

Minutes of the UUCWI Leadership Council Retreat
November 12, 2016
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island

Members Present: Laurie Riley (chair, Leadership Council), David Davis (treasurer), Donna Davis (chair, Care and Connections), Lisa Siders (chair, Music Committee) Rev. Dennis Reynolds, Christi Shaffer (co-chair, Visual Arts Committee), Joan Gerteis (chair, Library Committee), Larry Morrell (Committee on Ministry), Gene Berg (chair, Buildings and Grounds Committee and member of Membership Committee), Sara Heath (Committee on Ministry), Clara Beier (Board member), Katy Shaner (chair, Refreshments Committee), Sarah Richards (President of Board of Trustees), Mavis Cauffman (Choir Director and Worship Committee), Suzi Pengilly (administrator).

Laurie Riley, chair, opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. Suzi Pengilly, UUCWI administrator, offered to take minutes.

Rev. Dennis Reynolds read a poem while the chalice was lit. The group shared thoughts on the recent national events.

Healthy Congregations Presentation

Larry Morrell presented the *Healthy Congregations* program. One concept the program addresses is that the way we frame “stories” from our congregation affects how we view the future. That is, using more constructive or positive language can lead the congregation toward a more positive and productive future. It also maintains that diverse people and diverse opinions should not just be tolerated in a congregation but welcomed and invited. We need to create an environment where people feel safe to express their opinions. The Committee on Ministry (CoM) plans to present the concepts of this program as *UU Talks* in January, February, and March (January 20, 6-8:30 p.m., February 17, March 24). *Healthy Congregations* will then be an on-going curriculum for members.

Sara Heath continued by presenting the *polarities* part of the program. Clara Beier led an exercise in examining polarities.

Scheduling Committee Meetings

Laurie passed out the procedures for scheduling committee meetings and events at UU. Discussion continued about reserving specific rooms and the roles of the building host and sound tech. Suzi will assign rooms. The reservation request should include the number of people expected to attend and which classroom is desired, if appropriate.

Visual Arts Committee (VAC) Short video / discussion on purchase of new screen

The VAC has found an electric floor stand screen which if approved, would be funded by a special fund-raising event. Members showed a brief video on the unit. Joan Gerteis explained the concern about damaging the wall hangings from moving them aside to project on the wall. The wall hangings were designed and sewn by two members of the congregation.

Mavis Cauffman pointed out a bigger issue about the set up with the projector and difficulties projecting so all members, e.g., members in the back, can see the projection. Katy Shaner asked about installing an electric screen above the wall hangings that could be lowered in front of the wall hangings when needed

Larry suggested that the shades be lowered whenever the wall hangings are moved. He also suggested the congregation needs to have a technology road map as part of long range planning to address issues like this as the needs of the congregation grow.

Sarah recommended tabling this issue until more committees can get involved.

Updated Roles and Responsibilities

Laurie reminded everyone to submit their revised Roles and Responsibilities to Sarah for Board review and then to Suzi for safe keeping on the church computer. Katy submitted her Roles and Responsibilities for the Refreshments Committee, a new committee.

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Leadership Council Roles and Responsibilities

Laurie asked for feedback by November 19 on the Leadership Council's Roles and Responsibilities.

Leadership Council Membership

Laurie asked for thoughts on opening up membership to the Leadership Council to those who have held past leadership positions and are still considered leaders but are not heading a committee

Sarah Richards suggested having a "council of elders" that would help to preserve the institutional memory of the congregation. Joan seconded the idea. Katy asked about the size of the leadership council, and if the elders could make guest appearances. The discussion continued about the role of elders and sages in the community, and how to tap into their guidance in future discussions. It could be a group rather than a committee. The first step should be forming a list of those who have been in the Congregation for some time and retain some institutional memory.

Mavis reminded the group of Malcolm Ferrier's history of the congregation and church construction. Joan said that she has a box of documents related to the history of the church. Katy offered to serve as the church historian.

New Members: Shepherding and Serving

Laurie asked about the responsibilities for shepherding new members, and how can we best serve new members and get them involved and informed.

Gene stated that the membership committee tries to track of new members for a short time, but all members have responsibility to help new members get involved. Dennis suggested a mentoring program, as used by some congregations. Joan said that all members, including new members, may be better informed of committee business if committees use multiple ways to disseminate information (electronic, print, etc.). Larry suggested a UU 201 where relatively new members can get together for fellowship and to receive guidance on getting more involved.

Donna Davis offered to work with Membership to set up a mentoring program of some type.

Committee Concerns

Laurie posed four questions to the Council:

1. Do you feel your committee is heard and appreciated?
2. Which committees need new members, and how can we help get them? How can we help congregants and new members connect with our committees?
3. Do you feel your committee is getting its work done? If not, what are the roadblocks to getting your work done?
4. What can we do to better connect and communicate between committees and the Board?

Katy expressed her desire that members, when bringing refreshments, follow the guidelines that the Refreshments committee developed.

Sarah Richards said that there are all sorts of avenues for communication from the committees to the congregation. Sara Heath said that the CoM puts their information out there in many different forms to try to reach as many people as possible.

Discussion continued about putting a committee insert(s) in the OS or having handouts available for folks when they come in the door. The discussion continued about whether committees should be “allowed” to put notices on the chairs on Sunday (“seat mail”). Should committee heads have a right to disseminate information in any manner? Should committee chairs be invited to make the decision to put notices out?

After further discussion, the Council moved that *committee chairs should be authorized to communicate with the congregation through “seat mail” (placing flyers on the sanctuary chair seats) for a three-month trial*. Sarah will take this motion to the entire Board for discussion and approval.

Suzi agreed to put together a description of the committees and committee chairs for the benefit of new members.

With regard to communication between the Board and Committees, Sarah reminded the group that each committee has a Board liaison who should be communicating with the Board about committee business. If this is not working, both the Board member and the committee chair need to ensure they are communicating as needed. Katy pointed out that the Refreshments Committee needs a Board liaison.

Other discussions as needed

Sarah reported that Linda Good is interested in holding an event in 2018 to celebrate the congregation’s 25th anniversary. She will be looking for volunteers to help with this event. The congregation was founded in the spring, but the event will take place in the summer or fall.

Laurie set the next meeting for Feb. 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:15.

Topics held for next meeting:

- How we can best utilize our spaces to let Dennis and Suzi have a dedicated office?
- Need a new Auction Chairperson / introduction of possible new auction format. Laurie and Larry resigned their chairs for the auction committee.

