**First Unitarian Church of Providence**

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

June 10, 2020

**ATTENDING:**

**Prudential Committee**

Cheryl Bartholomew, President

John Simmonds, Past-President

Michael Cappelli, President-Elect

Roberta Groch, Treasurer

David Francis, Assistant Treasurer

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk

Caroline Mailloux, Strategic Planning

Tiffany Reed, Stewardship Liaison

Edie Warren, Personnel Liaison

Sam Cole, Community Life Liaison

Greg Kniseley, Social Justice Liaison

Dave Spremulli, Spiritual Development Liaison

**Church Staff Attending**

Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

**Guests – Incoming Board Members**

Loise Sloan

Odile Mattiauda

**6:45 Check-in**

**Opening Words (Michael Cappelli – CB Beal)**

**Call to Order - Chalice Lighting & Covenant Reading**

**Meeting is being held remotely due to COVID-19 Emergency**

**7:05 Consent Agenda: May 27 Minutes** (Edie/Dave S.) approved unanimously.

**REPORTS – Verbal updates**

* **Church Administrator (Nancy) - (See written report for May)** Nancy also worked on the Annual Report and Annual Meeting materials and process. She continues work on finishing 501(c)3 application and getting it in. Approval may take a few months. Working on various tech issues for which 501(c)3 status will afford us a discount.
* **DRE (Cathy) –** **(See written report for May)**. Cathy is in middle of re-imagining all RE work – not just virtual RE.
* **Minister (Liz) – (See written report for May).** Liz has been planning a presentation with Nellie Gorbea (RI Secretary of State) on voting rights and registration - How to increase voter registration while also making voting safe. This program is planned for July 5. All program staff have been asked to engage in some programming over the summer. Cathy is looking at programming with families. Roger and Fred will be collaborating on a virtual talent show. Retired ministers will be doing some things in the fall as well. Liz will be around more than usual this summer. Partnership with Rev. Howard Jenkins’ Bethel AME Church and First UU starting this summer.
* **Treasurer Reports (Roberta) –** Things look good. 82% of budget expended, at 92% of the year. Revenues are all on target. We will make June draw on endowments. We will see where we are with potential surplus in a few months.

**MINITRIES, PERSONNEL, STRATEGIC PLANNING**

* **Personnel (Human Resources) (Edie) –**

**Motion: I move to change the title of the minister from Minster to Senior Minister. (Edie / Dave S.)** Discussion: Usually when there is more than one minister, “Senior Minister” is used. This is also the case for ministers who are considered head of staff and have collaborative relationship with the PruComm as governing board. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Liz needs to have performance review every three years per contract. **Motion: In light of the 180 degree pivot in the Church year that occurred in March, 2020, due to COVID-19, I move that the timeline for all performance reviews for the Staff and the Minister be extended to the end of September, 2020, and that these reviews acknowledge and reflect the abrupt and creative changes that were required of job descriptions and for employee goals. (Edie / John S.) Motion passed unanimously.**

* **Community Life and Heritage (Sam) –** Transylvania partnership – until now funds have not come through the budget, but this group has been given one of the monthly collection plates. They had a three-year agreement that they would get one of the monthly plates. They would like this arrangement to continue. Greg and Cheryl have also received this proposal. This issue will be discussed on the agenda in the fall.

* **Social Justice (Greg) –** No report. See Transylvania Partner Church issue above.
* **Spiritual Development (David S.) -** Assumes things are going well.

* **Stewardship – (Tiffany) –** See update at annual meeting. We had a successful commitment drive - $483,000 or so. Nancy reports that we have received $3,000 more in pledges this week.
* **Strategic Planning – (Caroline) –** Genuine desire to move work forward, but lots of questions. Needs ideas to know how to best support presidents in visioning work.
* **Debrief annual meeting –**. Virtual meeting seemed to work fairly smoothly. Tech team helped make this happen. Preparation paid off. Thanks to all involved.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

* **Bridging Team –** Michael is pulling together a group to look into how, when and under what circumstances physical church will re-open. Bridging Leadership will consist of new members or members who have been members, but perhaps not engaged and have various subject expertise – as well as past presidents. This group will report recommendations to Prudential Committee to make the ultimate decisions. Michael will get this started as soon as possible. Michael has developed a timeline with regular reports to congregation over the summer. Nancy reports that smaller groups are eager to come back into physical gathering. Convening RE may have its own set of challenges. We may need some Spiritual Pathways representation of young families on the Bridging Team.
* **First U’s Race Work –** In light of racial injustice in the country and the related protests, what is our role as a congregation? We have put up Black Lives Matter sign, but what more can we be doing? A former congregant who experienced various micro-aggressions while attending First U in recent years has been in touch with Liz and Cathy. PruComm received a proposal for a “Mosaic” task force just before the COVID shutdown, but has not been able to respond to date. Some elements: People who could come in to do workshops; suggestions of a diversity trainer of color who brings youth into the mix. Louise will share proposal to remind PruComm members of its contents. Other thoughts:
  + We need to structure the work that needs to be done.
  + We need to include whole congregation with a churchwide commitment – not only side work of a separate committee.
  + Structured Partnership with Bethel AME is a good idea and a way to move forward. This will include discussions beyond race – e.g., religion, LGBTQ discussions.
  + Suggestion to dedicate a whole PruComm meeting to this discussion – perhaps facilitated. How are we complicit, individually and as a church, in white supremacy.
  + Church as a whole needs to buy into doing this work. Need institutional support for these efforts.
  + We need to be inclusive as well as anti-racist – two different things.
  + Youth and Side with Love team were involved in programming around anti-racism a few years back, before sanctuary work.
  + Request to move Black Lives Matter banner from side to front of church.
  + Conversation will need to be continued. Could be ongoing piece of work of PruComm in the fall.
  + Need lots of different entry points, range of options, ways to engage in the work.
* **Ewert Report on Stewardship: Action Plan for Implementation of Findings**

**Motion: I move that the PruComm take steps to act on the recommendation from the Next Steps weekend report to create a more holistic group to include all the financial groups in the church: finance, stewardship, investments, treasurers, Benevolent Society, etc., with a goal of looking at the financial health of the church from a year-round perspective.** (John / Edie) Discussion: We should embrace Ewert’s recommendation that we have year-round holistic stewardship team – umbrella group including representation from benevolent society, finance committee, commitment drive, other fundraising, etc. We have a need for strategic financial work as well. We need to highlight to congregation that we have moved some investments to be more aligned with our values. **Motion passed with one abstention.** Work team will begin this work in June.

* **PruComm Reflection:**In the interest of time, Cheryl will send these questions to members for written comment:
  + What did we accomplish?
  + What did we do well as a group in process and outcome?
  + What would we like to do better/differently?

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

* **Sabbatical Policy –** Policy was not ready in time for this meeting – We will revisit this in September.
* **Staff Performance Evaluations –** See above
* **Plan for Summer Services –** Services will **r**emain online for the summer.
* **Annual Volunteer Recognition Awards –** We are forgoing these awards for this year, but if you have ideas for anyone who should receive recognition send ideas to Michael and Cheryl. We will recognize them in person next year.

**NEXT YEAR – (Michael) –** Invitation for PruComm members for summer - Write paragraph on a piece of paper this week and describe what today you think your role on this committee is – put away safely somewhere. Take UUA Leadership training. High level, purpose of board, change agents, etc. Michael will email other information, along with some housekeeping information and schedule.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Michael extended thanks to Cheryl for her leadership during a very difficult time. Cheryl extended thanks to outgoing PruComm member, Sam Cole, and also to John Simmonds, as outgoing President and presented John with a copy of “Secret Art of Dr. Seuss” and “Bartholomew and the Oobleck” by Dr. Seuss.

NOTE: On June 25 via email the following motion was proposed:

**Motion:**

**The PruComm moves that the Black Lives Matter banner be moved from above the door of the Parish House, to a more prominent location in the front of the Meeting House on the Benefit Street side of the property. Consideration should be given to placement taking into account landscaping, existing 300th Anniversary banner and the historic nature of our Meeting House.**

The motion was passed with 10 of 12 PruComm members voting to approve.

**8:50 REVIEW ACTION ITEMS**

1. **Engage in Ministerial Performance Review –** by end of September.
2. **Transylvania Partner Church -** request to continue receiving a collection plate will be an agenda item for Fall PruComm.
3. **Continue congregational work on anti-racism –** Devote full PruComm meeting to this topic in the Fall.
4. **Sabbatical Policy –** Review policy developed by task force in September.

**Next Meeting/Assignments**

* **Next Meeting: TBA**

**Closing Words (Michael) - from Tom Robbins “Still Life with Woodpecker”**

**Extinguish Chalice**

**9:18PM- ADJOURNMENT –** Motion to adjourn(Edie / Dave S.) carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk