

UUFCM Board of Trustees Retreat  
August 29, 2015 at 9:00 am.

**UUFCM Board Covenant:**

As members of the UUFCM Board of Trustees:

We covenant to keep the best interests of the congregation at heart and to carry out the trust placed in us as guardians of the Mission and the Principles and as stewards of the resources of our church. We commit to:

- Be present, prepared, prompt, and participate.
- Communicate respectfully; all will be heard and we will seek consensus.
- Use discretion in communications beyond the Board.
- Support the decisions and policies of the Board.

**UUFCM Mission Statement:** To be a religious community guided by love transforming our lives and our world.

**Present:** Laura McBride, Vicki Chessin, Dave Macleod, Annette Pratt, Carol Rard, and Dawn Daniels

**Absent:** Scott Daigle and Capalene Howse

1. Chalice lighted: Dawn provided a Reading by Anonymous to begin at 9:20 AM
2. Welcome and check in with all and a “Welcome” to new member Carol Rard
3. Covenant Draft: covenanting is often included within the process of defining a mission, but we did not do that.

Can use a similar process to the one we used to define our Mission in the last year, although we should be able to abbreviate the process given the ground covered last year:

Handout of our current Covenant was reviewed/we need to design a process starting with a board subcommittee or task force and take it to the congregation for processing/discussion and adoption of a new Covenant.

4. Mission Deepening: Dawn read a quote from *The Almost Church Revitalized*, by Michael Durall. Bold “Leaders” create a bold congregation/conservative timid leaders produce little interest within the congregation.

Governance and Ministry by Hotchkiss says a retreat should be dedicated full-time to visioning – not combined with a business meeting. – (a thought for our next retreat)

Our new mission statement contains both Mission and Vision;

We need to address our mission and vision as it relates to three areas: Consideration “Within” our individual selves: our spiritual transformation, “Among” ourselves within our church community and “Beyond” ourselves and the church as we affect “transformation” outside our walls in the world. – We reviewed documents from members of our Transition Team of 2015 in which they individually explored their ideas regarding “deepening” the definition of our Mission Statement.

Next meeting: Create our own document re deepening the definition of the Mission Statement (or in a subcommittee of the Board?) to put before the congregation for discussion and approval. (Their “Draft B” had contained suggested activities)

5. Visioning: Hotchkiss suggests a congregations leaders and minister vision annually, asking in what new and different ways we will transform lives in the next 1-3 years. Then pick 1-3

priorities creating a “short list” of priorities

We performed an exercise where each of us wrote and shared our answers to questions...

First: Who are we? What are we called to be? And who is our neighbor?

Second: Balcony work ...

Exercise: we each wrote a brief answer about what we saw as goals for us to accomplish this year: 1) Within, 2) Among and 3) Beyond ourselves. We shared those thoughts.

**A:** Will be organized, open to new ideas and changes and ready for challenges. She will help the congregation understand “Black Lives Matter” movement.

**B:** Broaden the church to disenfranchised groups. (Transgender, young people, others)

Personal: ready to be president again, because the first she fully understood what it means to be president was in February and now feels she has more to do. She wants to encourage deepening of our Mission statement and take a leadership role in the Congregational Life Ministry as it is redefined and organized this year: Articulate its purposes and solidify the staffing.

**C:** Broaden her personal scope of consciousness – being open to words (sermons) and suggested readings. Awaken congregation to needs within UU Church and within community. Learn & teach meditation. Personally also wishes to grow closer to other individuals. Learn to meditate. Get more involved with the needy of the community.

**D:** wondered about adult RE needs; Focus on something to read and discuss. Thinks so or that should include our own faith traditions. Things seem vague and need to be more focused. Thinks it would help to find a collective service project. Get more people to assume responsibility in support of the church. What does it mean to support, both financially and in terms of participation. When we call a congregational life meeting it needs to be clear that it is asking for very few minutes (10 minutes?) and that it serves an important way for the leadership to communicate with the congregation. (Discussion followed that the purpose is Board and other Leadership means to communicate and increase transparency with the congregation and is very important for people to attend – may move right into the meeting in the sanctuary before people are excused to coffee)

**E:** Want to help the congregation move quickly through refining its understanding of “covenant” and creation of a more effective covenant that can be used in our gatherings. Help the congregation join effectively with other people of faith to use religion to promote the collective good positively affecting the coming elections. We need to learn about and act with the Black Lives Matter. Movement as it reflects racial justice flowing into Voter Rights and Immigration and prison reform. Support the environment with local water issues as a “bell ringer” issue as it comes to a head.

**F:** Intends to help the congregation grow in its understanding of what it means to be UU and a member of this church. Help us find our voices of faith and be able to articulate that with others and use it to act in the world.

Questions 3: We shared is our Vision for the Fellowship:

**A:** Get and deserve a Black Lives Matter banner; Adult RE class: Do the work with the congregation to understand the BLM banner/movement.

**B:** deepening understand of our mission. We promote greater understanding of our organization with transparency by which she specifically want to get the handbook more available and in use as a living document to all the team leaders and on the

website.

**C:** We need to reach out to others depending on their needs. Build bridges with other groups outside our congregation; to join others to have a political, but nonpartisan effect. Find an international cause to support to keep our vision and impact beyond our borders

**D:** We can sponsor community forums - investigate current problems that may come up. Be a center where people in the larger community can meet –Invite people with expertise to address issues. Perhaps we should make a commitment to do the every 3-4 months and more spontaneously if events dictate the need.

**E:** learn about Black Lives Matter in adult RE beginning with a common read of “Just Mercy” and forums to discuss it. This dovetails with Voting Rights and moves into ways we can be with other religious communities taking action and having our voice heard in society.

**\*\*Fellowship life meeting:** explain purpose and give the 10 minutes.

**6. Focus and Goals:** Dawn sees a necessary focus for UUFCM to be the evolution into a full Small Group Ministry program: Each SGM has a covenant and format for meetings – an example is a program called “Soul to Soul and Heart to Heart” which provides 14 themed monthly meetings. Can do one or two themes per meeting.

Alternatively one can have a series of book discussions about difficult to talk about issues like racial justice using a “common read.” There may be more than one group meeting at a time in order to keep the groups small enough to promote full participation.(6-8 people is ideal) Our initial effort to promote this could work around “Just Mercy” as a common read with questions available from UUA in October. This will deepen our spirituality and naturally developing into small group ministry. Dawn has many resources for Small Group Ministry both for planning and sources for use within the groups.

**7. Adult RE = Life Span Learning:** Common Book Read our work together as a community – transforming ourselves. How to be a good ally– how to be a good anti-racist. Concerted yearlong effort evolving into small group ministry. And continued common book read.

- 1) “Just Mercy” by Ethan Stephenson
- 2) “The Selma Awakening” by Mark D. Morrison-Reed (UU historical role within the racial movement)
- 3) “The New Jim Crow” by Michelle Alexander
- 4) “Not For Ourselves Alone” by TA-Nehisis Coates or “Toward Collective Liberation” by Chris Crass (anti-racism writer)
- 5) “A Hidden Wholeness” by Parker J Palmer leads into an understanding of Small Covenant Groups by fall 2016

**\*\*Ask Norma Bailey and Susan Powers to put together a “common reading” list for our youth**

**\*\*Consider a field trip at some point this fall or winter to the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia in Big Rapids.**

**\*\*\*Consider scheduling a group opportunity to meet and discuss when the UUFCM handbook**

This year long focus for the Adult RE on racial justice will allow us all to explore racism at many levels, understand more fully the Black Lives Matters movement as well as many issues

underpinning our choices in the coming elections including Voter's Rights, Freedom of the Press, Immigration issues, Capital punishment and prison reform which will be impacted by the elections and the rhetoric around them.

This year long focus for the Adult RE on racial justice introduces the experience of small group discussion that will evolve into a small group ministry.

This year long focus for the Adult RE will introduce the idea of a "common read" building a common experience that will be promoted in years to come for all – not just those who chose to join a Small Group Ministry.

### **The Worship Team**

-Will plan and introduce the "common read" –arranging meetings for group discussions, leaders and templates for processing the "Common Read." Several opportunities for congregants to meet will be provided for each book – perhaps two or more Sundays after church and at least one weekday evening for groups of 6-8 people per discussion section.

-will establish our first Small Group Ministries within one year. SGM will begin each meeting with a definition and covenant.

### **7. Dawn's goals** for the spiritual growth of the congregation this year:

- 1) Deepen ones understanding and articulation of being a member and UU exploring this through:
  - A) Sermons.
  - B) Promote a "Common Read" as part of developing intentional Adult RE.
  - C) Path to membership will include two different kinds of sessions:
    - 1) Introduction to UU-ism – open to anyone
    - 2) Path to membership (this congregation's history and expectations of a member)
    - 3) Both sessions will be held quarterly with a new Member-in-Gathering to follow.
- 2) Increased transparency and better communications. Policy and new options for communications: inserts, Social Media including Emails, Newsletters, Facebook, Fellowship Life Meetings, Web, bulletin boards and other ideas will be included in the policy and procedures to be implemented
- 3) Access of handbook and organizational chart to Team leaders, staff and anyone interested. (Plans to place it on the Website)  
Improve communication between teams/board to facilitate what and how we communicate and how things are scheduled.  
Discuss other examples to our current E-newsletter: Dawn will share Traverse City's newsletter as an example.

### **Other Suggestions:**

**\*\*Our directory could include a list of activities and contacts – consider a similar listing facing the street in the window by our door**

**\*\*Add "Meditation" to the Sangha Group meeting listing in printed material so people not familiar with the term Sangha can understand that this is a meditation group.**

**\*\*Make it standard practice to explain that Fellowship Life Meetings were created to provide a venue for the Board to communicate with the Congregation and allow discussion and generally last only 10 -15 minutes before coffee.**

**Lunch Break**

8. **Dawn's Contract and Goals:** Dawn offered a reading from "Living a Call: Ministers and Congregations Together" by Durall

Dawn shared a new awareness she has had in the last couple of months. The year has been good spiritually while there has been emotional struggle figuring out her new role and what it means to be a minister while at the same time serving as a minister. Referenced to her three pronged message yesterday via Email - She has learned that she has many gifts for ministry but feels primarily judged by sermon making... she has been trying to loosen the congregation's view of worship to evolve an appreciation of the integrated experience of worship wider than just a sermon. She is very good at discerning what makes the best material but has found sermon writing difficult with the standard she sets for herself = equal to the selected sermons published from the best of the best in CLF.. Now understands that she is not naturally a good "sermonizer." Understands sermonizing, but her own affinity is to explore her thoughts rather than format a solidified message in a cohesive way particularly in the short period of time between services. She is not predisposed to tell people what she thinks. Being a good minister is not the same as being a good preacher. She is a good minister but is not enjoying the pressure to preach. She feels charged with the quality of worship but this should not equate to formal sermons of her own every week or two.

Needs the board to discuss what we expect of her: would rather do an occasional original sermon, but prefers to reflect on other person's words in excellent selected sermons often. The time it takes to minister fully to the congregation in terms of leadership development, pastoral care, stewarding the staff and the teams and lay leaders as well as providing an interfaith voice in the community all are important. She feels strongly that with 8 weeks off a year she should be present leading worship all the remaining Sundays. On the other hand she does not want to be expected to preach each Sunday. Wants to be in chancel every Sunday, but many of those can utilize lay members using selected CLF sermons, leading ceremony and celebration.

The Board supports the concept of Dawn taking full responsibility for the quality of worship and sermons but recognizes that drawing from CLF and other sources for herself and lay leaders is valid. We do not have the expectation that there is to be a newly written sermon of her own more often than she feels she has a message to deliver.

The contract will be modified to reflect that she will be present for 44 Sundays a year for which she is responsible for the quality of worship. That will include various voices; her own and others, styles that are traditional and nontraditional, as she determines will serve the spiritual needs of the congregation.

This clarification of Dawn's role will be shared with the congregation at an upcoming Fellowship Life Meeting on Sunday September 20 following worship.

2:22 pm Business Board Meeting

- 1) Consent Agenda – Minutes of July 12, 2015 Board meeting – not available & Annual Meeting Minutes – not available yet.  
Minister's Report – see discussion above

RE Committee Report-and/or DRE report – none available

Worship Team Report received

Treasurer Report – Received – August numbers at next meeting

Social Justice Coordinating Team Report – received

Congregational Life Team Report -No Report (meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday mornings). This reorganized team needs definition and organizational plan clarified.

9. Discussion Agenda:

New business:

1. Assign team liaisons - Worship Team – Chessin/Dawn. RE Team-meets Monday nights – Scott. Congregational Life including Social Justice – Capalene (and possibly Carol)
  2. Board Meetings will continue to be 6:30 pm the second Sunday of each Month except May when it will be the first Sunday (May 3, 2016) and the third in May Sunday will be the Annual Meeting (May 17, 2016) immediately after worship.
  3. New Handbooks were passed out and changes reviewed by Laura - purple folders with colored sections – We walked through the contents and highlighted areas that need to be completed.
  4. UUFCM Organizational Map was discussed - Handout of a sample or a Board Governance Organizational Chart from “Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership by Hotchkiss.
  5. Discussion/Possible Vote on Dawn’s Contract - tabled until September meeting to allow time to make changes consistent with the discussion above regarding to our expectations.
  6. Contracts are ready to be signed with the Adm. Assistant and DRE. David has copies with minor changes.
5. Old Business:
- Update Website – Deferred to September Meeting - Email sent about 7/12/16 by Laura and Capalene to each Board member assigning responsibilities for web updating. Discussion about when minutes of each Board Meeting are to be posted to the Website concluded it should be after they are approved at the next Board Meeting.
6. Updates/ Announcements:
1. Board tickler for August: Dave has previously reported to Gisela the names of those members who did not make a donation of record for the last fiscal year. Dave will also send to Laura.  
Norma is to get a list of the Hispanic events planned at CMU for September 2015.  
**Church calendar** scheduling to be finalized: set Harvest Feast Date/November 22, 2016 and Laura will book the annex.  
Water Ceremony will be first Sunday after Labor Day.  
Laura will have church maintenance schedule servicing.  
CMU calendar of events –Capalene and Norma will communicate special events to the Adm Assistant.
  2. Fellowship Life Meetings will continue to be the Sunday following monthly Board Meetings starting September 20<sup>th</sup>. – Topic for September will be a discussion of the Board and Dawn’s understanding of her responsibilities for the coming two year contract.

Adjourned at 3:44 pm

Next Month meeting is Sunday, September 13, 2015 at UU Center at 6:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by Vick Chessin, secretary.