

First Unitarian Church of Providence

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

May 10, 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

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

Mandy Neff, Interim Director of Religious Education

Nancy Forsstram, Director of Operations

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

Opening Words – Odile – Annie Ernaux, Nobel Prize winner

Call to Order – 6:48 PM

Approval of April, 2023 Minutes

Motion:: To approve the minutes (Peter/ Odile) - approved unanimously.

Financial Report – We are doing very well. We are at 83% of church year; expenses are at 80%; revenue at 84%. John will send a letter to people who have not completed their pledge.

Motion: Pru Comm acknowledges that the Osborne Annuity currently on books as liability has been converted to the Osborne Fund. It is no longer a liability due to the death of Mr. Osborne. (Joan / Alison) Motion passed unanimously.

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

Director of Operations (Nancy) – See written report. Calendaring meeting Tuesday, May 23rd 7PM. Anyone who wants to sponsor an event during the next church year (September, 2023 – June, 2024) should attend. Worship themes will be shared. This exercise helps groups plan far enough in advance for effective budget planning as well. Liaisons, be sure to share with committees.

Minister (Liz) – See written report. Worship attendance continues strong. There has been a lot of enthusiasm about the Big Day (strategic planning). People coalesced rather than fighting over priorities. Rev. Howard Jenkins and Liz are planning for next church year. Kate McGovern is leading social justice work very capably.

Planned giving report (Nancy) – Planned giving is an arm of the finance committee. Colin Murray has compiled a bright, informational brochure on Planned Giving and also developed a plan for outreach and to raise awareness among congregation about opportunities for planned giving. There is a plan for a series of financial workshops next fall: “Keeping Your Money Safe”, “Estate / Generational Giving”, and “Tax-Smart Giving.”

Pledge Drive Update/Co-Chair recommendations (Joan) – Pledge drive has been successful. Within reach of the target of \$500,000. We need a new co-chair for next year’s commitment drive. Need someone who is creative, committed, energetic and outgoing. Hillary will draft a “job description” to help with recruitment.

Music Director update (Dana) – Beth Armstrong has agreed to remain as interim Music Director for a third year (2024-2025). The Music Committee has worked very hard on their research and report regarding the need for a full time music director. This will give PruComm time to consider this report and plan appropriately for any budgetary implications. It will also avoid having a DRE and Music Director Search in the same year. Thanks to Janice Okoomian and the Music Committee for their hard work and research. A fuller report will be given at the May 24 meeting.

Motion: That Beth Armstrong will remain for third year of interim music director. (Dana / Odile). Motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Food Pantry (Nancy) – Community Food Share has asked for a “perpetual” community collection similar to Partner Church project and Loaves and Fishes project. The numbers of clients are continuously increasing. Suggestion that moving forward in future years we should fund such financial need for the project in a budget request. Community Food share did not make a budget request this year. However, Nancy reports that their expenses are in the thousands of dollars per month. We need more clarity on what the food pantry expenses are and how they are currently funding those expenses. More discussion at May 24 meeting.

Kitchen task force formation (Hillary) – Hillary will work with finance and development to form a task force.

Technology Report & Estimates (Joan Richards) – Michael C. has shared a detailed request for Audio visual technology needs with accompanying estimates. **Motion: Approve Michael C. full recommendation and send to Finance and Development committee (Joan / Odile) – Motion passed unanimously.**

Signage (Joan Richards) – Rick Richards submitted report in the fall for a consultant to design signage for lawn. Tabled. Need more information on what would be included in signage design. Suggestion that it include three possible designs with cost estimates for each design.

LARGER REPORTS

Spiritual Pathways Report (Mandy Neff) - Mandy reported on the Spiritual Pathways interim assessment and 2023-24 plan.

Incoming assessments included the following: Regarding Programming -- Curricula needed updating; Generational continuity and traditions are solid; There are strong desires for: integrated connections, family concerns and leadership more aligned, content based curriculum, more instrumental music in chapel. Campus ministry needs strengthening. Regarding People – Teaching teams are strong and experienced, but understaffed; 50 children registered 2020-21, but now there are 90 enrolled; Two staff positions were unfilled in the Fall (DRE Assistant and Youth Music Director) – now both filled; Transition from former DRE needed attention; Spiritual Pathways Team ready and willing for interim work. Regarding Infrastructure – Tech and record keeping were largely on paper; Realm’s capacity for event registration, etc. is underutilized; Filesharing capability was built with google drive; COVID health policy and Teenage youth safety procedures needed attention.

2022-2023 Program Highlights – Restoring and Creating In-Person Structures: Parent ingathering and new family supports; Transition from “Soul Matters” to “Tapestry of Faith” curriculum, a more age-based curriculum; New health and safety procedures. Room furniture and supply upgrades. Restoring established traditions and rites of passage.

New Spiritual Pathways Team Mission - The spiritual pathways Team has developed a new mission statement: “Based on our First Unitarian mission, principles and values, we welcome people in love, create connections, foster inclusion for people of all identities and abilities. We facilitate lifelong learning and help people cultivate spiritual practices through social action and faith development.. We recognize that this is a journey that we walk together in, in compassion and justice.” They adopted a curriculum philosophy that includes strengthened educational content for children; inclusion and accessibility as a lens for curriculum selection and updating; Stages of Faith Development broader, developmentally appropriate age brackets.

Expressed needs for 2023-24 – Inclusion as a new SP Team priority; Youth service opportunities and opportunities to connect with other UU youth; strengthening social connections – e.g., “room parent” to organize social events for each age group; programs / activities with multi-generational components and story-telling opportunities.

Mandy reviewed program curricula and age groupings. Biggest change will be combining 7th and 8th grade groups next year for Coming of Age. Then same cohort will be offered Our Whole Lives during the subsequent year.

Strategic Plan – Update and Volunteer Recruitment (Peter Laarman)

Through the “Big Day” whole congregational process, sixteen priorities have been identified:

Pathway A: Enhancing Community

- We will continue and deepen our training and resources on welcome and inclusion and full accessibility for our whole congregation, and especially our key leaders and volunteers.
- We will fully commit to becoming an anti-racist church.
- We will expand opportunities for simple fun and creating connection through multigenerational events.
- We will deepen our knowledge of each other through sharing stories, interests, & skills.

Pathway B: Transforming Ourselves

- We will explore the role of Sunday services (words/music/silence) and meeting house in support of deepening individual and collective spirituality.
- We will continue to reflect on stories that help deepen our spiritual selves, including Native American & Greek myths, and personal and world stories, as opposed to a narrower UU point of view.
- We will explore the role of joy in sustaining a robust spiritual life.
- We will explore the intersectionality of spirituality and justice, including *radical nonviolence* as a spiritual practice.

Pathway C: Doing the Work of Justice

- We will become a church for the city in multiple ways and strengthen our presence and impact at city and state levels.
- We will form stronger and better partnerships with groups and movements whose commitments match ours, thus amplifying our agency and collective voice as First U.
- We will root our social justice and reparation work in our own congregation's troubled history.
- We will expand our multicultural and multi-ethnic congregation.

Pathway D: Building Our Capacity

- We will identify, select, prioritize and resolve major capital needs and building maintenance, such as: improved our sound system, kitchen, organ, accessibility in the Meeting House, a redesigned dais, improved parking, glass doors in the RE space, etc. with a capital campaign sufficient to meet our priorities and provide for proper maintenance.
- We will strengthen our church's development strategies, such as our planned giving program, annual giving, capital campaigns, grants, and other revenue generation sources.

- We will increase staffing as needed to realize our goals and to be in alignment with established best practices, such as kitchen staff, full-time music director, full-time pastoral minister, and communications support.
- We will develop a culture of participation and responsibility for the church that broadens our volunteer base.

We now need to identify folks to serve on a small, but nimble implementation team so that we have a coherent and compelling plan by the fall. The team will need diversity of age, experience, etc. Peter will need a co-chair. PruComm charges Peter to continue to form that group and begin its work. Thanks to Peter and Erica Baron (UUA Consultant) for all the hard work on this large strategic planning effort.

Thanks to Odile – Odile Mattiauda was acknowledged for her three years of service as President Elect – President – and Past President and given flowers as a token of thanks.

8:22PM - Executive session (all staff adjourned)

8:57 PM - Closing Words - Odile

8:58PM - Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk