

First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee
Minutes of the Meeting of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES

September 24, 2019

Present: Mark Bishop (President), Mark Bender (Vice-President), Jeremy Koenen, Chris Aiken(minutes), Jane Cliff (Secretary), Diana Dentino, Mark Miller, Jane Peterson, Melinda Vernon

Also present: Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom (Senior Minister)

Called to order: 6:05 p.m. CT

Opening words: Jane Peterson (words from author Toni Morrison on love and God)

I. Consent agenda (Mark Bender)

- a. Review and discuss August BOT meeting (August 24, 2019) minutes
- b. Received monthly staff change report from Rev. Jennifer
- c. Moved to approve items a and b above (Jane Peterson / Melinda Vernon); approved unanimously

II. Monitoring Ends 4, 6 & 7 (Mark Bishop)

- a. There was a discussion regarding the progress on the ends. Since this is the first year of monitoring there was some discussion of baselines as well.
- b. **End 4** - Generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge.
 - The Congregational Survey will be used as one measure of progress.
 - The progress will also be monitored with staff provided narratives. These stories are not necessarily quantitative but do give some indication of how the congregation is doing on End 4. It was noted by Rev. Jennifer that these stories were easy to come up with.
 - Statistics on the pastoral care program were provided and will continue to be monitored in the future.
 - Pledging is part of this end. Projected and actual pledge income will be tracked. The goal for this measure is to increase the pledge base by 5% every year until operating income is above operating expenses.
 - Additional analysis regarding historic pledging trends and patterns was provided and discussed. The issue of membership retention was discussed in depth. Improving membership retention has the potential to increase pledges over time.
- c. **End 6** - Open ourselves to wonder, making ourselves vulnerable and available to find meaning, inspiration, and transformation.
 - The Congregational Survey will be used as one measure of progress.
 - Worship attendance numbers will continue to be tracked as they have been for many years. This end will be in compliance when worship attendance numbers increase and are more consistent. The baseline will be the 2018 to 2019 church year.

- After some consideration the week to week attendance trends will not be analyzed in detail. This data would take considerable effort to collect and analyze and it has been determined that it would provide little value.
- d. **End 7** – Create communal experiences celebrating our interconnectedness
- The Congregational Survey will be used as one measure of progress.
 - The number of church events and attendance will also be tracked. The count will not include Sunday services, RE classes, Coffee Hour or Memorial Services. The total events for the 2018 to 2019 church year of 745 will be used as a baseline.
 - In addition, the total event attendance will be tracked. For the 2018 to 2019 church year the total attendance at events was 7566.
 - Rites of passage and attendance will be tracked as well.
- e. At the conclusion of the review and discussion a motion was made by Mark Bishop as follows -
 “We accept the Senior Minister’s report, including the provided evidence, that ends 4, 6 & 7 are being sufficiently monitored and appropriate attention is being given to achieving these ends.”.
 Melinda seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. Interpretation of Board Policy 4.6.12. (Rev. Jennifer)

- a. The policy is part of the Senior Minister limitations and states “the Senior Minister shall not: Endanger the congregation's public image or credibility, particularly in ways that would hinder its accomplishment of mission or its ability to accomplish its Ends.”
- b. Rev. Jennifer provided a detailed written interpretation of this end for discussion. The detailed interpretation will be posted to the church website in the future.
- c. The interpretation outlined actions the Senior Minister identified that could endanger the congregation’s public image and credibility such as publicly supporting an issue that the congregation as a whole does largely not support.
- d. When deciding to take a public position on behalf of the congregation the Senior Minister provided clear criteria on when it would be appropriate to publicly support an issue or coalition. The primary means of determining any potential public support of an issue were identified to be broad congregational support as well as alignment with our Ends, Mission and Values.
- e. Discussion – The Board had a detailed discussion regarding this end with input from all Board members. Rev. Jennifer answered questions and we discussed some hypothetical situations that may occur. At the conclusion of the discussion the Board was supportive of the approach and criteria proposed by Rev. Jennifer.
- f. A motion was made by Jane Cliff to approve Rev. Jennifer’s reasonable interpretation of Board Policy 4.6.12. The motion was seconded by Mark Bender. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. Linkage Sub-Team Update (Mark Miller/Jeremy)

- a. Propose to wait for the DRE to get more settled before engaging 1st to 7th grade children
- b. 8th grade and OWL will be engaged during the annual Congregation Survey as part of their classes.
- c. Mark Miller provided an update from the Youth and described excitement on the part of the Youth regarding a youth representative on the board.
- d. Some discussion of 2 youth representatives to provide coverage and experience from year to year.
- e. Mark Bishop suggested a call with consultant Laura Park regarding youth board involvement.

V. Monitoring Governance Process & Board Relationships - Evaluation Sub-Team (Mark Bishop)

- a. Proposal is to form a team of three Board members of varying levels of Board experience and tenure.
- b. Mark, Mark and Mark volunteered

VI. Zillman Bequest & KGAT (Rev. Jennifer)

- a. KGAT will prepare a recommendation for the board. The last work to be complete is for the long term use of funds.
- b. Ends and strategic planning recommendation

VII. Youth Board Observer – update (Rev. Jennifer)

- a. Rev. Jennifer provided feedback from 3 congregations that have youth board members or observers.
- b. The feedback overall was very positive
- c. Two out of the three had a youth that was a full trustee rather than just an observer.
- d. It was recommended to have a Board member serve as a mentor and point of contact for questions. It was suggested that the mentor not be one of the Board officers.

VIII. Other Business

- a. The Board has traditionally hosted a Feast For Funds event. The deadline to propose events is Oct. 13th. Mark proposed chili but is open to suggestions. Please provide suggestions before Oct. 13th. Mark will send out a Doodle with proposed dates.

Motion for adjournment: 8:05 p.m. CT (Melinda/Jeremy); approved unanimously

Next meeting: October 22, 2019

Assignments: Words/snacks—Jeremy; Minutes/Chanticleer article—Jane Peterson