

- Called to Order:** 3:59 p.m. by President Tom Mosher. **Note: Resulting action items are highlighted & bolded**
- Board Attendees:** Trustees (Position): Tom Mosher (1), Doug Deaton (2), Dick Burkhardt (3),
Quorum Present Luba Johnston (5), Cindy Fine (6), and Justin Bell (7).
Absent - Sue Stiritz (4)
Minister: Todd Eklof (ex-officio)
- Guest(s):** Lynn Jinishian, Jean Larson
- Agenda:** Approved with BoT Email Policy Tweak moved to first item under Old Business.
- Minutes:** Minutes of the December 2024 Board of Trustees (BoT) meeting were approved as presented.
- Next BoT Exec Committee Meeting:** February 19, 2025 4:00 p.m. (C Fine floating Trustee)
- Next BoT Meeting:** February 26, 2025 4:00 p.m.
- Minister's Report:**
- 1) T Eklof reported that the Shared Ministry Team had not met since they'd hosted a congregation discussion about the recent UUA changes and the possibility UUCS leaving the UUA. He did say the discussion seemed productive and speculated that the only action this year might be to consider removing "Universalist" from the UUCS name via a vote at the congregation General Meeting.
 - 2) During T Eklof's study-leave/sabbatical the following people are to be used to communicate with him through July 2025:
 - Administrative Issues / Crises' Operations Manager, Rebecca A
 - Pastoral Care Issues Pastoral Care Team Chairperson, Betty B
 - Other Issues Shared Ministry Team, Lynn J / Bob B
- President's Report:** T Mosher reported the following:
- 1) T Eklof and Rebecca A gave T Mosher the go-ahead to proceed, as an individual church member, in preparing an agreement for sponsoring a weekly KYRS Spokane community radio station program. He will work with the office to identify who should sign the agreement.
 - 2) T Mosher is working to publish a statement in the SUUN that we are looking for a Church Treasurer, previously referred to as Shadow Treasurer. (Note: Dick Burkhardt is the Board Treasurer.)
Action: The BoT approved without objection for T Mosher to work with Michelle on publishing a statement using the title Church Treasurer.
 - 3) **Action: The BoT approved without objection for T Mosher to remind the Nominating Team & Endowment Team to begin the process for identifying potential Board Trustees, Nominating & Endowment Team Nominees.**
 - 4) T Mosher shared the updated Attachment A Board of Trustees chart.
- Operations Team Report:** None.
- Treasurer's Report:** D Burkhardt's report is in Attachment B.
- Reports:**
- In-Person Attendance Subcommittee: J Bell reported that all the extra groups forming will hopefully catch various personal interests resulting in an attendance increase. Their December 8, 2024 meeting minutes are in Attachment C.
- New Business:**
- 1) T Mosher suggested Bylaw amendments to clarify which position (Board Secretary or Operations Team Liaison) is best suited to report Board actions to Rebecca A (Operations Manager). The BoT decided, after discussion, no Bylaw amendment was needed and to funnel communications to the Operations Manager through the BoT Secretary, C Fine.

- 2) T Mosher shared the Attachment D letter to UUCS he'd received from Rob Neils requesting use of the church for assisted suicide. After discussion, the following motions were made:
- D Deaton moved, and L Johnston seconded that this is not BoT business. The **motion passed** with 4 votes to approve, 0 votes to not approve, and 2 abstentions.
 - T Mosher moved, and D Deaton seconded that this be handled by T Eklof, as Chief Executive and Senior Minister. The **motion passed** unanimously with 6 votes to approve.
Action: T Eklof will handle.
 - Action: The BoT approved without objection for T Mosher to send Rebecca the update Attachment A Board of Trustees chart via C Fine for SUUN publishment.**

Unfinished Business:

BoT Email Policy Tweak: D Deaton shared the Attachment E proposed amendment to the BoT Email Policy. Following discussion,

- D Deaton moved, and L Johnston seconded that the entire section 3.4 paragraph a2. be deleted.
~~a2. Emails should not be used to solicit the opinions of, engage in discussions or exchange critical information with other Trustees regarding Church business outside of scheduled meetings, unless all Trustees are included as contacts during such an exchange.~~

The **motion passed** unanimously with 6 votes to approve.

- D Deaton moved, and L Johnston seconded that new 3.4 paragraph b2. be added and the subsequent paragraphs be renumbered.
b2. Emails should not be used to solicit the opinions of, engage in discussions or exchange critical information with other Trustees regarding Church business outside of scheduled meetings.

The **motion passed** unanimously with 6 votes to approve.

Action: C Fine will provide the resulting BoT Policies and Procedures document updates to Rebecca (section 5 regarding Member sponsored Congregational Meeting resolutions and updated/amended section 3.4).

D Deaton moved, and D Burkhart seconded that the BoT send T Eklof and the Shared Ministry Team the Attachment F letter. The **motion passed** unanimously with 6 votes to approve. **Action: Secretary, C Fine, will send the letter, drafted by D Deaton, to Lynn J of the Shared Ministry Team.**

Income Enhancement Subcommittee: D Deaton moved, and T Mosher seconded that the BoT authorize T Mosher to lead the effort to create an Income Enhancement Team. The **motion passed** unanimously with 6 votes to approve. **Action: T Mosher will work to create an Income Enhancement Team.**

Future Business:

Items not to be forgotten:

- 1) Review End Statements with church membership
- 2) 2025-2026 Update Strategic Plan, possibly with review of End Statements and a visioning process
- 3) 2025-2026 Review Ministerial Agreement

Member Input:

Jean L suggested looking at other church websites/newsletters for fundraising ideas, e.g. Westminster United Church of Christ (Spokane); Salem, OR UU church; Fresno, CA UU church; and (from T Mosher) Chandler, AZ Valley UU Congregation.

Adjournment:

5:54 p.m.

Attachments:

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Updated Board of Trustees Chart, dated 12/24/2024 | D. Death with Dignity Open Letter to UUCS |
| B. Board Treasurer's Report | E. BoT Email Policy Tweak |
| C. In-Person Attendance Subcommittee Report | F. BoT Letter to T Eklof & Shared Ministry Team |

Submitted by M Johnson, Recording Secretary.

Unitarian-Universalist Church OF Spokane, 4340 West Whistalks Way, Spokane, WA 99224

[illegible]

Jan, 2025, UUCS Treasurer's Report

The income and expense balances for the first 6 months of the 2024– 2025 fiscal year are looking good. The income total was about \$218,000 versus the budgeted amount of \$184,000, a surplus of over 18%. The expenses were about \$172,000 versus the budgeted amount of \$187,000, a savings of 8%.

The increase in income was largely due to very strong pledge payments and donations. The fundraising started out well with \$6000 from the auction but is still \$4000 shy of the 6 month budget, needing \$14,000 more to meet the annual goal. Income from the endowment is making a substantial contribution, about \$17,000 so far, because the endowment is now close to \$1,000,000 and church policy is for it to support the annual budget by 4% of the endowment, which would be close to \$40,000 annually.

Most church expenses are close to projections, with nothing unusual, but with many of the expenses that or under or over budget expected to even out over the rest of the year. The income numbers could moderate somewhat also, but church attendance is up at UUCS and in many UU churches nationally, so the positive UUCS budget trends may be somewhat sustainable.

Dick Burkhardt

Second Meeting of special group board of trustees on 12/8/24.

In attendance

Luba Johnston

Cindy Fine

Justin Bell

In an earlier meeting, we proposed 10 ideas that could be used to increase attendance, membership, interest and possibly add to revenue to the church. We are submitting this updated report for the consideration by the social activities group.

As of this date in mid December, it seems that 2 ideas are already working and do not need much further input from the board of trustees. These ideas are:

1. Poetry group – already a working group
2. Pot luck lunches- this one started on Sunday Dec 14 and seems to be popular and organized.

Of the original 10 ideas submitted earlier, we picked 3 priority activities that seemed to have the most appeal and interest. These are:

1. **After service feedback group** – discuss the sermon/books/concepts mentioned in the service.
2. **A Heather Cox Richardson discussion group.**
3. **An Ecology/Environment group** that would discuss issues in the environment and possible ideas to help the environment.

We dropped the idea of an **engagement group** that would serve the purpose of introducing people to each other. Instead, we favored the idea of spending the first 5-10 minutes of each group meeting having people introduce themselves and get to know others in the congregation who have common interests and ideas.

Of the 3 proposed/favored ideas, the **ecology/environmental** group seems to have the most interest at this time. Two women talked to me about this group after church on Sunday Dec 15. Both expressed an interest in joining the group.

A 4th idea is a computer truth/spam/malware/group. I feel capable of running and organizing this group by myself but will be quite happy if social activities group would like to join in to organize or help organize it.

Justin Bell

OPEN LETTER TO SPOKANE'S UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

The Stories of Reverend John Evans and Betty Drumheller.

On May 8th 1995 John Evans, a 79-year-old retired Unitarian-Universalist minister became the 22nd person Dr. Jack Kevorkian helped to die.

John Evans was a 1949 graduate of Harvard Divinity School and was minister to UU congregations in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, California, and Vermont. He also earned a master's degree in library science after world war II. He joined the American Peace Crusade and the effort to prevent nuclear war. In Pittsburgh in 1950, he helped to form a committee to support civil liberties, which was later designated as being a "Communist Front" organization by the United States attorney general. During the Mccarthy period, that designation drew the attention of government authorities and he was fired from his job as librarian in Detroit. In 1954 and following, Reverend Evans became a draft counselor in Oakland California during the the Vietnam War. He later joined the effort to organize the Woodworkers in Vermont. He was active in the Sojourner Truth organization which was, at that time, a radical interracial group in Chicago. He was actively involved in social justice issues throughout his life. Before Reverend John Evans died, he wrote two letters. The first was addressed to trustees of several local Unitarian congregations. The second was addressed to the press. He actually sent neither. Copies of his letters typed on the day he died, were received by the author of this letter from Dr. Kevorkian's attorney at Dr. Kevorkian's request.

Rev. John Evans's request for sanctuary to Unitarian Universalist congregations and the press

Letter one to UU Churches:

I am making this request of several local Unitarian churches hoping to receive an affirmative reply while time remains and my sickness moves its course. I have terminal pulmonary fibrosis.

UU churches have supported freedom of belief, opinion and speech. Now there is a freedom in need of support: freedom to choose the time, manner and place one's death. Unlike unlike other issues or causes common in our churches, the right to die is not only a principle to be supported in general or somewhere else - it is here now.

The finality of this act has a religious quality to it that William James called "solemn serious and tender." This, as well as the vindictive behavior shown by civil authorities in such matters, makes the occasion one of sanctuary.

Without disturbing your schedule or use of your building, will you rent me space or a room for my physician-assisted suicide? No special preparation would be required.

For some 20 years as a minister, I served several churches in the Unitarian Universalist Association. Now I need to ask if the movement that I have called "home" has a place for me.

Letter two to the press:

It had been my intention to send the enclosed request to several local churches. There were two reasons for not doing so: first, to spare my wife having my death occur at home, second, to give churches the opportunity to act on an important ethical issue that, sooner or later, they must face.

But we decided to use our home, and I was persuaded that to make this request of churches now may jeopardize the whole effort. My experience with churches gave me little reason to expect that one was immediately ready to offer this kind of sanctuary.

The question remains: When such a request is made of you what will be your answer?"

Sincerely yours, John E. Evans.

(I received Rev. Evan's story from Dr. Jack Kevorkian's attorney at Dr. Kevorkian's request that I, a principal Death With Dignity movement pioneer, compatriot and friend to Dr. Kevorkian.)

The Request of Betty Drumheller to the Spokane Unitarian Universalist Church

Early in 1995, Dying Well Network, the Death With Dignity movement's Spokane-based organization which I started, asked that Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, Washington if they would consider offering sanctuary to a terminally ill persons seeking a place to hasten death in the presence of loved ones. In June, 1996, Betty Drumheller, Dying Well's secretary, at her own initiative without consultation with anyone else in the Dying Well organization begged the Spokane UU congregation for sanctuary. Here is her story previously published in my Death With Dignity FAQs book published in 1997 which became the debators' world-wide handbook. Now Amazon sells used copies of the book for \$99.00 plus shipping. I contribute all monies I received from the sale of the book to the Death With Dignity movement.

Betty Drumheller, beginning treatment for her fourth flare up of acute, then terminal, leukemia, asked the Spokane UU Church for sanctuary. I dropped my membership in this Church at the time of this refusal and stayed away for decades, disgruntled. I have attended a few services recently and am considering rejoining. I'm older and wiser now...and also closer to death myself now. My need for sanctuary is obviously approaching.

Betty Drumheller wrote:

Could the Spokane Unitarian Universalist Church consider providing me with sanctuary to discontinue treatment and take measures to die peacefully with dignity should I choose the alternative? I pray that your answer will be a favorable as end of Life choices should carry with them maximum opportunity for self-determination.

Those of us who want ceremony of friends, rather than total isolation, beg for such an opportunity. The guarantee against isolation would be a planned farewell ceremony. I don't want to die alone.

I humbly assert that what I face in the next few weeks can be eased with the knowledge of such an alternative in mind.

The church responded:

We now have a task force beginning to develop a process to assist the congregation in studying and developing action plans and or positions on social issues. That process is not yet in place and the congregation has not had the opportunity to address the Death With Dignity issue in depth or the request for sanctuary for terminally old persons. Though we cannot accommodate your request for

physical sanctuary, we can offer you our support of your inherent worth and dignity during this phase of your life.

Prompted by your request, the social justice committee will discuss having liaison with Dying Well Network. (Writer report: This never happened.) The Social Justice Committee is committed to pursuing the issue you have presented. *Please know that we are with you in spirit and hopeful that your recovery is complete. (Italics added by me for emphasis.)*

Unitarian Universalist Social Action Committee

Dear reader, if you want to exercise your freedom of religion to have a sacred, protected place in your church for the ultimate religious act you will ever make, make your request very early. The experience of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane suggests other churches may have as great or greater difficulty.

Some proponents of the right to die argue that asking a church for sanctuary is counterproductive to the movement because it is simply "sensationalism." It isn't. No one involved in a deathing wants it "sensationalized" because it would jeopardize getting the death being done and it would focus unwanted attention on those in attendance thereby increasing their legal jeopardy.

Police and Mental Health Professionals (MHPs) can easily break the private property barrier to stop a "suicide." Violating the church-state boundary would be much more difficult. Public sentiment would at least inhibit, if not outrightly prevent, them from interfering with a deathing held in a church as a religious event. Church sanctuary does not have to be bodily resistance or a physical barricade. Sanctuary is a moral and religious boundary more so than a physical one. The right to die lies as much as within the public freedom of worship as within the private right to be let alone, the right to privacy. Deathing is fundamentally an act protected by the right to practice one's religion

Please note that the accented sentence of the Social Concerns Committee's letter to Betty Drumheller unfortunately ended with a statement expressing their sentiment that *"We are with you in spirit and hopeful that your recovery is complete."* (Italics again, is my accent.)

I comforted Betty at her great disappointment at the committee's rejection of her request and their missing the fact that she had no hope at all of a "recovery," the central point of her letter.

It is now decades past this rejection and, to my knowledge the Spokane UU Church has done nothing to resolve their resistance to even taking a stand on either the Right to Die or the sanctuary issues accompanying that right.

I am still hopeful that the Church will resolve their resistance because now it is my turn to anticipate my need to gain sanctuary. This writer will also not ask the church for what it has shown...empty commitment, despite the national UU endorsement of the right to die.

I plan not to ask, but to take sanctuary at the Church even if I have to break into it to let me die among loved ones and to force the Church to face it's obvious reasoned hypocrisy.

Wake up to your commitment to act on who you are! "Faith without Deeds" is living a life of "Death Without Dignity."

Where will be the Church be when you, the reader, needs it?

Betty Drumheller was insulted for “not being heard.” She was appropriately and keenly disappointed with the Church’s response. She declined to write to the Church, asserting that “Let them live with their inappropriate choice; I have enough on my plate to choose not to take on an unwilling organization. I need my waning energy to live the remainder of my life in peace and love.”

The Courage to Advocate for the Right to Die Frances Graves, 76, pioneer for the Right to Die

There is a concern throughout the world over denial of human rights. The violations include imprisonment without trial, torture, killings, and discrimination against women, racial, religious and political groups. The last recognized but also important violation is increasingly recurring in our freedom-loving country. We deny incurable patients the right to die with dignity and to hasten a lingering painful dying individuals who have lived free lives, making their own personal decisions since childhood, are being denied their last, ultimate, choice.

This denial is not yet well recognized as being a violation of human rights. This may be because the motive is good. The general idea of preserving life is good, but carrying it to an extreme is not. Following one’s religion is good, but imposing it on another is not.

Another reason for this violation is often not recognized is the gradual nature of the increasing power of medical technology to maintain a semblance of life longer and and longer. We are so pleased with great medical advances that we overlooked their misuse and their painful side effects.

If we value freedom we will not allow “medical ethics,” certain religious beliefs or outdated, misapplied laws to become paternalistic dictators at the end of our lives. We must work for legal recognition of the right to die just as some of us have worked for other rights. Our ancestors sometimes risked or lost their lives fighting for freedoms we now enjoy. They were misunderstood and maligned as we will be but that is the price of freedom.

This writer, like Jimmy Carter habitually “sees the best in people.” When his wife, Roselyn, was asked how Jimmy could negotiate with extremely difficult national leaders, she answered, “Jimmy always sees the best in people and sometime he sees more good than what’s there.”

My express goal is for the Spokane UU Church to provide me sanctuary when I need it and to awaken the best in the Church to their compassion responsibilities. I believe this letter may help to this end.

Rob Neils, Ph.D., retired clinical psychologist and Death With Dignity firebrand
with relentless invincibility. 2024

Here is the Death mantra I have used when lying alone, badly injured, and anticipating death while soloing cliff-climbing in Montana’s Cabinet Wilderness.

Earth and Sky	The Water still flows
You and I	and the
Live and Die	Wind still blows
TOGETHER.....	ALWAYS
In the Cabinets	
&	
Everywhere	
Om	

3.4. TRUSTEES' EMAIL POLICY: The purpose of this policy is to clarify the use of email: (1) between Trustees and (2) between Trustee(s) and Congregation Members to foster transparency, to encourage appropriate, respectful and professional dialogue between Trustees and Members, to maintain proper records, and to ensure that the Board's decisions do not take place by email. This policy may be reviewed annually by the Board and may be amended to adapt to new circumstances and/or to better meet the needs of the Board and the Church community. (amended 11/27/24)

Accordingly:

- a. Prohibition of Decisions via Email:
 - a1. Trustees shall not use email to deliberate or to make decisions affecting the Board, UUCS Members or UUCS.
 - (a2. deleted 1/22/25)
- b. Permissible Uses of Email:
 - b1. Any email communications not prohibited by 3.4.a. above are allowed, including email exchanges between fellow Trustees, staff and/or UUCS Members. Trustees shall exercise caution when discussing sensitive or confidential information with non-Trustees. Trustees are expected to communicate respectfully and professionally in all email exchanges.
 - b2. Trustees may communicate with each other, including within Trustee subcommittees, for the purpose of discussion and sharing information, while not deliberating or deciding on issue(s) that requires full Board involvement in an open Board meeting. (added 1/22/25)
 - b3. Any email communication with a Member(s) discussing an issue of concern to that Member(s) for the purpose of understanding that issue, clarifying existing rules/regulations and determining how that issue might be presented, as may be appropriate, to the Board.
 - b4. A Trustee may share by email official adopted information with other Trustees and/or Members, including Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, internal rules/policies, and website information best able to address the need or issue; while maintaining appropriate boundaries, respect and professionalism.
- c. Clarification on Personal Opinions:
 - c1. Trustees may share general information related to Church life or their individual participation in Church activities via email, including personal opinion comments on any aspect. However, such communications must clearly be marked as personal opinions and not represent or imply Board decisions or perspectives, unless citing official adopted Board Policies and Procedures, Ops-Team policy and/or any other UUCS policy/rule and/or UUCS Bylaw..
- d. Confidentiality and Privacy:

Dear Todd and members of the Shared Ministry Team,

We the members of the UUCS Board of Trustees regret the negative feelings which came up last month regarding our amendments to the BOT Email Policy. We felt it was past time to get our changes in place that would remedy what we felt was a policy which hindered our doing our best as the Board.

Our experience of the Policy in its previous form was that it was confusing and overly restrictive in terms of what was prohibited, and therefore a hindrance for us in doing the communicating needed between monthly Board meetings to prepare for those meetings.

Please trust that we intended no disrespect to you. Rather, we felt that the changes were essential and that it was time to enact them. Rest assured that this Board will never make any decisions, nor do any deliberations leading to decisions, via email.

Sincerely,

Your Board