

## UUFH BOARD MEETING

September 16, 2025

**Attendees:** Liza Burby, Laura Otton, Allyson Barish, Melissa Dinsman, Connie Rinaldi, Susan Peters, Rev. Israel Buffardi

**Absent:** Jim Ammerman, Jenna Kern-Rugile, Jon Nielsen

**Chalice Lighting** (Liza):

*We light our chalice to signify our commitment*

*To support one another*

*In our personal and spiritual quests for wisdom and understanding.*

*May the flicker of the chalice light remind us to offer*

*Sensitivity, respect, honesty, generosity, and love to all gathered here.*

**Covenant:** Reviewed by Susan

**Discussion and Vote Items:**

**Consent Agenda:**

August Minutes - approved unanimously. Susan will send approved minutes to Sandra to be posted on website.

**Minister's Report:** Israel is looking forward to the Board retreat. He has met with most of the committees and is almost finished setting up his office. Israel expressed interest in introducing a spiritual element to future Board meetings.

**Board Retreat:** All will meet at 6:30 at UUFH on October 3 for a potluck dinner and group photo. Email will go out to schedule Zoom calls with Erin Hilgart, the facilitator. October 4 all will meet at Pumpkin Patch to help, then take another photo and continue on to the Fellowship. The agenda will focus on how to move forward.

**Nominating Committee:** Positions to be filled for next year's Board are Vice President and two trustees. Laura Otton will speak with committee chair Nancy Wilkow to see if there are others. Would like to have Nominating Committee also fill positions for committee chairs as several key positions will be rotating off. Jason D'Orazio is rotating off Buildings & Grounds.

The discussion also covered the Personnel Committee's structure, with Connie Rinaldi, Laura Gerdes, and Maria Nielsen currently serving, and Rev. Israel expressing his intention to participate in staff evaluations, though these are traditionally conducted by the minister as Chief of Staff. Connie offered to organize a meeting with Laura Gerde, Maria Nielsen and Israel to align on expectations and next steps.

**Religious Education Strategy Shift:** The Board discussed revising their approach to Religious Education initiatives, voting to table the previously approved charter in favor of a new direction led by Minister Israel and the RE Committee.

**Governance Model Review and Decision:** The Board discussed the governance model, with Laura presenting a comprehensive report and recommendations—which was much appreciated! We decided to wait before voting on making the Hotchkiss model permanent, agreeing to give it another year under Rev. Israel's leadership to address concerns and make necessary adjustments. The Board also discussed sharing the report and survey results with the congregation after the upcoming Board retreat, and agreed to make the governance structure charts more readily available.

**Committee Recruitment and Visibility Plan:** The Board discussed challenges with committee visibility and recruitment, particularly for less visible roles like ushers and counters. We agreed to create simple informational materials about committees and volunteer opportunities, with Melissa offering to help create these materials if committee heads provide the necessary information. It was decided to start with basic handouts for the upcoming volunteer fair on the 28th, with plans to develop a more comprehensive brochure for the spring fair. Additionally, the need was raised for regular Sunday morning sessions to help members navigate and understand the website's membership resources. Liza mentioned that tutorials should also be done for the Auction as some members and newcomers said they weren't sure how to use it so missed out. Allyson clarified that the Auction falls under Stewardship, and she will consider working with that committee to create a video tutorial for the Auction process after the first of the year. The group also touched on the upcoming conversion to Realm, with plans for Lucy Booths to assist members in converting their automated donations.

**Strategic Planning:** Laura mentioned that she had not received updates on Strategic Planning and would follow up before the Board retreat.

**Finance Update:** Allyson has a preliminary profit & loss statement for last year, but it is not finalized yet, which showed we exceeded our pledge number and were 75% of our building use budget due to vacancies, while income was at 97% of budget and expenses were below target, resulting in approximately \$40,000 in surplus. We discussed plans for the Welcome Garden pavers, where Valerie Scopaz is moving forward with the project despite budget constraints, and Laura suggested exploring fundraising options through Faithify. Allyson agreed to review the financial details further and planned to close the books by next month, after which we will discuss potential uses of the surplus funds, including general reserve or specific projects. Realm integration is moving along. The pilot program will have 20 members participating. Allyson needs to set a date for full launch. Susan commented on the list of policies that need updating, and mentioned that she would look into the question of bonding for the treasurer's office. Allyson and Susan discussed following up with Church Mutual for clarification.

**Thank You of the Month suggestions:** A Thank you will be announced for the Kitchen crew volunteers for providing summer refreshments that will include Judy Cartwright, et al.

**Next Board Meeting:** October 21, 2025 at 7pm

*Respectfully submitted by Debbie Hocevar, Board Scribe*