

First Unitarian Church of Portland
Board of Trustees Meeting - March 4, 2021 – Agenda
Board (only) Deepening 6:30-7:00pm, Board Meeting - 7 - 9pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82930223125?pwd=TDdrckx1T0lSTG1KT3BFWGx5MmQyZz09>

Meeting ID: 829 3022 3125

Passcode: 398649

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,82930223125# US (San Jose)

+12532158782,,82930223125# US (Tacoma)

Board Meeting

6:30 Deepening/Check-in

7:00

Convene

Opening Words – Andy

Determine Quorum

Process Observer Review

Review Agenda

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Board Roles

Timekeeper – Alan

Process Observer – ?

7:05

Congregant Comment Period

7:15

Updates

- Committee updates – reports attached
- ET Update

7:35

Consent Agenda

- Vote to adopt the bylaws changes we agreed to in previous meetings (this is housekeeping – we didn't use the correct language when we voted previously)

7:40

Discussion

- Next steps in board size discussion (20 minutes)
- Church Goals Process – Barbara and Brad (20 minutes)

8:20

Generative Discussion

- Process for selecting Board leadership

8:50 **Meeting Wrap-up**
Communications Check
Process Observations
Closing Words – Andy

9:00 Adjourn

Our Mission:

The mission of First Unitarian Portland is to create a welcoming community of diverse individuals; to promote love, reason and freedom in religion; to foster lifelong spiritual growth; and to act for social justice.

Our Vision:

First Unitarian Portland is a beacon of hope for us and for our community, a spiritual center in the heart of our city that helps each of us to find our moral compass, calling and challenging us to build the beloved community with an ever deepening sense of spirit, diversity and inclusion.

Goals for First Unitarian Church

Five Year Church Goals are created in collaboration with the congregation and Executive Team and adopted by the Board. They reflect the mission and vision of our church. Church goals are primarily carried out by the Executive Team and staff, collaborating with the Board.

Board 1-3 Year Goals are created by the Board and Executive Team at our yearly Retreat. Board goals may draw from the 5 Year Church goals yet reflect work within the purview of the Board.

First Unitarian Church Five Year Goals

At the Board meeting on May 6, 2016, the Board adopted five-year goals for the church.

From 2016-2021, First Unitarian Church of Portland will:

- Focus on collaborative governance, revising policies for clarity and brevity and creating linkages between the Congregation, the Board, and the Executive Team.
- Increase church funding through enhanced giving, including goal to reduce or retire the Buchan Building mortgage.
- Make a cultural transition from program-focused church to mission-driven church, with priority to building beloved community between generations.
- Develop a long-term plan for development and sustainability of church campus given changing dynamics of West End and downtown Portland.

Board 1-3-Year goals

The Board adopted its 1-3-year goals at the October meeting. They are:

1. Continue to examine the ways in which power, privilege and White supremacy culture affect our church, including our board work, to include:
 - a) Educating ourselves on the issues, such that we can support the development of this work in the congregation.
 - b) Taking steps to improve our practices and model antiracist behavior. This will include:

- i. Evaluating how we enact policy-based governance in a manner that actively dismantles White supremacy culture in our board and in our congregation.
 - ii. Exploring and considering endorsing the adoption of the 8th Principle through its addition to our bylaws.
2. Holding the mission of the church, engage in ongoing, generative conversations with the Executive Team and the congregation to:
 - a) Develop understanding of the church that's emerging, as well as the pastoral needs and continuing connections among congregants in the church that is
 - b) Approve a revenue plan to sustain the mission of the church in current and emerging contexts
 - c) Lead the congregation in development of 5-year church goals
 - d) Consider viable options for maintenance of our current physical plant and future development of the campus to meet the needs of the emerging church
3. Governance committee will review and possibly recommend changes to the bylaws as they relate to size of Board, and definition of pledging member in board policies.
4. Continue to support the Ministerial Search Committee and the transition to a new Senior Minister.

**First Unitarian Church Portland Oregon
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – DRAFT
February 4, 2021
(Conducted via zoom meeting)**

Board members present: Mindy Clark, Alan Comnes, Cindy Cumfer, Ryan Deibert, Theo Harper, Caitlynn Hill, Adam House, Marilyn Mays, Barbara Morrison, Brad Taylor, Andy Wilson, Leila Wrathall

Board members absent: None

Ex officio board members present: Kathy Ludlow

Ministers and staff present: Rev. Tom Disrud, Kathryn Estey, Intern Minister Stacey Mitchell

Timekeeper: Caitlynn Hill

Process Observer: Caitlyn Hill

Congregants present: Laura Jones (representing Nominating Committee), Kathy Birch

The board meeting convened at 7:03 PM.

Opening words: Theo Harper read a poem by Langston Hughes, “A Negro Speaks of Rivers”

Mindy Clark determined there was a quorum.

Process observer review:

No notes to share from last month.

Review agenda:

Agenda was reviewed. Communications Committee update was added. Following generative discussion, board pursued two additional Action Items (see Action Items).

Review and Approve previous meeting’s minutes:

Andrew Wilson moved and Theo Harper seconded a motion to approve the minutes. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Congregant Comment:

None.

Dates to calendar

- None noted.

ET updates

- We are coming up on the first anniversary of COVID shutdown. We will be sponsoring a special worship session which will include reflections on the past year. We are in the

beginning stages of developing a plan for reopening, beginning with program leaders to identify questions and a process that they'll lead. As second step, ET will convene a small group of congregants to help with discernment and visioning for reopening.

- Just signed up an intern minister for next year. In some past years, we've had many applicants, in others few. This year, we had 8 applicants, and are pleased to announce that our intern minister next year will be Carter Smith, a current Master of Divinity student from Harvard Divinity School. Carter plans to relocate to Portland in the summer.
- We had record attendance for this year's Seminary for a Day (more than 200) with attendees from all over the country. The success with online enrollment suggests that in future, these events may either be partly or perhaps entirely online.
- We are just now beginning the process to develop the 2022 budget, with focus on how of reopening will affect budget. Many unknowns, but will be integrated into reopening planning underway.
- Upcoming on Finance Committee agenda:
 - Northwest Academy requesting extension of lease for additional year.
 - We have been notified by City of Portland that we have to have sewer work done (not optional) in order to comply with code. Range will be \$36,000 - 48,000, with work to begin in June. This was an unexpected expense, but we maintain reserves for this purpose and have sufficient reserves to cover the costs.
- Northwest Academy's reopening plans:
 - Likely to come back in hybrid format. No intention to return to 10 in-person classes immediately. In general, families want to come back socially, but to continue classes online for remainder of year.
 - The academy expects to return in-person in April on Mondays and Tuesdays only, if enough staff can be vaccinated.
 - Our sextons can be vaccinated through sponsorship of Northwest Academy as supporting staff for the school.
- We have recently been trying to strengthen quality of our estimated number of attendees (vs. devices) for online worship by assessing average household sizes (adults only). Our prior assumption of 1.5 people per device holds well in that analysis. On average throughout COVID, we've had roughly 600 devices (900 people) per Sunday. Very pleased, too, with attendance at family services (85-100 per Sunday).
- Question: Is part of reopening planning based on vaccine access for congregants, volunteers, staff, etc.? Answer: That's one of the many questions we'll be considering.

Committee Reports are included in the board packet and included here by reference.

- Communications Committee and additional update: CommComm will be organizing conversations to help develop church goals for next three years, beginning with a series of dialogues starting in next month. CommComm will start with letters out to various church groups to introduce and schedule the dialogues. CommComm is looking for board members to commit to at least two sessions, and is trying to limit the groups to roughly 20 people each. If board members have specific groups you'd like to be participate in, contact Barbara.

Consent Agenda:

- Proposed Board Policy Change: Change BPM 6.5 to add the text in red: 6.5 Effect of Policies. Board policies are intended to be guidelines, not legal standards or regulations, for the Board. Except to the extent that a policy complies with a law or governmental regulation or the Articles or bylaws of the church, the Board is not legally bound to follow its policies. The Board's failure to follow a Board policy shall not give rise to an arbitration, suit, action, administrative hearing or any other legal proceeding against the Board or the church nor shall such failure be evidence in an arbitration, suit, action, administrative hearing or any other legal proceeding against the Board or the church. The policies are binding on the Executive Team and staff.

Adam House moved and Leila Wrathall seconded a motion to approve. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Action Items:

Following the generative discussion, the following Action Items were considered:

- Vote to refer adoption of the 8th Principle as an amendment to the church bylaws through the congregational ballot in the spring
- Background:
 - First Unitarian Church of Portland's bylaws state that the purpose of the church is to promote the existing Seven Principles. To formally adopt The 8th Principle, the bylaws need to be amended to include the 8th Principle in the church purpose (Article I, Section 2), and the voting members of the church must vote to approve this amendment. The Board of Trustees must also vote to approve the amendment and refer the vote to the congregation. If approved by the congregation, The 8th Principle will be added to First Unitarian's bylaws and a new stage of learning and action will begin to accountably live into the covenant our principles create.
 - Within the bylaws, if amended, the 8th Principle would read: "The purpose of this church is to promote . . . journey toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."
- Board discussion:
 - See Generative Discussion notes below

Theo Harper moved and Caitlynn Hill seconded a motion to refer adoption of the 8th Principle through a proposed amendment to include the 8th Principle along with the existing Seven Principles in the statement of the purpose of the church in the bylaws (Article I, Section 2). The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

- Vote for Board of Trustees to endorse adoption of the 8th Principle through an amendment to the church bylaws

- Background:
 - Beyond referring adoption of the 8th Principle through a bylaws amendment via the congregational ballot in the spring, the Board of Trustees also considered whether the board should offer a statement to the congregation affirmatively endorsing the adoption of the 8th Principle.
- Board discussion:
 - See Generative Discussion notes below

Caitlynn Hill moved and Adam House seconded a motion that the Board of Trustees should author a statement to the congregation endorsing the adoption of the 8th Principle through a bylaws amendment. Andy Wilson voted no. All other board members voted yes. The motion carried.

Cindy Cumfer moved and Leila Wrathall seconded a motion to ... The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Generative Discussion: Final discussion about proposing the adoption of the 8th Principle

- Background:
 - Throughout this church year we have had several board conversations regarding the 8th Principle, and each board member has participated in at least one of the workshops led by Paula Cole Jones.
 - At our last meeting, we took a straw poll to determine whether board members were ready to refer adoption of the 8th Principle to a congregational vote on the spring ballot, or whether additional board-level conversation was necessary. At least two members suggested that additional conversation would be helpful, and so we are holding space for that tonight.
 - Tonight, we'll consider two questions:
 - Shall the board vote to put the 8th Principle on the ballot?
 - (If so) should the board endorse the measure?
 - Intent is not to move forward to a vote tonight, but open to doing so, if the conversation feels complete.
- Generative discussion ranged through several related topics:
 - Appreciated [video of ministers talking about what adoption has meant to their congregations](#): If you want this church to survive and have people under 40 come here, this is how you do it. Very resonant with conversations within young adult groups. These are the communities we're part of, the movements we're engaged in, and the conversations we're part of.
 - The conversations with other board members with reservations have been delightful and meaningful.
 - This isn't something we should pass, congratulate ourselves on, and then do nothing about. Let's understand what action will follow. Do we understand what our impact statement would be: If this passes, who will be affected, what will happen, etc. Finance Committee has not yet had this discussion. Can we

- have a clear, truthful and as full as possible impact statement?
- We will not know 100% what it will mean. As a person of color, when I was first introduced to the 7 Principles, my heart sung, and they spoke to me. By adding the 8th principle, we announce that we're an anti-racist organization and intend to make that real in the world. We are the ones who are called to do this. We have to decide whether to answer that call.
 - As a board member, asking should it be put on the ballot (yes) and should it be endorsed (may have a tendency to shortcut people engaging in curious conversation, so hesitant to offer endorsement). I don't want this to be adopted because the board endorsed it, but because the congregation endorses it.
 - I don't think it's a fair comparison to a government measure, especially because the church is a voluntary community (not required taxation), and people are free to pledge less, not compelled like a tax. Our Seven Principles have been inadequate, and it's important that we put racism and oppression out there, and acknowledge that it interferes with our other principles.
 - This will be our "calling in" now. Begin this conversation: What does this mean to us, within our communities?
 - What would it say to our congregation if we forward this without board endorsement? I think it may look silly, especially if we endorse other things.
 - I do think it makes sense if we're putting it on the ballot, that we've done the work of imagining some of the changes would entail (as a board, ET, committees, etc.). What we should be giving to the congregation is: This is the bright future that we're walking toward, this is the way we're shifting how we're inclusive, etc. It becomes more of an endorsement the more we imagine it.
 - I don't think it's possible to put forward an impact statement. Possible to say how it may impact the board. Very important to get congregational buy-in that we're setting up longer-term dialogue to examine how this changes our work moving forward. I think as a policy-oriented board, it's important for us to show leadership and communicate a clear stance of support.
 - I don't know for sure what saying "yes" will mean, and I'm not sure we can know. In fact, if we're committed to this, it will take us to places that we couldn't even have imagined. I do know, though, what the world looks like now: our continued exclusion (generally unintentional, but certainly in effect) of many people of color, the richness we miss out on as a result. So I know what it looks like to say "no," and I know that this isn't where I want our church community to be. Saying "yes" lets us begin to define what we could instead become.
 - Appreciate the perspective from the ministers' video, the joy that it brings forward. The board laughs more. Having grown up in a place where oppression was not acknowledged, I continue to be overwhelmed by the oppression that has existed. I didn't have the good sense to understand my own oppression. I like that we're talking about it - it's what the congregation needs to do - I love

the active part of it - stepping forward and stepping into it.

- In many of the social justice groups, people are talking about the 8th Principle and what it will mean for their work. Every one of the Ministerial Search Committee members supports the 8th Principle and will be talking to ministerial candidates about it. They will be looking for a leader who will be taking us to the next step.
- The existing principles are more about what's being asked of our hearts.
- We owe the congregation the opportunity to weigh in on this. Especially given the work that's been done to bring this forward.
- One of the things that's been interesting in this discussion over the past several months: How much we take the other principles for granted without thinking about what it means, as a people, to commit to these principles. The 8th Principle has called us to accountability. I think we need to be accountable to all of the principles, and not just say it - to actually engage in the work. There needs to be action and commitment to it.
- There were 16-18 people at recent new member class. Almost to a person, people they are coming here because this is a church walking its talk related to justice, and specifically racial justice. Those new members are generally younger, and are approaching this as: "How can you not be talking about this?"
- In bearing witness and showing leadership, racism often falls to the bottom. I hope the board offers an endorsement.
- I think we're also called to endorse this by our spiritual leaders.
- We're a church without a history of outreach. People find us. If we are to be a truly diverse congregation, we are going to have to change: A targeted outreach program, and welcome people once we've reached them. We may have to move to Hillsboro or to 82nd Ave to be a truly diverse congregation. We're going to have to reallocate our staff and programs. The emerging church will look different. If we think that's the kind of impact the 8th Principle will have, can we say: We're serious about this, and we'll have real participatory conversation with the congregation about where we want to go and how we might get there.
- Endorsement could reflect that it is not one without risks, but that one that we're compelled to move. I wish we could share the stories we've just heard. Just remember that many people are still at a very early stage (e.g. White fragility). We need to continue to provide education and support - we owe it to the congregation we have.
- As a longtime member of the church, I can't say that we've always been pragmatic. I've always appreciated that our church is out there marching, but we need to do more than walk. I worry that we're going to read about it, think about it, and not do anything about it.
- I hear anxiety about the unknown (cost, will we fail, where will this lead?). Sometimes you just take the next steps and see what happens. This feels really right, take the step, see what happens. -Faith.
- First commitment for how to move forward: Every week a song, writing, a

reading specifically from people of color.

- Following GA a few years ago, began talking about bringing it to the congregation, and I was really worried that we weren't ready for it. I was worried it would get centered in our heads, and we would get stuck on the words. And I knew that it was something we need to work on in our hearts. I don't know how we can not do this now. We are totally ready for it. We need to commit and we will find a way.
- Epiphany and liberation: The energy and brightness it brings. With this we are going to attract the people who are going to show up and propel the work of becoming an antiracist congregation.
- The board determined that it was ready to proceed with a vote (see Action Items above), and briefly discussed the related board policies:
 - Board Policy 4.2 (Board Job Description) reads, in part: "To perform its job, the Board shall . . . support Board decisions after subjects have been fully explored, discussed and decided."
 - Board Covenant includes: "We promise to . . . discuss, debate, and disagree openly in board meetings, expressing ourselves as clearly, honestly, and courteously as possible so that we are certain that the board understands our point of view," and "We promise to . . . support the final decision of the board, whether it reflects our view or not."

Closed Session

At 8:33 the board went into closed session to discuss an update regarding the ministerial transition.

At 8:41 the board resumed open session.

Communication Check:

- CommComm will start to work on distributing letters for congregational outreach regarding 3-year church goal development in the coming month
- CommComm may begin drafting endorsement for 8th Principle, and may reach out to other board members to assist

Process Observations:

- Tonight's conversation was rich and generative.
- This is a group in which we feel a deep sense of trust and love, as evidenced by our openness to engage in caring, respectful and sometimes challenging conversations.
- Maintaining personal check-ins at the beginning of meetings have been really important, especially in zoom format. It helps to humanize our interactions and set up good conversation.

Closing Words: Theo Harper read a quote by Audre Lorde: “When I dare to be powerful — to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted: Ryan Deibert, board secretary

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Chair: Cindy Cumfer

Committee Members: Ryan Deibert, Caitlynn Hill, Kathy Ludlow

DATE AND PLACE: **Wednesday, February 10, 7-9 p.m.**

Light Virtual Chalice

Opening Words—**Caitlynn: Melvin Hoover – In the Spirit of the Pioneer**

Next Meeting: Opening and Closing Words? **Ryan**

Announcements: **none**

Acceptance of Last Meetings Minutes (See Attached): **accepted**

Additions/Changes to Agenda?

Re: 8th Principle - Past presented for board endorsement of past measures.
Cindy will send the info

Agenda Items:

1. **Safe Church Policy Update** (Adam: check with KE about actions church takes for volunteers; process for members with problems with staff person; ask ET about policies they have; look at other church policies) – **deferred to next meeting**

2. **Board Self-Evaluation** (May Board meeting):

Who wants to work on this? **Ryan, Kathy, & Cindy.**

Content Changes:

Because we evaluate individual roles, we can be reluctant to call in places for change (it makes us careful about each other). Better to talk about the board function at a whole.

Rely more on the generative conversations and consciously return to the covenant/process evaluation for check points of the conversation.

Survey is low effort so it can be effective for the quantitative data and as prompts for generative conversations.

Have folks respond to only the committees that they are active on.

Evaluate each question in relation to the 8th Principle – next month.

3. Assessment of Ministry (June Board meeting):

Who wants to work on this? Caitlynn, Ryan, & Cindy.

Community centered evaluation framework – Building research frameworks around the things that the *communities* think are important.

ID folks who have been marginalized/harmed in our congregation and ask what they feel is an important measure.

Partner with:

- **MSC who are already doing this work.**
- **BIPOC caucus group (ask first)**
 - **RYAN with reach out to Lia.**

Identify a first step to take this year and develop more inclusive processes overtime with intention. More inclusive methodologies require more time/harder work.

Process Observation (comments by all)

Cindy sets the norm for consistent reflection of WSC.

Lively and exciting conversation resulting from reflecting on 8th Principle.

Closing Words—Caitlynn **Affirmation of hope**

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PORTLAND
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes
February 9th, 2020 6:30- 8:00 Zoom Room

The meeting convened via Zoom.

Present: Barbara Morrison, Kathy Ludlow, Theo Harper, Mindy Clark, Brad Taylor

Opening words

The January meeting minutes were approved as written.

The February Moderator Letter was discussed. Topics to be addressed:

There will be a final open meeting for congregants to discuss the 8th Principle on February 21st.

There will be a formal “thank you” to Ministerial Search Committee members who have left the Search Committee and a brief introduction of the new members.

It will be noted that it has been a year since we shifted from congregating in person. It will be noted that our Church’s foresight in improving our technological capabilities over the past several years allowed our Church to seamlessly move to virtual worship. Our attendance for service has met, and often surpassed, our attendance in person and our congregation remains strong due to the leadership of the ministers, staff, and congregants.

There was discussion regarding the Board’s endorsement for First Church adopting the 8th Principle. Theo and Ryan will craft a few sentences to announce the Board’s endorsement for the passing of the 8th Principle.

The process for discussing and considering upcoming Church goals was discussed and a draft letter to send to groups was considered.

The Communication Committee agreed to divide the groups among Committee members and each send out copies of the letters personally to the heads of groups and track the level of engagement that the various groups prefer.

The Communication Committee will develop a template that can be used to solicit congregants' thoughts on what the Church's priorities should be.

The Communication Committee will report to the Board regarding the number of groups requesting personalized engagement and the committee will ask for any necessary support from Board members in facilitating engagement sessions with interested groups.

The Communication Committee will provide training on how to facilitate engagement sessions to Board members and will provide an information sheet, which will include an outline of the engagement agenda to use and the template to be used when recording feedback from groups.

The next Board Forum could be used as an engagement session.

The Communication Committee will facilitate (with support from Board members) one or more engagement sessions that would be open to all congregants and would follow the same agenda and use the same template as the other engagement session.

The Communication Committee will finally compile the written submissions and the notes from engagement sessions and present the comments to the Board to review and consider during discussions regarding adopting goals for the Church.

Brad will develop a draft Engagement Session agenda and information sheet and a draft Engagement Template and will email them to Committee members for edits and comments.

Closing words

Respectfully submitted,
Brad Taylor