

**MINUTES**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church**  
**December 20, 2016**

Members Present: Mike Condit (MC), Barbara Crotty (BC), Nancy Lipp (NL), Linda Condit (LC), Wade Greiner (WG), Mark Andersen (MA), Jane Zachritz (JZ), Becky Edmiston-Lange (BE-L), Katy Carpmann (KC), Ruth Alkons-Wolinsky (RA-W), Richard Loftin (RL), Karen Van Horn (KVH), Ben Withers (BW), and Beth Hammer (BH).

Chalice lighting and reading (Becky)

President's Report- MC welcomed New Board nominees, Jane Zachritz and Ben Withers, to the meeting.

MC requested a short executive meeting to discuss and respond to a request by Becky. MA made a motion to increase ministerial compensation to \$@112,000, WG seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve November Board minutes – Minor changes were needed in the Board minutes, information being passed along to Kenny. MA moved for the minutes to be approved as amended, WG seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Welcome New Members – The Board welcomed new members; Marycate Mehta, Rebecca and April Smith, and Michael and Sharon Hilgart

Consent Reports:

- Minister – Highlights and items not listed in written report.
  - BE-L informed the board that Kay Bergen will be stepping down from the Lay Pastoral Ministry Committee. Marci Collier and Ian Sachs will be the new co-coordinators, as Ken McLeod is also stepping down in order to help coordinate a “Worship Task Force”. The new Task force does not yet have an official name, but will be structured to assist BE-L in the Worship needs of the church.
- RE Director – Highlights and items not listed in written report
  - KC reported on the ongoing activities and plans for the Religious Education. She attended a number of Webinars, and is looking forward to the upcoming UU Theology learning module for RE leaders.
- Business Administrator – Highlights and items not listed in written report
  - KVH informed the Board that contributions, to date, were \$548,261, and reminded the Board that the November YTD deficit was normal for the year, and is made up for by pre-paid pledges in December and catchup payments. KVH informed the Board of the theft of a computer from the Tanglewood School. The computer disappeared on a Thursday night, it was noted that whoever took it, took the time to move an unused monitor to the room. It was noted that currently no one is asked to monitor the classroom hallway during evening events. ESL volunteers will be asked to monitor this hallway, as well as the front door. Tanglewood does not place blame or ask for compensation, they wanted the church to know about the event. Millbend

Coffee House, in conjunction with Emerson's UniTunes coffee house would like to use the Sanctuary for a KPFT benefit concert on the afternoon of 15<sup>th</sup> January.

- Treasurer – Highlights and items not listed in written report
  - Statements were sent last week to those who have outstanding amounts for their pledges. The best estimate for 2016 payments from pledges is \$565,000, which is reflected in the 2017 budget presented to the congregation. It is expected that we will end the year in the black.
  - Focus is also on pledges being made for 2017. About \$525,000 has been pledged so far. The budgeted amount for 2017 is \$550,000.
  - Pre-paid pledges for 2017 are \$87,000.
- Committee Liaisons
  - Social Action will be reevaluating their restructure.

#### New Business

- Board discussion and plan regarding additional ministerial staffing
  - Rev. BE-L reminded the Board that the congregation has had 2 ministers for 17 years. There are high expectations for ministerial support, and presence. In many ways, the congregation would benefit from having more than 2 ministers. It was noted that First Church is about the same congregational size, and supports 4 ministers. Some of the specific needs for second minister include:
  - Sunday Services- BE-L, with the continued support of the local UU Minister Group, will cover the normal 40 Sunday services during 2017. In 2018, she will be in the pulpit for 30 Sundays (changing the need for other speakers from 12 to 22, in 2018).
  - It will take time, and Ministerial support, to help develop a high-functioning Worship Committee/Task force. While Ken McLeod will be spearheading the group, it will still take up a portion of BE-Ls time.
  - Public Ministry- Emerson UU Church has been a 'go to' congregation for Liberal Theology and Justice in the Houston area. If our Minister does not have the time to participate in these events, Emerson will no longer be a beacon of hope outside of our congregation.
  - The Lay Pastoral Group has taken on more responsibilities. This group will need more ministerial guidance, due to the increase in responsibilities. A healthy congregation needs a healthy way to support its members. And while the Lay Pastoral members are well trained, there will still be many events requiring BE-L's time. As well as time supporting the members of this group as they support others.
  - Some groups/committees have not seen ministerial support for months. Most committees are accustomed to ministerial presence on a regular/monthly basis.
  - Ministry is about relationship. Not just the ministers' relationship with the congregation, but also the individual relationship a member feels towards a minister.
  - In short – this is a congregational issue, a Board issue. An example of what can happen as our congregation is stressed can be seen in some problems arising in the Membership committee. There have been a

few Sundays where no one has been present at the Welcome desk to welcome visitors.

- It does not seem to be a question as to 'if' Emerson needs more ministerial support, but how do we go about finding, funding, and providing it.
- There appear to be two intertwined paths forward. One, in the short term: Supporting BE-L during this time, by finding committees and Board members who can take over any requested responsibilities and duties requested. A longer distinct path towards finding more ministerial support.
- An interim assistant Minister would be a good place to start for support. It is important that the Board does not underestimate the amount of work that needs to be done.
- Kenn Hurto from the UUA will be in the Pulpit in February, and has offered to help lead a congregational meeting on the Saturday beforehand.

To help the Board support BE-L and the congregation, NL will be contacting Kenn Hurto to discuss how the Board can help the congregation and BE-L during this time. A meeting will be setup for January, for the Board to meet (potentially with Kenn Hurto) to develop an action plan for helping the congregation.

#### Old Business

- Stewardship update – \$87,000 of 2017 pledges have been prepaid.
- Policy for items in need of Board of Trustees approval – BH delivered a draft to the Board for a Policy for items needed Board Approval. Changes to the draft were requested, and she will update for the January meeting.
- Revision of Definition of Membership for presentation at annual meeting – The board discussed changes to Membership, to be presented to the congregation. BC is working on the edits. Consensus was to follow the requests from the staff.
- Reminders
  - > Annual congregational meeting January 29, 2017
  - > First meeting of 2017 Board January 31, 2017
  - > First 2017 Board retreat February 11, 2017

Acknowledgement of retiring Board members

Closing reading (Becky)