

UUCSV Council on Committees (CoC)
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Shenandoah Valley
Summary of Meeting
Wednesday, December 10, 2014
6:35 pm – 7:55 pm
Lynnette Embree, UUCSV Board, presiding

Lynnette Embree began the meeting by asking Willy Hayes to read the UUCSV Promises and with a brief check in by the attendees.

Attendees; Lynnette Embree, Owen Lowe, Cory Ness, Mary Haskins, Bob Haskins, Robert Hurt, Mark Lore, Jeph Embree, Teri Merrill, Willy Hayes, Deirdre Cochran, Maria Francis, Gail Vasta, Monica Singh-Smith, Kelsey Wilkes, Joe Farruggia and Dottie Cox.

Board Members Attending: Robert Hurt, Lynnette Embree and Owen Lowe.

Willy Hayes moved and Teri Merrill seconded that the November 2014 CoC meeting minutes be approved. The motion carried.

UUCSV Minister - Paul Britner

No report.

Director of Religious Education – Cory Ness

Cory's written report had been circulated before the meeting. Cory reminded the CoC of the upcoming family worship service. She is also working with volunteers to develop the adult education offerings for the coming year. Cory has also met with the Stephens City police chief to learn where the UUCSV can help meet the local community's needs.

Board President – Robert Hurt

Robert has written a letter to the congregation describing our upcoming transition. He explained that we will proceed through the transition step-by-step with UUA guidance. A first step will be a facilitated town meeting on January 4, 2015 to help us move forward.

UUCSV Committees and Task Forces

Finance Committee – Teri Merrill and Willy Hayes

The committee is at work on gathering budget numbers for next year. The Personnel Committee will work with staff to establish their budget needs. All committees are encouraged to provide their budget needs as soon as possible.

Social Action and Justice Committee - Kelsey Wilkes

SA&J will lead the Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI) on escalating inequality by pulling together a study group in January. The group will study what we can do locally. Pride week will be June 7, 2015 through June 14, 2015. Pride Sunday will be June 14, 2015. The committee has started planning and is involving our youth. UUSC is participating in the "Black Lives Matter" issue and has asked for support from local congregations. A start would be a letter to our congregation to be posted on our web site. Mark Lore noted that the Highland Pantry needs gift donations and will be collecting gifts next Saturday.

Worship Committee – Joe Farruggia

Joe Farruggia has provided a detailed written report that recaps the last year. The committee needs guidance on how to proceed in February.

Committee on Ministry – Gail Vasta

A memorandum of understanding defining the terms of Paul's separation is nearly complete. The committee continues to support the minister, to provide a venue for congregants to express their views, and to monitor the health of the congregation. On the transition, the committee is waiting to learn how it can support the new arrangements. The committee is trying to calm troubled congregants who are out of right relations and is making contacts one-on-one to provide available facts. The COM will continue to make itself available after church each Sunday through January 4, 2015.

Green Sanctuary Task Force – Deirdre Cochran

Deirdre asked for feedback from committees on the previously- proposed adopt-a-highway initiative. Meeting attendees expressed enthusiasm.

Nominating Committee – Deirdre Cochran

The nominating committee continues to solicit candidates for church leadership. Deirdre asked all committee chairs to identify people with leadership potential and interest.

Caring Committee – Dottie Cox

Two big birthdays are coming up. Cards would be very much appreciated. Naomi Pidgeon is turning 95 and Christiana Von Hout is turning 80.

Membership Committee – Mary Haskins

Mary is coming up to speed as the new committee chair. The next big task for the committee is to verify the membership data base to establish UUA and JPD numbers for the next fiscal year.

Communications Committee – Bob Haskins

The committee is developing a brochure for publicizing events. A large screen TV has been installed in the library for use as a teaching aid and for telecommunications. A communications kiosk for the narthex is coming soon. Claire Haskins is the new “Connections” editor.

Stewardship Committee – Mark Lore

This year’s pledge campaign will kick off on February 15, 2015. The committee will meet January 14, 2015 to continue planning the campaign. The committee will work with the Membership Committee to clean up the membership list before February 15. The committee is also working on Bill Pay and other electronic means to facilitate pledge payments.

Personnel Committee - Maria Francis and Monica Singh-Smith

The committee is working to update the personnel handbook by June 2015. The committee is actively supporting our paid staff.

Building Committee – Jeph Embree

Jeph reported progress on several small building maintenance and upgrade tasks. He also reported receiving a letter from Potomac Edison about clearing and trimming trees. Those present urged caution about use of herbicides and massive clearing and trimming.

Other Information:

A motion to adjourn was made by Willy Hayes and seconded by Teri Merrill. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Summary submitted by Owen Lowe.

Report to the UUCSV Board - December 2014

Correna M. Ness, Director of Religious Education

Professional Development

- Attending the Word Press class

Administration

- Attended staff meetings

Adult Education (AE)

- I am pleased to announce that Katie Mack has offered to take on the role of the Adult Education Chair.
- Preparing for a variety of Adult Ed programs for the Winter/Spring time period.
- Check in regularly with our leaders of our AE offerings offering support whenever needed.

Children & Youth Religious Education (C&YRE)

- Met with the C&YRE Committee.
- Review Classroom Notebooks each week.
- Send out emails updating our families as to our children and youth experiences in their classes.
- Preparing "Miss You" postcards for those we haven't seen for a while.
- We have been unable to obtain a Childcare Provider so now we are looking for five childcare volunteers to volunteer once a month in our nursery until we are able to find a permanent solution. Please let me know if you or if you know of anyone who may be interested.
- Update C&YRE registrations.
- Corresponding with teachers and YG Advisors.

Worship

- Recruit volunteers for the Message of All Ages or I prepare to lead our Message of All Ages.
Prepared for our Children's Worship & Group Activity on November 30. Our theme was our Seven Principles and the Take Home message was "Everybody Is Important, UU's have 7 Principles, and How to put our Principles into action" *Children's Worship & Group Activity are planned on low attendance Sunday's and so that our teachers can have a Sunday "off."*
- Prepared with Paul and Jennifer our Family Worship Service on Gratitude.
- Collaborating with Jennifer, the "December Spirits" Family Worship Service that is scheduled to take place on Saturday, December 20th at 5 p.m.

Connecting with UUCSV Members & Friends & the Wider Community

- Continue to connect with members and friends....
- Met with the Stephens City Police Department – C.E. Bockey, Jr., Chief and Officer S.G. Baber to introduce myself and to inquire as to any needs that the community may need from our church. They invited me to attend the next Council meeting so that I can meet others in the community.

Worship Committee Report to Council on Committees 2014 Activities

The Worship Committee began 2014 with three voting members (Joe Farruggia, Miki Leeper and Kathy Crettier) and 3 non-voting ex-officio members (Rev. Paul Britner, minister; Mariana Mihai-Zoeter, music director; Mary Dale Jackson, board liaison).

At the quarterly meeting in March, only Joe Farruggia, Rev. Paul and Miki Leeper were in attendance. Kathy Crettier had resigned from the committee for personal reasons, and Mary Dale Jackson and Mariana Mihai-Zoeter were unable to attend. The main business discussed at that time was whether to update the charter to add the Director of Religious Education as an ex-officio member. That was approved by the only 2 voting members on the committee, and the revised charter was submitted to the Council on Committees in April and approved by the board in May.

Also in May, the chairs of the Council on Committees and Board of Directors both asked me if I would be willing to stay on as WC chair for at least one more year to try to recruit new members and strengthen the committee. I agreed to do that, and actively and aggressively recruited new members by establishing a set of criteria designed to reflect a profile of the people who might be best suited for the worship committee. These criteria included:

1. **Age** – For at least the previous 4 years, the members of the WC have been over the age of 50, and many over the age of 60. With the exception of Joe Farruggia and Kathy Crettier, nearly all of these committee members had been members of the UUSCV for at least 10 years or more. Younger adults and youth, as well as newer members, were not represented. The new criteria included targeting younger adults (21-45), newer members and youth. Result: 2 younger adult members (Amy Thomas and Sarah Frey), one of whom is also a new member, and two Youth members (Zoe Thomas and Alfio Vasta). Another young adult member was recruited, but had to drop off the committee due to school (LFCC) and work commitments.

2. **Committee Liaisons and other Church Commitments** – Over the past few years some unfortunate miscommunications have occurred between the Worship Committee and other committees in the church, most notably Social Action and Religious Education, in regard to special services. It was for this reason that the DRE (or a designated representative of the RE program) was added to the membership, and a liaison from SAJ was also actively sought. Lana Hurt is now the liaison between the SAJ and WC, with voting privileges as a member of WC. In addition, Amy Thomas is involved in Religious Education, primarily working with the Youth. Another new member, Willy Hayes, is co-chair of the Finance Committee, and also a member of the choir. New member Sarah Frey also serves on the Communications Committee. All of these committees and groups directly interact with the WC in some capacity to provide services to the church, and having members of those committees and groups serving as active members of the WC can, I believe, help improve the flow of communication as well as improve the quality of Worship Services in general.

3. **Perspective** – This is the most difficult of the criteria, and I will be the first to admit it's quite subjective, based purely on how well I understand the points of view of the committee's members. But it's also based partly upon the survey that was developed during the ministerial search process to identify the different religious perspectives that can be found among the membership of UUSCV in general. For ex-

ample, although I classify myself as an atheist, my personal spiritual beliefs tend to favor the more radical views of traditional Unitarianism and Universalism, which were on the far left wing of Christianity, and so I also identify myself as a Christian. At least two members have a primarily Jewish perspective. One identifies as an agnostic/humanist. Another has a more open-ended millennial spiritual outlook, while others lean more toward either secular humanism or Christian humanism. These different perspectives are helpful in ensuring that the Worship Services that are developed and implemented represent the broader perspectives of the congregation as a whole.

In June, Rev. Paul Britner and I encouraged everyone in the congregation to submit suggestions for sermon topics and themes for the 2014-15 church year. Index cards were passed out at each worship service in June, with approximately 50 being returned. These cards were separated into several broad categories by me, and then resorted by Rev. Paul into a written list for use in planning the worship services for the entire year.

In July, the first planning retreat for the new committee was held at the church. Present at the time were: Joyce Badanes, Georgia Dennis, Joe Farruggia, Sarah Frey, Willy Hayes, Lana Hurt, Mary Dale Jackson, Miki Leeper, Claudia Martin, Michael Snyder, Amy Thomas, Zoe Thomas, Alfio Vasta and Rev. Paul. DRE Cory Ness and Music Director Mariana Mihai-Zoeter were unable to attend. Ann Cross attended as a representative on behalf of Cory, and Leslie Blackburn was present on behalf of Mariana. (Three of these members – Georgia Dennis, Claudia Martin and Michael Snyder – have since resigned from the committee due to personal commitments; Miki Leeper’s eligibility as a member has expired, but she has agreed to chair a designated subcommittee.)

At this meeting, several actions were taken:

1. Two new subcommittees were established:
 - a. Aesthetics – charged with improving the aesthetic appearance of the sanctuary. Miki Leeper was appointed chair of this subcommittee. Joyce Badanes is also a member of this group.
 - b. Audio – charged with maintaining and monitoring the sound system during worship services. Ron Cox was appointed chair of this subcommittee. Sarah Frey and Willy Hayes are also members of this group
2. Reaffirmed Peggy Maio as chair of the Flowers Subcommittee. Joyce Badanes is also a member of this group.
3. Reviewed committee responsibilities and set a date for a training session in September.
4. Under the guidance of Rev. Paul, considered all of the sermon topics submitted by the congregation in June and began assigning topics to specific Sundays throughout the year, making tentative decisions as to which ones would be the responsibility of Rev. Paul and which ones would be the responsibility of the Worship Committee. This process was completed for services running from August to December, and for a few dates from January to June. The remainder of the topics and open dates were scheduled for completion at the October planning retreat.

In September, a training workshop was held. It was open to all members of the church who might be interested in planning, or speaking at, a worship service, but only one non-committee person (who had only a general interest in the committee’s work and purpose) attended. Only a portion of the workshop was actually completed because the allotted time for general information was exceeded. The rest of it was continued over to the October planning retreat.

At the October planning retreat, the training workshop was continued, with members present learning the responsibilities of a Service Leader and some of the “nuts and bolts” of worship elements and planning a worship service. Following that session, the remainder of the services for January-June were planned, with committee members dividing responsibility for the lay services in January and the first Sunday of February,

March, April, May and June.

Also at the October planning retreat, Amy Thomas volunteered to serve as committee chair beginning in 2015. After subsequently meeting a couple of times with Amy to discuss the role of the chair, I decided to step down as chair at the end of December and allow Amy to take over as chair in January. A number of personal factors contributed to this decision, which were outlined in my November report to the Council on Committees.

In November, the Council approved this change and sent it on to the Board, which also approved it. Amy Thomas will officially become the chair of the Worship Committee on Jan. 1.

At the Dec. 7 worship service, I presented the Welcome for the last time as chair of the WC and announced my pending resignation and Amy's pending appointment as chair. At that time, I also symbolically passed on to Amy the "key to the church," which is in fact one of the actual master keys to the church building that was passed along to me by Ron Cox when I replaced him as worship chair.

On Tuesday, Dec. 9, Amy Thomas and I met briefly with Rev. Paul to discuss possible resources for covering upcoming worship services from February through June, including those he was originally scheduled to conduct, and to determine tentatively which ones can be handled by the WC and which ones may require guest speakers or the participation of UU ministers. We determined the amount of funds that might be needed to cover expenses during this time, but agreed to wait until we receive explicit direction from the Board regarding the transition process before convening a WC planning session.

This report is my last official act as chair of the Worship Committee, as I have completed the task that was given to me - to recruit and train new members to carry on the work of the committee. I will remain with the committee through the end of June 2015, to provide support as needed for worship services during the ministerial transition period. But at the end of that period, my service to the church through the Worship Committee will come to an end.

Joe Farruggia
Worship Committee Chair
Dec. 10, 2014