

**The Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist**  
**Minutes of Board Retreat of January 15, 2010**

**Present:** Sam Brooks, Barbara Chapman, Mariana Fiorentino, Mary LeMay, Erich Lieth, Steve Marshall, Susan McDaniel, Maggie Scarborough, Paige Smith, Josh Socolar, George Thompson, Bob Weston

**Ex Officio:** Maj-Britt Johnson, Scott Provan

**Minutes:** Laurence Kirsch

George Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm. Paige Smith offered a reading about “Who Am I?”

**OPENING DISCUSSION**

George Thompson said that this year’s Board retreat is focused on simplicity, patience, and compassion, which will be his focus for this next year. He said that we need to develop three goals for the year.

George asked each of the Board members to share their thoughts upon being informed about the Board retreat. Going around the circle, the Board members said that the retreat offers an opportunity:

- for more in-depth work than at regular Board meetings;
- to focus on what’s important for the coming year;
- to learn about goals;
- to isolate/prioritize a few issues to better get things done during the upcoming year;
- to take an overview of issues and consider longer-range plans;
- to learn what the Board does;
- to understand what it means to be Board member;
- to get to know Board members; and
- to establish how we interact without the pressure of making decisions.

Mary LeMay said that she wants the Board to do better at heeding what we do at the retreat, because what has happened at past retreats has sometimes gotten lost at the retreat.

Sam Brooks said that she is looking forward to being involved in the church again.

Josh Socolar said that Cecilia Warshaw did a great job with the Board orientation.

Maj-Britt Johnson wants to find a process for training people to go out into the world and serve. Developing such a process will take deliberate thinking and coordination.

Mariana Fiorentino expressed a deep sense of sorrow about the end of the six-week seminar on Build-Your-Own Theology. She said that she has tried to keep seminar group continuing the practices developed at the seminar, but people have not found time to continue. She wonders if there could be reunions to recreate the experience.

There was a general discussion of membership. There are membership database issues. Small groups are a good way for new members to enter the church. The Membership Committee and the Board need to collaborate on membership issues. There is no member screening process: anybody who signs up is automatically accepted. Erich Lieth said that, because people who leave may have just figured out there is a bad fit between them and the Church, there is no reason that the Board should change anything to try to keep such people.

Maj-Britt said that there is now staff assigned to almost all ministries and sub-ministries. George wondered if the Board should continue to have liaisons to ministries. Scott Provan said it is very important that there be such liaisons.

There was general discussion of ways to organize action outside these walls and keep people committed to causes. The Church is vibrant because the structure encourages innovation.

The question was raised: Do we want to welcome more people into our congregation? Maj-Britt said that she hopes that answer is not “no,” and that the key question is: How do we welcome people? Barbara Chapman said that *Simple Church* does good job of spelling out ramifications of growth. In particular, there is a tipping point at which: a) a church in which everyone can make decisions because everyone can fit into one room; changes into b) a larger church in which it is harder for people to communicate. If a church cannot successfully deal with larger size, it slips back.

There was discussion about the role of the Committee on Ministry, and whether it should continue. For UU churches in general, Committees on Ministry have been discovered to be unhealthy because they became ministers own little committee insulated from rest of congregation. Our Church’s internal discussion has gone back and forth on role and necessity of the Committee on Ministry. If the Board is creating a vision of ministry, what is the Committee on Ministry doing? Josh asked if there is a charter for COM.

The Committee on Ministry is presently working on a Covenant on Right Relations, with a workshop on March 27, 9 am to noon. There was concern about , too few people showed up.

There was discussion of the necessity for the Board to have a vision around music. Glen Mehrbach is spending large amounts of time on major productions that are not part of his job description, and the choir is singing elsewhere. Maj-Britt has told him that Sunday morning worship has priority.

## **STAFF AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE BOARD**

Scott Provan commended Maj-Britt Johnson for having organized the staff so well.

Maj-Britt led a discussion of the church’s staffing, and expressed appreciation for being given a chunk of the Board’s time to discuss staffing issues. She said that staffing programs are

proceeding with changes even before governance changes happen. She asked if the Board members are familiar with the staff. Josh Socolar said that he does not know the staff and so perhaps should stop in office some time.

Maj-Britt's discussion partly followed her memorandum to the Board, which is Attachment A to these minutes. She said that she has never worked with a staff as big as this.

### **PREVIEW OF TOMORROW**

George Thompson said that tomorrow's retreat starts at 9 am, and that the Board must be out by 3:30 pm because of traffic considerations related to the UNC ballgame.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Paige Smith read from "What Do I Love?"

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

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**Attachment A**  
**Staff and Its Relationship to the Board – Rev. Maj-Britt Johnson**

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Dear Board members, I appreciate your reading this before the Board retreat. I think that way we will have some food for thought and discussion on Friday night. I have included my “letter of call” at the end of this packet, just FYI. A letter of call is different from a contract. Ministers are called, not hired, in our Association of Congregations (and in most denominations). What’s the difference between a hire and a call? I guess for me it speaks to who is really my boss. While I am accountable to the Board and the whole congregation for my performance as a minister, my boss is my larger calling to ministry, and the spirit that called me. Remembering that has always helped me to stay centered and committed to a sense of purpose.

**My role as head of staff:** I have oversight of 7 positions: Congregational Administrator, Religious Education Director, Assistant RE director, Music Director, Membership/volunteer Coordinator, Office Assistant, Custodian (a position which we are now informally calling Sunday Hospitality caretaker as it has few actual custodial duties). As of January the office assistant reports directly to the Congregational Administrator, and the Assistant RE director reports directly to the RE Director.

**How I work with staff:** Over the past year or more I have asked each staff member to use a system I adapted from Susan Beaumont and Gil Rendle’s book published by Alban Institute, entitled “When Moses Meets Aaron”. They each write a 3-4 month forecast for their work. They write 2-3 goals, name the new partnerships they would like to build in the process, and what they hope to learn. Then 3-4 months later we sit down and discuss the progress on each of those 3 areas, goals, relationships and learning.

Most of the staff says it has helped them to focus their work. The process is not fully in place, sometimes they forget to do them, or only do the goal portion (as you’ll see). There was some confusion initially about the forms they’re using; but it has begun to shape our work together in a positive way and I trust it will feel more natural as time goes on.

**Why I want you to know all this:** I’d like to share the staffs’ goals with you, as well as my own. *I hope this will inform the discussion of Board and Congregational goals.*

**Congregational Goals:** As I understand Hotchkiss’ model of governance the Board will have the task of setting a vision for ministry (p. 218) in the future. It seems to me a vision for ministry encompasses Congregational goals. This represents a big shift in how we “do” church. I am used to doing the visioning myself, or with the staff, while we listen to the needs and wishes of the congregation. In church life it seems “natural” that groups of individuals will spring up here and there, all wanting to fulfill their own vision of what we are to do at church. Sometimes individuals feel they are on their own with no support from staff or the Board who are too busy to help them implement new projects. The Board and staff on the other hand can feel overwhelmed by all the needs and wishes.

It's exciting to me to think the Board will be involved in intentionally developing the vision of ministry. I think there is much less confusion and it empowers all of us to do our best because expectations are clear, and dreams are shared. Having the Board lead the ministry vision process will ensure that the staff and Board are on the same page and that we are putting real meat on the mission.

**Staff Vision of Ministry:** So all that having been said...here's how the vision for ministry is shaping up down in the staff quarters.

Most of the staff has read a book called "Simple Church". We took what we needed and left the rest (such as the fundamentalist language). In particular Marion, Tifani, and I are using it in our thinking as we plan our programs. Basically what we got from the book was this: Our job is to move people from worship, to small groups, to service - either in the congregation or in the larger world (or both). The point of all this is spiritual growth or awakening/transformation. This model sees service (in whatever way a person is called to be of service) to others as the ultimate outcome of spiritual growth in community.

First: nurture the individuals in worship (which is where most people come in first) then give them a way to build connections and a sense of belonging in small groups, then help them find their own ministry, and equip them to go out and do it. The idea is to have clear "pass off" opportunities at each juncture, so as not to leave people wondering how to find a path to deepening their spiritual life.

At this point the "pass off" from worship to small groups is made clear is the Newcomer Orientation sessions. We have plans to expand that a bit (see Tifani's goals below). We let people know about: Covenant groups, choir, and Adult R.E. Classes.

The "pass off" from small groups is incomplete in two ways. Sorry for the sports metaphor, ministry books abound in them and they're in my blood now.

First off there are folks who do Building Your Own Theology and/or Building Your Own Spiritual Practice who have expressed a desire to continue to practice very intentionally with a group of people. It is much harder to keep to a practice, say meditation, on one's own. The more classes we do the bigger the pool of people who "graduate". I obviously can't follow up with all of them. It would be my dream that in the future we find a way to have small groups in which those folks who have taken one or both of those classes, and want to continue together, could do so. I could imagine training and leading facilitators for those groups, much as we do with covenant groups. But something else in my schedule would have to go.

The other way we need to have a pass-off from small groups is in moving people to service. We do not yet have a structured way to help people discern their calling, or be supported and equipped to move out into the community, individually or in small groups (unless a person is called to the particular issues which P&J or Community Ministry, or Justice United is working on). This is one of the conversations I hope the Board and I and other staff will have when it comes to visioning ministry. There are many possible ways to approach it. One is by offering a particular workshop/class on a regular basis which has discernment as its goal. But there would need to be a pass off from that, maybe a small group where people who are doing similar work out in the world can meet to process what they do and support and sustain each other.

One note: Service certainly can be service within our walls. One of the concepts I'm learning from the Justice United Clergy group is that *my* work is basically as a Community Organizer –

within the congregation. And so is the work of the volunteer staff and other paid staff within the church. In other words, we are organizing a community of people to find their ministry to the world and do it. For some people doing this work *within* the church that enables others to grow and serve *outside* these walls IS their service to the world.

So that's the conceptual overview of where we're headed on the program staff. Needless to say if we are to expand in any of the areas I have mentioned the Board will have to work with us and come up with a vision. Many questions arise about resources, staff time, and expenses.

### **My own Goals:**

1. To continue to learn about and work with the Board on a multi-year governance change as guided by Hotchkiss book.
2. To work with Marion on a new vision for Life Span Religious Education. This work has begun (see below).
3. To work with Tifani and the Membership Team on a new vision of her role, as we are moving much of the minutiae of her job to the Office Assistant. I have a meeting schedule next week with the M Team and her.
4. To have a visioning session with the Pastoral Associates Team, so that we might expand that ministry, resources allowing. I have a facilitator in mind for this.
5. To work on the Vision of Ministry with the Board, beginning at this very Board retreat.

### **What I hope the Board will have on its agenda.**

1. The Governance 3-4 year process.
2. Begin a conversation on this question: How will we structure a broad based ministry for social outreach beyond our walls. Here I'm expanding on my comments above about *service*. The congregation has, not in so many words, been asking me this question since I came for candidating week. There are two groups P&J and Community Ministries which are the established groups that work Beyond our Walls. Share the Plate is a new initiative that has helped to engage greater numbers of people in financial outreach, but it is not a way to get people directly involved in the larger community. The two committees are unable to have oversight of all the hopes and dreams of members for engagement with the larger community as they are heavily committed to certain projects already. There are many people already engaged in service to the community, how do we recognize that work? Do we need to? Can we support them in that work (as in the small group concept named above)? I believe this visioning is the Board's work. Our mission includes reaching out beyond our walls. So it is the Board's role to ask how will we live out that value, and how will we organize our congregation to be able to do so as broadly and effectively as possible, in ways that nurture the greatest number of people?
3. Begin a conversation on the question: Do we want to welcome more people into our UU congregation? If yes, then...what other questions do we need to ask about resources, buildings and staff?
4. A conversation on: What role does the Committee on Ministry have in the evaluation of ministry process as outlined by Hotchkiss? Do we need a committee on ministry? If so, is it a Board committee? I feel it is unfair to the COM if we don't address this soon as their

role may change, or even be eliminated as I don't see a place for a COM in the Hotchkiss model.

## **OTHER STAFF MEMBERS' GOALS**

These goals arose partly out of our quarterly forecast conversations and their evaluations. The ongoing conversations, and the evaluations, brought about some questions and changes in their goals.

### **Glenn submitted the following last week:**

Goals:

Outreach

Program music more closely to ability and level of various choirs

Involve more church musicians on a regular basis

Create a regular "band service"

Find ways to help the congregation feel comfortable singing out during hymns

Do more arranging and writing for the various choirs

Involve more Middle and High Youth in music as instrumentalists

3-4 Month Forecast:

- MLK, Jr. Day service at First Baptist Church
- Annual Music Gala
- TJ District Choral Festival
- Adult Choir Big Music Sunday

Questions to be addressed:

Glenn's hours really mount up during the Musical Productions, and sometimes planning for Sunday worship takes a back seat. The productions are wonderful and he loves doing them, and we love going to them or being in them. But they were not part of his original job description and we can't pay him for all those hours. He has decided to do the fall production only every other year. However that means that during the "on" years his hours will still be all wacky. ***I would like to ask the Board to talk about music when we talk about the vision of ministry.*** This is a creative church, and I think creativity is a big part of spiritual growth. Do we want large scale productions to be part of our mission? If so then there are staffing, and financial, questions to be answered, as well as a need to examine and weigh other priorities.

We also need to look at a policy regarding this question: Can staff do "volunteer" work? The conventional UU wisdom says no. At the Staff Retreat with Annette Marquis a year ago she advised the staff not to. What happens is that then it is difficult for the congregation to assess what is really needed in the way of hours and pay for the job that they're paying for, people end up feeling guilty and unclear expectations are created.

### **Tifani's goals as membership and volunteer coordinator**

1. create and execute a congregational time/gifts survey
2. transition into a team leader position with Membership Committee
3. implement a system, that can be consistently followed by myself and the Membership Committee, to check-in with new members.
4. To explore revamping the Newcomer Orientation to be a more thoughtful process for both attendees and facilitators. Building on the ideas brought up during the Membership Summit to have 2 sessions, one that is more info/spiritual and one for book signing and expectations of membership.

*What will I be learning....* How to best collect and use data about the congregation. What my limits and boundaries will be in being a team leader to Membership Committee. What expectations the Membership Committee will have of me and vice versa. How to best allocate my time to meet these new goals

*Who will I be working with..* More closely with the Membership Committee. A broader range of the Congregation as I gather data. More closely with Stewardship (Frankie & Peter), SEA and Covenant Groups as I expand the Newcomer Orientation experience.

The main issue that is being addressed in Tifani's goals which affects the vision of ministry and her role as a staff person is her work with the Membership team. It came out in the evaluation process that they would like her to take more of a visioning/leadership role. I see it as my job to work with her on that vision, and increasingly input will come from the Board.

**Andrea Sordean-Mintzer** is in a whole new role as Congregational Administrator. Capsule description:

*Responsible for a broad variety of functions for the smooth operation of the church program with minimal guidance by a business manager or minister. Manages office procedures, facilities, schedules, purchasing, preparation of budgets, and bookkeeping services. Will be skilled in office applications for computers. Will supervise other administrative staff in the absence of a Business Administrator. Prepares reports and recommendations to governing board and minister. Contacts people internally and externally to gather information. Knowledgeable about the organization and its policies. May prepare payroll, accounts payable, and record revenue.*

Andrea reports that her main focus for the next 3-4 months will be

1. training and supervising the new office assistant.
2. Facilities requirements: Observation time, notation, beginning to plan new systems for late 2010-2011
3. Establish a working relationship between IT team and the office.

She plans to learn: Job related duties having to do with facilities and IT

The new partnerships she will build are with: Susie Warden, Office assistant. Gary Giles on B&G (they have a meeting scheduled to figure out how they will work together); and Mark Smith on I.T.

## **Marion Hirsch – Lifespan Religious Education Director (as of January 1)**

Goals:

### Adult Religious Education

- Develop vision and structure of Adult Religious Education Program with minister and leaders of Adult Religious Education Program
- Support and expand Thursday Night Adult RE Program
- Survey adults in congregation about Adult RE needs and interests
- Revitalize Young Adult Program
- Improve communication about adult programs and groups

### Youth Program

- Develop and deepen the Coming of Age Program which is new in 2009-10
- Identify and Train new leadership for Middle School Youth Group
- Expand Our Whole Lives Program to address the increase numbers of youth participating in the church
- Evaluate Youth Travel Program and implement any needed changes
- Develop a Youth Leadership Program for post-Coming Age Youth

### Children's Religious Education

- Improvement integration of new families
- Develop and deepen the RE teacher core
- Revise and improve safety policies
- Strengthen communication with RE Families
- Develop UU Parenting Group/Class

I will bring to the retreat an organizational **chart** Marion made up regarding her new role. It wouldn't copy onto this sheet correctly.

Marion and I have established her priorities for the time being, but as the Board works on the ministry vision with us in the future some of those may shift of course.

### **Other Staff:**

Susie Warden just began as office assistant, but after her 90 day entry period is over Andrea will work with her on goals. Marion and I have to talk about her supervision of Wren. I think the

relationship is going well, from what I saw on evals. but we haven't put a system in place there yet.

Olga Naranjo (Hospitality on Sundays) Andrea will be Olga's supervisor. We have some things to work out there, in terms of how she reports to Andrea.

I received these goals from the staff just last week. When we next meet I will be asking Marion and Glenn to add answers to the questions about which partnerships they hope to build and what they plan to learn. Relationships are what church life is built on and I think it helps to name what they are, talk about them intentionally, and keep track of how they're going.

I hope all this helps to give you a picture of what the staff is working on, and I hope it will become information the Board can use as you chart the congregation's direction in the next year.

Faithfully,

Maj-Britt