

# The Community Church of Chapel Hill

## Unitarian Universalist

106 Purefoy Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 • 919-942-2050 • c3huu.org

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2017

**Members:** Lillie Bonzani, Dan Hill, Bill Rote, Barb Chapman, Dave Klibanow, Jenny Warnasch, Andy Hencke, Bill Poteat, Steve Warshaw - chair

**Ex Officio:** Thom Belote, Bonnie Nelson (absent), Andrew Wright

**Guests:** Paige Smith, Russ Bowen, Gail McKinley

### Welcome

Chalice Lighting – Lillie opened with a reading by Cheryl Strayed about not giving up

Check-in

### Consent Agenda

Steve sent the agenda out, Bonnie sent out minutes, Thom sent out Monthly report, Steve passed out a list of ideas from the last board meeting on how to enhance linkages. He asked us to check three of them that we thought were best while Thom gave his monthly report briefing and highlighted one issue on sanctuary.

Thom mentioned that the refugee support ministry feels there should be a cong vote to become a sanctuary. Discussion.

Main points:

- not the January meeting, a later one
- not until the Manse is fixed up, cannot house someone while preschool still here
- in the meantime, we will turn away people seeking sanctuary

Andy moved to approve the consent agenda, Dave seconded. All Aye.

Steve introduced Gail M who will discuss building project and Russ Bowen, a potential board candidate, who is observing.

### **New Building Spaces Relative To Board**

Gail said she has been making the rounds to ask groups to think about the proposed building space and how it will affect their group/ministry. She's asked them if they have ideas to submit them by the end of October. She asked the board about meeting space requirements for the board. Discussion.

### **Building Project update**

Paige gave updates on the task force meeting, including that the building task forces voted that we would not take donations specific to anything except for paying off debt as it is one project. She gave an update on the leadership phase, with the update that some meetings will happen in the fall, earlier than originally planned.

Andy gave an update on ongoing contingency planning by the building task forces. Discussion.

### **Names Of Board Candidates**

Steve said we covered names of board candidates when he introduced our one candidate.

### **Preschool Request For Extension**

Steve updated the board on what he has communicated to the preschool. The board reiterated that extension past Dec 2018 is not feasible. **Action: Steve will get back to the preschool.**

### **Naming Facilities**

Jenny gave an update of information gathered. Thom gave an update from other ministers on their experience. No action taken.

Steve said he'll probably put in on the agenda in November for the board to vote on suggesting a change in the bylaws to cover honorary naming.

### **Comment Box**

Jenny gave an update on the online comment box. The board decided to make it live and see how it goes (no official motion or vote). **Action: Jenny will update us how it goes over the next months.**

### **Policy Discussion: How Do We Measure Our Effectiveness As A Board**

Steve opened the discussion. Discussion. Barb said there is a process in Hotchkiss book for this. It relates to growth. **Action: Barb to summarize the process for the November meeting, and suggested we all read the section of the book too.** Additional discussion. Bill P said we have goals and objectives but we don't really document them. We pass a budget, we try to hit the maintenance and operating reserve amounts, etc. **Action: Bill P to pull the implicit board goals he referred to out for us and list them at the next meeting.**

### **Maintenance**

Steve postponed maintenance discussion. **Action: Thom will get with Brad to provide an update at November meeting.**

### **Process Observations**

Lilie said we had thoughtful discussion. Steve asked what we could have done better and Lilie said be careful to listen and make sure not to talk over anyone.

Andrew reviewed action items.

Steve said Susan and Don Blanchard asked that the board participate greatly in the auction.

Lilie made another reading from Brave Enough by Cheryl Strayed about moving forward.

Andy moved to adjourn, Jenny seconded. Everyone voted with their feet.

## Conversations about “Building on Our Legacy” October 2017

Church Group: **Board of Trustees** (October 10)

Leader/Contact Person(s): **Steve Warshaw**

Names of Others in the Conversation: Rev. Thom, Jenny Warnasch, Barb Chapman, Andrew Wright, Lillie Bonzani, Bill Poteat, Bill Rote, Dave Klibanow, Andy Hencke, Dan Hill. Visitors: Russ Bowen, Paige Smith.

Names of Other Current Members: (Recording Secretary Bonnie Nelson)

How many meetings/gatherings does your group have in a typical year? Monthly

Which is your favorite (first-choice) location? Straley, because easy to set up square of tables and has good lighting, relative privacy. Have also met in Commons, Kirby, Manse.

What are the features you particularly value in a meeting/gathering space?

1. Capacity: seating for 13 people around a hollow square of 4 six-foot tables, plus room for a row or two of auxiliary chairs, with enough room so as not to trip over the furniture.
2. Furnishing/set-up: See above.
3. Storage: [not discussed]
4. Privacy - for occasional closed sessions.
5. Good lighting and ability to hear everybody well.

How would you imagine using the proposed additional meeting space to help your group pursue its mission?

AV capability to show slides, internet connections and equipment for Skyping or teleconferencing – “would enable us to consult with so many resources!”

More space for bystanders would enable us to invite people to sessions of interest.

More flexibility to be creative for annual Board retreats.

Other General Comments? Some skeptical remarks about the uses of the proposed Quiet Room were made, but Barb Chapman commented after the meeting that it was not seemly to be so dismissive.

**October Minister's Report**  
**Rev. Thom Belote**  
**10/10/17**

**Since Last Time (9/12/17)**

- Preached and led worship on 9/17, 9/24, and 10/1. Will preach and lead worship on 10/8.
- Worked with members of the Community Service Ministry to co-plan service on 9/17.
- Continued to live-stream sermons on Sunday mornings. Each sermon was uploaded to the church YouTube channel with 24 hours of delivery.
- Celebrated church activities including the high school youth group volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, the middle school youth retreat to Shelter Neck, and our church sending a team to the Sanctuary Matters conference on the Community Church In Action page on the website. <http://www.c3huu.org/community-church-in-action.html>
- Responded pastorally to the hospitalization and death of church member Joe Farinola
- Co-taught the September Exploring Membership class with Rachel Rose. 7 new members signed the book in September: Krista Rowe, April & Jerry Ulrey, Abby & Rachel Stebkin, Angela Molfese, and Carol Tadeusik.
- Delivered the SEA kickoff talk on the topic of “Beloved Community” on 9/14.
- Taught a SEA class on Labyrinth Walking. (This is outside my usual comfort zone and it was fun to do something new and different.)
- Attended Building Open House at church
- Attended Sanctuary Matters: Testimony and Best Practices conference with 6 church members.
- Other meetings included: Worship Ministry, Caring Ministry, Sanctuary & Refugee Support Ministry, and Committee on Ministry. (Committee on Ministry will be leading the process for my evaluation in the next couple of weeks.)
- Worship Attendance for the past month (choir counted at first service only):
  - 242 on 9/10 (88 first service, 154 second service)
  - 228 on 9/17 (107, 121)
  - 234 on 9/24 (89, 145)
  - 221 on 10/1 (74, 147)

## Sanctuary Update

On Sunday, September 10 and Wednesday, September 27, I facilitated to conversations open to the congregation. These conversations introduced congregants to the work of the Sanctuary & Refugee Support Ministry and also familiarized the congregation with what it would mean to become a Sanctuary Church. A time was provided at each for discussion and answering questions.

These sessions were well-attended; a combined 70 congregants attended. More importantly, at the end of each session we conducted a straw poll to gauge interest and both sessions resulted in unanimous interest in becoming a Sanctuary Church. These two sessions were tests to see how the congregation might react, and the idea has garnered overwhelming support.

Now, we are approaching being ready to call the question and ask the congregation to affirm Sanctuary status. We envision that this will involve setting a date for a congregational meeting dedicated exclusively to the question of Sanctuary.

Complicating this issue is a division among some of us around how exactly to structure that meeting. At the Sanctuary Matters: Testimony and Best Practices conference, the minister of the UCC Church in Greensboro (which has offered sanctuary recently\*) advised very strongly against taking a congregational vote. UCC has the same polity as Unitarian Universalism; they vote to call ministers and hold annual congregational meetings in the same way that we do. The reason that was given was that it was believed that doing so provides an extra layer of legal protection. So, some of us view that as good advice and others of us are committed to holding a vote. We will meet this evening to try to reach consensus.

Either way, there will need to be some way of securing congregational buy-in. This might be an official meeting and vote. This might be an informal meeting with a straw vote. Either way, we would hold additional pre-meetings for the purposes of continuing to answer questions and educate the congregation.

\* Sanctuary was offered successfully! Minerva entered Sanctuary on June 29 and had her order of deportation vacated on October 2.

[http://www.greensboro.com/opinion/n\\_and\\_r\\_editorials/our-opinion-i-can-go-home-live-a-normal-life/article\\_82cc4637-29a7-5024-aeb8-bc0831e2a083.html](http://www.greensboro.com/opinion/n_and_r_editorials/our-opinion-i-can-go-home-live-a-normal-life/article_82cc4637-29a7-5024-aeb8-bc0831e2a083.html)

## Sanctuary and Immigrant Support Ministry

Formed in March 2017, the *Sanctuary and Immigrant Support Ministry* is a collaborative team that includes members of our church's justice and service groups (Community Service Ministry, Peace & Justice, Standing on the Side of Love,) other interested members, and partners in the wider community.

Our focus includes:

- 1) Relationship building and direct service with local immigrants and refugees.
- 2) Leading a process within our congregation to explore becoming a Sanctuary Church.
- 3) Challenging racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic attitudes and laws.
- 4) Partnering with faith communities and organizations.

Here are some of the things we have done so far:

- Members volunteered as tutors in immigrant communities through the Chatham Literacy Council.
- Held special food drive in June 2017 for TABLE in response to a growing need among immigrant children.
- Members volunteered as drivers to a picnic held in Carrboro in May 2017 for Syrian refugees.
- Hosted two meetings of Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia (MERI).
- Sent members to The Gathering: Sanctuary and Immigration on August 6, 2017 led by Rev. William Barber and Repairers of the Breach.
- Established a shared covenant with our neighboring UU congregations (Eno River UU Fellowship, UU Fellowship of Hillsborough, UU Fellowship of Raleigh, Mutual Aid Carrboro) to promise financial support, volunteer support, and moral support for Sanctuary efforts.
- Made contact with local congregations and organizations to find out about opportunities for partnership and collaboration.
- Sent a team of 7 church members to the Sanctuary Matters: Testimony and Best Practices conference at United UCC on September 16.
- Led congregational discernment meeting on Sunday, September 10 and Wednesday, September 27 to explore the process of becoming a Sanctuary Church.

Upcoming Projects Include:

- Hosting an event at the church to benefit Syrian refugee families.
- Promoting involvement in activities that build relationships with and provide direct services to immigrant and refugee families.
- Hosting a benefit concert in November in conjunction with the Standing on the Side of Love Concert committee.

## ISSUES TO CONSIDER RELATED TO BECOMING A SANCTUARY CHURCH

### THE CHALLENGE

This country promises to welcome “your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore” but has struggled with the issue of immigration for decades. However, in very recent times the tone of the debate has changed. Now the language is hateful - Mexican immigrants are characterized as rapists and murderers - Muslims are all terrorists. Rather than loving our neighbor, we are fearing and hating our neighbor

Not only has there been hateful language, but there has been hateful action. Unlike the prior administration where only limited groups were targeted for deportation, the Trump administration has effectively made everyone without papers a “priority” for deportation." (Reported in the Economist Magazine, Feb. 25, 2017, p 24) No class or group, including Dreamers or the parents of Dreamers, are exempt from deportation.

Ten thousand additional ICE personnel and five thousand more Border Patrol Agents are to be hired, a network of detention facilities constructed, more judges appointed, and the definition of "criminal alien" to be expanded to encompass hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions of individuals. These are active measures intended to dehumanize and criminalize the entire immigrant community.

The Trump administration has attempted to ban Muslims from this country. While these efforts have been met with legal challenges and roadblocks, they have succeeded in making all Muslims, including those here legally, afraid.

The children of immigrants are afraid to go to school for fear their parents might not be there when the return. Parents are afraid to sign their children up for free and reduced price lunches or food stamps for fear that seeking a government program will subject them to deportation. In Houston immigrants without documents would not seek shelter, even after the Mayor assured them that no one would ask for papers.

These government actions **taken in our name** are chilling, and are producing a climate of intimidation, fear and panic among immigrants. These actions could not be further from our values as a nation and as a church. In this time what is our role as a church? What do our values, our morals call us to do?



## BACKGROUND

On March 12, 2017 Thom gave a sermon on sanctuary and invited all who were interested to attend a meeting the next evening. A total of 21 people came to the first meeting including representatives of Community Service Ministry, Standing on the Side of Love, and Peace and Justice Ministries. That first evening the group decided to contact other faith communities and groups working with immigrant and refugee communities to determine the scope of the problem locally, what is being done, and what is needed. Over 20 groups were contacted and reports given at subsequent meetings. In addition this group, now called the Sanctuary and Immigrant Support Ministry, has participated in a number of immigrant and refugee programs and has made specific plans with other congregations including Binkley Baptist Church and Kehillah.

## WHAT IS SANCTUARY?

Sanctuary is a way to be in solidarity with the undocumented community by creating safe spaces for the voices of immigrants to be lifted up as we together confront unjust laws. A church that declares itself a Sanctuary congregation is one willing to engage on a spectrum of solidarity actions including welcoming undocumented people, advocating to help stop deportations, assisting the immigrant community, and physically sheltering an immigrant in danger of immediate deportation. Sanctuary is one way for faith communities to resist destructive and racially charged policies.

The concept of sanctuary has evolved from the earliest times of all the world's major religions. The ancient Hebrew people allowed temples and even whole cities to declare themselves places of refuge for persons accused of a crime which they may not have committed. Later, during the medieval period, the English common law permitted an accused felon to seek sanctuary in a church.

In the United States there is no law that prevents law enforcement from entering places of worship, but there is and has been symbolic protection. Sanctuary has been used for the Underground Railroad, for the protection of conscientious objectors, for Viet Nam objectors, for immigrants from Central America in the 1980s, to the current crisis. Churches have always been at the core of these efforts.

The current sanctuary movement began in 2007 and now includes 63 Unitarian Universalist congregations.

## THE LEGAL STATUS OF SANCTUARY

Most actions taken in support of Sanctuary are not likely to incur any possibility of criminal prosecution. However, inviting someone who is subject to a deportation order to take refuge in a congregation could subject individuals to arrest. A 1983 Justice Department analysis called "Church Sanctuary for Illegal Aliens" concluded that churches do not enjoy legal protection in efforts to provide sanctuary, and that attempts to do so are in violation of 8 U.S.C. 1324(a)(3), which forbids the harboring of aliens. The analysis states that, "A search of both federal and state case law has revealed no case recognizing church sanctuary as a legitimate barrier to law enforcement." But tellingly, it also concludes

that, "...the continued existence of 'sanctuary' depended entirely upon the authorities' desire to avoid a confrontation."

The political repercussions of prosecuting faith leaders and congregations and the fear of negative press coverage, has made actual enforcement and punishment rare. In the 80's eight individuals working through a church in Tucson Arizona were charged with smuggling, transporting and harboring undocumented immigrants. In this case, three of the defendants were acquitted and the remainder received sentences of probation.

Under the Obama administration the Immigrations and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agency adopted guidelines that consider churches, schools and hospitals to be "sensitive locations". ICE will avoid these locations unless there are "exigent circumstances". In November, 2016, ICE announced that it intends to adhere to existing guidance to avoid the apprehension of individuals at sensitive locations. However these guidelines can easily be changed.

#### HOW DOES SANCTUARY ACTUALLY WORK?

Use of actual physical sanctuary in North Carolina has been relatively rare, but this could easily change under the current administration. In this area there are a number of groups that evaluate potential candidates for sanctuary. Most cases occur when a lawyer or legal clinic identifies an individual who has been working unsuccessfully to stop his/her deportation. Before a person is referred to sanctuary, the legal screening process has determined that the person is probably eligible for some sort of stay of removal, order of supervision, or other form of relief. Sanctuary, in these cases, provides time and opportunity to mobilize a legal defense, to draw media attention to the case, and to organize various types of support for the case (letters, testimonials, public witness statements, etc.). The best case scenario is that the individual does have some prospect of legal relief and that the period of sanctuary is relatively brief. However, even in these cases individuals can remain in sanctuary for an extended period of time.

The worst case scenario is that the person has had no contact with immigration-related legal counseling, that they may have no reasonable prospect of relief, and that they show up on the doorstep unannounced and unplanned. However, a decision to become a Sanctuary church does not commit the congregation to accept anyone who comes and allows the group to work through the existing organizations to evaluate candidates for sanctuary.

#### WHAT IS INVOLVED IN OFFERING SANCTUARY?

The promise of sanctuary implies that we develop the capacity to offer protection and accommodation. The concept of sanctuary requires that the actual space be on the church property but in an area not generally a public space. Public spaces include the sanctuary and the community room, but not classrooms. At a minimum the space must be large enough for a bed and a table and chair. There needs to be access to a bathroom and shower. Access to a kitchen or a simple hotplate and small refrigeration is needed. There needs to be internet and cell phone service and preferably TV service to

help pass the time. The downstairs area of the manse could meet these requirements with access to the kitchen when others are not using the upstairs space.

Just as importantly, we would need to provide support during a time of high stress and vulnerability. We would need to develop a robust and flexible support team to provide friendship, counseling, material and perhaps financial support. There may be a need to provide a round the clock presence in order to discourage any unannounced ICE visits. All of the other UU congregations in the area have agreed to assist any UU congregation that does provide physical sanctuary. In addition representatives of Kehillah have indicated that they would support this effort as well.

#### ALTERNATIVES TO BECOMING A SANCTUARY CHURCH

Should we decide not to become a Sanctuary church, there are many things we can do to support the New Sanctuary movement short of actually offering physical sanctuary. Most immigrants without documentation have been here for a substantial period of time. They live and work among us and have developed many systems and institutions for mutual support: churches, credit unions, recreational groups, neighborhood associations, child care arrangements, radio stations, and kinship and friendship networks. The very first line of defense in the present immigration crisis, therefore, should be the support and development of these already existing resources and institutions.

The Sanctuary and Immigrant Support Ministry is already working to strengthen our ties to these groups working with the immigrant community. In this work some specific areas that need support have been identified:

1. Additional support is needed for the local food banks because immigrants are using them since they are reluctant to use the school lunch program and food stamps;
2. Tutors are needed for immigrant children and adults. The Ministry intends to establish a system to connect church members with tutoring opportunities;
3. Muslim women need the ability to safely leave home during the day and to meet other Muslim women. Working with Binkley Baptist Church we are trying to establish a monthly lunch with an opportunity to also stop at a grocery store;
4. There is a need over the next six months for visits to Washington DC in order to personally visit our Senators and Representatives and urge the passage of a DACA replacement;
5. There is always a need to take a public stand through letter writing, op- eds, and demonstrations in support of immigrant rights; and
6. We can continue to support a broad network of organizations supporting immigrants and, in particular, support any congregation that is offering physical sanctuary.

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

We should continue to work with a community-wide interdenominational sanctuary movement and we should consider whether CCCH should become a Sanctuary Church .

The UUA's Sanctuary Movement asks us to pledge:

As people of faith and people of conscience, we pledge to resist the newly elected administration's policy proposals to target and deport millions of undocumented immigrants and discriminate against marginalized communities. We will open up our congregations and communities as sanctuary spaces for those targeted by hate, and work alongside our friends, families, and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people.

As a congregation we must investigate the issues and decide whether to take this pledge.

Respectfully submitted,

The Sanctuary and Immigrant Support Ministry

This document relies heavily on and frequently quotes verbatim the Sanctuary Toolkit which was created by a number of congregations and groups that make up the New Sanctuary Movement. It was updated by the UU College of Social Justice, UU Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education and Church World Service for use by all faith communities. The Sanctuary Toolkit can be found at

<http://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/uploads/7/6/9/1/76912017/interfaithsanctuarytoolkit.pdf>

# ***Sanctuary FAQ***

## **Q. What is Sanctuary?**

Sanctuary is a religious act as old as history practiced by virtually all religious traditions. It involves offering safety, protection, and care to a person who is being threatened or persecuted. Famous examples of sanctuary include the Underground Railroad, Anne Frank, and the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s.

## **Q. What does Sanctuary mean for us?**

It means taking a public moral stand against the immoral persecution of immigrants. Sanctuary works to draw public attention and scrutiny to the cruelty of our immigration system while providing potentially life-saving assistance to someone under threat of deportation.

## **Q. How would it work?**

Sanctuary is an intentional strategy that may be recommended by attorneys and non-profit immigrant rights groups working with the person under threat of deportation. They would recommend their client seek sanctuary and then connect that person with a congregation offering sanctuary. The congregation would then decide to welcome that person into sanctuary until either the desired legal action is taken or the person decides to leave sanctuary. Some cases may be resolved in a matter of days or weeks while other cases may take six months or longer.

## **Q. What would it look like for us?**

Community Church of Chapel Hill is ideally suited to offer sanctuary. We have a house on our property that is very lightly used and would offer comfort and privacy to someone welcomed into sanctuary. These accommodations are better than those offered to most people welcomed into sanctuary.

The biggest requirement would be a significant number of volunteers. In addition, if we welcomed someone into sanctuary the congregation would need to offer food, some furnishings, and possibly limited childcare and transportation to the family of the person. The congregation may choose to offer additional financial assistance to the family.

## **Q. What resources are available?**

Our congregation would draw on the volunteer efforts and contributions of its members and has funds available in the Benevolence Fund and Ministers Discretionary Fund that could be applied.

However, WE WOULD NOT HAVE TO DO IT ALONE! We share an agreement with four other UU congregations (Hillsborough, Eno River in Durham, Raleigh, and Mutual Aid in Carrboro) to provide volunteer and financial assistance if one congregation welcomes someone into Sanctuary. Additionally, there are several faith communities in Chapel Hill that have told us that they do not have the physical space to offer sanctuary but stand ready to offer significant volunteer assistance.

## **Q. Are other UU congregations involved in the New Sanctuary Movement?**

Yes! The UUA currently lists 63 congregations in 28 states plus the District of Columbia as Sanctuary congregations as well as 5 UU organizations including one campus ministry! These congregations range from small fellowships to many of the largest and most celebrated congregations in the United States such as First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin, and All Souls Church in Washington, D.C.

Several UU congregations, including First Unitarian Society in Denver and the UU Fellowship of Northern Nevada in Reno, have welcomed immigrants into sanctuary in 2017.

Jeannette Vizguerra in Denver was named one of Time's 100 most influential people.

You can read the story of David Chavez-Macias:

<http://www.rgj.com/story/news/2017/06/10/reno-man-living-sanctuary-afraid-being-deported-us-immigration-and-customs-enforcement/102689312/>

## **Q. What are the legal implications of Sanctuary?**

Offering sanctuary is an act of civil disobedience challenging an immoral and unjust law. However, to date there has been no legal action taken against any church offering sanctuary as part of the New Sanctuary movement. During the 1980s, when more than 500 congregations from diverse faith traditions offered sanctuary to Central American refugees, there was a single case brought against leaders in that movement whose activities far exceeded the scope of anything we might consider.

## **Q. Why does Sanctuary matter?**

Becoming a Sanctuary Church helps to increase visibility about our immoral immigration system and speak to this system from the depth of our UU moral values and principles. Becoming a Sanctuary Church would communicate a stance of welcome and acceptance to all immigrants in our community whether documented or undocumented as well as to racial and ethnic minorities who feel under attack in our society. Becoming a Sanctuary Church also has the potential of offering direct and potentially life-saving assistance to an individual.

## **Q. What are the benefits for our congregation?**

When our congregation takes an unambiguous moral stance we feel a collective sense of doing something at a time when many feel powerless. This is an opportunity to live our values and practice our faith. Sanctuary status carries the potential of stronger, deeper, and more significant relationship with other diverse faith communities in Chapel Hill and other UU congregations throughout the Triangle.