

# Prairie Circle Unitarian Universalist Congregation Grayslake, Illinois

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## **Board Meeting Minutes — August 13, 2009 – 7:00pm**

The Board met at Mike Merritt's home on August 13, 2009 at 7:00 pm. Present: Steve King, Teresa Aguinaldo, Mike Merritt, Susan Bellmore, Diana Fox, Elizabeth Harding, Laura Tomsy and Andrea Mills. Donna Marshall and Pierce Regnier were also in attendance representing the Membership Committee.

### **Opening Reading & Chalice Lighting**

An opening reading was provided by Reverend Harding and the chalice was lit.

### **Conversation with Membership Committee – Donna Marshall, Pierce Regnier**

Donna reviewed issues that the Membership Committee identified in a previous meeting as important issues. There was discussion on each issue:

- Visitor recognition on Sunday could include introductions during the service and should include the children and teenagers. Andrea will send visitor information from the Visitor Sign-In Sheets to Laura if the visitors have RE-age children so that she may connect with them and discuss our RE programs.
- Meetings should be delayed so that they do not conflict with Coffee Hour; it can feel awkward to visitors if they feel they are interrupting church business. Steve suggested one Sunday a month could be a "meeting-free" Sunday.
- Announcements on Sunday morning should be live to capture more attention; the written announcements in the newsletter and the Order of Service are too passive. Mike brought up the issue that occurred earlier with having too many announcements about a wide range of topics. There was an interest in having announcements from Social Action and Religious Education only and to clearly separate the announcements from the worship portion of the service. Steve said that we are already working towards this in our services.
- There should be a "Committee Fair" for each of the committees to define their role and look for new members. Elizabeth recommended 9/20 or 9/27 since Opening Sunday is 9/13.
- We should send a postcard to the membership and recent visitors about the upcoming picnic. Laura can print labels from the current membership spreadsheets. Andrea will

find postcard blanks and connect with Rich, Steve and/or Teresa for the text with the goal of mailing out the postcards by Monday, August 24th.

- Andrea could take over some of the committee's responsibilities. The Membership Committee will send Andrea information on the additional tasks they would like to pass on to her.
- We should put more RE information on the website and also social action & events. Sara is working on this.
- It would be helpful to reprint the newsletter article about "meet one/greet one" in the church newsletter. The Membership Committee will get this article to Andrea by August 25<sup>th</sup> for the Sept. newsletter.
- The sermons should be on the website. The Worship Committee is pursuing podcasting. Elizabeth remarked that sermons are oral communication and not generally designed for written communication. Therefore, it would require significant editing to make them appropriate for a written format. The focus will be on moving forward rather than putting up old sermons which would take quite a bit of legwork. Susan asked how often the sermons were accessed in the past. Elizabeth said that, in the future, Sara could put up a counter to see how often they are accessed.
- We should again offer the Introduction to UU classes. Laura remarked that they had not been scheduled last year by the RE Committee since there was not much interest expressed on sign-up sheets. They do plan to do one class with Elizabeth this fall. We will need to monitor interest, whether from old members or new members/potential members, to determine if we should do a second class in this church year.

## **Conversation with Religious Education Committee**

Laura Franz was unable to attend so this committee will have the opportunity to join the Board at a later date.

## **Approval of Prior Month's Minutes**

Mike moved to approve the July minutes with a few changes and Diana seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by the Board.

## **Consulting Minister's Report – Reverend Elizabeth Harding**

- **Completed Activities**
  - Preaching in Geneva, Illinois, on August 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - Preaching at PCUUC on August 9<sup>th</sup>

- **Upcoming Activities**

- Preaching in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 16<sup>th</sup>
- Preaching at PCUUC on August 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Preaching at North Shore Unitarian on August 30<sup>th</sup>

- **The Caring Committee would like to memorialize Roberta Rogers** in some way. We will be dedicating several items in upcoming services (readings, music) and will provide a biographical insert about her in a service with information from her brother. We already had a candle-lighting in the August 2<sup>nd</sup> service. Roberta's family asked that memorials be sent to PCUUC and the Caring Committee had some questions about whether or not money has already come in from that request. The Caring Committee would also like to invite the congregation to make a donation to the American Cancer Society or Roberta's other charity and report that donation in the Order of Service in some way.

Mike mentioned that her family had donated \$500 to PCUUC in Roberta's honor. He will set aside a specific fund in our accounting system for these donations and will notify the Worship and Music Committees. Elizabeth will inform the Caring Committee about this and ask them to send a thank you note to Roberta's family.

- I was unable to have a reading week, so I will attempt that again in a week or so.
- **Opportunities** - The opportunities remain the same for the congregation as in my previous Board Reports.
  - There is a Compensation Consultant available to help the congregation as they work with the Minister around growth and support of both the congregation and the Minister.
  - Rev. Matthew Johnson-Doyle is available to talk with the congregation as part of a fall Board retreat.

## **Treasurer's Report – Mike Merritt**

### **July Financial Reports**

July figures are not complete due to the complexity of our finance system and the changeover of Treasurers. Our pledge receipts are doing fine. We will be done closing out July by this weekend and he will send an e-mail to the Board if he sees any problems. Otherwise, he will report on July at the September Board meeting. So far, our bottom line is positive because we have not had too many expenses yet. In the future, he will report to the Board on a new financial system that is more user-friendly.

## **Pledge Statistics**

The average pledge is about \$1200 and the average cost per member is about \$1600. The \$400 deficit is offset by scrip, loose plate and income from investments. There was an increase in pledge income of \$6000 over last year but our expenses grew by more than \$6000. The smallest pledge for this fiscal year is \$168.

There was discussion about having a minimum pledge as a requirement of membership. This was discussed two years ago but not implemented because it was perceived as unfair to some members. The Board did end up *suggesting* a \$500 minimum pledge. Diana shared a book from the UUA that she recently purchased that discussed this issue. She will share more with us when she has had a chance to finish reading it. She commented that it focuses on being positive and coming from a place of abundance. Steve suggested that we let the new Stewardship Committee make decisions on this issue but the congregation does need to know what it costs to run the church. Reverend Harding recommended we offer a range to the congregation including the range of current pledges (not name-specific).

Susan shared some fundraising ideas. We could go to the Adlai Stevenson family for sponsorship. Or, possibly, go to the big eastern churches for sponsorship. Reverend Harding explained that the UUA has grants and we could apply for them through the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock. She also explained the UUA's Chalice Lighter program. Mike mentioned that we did get \$10,000 from the Chalice lighter program for our RE program several years ago. Steve thought that these ideas would be the kinds of things we could forward to the Stewardship Committee. Mike & Steve volunteered to go with Susan to talk to the Stevenson family if she does some initial research.

Mike volunteered to do some more number crunching on the pledges. Steve requested that he then pass this information on to the Stewardship Committee so that he can focus on the financials.

## **Director of Religious Education's Report**

- **Upcoming Special Activities**
  - Church year calendar planning
  - 2009-2010 RE curriculum planning – world religions
  - Update RE brochure
  - World religions tie back to adult education theology classes & intergenerational services
  - Teacher & nursery recruitment & screening
  - 2010 youth trip to Boston planning

- RE web updates
- DRE annual review process
- **Completed Special Activities**
  - PCPSA bake Sale (\$144.00) – would like this money out in a separate account from the funds they are raising for the Boston trip so they may use it for an activity other than the Boston trip
  - Movie Group Presentation – 10 participants
  - Safety Plan Update
  - Summer Program Wrap-Up
- **Regular Activities**
  - weekly children’s RE lesson plans, teacher coordination, activity preparation and parent hand-outs
  - monthly RE Committee meetings
  - monthly Board meetings
  - various committee meetings as time permits and as requested
  - Adult Education development and coordination
  - nursery supervision
  - Story for All Ages – as requested
  - Newsletter contribution
  - room and gym rental coordination and reporting
- **Activities on the Horizon**
  - post RE information on website – schedules, lesson plans, handouts
  - update RE website page – DRE bio, etc.
  - Fair Trade booth – social action project for PCPSA
  - update and publicize lending library
  - family worship and quarterly get-together
  - Train the RE Teacher session
  - Seeker and Mentors program

- RE Program Outreach
- Men's group
- Mother-daughter group
- Father-son group
- drumming group
- Pagan UU group

Laura brought up the RE Committee's request for new members that are also on the Social Action and/or Worship Committees. This would help them coordinate the RE activities that overlap with these committees.

The RE Committee has also requested a specific Sunday of each month to be reserved for adult education. There would be no committee meetings on this Sunday. Steve thought we should announce this policy at next month's Board meeting when representatives from all of the committees are in attendance.

Laura passed out the calendar for the church year. She pointed out that the focus in RE this year will be on world religions.

Mike asked about nursery supervision. Laura explained that we have only had two children in the nursery and they will be moving into RE this year. We do not regularly have babies. Laura wants to have nursery care in the gym so that there only needs to be one nursery caregiver. This issue will be addressed by RE Committee at the next meeting.

## **Committee Issues**

### **Stewardship Committee**

Diana reported that she had requested information from other congregations but did not receive much feedback. She bought "Beyond Fundraising" from the UUA. This book recommends hiring a consultant who focuses on specific individuals and then the whole congregation and includes a weekend event. They recommend that you need a core group of people who are really interested in this topic. Jan Kirch and Ric Sarmont are willing to co-chair the fundraising event and now we need to identify people who will be on the Stewardship Committee. Steve felt we should discuss and identify those people and invite them to be on the committee. Reverend Harding pointed out that the Central Midwest District has several online free workshops one of which is taught by the author of Diana's book. We should take advantage of these resources. She plans to do several of these online classes and would be willing to attend conferences if others wanted to go with her. Steve suggested that these courses could be presented at the next Board meeting as part of the organizational development model that he and Reverend Harding are working on.

## Other Issues

### Using Photographs in the Newsletter

Reverend Harding received a range of responses from her colleagues. The quality of the photos can be an issue. Most of her contacts use pictures without names or, if they use names, use them in a members-only part of their website. They don't use children's pictures without parents' permission. Some use first names and a last initial only. She will send everyone a link to a privacy policy that someone she trusts put together. Reverend Harding recommended that we adopt this policy. Steve suggested that we each review this policy and discuss it via e-mail.

### Re-Using Paper

Teresa wrote a policy about re-using paper. Andrea will e-mail it to the committee chairs. The paper will be stored opposite our kitchen cabinet in an empty paper box. Diana will ask Stan about recycling at the Barn. To further conserve our paper use, Andrea will make 50 copies of the Order of Service rather than 66.

### Hiring of Church Members

There was discussion on this issue which included the following points:

- if the position is financially lucrative, like an architect, we should not hire members but otherwise it is good to extend opportunities to our members and help our own community
- working for the church could burn-out the member and create the difficulty of that member/employee losing their church community
- if there is a performance issue, a member is put in a position of reprimanding another member
- we could only temporarily hire members while we find a non-member for the position
- if we do hire a member, we need to be clear that performance requirements do not change just because you are a member
- we could have different policies for different positions
- a member could resign to work for the church and then join again when no longer an employee
- it can be very challenging for a person to work for their own church because of boundary concerns; members may not realize how difficult it will be to become employee who is also a member; it is sometimes difficult to be a good employee and also a good member

A vote was taken and there were two votes for allowing the employment of members and three against that policy. Steve will send Norine a note letting her know where we stand and then we will set the policy next month.

## Summary of Follow-Up Actions

- We will send out postcards for the picnic. Andrea will draft the copy and send it to Steve, Rich and Teresa for their approval. Then, Andrea will prepare the postcards and mail them out by Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Diana will continue to research the idea of a Stewardship Committee.
- Andrea will send the policy on re-using paper to the committee chairs.
- Steve will send an e-mail to Noreen regarding the vote on employing members.
- Diana will talk to the Music Committee about the memorial fund for Roberta.
- Susan will do research on soliciting support from the Stevenson family.

Steve asked for suggestions as to where we can hold the next Board meeting which will include representatives from each committee. Mike will check with the Grayslake Area Public Library. We could use the charter school classroom but would have to pay a rental fee. Steve will write up an invitation for the committee chairs and request an RSVP. We should minimize other Board work at this meeting. Our focus should be getting the committees to work together. Teresa, Diana & Susan volunteered to bring refreshments.

## Closing Reading and Adjournment

A closing reading was presented by Reverend Harding. Steve moved to adjourn the meeting and Teresa seconded the motion. The next board meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on Thursday, September 17, at a location to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Mills  
PCUUC Administrator