the possibilities for the participants. Each of the youth, their families, and their mentors are "all in." They even wrote into their covenant that they want this to be a transformative experience! I look forward to the next several months with this group and am grateful for the opportunity to be part of their journey.

OWL (Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education)

This year, Drew Schrader is helping to create community among the OWL facilitators. Together we hosted an "OWL Ingathering" at the end of August where we got to know each other a little better, talked about our visions and ideas for our OWL program, and began to discuss some possible paths to get there. We now have plans in place for recruiting new facilitators,

supporting new and existing facilitators, and identifying tasks that people can do to support the program even if they don't currently have the bandwidth to facilitate a class. If/when we have congregational support in the form of both funding and volunteers, we hope to expand our OWL offerings to the broader community.

Adult Religious Exploration

Our robust list of ARE offerings includes opportunities for spiritual growth, increased understanding of social justice issues, deeper engagement with UU values, community building, and more. Some are one-time events, others occur over a series of 3-5 workshops, and a few are ongoing opportunities - making it possible for people with varying levels of availability to participate. Registrations for all classes are up from previous years, even for events that are not scheduled until next spring!

I am particularly excited about the work of the Indigenous Studies Group, which has been building relationships with Ryan and Andrea Conway and other Indigenous people by showing up to support the Shawnee Seed Sanctuary and the Prophetstown planting project. The group has coordinated folks to plant and weed at Prophetstown and has been working on raising money as well as educating people about the project and its importance. I especially appreciate Judy Berkshire and Zach Ammerman for their excellent contributions and leadership in building relationships that restore justice. We are grappling with how to make this more of a congregation-wide effort.

Gifts & Challenges

Our Religious Exploration programs are thriving right now because of the amazing people involved in a myriad of ways. It makes all the difference to have an adequate number of volunteers to staff Sunday morning classes – but it's not just the number. This year's volunteers are sincere about their work and dedicated to the children and families they're serving; they've been going out of their way to get to know the kids, to engage with them thoughtfully, and to be open to be moved and delighted by them. They seem to understand and embrace the possibility of being significant figures in the lives of the young people of our congregation.

Priscilla Borges is doing an outstanding job in her new role as Religious Exploration Assistant. Along with skills and expertise, Priscilla brings energy, innovation, and dedication to the job. Meanwhile, Beth Kaylor is doing a fantastic job scheduling and supervising childcare, providing a safe, calm, and loving environment for our youngest children.

In addition to RE staff and volunteers, other UUCB staff support is invaluable. Jo Bowman has been intentional and proactive about communications around religious exploration, ensuring that events and opportunities are promoted in our publications, working with me on the website,

designing fliers and postcards, and more. Hans Kelson has listened to my frustrations over the limitations of Planning Center, Google sheets, and other available tools, and has designed software that streamlines some of the time-consuming administrative processes that recur each year.

So far this year, the main challenge has been in starting the religious exploration year in August rather than September. This shortened timetable, coupled with transition in the REA position, made for a short and stressful summer! However, I am confident that we will continue to find our rhythm and improve our processes so that we can reduce or even eliminate the start-up crunch.

ATTACHMENT B

September 2026 Lead Minister's Report to the Board
Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington
Submitted by: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

General Reflections
I am prepared for the next several months to be extremely busy and even stressful. There is a lot of change and of work happening in the next few months with our multiple hiring processes and onboarding and supervision of Ministerial Intern, Maria Renner. I will need to be clear in my priorities and ask for help to get through this period.

October's Worship Theme is: Pride and Humility

Calendar highlights
I am scheduled to be away the evening of October 4th – Saturday, October 10. The Heartland UU Minister's retreat in Syracuse, IN is October 4 – 7. Maria Renner and I are both registered to attend. Then October 7 – 10th, I am supposed to be in Boston for a Board training in my role as Chair of the UUSC's Human Rights Action Network. I have let the UUSC know that I may need to cancel the trip.

Updates and Highlights from Ministry
Director of Administration hiring: We had many applicants for the position. Dee Morris and Carl Deitchman of the hiring team reviewed all applicants and eliminated those who for obvious reasons were not eligible or qualified and left us with 15 potential candidates. The full hiring team including Dee, Carl, Bill Lonnberg, Steve Krahnke, and myself reviewed these 15 applications and selected our 5 top candidates for interviews. The interviews begin this week. We expect to bring finalist candidate(s) for a second interview before making our decision. We hope to have an offer made by the end of October with a start date negotiated with the person.

2nd Minister hiring: I have finalized the 2nd minister hiring team and tried to assemble a small team that would represent some of the diversity in age, gender, orientation and area of interest. This was not easy with also trying to keep it small. The team is Drew Schrader, Mary Beth O'Brien, Mark Reyes, Margy Roby, Matt Stonecipher, Judy Owens and me. Our first meeting will be this week. We will work on establishing a covenant as a team, focus on the importance of confidentiality about candidates, and review the basic timeline and tasks of the hiring process.

FY 2026- 2027 Annual Goals

Aligned with the Board monitoring goals; I am including my key goals for this year and strategies for achieving them.

Be a partner to the Board in our conversations and discernment around a Working Mission and a Vision for the congregation

1. Share resources from UUA and the Vision Discernment Working Group from last year about the definitions and differences between mission/vision and ends.

2. Actively participate and help shape when needed the powerful questions that can help the Board hold vision conversations among itself
3. Support the Board as needed in engaging the congregation in powerful questions around vision (in whatever form that might take)

Continue to Improve Administrative and Financial Practices at UUCB

This is a long term goal and it involves completing some actions that were not completed last year and attending well to both the hiring and onboard of the new Director of Administration

1. Work with hiring team to try to select the best candidate for the Director of Administration position.
2. Use the updated Job Description and the Financial and Administration Practices Recommendations that Carl Deitchman did last year to onboard well the new hire to the full responsibilities of the position.
3. Meet weekly with the new hire not just about tasks but to ensure they are well supported in learning and taking on the job
4. Work with Carl Deitchman and the Personnel Work Committee to update the Personnel Manual; review it with staff for clarity and improvement; share with the Board for approval and be ready to implement by January 1st.

Hire a 2nd Minister to expand the Ministry of the Congregation

1. Recruit a diverse hiring team
2. Lead a thoughtful, collaborative process to discern the needs of the congregation and a strong second minister for our ministry
3. Communicate well with the congregation about the position and the process
4. Create a clear job description and position title for the 2nd minister
5. Goal would be to make an offer to a minister in March or April with a start date of August 1, 2027 (I share this so the everyone is aware of the timeline and knows it will be almost a year before a 2nd minister would start)

Invest in the formation of our Ministerial Intern, Maria Renner

1. Set aside time to support Maria in her growth and formation; at minimum a weekly supervision meeting that focuses on exploring both practical ministry and theological reflection
2. Support Maria and the Intern Committee in meeting the reporting requirements of the UUA to fulfill the ministerial internship (Learning Service Agreement, evaluations)
3. Be timely in my evaluations and reporting requirements for the internship
4. Connect to resources from the UUMA and UUA to support supervisors and invest in my own growth and awareness as a ministerial internship supervisor
5. Set aside time with Board, Staff and Intern Committee after the internship to reflect on whether in the future we would like to become a regular teaching congregation

Support staff and the congregation through this year of multiple transitions

1. Pay attention to team dynamics and specifically trying to be attuned to the needs of existing staff taking on extra work as we move through staff departures and onboarding of new staff
2. Be mindful that transition and leave taking and onboarding is critically important work, takes time and investment and that other projects may need to be on hold during transition.
3. Support the staff by helping to communicate this with the congregation, leaders and ask for Board's help in communicating this when needed.
4. Use the theme of Be Seeds of Change to help articulate and support the congregation in understanding the levels of transition we are moving through.
5. Create a plan to move through transition of the Connections Coordinator and implement that plan.
6. Create opportunities for intentional relationship building and team building as we integrate new staff. Currently, we have a staff retreat date on October 22nd. No plan for what we will do. I should try to find help for this. I welcome ideas.

Create worship and ministry that helps all of us find ways to care for each other, resist attacks on our basic rights and democracy, and gives us hope and strength to continue in the work to protect and nurture our community and values.

1. Continue to strategize about how we build courage, sanctuary and imagination amid rising autocracy.
2. Support the Democracy Task force in thinking about what area of leadership and ministry/work are we particularly well-positioned to do and find ways to support that work (this could be through UU the Vote, legislative advocacy, hosting and providing teach-ins for the community)
3. Listen for what is needed; pay attention to what is happening, continue speaking a word of truth, hope and compassion amid it all.

Be Attentive to my own limits; find ways to take time off and create balance in this busy year.

1. Protect my sabbath on Monday and keep it sacred.
2. Take some Saturdays off, especially when I am not preaching on Sunday
3. Take a week of study in early Spring (April) to beginning planning for next year's worship themes and calendar and the congregation calendar