

UUCG Board Minutes

9/21/21

ACTION ITEMS SUMMARY		
WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN
MJ	Request comm comm to prepare activity report for next GNUUS	Done
MJ	Share full survey reports with comm comm	9/26
Katrina, Lydia, Erika	Continue obtaining input on 3 Open Questions for remainder of year: keep survey open and publicize it, have town halls, etc.	6/30/22
Katrina	Prepare article for next GNUUS on 3 OQs	9/23
Lorena	Discuss cong. retreat date w/UUFA	10/19
All	Review Sabbatical Handbook, make comments in document	10/19

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Date: 09/21/21	Time: 7-9p via Zoom
Board Member	Present? (Quorum = 5)
Lorena Griffin, President	N
Ed Miller, Vice President	Y (Presiding)
Maryjane Stout, Secretary	Y
Thomas Yun, Treasurer	Y
Gary Kiel, Treasurer-elect	Y
Erika Shell Castro, Member at Large	Y
Lydia Patrick, Member at Large	Y
Katrina Yurko, Member at large	Y
Rev. Jan Taddeo, Minister	Y
Guests: David Morgen, Sharon Yun	

Called to Order at (time):	7:03 p.m.
Consent Agenda (Minister's Report, Financial Reports, previous meeting minutes, next bd mtg date) approved?	Yes

Public Comment:

Sharon Yun: re possible **8th principle:** offering herself as a resource; fairly knowledgeable about topic when it comes time to discuss topic with congregation. Advocating for putting it in Article II, Purposes, not becoming the 8th principle. Intent is good but implement it differently.

Discussion Items:

1. Report from Lydia, Erika, Katrina on open questions.
 - a. 22 responses. See attached for full reports. Brief summaries:
 - b. Q1: Doing well: Model the beliefs, active SJ program, volunteer our time for causes that reflect our values, show compassion
 - c. Q1: Things to work on: Need publicity, need full RE program, need input and membership from POC. Need to up our tech game, farm the neighborhood, up our publicity efforts (many suggestions), reach out to nearby immigrant community, offer more events to wider community
 - d. Q2: Need strong comm team, UUCG making progress, need active participation from congregation; need care committee chair and chairs meet monthly then report in newsletter; since our building is hidden from street, use sign more; facility should be accessible to stakeholders – all members should have the code; more events, like worship in the park. Sign needs renovation. Stone and brick columns at entrance. Building and grounds are tired. Need polish. Follow “build it and they will come” w/RE. Most younger people use Insta, Tiktok, we should too. SJ should involve chalice circles. Sermons should be more joyful and inspirational.
 - e. Q3: We have thoughtful worship each week, Jan does good job. Lorena doing fabulous job. Faith Dev. not well publicized. Connect with community. [and more positive comments]
 - f. Q3: Not having a family puts me outside this community sometimes. Perhaps we should be a little less *radially welcoming* and a little more *broadly welcoming*.

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Christian symbolism here is too strong. Doesn't support those who do not identify or are from non-Protestant backgrounds. Take all these surveys and make concrete goals of them.

- g. Jan's recommendations: comm comm should share what we're doing in a forthcoming newsletter. Consider asking questions to develop these. Hone into tangible goals -- for next year's implementation by MC.
2. Next year's retreats at the Mountain
 - a. Leadership Retreat – scheduled July 8-10, 2022.
 - b. Congregational Retreat – take it to the MC
3. COVID Review
 - a. Risk Level, Gwinnett County, still very high. Things starting to get better.
 - b. But UUCG's position will not change at this time. We're not ready.
 - c. Minimal lead time to return is needed; just allow time for staff to get registration process up. Prefer 1.5 weeks lead time to be in person.
4. Review Sabbatical Handbook: quick overview. Feedback requested (in the document)
 - a. There may be some changes later this week
5. Overview of UUA 8th Principle project (Rev. Jan)
 - a. Article II of the bylaws of UUA: is a covenant among member congregations. That's where the 7 principles are.
 - b. Suggestion: it's not time to get into this; commission is discussing. Premature.
 - c. This may be a "fake fight." Fighting over words and not the deeper issues.
 - d. UUA internal practices, including hiring, is involved. POCs seem to be in service part of staff. (2017 hiring issue.) Sometimes what happens at GA can be fraught.
 - e. Schedule: Jan. 2022: UUA board votes. 2022 GA: 1st vote. 2023 GA: 2nd vote. So there's time.
 - f. Recommendation: Board and congregation should have regular conversations around all UUA issues.
 - g. This issue is actually a conflation of multiple issues.

Action Items:

1. Internship Agreement
 - a. Approved with modifications to clarify definition(s) of "year."
2. Contracts for Sabbatical ministers
 - a. Approved.
3. 2022 Housing Allowance request from minister
 - a. Approved with modifications to clarify years.

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TOPICS DEFERRED TO NEXT MEETING
Every meeting: consider what we will announce in the next newsletter
Had overview of 8 th principle issues; still need to have discussion
Congregational retreat date
Every month until resolution: revisit COVID opening date
Sabbatical Handbook

Adjourned at (time):	9:02p
Next Meeting:10/19/21	Via Zoom 7-9p

Respectfully submitted,
Maryjane S. Stout
Secretary

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Open Question Survey Results to Date (22 responses)

1. #1 *What are the unique gifts that UUCG has to offer the broader community and how do we build bridges between our church and the community that model our shared values?*

belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and our goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. By putting these practices together in the community, as much as possible, we are modeling and showcasing them for others to see.

Needs publicity

Radical welcome and inclusion. Inviting the community to join us in celebration of "their" ancestry, traditions, and spiritual practices.

We must have a full RE program and we need input from and membership of people of color. We are a unique spiritual opportunity, but until prospective members see a vibrant RE community and POC, they will only come in the door one time.

In my opinion, the active social justice program and inter-Faith activities are the best gifts that work to build bridges between our congregation and the broader community.

By volunteering our time for causes that need our help, by showing up at political events and protests, by donating to causes that are important to us and reflect our values. Examples would be donating to El Refugio and being present at the Charles Hale soil collection. We need to establish our reputation in the community by making sure that our involvement in these areas is known.

Our ability to show compassion to the diverse groups in the neighborhood.

We build bridges through example of helping others

I would love to see us obtain an electronic sign to tell the community about our principles, events and upcoming services and/or speakers.

Begin the process as a congregation to adopt this -<https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background>

Aggressively farm the residents of the neighborhoods who drive by UUCG. I'd suggest starting quarterly with a sustainably manageable number of no more than 250. This simple marketing concept is common and following at least a year of implementation, a simple data analysis can be drawn as to the results.

Compassion! The work with community organizations (Corley Elem, El Refugio, etc) are excellent examples. Carrying the light out into the world.

UUCG offers the opportunity to pool together talented and interest people for social-justice purposes. We need to do a better job of appealing to a wider net through social media and advertising on Google by using available talent and resources.

Press releases to local media might also provide exposure. The El Refugio work does a great deal, but doesn't seem to involve our local community.

I think the UUCG could offer a great number of services needed in the local community. We have a large immigrant population, particularly of children, who are here with distant relatives, if with anyone. Considering the work the UUCG does with el Refugio, this is a great opportunity to offer help to our local

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community too. The UUCG could also offer things to the local community in need: swap/take fairs, food banks, etc.

UUCG offers the public an open relationship between self/ humanity/and spirituality. It offers a unique opportunity for people to bring their beliefs to a shared table , a shared path of open dialogue/respect for personal perspective and a community that share the landscape both within and among us.

Most of my ideas in that area have to do with offering talks, meetings, and events open to the wider community that create space for conversation afterwards.

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2. *What personal and organizational needs must be addressed to move fully into our vision and what resources do we have to help us meet them?*

- I feel we need a strong Communications Team to make sure everyone within our congregation and beyond our walls will know what is happening and being done at UUCG.
- Mentoring, diverse Leadership Teams, and inclusive decision-making.
- UUCG seems to me to be making progress moving toward the vision. The resources needed to meet the growth toward the vision are- active participation from the congregation and financial support.
- Care Circles and Phone trees. We should have a Care Committee Chair and Leads from Each Circle who meet monthly for updates regarding our needs and health. Then we publish the results in our Newsletter
- Our Blue Building is hidden from the view of those passing by. A sign with changing messages will say "here we are, this is what we are about, come see what we are doing."
- outreach to encourage members, who correct me if wrong, collectively own UUCG, to access the building and property, on THEIR own, at a time of THEIR choosing, to enable them to carry out the mission of UUCG.
- My belief is that, regardless of amount of increased usage of the building and grounds, broadcasting this enablement may increase, a sense of community ownership and participation, which is essential in fulfilling the ambitious UUCG mission statement and long range plan - many well meant versions of which sit unfulfilled, gathering dust on shelves at UUCG.
- More public events would be great... trunk or treat events, etc. I liked the idea of a "worship in the park" service.
- Our building is not visible from the road, our sign needs a renovation, We need stone/brick columns at the entrance to make our welcome OFFICIAL. the church and grounds needs to look like we are financially viable and established in Gwinnett. People make judgements on first impressions. The building and grounds need to tell a story about us as a thriving community, we are solid state and financially rooted. This is the first point of perception for the public. It needs to be polished.
- We need to follow the "build it and they will come" attitude in renewing a strong RE program. In a county with the largest school population in Georgia, there are many families with kids who would find us and join us if we only provided a program for them. Recognizing that this will not work while we are in Zoom mode, we need to plan to expand RE when we return to in person.
- Many may hesitate to get involved because it appears that our financial status is questionable.
- Most people of the Millennial age (elder Millennials are approaching 40), Gen Z, etc. use Instagram, Tik Tok, and Snapchat much more often than email and Facebook. A lot of organizations and even churches use Tik Tok and Tik Tok trends to spread news.
- Social justice is our spiritual practice. Social justice issues could be best served in chalice circle settings, to address personal fears and express hopes. Sermons need to be more joyful in order to inspire us throughout the week to do the work. Personal testimonies in the form of reflections will also work.

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3. *In what ways does UUCG meet your spiritual needs and how can we support each other in our spiritual journey?*

UUCG meets my spiritual needs by having thoughtful and meaningful worship services each week, and by providing opportunities for me to connect with and learn from others within our congregation.

Everyone deserves to have their story cherished and celebrated- past, present, and future. We have not heard the Community until all voices are heard.

I think Jan does a very good job of meeting our pastoral needs. I am very glad that there is a liberal religious present in Gwinnett county; we are doing that, for sure. I also think Lorena is doing a fabulous job.

I am excited to be involved in the faith development for families with young children. I did not think that this was well publicized though because I only found out about it through another member. We need to make sure that these opportunities are clear perhaps by Reverend Jan mentioning them at the service. I have thoroughly enjoyed the faith development programs I have experienced.

A feeling of acceptance. Messages that align with who I am

I feel that not having a family puts me outside of the spiritual growth of the community, but I have leaned more into my Buddhist practice. Personally, I am moving more in that direction.

The Community of people. Just being available to listen to each other, and our stories.

I find the ability to connect with a community that holds progressive values similar to my own to be reaffirming.

It's good to have access to programs related to race awareness, to covenant groups, and like-minded community support. I enjoy the Sunday morning services on Zoom.

As UU's we bring our spirituality to the table and align our beliefs with what we choose.

The themes, programs, and worship services open the doors to the questions of ultimacy, to environmental connectedness, to a search for meaning, but the answers are within us.

Our many varied services with an emphasis on personal search for spirituality provide a strong attraction for the people who value reason and science and yet are open to others ideas. Perhaps we should be a little less "radical" and a bit more broadly welcoming.

The UUCG has a GREAT and STRONG connection to Christianity, particularly Protestantism: special services are held for holidays, Christian terms are often used when needed, and Christian symbolism has permanent place in the congregation. It has been my experience in the past the UUCG gives preference to and more strongly supports a Protestant experience. This is fine, but does not support those who are not Christian or who do not identify with the Protestant experience. I have found the UUCG Druid group EXTREMELY supportive and I greatly appreciate their work. I would like to see the same for people interested in study or spirituality within Judaism, Islam, other pagan traditions, etc.

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Take all these surveys and make a plan with a timeline. Periodically let the congregation know how we are doing with it and if we do not reach 50% of the goal after a specific time period, scrap it and start over. What is the point of doing these surveys if nothing ever comes of the data?

Adult RE and WOW are helping to expand my understanding of the world.

The community, the widening of perspectives, the reinforcement of an open mind... I am thoroughly enjoying both this church and the people I've met and learned from so far