

UUTC Board/Ministry Retreat Minutes
October 8, 2020 @ 5:30pm via Zoom

Present: Betty Kendrick, Kevin Lausch, Gail Meyers, Quim Moya, Rev. Bob Renjilian, Bart Renner, Michael Solomon, Kay Webb, Elizabeth Williams, RK Young, and Susan Zelle

Welcome, Check-In, and Opening Words: The meeting opened with a check-in with those attending and a reading by Susan Zelle. Quim Moya was welcomed as the newest member of the Board.

The Business of the Board: Rev. Bob highlighted chapter 5 of the book Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss. Aspects highlighted included fiduciary, strategic and generative responsibilities of a board. A board should set the tone and tenor for its congregation and its mission, do strategic planning for 3-5 years out, and engage in forward thinking towards a longer-term vision of 5-10 years.

Our Vision: Michael Solomon shared the “Vision 2025” presentation that the Council presented to the congregation in October of 2019 to remind participants where we are in the visioning process and to provide a backdrop for consideration of next steps. Michael would like to see the Council continue the visioning work of developing strategic goals for the next 3-5 years.

Five Assumptions: Prior to the meeting, participants read “Five Assumptions Failing Us Now,” an article from the Congregational Consulting Group. It covers long-standing assumptions about belonging, engagement and membership that are being challenged during the pandemic: 1) geography dictates belonging, 2) discipleship begins with membership, 3) worship participation is the best indicator of member engagement, 4) in-person engagement is more authentic than online engagement, and 5) belonging requires owning the “whole” church. While the congregation is unable to meet in-person for church services and activities, new ways to connect need to be developed and expanded. Questions to consider once we return to our physical space: what happens to newly formed online communities? what does “membership” mean to someone who does not interact in our physical space? what does authentic engagement look like in a virtual world and how do we measure and track it? does it matter whether people are engaging life in the church synchronously or asynchronously?

Focus and Goals: The focus seemed to land on how to keep youth and adults connected and involved in UUTC services and activities while the building is closed, as well as after re-opening. Suggestions included improving ventilation system within the building, enhancing outdoor meeting spaces, offering more small-group activities in the outdoor spaces, offering more online activities for CRE and ARE, maintaining online access/presence after re-entering the building. Retreat participants agreed to engage Members and Friends to determine how they would want to keep youth and adults connected and involved with UUTC. Each participant was asked to send 2-3 questions to RK that might be posed to Members and Friends in virtual or in-person discussions. After these discussions, the Board will develop specific goals to address staying connected and engaged.

Respectfully submitted,
Kay Webb,
Secretary