

# **TUUCW Board of Trustees**

## **Meeting Minutes - Final**

### **October 28, 2025**

**Date: October 28, 2025 Time: 7:09 p.m.–9:27 p.m.**

Location: Hybrid (in-person and remote)

Attendees: Ravi Sankar, Mark Corcoran, Jon Gage, Dayle Brownstein, Julyen Norman, Sari Bodi, Alexa Marshall (remote), Rev. Carlton E. Smith Absent: Felicia Keeton and Beth Cliff.

Observers: Nancy McKeever, Linda Hudson, Randy Burnham, Ken Vernon, Denise Carreau (remote), Wendy Levy (remote)

Opening Meeting called to order by Ravi Sankar at 7:09 p.m. Ravi lit the chalice and shared a reading. The Board checked in sharing what they were grateful for.

**Motion:** Approve minutes from 9/30/25. Moved by: Mark Corcoran Seconded by: Julyen Norman. The motion passed unanimously.

Observers were given an opportunity to speak, and Nancy McKeever shared that as a new member of the nominating committee, she wanted to get a sense of what the Board did.

#### **Art Show**

Linda Hudson described the Art Show fundraiser to the Board, and shared that the group hoped to earn \$5000, but also a goal was to excite community involvement. The expense budget is \$500. There was discussion whether fundraisers needed to have a sponsor on the Board. Linda pointed out that Julyen Norman is on the fundraising team [and in fact had shared information about the fundraiser at the September meeting during his check in]. She indicated there could be another fundraising event in the spring if needed.

Ravi Sankar said that the board should formalize the approval process for future events. He moved the **Motion:** “The board agrees that the Art Show is a good idea and that Linda Hudson should go ahead with it.” The motion was seconded by Dayle Brownstein and passed unanimously.

#### **MINISTER’S REPORT**

Reverend Carlton reflected on what it means to become a sustaining congregation, especially in a K shaped economy where a portion of the congregation is doing well and others are not. He suggested that the congregation might want to try to find a multi-year project that involved congregational-wide support, which is different from our current practice that involves many passionate people, each trying to recruit people for their own projects. An example of this kind of work is a housing complex for seniors built by a church in Arlington, VA, called Culpepper Gardens, a separate non-profit which is still on going. He recommended that the congregation join the organization CONNECT, which brings congregations together for social justice projects. The Board discussed briefly this kind of opportunity to coalesce around one big issue.

#### **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Jon Gage as Treasurer reported that Finance was requesting funds from the Endowment Committee to pay \$30,000 in operating support that has been approved in the budget. Ravi made the **Motion**: "The board is calling the Endowment committee to disperse \$30,000." The motion was seconded: by Mark Corcoran and passed unanimously. Jon noted that bills have been submitted for construction and approved.

Jon also reported that pledge numbers are up from \$175,000 revenues to \$225,000. He explained that we still need to push revenues past what we've done in previous years. Most of our cash is tied up in restricted funds, and Endowment is focused on long-term investments. Mark Corcoran added that currently we have bills coming to us that are not explicitly in the budget - e.g. the need of a replacement sanitizer in the kitchen - although there is a fund for emergencies. Some of the unforeseen needs may be covered by this fund, in other cases we might need support from Endowment and the Wertheim Fund.

It was suggested that the Finance Committee develop a process/proposal for funding maintenance and unexpected expenses beyond the regular budget to present to the Board. And the funding process could be discussed with the endowment committee at the annual meeting. It was shared that under Frank Hall (who retired in 2013), the minister used to just ask individual members of the congregation if they could fund something like the sanitizer.

## **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THREE 'CONFLICT RELATED' COMMITTEES:**

The Board took time to hear from three important teams: Safer Congregations, Right Relations, and the Committee on Ministries that could have some overlap - they all deal with conflict, internal relationships and our covenant . The Board had asked for clarity between them and was grateful for their coming to the meeting to share their points of view.

**Safer Congregations** Wendy Levy, as head of Safer Congregations, reported on the team: over the past few years it has been dealing with lots of issues, and new folks are getting up to speed. The team is appointed by the Minister and reports to him. It is currently made up of Wendy, Deb Garskof, Amy Feinman, Angi Haen, Maureen McBride, Miki Lasher, Lesli Cenci, Jay Lubin and Carlton Smith. Safer Congregation's responsibilities include mental health, physical emergencies, training, and personnel issues. She offered to research and identify training opportunities on conflict meditation for COM members should they want it.

**Right Relations** Randy Burnham reported that Right Relations, which reports to the Board, was created because conflict transformation was something Rev. Alan was trying to put in place when he arrived in the fall of 2023, and the Board agreed. Members of the team were appointed by the Minister and approved by the Board. In the past year the team has focused on developing a living covenant, so that issues don't escalate out of control. Ken Vernon reported that the Right Relations team has observed that the 2018 covenant is not being used as it could be and put forth that all three groups draw on the concept of covenant in their work.

**Committee on Ministries.** Denise Carreau shared information on COM on behalf of the team, which is headed this year by Shahan Islam and Melanie Allen. The Constitution has created COM, its members are elected by the congregation, and it reports to it. She explained that COM works with all the committees, and liaises with each one, making sure they stay on track against the mission of the congregation. COM focuses on the ministry, on conflict, our values, and education. One of its main

activities is to respond to lower-level conflict, developing a framework for quietly helping people in a supportive way.

After discussion amongst the three groups, (COM, Right Relations, Safer Congregations) and with the Board, Denise agreed to draft a framework document for the teams that outlines how the teams work together, defining roles, responsibilities, and processes for handling conflicts and disruptive behaviors. Wendy agreed to research and to continue to talk with Rev. Carlton, as well as find some information on conflict management within institutions.

## **LINKAGE**

Dayle reported that while Linkage is ready and available to conduct formal conversations about our ends, how we're doing against them, and how we as a congregation think about our spiritual health, it is in a bit of a holding pattern at the moment given that so much is going on, especially, the Search team's work. The Linkage work that was approved and scheduled for October was put on hold given the Search activities. Board members agreed that maybe this was something to return to a little later, perhaps picking up on a variation of Bagels with the Board. Dayle agreed to come up with a proposal for the Board to consider on how to handle Linkage in the future.

## **WEBSITE**

Rev. Carlton reported that he has seen the interim version that the internal team is currently working on. He believes it to be a vast improvement than what is currently in place: more user-friendly, simple, more dropdown pages and open spaces, with "dead" pages removed. The timeline for completion remains uncertain. He recommends that the new minister see this updated website and to be sure it's consistent with their vision.

## **FUNDRAISING**

The board discussed historical patterns of annual pledge drives, holiday appeals, and special events like the Holiday Boutique, with plans to revive these activities and potentially explore new revenue streams through a consultant who is currently being identified. Rev. Carlton and Brian Lasher are discussing developmental work on stewardship and fundraising with the consultant when they're hired. There was more discussion on historical practices and how it was handled in the past. It was noted that currently we do not have a stewardship team in place, which needs to be addressed soon.

## **CLOSING**

Julyen Norman, the process observer, reported he felt things went well: folks were open to discussion, and we learned a lot from the guests. Jon Gage read a poem for the closing.

The meeting ended at 9:27, with the next meeting on Tuesday, November 18.