**First Unitarian Church of Providence**

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

September 9, 2020

**ATTENDING:**

**Prudential Committee**

Michael Cappelli, President

Cheryl Bartholomew, Past-President

Odile Mattiauda, President-elect

Roberta Groch, Treasurer *(absent)*

David Francis, Assistant Treasurer

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk

Tiffany Reed, Stewardship Liaison

Edie Warren, Personnel Liaison

Beth Armstrong, Strategic Planning

Louise Sloan, Community Life Liaison

Greg Kniseley, Social Justice Liaison

Elizabeth Allsworth, Spiritual Development Liaison

**Church Staff Attending**

Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

**Guests**

Martha Rice Sanders (before 8PM)

David House (after 8PM)

**Meeting was held remotely via zoom due to COVID-19 Emergency.**

**6:45 - Check-in**

**7:20 PM - Opening words** (Edie Warren) “The Germ” – Ogden Nash

All opened their package received in the mail from Michael – Small chalice with candle – both authentic for lighting with fire or battery operated electronic version.

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

**7:20 PM - Consent Agenda**: - August 12 Minutes. Approved unanimously (Michael / Cheryl)

**REPORTS**:

**Reports**:

* **Church** **Administrator** (Nancy) – Has been working on reopening building for small groups. Two groups have retuned. Jaime is back. Pedro has been here. Cleaning is happening thoroughly. 12-step groups are reluctant to return due to waiver requirement. (group members are anonymous by definition. Trying to work through that obstacle with some workarounds). Some meditation groups are considering the return. Tech team has been working all summer. New database system is being tried out. If glitches cannot be worked out, may need to move to more expensive option. Now also looking into new accounting software.
* **Director of Religious Education (Cathy) –** Working on preparations for this Sunday’s water communion service. Gathering volunteers for reimagined faith development for children, youth and families. Re-gathering coming of agers from last year who never finished their year. Gathering items for packages for all families. Campus UUs have been meeting. One of them will be helping out with RE. Postcard went out to all young people blessing their school year. First U4U congregational handbook almost complete.
* **Minister – (Liz) –** Several things already underway: UU the Vote – postcards to help get out the vote in communities where voter roles were purged; New mask initiative for First UU folks and larger community (protest rallies, food pantry, etc); Collaboration with Beth AME to increase food effort from once a month to once a week. New programs for fall – more than usual - small groups, lifespan education, and support group opportunities. Supporting connections and community for First U. There has been an increase in suicide in other UU congregations. We want to keep connections to avoid this in our community. Worship in a new way – filming from meeting house – starting this coming Sunday.
* **Treasurer (David) –** See report. We are under expended – about %16 of year – only 9% of expenses, largely due to building being closed. Income is where it should be relative to the year. $94,000 “surplus” includes PPE loans. This is a liability until forgiven.

**DISCUSSION:**

* **Fall Prudential Committee Conference**
	+ **Saturday or Sunday in September, early October… tbd**
		- **Topics for @ 2 hours**
			* **Outline of Prudential Committee structure and responsibilities**
			* **How have we been doing inside the large congregation?**
			* **Martha’s visioning piece**
			* **What is the plan / objectives for the year? – Fold in with Senior Minister review – folded in with PruComm self-eval**

Martha – Suggested visioning process – This was tried at a committee on ministry meeting pre-COVID. Five words that describe what we are now (not pejorative) – Five words for what we want to be. Each come to the meeting with your own five words describing the church now. Consensus process to bring these all together. Then develop aspirational five words together.

E.g. for Martha’s garden - now -- weedy, traditional, unimaginative, unproductive, colorful. What she would like it to be --Inventive, colorful, unique, productive, tidy

Send any thoughts and preferences for meeting time(s) to Michael in email. May need to spread over two sessions – Friday / Saturday or Saturday / Sunday. Some comments that the agenda seems ambitious and may need to prioritize so that we spend enough time on visioning exercise and PruComm and Minister goals for the year. Cheryl will send responses to questions from spring and “Inside the Large Congregation” summary to group.

* **Bridging Team and Related Updates, 1st U 4 You…** (Did not discuss these items)
	+ **Bridging Team Update – they just will not quit…**
		- **Update on building usage**
	+ **Food Ministry – quadruples in size!**
	+ **Opportunity with masks – ideas needed**
	+ **Streaming Services – opportunities for youth and adults**

* **Mosaic Proposal -Discussion, decision on recognition and ministry alignment –**

Mosaic committee proposes to find ways to make congregation more racially inclusive. Anti-racist workshops and educational programming, some other recommendations for music, decor, etc. to make First U more welcoming to people of color. Suggestions to be sure to include members from a range of perspectives and stakeholder groups on this committee.

**Motion: To approve the formation of Mosaic Committee under community life and heritage ministry.** (Cheryl / Edie). Motion passed - nine approved; one opposed.

* **Proposal to repair Bell and Clock – (David House @ 8:00 pm)**

Capital campaign fund has about $61,000 remaining. These funds have been designated solely for renovation of meeting house. The bell tolling hammer is not functional. Wooden crib holding bell is not stable – needs to be replaced for safety. Could also fix clock face gears to synchronize and show correct time. Holding off on repair of clock face would more than double the cost of that repair. Total cost to repair both bell and clock now would be about $36,000.

**Motion: To spend money from the capital campaign to fix bell, crib, hammer and clock. (Beth / Edie).** Motion passes unanimously.

Need to let congregation know the reasoning for this decision – from capital campaign funds already designated for meeting house, a safety issue, and used for ritually marking events of import to all of the community. Michael will reach out to David, Norma Rossi-Meade, and Bev Koteff to put together article for Newsletter. Suggestion to post this and other announcements to the church Facebook page as well.

There are other safety issues that have been recommended to address with balance of Capital Campaign funds. (See list compiled by David House in board materials).

* **Sunday Collections and Partner Church – (Greg Kniseley)**
	+ **Partner Church Report – Gifts proposal – For Discussion at October meeting**
	+ Exchange a piece of silver with Partner Church? Appraisal of silver? Silver was bought with money from slave-holding families –What to do with this – need some thoughtful thinking.
	+ What to do with the plate this year in general, and Partner Church specifically?
* **How to open Zoom Pru Comm to community?**

Michael will explore some options with Nancy.

**9:30PM - Closing Words (Edie Warren)** “Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost

**Extinguish Chalice**

**9:35PM - ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn (**Edie / Claire**)**

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk