

President's Report

April 15, 2010

Fellow Trustees,

Obviously the main item of this meeting is the budget, however Patti is out of the office so the actual budget is being sent later. Justin's report discusses the major initiatives he is proposing. There are a couple of other items that need time as well. As far as I can tell we never took formal action to schedule the annual meeting of the congregation or the board special meeting for our retreat that same day, so I have added that action to the consent calendar. I have also added an executive session to begin a discussion of ministerial compensation for next year. With me being gone and Patti and Justin also being gone I am not able to send any background information for this discussion at this time but hope to either send something before the meeting or have it at the meeting.

I had expected that there would also be action items related to finance matters but Nancy and I have both been gone and have not been able to communicate about this so I have left this off this agenda and expect to deal with it in May. That may change when Nancy is back and we can talk.

As you will see there is also an update on our current question of the month process. Along with wanting to keep a focus on this so we wrap up our committee meetings and report our results, I wanted to give time for Justin to help us reflect more on what we should properly do with the results once we are finished. The agenda is a little tight for time, so this may have to get moved to May also.

Barry

Board of Trustees Meeting
April 15, 2010
Agenda

- 6:30 Gather
 - Chalice lighting and opening words - Justin
- 6:40 Consent Agenda
 - Approve March minutes
 - Approve new members
 - Set annual meeting of the congregation for June 6, 11:15 a.m.
 - Set special meeting of the board of trustees for June 6, 2010, 12:30 p.m.
- 6:40 Review the Past
 - Sr. Minister report
 - Financial monitoring report
- 6:50 Create the Future
 - 6:50 2010-2011 Budget
 - Action: Provide feedback
 - 7:50 Second Question of the Month update
 - Action: None
 - 8:05 Executive Session
- 8:20 Meeting Summary and Evaluation: Decisions review, action items & assignments
- 8:25 Closing - Justin
- 8:30 Adjourn

Attachments:

1. President's Report
2. Attendance Report
3. Report of the Staff Management Team
4. Statistical Report
5. Finance Report
6. Draft 2010-2011 Budget (to be sent separately)

Next meeting: Thursday, May 20

Budget meeting for congregation: May 12, 7:00 p.m.

March Attendance	2010			2009			2008		
Adults	9:00 AM	11:00 AM		9:00 AM	11:00 AM		9:00 AM	11:00 AM	
1st Week	204	365	569	83	281	364	140	277	417
2nd Week	118	350	468	76	219	295	119	326	445
3rd Week	207	409	616	186	404	590	184	481	665
4th Week	153	376	529	109	245	354	131	272	403
5th Week	0	0	0	110	168	278			
Monthly Total	682	1500	2182	564	1317	1881	574	1356	1930
Avg for March	170.5	375	545.5	113	263	376	144	339	483
Church School									
1st Week	83	181	264	69	204	273	71	113	184
2nd Week	65	148	213	83	233	316	80	149	229
3rd Week	88	203	291	75	169	244	69	120	189
4th Week	72	165	237	58	190	248	73	120	193
5th Week	0	0	0	63	173	236			
Monthly Total	308	697	1005	348	969	1317	293	502	795
Avg for March	77	174.25	251.25	70	194	263	73	126	199
Combined Avg	247.5	549.25	796.75			639			682

Notes:

1st Week Justin Schroeder
2nd Week Justin Schroeder
3rd Week Kate Tucker
4th Week Justin Schroeder

Church School Notes:

2nd Week No COA
4th Week No SH class/Booksale

Senior Minister Report, April 2010

Pledge Drive, Growth, and Change

We have just concluded an outstanding pledge drive. Thanks to our pledge team, Patti Frazee, and many others, we are estimating approximately \$120,000 increase in our pledges from last year (including over \$20,000 in new pledges.) Currently, we have an increase of nearly \$40,000 over last year, and we still have yet to hear from 100 plus families who pledged close to \$80,000 last year.

In short, it's an exciting time in the life of the church. Sunday attendance is up and because we've had a successful pledge drive, we can proactively move into the future, intentionally planning to accommodate the growth we are experiencing and that we anticipate in the coming year.

*We are planning to "re-do" the Social Hall this summer so it's more friendly for socializing, connecting, coffee drinking and relationship building. There will be central Welcome Table in the social hall, and the Welcome Center will be converted into a Bookstore. Most sign up tables and groups will be in the Chalice Room.

*We will launch 15-20 Sermon Based Small Groups in the fall, as we continue to grow this program and help members and friends deepen their connections and explore the monthly themes.

*Because we're growing and have a major attendance imbalance between our 9 and 11 am services, we are planning to change our service times in the fall. We will offer nursery through 9th grade RE at both of the new service (tentatively 9:30 and 11:15 a.m.). In May, the R.E. team will offer 4 "Orientation and Registration" sessions for RE families; parents will be required to attend one of these sessions to register their children, commit to volunteering, and to better understand the philosophical and religious underpinnings of the program.

*In the fall, Rev. Tucker and I will begin to offer monthly "Pizza and Teaching with the Pastor" nights, where we'll have pizza/food from 6-7pm, and then teaching from 7-9 pm on the theme of the month.

*Finally: I believe that this is the year that we will begin to partly address our "space issues." Given that in our proposed budget, we will be adding two new staff positions (an intern minister and a part time Financial Assistant for Patti Frazee), I believe that our best option is to move the office staff offsite and convert the current office space into top quality religious education classrooms, possibly including a nursery. We explored the possibility of renting "classroom pods" for the parking lot, but after exploring this option, it doesn't seem viable. We would lose 15 or more parking places, probably damage our relationship with our neighbors, and open a whole can of worms around zoning ordinances.

Our Religious Education Program has been "pinched" for space for many years, and I believe that this option not only serves our staff (we'll finally have the space we need) but best of all, it serves our children and youth, and those who teach them. If we make this move to offsite office space, it will signal to the congregation our seriousness about providing the best possible experience for our children, and the children of those families who are searching for a high quality religious education program.

I am not sure how the congregation would respond emotionally/psychologically if the staff was offsite. I'm contacting colleagues and others who have experience with these issues to learn from them. My gut sense is that the vast majority of the congregation simply wants a powerful Sunday experience, as well as good Religious Education, and other opportunities for growth and learning. If these things are happening, it's not that important where the staff is located.

I will be the first to acknowledge that this is a lot of change! What I know about change is this: 1) no one likes to be surprised, and 2) change can bring up unexpected feelings of grief and sadness, even if it's positive change. For these reasons, we are being thoughtful and intentional about how we communicate about and move forward with these plans; we are holding two forums for congregants to share their thoughts and feedback about service change times; we are working with SPIFF, Visual Arts, Building and Grounds (BAG) Committee, and Green Sanctuary, as we implement Social Hall changes, and seek their input. And after we make a decision about our space needs, we will communicate this to the congregation (and celebrate the fact that we will finally have enough space for staff and Religious Education!)

What's most important to understand is that all of these decisions are grounded in our Mission Statement (to share the Universalist message of love and hope).

Dreaming Big Conference: This past weekend, I was in Washington, DC, for a "Dreaming Big," UU Ministers Conference. The focus of this gathering is on "Worship" and "Prophetic Preaching." Dreaming Big is a program designed for 25 ministers of mid-size and large churches. Last October we meet in Portland, OR, and meet with the ministers and staff of First Unitarian Church of Portland. The focus was on Ministry and Media, as well as Prophetic Witness and Public Ministry. In February, we met in Tulsa, OK, and the focus was on Stewardship and Fundraising.

I have found these gatherings to be incredibly valuable, and I appreciate Rev. Tucker and the staff covering for me in my absence.

2010-2011 Budget Memo:

Note: We will be holding a budget hearing on May 12th at the church at 7pm.

A budget is ultimately a document about values. It reveals the core values, hopes, and aspirations of a person or an institution. The driving values in this budget are generosity (giving away more of the offering), that a well kept building matters (more staff hours dedicated to the people), that we have a role to play in the wider Association by becoming a teaching congregation again, and a belief that we have a saving faith (and thus, must respond to the growth we are experiencing)

Giving Away the Offering: This budget reflects First Universalist giving away 40 out of 52 offerings. Essentially, three out of every four offerings will be giving away.

Building Maintenance: Starting in the fall, Chrystal Teachout will be dedicated full time to supporting and maintaining the building. (We'll hire a part time financial support person for Patti Frazee, since Chrystal had been doing some of this work.)

Intern: We've budgeted nearly \$20,000 for an intern.

Offsite Office Space: After considering a number of options to address "the space issue" (lack of staff office space and lack of RE space), we have begun to look very seriously at leasing or buying offsite office space. We've looked at a number of properties within a two miles of the church. We are excited about this possibility because 1) it would give us enough office space for all staff, and 2) we could then convert the current office space to 3 or 4 Religious Education class rooms, including a nursery.

We have budgeted \$60,000 for a year of rental fees and/or mortgage payments, as well as moving expenses, for these offsite offices. We believe that moving the staff offsite will give us breathing room for at least three or more years before the Religious Education Program starts to feel another significant pinch. At that point in time, if the two worship services have 350 people in each, with 225-250 registered kids at each service the next step would be to add a third service, possibly on Saturday night (this growth trajectory does not seem unrealistic: it would mean a net growth of 50-60 worshipers per year; right now we have 550 in worship on Sunday, so three years from now, if we had net growth of 50-60 worshipers a year, we'd have 700-730 in worship on Sunday). This third service would offer Religious Education and would lessen the pressure on the two Sunday morning services. If growth rates continued at 50-60 people year, in 3-5 more years, we'd have 950-1010 people in worship, maybe 350 at each at the Sunday services, and 200 at the 3rd service. After that, we either add another worship service (and another minister), or think about moving. The other possibility is that we don't add a third service, and move to a space that better suits our needs after both our morning services are at capacity.

Patti Frazee has created a number of different cost scenarios, based a variety of properties we've looked at (these will be sent separately). One of the possibilities we're exploring is to purchase an offsite office property, which would mean we wouldn't have to pay property taxes. (One of the rental properties we are looking at has \$17,000 a year in property taxes. If we rented this space for 5 years, we'd pay \$85,000 in property taxes, not an insignificant amount!)

I believe that moving the staff offsite will increase their productivity (less interruptions and better working space), and it will open up a great deal of religious education space at First Universalist, thus allowing RE to truly grow and flourish. Many, many people come to First Universalist for their children first, and then find themselves drawn in. Having room for their children is critical. (Religious Education can be one of our major growth areas.)

As far as logistics, we would probably have Chrystal Teachout (as building manager) and Sandi DiNanni remain at First Universalist, in order to interface with the school, welcome groups who were meeting, etc. We'd maintain a basic office at First Universalist, with a copier, computer, etc. for staff to use on Sunday mornings, and as needed (Sandi and Chrystal would use during the week).

Depending on the offsite space we find, we could conceivably have additional meeting rooms for church groups (Board meetings, Sermon Based Small Groups, etc.) Volunteer receptionist could be trained to work at both the offsite offices as well as at First Universalist (we already have a well trained team!)

Patti Frazee will present more information and various cost scenarios at the Board Meeting.

Prepaying Mortgage: This budget includes \$5000 in additional principal payment on our mortgage.

***Capital Needs from Reserves:** We have budgeted \$30,000 for capital needs. This includes capital expenses for converting our current offices into RE classrooms and for setting up our new offices spaces, as well as doing small projects around the church.

Unity Leadership: Deb Rogers and I have been meeting with the Foundation Board and have proposed that the Foundation make a five year, \$300,000 commitment to help Unity Leadership become a successful 501c3, as an affiliate of the church. The Foundation has approved money to be used to work with a consultant, who can help us map out a successful transition plan. At the April Board meeting of the Foundation, we will resume the conversation about our proposal.

In this budget, we have reduced Deb's "Faith in Action" hours to more accurately reflect the nature of how she spends her time serving the church vs. serving Unity Leadership.

Legacy Fund: This budget includes a 4% draw down on the Legacy Fund, as per the Financial Monitoring Committees Recommendation. I would like to have the drawn down be up to 7%.

Salary Increases: I will share this information at the Board meeting.

Board action: Respond to and discuss proposed budget. **Note:** Board will approve final budget at May Board meeting.

Memo on Question of the Month Process:

Under Policy Governance, linkage (connecting) is a key part of the Board's work. I applaud the Board for the efforts it has made to connect with members of the congregation in order to hear their responses to the questions of the month. However, it seems that this process has raised some confusion for the Board (i.e., how does the board appropriately respond to the feedback it's getting, what are the questions the Board should be asking, and how does all of this relate to strategic planning, and modification of the End Statements?)

The idea behind linkage/connecting is to listen to the deepest hopes, dreams, and longings of the congregation. These hopes and dreams could be triggered by specific questions that they board might ask, but I think we have to very carefully formulate those questions. Looking back, it seems that "How well is the building working for you?" (I'm paraphrasing) is a very different question from "If you imagined the ideal space for First Universalist, from the parking lot, to the RE space, to community space, to worship space, what would it look like?" It's key to ask questions that get to the underlying hopes and dreams of the moral owners of the church.

Then, the Board's work is to listen deeply to what people are saying, to listen to the "words under the words," the themes that are perhaps deeper than the particulars of what's being said. As the Board begins to hear emerging themes and refrains, these ideas can shape the revision of the Ends Statements and guide the strategic planning.

But the key work of the Board is to hear the underlying hopes and dreams of the church, and construct Ends Statements that help the church more toward fulfillment of those hopes and dreams.

**First Universalist Church
Statistical Report
April 15, 2010**

MEMORIAL SERVICES: 0

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT: 0

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 1
Elaine Davis, St. Cloud, MN

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 0

	To Date	End of Year Totals			
MEMBERS	2009-10	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
(Fiscal Year)	51	72	41	63	92
TOTAL MEMBERS:	832	840	824	845	885

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF THE LAST MEETING: 832

To be added: 1

To be removed: 0

TOTAL MEMBERS: 833

Report from the Director of Administration

April 5, 2010

Our Pledge Campaign is a smashing success! We are very pleased with the numbers and I think you will be too. As of this writing, the pledge numbers are as follows:

Current total of 2010-11 pledges: \$776,894.

We received more than \$20,000 in new pledges and will now receive the \$15,000 match donation!

Overall, there is a 15% increase in pledges over last year.

We're still waiting to hear from 138 households who pledged \$98,678 in 09-10.

Pledge Report

Data as of March 31, 2010

	# of Pledge Units	Annual Budgeted	Current Projected	Rec'd to Date	Last Yr to date
Pledges	544	\$753,000.00	\$752,205.84	\$546,735.93	\$548,755.42
New Member Pledges	22	\$25,000.00	\$11,501.67	\$7,355.00	\$5,487.02
Contingency for Unpaid Pledges*	n/a	-\$20,000.00	-\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Totals	566	\$758,000.00	\$743,707.51	\$554,090.93	\$554,242.44

* Shortfall built into 09-10 budget to account for any unpaid pledges, lost pledges, etc.

Statement of Financial Position Summary
(Prior to Monthly Bank Reconciliation)
March 2010

	Balance as of 7/1/2009	Balance Last Month	Balance as of 2/28/2010	Year to Date Change
Assets:				
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	58,071.49	72,955.11	35,187.98	(22,883.51)
RECEIVABLES/PREPAYS	6,206.23	0.00	0.00	(6,206.23)
INCOME RECEIVABLE	772,997.44	270,728.43	218,906.51	(554,090.93)
PHYSICAL PLANT	2,220,750.75	2,220,750.75	2,220,750.75	0.00
RESERVE FUNDS	597,157.17	695,370.31	695,370.31	98,213.14
Total Assets:	<u>3,655,183.08</u>	<u>3,259,804.60</u>	<u>3,170,215.55</u>	<u>(484,967.53)</u>
Liabilities:				
PAYABLE/PREPAID/CARR	75,418.09	36,328.07	40,790.72	(34,627.37)
DEFERRED REVENUE	772,997.44	270,728.43	218,906.51	(554,090.93)
DEBT	759,173.21	759,173.21	759,173.21	0.00
Total Liabilities:	<u>1,607,588.74</u>	<u>1,066,229.71</u>	<u>1,018,870.44</u>	<u>(588,718.30)</u>
Net Assets:				
EQUITY	1,682,180.77	1,766,850.07	1,766,850.07	84,669.30
TEMPORARILY RESTRICT	214,387.62	257,208.36	256,743.25	42,355.63
PERMANENTLY RESTRICT	159,026.42	107,815.96	107,815.96	(51,210.46)
Current Period Changes	(8,000.47)	61,700.50	19,935.83	27,936.30
Total Net Assets:	<u>2,047,594.34</u>	<u>2,193,574.89</u>	<u>2,151,345.11</u>	<u>103,750.77</u>
Total Liabilities & Net Assets:	<u>3,655,183.08</u>	<u>3,259,804.60</u>	<u>3,170,215.55</u>	<u>(484,967.53)</u>

Statement of Activities Summary

(Prior to Monthly Bank Reconciliation)

March 2010

	March Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget	YTD % of Ann. Budget	Year to Date Last Year
<i>Income:</i>					
OPR. CONTRIBUTIONS	57,109.92	592,882.16	821,500.00	72.17	617,080.41
FUNDRAISERS	915.00	37,653.00	47,000.00	80.11	30,126.90
INTEREST	0.00	3,762.17	8,000.00	47.03	7,654.86
BUILDING USE	17,324.90	158,516.59	207,918.00	76.24	141,530.59
MISC.	18,053.88	106,857.88	120,223.15	88.88	93,176.66
R.E. DONATIONS	1,987.55	35,913.19	30,600.00	117.36	22,563.75
UNITY LEADERSHIP	0.00	49,190.02	92,315.50	53.28	0.00
<i>Total Income</i>	<u>95,391.25</u>	<u>984,775.01</u>	<u>1,327,556.65</u>	<u>74.18</u>	<u>912,133.17</u>
<i>Expense:</i>					
MINISTERS	25,918.14	188,459.16	261,545.67	72.06	175,717.81
LIFE SPAN FAITH DEV.	21,429.64	101,043.19	128,170.65	78.83	139,989.91
WORSHIP	5,601.88	34,649.39	48,210.53	71.87	38,514.93
MEMBERSHIP	3,073.65	24,645.68	37,374.00	65.94	23,754.09
DEN. CONNECTION	9,250.00	27,750.00	39,500.00	70.25	20,738.25
COMMUNICATIONS	3,685.14	37,594.17	50,832.00	73.96	34,128.77
FAITH IN ACTION	5,804.29	40,081.72	59,964.98	66.84	41,728.46
PASTORAL CARE	100.00	6,766.61	8,450.00	80.08	3,647.21
FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION	17,988.79	136,148.30	211,029.21	64.52	141,288.72
PROPERTIES	18,507.55	160,339.35	215,935.78	74.25	172,007.82
DEPRECIATION	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CAPITAL EXPENSE	1,741.73	18,633.60	18,200.00	102.38	21,491.85
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE	8,154.78	64,161.96	88,114.00	72.82	0.00
UNITY LEADERSHIP	2,982.38	48,447.50	98,315.50	49.28	0.00
NON-OPERATING	12,917.95	73,655.08	60,454.56	121.84	46,326.54
<i>Total Expense</i>	<u>137,155.92</u>	<u>962,375.71</u>	<u>1,326,096.88</u>	<u>72.57</u>	<u>859,334.36</u>
<i>Income - Expense</i>	<u>(41,764.67)</u>	<u>22,399.30</u>	<u>1,459.77</u>	<u>1,534.44</u>	<u>52,798.81</u>

FOUNDATION
Statement of Financial Position Summary
(Prior to Monthly Bank Reconciliation)
March 2010

	Balance as of 7/1/2009	Balance Last Month	Balance as of 2/28/2010	Year to Date Change
Assets:				
TEMP. BOARD RESTRICTE	1,142,953.53	1,276,636.70	1,276,636.70	133,683.17
Total Assets:	<u>1,142,953.53</u>	<u>1,276,636.70</u>	<u>1,276,636.70</u>	<u>133,683.17</u>
Net Assets:				
TEMP. BOARD RESTRICTE	1,135,304.10	1,282,436.85	1,282,436.85	147,132.75
Current Period Changes	7,649.43	(5,800.15)	(5,800.15)	(13,449.58)
Total Net Assets:	<u>1,142,953.53</u>	<u>1,276,636.70</u>	<u>1,276,636.70</u>	<u>133,683.17</u>
Total Liabilities & Net Assets:	<u>1,142,953.53</u>	<u>1,276,636.70</u>	<u>1,276,636.70</u>	<u>133,683.17</u>

FOUNDATION
Statement of Activities Summary
(Prior to Monthly Bank Reconciliation)
March 2010

	March Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget	YTD % of Ann. Budget	Year to Date Last Year
Income:					
FOUNDATION RECEIPTS	0.00	22,087.42	0.00	0.00	19,080.58
PREPAID/CARRIED	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
FOUNDATION	0.00	22,087.42	0.00	0.00	19,080.58
Total Income	<u>0.00</u>	<u>22,087.42</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>19,080.58</u>
Expense:					
FOUNDATION DISTRIBUTION	0.00	30,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expense	<u>0.00</u>	<u>30,000.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Income - Expense		<u>(7,912.58)</u>			<u>19,080.58</u>

Notes/Minutes

Finance Committee Meeting of 3/4/10

Present: Patti Frazee, Jill Anderson, Nancy Gaschott
(notes)

A. We reviewed the work we've done since November on understanding and then characterizing the various church "reserve funds." (Please see notes from earlier meetings to review.) At this meeting our focus was primarily on (1) the Legacy Funds and on (2) those unrestricted funds over which we've concluded that the church's Staff and/or Board of Trustees have spending authority.

1. The Legacy Funds

The church should continue in its effort to build the church's quasi-endowment¹ funds ("Legacy Fund"). Currently the main Legacy Fund's value is around \$100,000. In addition, there is another "quasi-endowment" fund, the M.E. Carter Library Fund, (about \$13,000), the purpose of which is to support the library.

We recommend that the Legacy Funds be separated from all other church funds in its own investment account.

The Legacy Fund also needs an updated Spending and Investment Policy. The Finance Committee has a working draft of this policy and will present a final draft for the board's consideration at its May meeting. Some elements of the policy include:

(a). A 4% annual payout from the Legacy Fund to be included in the operating budget.

(b). The payout should be based on a 12 quarter rolling average of the market value of the fund. This policy, however, would begin with the 2010-2011 budget year and so would look back for only the market values of the 2010 year, adding quarters to the formula as time goes on.

The 3 of us who were present at the meeting liked the idea of giving a boost to the Legacy Fund by adding fund #227 (see below) to the main Legacy Fund. This was a fund whose purpose wasn't entirely clear; it was moved into the church equity account in the 2000-2009 church year. This would increase the Legacy Fund by around \$45,000.

¹ I'm using the term "quasi endowment" in these notes because, according to our by-laws, the congregation could vote to "invade the principal," of these funds. In this they are different from traditional endowment funds where the principal may only be spent if the institution's policy provides for re-payment of that spending.

2. Funds over which the staff and/or board have spending authority:

current - or earlier - name of fund	value	treatment in 1/31/10 statement
Future debt fund	67,354	Temporarily Restricted - #115 Future Debt Fund
Pledge reserve	118,174	Equity - # 113 capital campaign reserves
2 mo operating reserve	155,410	Equity - # 107 Contingency Reserves
the 2008 # 227 operating fund, moved to equity before 09 YE	45,778	included with fixed assets in #22 Church Equity
Undesignated bequests	62,000	Temporarily Restricted - #51 Unrestricted Bequests
TOTAL	448,716	

We considered the recommendations we wanted to make to the board regarding the treatment of this not insubstantial total. Although Paige was not able to be present at this meeting, we had received an e-mail from her, and so knew her perspective. We were not able to have that specific input from Dan, but did not feel that our conclusions would differ were he to have been able to participate in the discussion.

Our primary recommendation is that "not much" of this money should be spent until the church has engaged in and concluded 3 - 5 year strategic planning, with an accompanying financial plan. We know that the current draft budget includes some capital spending from these funds, and we aren't necessarily opposed to *some* spending, but believe the prudent course of action is to preserve the bulk of this asset until such time as the church is clear about that part of its future which could require capital.

We discussed the wisdom of paying down the church's mortgage. Please refer to the memo dated 3/12/10 from Paige Winebarger called Financial Overview of Church Building, and an earlier memo from Patti regarding the features of the church's mortgage. Without pre-payment penalty the church could make up to \$80,000 in additional payments per year. At least some members of the Finance Committee who met on April 1st believed this would be a good thing to do, once the church had made some decisions regarding its intentions for our current building.

Fellowship Committee – Heidi Mastrud—2/18/10

I met with Heidi Mastrud regarding Fellowship, as there is no “Fellowship Committee” at this time. According to Heidi, the membership committee supports the Sunday Morning Welcome Teams, and she staffs most of the other fellowship activities, like circle suppers, family circle suppers, Lake Harriet picnic, monthly intergenerational activities, book clubs, etc.

Heidi defines this part of her job as “nurturing the social connections of the congregation.” She guesses that 60% of the congregation doesn’t have connections outside of worship services and RE if they have kids, and 80% are seeking more engagement with the Church.

The facility—the church and the RE wing—limit the opportunities for robust fellowship activities, in terms of both quality and quantity of space. We need more intermediate spaces, larger than classrooms and smaller than the Social Hall. Accessibility is also an issue with many of our smaller/intermediate spaces (Meditation Room, Brides Room, Arches, etc.). Near term, Heidi suggests that we re-think the Social Hall and Chalice Room. Her dream is to have the Church be more comfortable and welcoming to young families. Now we have a “pen” for young children in the Social Hall; it would be great to have a space where parents with young children can come and create friendships in a safe and comfortable space.

Our need for a tenant limits many options. She mentioned movies for elders, and establishing a UU Montessori school as the kinds of programs that could be launched with different spaces and without a tenant.

She sees the size of the Sanctuary as an asset, but the building is not intuitive for a newcomer. New signage could help but it’s hard to imagine it being artful as well as effective. This issue is as much about hospitality as the building. It’s an ongoing question as to how we can be more welcoming to newcomers.

We are considering a new Sunday morning structure of “Welcoming Teams,” with greeters, ushers, coffee servers, visitor table attendants and nursery volunteers working together for the same Sundays. When possible, it is important to follow up with visitors and integrate newcomers and young families in the social as well as the spiritual life of the Church as soon as possible. Some activities lend themselves to this but others don’t because they are cyclical and begin only once or occasionally each year.

The website, however, has been well received and seems to serve newcomers and others seeking online fellowship.

-- Dan Berg

Garden and Grounds – Douglas Owens-Pike—3/2/10

I met with Doug Owens-Pike to discuss the Garden and Grounds Committee perspective on our current discussion topics. The Committee doesn't have meetings, but there is a core group that has worked with Doug for years in maintaining and improving the exterior property. Often, members of the Committee work independently, taking on a task that's been identified by Doug or by consensus. Doug says it would be nice to work together more, but it's hard to coordinate people's busy schedules.

As we've heard from many people, there are plenty of challenges to be addressed in our current site. Doug mentioned issues such as management of roof runoff, paving options for the playground/parking lot, and installation of a rain garden. He mentioned that there are grant dollars available to support some of these projects through the Watershed District. This would be worth investigating if we have any plans to make improvements on the property. As he says, if we're going to repave, let's do it right.

Doug and other Committee members are also working with Emily Grey Academy, providing enrichment activities for the students around the environment and outdoor activities. They have a good relationship with the school and its administration.

One area that Doug mentioned in particular is the NE corner of the property around the sign. They are hoping to plant a tree in memory of Will Hartfeldt and upgrade the landscape in that area using (what I understand to be) a low-maintenance turf management system. Doug suggested that this could also be featured as a learning opportunity for the congregation.

Doug sees a clear connection between the work of the Garden and Grounds Committee and the hospitality of the Church. Design and maintenance—especially maintenance—make a big difference for visitors, as an indication of how much we care about our Church.

There is an ongoing desire/intention to engage more people, especially newcomers, in the activities of the Committee. They communicate with the SPIFF Committee in identifying people with an interest and the projects that need to be done.