

First U Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, September 22, 2021 – ZOOM – 7:00 p.m.

Included below

Appendix 1: Memorial Policy (updated)

Appendix 2: Covid Task Force Report

Appendix 3: Rev Eric staff report

Draft budget available upon request.

Agenda

• **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Present: Rev. Eric Meter, Lisa Sharp, Brent Nicolle, Phil Nagy, Amy Berube, Caycee Price, David Chernushenko, Carl Sonnen, Andrew Drake
Special welcome: Jen Brennan, Michelle Jackson
(Sherri Watson and Kathy Yach also joined item 8, and left after)

1. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Agenda

b. Approval of Minutes from August 18, 2021 meeting

Moved by Amy; Seconded by Andrew; passed

2. BUSINESS ARISING

a. Motion to update the Memorial Policy - Appendix 1

Moved by Brent; seconded by Phil; passed

b. Approval of Minutes from June 17, 2021 meeting

Moved by Lisa; seconded by Brent; passed

c. Motion to appoint Amy Berube to replace Caycee Price as Interim Secretary.

(she will be interim secretary until approval at the next meeting of the congregation)

Moved by Lisa; Seconded by Carl; passed

3. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Covid Task Force - Brent Appendix 2

- Children in Sanctuary : the decision has been made that children will not be permitted in the sanctuary unless they are infants (babes in arms). There still needs to be a discussion being accommodating to our children and families in worship, perhaps as a monthly or quarterly Sunday service.
- Masks at the pulpit : speakers should not need to be masked at the pulpit.
- Congregating outside : singers and children are meeting outdoors for the time being.

Motion: that the board formally adopt the recent recommendations of the COVID Task Force (minutes attached), notably including the resumption of in-person Sunday services for fully vaccinated congregants only, and the cancellation of this year's Fall Fair.

Moved by Brent; Seconded by Andrew; Passed

b. SRCT - Lisa

i) Sponsorship of the Almasalmeh family:

Preamble, whereas:

- The Almasalmeh family, consisting of the father, mother, six children and the grandmother are Syrian refugees wishing to reunite with their family members in Ottawa.
- It is estimated that \$55,000 will be required by the federal government for this sponsorship.
- The family in Ottawa are able to contribute at least half of the required funds (e.g. \$28,000 of estimated \$55,000) to sponsor their family.
- Or Hanashamah is willing to equally share the responsibility, both financially and with volunteer hours; and will specifically take the lead in the administrative tasks related to submitting the application forms.
- First U would be willing and able to take the lead on coordination of the financial aspects; and would be able to contribute about \$13,000 to the initial funds required to submit the application.
- Or Hanashamah's board of directors has already approved this project; Carolyn stated that she felt that \$13,000 commitment would be possible.

Discussion: Financial concerns were brought up, as making unforeseen commitments may be expensive for our congregation while we are in a deficit. Members of the refugee group and the extended family of the Almasalmeh's are hoping to raise more funds which would translate into little to no cost to the congregation. While these concerns were duly noted, along with a potential increase to staff hours, this endeavour was seen as being important and necessary. Furthermore, the idea of using the bequest of Bob Stevenson of \$10,000 to fund the majority of the needed costs, would be a fitting use of these funds. (for more information, see the Bob Stevenson bequest discussion below)

Motion: That First U shall work in partnership with Or Hanashamah to sponsor the Almasalmeh family, provided that the minimum required funds are available to submit the application.

Moved by Lisa; seconded Andrew; Passed

ii) Bob Stevenson's memorial fund

Bob Stevenson, a longtime congregant and former chair of the refugee group has left a \$10,000 bequest from his estate. Bob will be honoured for his work with these groups and other social justice projects in the near future. Some members of the board feel that Bob's wishes for his bequest would be to be put into a separate refugee fund to help with subsequent sponsorships, such as the current project with the Almasalmeh family, as voted on above.

Discussion: Finances are currently a concern. The 2022 budget is currently projecting a large deficit. The recommendation given by the Finance committee was to leave Bob Stevenson's request in general operation funds. Since the 2022 budget is a subsequent item on tonight's agenda, and it was seen as premature to vote on this item before the summary of the budget was given.

- Brent has asked that we table this discussion, and the vote until after the budget discussion ,
Brent moved; Phil seconded; carried

After the budget discussions, the board returned to this item. For clarity, it will be added here, but this vote took place after item 4.

Motion: to move the \$10,000 bequest from Bob Stevenson's estate from operation funds to a separate refugee fund.

Moved by Lisa; seconded by Andrew; carried (Phil abstained)

c. **CPC Update** - (David and Lisa)

Lima Dental Development and Site Plan: Lima Dental (an adjacent property owner) is currently planning to build a nine story building on their property. Such a building may impede our use of the first U campus, for which there is not currently a concept or plan. The CPC is trying to block Lima dental's project from going forward, but unfortunately, will have difficulty succeeding without their own plan. Given that first U needs to protect its own property interests, preparing some kind of concept plan or site plan may need to be put in place in the near future. This option is going to be explored by the CPC, but no firm commitments financial or development wise will be made without subsequent consultation with the board.

Motion for CPC to investigate development of First U site plan and bring proposal, including projected costs, to board for a future meeting.

Moved by David; Seconded Carl; carried; Phil abstained

d. **Finance Committee - 2022 Budget discussion** Michelle and Phil

- Michelle gave the board of the summary of the current budget for the 2022 year. Please note that budget drafts are available upon request.

4. STAFF REPORT

Minister Report - (Rev Eric)

His report was sent by email and is attached *appendix 3*

5. NEXT MEETING

BOD Meeting - October 20th, 7pm

- Fall Congregational Meeting, Nov 21, 11:30 am

Appendix 1

DONOR AND MEMBER RECOGNITION POLICY: BOOK OF GRATITUDE, MEMORIAL PLAQUES AND MEDITATION GARDENS MEMORIAL DEDICATIONS

EFFECTIVE DATE:

POLICY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE:

First U has a number of means of recognizing members and congregants who have made significant contributions to First U and those who have passed away.

The Book of Gratitude is a formal record of those who have supported this congregation, above and beyond their important annual pledges, by generous donations to capital campaigns, in memory of loved ones, through bequests/end of life gifts, or with significant gifts. As such, the book is a historical document, a significant and valuable document among the assets of the congregation. Entries into the Book of Gratitude will be made in accordance with the criteria and protocols outlined below.

Memorial Plaques may be placed in memory of congregation members or long-term supporters. A donation of record is expected to be made at the time of placement of a memorial plaque.

Memorial plantings and structures in the Meditation Gardens provide a place for loved ones to spend time in the beauty of nature to remember and honour the person they have lost. Donations will cover the cost of the planting, structure or other dedications, including purchase, placement and maintenance.

POLICY DETAILS

A. Book of Gratitude

Criteria for Inclusion in the Book of Gratitude:

Names will be added to the Book of Gratitude in compliance with these criteria:

1. Bequests or end-of-life gifts of \$2,000 or more when there is no specific designation for a particular fund or use of the gifts.
2. Gifts of \$1,000 or more in memory of a person or a couple. (Only the name(s) of those honored will be entered - not the name(s) of the donor(s).)
3. Gifts of \$5,000 or more to a capital project such as the Elevator project, or the Building Renewal project.
4. Gifts of \$10,000 or more which are designated for a particular fund or use of the gifts.

Protocols

1. A "Custodian of the Book of Gratitude" will be responsible for the care and upkeep of the Book.
2. No one but the Custodian will be allowed to access the Book unless they have been instructed and authorized by the Custodian.
3. The Custodian will ensure the book is handled carefully, including being protected from sunlight, as is required for the type of paper used in the Book.
4. The Custodian will regularly change the pages that are on display in the case.
5. The Case with the Book will be kept at the back of the pews in Worship Hall.
6. The Custodian will maintain an electronic copy of the Book on the congregation website.

7. The Custodian will, at least annually, obtain from the Office, the names of donors who meet any of the criteria. The Custodian will obtain costs for adding the new names and submit the estimates for inclusion in the appropriate section of the congregational budget. A tight budget or unforeseen cash flow problems may delay updating the actual book, but the website copy will be updated to show the latest donors.
8. When additions to the Book are required, and the costs will be covered in the budget, the Custodian will engage a calligrapher to create the new entries.

B. Memorial Plaques

Criteria for Memorial Plaques

Memorial Plaques may be placed on the designated columns in Worship Hall in compliance with these criteria:

1. Upon request of the family in memory of a congregation member, **a non-member beloved by the congregation, such as a family member**, or long-term supporter of the congregation.
2. A donation of \$50 or more is expected. Where the donation exceeds the costs involved, the excess funds will be placed in the Memorial Fund. (See Finance Policy regarding Memorial Fund for its uses and authorities)

Protocols

1. Requests for Memorial Plaques will be made to the Operations Manager who will be responsible for ordering the plaque and ensuring appropriate placement.
2. The Operations Manager may also, from time to time, increase the expected minimum donation for a Memorial Plaque to ensure that the donated amount covers associated costs.

c. Meditation Gardens Memorial Dedications

The development and maturity of the Meditation Gardens has been fostered through encouraging the planting of memorial dedications. As of 2019, there were 47 commemorations consisting of 35 tree species, 7 shrubs (lilacs, weigela, currant), and 5 other dedications such as structures, benches and bird baths.

Criteria for Meditation Gardens Memorial Dedications

Memorial dedications will be considered using the following criteria:

1. Dedications and commemorations may be placed in memory of a Congregation member, active supporter of the Congregation and in remembrance of their loved ones. Dedications and commemorations may also be made for individuals who have made a significant contribution to the Congregation.
2. A donation will be expected sufficient to cover the cost of the dedication, including the costs of the material (plant or otherwise), the memorial marker, placement and a contribution to overall Gardens maintenance costs. Where the donation exceeds the initial costs, the excess funds will be placed in the Meditation Gardens special purpose account.
3. Due to space constraints and changes to the water table due to neighbouring development, memorial tree plantings will no longer be considered. The Friends of the Meditation Gardens will maintain a list of plants and other commemorative options that will be considered (e.g. structures, benches, bird baths and possible other options such as etched stones or bricks). Donors will be advised of the impermanent nature of Garden memorial dedications.

Protocols

1. Requests for dedications will be made to the Operations Manager who will forward them to the chair of the Friends of Meditation Gardens for consideration.
2. To maintain the integrity of the Gardens, the Friends of the Meditation Gardens will have the final say in plant selection and in the design and placement of other commemorative items. The Operations Manager will be advised of decisions and a record of dedications will be maintained.
3. The timing of fulfilling memorial requests will be decided upon by the Friends of the Meditation Gardens, considering things such as the availability of team members to water new plantings.

D. GENERAL

The Board of Directors or congregation may request a memorial dedication (Memorial Plaque or Meditation Gardens memorial dedication) in memory of a congregant who have made a significant contribution to the congregation, either financially or as a volunteer. The cost of the memorial dedication requested by the Board or congregation will be covered from the Memorial Fund.

AUTHORITIES:

The Board will appoint the Custodian of the Book of Gratitude for either a set or indefinite term. The Operations Manager will make decisions about Memorial Plaques in accordance with the criteria and protocols outlined above. The Friends of the Gardens will make decisions about Meditation Gardens Memorial Dedications.

WHO DRAFTED THIS POLICY: Bob Armstrong (initial policy on Book of Gratitude); Eva Berringer and Jen Brennan (update to include memorial plaques), Bob Armstrong, Custodian of the Book of Gratitude (original Book of Gratitude Policy), Susan Mellor of the Friends of the Meditation Gardens (draft Gardens Memorial Policy).

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO REVIEW/UPDATE OR AMEND THIS POLICY: Custodian of the Book of Gratitude, Operations Manager, Friends of the Meditation Garden

WHO APPROVES THIS POLICY AND ITS AMENDMENTS: Board

DATE OF INITIAL APPROVAL : April 4, 2018 (Book of Gratitude Policy)

REVISION HISTORY

Revision Date	Version	Comment
April 4, 2018		Approval of Book of Gratitude Policy
Nov. 2019		Book of Gratitude policy expanding to include other forms of donor and 'in memoriam' recognition

COVID Task Force Report

Summary of Recommendations to Board

The COVID Task force met four times in August and September. Our minutes are included in this report, but our recommendations to the Board are summarized below.

1. Sunday Services Reopening

- a. Plan on reopening Sun. Sept. 19 with a Zoom Town Hall Sept 12 to explain rules b. Registration, vaccine mandate, COVID questionnaire, distanced, masked.
- c. Vaccine mandate for all participants, staff and volunteers. No medical exemptions. d. Unvaccinated children should be redirected from Sanctuary to RE. One exception: infants (unvaccinated) can remain with their parents in Sanctuary.
- e. Max capacity 80
- f. Mask off at pulpit OK if presenter is comfortable, with a safety radius
- g. Soloist vocal accompanists possible, masked, with a safety radius
- h. Elevator use accepted for 2 riders: short duration, masked, vaccinated
- i. No coffee after service at FirstU.
- j. 10 am Sunday start to allow attendees to head home and catch HH on Zoom. k. Congregant arrival 9:30-9:50 to prevent last-minute crush of list-checking

2. Children's RE

- a. Concurrent with Sunday Service 10-11.
- b. Outdoors as weather permits (or basement)
- c. Masked for ages 2+, registration, COVID questionnaire.
- d. Vaccinated volunteers/staffers.
- e. One-room-schoolhouse model until numbers warrant split.

3. Cancellation of Fall Fair for 2021

- a. Impractical to impose vaccine mandate on shoppers
- b. Capacity limit of 100 outside and ~30 inside (incl. volunteers) is hard to manage c.

Infection rates rising. There is a risk the event may be cancelled later, since 4. Cautious restart of choir practices

a. masked, distanced, outdoors (while weather is good), vaccinated participants. 5. Rites-of-passage should conform to same rules

- a. Registration, vaccine mandate, COVID questionnaire, distanced, masked.

6. Event Rentals need to conform to same rules (in rental contract)

- a. Registration, vaccine mandate, COVID questionnaire, distanced, masked.

7. Building use (committees and groups)

- a. Vaccine mandate as per province, plus registration, questionnaire, spacing, masks. b. Large basement rooms 2,3,4,6 have a capacity of about 8. NOW room capacity=11. 8. HEPA air filters
- a. Not suitable for Sanctuary. Possibly useful for other spaces (eg Fellowship Hall) 9.

Membership on COVID Task Force

- a. Music-Jenn interested in membership
- b. Guy Belleperche and Jane Lindsay interested as observers

Minutes 2021/08/19

Meeting Details: Thursday 2021/08/19, 7:00pm-8:30pm, via Zoom.

Attendees: Rev Eric Meter, Andrew Drake, Guy Belleperche, Jen Brennan (“Ops-Jen”), Jen Bernsten (“Music-Jen”), Brent Nicolle.

No formal agenda was distributed, but the main topic was reopening for Sunday Services

1. Sunday Services Reopening

- Guy re-distributed a link to his own daily COVID infection tracking spreadsheet [see References].
- Ops-Jen reported that we had a near capacity of 80 people at two summer memorial services
- Andrew worries about the infection rate climbing in the fourth wave after schools re-open
- Brent is concerned that if we wait too long to decide to re-open, the decision will be made for us

by infection rates and we will have missed an opportunity to re-open that many are waiting for.

- Guy is adamant about a vaccine mandate to attend. No medical exemptions; please participate via on-line service.

- We should not plan to serve coffee after service as it is extra risk and extra complication.
- Rev Eric proposes a Town Hall via Zoom on Sun Sept 12, to discuss a planned reopening on Sun Sept 19.

2. Choir practices

- Music-Jen distributed a recent study indicating how choirs might practice/perform safely [see References], and that she has been already conducting choir practices with safety protocol.
- Music-Jen proposes a vaccine mandate for choirs, outdoor practices as weather permits.

3. Next Meeting

- We agreed to meet again in two weeks (Thur Sep 2 7pm) to reconfirm details of Town Hall, and rough plan for reopening.

REFERENCES

1. Guy maintains his own daily COVID infection tracking spreadsheet:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mt9BuUKFU34O_cmwb8K3OP8hpZ9NemfQp0I0cnPwinM

2. Music-Jen distributed a recent study indicating how choirs might practice/perform safely:

https://www.nfhs.org/media/4717034/international-coalition-performing-arts-aerosol-study_july-2021-update-final.pdf

Minutes 2021/09/02 (draft)

Meeting details: 2021/09/02 7pm-8:30 by Zoom

Purpose: Plan of details for Sun Sept 19 Reopening, and for the Sun Sept 12 Town Hall. **Attendees:**

Rev Eric, Andrew, Guy, Jen Brennan (“Ops-Jen”), Jen Bernstein (“Music-Jen”), Brent.

Rev Eric thought that for Sunday Services to move start of services to 10am. Assuming finish at 11am, this gives many folks sufficient time to return home (or elsewhere) for Hospitality Hour at its usual time 11:30. The earlier start to worship may not be convenient to all, but since livestreaming records to YouTube immediately, people can time-shift to fit their schedule.

RE would operate concurrently during in-person service. Kids over 2 would be masked. It would be outdoors as weather permits.

Music-Jenn proposed limited singing accompaniment in-service with masks, by 1 (or 2 from same bubble) vaccinated choir singers, with an appropriate 6-foot or 10-foot circle. She is planning outdoor masked choir practices, and considering other non-vocal performances (eg percussion) in service.

Review of anticipated questions for Sept 12 Town Hall, and prepared answers:

1. Is this part of the new provincial regulation on vaccine passports? [No religious services are exempt. This is a FirstU regulation.]
2. Will we use provincial vaccine passports? [Yes when available. But PDFs and printouts can work in the meantime.]
3. What exactly will we need to show? [The proof may be a paper or electronic record of your second vaccine, or a paper or electronic QR code from a government vaccine passport. If we don't recognize you, please forgive us, we may ask for government photo ID as well.]
4. What info will we transcribe from the proof? [Your name, plus the date of the 2nd dose in case vaccinations are found to require a 12-month booster, plus the date we checked it and who checked it.]
5. Do I have to show this passport every time I preregister/arrive? [No just the first time. We will have a list.]
6. Are volunteers required to show proof of vaccine? [Yes.]
7. Are staff? [Yes.]
8. Are children? [Children under 12 are age-exempt.]
9. Do we allow medical exemptions? [No, please stay safe at home and join us online.]
10. What about attending indoor rites of passage? [Same FirstU rules apply.]
11. What about other site rentals? [Same rules apply, as per province effective Sept 22. Currently Jen is currently doing registration and pre-screening but this is not sustainable. We may need an extra staffer for rites-of-passage, and need to delegate rules compliance for rentals by embedding into contracts.]
12. What about indoor team meetings? [Same rules apply, as per province effective Sept 22]
13. What about last minute attendees? [if you don't preregister, you may be turned away because we are full. Last minute attendees will still need to show vaccine proof]

Actions:

- Brent to produce a draft Agenda for Town Hall.
- Rev Eric to alert Greeters and Hospitality Hour of changes

Minutes 2021/09/09

Date: 2021/09/09 7pm-8:30 by Zoom

Attendance: Rev Eric, Jen, Andrew, Guy, Brent

Guest: Carol Card

1) Fall Fair

Carol Card had sent email requesting clarification of decision to continue or not, as some key volunteers expressed reservations.

If we continue, there are follow up questions:

- all outdoors, or any use of indoor space?
- can we ask for proof of vaccination from shoppers?
- can we double-check the 100-person limit for outdoors?
- any other safety measures recommendable?

Discussion ensued.

DECISION: The COVID Task Force made the difficult decision to recommend cancellation of the Fall Fair on the following major bases:

1) Public Health measures are rising exponentially: Public-health indicators are rising in Ottawa, and there is a risk that we might be forced to cancel the event at the last minute due to public-health rates. A late cancellation (once we have accepted donation of goods) may cause considerable future logistical problems and costs.

2) Vaccination: Unlike our Sunday services, it is currently impractical to enforce vaccination upon shoppers, which unnecessarily expose our senior volunteers. The differences between our own public health measures for Sundays versus for a Fall Fair is stark.

3) Capacity Limits: We would be restricted to 100 persons outside and only about 30 persons inside in various rooms. This capacity limit would include volunteers, and those waiting in line. Clearly this would be a shadow of a normal Fall Fair, and crowd management would be a serious problem. There are minor concerns as well, including complication of construction along Richmond Road, and the reputational risk to FirstU or future Fall Fairs of things going poorly (such as traffic or crowd control) at this Fall Fair.

The known benefits of Fall Fair (community-building among our volunteers, showcasing FirstU, re-using goods, and raising funds) are all significantly diminished by the reduced size of the Fall Fair. The smaller benefits are outweighed against the formidable problems outlined above.

ACTION Brent to advise Board of recommendation ASAP, but we decided to let Carol now immediately due to e-UU and other preparation deadlines.

ACTION Carol to advise her team immediately (back-tracking from messaging earlier in the day)

ACTION Carol/Jen to advise Allison for eUU

2) Jen circulated the Ontario Regs still saying 100 persons max for public gatherings outside. It was difficult to determine if we could reclassify ourselves as Outdoor Retail, when we are predominantly a church.

ACTION Jen can ask for guidance from Ottawa Public Health for future reference. 3) Jen asked if we want to revisit the indoor limit of 80 persons max (25% capacity) in the sanctuary, in light of CUC's guidance

We agreed we are comfortable with the 80 person limit

Worth noting: safe indoor limits for key rooms in basement are pretty small: 11 people for NOW room, 8 people in rooms 2,3,4,6.

4) Rev Eric requested exemption for him (or anyone so comfortable) speaking at the pulpit to not wear a mask. Part of the difficulty is for the hard-of-hearing to hear voices through a mask.

All agreed, although we would apply a (wider-than-6-feet) perimeter around the pulpit, and require masks back on as one leaves pulpit.

5) Run-through of PowerPoint presentation for Sunday's Town Hall

ACTION Jen to change HH URL to use larger account

ACTION Rev Eric to ask Lisa Boulay to mention new HH URL in Announcements

Neo would like to present early since she needs to prep for Outdoor RE Sunday afternoon.

Minutes 2021/09/16

Meeting Details: 2021-09-16 7:30pm-9:15pm by Zoom

Attendees: Ops-Jen, Guy, Andrew, Rev Eric, Brent, Music-Jenn Berntson, Jane Lindsay.

1. Previous minutes of 2021-09-09

Adopted.

ACTION: Brent to forward to Board

2. Children in the Sanctuary

- Unvaccinated children versus seniors with potentially weak immune systems (but vaccinated) - Neo doesn't want kids in the Sanctuary

- Physical space (left-side/right-side) is perhaps only a pseudo-barrier, requires study of air flow - Calendar space (alt Sundays) is logistically challenging and complicates the simple rule of "everybody is vaccinated"

- Potential (unlikely) for discrimination litigation if under-age exemption is allowed, medical exemption not allowed

- Lounge with CCTV could be a possibility, but how is that different from watching from home?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Concluding recommendation: unvaccinated children should be restricted from the Sanctuary - We do provide a welcoming space for young children: in RE. Parents can choose to be with their kids in RE, or with the congregation.

- Only meaningful exception: infants (babes-in-arms), who would be viewed as part of their parents' bubble.

- This restriction on families is not desirable and will be re-reviewed as public-health circumstances change.

ACTIONS:

- Ops-Jen to change wording for "Children under 12" to "Infants" on Signup

- Rev Eric to consult with Jill Swan

- Brent to clear these Recommendations with Board next Wednesday.

3. Elevator Access

- Small elevator, mobility issues often require an attendant.

- Should riders face away from each other? Unlikely to help much, they are sharing the same air for a short time (masked, vaccinated).

RECOMMENDATION: Continue using elevator as per usual.

4. Other topics from Sunday Town Hall

- Disregard bolo name tags, not significant part of Sunday service, no specific guidance required. -

Specific guidance on arrival time: greeters arrive at 9:15, congregants should arrive 9:30-9:50 - Not

many signing up for this Sunday just yet, perhaps many are adopting "wait-and-see attitude - Unclear on messaging about congregating outside (encouraged or not? masked? distanced?) ACTION:

- Jen to provide messaging in e-UU that congregants should arrive between 9:30 and 9:50 on Sunday - Jen to

provide signs for recommended practices for people chatting outside: masked, distanced, short duration.

5. HEPA filters

- A 600 cfm device (\$1000) could handle a 30x30ft room (8ft high). Worship Hall would probably need about 17 of these.

- Not much public-health messaging that HEPA filters have a significant impact for

RECOMMENDATION: 1 or 2 units on hand may be useful for Fellowship Hall or other spaces. Operational decision.

6. Men's Breakfast Group (email from Chris Hughes, forwarded by Guy)

- invitation implied that participations could have medical exemptions to vaccination. -

invitation implied that the organizers would be registering vaccinations

ACTION: Jen to confirm with Chris that office should keep vaccine registry, and participants list

7. Membership on Task Force

- Music-Jenn is interested, subject to schedule availability (Tuesday afternoons works) - Guy would like to remain as an observer

- Jane would like to continue as an observer for now

ACTION:

Brent to take membership to the Board

Appendix 3

Minister's Report to the Board of Directors of the
First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa

September 2021

First off, I want to begin this, my first official report to you, with gratitude for all the expressions of welcome my wife Ann and I have gratefully experienced since arriving in Ottawa in July. To members of the Search Team, staff, Board, Unitarian House and others – Thank you.

At this point, I've met informally with the Men's Breakfast group, and formally with FirstU's Committee on Shared Ministry, Welcome and Membership Team, Social Responsibility Steering Committee, Caring Network Exec., Worship Associates, and Finance Committee. I've also met with Rev. Ellen Bell, had a long conversation with Rev. Linda Goonewardene, and spoken briefly with Caterina Pace at River Parkway Children's Center. I still need to reach out to Rabbi Liz Bolton, which I'll do after the conclusion of Sukkot.

I've also worked closely with the COVID Task Force, and am in regular contact with the church staff. Highlights of these past weeks include the Sunday afternoon I joined Neo (and was able to meet her mother!) at our summertime Religious Exploration activities outdoors at FirstU and talking with members waiting for the Trail of Tears walkers on Saturday, August 21st.

Over the last several weeks, I've joined Alex Campbell in leading memorials for Michael Carson and Madeleine Soroczan-Wright, and officiated at the committal and an informal backyard memorial for Barbara McInnes.

Perhaps the biggest event in these last weeks was Sunday's initial hybrid worship service. Hat's off to everyone who made it possible! From my vantage point (and the remarks from those who sat around the table in my office to de-brief directly afterward), the service was a great success. We clocked in at just under an hour. I'm not yet sure why participation in Hospitality Hour was lower than usual. That's still something I'm wanting to figure out. Some of you have already provided direct feedback. Thank you! If others have thoughts or ideas, I'd love to hear them as well.

On points of business for this month's meeting, as Lisa and I have discussed, I've invited Michelle Jackson and Jennifer Brennan to the next several Board meetings.

My understanding is that FirstU operates under a modified version of Policy Governance in which the minister does not operate as CEO. (Thank goodness.) That said, even though I am chief of staff, I believe it will benefit everyone if senior staff participate in Board meetings. I understand that at least one misunderstanding arose when Rev. Pat was not able to keep Michelle or Jen in the loop actively enough on a new program church being developed.

Which brings me to a question I want to ask you. What information will be most helpful to you for me to include in my monthly reports? Each Board I've worked with has asked for a different framework. I would generally list the efforts I've made toward Board / church goals for the year, as well as what I've learned from past activities and how that informs future plans. Would that work for you, or would you prefer a different focus?

Another, unrelated question: might we large the weekly (in-person) Board reports to include the full welcome and all Sunday morning church announcements?

In other news I want to make sure you know that beyond First U, I've been on the Board (as Secretary) of the UU Partner Church Council for over 6 years now. Over the last two of those years we've been discussing our future, first among ourselves and then with the UUA and the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists. In that time, we have come to realize that while we were formed foster relationships between Unitarians across the globe, much of that, especially in the beginning, was in the form of us in North America providing funds to other Unitarians in Eastern Europe and then North East India, the Philippines and communities in Africa. These days that looks too much like colonization. So, if all goes as planned, by the end of this calendar year both the UUPCC and the ICUU will close shop and the UUA and international partners will begin to dream up something new. While I'll be letting go of this work in the coming months, it has turned out that closing a nonprofit takes even more work than usual over its last several months.

Lastly, the annual meeting of the Ohio River Group, the UU clergy study group I'm in, will be meeting virtually again this year in early November. In the past, I've served on its Program Committee and presented a paper on the future of political liberalism (pre Trump, thankfully) and response papers on poetry in worship, and other topics. What is presented and discussed at the study group fuels my sermon thinking for months to come. I can't wait until we can meet in person once again.

And that's it for this report. Thank you all for making Ann and I feel so warmly welcomed. We are delighted to be with you and the rest of FirstU.

All the best,

Rev. Eric Meter