

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana

Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World

Approved Board Minutes

October 20, 2021



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Board members attending: Stuart Yoak, Steven Gilbert, Abby Gitlitz, Julie Lawson, Rich Slabach

Board members absent: Drew Schrader, Jane McLeod

Ministers attending: Revs. Mary Ann Macklin and Emily Manvel Leite

Present by invitation: Ann LeDuc (via ZOOM)

Submitted by: Steven Gilbert, Secretary

Attached Documents:

- A. Senior Minister's Report
- B. Connections Coordinator's Report

A. Call to Order

President Stuart Yoak called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

B. Chalice Lighting

Stuart Yoak lit the candle.

C. Check-in

D. Approval of the Minutes

Steven Gilbert moved and Julie Lawson seconded approval of the September Board minutes. The motion carried without dissent.

E. Monitoring

A. Senior Minister

Rev. Macklin provided a report on her activities (Attachment A) and suggested the President Yoak write and send a letter of support to the Islamic Center in light of recent vandalism there. Stuart said he would do so.

B. Connections Coordinator

Connections Coordinator Ann LeDuc provided a report on current attendance at the church and on her own activities, shown in Attachment B.

F. Old Business

A. Update from NEST Committee

Jane Mcleod indicated through President Yoak that the situation at present continues the status quo.

B. Update on Security Cameras

President Yoak reported that all of the new outdoor cameras have been installed and are operating.

G. New Business

A. Update on Plans for the 2021 UUCB Bazaar

President Yoak reported for Ruellen Fessenbecker that all is well in preparations for the church bazaar in December.

B. Upcoming Congregational Meeting

President Yoak confirmed that the upcoming congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, December 12 at 4 p.m.

C. UU Transitions Interview with Rev. Pyle

President Yoak reported that the transitions interview with Rev. David Pyle will be held on October 30, and include himself, Julie Lawson, Drew Schrader, and Rev. Macklin.

H. Housekeeping

Status of future Readings and Board Participation in Services was reviewed.

I. Executive Session

The board entered executive session at 8:15 p.m.

J. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

ATTACHMENT A

Senior Minister Board Report Reverend Mary Ann Macklin October 20, 2021

COVID

Covid19 deaths in our country have now eclipsed 700,000. I write this as both a reality check for all of us but also for future ministers or archivists who might be perusing our reports to understand the pandemic responses or lack thereof during this time. As for our congregation, The NEST committee has tried to settle into some type of stability of policies for the time being. Covid numbers are currently dropping but the winter months are unknown. Certainly, we will adapt if the numbers appear to ease with time.

ORDINATION

Last Sunday I participated in the Ordination of Jamie Hinson Rieger of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis. I was invited to give the Charge to the Minister which I renamed the ReCharge to the Minister, figuring we all need a little recharging nowadays. With help from Media Tech Crew member, Hans Kelson, I was able to video my presentation and add other colleagues as part of the charge. A good time was had by all.

CHAPLAINCY

As a result of continuing education and chaplaincy training, I am adjusting some of my weekly meeting time with each staff member under my supervision which includes: Church Administrator, Minister of Story and Ritual, Media and Tech Crew Member, Connections Coordinator, Religious Education Interim Consultant, and Director of Music. The good news is that I am also becoming oriented to the new IU Health Hospital as well as the current one. The moving date will be December 5th. I will be doing my chaplaincy shift on Friday which is already, technically, a day off for me.

INVITATION

I received the following invitation last week and accepted a time to share my thoughts next Monday: *In partnership with the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County (CFBMC) we are working to capture the collective voice of the Bloomington and Monroe County communities. We are in the process of facilitating a series of community listening sessions, and you've been identified as an important voice and community stakeholder. In preparation for the Listening Sessions, I'd like to carve time to meet with you (virtually). My goal would be to pick your brain about the current social landscape of Bloomington and Monroe County and help set the stage for the collective community conversation.* If you, as a member of our Board of Directors, have any thoughts that might enrich my conversation, please let me know before next Monday.

PROGRESS

I am working with our CFO, Arzetta Hults-Losenksy, to create a budget, to be affirmed at the December meeting, for the fulfillment of our ministry until the of June 2022.

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

I would like the Board of Directors to consider a possible letter of gratitude to All Souls in Indianapolis for their hire of Elizabeth Valencia when we failed to do so this past summer.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I hope many of you heard my introduction to the land acknowledgment on Sunday. There are some critiques of the acknowledgment as becoming a weakened response to the lives---past, present and future---of indigenous people. I found the following article helpful.

[https://theconversation.com/land-acknowledgments-meant-to-honor-indigenous-people-too-often-do-the-opposite-erasing-american-indians-and-sanitizing-history-instead-163787?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest from The Conversation for October 11 2021 - 2084020574&utm_content=Latest from The Conversation for October 11 2021 - 2084020574+CID_7a565d17294b7da557789a1c0246007c&utm_source=campaign_monitor_us&utm_term=The problem with land acknowledgments](https://theconversation.com/land-acknowledgments-meant-to-honor-indigenous-people-too-often-do-the-opposite-erasing-american-indians-and-sanitizing-history-instead-163787?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest+from+The+Conversation+for+October+11+2021+-+2084020574&utm_content=Latest+from+The+Conversation+for+October+11+2021+-+2084020574+CID_7a565d17294b7da557789a1c0246007c&utm_source=campaign_monitor_us&utm_term=The+problem+with+land+acknowledgments)

However, an argument is also made for a Land Acknowledgment inclusion

<https://firstnations.indiana.edu/land-acknowledgement/index.html>

And so we hold these important voices within their paradoxical truths, continuing to learn the stories, both tragic and triumphant, along the way.

FISCAL HOPES FOR HEALTH

The two budgets that were presented at our June congregational meeting were: \$620,000 conservative and \$675,000 as a higher goal. Reverend Clements also had set an even higher goal of \$725,000. We currently fall approximately \$30,000 short of the minimum \$620,000, thus I sent this letter out on October 11th.

Autumnal Greetings,

This letter is going out to our Top Fifty active donors regarding our 2021-2022 pledge drive. As I reviewed our current pledge totals in September, it became evident that we had not met our minimum budget amount of \$620,000 for this year's pledges; a maximum amount was set at \$725,000. As you know, we have had ongoing change over the past few months which has called upon us---staff, leaders, members and friends to respond creatively, safely and enthusiastically to this change. I have been relieved to see the progress we are making in terms of reconnections within our congregation through music, religious education, volunteer activities, and simply the harvest of care and love that is flourishing this autumn.

I recently told our Board of Directors that this year my top goal is making sure that our congregation is fiscally healthy by June of 2022. Our current pledge total for 2021-2022 is: Again, our minimum amount for this year's budget is \$620,000.

I write to ask you to help us set a path forward to meet this amount. In good faith with this request, Deborah and I are increasing our pledge for 2021-2022 by \$1,000. Please join us. An overall invitation, for everyone, will go out in this week's Friday Update.

We will have some of our sunshine cookies, from our pledge drive, in our UUCB deep freeze. I can assure that a little added warmth and they are still delicious, and if you'd like some sunshine cookies delivered to your home, let us know. I actually love getting out and about as do others. Also if you'd like a personal sit-down time with me, please do not hesitate to ask.

A big request is that you respond to this letter quickly. We hope to have all new pledge increases in within 11 days, October 22nd, so we can have a better idea of where we are as we enter the month of November. Also, 11 and 22 are cool numbers.

In gratitude, Mary Ann

I also placed an announcement and column in our Friday Update and Prologue to encourage all folks, who can afford to do so, to increase their pledge.

ISLAMIC CENTER OF BLOOMINGTON

I also wanted to include this message for this report:

Message from Reverend Macklin

I learned yesterday that the Islamic Center of Bloomington had been vandalized early Monday morning around 1:30am. The masjid yard, where I once threw a football with some youth, was vandalized. The fence and HVAC systems were damaged as well as some picnic tables and toys. The leaders of the Islamic Center have contacted the police and FBI and they are reaching out to community contacts throughout Bloomington.

Upon hearing the news, I stopped by the Islamic Center to offer solidarity with our sisters and brothers there. As I greeted some of the members who were standing outside, I was immediately recognized as a result of our congregation's annual gathering with the members of the Islamic Center for our Ramadan Dinners. With that established friendship of trust, they invited me to witness the damage done. As we walked together, I expressed, on behalf of UUCB, our deep sorrow for this violence directed at their congregation. I also expressed our solidarity as people of faith and love--- to let them know that they are not alone. Blessings of healing and protection upon The Islamic Center of Bloomington.

Also much gratitude to the friends and members of this congregation ,who continually nurture our friendship with our Muslim sisters and brothers, locally and globally.

Peace and Love, Mary Ann

LASTLY, I want to express my gratitude to Reverend Breeden who has helped me throughout the month of October when I was not able to complete all of the ministerial tasks before me. Also, thank you to our Core Staff as well as other staff and lay leaders. There seems to be a steady breeze in our sails.

Peace, Mary Ann

ATTACHMENT B
Report to Board
from
Connections Coordinator
October 21, 2021

The numbers

Membership

September 2009: 415
September 2010: 453
September 2011: 473
September 2012: 480
September 2013: 510
September 2014: 510
September 2015: 483
September 2016: 482
September 2017: 516
September 2018: 547
September 2019: 547
September 2020: 561
September 2021: 567

New members

2012: 44 new members
2013: 32 new members
2014: 27 new members
2015: 24 new members
2016: 46 new members
2017: 55 new members
2018: 42 new members
2019: 29 new members
2020: 49 new members
2021 (so far): 9 new members

Member Losses

6 members moved away
4 members died

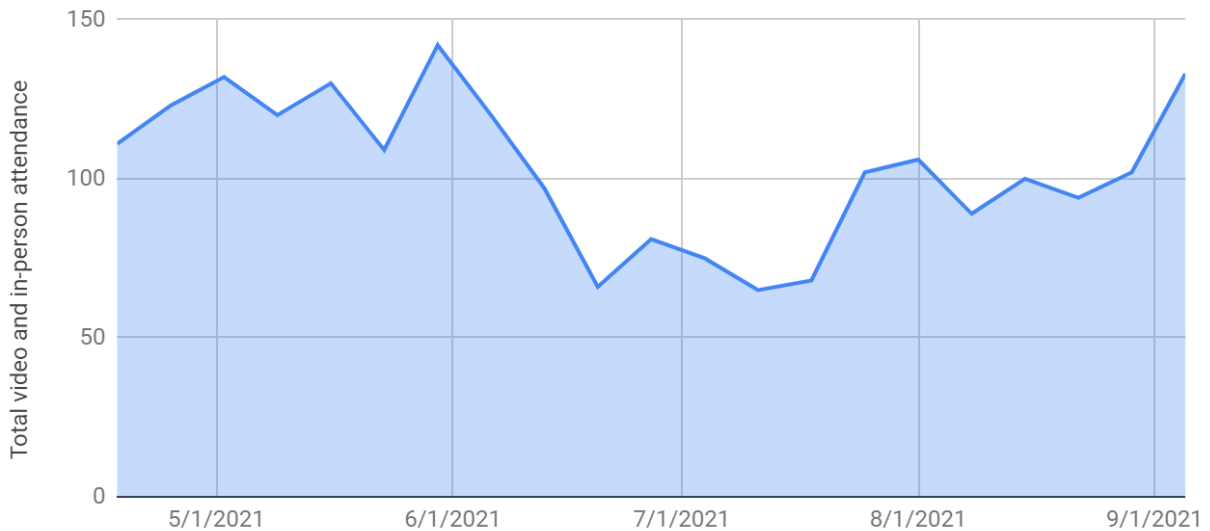
5 members left due to the following reasons: needing Christian church, no longer engaged or desiring engagement, split up with partner who attends, disagrees with our encouragement of vaccination.

Adult Worship Service Attendance

2021 Attendance Trend

April 18, 2021 (start of Vimeo platform) to October 5, 2021.

Total video and in-person attendance



Year	Video: average connections	In-person Adults: average attendance	Total connections + in-person attendance
2016	65	280	345
2017	102	284	386
2018	121	285	406
2019	90	252	342
2020	Pre-pandemic= 136 Connections during Pandemic = 413	292 Pre pandemic no in-person attendance during pandemic	total pre pandemic=428 total video <u>connections</u> during pandemic=413*
2021	Current 104*	34 (Sept and Oct)	138

***Note: In April 2021 we switched to the Vimeo platform, which provides us with very different viewer data.**

Guest Cards

Our Guest Card form is available online via our webpage here:

<http://www.uubloomington.org/live-stream/>.

The number of online guest cards completed March 15 through mid October 2020, compared to the same time period this year is down considerably. 61 guest cards last year, compared to 23 this year.

Summary of Engagement Data

In summary, it is clear that the decreased opportunities for outreach and engagement during the pandemic have had a noticeable impact on the number of newcomers to our congregation.

Due to the change in live streaming platform, it is not clear how much our actual Sunday Service attendance has decreased overall.

Recommendations:

In order to create and maintain strong connections to our church, I recommend we encourage our committees and task forces to resume meeting in our building, masked and socially distanced. This may require staff to be present during daytime hours and key cards to be issued for leaders of evening meetings.

Additionally, I suggest that we look for additional outreach opportunities, such as tabling at outdoor community events. We may also want to consider bolstering our social media presence by using a service that pushes our event information to multiple platforms.

Connections Activities

- Offering a variety of events and connections opportunities, when possible
- Leading "Team Tend," a small group in touch with our most vulnerable members
- Checking in by phone with our most vulnerable members
- Assisting with technical issues that arise with Zoom
- Learning how to use the new church database, Planning Center
- Setting up event registrations and various groups in the new database
- Zoom hosting for events when needed
- Offering New to UU and Exploring UU classes
- Creating Facebook events and posts for connections events
- Recruiting many volunteers for many activities. The largest number of volunteers are recruited for grounds work each year, about 40 people.
- Offering membership ceremonies
- Welcoming newcomers
- Organizing welcome emailing team
- Assisting new members in connecting to groups and activities at the church
- Connecting current members to the church
- Maintaining membership and attendance data

- Organizing Bloomington Pridefest and Spencer Pride booths
- Working with the ministers to create surveys and questionnaires

In addition, I serve the NEST committee, Greeters, Caring Committee, Leadership Cultivation Committee, Auction Committee, UU Online Book Club, and UU Hikers.

I am also a resource for the Young Adult Ministry Coordinator, Jason Michalek.