

First Unitarian Church of Providence
Prudential Committee Meeting Notes
December 12, 2018

ATTENDING

Prudential Committee

John Simmonds, President
Jay Glasson, Past-President
Cheryl Bartholomew, President-Elect
David House, Treasurer
Roberta Groch, Assistant Treasurer *absent*
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk *absent*
Caroline Mailloux, Strategic Planning *absent*
Tiffany Reed, Stewardship Liaison
Kate Bowden, Personnel Liaison
Sam Cole, Community Life Liaison *absent*
Nancy Weiss Fried, Social Justice Liaison
Cynthia Roberts, Spiritual Development Liaison

Church Staff Attending

Elizabeth Lerner Maclay, Minister
Cathy Seggel, DRE
Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

Guests attending

Ralph Mero
Gail Brule
Kristen Ivy Moses

OPENING

6:45 PM - Check-in; Opening Words - Nancy F., reading words by Jerry Garcia, sent by Roberta Groch
- Chalice Lighting – Call to Order

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion for Capital Projects Fund and Preservation Endowment fund was removed from the Consent Agenda.

Meeting minutes for November were approved.

Motions to create a Discretionary Fund and to engage a Pastoral Care intern were made, seconded, and approved.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Minister (Liz) –**

- Ministerial Intern, Kevin Carson, will start in January, and work half-time unpaid for 6 months as part of his ministerial credentialing requirements. He will focus on plans for enhancing pastoral care.
 - David Pyle consulted with Liz and members of the staff; his report just arrived and he would like to meet with the PruComm to talk about his conclusions.
 - This week is the Sandy Hook Vigil, the Security Training, and continued preparations for Christmas.
 - Thinking that we might need a conversation or some communication about Change. While change is activating, it can also be challenging, and it is important that we continue to respect each other.
- **DRE (Cathy) –**
 - Very busy getting everything ready for Christmas – many worship services in our future!
 - The senior high have met with staff from Dorcas and will work on a project.
 - The Common Read discussion was re-scheduled to January 17.
- **Church Administrator (Nancy) –**
 - Feedback from everyone was extremely positive about the Athenaeum program last Friday – Many First U members attended; many Athenaeum members were thrilled; members of the public were able to be invited. Believe there will be more such projects with the Athenaeum. (Ralph Mero said he hoped we would soon be able to address the issues with the sound system which made it hard to hear the speaker at times...Jay mentioned the importance of doing voice checks before future performances.)
- **Treasurer (David / Roberta) –** Income and expenses are both on track. David also announced that we had found a way to set up a timed light, to flash 8:30 – 8:35 pm every night, as part of the Good Night Lights effort. Motion was made, seconded, and approved: To accept David's proposal that we install a light, costing \$30.00, in the steeple, to add to the effort to communicate good wishes to the children at Hasbro Children's Hospital.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Security** – a security training session with the Providence Police Department will be held Sunday, December 16, at 12:30 – all who are able are urged to attend.
- **Sound System** – the committee has been working; there will be more info coming in January.
- **Restoration Status** – The O'Donnell work is done; the project has been paid for, with no debt incurred. A 'thank you' letter has been sent to all who pledged to the capital campaign, in gratitude for their efforts to fulfill their pledges. Some money from the campaign is still coming in and will be used to repair/paint the interior of the Benefit Street entrance. Next week David and Jaime will sand and paint the 'fan' over the pulpit in the Meeting House. The clock has been repaired but the timer does not work so the chiming has been turned off for now (to avoid chiming every hour, including all through the night...)
- **Atrium Glass Wall** – repairs on the seals have begun; the rest will have to wait for warmer weather.
- **Budget Prioritization Process** – three ministries have submitted 'wish list' budgets and the executive committee has begun the evaluation process. We expect the remaining budgets by early January. The evaluation process will take place during January's PruComm.

- **Parking Lot** – The lot has been torn up and will be leveled and covered with a binder coat; the final coat will be applied in the spring. Lines will be painted, and then repainted when the top coat is applied. Lights will be finished in the spring.
- **Ask the PruComm** – It has been suggested that members of the PruComm staff a table during coffee hour, once a month, to answer questions about what is happening around the church. It was decided to do this once a month; January 13 (Cynthia Roberts and Cheryl Bartholomew), and February 10 (John will ask Roberta to work with Nancy Weiss Fried).
- **There will be a ‘communications summit’ January 15, 7:00 pm**, for any who have a stake in how we communicate at First U. ‘Save the Dates’ will go out soon.

MINISTRIES, PERSONNEL, STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Personnel (Kate)** – No report other than items for Executive Session.
- **Strategic Planning (Caroline)** – no update.
- **Community Life (Sam)** – Cathy reported that the family-oriented Parish House Pot Luck was a lot of fun for those who were there.
- **Social Justice (Nancy)** – no update
- **Spiritual Development (Cynthia)** – is gathering budget info from her areas
- **Stewardship (Tiffany)** – Online giving has been set up; the first Giving Tuesday was a success, with \$3600 given to Sanctuary.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- **Green Team (Kristen Ivy Moses)** – The Green Team has prepared a survey about current recycling and environmental habits. This will help them plan programming most appropriate for the congregation’s interests. It can be accessed through an email link (Survey Monkey) but there will also be paper copies available. This will be available during two weeks in January, with notices in the newsletter and MHT.
- **Minister’s Discretionary Fund and Christmas Plate:** The Discretionary Fund was approved in the Consent Agenda, but the question remains how to fund it. Some had suggested seeding the Fund with the Christmas Eve plate. It was mentioned that the Christmas Eve plate often went to the Food Pantry, to supplement the endowed money, which must be spent on food only. It was decided to split the Christmas Eve plate between the Discretionary Fund and the Food Pantry, and to assess additions to the Fund when we see how much money comes in on Christmas Eve.
- **Pastoral Care / David Pyle:** David Pyle, the staffing consultant from the UUA, would like to deliver his report to and discuss it with the Prudential Committee. Kate will ask him to come to a meeting January 13, after worship. In the meantime, new intern, Kevin Carson, will work on issues of Pastoral and Parish care, supervised by Liz, with back-up from Nancy, in contact with Cynthia Rosengard, who has been working to keep a ‘care crew’ on call. As this is part of Kevin’s requirements from the UUA, we are not paying him for his time. First Unitarian will host a UUA Pastoral Care training workshop on February 23.
- **Epic Theatre:** The Epic Theatre is a small, local theatre company. Their director, Kevin Broccoli, recently spoke to the Women’s Alliance, and several members of the congregation know him and the theatre. In May, they are doing a production which takes place in a church, and they have asked about using the Meeting House as a setting for the show. Their hope is

to split the ticket proceeds with us, in lieu of rent. After a discussion, it was decided that this would be a good community partnership, and it was suggested that we might negotiate an arrangement which would net the church an amount at least equal to the Good Neighbor rate, plus the cost of a building manager. It was move, seconded, and voted in the affirmative to allow the Epic Theatre to use the Meeting House in May, assuming we can reach a mutually satisfactory arrangement.

- **Sanctuary:** There are two issues involved in our current Sanctuary arrangement. 1) During original Sanctuary discussions, a Rapid Response Team was created, to be utilized in the event a decision had to be made quickly. PruComm endorsed this concept, but never actually voted to give it the power necessary. It was moved, seconded, and voted in the affirmative that this Rapid Response Team be given the authority to make a decision about accepting someone into Sanctuary. 2) There has been a difference in opinion about whether or not we should be publicizing the fact that we currently have a family, considering that the original goal of Sanctuary was to take a public stand against wrong. It all comes down to how the wording of the final vote is interpreted, and a discussion ensued about the different opinions. It was the consensus that the PruComm has the ability to interpret, and that this PruComm believes the wording leaves it up to the discretion of the Sanctuary Steering Committee and the wishes of the individual(s) in Sanctuary whether or not to publicize their existence in our facility. Since our current family is fearful of the consequences of public disclosure at this time, the details of their refuge with us will not be made public at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

- The winter PruComm retreat will be held Saturday, January 12 at Liz's house; Cheryl Bartholomew and Nancy Weiss-Fried are planning.
- Ralph Mero spoke of efforts being made to revive the Benevolent Society for the purpose of promoting planned gifts to the church. A new booklet, distributed during the meeting, has been prepared, thanks to Paul Brule and Janet Downing Taylor, and two planned giving workshops are planned for January.

Executive Session

- Members retired to Executive Session.

ACTION ITEMS

1. John will ask Roberta Groch to co-host the February 'Ask PruComm.'
2. Kate will confirm the January 13 date with David Pyle, and check on how much time he thinks will be needed.

CLOSE

- Members reconvened for closing words, by Ralph Waldo Emerson, courtesy of Roberta Groch through Nancy F.

SUBMITTED by

Nancy Forsstrom