



**UUSS Congregational Meeting - via Zoom and in-person
Sunday, October 19, 2025, at 11:45am**

AGENDA

1. Welcome – Andy Cramer, Board of Trustees President (2 min)
2. Establish Quorum– Andy Cramer (2 min)
3. Invocation and Chalice Lighting – Rev. Dr. Roger Jones (3 min)
4. Review agenda and meeting procedures – Andy Cramer (2 min)
5. Approve May 2025 Congregational meeting minutes (3 min)
6. President’s Report – Andy Cramer (7 min)
7. Treasurer's Report – Victoria Owens (7 min)
8. Ministers Report– Rev. Dr. Roger Jones (7 min)
9. Program Council Report – Sean Fountain, Program Council (7 min)
10. Community Partners Proposal- Member of SJCC (5 min)
11. Community Partners vote (5 min).
12. UUSS Unsung Hero Award –Program Council (5 min)
13. Closing –Rev. Dr. Roger Jones Minister (3 min)

UUSS CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, May 18, 2025. 11:45 am, via Zoom and in person

Minutes

Welcome – Anara Guard, Board of Trustees President, welcomed members and guests at 11:47 AM.

A quorum of members was established.

Rev. Lucy Bunch gave the invocation for chalice lighting. Rev Roger Jones lit the chalice. Anara called for the approval of the October 2024 Congregational Meeting minutes, which were approved by voice vote.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Anara, on behalf of the Stewardship Committee and the Board of Trustees, thanked the members and friends that have submitted pledges for the coming fiscal year, totaling \$667,000, with only a few pledges outstanding.

- To date, 311 pledges have been received
- This is an 8% year-over-year increase in pledges
- 125 pledges were increased, and 43 new pledges

Because of the generosity of members and friends the congregation is financially healthy. Once the budget is approved, we will be able to fund our half-time ministerial intern and improve the compensation for our ministers and staff.

Anara reported that due to our successful Solar fund, 121 solar panels are in operation and our electricity bills have decreased an average of 47% over the last six months.

Anara thanked the entire Board of Trustees for their dedication over the past year, and especially thanked outgoing members-at-large Susan Davis-James, Leanna Pierson, and Secretary Lisa Dahlquist.

MINISTERS' REPORT – Rev Lucy thanked the administrative staff of 15 that are a critical part of our congregation's vitality. Thanks to the increase in pledges received, we are able to improve staff compensation.

Rev Roger advised that he and Rev Lucy work together on communication issues for the congregation. This year they worked with the AV staff to improve the sound and visuals on our Sunday morning Zoom stream. Rev Roger announced that starting in August 2025, a new monthly newsletter called "*What's Happening This Month at UUSS*", will create one central monthly place to find everything that is happening within the congregation. A new on-line calendar system will improve information about events and activities.

Rev Lucy celebrated the 11th year of Soul Matters, our small group ministry program. This year almost 90 people participated. In addition, we have supported newer covenant-based groups such as Crone Connections, Men's Group, People of Color Caucus, Young Adults.

Rev Roger advised that our family ministry program and RE are strong and growing. All Ages Family Dinner potlucks are scheduled for one Friday evening per month. We had a strong turnout for Thanksgiving, Christmas party, and Easter egg hunt. All Ages camp weekend is Aug 1-3. Planning now for summer and Fall RE and Our Whole Lives and other special programs. He announced a Dungeons and Dragons day camp for two weeks in July for middle/high school-age children.

Rev Roger confirmed that next year's budget includes hiring a UU ministerial intern for the next two years on a half-time basis.

Rev Lucy acknowledged the challenges our country faces and how best to serve the congregation. The ministers strive to be relevant to the challenges and to encourage joy and resilience. Sermons are chosen

with intention, and the ministers have introduced the Candle of Compassion and Resistance and have added a program: *Embodied Spiritual Practices for Stressful Times* on the 4th Sunday of each month before service. The ministers will continue working together to keep our community healthy and thriving.

Rev Roger closed the Minister's Report encouraging the members to visit with the ministers and to provide feedback and ideas. He closed with "We are happy to serve together, and we are grateful to serve all of you in this generous, vital, and loving congregation".

Program Council – Sean Fountain presented slides describing the Program Council

- Introduction of Program Council members
- Discussed the function of the Program Council
- Announced that the annual Activity Fair will be held on Incoming Sunday, September 7th
- Spoke to the Unsung Hero award!
- Program Council supports congregational life programs
- Called for members and friends to support the Program Council by joining a group, and he invited members to bring their ideas for new groups to the Program Council.

SJCC – Andy Cramer co-chairs the Social Justice Coordinating Committee with Karen Gunderson. Andy called attention to the Social Justice page on the UUSS website, where information about the social justice groups can be found. Andy highlighted:

- Fred Pannek has taken over the role of coordinating with our Community Partners internally and externally. Continue to check the blue sheet for information on monthly partners and special donation drives.
- Our new Pink Haven group, which supports gender refugees, is gaining momentum. Andy announced Pink Haven's fund-raising concert happening UUSS on Sunday, May 25th. Andy asked the congregation to support the Justice and Equity Team (JET) request regarding our collective experiences related to diversity, welcome, and belonging, and by completing the survey by May 25. A link to the survey is available on the website.
- Andy called attention to our Advocacy work that has ramped up this year thanks to the leadership of Meg Gunderson. Andy spoke about our Lobby Day activities at the State Capital and noted the next Lobby Day is June 23rd.

ENDOWMENT TRUST – Lisa Derthick presented slides that provided details about the Endowment Trust (slides included with minutes).

Lisa advised that the Endowment Loan to UUSS for past building renovation and expansion has been extended until June 30, 2035. Lisa detailed that \$65,000 of the original loan of \$325,000 has been repaid by UUSS, and that the balance of \$260,000 will go forward at 1% annual interest. Lisa spoke about the Heritage fund which is managed by the Board of Trustees.

Lisa fielded questions for the congregation:

Why is the loan interest 1%, and not a higher interest rate? Mary Howard, who chaired the Endowment Trust when the loan was initiated stated that originally the Endowment Trust wanted to gift the funds to UUSS, but Endowment guidelines do not allow for such a gift, therefore a nominal interest rate was established.

Why wasn't the loan forgiven? Lisa answered that the Trust determined that the same Endowment guidelines that prevented the loan from being a gift in the first place prevent us from forgiving the loan now.

Is there a purpose to the Endowment Trust Fund other than the 5% allocation for special projects each year? Lisa answered that none other than the possibility of having funds available for a loan sometime in the future if needed for an emergency.

STRATEGIC PLAN – Andy Cramer spoke on behalf of the Board of Trustees whom this year led an effort to revise our five-year Strategic Plan.

- The previous 5-year plan was approved in 2019, after an extended collaborative process within the congregation.
- Due to the pandemic, the timeframe for the plan was extended to 2025.
- The Board felt that the Strategic Plan needed some revisions and updates, but we did not need to fully restart the process. There are 4 overarching goals and each have supporting objectives.
- Last Fall the Board held a working session to revise the Strategic Plan. The Board gathered input from the Program Council, the Justice and Equity Team and others. The revised plan, if approved this morning, will cover the next 5-year period to mid-2030.
- Andy reviewed the first two goals, which directly relate to our mission of “we come together to deepen our lives and be a force for healing in the world.” Each goal has a related objective, and an action plan to achieve the objective. The action plans are intended to be fluid and change as needed.
- Andy discussed that the 3rd goal is specific to our commitment to racial justice. Andy again urged the congregation to complete the JET survey. The 4th goal addresses the infrastructure and organizational abilities we need in order to achieve the previous three goals. The Board will be increasing its attention to the 4th goal in the coming years.
- Andy requested a motion, and a second, to approve the Strategic Plan be offered. The Strategic Plan was approved by a voice vote.

INTRODUCTION OF SLATE OF CANDIDATES – Marion Randall, chairperson of the Nominating Committee thanked all members that expressed interest in serving, and announced the following candidates:

Board of Trustees – President	Andy Cramer
Board of Trustees – Secretary	Fred Pannek
Board of Trustees – Member at Large	Emily Moran-Vogt
Board of Trustees – Member at Large	Patty Innes
Nominating Committee	Robin Visel
Nominating Committee	Sally White
Nominating Committee	Amanda Dewey
Program Council	Sean Fountain
Program Council	David Paul
Program Council	Angela Martin

Anara Guard called for a motion and second to elect the slate of candidates. The candidates were elected by voice vote.

TREASURERS REPORT - Victoria Owens provided a detailed overview of the proposed budget which included a slide presentation (included in these minutes).

Victoria provided these highlights:

- Current year pledge results are running ahead of previous years.
- Presented the 2025-2026 budget
- Major source of income is pledges; major source of expense is salaries (compensation and benefits)
- Planned income increase is budgeted at 7.5%
- Staff compensation: making efforts to raise compensation to UUA recommended levels. This year the Board of Trustees created a compensation task force which has outlined a plan to raise all staff members to UUA levels within five years.
- Proposed overall expense increase of 7.5%
- **A question was asked regarding the 1% insurance increase, which was thought to be low?** Victoria confirmed the increase was correct, and that we are insured by a company that only insures churches.
- **A member asked if the increases for staff include an annual cost-of-living increase?** Victoria answered yes.
- **A member asked what was included in “program revenue”?** Victoria advised revenue from the Bookstore, Art Committee, and others.
- **A member asked if no grants are requested from the Endowment Fund, can that amount be used as a principal payment of the UUSS Endowment loan?** Victoria answered yes, it would be a Board of Trustees decision.
- Victoria thanked the finance committee members, Randy Webb, Susan Davis-James, Sally Wilkins, Janet Lopes, Rev Lucy Bunch for their help and support.
- Victoria called for a motion and second to approve the budget. The budget was approved by a voice vote.

MEETING CONCLUSION

- Andy began closing the meeting by thanking outgoing members at large of the Board of Trustees: Leanna Pierson and Susan Davis-James, and Board Secretary Lisa Dahlquist. We are grateful for all their work.
- Andy then acknowledged the huge efforts of Anara Guard who has served the last three years as president of the Board, and previously two years as Secretary. Over that time Anara has leaned into the role and provided leadership to the Board of Trustees and kept the Board in line with her firm but gentle hand, and sometime hard stare. Anara embodies the spirit of a servant leader. Andy asked the congregation to join in expressing our appreciation to Anara for her years of service.
- The Board presented gifts of recognition to Leanna, Susan, and Anara. A gift to Lisa will be given at another date.
- Anara expressed her appreciation, and Rev Roger thanked all leaders and volunteers, and provided the benediction and the chalice was extinguished. Meeting was adjourned.

