

First Unitarian Church of Providence

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

December 8, 2021

ATTENDING:

Prudential Committee

Odile Mattiauda, President

Michael Cappelli, Past-President

Joan Richards, President-elect

John Dooley, Treasurer

Rick Richards, Assistant Treasurer

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk

Edie Warren, Personnel Liaison

Beth Armstrong, Strategic Planning

Louise Sloan, Community Life Liaison

Greg Kniseley, Social Justice Liaison

Alison Green, Spiritual Development Liaison

Kate Niles, Stewardship Liaison

Ex-officio - Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister

Carson Cole, Youth Representative *absent*

Church Staff Attending

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

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

6:45 PM - Gathering

Opening Words – Alison – Starlings in Winter - Mary Oliver

Covenant Reading

Call to Order – 6:53PM

November Minutes - Motion to accept minutes of November 10 meeting (Odile / Alison) was approved unanimously.

Reports (Highlights only) –

Financial – (John / Rick) – We are ahead of last year. \$25,000 over last year's income at same time. Rental income is up. Pledges are up. Rick has done an analysis of those who have not made any payments on their pledge and will send out letter to them regarding what all First U is doing. The letter will also include pastoral message as well– how to reach out if they need help (Liz will add this message). We will send out status letters to others in January. Request to hear about how endowments are doing for next meeting.

Church Administrator Report (Nancy) – See written report. Consulted with David House to assess choices for renewing our insurance. Changed companies to get more coverage for less money.

Minister's Report (Liz) – See written report. RI State Council of Churches will support gun control legislation. Liz has been asked to drive this effort with RISCC. Liz has also reconnected with Scott Latham – One Gun Gone -- to build on relationship with this Providence youth organization for a joint service. Most of these young people have not been vaccinated and this will be an opportunity to pass on better information and access to vaccines with this group.

DRE Report (Cathy) - See Written report. Last Sunday Mosaic Team leaders came to Youth Chapel and Coming of Age. This was a very meaningful time. Communication to parents regarding plans for reopening. Survey can go out now. There are still some questions regarding who will decide protocols when the time comes. Cathy, SP Team will need to work with Pandemic Response Team and Doctors and Doctors to develop detail on this.

DISCUSSION

Goals & Priorities (Liz and PruComm):

Draft shared based on earlier discussion aligning PruComm Goals with Liz's.

Mission Statement and Strategic Planning (Beth). Beth shared that the Mission Statement Team sent out a memo to committees to consider current mission statement draft for comment. Responses have been about 80% negative. Team feels that this statement as it is would not pass a vote and perhaps we should start over. Although all responses were appreciative of the work of the Team, some feel current mission statement is fine and there is no need for a new one. Some think it needs more about spirituality. Some think it is too long. Some think it doesn't describe church in its entirety. There is a feeling of the PruComm that the limitations of COVID and inability to gather together to hash things out has led to this juncture. People are feeling battered (by COVID and the times) and may be best to regroup on this. We need consensus. There is possibility that we could have congregation learn more about context of what a mission statement is and where this one came from and still gain consensus by June. Or we start the process over. We need a mission statement to kick start a strategic plan. Without that, we can continue to limp along as we have with old mission statement, which is too broad to effectively provide direction. We need to communicate to the congregation that we are taking this pause.

Stewardship and Commitment Drive (Kate) – Plans are underway for a strong and successful Commitment Drive. Liaisons, please ask your committees to find folks to help with commitment drive. Mark Ewert report – February, 2020 – suggested the development of a more sustainable commitment drive. We want to engage Mark's technical assistance for this year's commitment drive to help us do that. Preliminary meeting with Mark has been scheduled for next week. We plan to have a full team in place by January. **Motion: That we allocate \$5800 to retain Mark Ewert as consultant for our commitment drive this year.** (Kate / Joan) We have about \$35,000 of unspent funds in this year's budget that will be more than enough to cover this.

Sabbatical Planning – We considered four different scenarios for coverage for Liz during her sabbatical, including moving Roger to full time and various combinations of Roger and hiring a

“Targeted Minister.” The Worship Committee has committed to hire guest preachers for three out of four Sundays if Roger goes full time. **Motion: To make Roger full time with guest preacher slots at additional cost of up to \$20,000 and not hire targeted minister for Liz’s sabbatical. (Odile – Joan)** Motion passed unanimously. It was suggested to form a sub-committee for long term plan for future sabbaticals. We need to bring draft sabbatical policy to PruComm for a vote (still in draft form for a few years).

RE plan and interim search – (Alison) Alison has worked on recruiting folks to serve on “Developmental” (interim) RE Director search. There are about ten folks who are willing. The goal is for a team of five. Alison will send recommended list to PruComm for approval, ensuring that the group will have representatives from youth, parents, volunteer teachers, and SP Team. Alison also spoke with Jan Gardner from UUA regarding the Developmental RE Director search processes. Team will need to meet and get job posting developed and out in January. We need to move quickly to get the best candidates.

Choir recommendations – In response to expressed unhappiness about not singing, the Pandemic Response Team met with the Doctors. There is a proposal for choir going back to singing. This was not unanimous. Some of the Doctors were not in agreement, but helped in coming up with the recommended protocols to make this as safe as possible.

Motion: (Joan / Claire)

That the choir be allowed to sing in the church services of the First Unitarian Church of Providence adhering to the following list of guidelines:

COMMUNICATION:

- **There will be a major Church-wide communication effort** each Sunday and through 1stU channels (special announcement, weekly newsletter, website, etc.) to inform all congregants that the choir may now be singing so that all congregants can make their own decisions about whether to attend in-person services or not. *This communication must highlight that attendees’ vaccination is expected unless medically exempt.*

LOGISTICS IN THE MEETING HOUSE:

-**The South half of the balcony** (to the left when standing in the pulpit) will be exclusively reserved for choir members
-When singing, the Choir will gather in the southwest corner next to the organ; when not, they will disperse themselves through the rest of the south balcony.
- **Limited singing time for each piece** at performance and rehearsal: 5 minutes maximum or so per piece, i.e., 3-4 verses of a hymnal (based on the 15-minutes contact RIDOH rule)

- **Ventilation** through windows and/or doors as recommended by the CDC

- **Rehearsal** in the Meeting House in the area reserved for the choir (South half balcony and near organ), for up to 15 minutes at a time in same section of this area.

FOR MEMBERS OF THE CHOIR WHO CHOOSE TO SING:

- **Choir singers must refrain from participating** if they are experiencing any symptoms of any kind

- **Choir singers must be fully masked**, surgical mask required (Singers may feel free to use N 95s if they need to), worn over mouth and nose at all times,

- **Choir singers must be fully vaccinated** (fully is to be understood as including booster shot as of December 15, 2021, as boosters have been readily available),

- **Choir singers must test COVID negative on a rapid-test** taken 24hrs before the performance, (CVS, and Walgreens offer scheduled free testing. *Drs./PRT may advise on validity of rapid testing as more information about Omicron becomes available.*
- **Choir singers must report immediately any case of positive testing**

Discussion: Concern about the requirement for testing within 24 hours was discussed. With notice, choir members should be able to schedule a free rapid test at a state site (or purchase home rapid tests) to meet the testing requirement. Will be in place to have choir by Christmas Eve. **Motion passed unanimously.** Liz and Nancy will look into having First U becoming a state testing site again with hopes for an assigned day of Saturday to accommodate choir need. The church will provide KN95 masks for choir.

Church Administrator / COO discussion tabled until January – please read all related documents. Budgetary options are contained in this proposal and need to be approved as well.

Staff now need to be COVID tested regularly. Church will bear cost. Nancy will order tests.

NEXT MEETING: January 19, 2022, at 6:45 pm Zoom (instead of January 12)
MID-YEAR RETREAT: January 23, 2022 (tentatively at 5:30 pm / Liz has offered to host)
Closing Words – Alison - David Breeden
9:00 PM – Adjournment

ADDENDUM:

On December 9, Odile emailed the PruComm to address an item that there was not time for at the meeting on December 8, but needs timely consideration and a vote:

Motion: To allow the Sanctuary committee to donate the non-attached furniture in First Unitarian's Sanctuary Room to serve immigrants in our community. The Sanctuary Committee will identify recipients of this distribution. The Sanctuary Committee commits to re-furnish the sanctuary room should the eventuality of sanctuary at First Unitarian within contractual utilization arise. (Odile / Michael).

Motion passed unanimously by email on December 10, 2021.

ADDENDUM #2:

On December 17, 2021, Alison Green made the following motion via email. Seconded by Rick:

Motion: The Interim DRE Search Team, comprised of myself (Alison Green), Rev. Liz, Kelly Baraf, Dominic Napolitano, Cynthia Roberts, Cynthia Rosengard, Michael Capelli, and Carson Cole, will undertake the search for an Developmental Fulltime Interim DRE who would be hired for one year, with the option to renew for a second year (with the understanding that we would only decline to renew their contract if things were really not working out). The Interim DRE would not be eligible to apply for the settled DRE position at the end of the interim period. Motion passed unanimously via email on December 20, 2021

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk