

Minutes
Board of Trustees: April 19, 2023
First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Rob Schwartz, President (2024); Amy DeChicchis (2024); Kate Snow, Secretary (2023); Raeann Olander (2025); Nicholas Izzo (2025); Heather Masterson (2023); Bob Mitchell (2024); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2023); Christine Milcarek (2025)

Absent Members: none

Ex Officio Member: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Mary Denison

Call to Order (Rob) (7:00)

1. **Opening Words (Kate Snow)** Martha Graham's advice to Agnes De Mille to be her true self in the world ; Howard Thurman's advice to be your alive self in the world.
2. **Welcoming Guests (Rob)**
3. **Announcements (Raeann)**
 - a. The next regularly-scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, May 17, 2023.
 - b. Opening Words for May: Any DeChicchis
 - c. Committee Reports due in May: Stewardship, Building, Investment
4. **Consent Agenda (Rob) (Documents)**
 - a. March 15, 2023 Board meeting minutes. Motion to approve as amended by Kate. Second by Chris. Approved unanimously.
 - b. Minister's Report (see document).
 - c. LRED Report (see document).
 - d. Committee Reports: Finance, Nominating, Personnel, Program Endowments, VIM
 - e. April Finance Committee Report.
 - f. Board 2022-2023 Priorities (review)
5. Review the recommended organization of program (non-Board) committees (Rob, Nick, Rev. Kate) (document) Kyle: Who has the authority to create this Program Council and how do we go about doing it? Rev Kate suggests that the Minister and Board should work together to set this structure up. Kyle has offered to work with Rev. Kate. The plan is for a launch in the Fall. This organization framework is expected to be presented at the next Board meeting.
6. COSM Report on the Minister (Committee on Shared Ministry). (Mary Denison, Rev. Kate). (7:46) (document) They surveyed a good mix of church members to complete the assessment. The next question is what to do with this information. Kyle would like more clarity/transparency and detail in how the interviewee selection took place, and he believes this information should be included in the methodology. This will give the Board more data on how to pursue this in the future. Bob: He remembers that this was to be

shared in a general way with the congregation. Mary indicated that she plans a very general statement, preserving confidentiality. Nick: Doesn't see a need to know specifically who was surveyed, especially if that wasn't presented to them initially. Kyle: There is a sense of the Board to include in the report a little more detail on the process. The Board can then evaluate this process at the retreat for future assessments. Rob: Thanks to you and the team, Mary. Phenomenal work, and it's great that we have this process and are doing it. Mary: Kudos to Rev. Kate for encouraging this to happen.

7. Vote: Updated Marion's Purse Policy (Kyle, Rev. Kate). (document)
 - a. The first thing is to change the name to "discretionary," rather than "benevolent." She would also like two people who can be signatories. Motion by Kyle. Seconded by Nick. Motion carried unanimously.
8. Vote: Revised COVID Policy (Rev. Kate) (document)
 - a. The bottom line is to go to "mask optional, but highly recommended" with other changes flowing from that, including to delete any language about vaccination. The request is to go into force immediately. The windows are open and the fans are on, so this should not be a problem with having to wait for the new air filters. Bob: I would like a survey at some time to see how people feel about this. Rob: Maybe we could have a survey including how else they can be served, etc. Rev. Kate: We need to convey what is intended to be done with the survey data. Motion by Kyle to adopt proposed changes. Seconded by Kate. Motion carried unanimously.
9. Vote: Update on Air Filters (Bob) (documents)
 - a. The cost of the six total units and installation still fall within the \$17,000 approved by the Board. At that time, the Board approved only the five units for the Sanctuary. Motion to add the installation of the Undercroft (6th) filter to the previous motion, by Kyle. Second by Nick. Motion carried unanimously.
10. Board and Board Activities Visibility (Nick) (document)
 - a. Visibility in the newsletter: Some suggestions were to have two newsletters to handle a what has become a lot of information to pass on to the congregation, or one newsletter dedicated to the Board monthly. There were many more ideas floated.
11. Discuss Draft Strategic Plan (Bob, Kyle) (document) (8:39)
 - a. A goal is to make the plan much shorter and to the point. Much is based on the most recent VIM survey, and there will be more to come. About 20% of the congregation participated in the survey, in which there were two significant results from the survey. Current level of interest in our priorities from most recent Strategic Plan, including 1) a strong sense of belonging and 2) retaining community partnerships. There is still a discernment process that needs to occur. The goal is to make the plan shorter and to the point, making sure it reflects the congregation's actual opinion. We might not be able to present a plan to the congregation in May.
12. Discuss Draft Board Self-Evaluation for May (Kyle, Bob, Rev. Kate) (document) (8:51)
 - a. They discussed who might present the assessment. COSM was not supportive of their doing it, because they are a Board committee, so it might be a conflict of interest, so we are not going to ask them to do it. Rev. Kate has reached to the UUA, and they might be able to administer a Board assessment. Since this is not

something that has been done widely by many congregations, so it might be something for us to create that other boards could use. The assessment might be every other year. We might be looking at getting a Board assessment for next year. Instead we might be looking at doing a self-assessment, doing it annually. A Board self-assessment is posted, maybe to be filled out next month. There are two parts, an individual self-assessment, and one with individuals assessing the Board. They would like comments on the assessment tool within a week.

13. Set up annual Meeting planning session (Kate Snow) (9:01)

- a. There is a lot of preparation that needs to be done in order to pull this together. We could consider a potluck followed by a congregational meeting in the evening on a Sunday, as suggested by Rev. Kate, versus bringing food for a meeting at 12:45.

14. Move to Executive session:

15. Approval of GA delegates: Eleanor Mayfield, Alice Carnes, Ebe Emmons were approved as delegates, with Denice Galpern as an alternate.

16. **Adjourn** (Rob) (9:16)

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Board: May 17, 2023
Kate Snow, Secretary