

**United Church on the Green**  
**Leadership Board Meeting September 13, 2023**  
**Minutes**  
**via zoom**

1. The meeting was called to order by Al Forino, moderator of the congregation, at 7:04p.m. Present: Cher Balkcom, Tim Bertaccini, Abram Guerra, Benjamin Gyadu, Christine Maursky, Colleen O'Connor, Julie Peterman, June Richards, John Sawyer, Moderator Al Forino, and Senior Minister Rev. Dr. Stephen J. Ray, Jr., who offered an opening prayer.

2. The Minutes of the July 19, 2023 meeting were approved by consent.

3. Tim presented the Treasurer's Report. We are 16.6% of the way through the Fiscal Year. Income is at 17%, expenses are at 15%, so we are showing a positive YTD of \$11,000. Annual giving is at 16%, but total pledges are short. But we do get other contributions from people that don't pledge. The endowment is over \$6 million. We are in good fiscal shape. Tim then asked for an update on IRIS's lease. John replied that the meeting will take place tomorrow, so there was nothing additional to add.

Chris wanted to address meeting our Oasis obligation, so it doesn't fall through the cracks as it did last year. She asked if it should be paid monthly, or if we should pay the whole thing up front. Tim said to let Nancy know she should pay the whole \$2,000 for the FY 23-24 as soon as Chris wants to.

4. Pastor's Report. Stephen began by sharing a quote from one of his former students on Facebook, "I feel this to the core! Growing up in the church it always felt like I had missed out on a good time that happened right before I got there." Stephen then explained that one of our challenges as we move into the future is going to be that our church has had such a joyous and great history, and we can talk about our history in such a way that we're not leaving room for people who are making our future. He then went on to talk about Gathering Sunday. He was very happy with how it turned out. Save for a few people who were not able to be there, we had the turnout of what our church looks like. One of the things that is going to be important for us moving forward is that there are any number of people who come sometimes, and we are happy to see them, but we can regret they're not coming all the time to the point that we actually feel that *we are not enough*. So he wants to challenge all of us to celebrate that we have had a significant turnout of people in the 40's to low 50's throughout the entire summer as well as on Gathering Sunday. That is something important that we should keep in mind as we move forward – we have a very solid foundation, and we have some very committed people. And if we move forward looking to what God is bringing us, and *who* God is bringing us and don't spend quite as much time missing people, who, for whatever reason, aren't with us, then that will be a helpful thing for us moving forward. His former student, who is now a pastor, said it well. We can talk about the "glory days" so much it makes people feel as if they were born 10 years too late, and as a consequence, they missed all the good stuff; when actually all the good stuff is *yet to come*.

Next, Stephen talked about his Installation weekend. Today he had a very good meeting with a media consultant, and we will be rolling out an ad campaign that will treat the Installation in two ways – one, as an Event (the entire weekend), but then treat Friday and Saturday as discrete events and opportunities for us to reach new audiences. In terms of the Jazz Vespers Service and the dramatic reading from The Green Book, we will market those separately. For those of us in the church it is all

one event. For other people, it is more segmented. At the Installation service, Rev. Traci Blackmon, the Associate General Minister of Justice and Local Ministries for the UCC will be preaching.

Stephen officiated at two memorial services last Saturday, for Carolyn Belt and for Christiana Aikire's father.

Stephen then talked a bit about the situation with the parking lot, and said that he hasn't been able to get in touch with the lawyer that drew up our contract yet. Regardless, he will be writing the letter soon, and will send a copy to the board members.

The SNEUCC is hosting a Trans workshop on Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup> at Old North Church in Boston. There has been some interest from some members of the congregation to attend, both virtually as well as physically. The deadline for in person registration is this coming Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Stephen then shared that he has met with the executive director of CONECT, and he is looking forward to supporting our work with them in a significant way. A note of celebration on that is that Cher is part of the Strategic Planning Team at CONECT, so we will be well represented there.

Stephen then asked for questions and comments. Al shared that David & Leslie French have indicated that they would be in touch with Stephen about online registration for the Trans workshop. Jo Buchannan also is interested. Stephen plans to get everyone registered through the church, so that we will know everybody who wants to go is registered.

Stephen then shared that we will be looking for three people to oversee our digital needs. The Digital Media Administrator will be our Tech person, who keeps all of this running well. The job description is finished, and will be circulated within the next week. Hopefully we will have someone within the next few weeks. We will also be contracting two other people to assist us. One for the creative work and the other to maintain all of our hardware that is undergirding our digital presence. John commented that he has made up some instructions for our AV team, and he is looking at some video training as well. This is something that the DMA will need to be on top of.

5. Installation Weekend. A committee is being formed and Roger Adams has volunteered to lead it.

6. Annual Conflict of Interest Forms. Al has sent out the forms again, and will be bringing some copies of the forms to church so that those Board members and Officers who have not yet signed them will have the opportunity to do so.

7. Active/Inactive Member Project. Al has drafted a letter to the inactive members advising them of their status and letting them know that they can be made active again. He sent it to the Board members and asked for feedback. In response to Chris' question about there being multiple ways to contact these people, Al replied that he was thinking about contacting them via email first, using a "return receipt requested" so that he will know if they have opened it or not, and then follow up if they haven't opened it. Colleen then shared that she has read Al's draft and felt it was done in a very caring way. Abram then suggested Al break up the first paragraph, pushing some of the more technical stuff to later and moving the message that if you would like to be an active member, just let us know and you will be an active member. Al thanked everyone for their feedback.

8. Fall Programming Opportunities. This Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, there will be a YardBirds fall cleanup going on at the Parish House. On September 23<sup>rd</sup> there is the New Haven Pride Celebration, and we will have a table there that we will be staffing. On October 7<sup>th</sup> there is the SNEUCC Trans Seminar in Boston and on Zoom. Later in October, of course, is our Installation weekend - October 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>. A CONECT meeting is coming up soon, on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Jeff Hopper has agreed to carpool those people who don't want to drive that far at night. Our Faith Formation Ministry Team has announced a sermon discussion session with our pastor. The first one will be on September 24<sup>th</sup>. It will be during our Second Hour. They would also like to resurrect the bible study, and will poll the congregation as to their preferred day and time.

Colleen suggested that sometime in the future, we reach out to the local Mosque and Omar, as well as some of the Rabbis that we host a Ramadan Feast, or host one night of Passover.

9. Just in Case – COVID measures. Al shared that the latest variant has cases on the rise again. We will ensure that we have an adequate supply of masks available for those who would be more comfortable wearing them. June will begin putting them out on the name tag table again. If cases do rise, we will have to go back to distancing in the pews and contact tracing. Julie suggested we might want to put small bottles of hand sanitizers in the pews again

10. Other business. Pam Stanton and Jean Blue have brought it to John's attention that we still do not have an proper hand rail on the ramp or on the 3 sets of stairs leading the the main section of the Bradley Room. John will follow up.

11. Next Board Meeting. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 11th at 7p.m. on Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.