

Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
October 21, 2008

**Present**

Jane Park, moderator  
Matt Fuller, vice moderator  
Thad Smith, treasurer  
Ben Bear  
Tara Hernandez  
Carol Johnson  
Mike McGirr  
Stephen Schwichow  
Don Williams  
Sonnie Willis  
Bill Wise  
Claire Weber, secretary  
Greg Stewart, Senior Minister  
Peter Olandt, Ministerial Intern  
Nancy Evans, Executive Director

**Call to order.** The meeting was called to order by Jane Park at 7:00.

Opening. Carol's opening focused on anxieties and the importance of being able to remain in the present.

**Members' Forum.** No members were present for members' forum. There was no feedback from other Society members.

**Agenda review.** The fourth item—personnel—under New Business was deleted by agreement.

**Consent agenda.** The minutes of the September 16 meeting were approved with minor corrections.

**Reports.** Minister's report. Greg presented his written report. He also stated that the invitation to membership has been revised to provide a more intimate experience for prospective members who are meeting with the minister. Representatives of committees will no longer attend to make presentations. The board will continue to be represented, usually by Sonnie so she can take the official new member photos. Greg will let us know if an additional board member is needed to attend.

A sign-up sheet for Sunday announcements was passed around. Greg will check with those who volunteer to improve that portion of the service.

Executive Director's report. Nancy explained the possible sale of the Edith Hamlin prints and noted that she will keep us posted on the sale. Reaction to the new order of service appearance was discussed. Greg said the response to the changes included 64 favorable

comments and two unfavorable comments. There was also one anonymous unfavorable comment to the changes. Nancy said she gets a regular update on the Margaret Coope bequest. Once again she has been told again that it is almost ready for distribution. The church will receive about \$150,000 to \$170,000. Nancy distributed a space usage report and explained recent space usage data. Matt suggested she share some of the summary info with the membership.

Financial reports. Nancy reported that pledge payments and event income have not declined in the last few weeks despite the economic slowdown. She noted that over \$4000 has been received in wedding-related gifts. Tara asked how badly the stock market decline had impacted church investments as the decline was not yet reflected in the most recent report, which only goes through August 31. Thad noted that there will be an investment report to the board next month.

Nancy said she will be reporting the Sunday attendance and plate collection beginning next month. Greg also said we need to know the total number of people in the building, not just how many are at the Sunday service. He said that UUA and the Alban Institute recommend counting everyone in the building on Sunday and Greg agreed that it is important that we know all those figures.

#### **Old Business.**

Wade estate. Matt reported that there has been a partial distribution of the Wade estate to the two beneficiaries, with substantial funds held back for other liabilities. He hopes for a wrap-up and final distribution next month. The church share of this partial distribution was \$305,000, after attorney's fees.

Ted Drenton bequest. Nancy distributed a letter she sent to the city probate office about Ted Drenton's typed will.

Safety policies. Jane reviewed the action the board took in August, when we sent a gun ban proposal to the safety and security committee for their feedback. Jane will share the SAS comments with the board next month, but she noted that SAS was generally not positive about the proposal. The RE community is currently drafting a comprehensive child safety policy in response to a board request last year. Betty is spearheading this lengthy proposal, which includes appropriate forms. This proposal is being thoroughly vetted by the RE community, including parent groups and all other members of the RE community. This policy may ultimately include some provision for guns.

Debrief/feedback on October Quest. The board discussed the recent October Quest. Mike commented that the tables were well laid out and gave good info about activities. Tara observed that attendance was fairly low with a few tables receiving most of the attention. Food sales made \$250 for Denis' ordination.

#### **Board initiatives.**

Finance committee. We have signed a contract for financial review with Lautze & Lautze. Some timing issues have delayed review work until December so the goal is to

have board review at our January meeting. Thad will make a presentation at the five year plan meeting. No date has been set and that meeting is the next project of the finance committee.

Leadership/policy governance.

Debrief on Sept 20 Council of Committee Chairs meeting. Jane said turnout was a bit low, but the meeting was good. There was a positive response to the board covenant and some committees are interested in adopting similar covenants. People liked getting information about workshops and other tools to help them with committee work. It was agreed that this was much better than similar events in the past.

Committee liaisons: Tara distributed a report by Mike on the *spiritual growth and learning cluster*. It was particularly hard to report on religious education (RE) as there is no chair and no committee charge. There may be a rotating chair. The children's RE (CRE) committee is composed almost entirely of members who are new in the last few months. The CRE committee has no charge and has experienced prior friction since Betty became acting director of religious education (DRE). This committee previously had primarily worked on special events. Betty would like to have the committee be more involved with decision-making and the basic CRE program. Lots of work is needed to make this committee function effectively. There was extensive discussion of the CRE program, personalities, history and needs, including the reality that this church has a relatively low number of children for the size of the congregation. Greg pointed out that a church our size would more likely have 100 children in RE.

The adult religious education (ARE) committee is creating a charge and has agreed to a monthly rotating chair. This committee is in a somewhat better situation than CRE at this time. Mike asked Greg what the Board can do to help the RE committees which are smaller and less active than they should be. Greg said the board could take a more proactive approach to RE and other committees and this approach could make a difference for these committees that are having difficulties.

Generally, if a committee does not have sufficient members and commitment, then perhaps the project should be disbanded, as happened with Stone Soup. But for important matters such as RE, the issue of making the committee more effective needs to be addressed. Tara stated that the committee model may not be the most productive structure for RE. Jane suggested this issue could be further addressed by brainstorming in the leadership group. Ben said the Peers consultancy should also address this basic matter of how we identify and grow leaders. Tara suggested the RE meetings could be rescheduled to be more parent- and kid-friendly by scheduling the meetings when people are already at church, providing child care and food, etc. Peter noted that our staff ratios are not at a level to facilitate growth, or even to maintain, our current membership level.

Mike distributed the report on the *spiritual growth and learning cluster*. Mike said Betty did not respond to his inquiries which was not helpful and made the report somewhat incomplete. The report includes three groups: the forum, intern committee and the pagan interest group.

Forum: The forum provides weekly programs. Although it appears on the organizational chart as an adult RE program, the forum appears to be functioning effectively as an independent committee. The forum doesn't have a charge.

Intern committee: The intern committee is a "select" committee under the bylaws, so the chair and all members should be appointed by the moderator and approved by the board. There is no recent charge.

Pagan circle: The pagan group is chartered as a participating organization, not a church committee. The circle's challenges include the difficulty of including older members, some with limited mobility, in their activities. Most pagan events are in the evening which is particularly difficult for older members.

None of the committees provided any detailed financial information. Mike would like all groups that spend funds to provide a financial report and to have financial accountability.

Tara noted that Carla expressed surprise that the pagan circle was affiliated with the spiritual growth and learning cluster instead of the worship cluster. She was not upset about it, but she thinks this affiliation might suggest that the pagan circle is perceived as an educational group that offers classes and not as a worship group. The pagans very much consider the group to be worship-oriented. The board then discussed the fact that the pagan group is a participating organization (PO) and not a committee, so two-thirds of their dues should go to the church. The board does not need to get charges from participating organizations. For the pagans, this PO status may also reflect the disaffiliation from the national UUA of pagans and other groups. This situation shows how important the liaison project is in determining exactly what church groups exist and what their status actually is. Mike will follow up with the forum and intern committees about the charge and chair issues.

*Stewardship.* Thad distributed a written update on the stewardship cluster committees, which are: buildings and grounds, planned giving, canvass, investment, finance, fund development, library and nominating.

Building and grounds is essentially inactive as a committee, although it includes a roster of people with specific skills. Nancy pointed out that the size and age of our building complex requires people with particular skills. Such issues as lighting and roofing require technical expertise. The committee has great leadership but there is not sufficient support or membership for building and grounds work. There is a good aesthetics committee. Stephen said that this points up the need to know the skills and expertise within the membership. David would like to brainstorm about where to go next with this issue. Jane noted this is another area where the traditional committee structure may not be the best way to handle issues.

Planned giving has great leadership and membership. The Allyne Circle will have its autumn tea in November and board members should plan to attend. This group is also planning a seminar on senior housing options early next year. There probably is an existing charge.

Canvass committee. This is not an ongoing committee.

Investment is an active committee. Chair Michael LaOrange will make a presentation at November board meeting.

Finance is active.

Archivist is Leslie Bader. A few more committed people are needed to share the work when someone needs to access archival material. Apparently all important documents have already been properly archived.

Library. This is a small committee of elderly members who cannot do the physical activity needed for library work. They are cataloging the collection and do some reshelving, but need help for physical assistance. The Pierce library fund and the money in the fund needs to be clarified.

Nominating committee is elected. This is an active committee that meets and works as necessary.

Larry Peers update. Larry Peers was here Sunday and attended the committee faire. The leadership group is convening a future steering committee weekend when Larry will be here. (This will probably be the last weekend in February.) In November, people will be filling out assessments, interviewing other members, etc. There will be a more complete report to the board in November.

Up on Top MOU update. The leadership group will make any changes to the current draft and the MOU should be finally approved soon. Matt said the “end is in sight.”

Culture of Generosity report by Don.

The culture of generosity topic includes three major events: canvass, holiday faire and silent auction. The canvass is most important. The holiday faire is valuable as a fellowship activity but not as a money-raiser. The faire requires a significant effort to raise \$3000. The silent auction combines a community activity with important fund-raising. Mike suggested an alternate gift catalog for the church. You donate money for a specific purpose as a gift and the church provides a card for the recipient describing the gift. Initially, the catalog could be one page in a newsletter and later might be a freestanding catalog. This might replace or supplement the holiday faire. As a small beginning project, this could be a manageable, defined task. Greg said the Pasadena church of 800 members made \$20,000 to \$30,000 from an alternative gift catalog. He will give the committee info about the Pasadena church’s catalog project.

We need leaders and workers for all culture of generosity projects. The committee has created a list of 30 potential leaders for these projects and we are now narrowing it down. The next meeting will be chaired by Carol—we are meeting every two weeks.

Town Hall Meetings. Jane, Mike and Claire met re town hall meetings. Jane said the board may decide to ask the congregation to reconsider the expenditure of bequest money, either on a one-time or ongoing basis. Jane wants a presentation to the board in December to let the board know what will be presented at the town hall meeting in January.

## **New business.**

Emerita status. Matt presented the results of his research about the procedure to make Margo Gross emerita. The question is whether we are required to do this by board vote or congregational vote or some other means. Matt has researched our past practice and precedent, which is not at all clear. The issue also relates to whether Margo can vote at GA, according to UUA rules. Board members will get more info before the next meeting so we have all the facts necessary to make a decision. Jane noted we are required to reconsider Margo's status because we committed to do so a few years ago. However, we may also wish to consider Kay's status, as she is now retired. Matt suggested that board members make an effort to discuss the emerita issue with members before the November meeting. Our options are: do nothing, have a board vote or have a congregational vote. If we decide to require a congregational vote, it could be done either in a meeting or by mail.

Affiliated community minister status. Denis Paul has requested this so the process has started. The board will be required to make the final vote, but the goal is to complete this process by the time Denis is ordained in the spring.

Update on grievances. Motion by Stephen to go into executive session and to request Greg and Nancy to remain. Tara seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 10 to 0 with no opposing votes, no abstentions and the moderator not voting. The board went into executive session. The board came out of executive session.

## **Upcoming events and board commitments.**

The following events are in addition to the items listed in the agenda.

November 15 from 2 to 4 is the Allyne Circle. Board members should attend.

On Monday, November 10, in the sanctuary, the church choir and choral groups from UC Berkeley will have a free open rehearsal with an orchestra of Voices of Light, an oratorio that accompanies the silent film The Passion of Joan of Arc.

One week later on November 17, the same groups will present program at Castro Theater. The film showing may be followed by showing "Preacher's Sons," the recent documentary about Greg's family.

Thursday October 22, at 7 o'clock is a meeting of the Cathedral Hill neighborhood association concerning the proposed Cal Pacific Medical Center. This meeting will be at the Cathedral Hill Hotel.

**Appreciation.** Carrie Steere Salazar for October Quest.

Lucy Smith for lunch at October Quest.

Amy Kelly for intern committee work on intern reception at Jane's.

Delores Perez Priem for her work on service for blessing of the animals.

## **Good and Welfare.**

Bernice Biggs had surgery and is doing well.

**Closing.** Carol selected closing words that relate to anxiety. Her reading from the Asian Art Museum emphasizes Confucian family precepts about the value of living in the moment.

**Adjourned** at 9:30.