



First Unitarian Church of Rochester
Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, September 13, 2021
6:30 pm via Zoom

Attendance: Ken Buckle, Barbara Gawinski, Jon Horne, Lynn Kinsman, Robert Lyubomirsky, Courtney Miller, Gregory North, Anne Perry, Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz, EJ Santos, Paul Suwijn, Kyle Williams, Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan.

Guests: Rev. AJ van Tine

Absent:

1. Establish a Quorum and Call Meeting to Order at 6:33 pm — Gregory North
2. Chalice lighting – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan
Centering Reading, Gregory North:
“The Part That is Not Water” from Spilling the Light by Theresa I. Soto.
3. Consent Agenda [*Note: consent agenda includes items that are distributed before the Board meeting and are voted on without discussion. Any Board member can request that an item be removed so that it can be discussed.*]
 - o August 9, 2021, Board minutes
Approved
4. Calendar for 2021-22 – reviewed the Board work plan for this church year. Discussed timing of the congregational survey and how that links to when the Board uses the results in Ends monitoring.
5. Committee and Other Assignments – members were asked to fill in their preference on the Board Contact List on the shared google drive. So far:
 - a. Leadership Nominating Committee – Paul Suwijn [BOT elected; full member of LNC]
 - b. Policy Governance – Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz, Robert Lyubomirsky, Lynn Kinsman, Anne Perry
 - c. Linkage – Barbara Gawinski, Jon Horne, Kyle Williams
 - d. Sr. Minister evaluation – Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz with assistance from Gregory North
 - e. Staff Survey -
6. Finalizing Covenant – The Board brainstormed a covenant at its August retreat. The first draft was discussed at this meeting, some changes made, and covenant adopted.
MOTION: To adopt the Covenant of the Board of Trustees as amended.
Moved: Kyle Williams Seconded: EJ Santos
Motion passed.

7. Building for our Future

a. Charter

Objective:

Recommend to the Board possible projects aligned to First UU Mission, Ends and the Board of Trustees Five Year Vision adopted in our June 2021 Retreat, in which we committed to:

- i. Invest to expand our relevance to and support for ourselves and the wider community,
- ii. Be open to the significant change needed to embrace and continue to hold young adults, families, LGBTQ and people of color,
- iii. Be prepared to deal positively with conflict along the way.

Composition:

- i. Rev. Shari + 6 members
- ii. 2 Board members
- iii. 2 to be named by the BOT
- iv. 2 by Rev. Shari

Budget:

Up to 25k for consulting support

Guardrails for Project Evaluation:

- i. Aligns to First UU Mission, End and BOT Vision
- ii. Can include other than investments in physical plant
- iii. Does not create an unsustainable operating cost
- iv. May require multi-million-dollar investments

Timeframe:

Launch Sept./October 2021, completing deliverables within 3-6 months

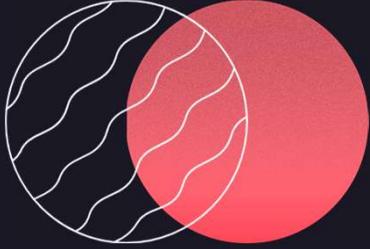
Activities and Deliverables:

- i. Select consultant
- ii. Generate list of potential projects
- iii. Develop evaluation criteria
- iv. Evaluate project options
- v. Prioritized list of recommend project(s)
- vi. Develop Case Statements
 - a. What is the project?
 - b. What is the impact?
 - c. How is it aligned to the Vision?
 - d. What would it cost (high-level estimate)?
- vii. Present options to the Board for consideration

b. Next Steps

- i. The Board approved two Board members for Building For our Future (BFF): Kyle Williams, EJ Santos
- ii. For the October 11 Board meeting, Kyle and EJ will propose criteria for two congregants to be appointed by the Board and make a recommendation for who they will be.

8. Progress on End 3.
The presentation is attached at the end of these minutes.
9. Minister's Report – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan
There being no need for a motion on anything in the minister's report and we spent more time on Progress on End 3, board members were urged to review the report and communicate directly with Rev. Shari if there are questions and to familiarize themselves with issues that may come up in the future.
10. Treasurer's Report – Robert Lyubomirsky
The Board is having a full treasurer's report quarterly. The first quarter ends September 30 and the full report will be on the November agenda. Robert Lyubomirsky reported that our pledge payments in the first two months of the year are down compared to last year. Results will be investigated further to better understand what's happening.
11. Check-Out. This agenda item is for a process review of the meeting. For example, we spent more time than planned on Item 8. Progress on End 3. It was agreed that doing so was okay because it is so important to the work of the Board. It was suggested that when we have Progress on an End on the agenda that we endeavor to reduce the number of other topics.
12. Adjourn. With no objection, meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.
13. Closing and extinguish the chalice – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan

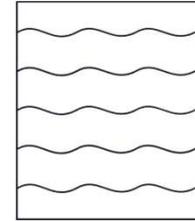


IN PURSUIT OF END 3

September 2021
First Unitarian Church of Rochester

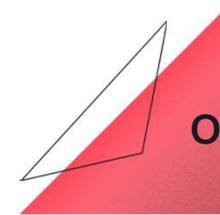
THE END ITSELF

**3: We engage in
spiritual growth and
development**



INTERPRETATION

The church as the institution and the church as the people consider spiritual growth and development to be a core element of our purpose together. Our congregational mission calls us to open to transformation, which carries with it the bold claim that being a part of First Unitarian changes the life of its congregants and community. The congregation's ministries provide containers for exploration, practice, and transformation, and members and friends are invited and expected to actively participate in the work of their own spiritual growth and development. Recognizing that transformation is hardly ever a momentary flash of insight, spiritual development at First Unitarian is viewed as a path of discipleship in which this growth is incremental and continuous, although not linear, and ongoing participation in the life of the church brings a deepening commitment to live more fully out of our values.



OR, IN BRIEF:



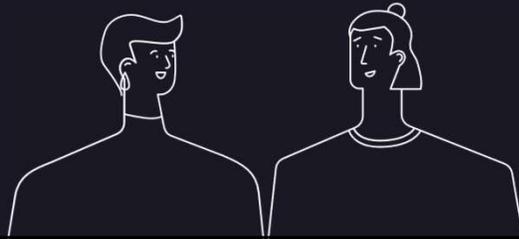
We expect people to grow spiritually.
This growth isn't linear, but it's important.

As a congregation, we provide opportunities. As a member, it is expected that you take responsibility for your development.

ARE WE MAKING PROGRESS ON THIS END?

How do we know?

Here is what we agreed on to determine if we were making progress.



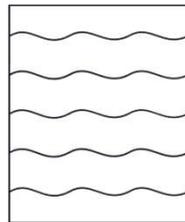
CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

- On a scale of 1-7, how true is this of First Unitarian now?
- Congregants can provide meaningful answer to "What is the next step I can take at First Unitarian to grow spiritually?"

AND Trustees can testify to the spiritual growth and development present in their own lives.

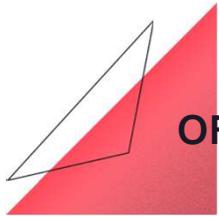
THE END ITSELF

**3.1 Providing
inspiration, support,
and courage to explore
our whole selves.**



INTERPRETATION

We contain multitudes, and no one activity or gathering can address all of the needs of all of the people. Still, our spiritual growth demands attention to multiple facets of our being: exploration of our whole selves involves mind and body, thought and emotion, introspection and social connection, justice-making and reverence, silence and music. While only an individual can consent to undertaking this exploration, the community inspires and encourages community members to begin and continue their spiritual journeys by providing support, accompaniment, and tools along the way. Belonging to this community carries an invitation and responsibility not only to grow our own souls as individuals but also to encourage and accompany others on their journeys. We come together in a covenanting community because the deeply important work of meaning-making in our lives involves the collective spiritual practices of community building and spiritual accompaniment.



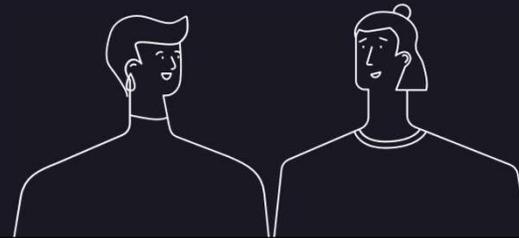
OR, IN BRIEF:

Spiritual growth includes body, mind, and relationships. Social justice, art/music, silence, companionship, and more are both expressions of the holy and supportive tools for discipleship.

**ARE WE MAKING
PROGRESS ON
THIS END?**

How do we know?

Here is what we agreed on to determine if we were making progress.



CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

- On a scale of 1-7, how true is this of First Unitarian now?
- Congregants can testify to how they have grown spiritually over the past year.

**ATTAINMENT OF
WELCOMING
CONGREGATION
STATUS**

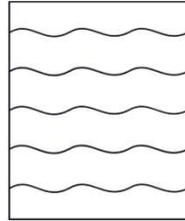
This past year

Thank you to BOT member Lynn Kinsman, membership coordinator Shannan Foos, the Welcoming Congregation Team, and all who participated.

Remember: This designation requires annual renewal.

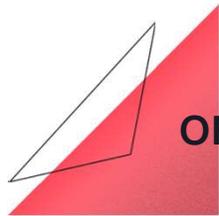
THE END ITSELF

3.2 Recognizing our racial bias and confronting its impact on our relationships and behaviors.



INTERPRETATION

As Unitarian Universalists, we join in spiritual community with others who seek to build The Beloved Community: an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural community characterized by equity and inclusion that reflects the inherent worth and dignity of all persons. The proposed Eighth Principle situates this work within our journey toward spiritual wholeness, and this collective work requires personal and relational transformation over time. Racism is woven into the history and present of the United States, Unitarian Universalism, and the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, and biases and behaviors that reflect this cultural context shape us--both white people and BIPOC--as individuals and as a community. Our interconnectedness means that we are connected to legacies and lifetimes of learning white supremacy, and we are called by this End to identify, acknowledge, confront, and change the ways our learned racial biases uphold structures of power and ways of being that privilege the spiritual and material lives of white people over that of others.



OR, IN BRIEF:

Racial bias is present in our relationships and behavior.

Our spiritual tasks include surfacing this, naming it, addressing whatever it is keeps it in place, and developing the skills to imagine and then create alternatives.

DIRECT INSPECTION BY THE

CONGREGATIONAL **BOT** SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1-7, how true is this of First Unitarian now?

ARAOMC review by a subcommittee of Board of Trustees minutes, decisions, and process observation

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM ANTI-RACISM, ANTI-OPPRESSION, MULTICULTURALISM AUDIT

- Racial justice commitment is not stated & practiced consistently
- Leadership does not engage rigorous self-assessment and outside consultation
- More theological support around building the Beloved Community
- Music and worship needs to increasingly reflect multiple cultures and voices
- Pastoral care for BIPOC has not adequately met particular needs of this year
- Self-awareness re: \$ could lead to leveraging our power for wider movement

SM Report on participation in anti-racism programming

We approached but did not reach our participation goals for Beloved Conversations:

Close to 10% of the congregation

Reached 75% of staff

Fell significantly short of 75% for lay leaders

*Thank you to Anne Perry
for helping coordinate
Beloved Conversations!*

After mixed reviews, we won't continue this program, but despite that, we heard significant feedback about major growth from a small number of participants.

Congregants can testify to specific learning about their own biases and behavior change. **NOT QUITE**

Anecdotal data collected, but this has not been systematically collected.

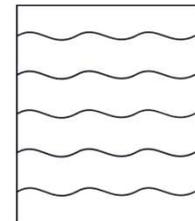
Hiring, contracting, and outreach efforts begin the process to draft and execute a plan to address and dismantle racial bias.

NO PLAN, HERE'S OUR PROGRESS OVER PAST YEAR:

- Hiring description template developed with equity-driven best-practices.
- Hiring includes outreach to at least one recruitment channel in which racially underrepresented persons are centered.

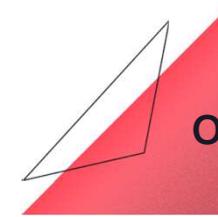
THE END ITSELF

**3.3 Developing our
ability to communicate
openly and with loving
kindness.**



INTERPRETATION

In Unitarian Universalist community, we are bound together by covenant: a living, breathing commitment to be in relationship with each other. Relationships depend on and deepen through communication, and our ability to communicate well is not innate but learned. Similarly, healthy communication is not done alone but rather cultivated and supported by a community of accountability. Conversations, especially when in conflict, involving both candor and care affirm the worth of all parties involved and open the possibility of deepening and transforming relationships. Communicating openly and with loving kindness requires, among other things, vulnerability, self-awareness, and attention to the ways power and privilege operate in our relationships. These are traits that grow with practice.



OR, IN BRIEF:

Open, loving communication is a core skill that we must develop as part of collective and individual spiritual growth.

DIRECT INSPECTION BY THE BOT CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1-7, how true is this of First Unitarian now?

**Trustees can testify to a personal
experience at church of communicating
openly and with loving kindness within
the last year.**

Percentage of teams, groups, and committees who have a covenant

NOT QUITE

We have not yet collected this information.

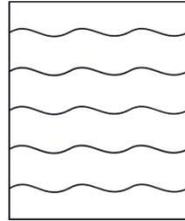
BUT

This metric might be premature.

We have focused on building skills for covenanting.

THE END ITSELF

3.4 Strengthening our spiritual connections within our own community and beyond.



INTERPRETATION

The work of building spiritual connection is ongoing, and connections are strengthened through both repetition and diversity. Connections across generations, interest groups, and tenure within our congregation are encouraged alongside long term spiritual connections. Just as individual spiritual growth is aided by the company of others here in the congregation, our church's spiritual development and wholeness are strengthened by connections with other communities. We long for and work towards accountable relationships with other Unitarian Universalist congregations, the Unitarian Universalist Association, Black Lives of UU, DRUUMM, and other UU organizations; local religious and interreligious organizations; the broader Rochester community; the land and its original inhabitants; and the Earth. Each of these communities is a teacher and potential partner to us. Our connections with them encourage us to grow and develop as individuals and as an institution, carrying the risk and promise of transformation. Ministries and programming are developed and sustained with the goal of strengthening our spiritual connections, unveiling the ties that bind each to all.



OR, IN BRIEF:

Connect with the UUA, UU organizations, other UU congregations, and other religious communities.

DIRECT INSPECTION BY THE

CONGREGATIONAL ^{ROT} SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1-7, how true is this of First Unitarian now?

Connections, institutionally or through individuals to other UU communities. ✓

Senior leaders of the church, including senior staff members and trustees, know how to connect with people in similar roles at other UU churches. ✓



WITNESS TO WHAT EMERGED / WORKED

- Increased Wellspring participation
- High level of participation in Beloved Conversation
- Worked to incorporate embodied practices into adult worship
- Made space for grief and lament
- Great turnout for Welcoming Congregation events
- Structural support for Soul Matters including great packet team



CHALLENGES

- Ministerial/staff turnover
- Zoom fatigue
- Soul Matter stagnation
- Everything is new in COVID context
- Difficult to measure soul work

TENSIONS/QUESTIONS/CHOICES



Communication, Anti-racism, & Trauma-informed spiritual work are our priorities, but we're struggling.

How do we bring this to our work together and the trustees' own spiritual lives and families?



