

First Unitarian Church of Providence

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

February 8, 2023

ATTENDING:

Prudential Committee

Joan Richards, President

Odile Mattiauda, Past-President

Hillary Salmons, President-elect

John Dooley, Treasurer

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk

Dana Borrelli-Murray, Personnel Liaison *absent*

Peter Laarman, Strategic Planning

Louise Sloan, Community Life Liaison

Lisa Voutes, Social Justice Liaison

Alison Green, Spiritual Development Liaison

Andy Wilby, Stewardship Liaison

Ex-officio – Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

Church Staff Attending

Roger Peltier, Assistant Minister for Pastoral Care

Mandy Neff, Interim Director of Religious Education

Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

Guests

Rick Richards, Commitment Drive

6:45 PM – Gathering / Chalice Lighting / Covenant Reading

Opening Words – (Andy)

Call to Order – 6:47 PM

Review of January, 2023 minutes (Claire) – Motion: To approve the January minutes as presented. (Joan/ Odile) Approved unanimously.

Financial Report (John) – Expenses are at 58%; revenues in 60%. John will share full written report with PruComm tomorrow. In the Fall we voted to move smaller funds from Citizens to Washington Trust. In the process of looking at some of these accounts a few no longer have purpose (e.g., Swan Point fund - \$11,300, Brown meeting house repair fund - \$3,776). It would make sense to move these funds into the capital projects fund. **Motion: To consolidate cemetery fund and BU Fund into the capital projects fund.** (Hillary / Andy) Unanimously passed. It was noted that at some point there may be a need to repair the obelisk at Swan Point and other grave marker upkeep.

Highlights from Staff & Committee Reports (submitted and read in advance)

DRE (Mandy) – Coming of Age Taco dinner COA to be held on Saturday. Doors open at 5:30; dinner at 6PM. Proceeds will help fund trip to Boston to see UU Heritage sites.

Assistant Minister (Roger) – Thanks for gift from PruComm. All-Facilitator Small Group Ministry training is scheduled for Saturday. Over 30 are registered. Elizabeth Allsworth and Cynthia Rosengard will be training.

Administrator (Nancy) - Nancy was on two week well-deserved vacation.

Mosaic (Claire and Louise) – Plans are underway to host a showing of the documentary film “Being Thunder” which tells the story of Sherente Harris, a two-spirit Narragansett Tribe member (and current Brown student) and their challenges expressing both Narragansett culture and two-spirit nature. Date to be set once Sherente’s availability is pinned down for a Q&A. Possibly a Saturday around 4PM. Will be reaching out to Brown and Narragansett community, in addition to our own youth and adults, to promote event. Lee Rodman joined Mandy in speaking with youth group regarding “Intent vs. Impact” in our dealings with each other around issues of race and other marginalized groups. Kate Niles and Lee have also assisted Mandy with review of RE curricula.

Sabbatical Report (Liz) – Her Sabbatical was very restorative, especially after COVID. It was great to be out in nature on a daily basis. She focused on learning old Scottish folk music. “Land of the Leal” was specifically produced for last Sunday’s service that wove the ideas of mutual “loyalty” and “Beloved Community” into ways we can support each other as a faith community. She could possibly plan a Parish supper with a report out of her Sabbatical stay in Scotland. She did keep some ongoing posts on Facebook during her time away to keep in connection. Created website for breeding dogs. Since her return last week, the staff held a retreat. Roger and Liz did an overnight retreat. She is grateful that church has thrived on many levels in her absence. Liz will prepared a written Sabbatical report for PruComm for next month’s meeting. PruComm will need to decide what to do with the two “sabbatical chalices.”

Pledge Drive Report (Rick) -We have a compressed timeline this year. We will start in March with no “soft start” in February. Visiting stewards will visit folks in March – both large givers and others. We have 26 visiting stewards for about 50 visits. A few will host group visits in their homes. Liz will give a launching sermon first Sunday in March. There will be testimonials each Sunday - perhaps one from the youth who may be going to GA. Pledge letters are near their final edit. Each letter will have individualized suggested amount. We have 25 table leaders for the Fellowship dinner scheduled for March 3. We will have a Commitment drive newsletter. Diane and Rick thank PruComm for advancing the schedule for draft budget development prior to the commitment drive. They also expressed appreciation for PruComm members who have volunteered to be visiting Stewards and table hosts. PruComm expressed their thanks to Rick and Diane for their leadership on the commitment drive effort.

General Assembly (GA) recruitment process (Hillary) – There are four firm adult delegates identified to date. Three potential teens. We still have at least three possible slots available. Liaisons should connect with those in their committees who may be interested. . Would be good

to have rep form Green Team and other targeted groups. Odile will ask nominating committee to check with confirmed nominees, as GA could be a great initial leadership experience for anyone who would be available to attend either in person or virtually. Early Bird special deadline is the end of February. Recommendation to assist the three youth with registration costs at \$300 each. We may also request extra help with living expenses when final group is firmed up

Organ report (Joan) - Joan met with Jonathon Ortloff (Ortloff and Co.), Beth, Nancy Nicholson (organist) and Roger in late January. At that time about a third of the middle keyboard was not sounding. Jonathon gave a tour of the organ and its workings. When blower was found in the steeple, it was determined that the “Sleeve” to the blower was blown out, preventing sufficient air getting to most of the pipes . On Feb 1, Jonathon Ortloff returned and replaced the sleeve after which most of the keys and pipes were sounding. Jonathon will give a written report of his assessment and recommendations for refurbishing the organ. Nancy Nicholson, playing it after the repair, was not as optimistic that it is fully functional. Several-year-old estimates from two organ companies – Ortloff and Foley Baker – have warned that the organ, at close to sixty years old, needs major refurbishing to prevent permanent deterioration. Ortloff will give a written report of his assessment within the next month or two and Joan will share with PruComm when she gets it. There is a possibility that some of the work could be done in stages. There is also a possibility that we could hire a neutral expert consultant familiar with organs like ours to assess whether the Ortloff and/or Foley Baker recommendations and estimates are reasonable.

Summer Retreat planning (Joan) – It was beneficial last summer to have a retreat to help orient new PruCom members. Hillary will be away soon after the annual meeting, but back at Labor Day. Joan will be gone in August. Possible mid-June retreat to orient newly nominated PruComm members. To be considered at next meeting.

Masked only space in services (Liz) – Some people have not come back to live services due to health vulnerability. Some congregations have a designated space in the front of the sanctuary where all people sitting in that area must be masked. **Motion: Have staff figure out best place for a masked only section during Sunday services.** (John / Joan). Passed unanimously.

Financial Organization Report – See written report (Andy) – Thanks to Andy for putting forth this effort to develop a plan for stewardship, finance and investment organization for the church. Recommendation for two PruComm liaisons – one for finance and investment (money coming in). The other for Stewardship (money going out). Revenue falls into five groupings – (proposed to be chaired by the incoming president): Operations (rentals, etc.), Commitment Drive, Capital Campaigns (small projects, medium campaigns, Larger Capital Campaigns), Benevolent Society (planned giving), investment management (manage our various funds). Suggest a Finance and Investment Committee to oversee these five efforts. Money going out – would be chaired by the Stewardship Liaison – with a leader for each of these six areas: Building, Organ, AV / IT, Kitchen, Event Space, Accessibility. Finance Committee should be answerable to PruComm and available to consult with how to finance the vision of the church,

also recognizing that when it comes to use of various funds, they are also obligated to the original donors and establishers of the funds to use them as intended.

Andy will gather the nascent Finance and Investment group to meet in the next month and give a report to the PruComm for the next meeting even before being formally authorized. Rather than add a new official member, increasing the size of the PruComm, we could redefine the “assistant treasurer” role as Finance and investment liaison. Nominating committee will need to have roles clear for recruitment. Andy will get new job description language for these new roles to Odile to share with the nominating committee.

Need to educate congregation on the rationale behind this change. Develop provisional addendum to By-laws to try for the next year or two. Hillary, Andy and Nancy will work on by-law change language.

Strategic Planning report (Peter) - PruComm has worked on priority setting both at the summer and January retreat and meetings through the fall. We now need to move strategic planning process forward to get consensus and buy-in from congregation. We are planning a special day on a Saturday when everyone has a chance to work together to adopt a plan based on “pillars” that we have identified. This large all-day congregational meeting will be facilitated by a facilitator from regional office of UUA. A task force would take the information from that day and refine to develop the plan for formal adoption at annual meeting in June. Peter is proposing the date of Saturday, April 29 as well as opportunities for those who cannot attend on that date to weigh in in advance or participate remotely. Once the April 29 day wraps up, no more input will be accepted. This is the chance to get ideas into a strategic plan to be implemented over the next few years. Youth will have opportunity to participate at least for part of the day. Child care with planned activities will need to be provided. Care will need to be taken to manage overpowering voices and ensure that hesitant voices are heard. **Motion: To approve moving forward with full day strategic planning gathering on 4/29 for entire community to be facilitated by neutral facilitator (Peter / Andy).** Unanimously passed.

Other Business – Items for Next Month’s Agenda (Joan)

- Decision on chalices
- Emeritus Policy
- Finance and Investment presentation

Closing Words (Louise) -

9:02PM - Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk