

UUFBR Board of Trustees Meeting

Minutes May 2022

Date: May 26, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM

In Attendance:

Board Members:

Louis Merlin

Bill Jensen

Carole Stephens

Paul Libert

Patrick Larson

Judy Keiser

Barbara Messick

John Tilton

Guests:

Reverend Harris

Elon Bateman

Celia Hirsch

Ellen Cormier

Charlie Cormier

Lynn Smith

Patricia Rogers

Barb Jensen

Betty Tilton

Agenda Item 1: Chalice Lighting

Judy Keiser led the attendees in meditation before the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Called to Order 7:10 PM

Called to order with a quorum of Board Members by Judy Keiser.

Agenda Item 3: Approval of Minutes

Paul Libert made a motion for approval of the April 2022 Board of Trustees minutes. Barbara Messick seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Minister's Report

Harris Riordan reported that Stephanie Monsour-Nixdorf is planning on changing her role as music director. She has written a letter explaining her new role. We will need a music committee to help facilitate this change. Many on the Board would like to see more detail from Stephanie regarding her precise responsibilities and compensation.

Agenda Item 5: Interim Minister Committee report

Elon Bateman reported that there is one candidate who has expressed interest in UUFBR. The Interim Ministry committee will be interviewing this candidate on June 2nd. However, the candidate has applied to other Congregations as well, so it is far from certain that they will come to UUFBR as an interim minister.

Agenda Item 6: VP-Facilities Report

Patrick Larson reported that the new flooring is underway with the Sanctuary basically done. Other rooms are currently underway.

He reported that the painting project is also underway. Tree work is scheduled soon. RE building ACs are also scheduled soon.

Patrick Larson noted that our current bulk nonprofit account for cleaning items is at Costco under Harris Riordan's name, and that needs to change. We can either transfer the existing account to a new person or open up a new account.

Agenda Item 6: Treasurer's Report

Paul Libert reported that the year-end report for FY 2021-2022 was distributed to the Board. The first month's (April 2022) financial report for the new fiscal year was also distributed.

Paul Libert moved that the board approve direct deposit of paychecks for all employees and that such deposits require written authorization of one signatory and the treasurer. Louis Merlin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul Libert moved that the board approve electronic bill payment of recurring bills and payments and that approval of such bills and payments require written authorization of one authorized signatory and the treasurer. Barbara Messick seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 7: Endowment Committee Report

The Board received a quarterly written Endowment Committee report from Patricia Rogers.

Agenda Item 8: Finance Committee Report

The Board received the written Finance Committee report from Patricia Rogers.

Agenda Item 9: Sharex Committee Report

John Tilton reported that we have discussed renting to the Palm Beach County election board, once for August and once for November. The offer is for \$400 each day. Judy Keiser pointed out that a past board decided not to rent to the election board due to discrimination against a local mosque. Betty Tilton will look into the election board's current policies and practices.

Agenda Item 10: RE Building Rental Report

Patricia Rogers reported that UUFBR's property has been operating under a Conditional Use Resolution. UUFBR has had three schools use the property under that authorization. The RE Building Rental committee has developed a lease with the French School in mind with a tentative rent of \$75,000/annually plus utilities. The City informed UUFBR that we must meet with them before renting to any outside organization. A real estate agent's representation has been obtained and he has already identified a prospective tenant, who has offered \$61,560 to lease just the RE Building.

Patricia Rogers reported that we may need legal assistance for land-use issues. Patricia Rogers requests permission to seek legal advice from the firm of Sachs Sax Caplan for lease review and a land-use consultation for a cost of up to \$1500. However, if we need a new conditional use permit, we may need further legal representation.

Bill Jensen made the motion to authorize the RE Building Rental Committee to hire Sachs Sax Caplan for consultation on a lease and land-use issues. Carole Stephens seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 11: RE Council Report

Louis Merlin submitted a written report on behalf of the RE Council.

Agenda Item 12: Legacy Group Report

Judy Keiser noted that the first article was in the May Unicorn and was about Doug Hughes. The second one will be in the June Unicorn about Harris Riordan.

Agenda Item 13: Membership Committee Report

The Membership Committee submitted a written report to the board about its May 10th meeting.

Agenda Item 14: IT Committee Report

Louis Merlin said there was no report from the IT Committee. Most of its action items are on hold.

Agenda Item 15: Landscape Committee Report

Celia Hirsch provided a written report on behalf of the Landscape Committee.

Agenda Item 16: Healing Justice Report

Healing Justice provided a written report.

Agenda Item 17: Community Service Committee

No report was provided by this committee.

Old Business

Agenda Item 13: Emergency Affidavit

Louis Merlin reported that the Emergency Affidavit for May 3rd has been completed and will be posted to Google Drive. He asked what Board members have the capability to print, sign, and scan these affidavits. BOT members with this ability include Judy Keiser, Louis Merlin, Paul Libert, and Patrick Larson. Patrick noted it would be desirable to set up a system for e-signatures.

Agenda Item 13: Internal Communication

Louis Merlin reported that there are several options for internal communication. The basic trade-off is between ease of use and advanced features. The most important advanced feature we might want are channels, that allow different conversations to include different people. He mentioned three options: the current Facebook group, the website, and Nextdoor. He recommended that UUFBR start a private group on Nextdoor.

Louis Merlin moved that the IT Team create a UUFBR group on Nextdoor for the exchange of information among members and friends. Paul Libert seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Harris retirement celebration planning progress

Judy Keiser announced that the invitation for Harris Retirement Celebration was sent out and encouraged everyone to RSVP online, attend, volunteer, and bring food. 40 people have RSVPed so far. Weekly planning meetings are held at 4 PM on Wednesday. <https://www.uufbr.org/farewellcelebrationletterharris/>

Summer Worship (if not covered by Minister's Report)

Bill Jensen reported on the state of summer worship.

Space Planning and Giveaway Days (if not covered by RE Council report) and new committee/working group: Closet Clearout Committee

Judy Keiser made a motion for a Closet Clearout Working Group. Barbara Messick seconded. This Working Group will be tasked with reorganize the materials in storage and deciding what items can be given away without affecting UUFBR's operations. We plan to hold one or two GiveAway days to give away things UUFBR no longer needs and connect with the local community.

Patricia Rogers requested that we not throw away cookbooks, tablecloths, or silverware. Patrick Larson mentioned that there are many items stored in the RE Building attic.

Bill Jensen suggested that Maria Mol could be part of this Working Group.

The motion passed unanimously.

Southern Region Board Training

Carole Stephens reported that there will be a class in August.

GA Delegate approval (Jim and Lynn Smith – any others?)

The board had an in-depth discussion about sending UUFBR delegates to UUA General Assembly. Generally, board members felt that any delegates should represent the will of UUFBR as a whole, not any particular members. Since we have not done the pre-work of discussing the issues before the General Assembly or hearing various points of view, the Board decided not to identify any representative at this time.

Issue of Sharex vs. exclusive use leases

Tabled.

Wishlist of functions we need handled (internal communication, interim period functions, Marketing/Social Media)

Tabled.

Board "At Home" time on Sundays – increased accessibility

Judy Keiser would like to have a Board member at a table on the patio and at a breakout room on Zoom available for community conversations on Sundays.

Date of Next Board Meeting

Thursday, June 23rd.

Visit St. Andrews

Skipping for June.

Bill Jensen can visit in September.

Board Welcome during Service

Several board welcomes have been identified by email prior to the meeting.

June 5 Louis Merlin

June 12 No Volunteer Needed
June 19 Paul Libert
June 26 Bill Jensen
July 3 Bill Jensen

Barbara Messick made a motion to adjourn. Louis Merlin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Having exhausted its time allotted, the meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Louis Merlin

VP Report – UUFBR meeting of Board of Trustees, May 26th, 2022

Patrick Larson

Recent items, volunteer:

1. Celia Hirsch, Mary Wickensheimer, Bill Jensen, and Harriet Schuman (“Landscaping work party”) continued the Tuesday work parties. Thank you!
2. In addition to the normal landscaping maintenance, the Landscaping work party did extensive work preparing the perimeter of the buildings and the garden walls for the Exterior Painting project.
3. Charlie Cormier replaced the old lights in the hallway of the Main building. Many of the old fluorescent lights were broken or failing. The new lights have LED bulbs, and the hallway is now bright and cheery (as much as an old hallway can be).
4. Charlie is in the process of replacing the broken casters on the hymnal cabinets. This was started in anticipation of the installation of the new flooring.
5. Charlie replaced some broken receptacles and GFCIs.
6. Patrick drafted an “Independent Contractor Agreement” for contractors to sign prior to working on projects at UUFBR. The agreement was based mostly on an example agreement posted by the city of Fernandina Beach, FL.
7. Patrick measured the “as-built” interior dimensions of all rooms in the buildings and annotated these onto the existing floor plans. There were several discrepancies of the as-built dimensions compared to the plans. Alison Rognas is in the process of updating the digitized floor plans to match the observed dimensions.
8. Patrick repaired the subfloor at the base of the east glass wall of the Sanctuary. The glass wall on that side had been installed on wood sills for some reason, and the boards in some locations were not stable. The boards were fastened securely to the concrete to allow the installation of the new flooring.
9. Patrick made repairs to the stage and the choir platforms in preparation for the installation of flooring (carpet).
10. Patrick repaired the door of the north hallway so it will latch on its own. For a long time, this door has been unable to latch on its own, and it was frequently found to be ajar.

Recent items, hired:

1. All Around General Services is nearly done with the Exterior Painting. The Garden Walls are still underway, and some of the soffit vents remain to be replaced.
2. Flooring SF is nearly done with the Flooring in the Main building. The floors in the Sanctuary and Osias Hall are done, and the stage is underway. The Foyer and Offices remain.

Pending items:

1. **Tree Work** – T&V Lawn Maintenance & Tree Service is scheduled for **May 31 - June 1**. This work was rescheduled in order to prevent interference with the Exterior Painting.
2. **Air Conditioning Units in RE building** – Pride Air Conditioning is scheduled for **June 6 & 8**.
3. **Power-Line Burial** – GO Electric had a rough-in inspection of the underground conduits on May 25. The inspector requested to see the boring logs, and the contractor sent them for review.
4. **Fire-Alarm System for Main** – Alpha Security & Fire inspected the building on May 5th and is preparing an estimate. Other companies are pending, but the process has been slow. I think we

should consider hiring the engineering portion separately in order to expand the set of possible companies to bid. (Some potential installers rely on 3rd parties for engineering.)

5. **Parking-Lot Lights** – (no change since last update) We have one bid from Caner Electrical for \$10,075. Three other companies have done site visits and were provided the site plan and the foot-candle map. None have sent proposals yet. I will contact additional companies.
6. **Inspection for termites** – This was an action item from the building inspector (that we hired last summer). There was some “old” damage observed at the outside north wall of the Sanctuary. Although no active infestation was observed, inspection was recommended. Since that time, the flat roof has been repaired, the window frames of the north wall have been repaired, and the building exterior has been sealed and painted.
7. **Remove the unsightly Ficus bushes** – This is planned to be done in stages by volunteers. There are 84 bushes at the south property line alone.
8. **Review Comcast/Xfinity service** – We spend about \$240/month on Comcast. We probably have more services than we need. We can probably reduce the bill substantially.

Action items: NA

1. **Shall we update the Costco account or create a new Costco account?** Presently Harris has an account that is associated with UUFBR for the purpose of tax exemption.
 - a. Option #1 is to request Harris to visit Costco in person and either:
 - i. change the named individual on the account, or
 - ii. remove the tax-exempt association with UUFBR.
 - b. Option #2 (need to verify) would be for an authorized person to create a new account, and associate it with UUFBR for tax exemption.
 - c. FYI, for a “business” account, each “employee” that is authorized to use the account costs an additional \$60/year.
 - d. Option #3 is to have no Costco account.

RE Building Lease Report

May 26, 2022

By Patricia Rogers

This is to provide you with an update on the lease of the RE Building. I am requesting one decision from the Board.

Land Use/Zoning

1. The UUFBR has been operating under Conditional Use Resolution 81-2004, approved by the City of Boca Raton.

In the past, UUFBR has, under 81-2004, housed a number of schools. However, when The French School (School) submitted its application to move the School to the UUFBR, the City informed the School that UUFBR must meet with the Development Department before any approvals would be issued. It is possible a modified or new Conditional Use may be required.

1. I spoke with the Development Department, and am setting up an appointment. After a meeting with the City, I will know if a new Conditional Use is necessary. At that time, I will advise on the estimated cost of an attorney (while we can draft in house, we would need review by and assistance from an attorney qualified in land use/zoning. (See Lease #2).
2. **This may delay the UUFBR ability to lease the RE Building.**

Realtor

1. As previously discussed, Co-President Sandy Troiano signed an agreement with a realtor, Joe Hillner, to find UUFBR a tenant for the RE Building (REB). He, Patrick, Harris, and I walked the REB and grounds. UUFBR agreed that Joe would not advertise until the exterior was painted, the grounds cleaned up, and the sidewalks pressured cleaned. All of these activities are in process.
2. Although Joe has not yet advertised the REB, he showed it to a potential lessee on Monday or Tuesday.

Potential Lessees

1. As reported at the last Board meeting, The French School (School) has offered to lease the REB and one office in the main building. UUFBR and the School tentatively agreed upon a rent of \$75,000 (approximately \$21/square foot). The School would be responsible for electricity and other costs. The lease is under negotiation.

The School submitted its application to the City of Boca Raton yesterday. The City informed the School that UUFBR must meet with the Development Department before any approvals would be issued.

The School may withdraw its offer if the UUFBR is unable to utilize the 81-2004 and must apply for a modified Conditional Use.

1. Joe has submitted an offer for lease of the REB only. The proffered annual amount is \$61,560 (\$18/square foot), plus a percentage of utilities, insurance, and other costs. I have not determined what the likely gross lease amount would be.

Decisions requested: I request approval to collaborate with the Co-Presidents in determining if this potential lessee is suitable. If the Co-Presidents concur, I request approval to negotiate a proposed lease for approval by the Board.

Office Space/Clearing REB

1. The RE Council met and has developed a plan for emptying the REB. This will be achieved by the middle to end of June.
2. The RE Council, Co-President Judy Keiser, and I met to discuss the use of the various offices in the main building. No final decision has been made as to which office UUFBR shall assign if an office in the main building is necessary for the REB lessee. Additionally, an office will be needed for the acupuncture clinic (see #3 below).
3. I will require the assistance of John and Betty Tilton, Sharex, to discuss moving the Acupuncture Clinic to the main building, once a potential lessee for the REB is firmed up. We should review the terms of the agreement between the UUFBR and the Clinic to assure that UUFBR is in compliance with any conditions and agreements in the current agreement.

Lease.

1. Co-President Sandy Troiano drafted a commercial lease, which Co-President Judy Keiser and I reviewed, and I have "finalized." It is pending review by an attorney, and agreement by UUFBR and a selected lessee.

Legal Assistance

1. The law firm originally recommended (Dunay, Miskel & Backman, LLP) has been non-responsive. Co-President Judy Keiser approved using this attorney for land use and review of the lease, at an approximate \$1,000.

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2. I contacted Lou Caplan of Sachs Sax Caplan, who has agreed to represent UUFBR. He is preparing a letter of agreement. Mr. Caplan is Board certified in Land Use.

Finance Committee Report

May 26, 2022

From Patricia Rogers

The Finance Committee met on May 16th.

Discussion:

- Treasurer Paul Libert had previously sent out the end-of-year reports and the April financials. There were no questions from the Committee.
- Vice President Patrick Larson updated the Committee on the Capital Projects progress.
- I updated the Committee on the process on leasing the French School. We are awaiting information from the attorney. Depending on what the attorney states, we may need to go to the City. Bill asked that UUFBR obtain a written recommendation for the French School (done).
- Betty Tilton, Chair of the Interim Minister Committee, provided an update regarding the process. The Finance Committee briefly discussed alternatives, were UUFBR not to be offered an interim minister, or if the interim minister was not accepted by the Board. The Committee suggested the Board and Committees may be able to bring together the UUFBR to move forward, were UUFBR not to have an interim minister.
- I directed each member of the Finance Committee to bring to the June meeting one realistic fund-raising suggestion.

There were no recommendations for Board action.

Plan B Meetings.

The Plan B meetings have been well attended. We have had 3 so far, with the last scheduled meeting this Sunday in person after worship. Attached to this report is a sheet titled The Minister's Jobs. I hope this guide will help you apportion responsibilities into smaller doable chunks.

The meetings have done thier work so far.

1. Changing shock and worry into a positive attitude. Folks are well on their way from "Oh, My How can we ever" to "We can do this! "

2. Folks are volunteering to take on important jobs. You already have 3 folks who have committed to being a worship committee: Nick Sanchez, Bill Jensen and Lynn Smith. They have both knowledge and passion. The IT team, which needs more members to run Sunday Services has also seen folks set up to be trained. These are all good signs.

3. You will need to recruit more members to these and other needed committees and working groups, as you move into the next stage of this process, which is to empower and support each committee or task force as they go about handling their responsibilities.

4. The Board will need to evolve new ways of working with all these groups, providing support and guidance without micro managing them. You will have to set up procedures and a set of norms to guide you, otherwise, Board, you will burn out. There's just too much work to do. I would suggest that over the summer you assign Board Members to be liaisons to each important working group. Liaisons can support the committees and help them decide what they are empowered to do and what need the Board's involvement

5. The news that you got a nibble in the second round of the Interim Search is great. And this possibility may ease the urgency of the process we have just started. But. Remember the numbers. 54 congregations searching for an IM 44 IM's searching for a congregation. This minister who is about to be interviewed by your committee is looking at 5 other congregations. You need to continue with all deliberate speed.

6. I will be as helpful and supportive as I can in the next month. I can get these conversations started, and offer all the information I have that seems useful. But I leave town on June 29th . After that the support I can give will diminish.

MINISTER'S JOBS

SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE - WORSHIP PLUS

Committees to be involved.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

- Plans the year in worship From the Balcony View
- Regular Sundays Schedules preachers, service leaders, coordinates Board Welcome & Zoom Chaplains
- Creates teams for Holy days and Holidays that will continue (Water Communion, Legacy Sunday, Hunger Communion, Solstice, Xmas Eve, Passover, Easter, Flower Communion)
- Works with IT team for hybrid services
- Works with Music Committee

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Song Leaders, Recorded Music

IT COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE - greeters welcome to visitors

ORPHANED FUNCTIONS AT THE MOMENT

Coffee Hour

Ushers

Religious Education

- For children and Teens- working with the RE Council.
- For adults There are self-sustaining programs. Will you need more? How will they be created and sustained?

Pastoral Care

- Life Celebrations
Memorial Services, Baby Naming, Graduations, Weddings

Local UU Ministers to fill in

- Emergences - The Caring Team is willing and able, if folks ask.
- Pastoral Care - is everybody's job

Staff Supervision Staff is strong and very capable.

- Office Karen is organized, responsible and a self-started. Coordinates well with Patrick on building use. Can handle tasks that the office must do. Deserves clear expectations and one person as designated supervisor.
- Finances Paul and Robert have put our financial house in order. With the new software, I no longer have the knowledge to actually supervise this work. I offer support when the going gets tough and advice when there is a problem to unravel.
- B & G As long as Patrick is the VP, no supervision is needed. His skills, judgement and wisdom in working with the board and coordinating with the office are stellar. Trust him. Support him. Treasure him. .
- Music I suggest forming a Music Committee to help coordinate with the worship committee
- RE The Council is doing an inspired and thoughtful job, tackling the problem of re-starting the RE program, and inviting parents and families back into in person fellowship. The Board and the congregation will need to support and co-ordinate with them. .

My suggestions for staff supervision.

1. Make sure you have clear expectations. Share those widely and often.
2. Board appoint one trustee, or give the job to the co-presidents.

Things to Watch Out For

MINISTER AS SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR

You are not as good as you could be in communicating with each other. You forget to tell each other early enough what's happening when. The minister facilitates this, and now you will have to be intentional about making sure it is done.

INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

Done my best to do brain dumps. (Check old minister's reports on the Board's Archives). Louis has created a google drive to store all of these. I will put the ones I am still working on there, but I do not think I will have the time to go through the archives and move others into that drive. My suggestion: If you find the Brain Dump on the holiday party, or the history of Endowment useful , then transfer it to the google drive.

I will prepare inventories of what is stored in which closet. I will post this on Brain Dump Drive and leave hard copies in the office.

But there will be gaps. Snafu's will arise from those gaps. Keep your sense of humor. Practice a bit of humility and forgiveness. Get into the habit of asking, often "Is there history here, we need to know about?"

HERDING CATS - PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION - GETTING SHOOTING STARS TO DANCE IN A CONSTELLATION

These are all the metaphors I have used to describe and essential and invisible part of my job description. I suppose it goes under "13. Other duties as required." With a group of smart committed folks like UUFBR, it is always needed. And it takes more time, more phone calls, more e-mails than you think.

FROM: Religious Education Council (RE Council)

TO: UUFBR Board of Trustees

RE: Monthly Report for May, 2022

DATE: May 25, 2022

The **OWL (Our Whole Lives, human sexuality education) program held an open house** for parents on Friday, May 13th. The open house included the two facilitators identified for the Owl program, Amy Levine and Ed Proulx, as well as parent and child alumni from previous OWL programs held at UUFBR. The audience in attendance strongly agreed on the profound benefits of OWL sexuality education for teens (and persons of other age groups as well). Logistics of the OWL program were also discussed. A variety of handouts about our OWL program are available on request.

The RE Council met on Friday, May 13th primarily to **discuss the impact of the potential rental of the RE Building on child and family-oriented functions**. The RE Council agreed to prioritize identifying rooms for the ongoing Teen Room (currently in the RE Building) and a childcare room (currently in the main building). A nursery is also desirable. The RE Council proposed moving the Teen Room to the current Living Room and shifting AA meetings to the current Minister's office.

The RE Council also brainstormed ways to deal with excess stuff currently in storage. The RE Council believes that space for people and activities should generally take priority over space for storage unless the stored items are regularly a part of UUFBR programming (i.e. Christmas decorations). We recommend holding one or two Giveaway Days to help reduce our current holdings and build goodwill with the local community. Detailed notes on the Giveaway Day proposal are available upon request.

Full notes of the RE Council meeting on Friday May 13th are available upon request.

Danielle Smith is the latest person to join the RE Council. We welcome her and her energy with open arms!

The next meeting of the RE Council will be held on **Sunday, June 19th at 1:30 PM** on Zoom.

RE Council Chair, Louis Merlin, 404-374-7532, louismerlin@gmail.com.

Brief Information about Healing Justice from the meeting on May 24, 2022 on ZOOM at 7:30

Present: Betty and John Tilton

Jim and Lynn Smith

Jennifer Ligetti

Carolyn Brown

We talked about the upcoming Summer Service. Our final title for that service is **Healing Our Hurts and Hearts** . The date for this service is August 21, 2022.

Our aim is to share the ways we and other UUs can provide healing for the hurts within ourselves, fellow congregants, and our wider community. We plan to share from different perspectives what the hurts might be like and how we in our own congregation as well as the wider UU community provide healing opportunities for others. Injuries experienced may be inflicted from a variety of dislikes, hatreds, prejudices and biases. Some may be as blatant as murder or as subtle as not being included in activities.

We also discussed the place of Justice Work at UUFBR. This is a topic we will be addressing further in future meetings.

Landscape Committee Report May 26, 2022

By Celia Hirsch

Here is my report.

1. Memorial garden. Sharon Drew has ordered another granite wall plaque and the backlog of small name plaques. Helen Rockberger's granddaughter Becca recently requested burial and plaques for Helen and also for Becca's Mom, who recently died in an auto accident. Sharon is finalizing these arrangements with Harris.
2. Next Zoom meeting is June 7. We plan to put copies of our approved minutes on file in the UU office.
3. Tree pruning and removal is scheduled for Tuesday, May 31. Committee members plan to observe the work going on that day and possibly on June 1.
4. The issue of keeping and maintaining vs. removing 85-100 ficus bushes continues.
5. Celia has given handouts covering weekly maintenance tasks and a report by Susan Kimball about her landscape design in the early 1990's. Also filed in office.
6. Harriet Schuman is active in maintaining the Memorial Garden and other areas on the property.
7. We are still experimenting with small ground covers for use in the shaded area for ashes.
8. Behind the large dumpster in the back, Bill Jensen has been organizing piles of material for composting, and Mary Wickensheimer is making signs to guide persons who put cuttings there. Patrick successfully used a blower to vac and mulch dead leaves to create mulch. UU should probably purchase its own blower/vac if we plan to do this. Master gardener supports this practice unless the material has been heavily sprayed or fertilized with nonorganic chemicals.
9. The Nelsons donated a 3 gal. Simpson Stopper native bush/tree that they acquired from a Boynton tree giveaway event. We will discuss ideal places for planting it, it can grow to 20ft maximum height. I will be advocating to place it for maximum growth, where it can add shade and many leaves to replace some of the trees we will be removing on the 31st. All removals being done were suggested by a certified arborist because they were: dead or very nearly dead, non-native, were shrubs that were allowed to grow tall, are too close to walls, gutters, or sidewalks, or create weekly heavy maintenance that we cannot afford.
10. Finally, we need to ask all members that any suggestions or donations of plants pass to this committee for approval. We are trying to maintain a mostly native landscape that will succeed as the climate gets hotter. There are really a lot of plant treasures already on the property, but some are struggling to get enough water to thrive. We are doing ongoing evaluation as to whether any areas will need repairs to the sprinkler system.

Celia Hirsch, Chair, Landscape Committee

Stephanie Nixdorf
Music Director/UUFBR
May 24th, 2022

Hello Friends:

I am writing you this letter to outline some ideas that Harris and I have been discussing over the past few months as her retirement looms closer and closer. Prior to the pandemic, Harris and I used to discuss the notion that we would leave the UU together. This year, it's obvious to me that the UUFBR can not absorb the loss of the minister and the music director all at once. We are already struggling with attendance and the path forward.

I'm going to blow my own horn here for a moment, and then I'm going to pitch some ideas that I believe will best serve us moving forward. Depending on what you're looking for, it won't be easy to replace me. I have advanced degrees in music, 26 years of teaching and choral conducting experience and as many years staging performances in theater. In other words, I can do a lot with very little. Since the pandemic, choir members have left the UU, decided not to return to choir due to aging and the effects of aging on the voice and moved away. It is going to be a long process to recruit a Chalice Choir the likes of which we have had in the past. Additionally, you need someone who understands and can teach proper vocal technique to maximize the limited talent that most voluntary choirs are composed of.

After 15 years as your Music Director, I am looking to have weekends free so I can pursue other interests and spend more time with my husband. I have been working for churches since I was 16 years old: it's time for a change. That being said, I have some ideas for the coming year that could improve the fellowship musical culture and integrate some new ideas for the path forward.

Here are some thoughts that I have discussed with Harris:

1. This year, I would like to stay on as more of a Music Director who is on somewhat of a sabbatical. I would like the opportunity to not have to be there or online every week while I decide if I wasn't to continue on next year and beyond.
2. I would like the UUFBR to hire a pianist(s) to be my permanent sub for the year. I would like to aid in the hiring of this individual or individuals. I feel that the area university music departments will be invaluable in this search. This way, you will always have an accompanist for the hymns and live music. I believe the stipend for this service will have to be in the \$100-150/service range. The fee should be commensurate with experience and the level of commitment of the musician. This would constitute approximately 1/3rd of my salary.
3. I believe that the Sundays should be divided thematically each month:

1. **Sing In Sundays:** Once a month, choir members and new people interested in singing come to the UU for 1 Sunday a month to learn a piece for the service on the same day. Minimal commitment and hopefully fun. This would get our people singing again and perhaps recruit some new talent for the future.

2. **Drum Circle Sundays:** I spoke with Dave Van Camp about this idea which he loved. Either Dave, or someone he knows from the drumming community would lead a drum ensemble to accompany 1 service a month. Obviously, the pianist would be there also for hymns, etc...

3. **Classical Music Sundays:** Here, the pianist and myself would recruit area musicians and music students to perform with us on 1 Sunday per month. It could be a regular gig or new people every month.

4. **Folk Music/Culture Sundays:** On folk music Sundays, we will put together a group of musicians who will volunteer to bring their gift to the UUFBR throughout the year. We will share their products, promote their music, and whatever else we can do to show our appreciation for their gift. We have several musicians in the fellowship membership rolls who may be willing to volunteer and also reach out to friends.

I believe that some of our UU musical traditions are so important to the fellowship and should not be tampered with :

Christmas Eve and the **Solstice** service. I am guaranteeing my presence at the helm of these services next year to ensure that the Holiday traditions that often bring in people from the Community and family from out of town will carry on.

These ideas will involve a lot of collaboration between Ron Roth, our cantor in residence and myself. I am also in the process of forming a Music Committee that will assist in procuring talent and planning these services.

I am more than happy to discuss these ideas with you all, but this is the path I am envisioning for next year as we navigate these strange times at the UUFBR. I fully believe that some of this might really reinvigorate music at the UUFBR, and also provide me with a much needed break from the 7 day work week that I have been working for so many years.

Thank you for your understanding and I look forward to our future collaborations.

Stephanie