

## Board Notes

From First Unitarian Weekly Connections Newsletter dated May 16, 2017

**Budget Roundtables are scheduled for this Thursday, May 18, 2017 at 7:00pm and Friday, May 19, 2017 at 10:00am.**

The May Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting began with Investment Committee Chair David Friedman reporting investment results from our money managers, Alesco Advisors. They have provided top quartile returns for the trailing five years on our church's moderate risk, low cost, growth and value index funds. Investment Committee member Annie McQuilken reported on progress toward divesting our portfolio of fossil fuels. "Green/clean" index funds are relatively new. The committee developed filters for tracking risk and return over the past two years, and working with Alesco identified two funds. One fund tracks favorably with our current portfolio's returns and is being considered. The church pays Alesco Advisors a low, competitive fee. The Investment Committee recommends continuing our relationship with Alesco Advisors, a local firm. Thank you to Chair David Friedman, Amanda Kish, Anne Perry, Ron Steinman and Annie McQuilken for their excellent work researching, reviewing and monitoring benchmarks for our church's portfolio.

John Keevert reported on the Environmental Climate Task Force's activities from 2015-2017. Seven videos were shown, several carbon foot print trainings given, a visit to ECO Park recycling center, petition and letter writing, talks and presentations, and most recently a post-it board "What are you doing for the environment?" Congregational response has been positive for events after church and low for other kinds of events. Thank you to Chair John Keevert, Keith Able, Ken Buckle, Ron Johnson, Andrea Porter, Art Rothfuss, Sue and John Steepy for your good work.

The 2017 Grants Panel Chair Mary Palmer, Jo Cone, Robert Cook, Libby Moore, Tom Petrillo and Marilyn Roche submitted their recommendations for the 2017 Grants Panel Awards. The congregation will vote to award these grants during the annual meeting Sunday, June 4, 2017 after the 10:00am service. Recommendations: \$4,000 from the Josephine and Paul Wenger Fund for Peace Through International Understanding to Lake Avenue Baptist Church for refugee management services; \$2,000 to Flower City Pickers who collect unsold food from public market vendors for distribution to local shelters and food kitchens; \$2,300 to Rochester's Workers Center to support home health care workers; and \$2,300 to Workers Justice Center to support dairy farmer workers. Both organizations focus on leadership and advocacy training and providing legal assistance with the goal of empowering workers. Further details and a question and answer session at the annual meeting June 4.

Board member Jo Cone summarized the Unitarian Universalist Organizations' Social Witness draft statement of Conscience [Escalating Inequality](#). The document highlights our denomination's response to increasing economic inequality and identifies systemic racism and other intersectionalities as causal factors. The draft recommends action steps for the denomination, congregations and individuals. The draft will be discussed at 2017 General Assembly.

A "shout out" was given to the **Spiritual Survivors** (6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade Religious Education group) who slept overnight in their cars to raise awareness of homelessness in the Rochester area. The Spiritual Survivors participated in RAIHN activities and were complemented for their large turnout, their friendship, and deep commitment to social justice. A special thank you to the **Spiritual Survivors** and their exceptional Religious Education facilitator Dana Lundquist for your outstanding community work.

The Interim Senior Minister's report started with Good Governance. The budget is on target and anticipates the books closing June 30 balanced. The draft 2017-18 budget is coming together and will be finalized after the pledge drive. There have been no staff grievances. Since November 2016, Rev. Joel has assumed all of the church's executive functions including financial oversight, personnel, building and grounds, etc. (to reduce costs) in hopes that this spring's pledge drive would support additional staffing next year (business administrator, membership, social justice, gardener). Some important ministerial, interim and financial tasks / goals were deferred but must be attended to next church year. Rev. Joel hopes to begin interviewing for a Business Administrator in August. Three-year budget projections will be shared at the fall 2017 Congregational Meeting after the final close of the spring pledge drive. The roof replacement contract has been signed. Work will begin August 2017 and will be completed by November 2017 less expensively, with the shortest work period, and earliest date of completion of all bids.

Mary Hammele and Barbara de Leeuw were approved as delegates and will join Anne and Tom Perry, Carolyn Rankin, Paul Minor and Len Stein representing our church at General Assembly 2017.

Financial maintenance: Treasurer Anne Perry proposed an addendum to the Micro Finance and Community Development Task charter to require that distribution of funds for reasons other than a loan guarantee must be pre-approved by the BOT. When the fund was established, notices should have been sent to the Task Force and the Genesee Credit Union that BOT pre-approval is required prior to distribution of funds for **non-lending** purposes. The board was made aware that a **grant** was given by the Micro Task Force to Rochester Refugee Resettlement Services that was outside of the parameters of their charter (a grant rather than a loan guarantee). The request should have come to the BOT. The Micro Task funds are assets of our church. The board retroactively approved the task force grant and passed the addendum requiring that any transfer of micro task force funds, other than for loan guarantees, be pre-approved by the BOT. An official notice will be sent to Genesee Credit Union and the Task Force.

The board engaged in a policy governance "rehearsal" related to board influence on staff hiring. Our board governance policies have numerous policies detailing board and senior minister responsibilities, scope, and accountability. The congregation hires the Senior Minister who is accountable to the Board of Trustees. The Senior Minister is responsible for all other staffing. It is wise to keep the board informed and to seek counsel prior to major hiring decisions but not required by our by-laws or policies.

The annual pledge drive is half-way completed. Pledge increases are up 13% for matching funds. It is important for members/friends to indicate their pledges ASAP so a meaningful and responsible 2017-18 budget can be developed.

Growing better...together,

*Barb*

Barbara de Leeuw, President of the Congregation