

**First Unitarian Church of Providence**  
Prudential Committee Meeting Notes  
December 9, 2020

**ATTENDING:**

**Prudential Committee**

Michael Cappelli, President  
Cheryl Bartholomew, Past-President  
Odile Mattiauda, President-elect  
Roberta Groch, 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

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

**6:45 - Gathering**

Opening Words – (Beth Armstrong) Howard Thurman – “Christmas Returns”  
Chalice Lighting & Covenant Reading  
Call to Order – 7:00

**7:00 PM Minutes:**

**November Minutes** - Approved Unanimously

**November Treasurer’s Report** – Roberta reported that we are doing OK with 31.1% of budgeted expenses spent and 40.8% of budgeted income received. Pledges are doing well but under where we were last year. Some folks can’t give what they pledged due to unemployment and other COVID related financial hardships. Sunday offering is much lower than last year. It was mentioned that other UU churches report their giving up because of a smoother electronic giving process during virtual services. Could we look at this? We do have the surplus from 2019/10 as a cushion this year. However, the 2019 resolution to carry surplus expires this year. After this fiscal year, any surplus remaining from prior years rolls back into the Buildings and Grounds fund.

**DISCUSSION:**

- **7:16 PM - Decision to Sponsor Nicholas Aaron Friesner on his path to ordination–**

**Motion: That First Unitarian Church of Providence sponsor Nichaolas Aaron Friesner in his path to ordination at Meadville-Lombard Theological School (Beth / Odille) – Motion passed unanimously. We will let congregation know that we have done this in an upcoming Newsletter**

- **7:19 PM - Prudential Committee Goals / Priorities**

Cheryl shared the three broad goals for the PruComm developed at the Goal-setting retreat along with suggested tasks and timelines for this year, acknowledging that we need to set realistic expectations as to what can get accomplished. All agreed that these broad goals are what we need to work on. There was acknowledgement that work on Goal 2 and especially Goal 3 will be multi-year efforts. Some discussion ensued regarding specific tasks and timelines:

Goal 1- Continue to focus on our transition to the professional church size category. Continue work on creating and revising systems of governance, management and other systems/structures to align us to the professional church size category.

- Rebuild Human Resources Committee – completely staffed by Feb. 2021
  - Implement Church Staff Performance Management System – already happening.
  - Create job description for increased Membership Coordinator role (partner with staff involved) – Spring 2021
  - 5-year plan to transition church administrator to executive director – Research similar positions elsewhere and develop job description (partner with staff involved – some work already begun on research) – Spring 2021
- Increase Membership Coordinator hours by 2 in next FY Budget – Spring 2021 (Treasurer – Stewardship Committee)
- Monitor UUA salary recommendations. Ensure we are meeting Large 1 size rating – Spring 2021 (HR and finance committee)
- Congregational data system is a unified church software system that all staff can access through the internet (Monitor progress through Spring 2021 – Tech Team)
- Create a finance committee (Treasurer – Winter 2021)

Goal 2 - Develop a new mission statement, followed by goal-setting and strategic initiatives.

- Form a Mission Statement Task Force. (Strategic Planning) Timeline: Completed
- Create a Mission Statement. (Strategic Planning – Beth reports that committee has been meeting and will likely have a mission statement along with proposal for roll out process ready for PruComm’s review and approval by the January meeting) Timeline: January
- Buy-in from the Congregation on the new Mission Statement – It will be important to communicate to congregation the various avenues of congregational input over the last year or so used to develop the mission statement and how the mission statement will be used in decision-making and financial priorities. We could build worship service around this – include youth group. One proposed

timeline was to roll out mission statement and finalize in February 2021 so that it can be basis of commitment drive in March 2021.

- Based on Mission Statement – develop three or four broad goals for congregation with associated outcomes – August / September 2021
- Share Goals and Outcomes with Congregation – Fall 2021
- Whole church community develops strategies – action steps / programs, etc. to achieve outcomes – Fall / Winter 2021/22 and ongoing.
- Align structure and culture. (Strategic Planning) Winter 2022 into the future.
- Update policy and procedure manual institutionalizing changes
- Develop a culture of long-term fiscal planning and management (Finance Committee) Timeline: Spring 2021 into the future

Goal 3 - Advance and support anti-racism work in our congregation.

- Form Mosaic Team - Discussion that this should be a group like the Bridging Team that reports directly to the PruComm rather than a “committee” under one of the ministries. Team formed ASAP
- PruComm participates in workshops, book groups, etc. regarding anti-racism and cultural competence. Ongoing
- Multi-layered strategies for educating the congregation around white privilege and systemic racism will be designed to include passive and active opportunities. Timeline: Spring 2021 and into the future
- Opportunities need to include varied entry points. Timeline: Spring 2021 and into the future
- “Short” educational videos will be shared with the congregation. Timeline: Spring 2021 and into the future
- Book Groups will be formed around books focusing on anti-racism, white privilege, and systemic racism. Timeline: 2021 and into the future
- Workshops will be designed that focus on systemic racism, anti-racism, and white privilege. Timeline: 2021 and into the future.

There was agreement that there should be some urgency in forming the Mosaic Team and getting at least one anti-racism associated action done as soon as possible. Louise pointed out that some of the actions proposed by the Mosaic committee– e.g., workshops with skilled presenters / facilitators – will take some budgetary considerations.

Cheryl will revise and share the Goals / Outcomes / Timelines document according to discussion tonight with the understanding that it is a working document.

### Reports:

- **8:33 PM Minister (Liz) –**

#### **Goal 1. Increasing strength, programs and fulfillment through the pandemic.**

Fall programs are winding up. Chalice and soul circles continue. Buddy program continues. Virtual pickup pageant for Christmas is underway with lots of participation and lots of fun. Two Christmas services will be online - 5PM and 9PM. Collaboration with Bethel AME – Joint service, “Love beyond Belief” is planned for this Sunday and also a second MLK Sunday Joint service that will feature participants in the “Merciful Conversations in Relationships” group. Food ministry continues. Chapel has consistent

attendance. Viewership has declined for Sunday services, but settled into a consistent pattern – guest preachers less viewership as with attendance with face to face services. Generous gifts from service. Thanks to Michael Cappelli who leads Tech Team for services. First U4You packets reached those who have not shown up virtually. Possibility that with any new lockdown phase we may need to move from church streamed services.

**Goal 2: Broaden/deepen musical range at First U** – Cathy, Kristi and Dan Gray virtual musical offering in November was a success. Fred collaborating with Delbert Collins from Bethel AME for the joint services.

**Goal 3. : Broaden/deepen connections with clergy who are people of color** – RIDOH has responded to Faith Leaders and COVID vaccine effort. All the other ministers involved in this effort are people of color.

- **8:42 PM - DRE (Cathy)**– We continue connections and online presence for children, youth and parents. Jenn N. and Anne V. have been helping with streaming from auditorium. Seventy people are participating in Christmas virtual pageant. “Harvest the Power” and “Widening the Circle of Concern” adult education program continue. In addition to education, these have become places for support and taking care of each other. RE committee delivered 100 First U4You packets to homes. Preparing for the common read sessions in the winter – “Breathe: a Letter to my Sons” by Imani Perry. Parenting in time of Pandemic will also start up after the Holidays. Spiritual Pathways has begun re-imagining for next year – budget and goal setting for our times.
- **8:46 PM Church Administrator (Nancy)** — Continuing facilitating things. Keeping building clean. Paying bills, etc. Changing circumstances of COVID require lots of pivots of the staff almost constantly.
- **Liaison updates**
  - **8:54PM Social Justice (Greg)** — Loaves and Fishes fed 60 guests at Emanuel House. Beneficent church contributed half of meal. First U is now distributing food packages to Genesis Early Learning Center. There is a proposal / request from Food not Bombs, an international group that distribute hot meals to those protesting shelter and hunger issues. They want to use First U kitchen to prepare food. Michael will discuss this get back to Greg after discussing with the Bridging Team.
  - **8:52 PM Spritual Development (Elizabeth)** Continues meet and greet with chairs. After discussing suggestion of moving Deacons to Community Life ministry with Roger, the decision was that they should stay with Spiritual Development.
  - **8:50 PM Stewardship (Tiffany)**- Small team has been assembled. They will work on Commitment Drive and two other goals based on survey. They will identify the one or two things that will move those goals forward this church year.

- **9:02 PM Human Resources** – (Edie)– Wants to congratulate staff for all the phenomenal work they are doing.
  - **Strategic Planning** – (Beth) – See above report on work on mission statement
  - **Congregational Life** – (Louise) – See above on Mosaic Team
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- **Next Meeting... Sanctuary Proposal being developed**

**9:05 PM Closing Words** – (Beth Armstrong) Howard Thurman “The Work of Christmas Begins”

**9:07PM Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk