



**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of the Catskills**
Sunday Services at 10:30 am

UU Catskills Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: 8/16/23

Present:

Kristen Schara, Co-President; Kathy Atwell, Treasurer; Lydia McCaw, Secretary

Trustees: Don Critchell; Kathy Eberlein; Christie Billeci

Carma Haas, Assistant Treasurer

Guests: Karen Miller, Paula Silbey

The meeting began at 9:36 with Donn Critchell lighting the chalice as he read centering words. Kathy Atwell then read from the covenant and board members shared in a check-in.

Review of minutes

Donn moved to accept minutes, seconded by Kathy A., motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

We seem to be on track for our goals overall.

A few funds need to be differentiated - Carma and Kathy A. will have a meeting to discuss nuances.

Soul Matters subscription has been renewed for the next year.

We've been having some trouble updating our name on some paperwork so that MailChimp will accept it. This is a priority as we'll be eligible for discounted Email services once this goes through.

No other major snags.

We need Assistive Listening Devices and additional lavalier mics. We discussed the possibility of putting Chalice Lighter funds towards that purpose.

Kathy E. moves to accept, Donn seconded, motion passed.

President's report

Several members of the board attended a leadership workshop this past month. Those who attended plan to get together to discuss the experience and pass the information learned on to the remaining board members. Workshop paperwork will be shared via onedrive.

Looking at next steps for the Anti-Racism Task Force:

- Our priority should be to talk to local groups about how we can best support what they are already doing
- We will have a booth at the African American Festival. We will be promoting RE but will have no event in particular to promote. (Last year we had the Encanto festival.)
- A Barbie movie group viewing is scheduled for Sept 24 followed by return to the sanctuary for discussion. We discussed whether to promote that event outside the congregation and how to ensure that our members are prioritized in registration given that there will be limited seats in the theater.
- Plans to show the "Disrupt Church" video from the GA meeting are on hold. The film is not yet officially released by UUA and we are currently unsure when it will be or how to proceed in the meantime.
- There are growing concerns over governance issues with UUA. Should we form a group to discuss these issues?

Following up on previously discussed MailChimp list pruning, Carma has a list of lapsed members which she will send to board for review and follow up. We will then have Rita send out an "Are you still interested?" email.

Who is in charge of making sure new members are in the directory and on the mailing list? Kristen will follow up.

We request that the Membership committee take over mailing list maintenance.

Committee Reports

The Climate action team is organizing membership joining a Climate March on Sept. 17th. Pickup will be in Kingston and members will have to sign up.

Discussion of the role of the Caring Committee and Rev. Diane in reaching out to members in need of care. Christie will reach out to Caring Committee leadership to discuss further.

New Business

Karen Miller gave a presentation about a step that we could take to assist incarcerated people transitioning back into society - allowing our address to be used by people without stable housing as a secure mailing address during transition. She met with a reentry coordinator and a community liaison about how to support incarcerated people in our area and both suggested this course of action. Karen will be the contact person for this program and will meet at an outside location to distribute mail, so the sanctuary would not be involved except as a space for the mail to be delivered to.

- We are already hoping to set up mailboxes in the admin offices to sort various mail into. Adding another box for this program should be easy.
- This will be for county prisons only, so we shouldn't see a huge influx of mail.
- Kathy A. motions to approve the program, Donn seconds, motion approved

Karen taking over distribution of the "Coming Back to Ulster County" Pamphlet, which will need an update and/or reprinting soon.

The Social Action committee would like to form a new subgroup - the Coming Back to Ulster County working group.

The Anti-Racism Task Force will be changing their name to the 8th Principle Task Force, with their goal being to put into practice the values of the 8th principle.

Unfinished Business

We are postponing discussion of the chimney repair as it may be more expensive than planned. There is also the possibility of switching to a heat pump or moving extra HVAC units from the Sanctuary to the Farmhouse which would change the nature of the work necessary and might be cheaper in the long term.

Play Haven has confirmed they are leaving. There is no exact date yet but probably by spring at the latest.

We are making progress on the discussion of Gravel and Paving. Currently a \$30k bid seems to cover the most bang for the least buck, but there are still some things in question. Christie will send further questions to Carma for Bill to follow up.

Carma will work on a B&G article for the September Newsletter.

Suggestion: a "Where Does Your Money Go?" monthly column or newsletter so people know what we use donations for.

[Break]

Following the GA panel, it seems Article 2 changes are likely to be adopted. We need to make sure our congregation is educated on what this means so that reactions come from logic and understanding rather than fear of change.

- Perhaps we can bring in a facilitator? Maybe the same person who comes in for board retreat?
- UU Wellspring offers workshops exploring article 2 changes.
- The UU Wellspring workshops are designed for a small group (10-15 people), so we'd likely need to run multiple sessions.
- The Leadership Development Fund seems the most logical place to draw funds for these workshops if we decide to go with them.
- UUA promised materials for this purpose, which is one of the reasons we held off on this earlier, but nothing substantial seems to have come to our attention.
- Kathy E. will look into the available UUA materials for running Article II workshops and offer a recommendation.

- Wherever we get our educational materials from, we should be aware of potential biases in the materials themselves. We want to educate people, not pressure them one way or another.

Our system of designating GA delegates needs reforming. Currently, delegates are appointed very late, and the delegates are losing out on early bird pricing for the GA. They also may be less invested in the issues if they aren't certain of their involvement until very shortly before the GA, which is a loss for us in not having well-educated delegates.

- The Board can call for a special meeting according to bylaws. Perhaps we could use this to appoint GA delegates.
- Or we could have a full congregational meeting every six months rather than once a year.
- We will think on this further.

We continue to iron out the details of our Animal Policy.

- It needs to be on our website.
- Animals need to stay on south side of the sanctuary - furthest from snacks and where people who are uncomfortable with or allergic to dogs can stay far away from them.
- Service animals only - No "Emotional Support" animals.
- We decided to reword the current policy draft to be a bit less harsh - Kathy A. will take on looking at other church's policies to try to find something appropriate.
- We don't want to make the sanctuary unwelcoming to people who do need service animals.
- Final decisions need to be communicated to Karen and the Welcome committee.

Progress has been made on the Suggestion Box

- Christie's proposed comment form seems perfect. Wording is good, size seems appropriate.
- Where to put the box? Maybe over by podium? Welcome table? bookshelf in hall? We will see when we have the box. Carma will take charge of that.
- Perhaps we could have an old All Ears sign over the box to help continuity for those who remember that initiative.
- Kathy E will write a blurb for the September newsletter.

Zoom meeting format has been very successful. Board members would like to continue with it. We should perhaps publicize that these meetings will be held on zoom, as some congregation members who wish to attend these meetings may find this more accessible than traveling to the sanctuary.

Thank-you notes

Christie will take on this responsibility.

We would like to thank:

Lois Slade for tea fundraiser

Mark Howenstien and Carol Rider for lay-led service

Anyone in the future who does lay-led service without being a member of worship committee. Kathy has volunteered to keep track of these people.

Next meeting(s): Sept 20. On Zoom. 9:30 AM

Centering: Donn

On a motion by Donn, seconded by Christie, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 12:24.

ADDENDUM:

Motion to hire Atwood Gravel to re-gravel and improve the parking lot per B&G recommendation made via email by Christie and seconded by Erin. Motion passed.