

Meeting Minutes
Board of Trustees of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church
5 February 2008

Board members present:

Reid Adler
Wendy Burns
Bill Clontz
Ilene Gillispie
Lisa Guide
Birgit Robbert
Raleigh Romine
Lauck Walton
Mike Walker

Absent:

Jim Potter, Chairman

Others present:

Al Erickson, Treasurer
Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster, Interim Minister
Meagan Henry, RE Director
Becky Brandt, Nominating Committee
Lincoln Cobb, Membership Development Committee
Jane Nelson, Ministerial Search Committee
Sandy Peterson, Ministerial Search Committee
Marty Bredeck, Ministerial Search Committee
Suzanne Cleary Cohen, Green Sanctuary
Daniel Cohen, Green Sanctuary

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Board vice-chair, Lauck Walton

1. Jane Nelson, Sandy Peterson and Marty Bredeck attended the meeting solely to keep abreast of any Board developments that may affect their work in interviewing potential ministerial candidates.
2. Becky Brandt presented the Nominating Committee's slate as follows:
 - Board of Trustees – Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson; Joan Darrah and Tamara De La Camp
 - Youth Representative – Douglas Jemison
 - Our Home Community Program Council – Sandy Peterson
 - Religious Education Program Council – Seileen Murphy
 - Social Justice Program Council – Georgia Pouchot
 - Nominating committee replacements - pending

3. Jim Potter had requested that the DRE, the DOM, and several committees present to the Board their ideas for improving their respective areas, and how much the improvements would cost. Information, as follows, will be used in the Board's work in devising a budget for the coming church year(s).
4. Lincoln Cobb reported on the Membership Development Committee's (MDCOM) ideas for growing MVUC. Some of these ideas have been implemented in the past and the MDCOM feel they should be continued--Autumn Connection, the Shoe-leather Campaign, new members classes (in process) and dinner, and supporting Circle Suppers. Other ideas include: creating a more welcoming entrance to the church and a more organized interior space, better signage (especially at Windmill driveway), better communication with the congregation, a more formal path to becoming a member of MVUC, and forming small group ministries (covenant groups). The Shoe-leather Campaign costs approximately \$1500 per round. Lincoln pointed out the need for more energetic members to serve on the MDCOM. It was pointed out that lack of involvement or active-members being "stretched" seems to be a problem for this and other MVUC activities.
5. Interim minister Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster gave his monthly report (attached).
6. Don also shared the following letter from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA, dated 18 January 2008: "Pursuant to Ministerial Fellowship Policy 4, I write to inform you that at the business meeting on the 2nd December, 2007, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association voted to accept the resignation of the Reverend Louis Schwebius from Ministerial Fellowship with the UUA."
7. DRE Meagan Henry presented the following budget items for consideration:
 - a) Hiring a paid youth coordinator for Youth Programs at MVUC, initially for five hours per week from the beginning of September through the second week of June. This would cost approximately \$2,688 per year at \$16 per hour. This position should increase to 10 hours per week after the first year. Working 10 hours a week, this person could coordinate YRUU and a small young adult group as well
 - b) Incorporating Spirit Play in the RE curriculum. Spirit Play is a Montessori based program for young children that can be used for Pre-K, K, 1, & 2 and is specifically developed for UU churches. Initial start up costs can be as much as \$4000 for training leaders, purchasing materials and creating a dedicated space for the program.
8. DOM Melodie Feather's monthly report was noted (attached). Melodie proposed the following budget items for consideration:
 - a) Hiring a part-time key-boardist to accompany choir rehearsal at least three times per month and to provide keyboard services on at least two Sundays per month. Cost \$6000-\$8000.
 - b) Hiring a pianist for summer services in July and August. Cost \$1000-\$1200.

Also, Melodie requested that the Board consider having more time between services, pointing out several advantages to having a full hour between services.

9. Suzanne Cleary, representing the Green Sanctuary Task Force, reported that MVUC has met the requirements for, and is ready to apply to become, a UUA-certified Green Sanctuary congregation. Suzanne pointed out that what started as a small group within MVUC five years ago has become a church-wide movement to incorporate green practices in all aspects of church life. Highlights of the green program include: \$60,000 Fairfax County storm water improvement at MVUC and co-sponsoring a town meeting for citizens of Alexandria concerning the Mirant Power Plant. MVUC is being recognized as a leader in the green movement, bringing MVUC good publicity. Although no budget request was made, Suzanne requested the Board lead in incorporating “green” thinking in all MVUC policies, programs and actions; that the Board fund recommendations resulting from the GWIPL energy audit; and that the Board work to strengthen MVUC’s role as a community leader in resolving climate change.
10. Al Erickson gave Treasurer’s reports (attached).
11. Lauck Walton said since the Finance Committee has not met since the last BOT meeting, there is nothing new to report at this time. Lauck noted that the committee recommends reverting to an accrual basis for accounting rather than the cash basis presently used.
12. Bill Clontz, reported on the Program Council’s work (report attached.) The charter for the music committee included in the report was deferred for Board approval until details are resolved. The Program Council recommended that the Board not accept the Sunday Services Committee’s request to move to one service starting on March 30 rather than on May 25. Careful consideration has been given to the Sunday Services Committee’s request, starting already last fall. The PC found that the cons far outweigh the pros for this change. The Board voted 9-0 to not accept the Sunday Services Committee request.
13. Reid Adler reported on the on-going work of the newly-formed Strategic Planning Committee. Presently members of the committee are Jim Potter, Lauck Walton, Bill Clontz, Al Robbert, Karen Tyson, Kris Rosenthal & Reid. The committee is looking at matters relating to the budget, stewardship, church administration, etc., as well as at the BOT’s priorities for this church year, to identify critical activities that might need attention. Also, the committee has looked at recent MVUC long-range plans to identify important but uncompleted activities that warrant renewed attention. The committee is preparing recommendations for MVUC’s ongoing planning process, for example, holding an annual congregational meeting in the fall to consider the mission of our church, and strategies for achieving major goals and objectives. Lauck is organizing a meeting (possibly in March) for the chairs/leaders of MVUC committees and programs to talk about our collective goals and planning for next year. The committee intends to submit a draft charter for BOT review at the March meeting and intends to submit some strategic planning recommendations in April/May.
14. Raleigh Romaine reported on improvements needed in MVUC’s sound system. Hearing assisted devices have been repaired and a new cordless microphone has been purchased . A sound engineer evaluated MVUC’s sound system--much of it jerry-rigged--and estimated an upgraded system would cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000. Raleigh said approximately \$15,000 would be needed.
15. Wendy Burns submitted a comprehensive list of improvements prepared by Russ Stumpe and others of the PMM (Building and Grounds) Committee, totaling \$40,000. Much of this

expense is for large maintenance and repair items. In addition, Alvin Macomber proposed hiring a part-time groundskeeper, costing \$15,000-\$20,000. Some of this expense would be offset by using the present lawn maintenance company less, and potentially by increased rental income that a well-maintained property may bring in.

16. Update on the interactive playground: Wendy reported that the Fort Hunt pre-school has contributed \$20,000. The “story-telling chair” has been ordered and some talented neighbors are getting involved in the project along with MVUC and the pre-school.
17. Wendy presented the Susan B. Anthony Committee’s list of item to be funded by the proceeds from the Holiday Shop (\$14,132 was made this year). The Board approved the list 9-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10.

Respectfully submitted,
Birgit Robbert, Board Secretary

Attachments:

1. [Minister’s report](#)
2. [Music Director’s report](#)
3. [Revenue and expense report](#)
4. [Building revenue and expense report](#)
5. [Program Council report](#)

Interim Minister's Report to the MVUC Board of Trustees

For the Period of January 9 to February 5, 2008

January 31, 2008

Five Sundays occurred during the period of this report. I led three services (January 6, 13, and 27) and the Sunday Services Committee led two (Jan. 20 and Feb. 3.)

Jan. 6: a service on the nature of UU ministry and how it may be approached. (Sermon title: "To Do or To Be: A Perspective on Ministry.")

Jan. 13: a service on conflict management. (Sermon title: "Foxes, Teddy Bears, Turtles, and Sharks.") Introduction of new members.

Jan. 20: A Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday service by the Sunday Services Committee. (Service theme: "Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters") I missed attending this service because of a virus.

Jan. 27: A service on congregational polity and the dynamics of democracy. (Sermon title: "Making the Most of What We Are.")

Feb. 3 a service on the Partner Church in India, organized by the Partner Church Committee and the Sunday Services Committee. Rev. Khlur Mukkim of Khasi Hills, India, speaker. (This service had not occurred at the writing of this report.)

The three services I led this month were on specifically interim ministry topics. During the three services I will do in February, after doing my first service (which will again be on an interim ministry topic, i.e. the function of small groups in strengthening membership commitment), I will shift my emphasis in a bit to do one sermon on the quality of our personal lives and one on the nature of our humanness itself.)

Because of a virus I had to work at home several days this month and could not attend some usual meetings, namely, one choir rehearsal and a staff meeting, which I understand did okay without me.

Events and functions I attended within the congregation during this period included: dropping in on the Thursday Groups luncheons, attending the kickoff meeting of Wednesday Fellowship Potluck and leading **Vespers** that evening, attending the Green Sanctuary program on Jan. 27, and attending a session of the Spiritual Friends group. On Jan. 12, I led a class on "**Unitarian Universalism: Its Heritage and Point of View**," the first class in the "Welcome to Our Community" series. Thirteen persons interested were present and showed high interest in Unitarian Universalism and this congregation.

Other meetings that I attended included: Board of Trustees, Program Council, Green Committee planning meeting, Special Board meeting on strategic planning, and all but one of the Kitchen Cabinet. Also, I have participated in most of the choir rehearsals.

Administrative activities have included the weekly staff meetings and other meetings as necessary with the Church Administrator and the professional staff (i.e., D.R.E. and Music Director).

I have had numerous **pastoral** contacts most of which were supportive conversations and some of which were counseling sessions. On short notice, I was requested by Robert Esser, an Ohio resident, to conduct memorial and graveside services for his mother, Erna Esser, a former resident of this area and a life-long Unitarian Universalist. On January 26 the memorial service was held at Robert J. Murphy Funeral Home, Arlington, VA and the interment was at Arlington National Cemetery. Two UU ministers have contacted me for my agreement to their conducting memorial services here for members of this congregation – agreement that I readily gave. They were Rev. Linda Peebles who will conduct the service for Harry Jackson and Rev. David Bumbaugh who will conduct the service for Florence Searle.

Other issues and activities this month included a **change in the format of the Order of Service** which was introduced on January 27. After discussion in staff meetings and with the aid of Ron Brandt, we reduced the size of the order of service and printed the announcements on a separate “Weekly Bulletin” sheet. The Weekly Bulletin was not passed out until after the service, as people left the chapel. The intent was to focus more directly on worship without extraneous matters requiring attention until the service was over. I want to try this format for several weeks before evaluating its effectiveness.

In spite of requests I began making back in December for a non-email, face-to-face **meeting with the Sunday Services Committee**, it still has not happened.

I was contacted by a first year **Interim Minister** to be her **mentor** and I agreed to do so. Her name is Rev. Pam Allen-Thompson, at the UU Church of Norfolk, VA this year.

As requested at the last Board of Trustees meeting, I will bring to this meeting of the Board **samples of bylaw provisions for congregational and ministerial relationships**. My source for them is the UUA Handbook on Bylaws, which is available on line a www.uua.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster
Interim Minister

**Report from the Director of Music
to the MVUC Board
January 2008
by Melodie Feather**

*My personal mission in life is to help others embrace their gifts
so that, together, we can learn to share treasures from within.
As a musician, I strive to fulfill this mission by embracing
my love of music and creating opportunities
so that others may share their gifts.*

Collegial Endeavors

- **Ministers** – I want to acknowledge the fact that Don has been very supportive and cooperative in adjusting our meeting time and days to accommodate my “changing” schedule in the past several weeks. This has afforded me the opportunity to participate in several UU local and district events. Our service planning continues to be collegial as we strive to work not only on services for one to three weeks out, but as we begin to plan for the Canvass Kickoff Service (3/9) and Easter Sunday (3/23).
- **RE** – Meagan and I continue to meet with Don to plan worship services. I met with Meagan and Tamara de la Camp to discuss issues and possible solutions related to the scheduling of the Kids Choir rehearsals.
- **Other Staff** – I attend the weekly staff meetings and coordinate with staff on an as-needed basis. Norman is tremendously helpful and supportive in making changes and/or adjustments early on Sunday mornings, especially when he has not “pre-set” the Chapel for Sunday services!
- **Lay Leaders** – I continue to coordinate with many lay leaders as I assist in planning for events for the music program and worship services. In early January, I began planning the Partner Church service (2/3) with Lisa Gillispie. I met with Betsy Yarrison on 1/9 to discuss and plan for the 1/20 service. I also collaborated with Mimi Stephens to finalize logistics for this service. Because it has been difficult to schedule a meeting with the Sunday Services Committee, I cancelled my out of town plans to be able to attend their meeting on 2/10.
- **Choir** – Weekly rehearsals continue on Wednesday evenings and attendance is only slightly less than before Christmas. Drop-off in attendance is not unexpected this time of year due to illness, weather, and busy schedules. I anticipate greater attendance as Easter and Music Sunday approach.
- **Music Committee** – The Music Committee met on January 6th to discuss business, review the music survey results from last April, and have a brief visioning session. The next meeting is scheduled for 2/17 at which we will discuss the budget proposal for the coming year. I submitted a draft budget to the committee on 1/31 for their review prior to the next meeting.
- **Director of Music Relations Committee** – Mimi Stevens, Trish Waters, and Robin Roberts serve on this committee. I met with them this month.
- **Supervisory Group** – I met with this group for the first time on 1/3. At their request, we met again on 1/28; and we will be meeting again in the next couple of weeks to follow-up and discuss the “Staff Planning and Review” form which I will complete.

- **Other** – I continue to rehearse with instrumentalists, soloists, and/or small vocal ensembles almost every week as they prepare music for Sunday services. This month I rehearsed with the adults and Voices of Youth to prepare the music for the 1/20 Community MLK Service. I assisted with music for the Green Sanctuary meeting on 1/27, and I rehearsed with Michelle Coon and Phyllis Gonigam to accompany their instrumental selections for the Sunday services.

Congregational Support

- **Accompanying** – Michael Carver provided keyboard services on 1/13. He brought a colleague with him who played flute during the service as well. I was unable to arrange for a volunteer accompanist on 1/27, so I covered this service. Since funds for paying accompanists are limited this year, it is my hope to trade this Sunday out with my third Sunday responsibilities in March. I have begun arranging with Don and Eric Pourchot for a “guitar only” service on 3/2.
- **Songleading** – When I am at MVUC, I continue to use the last part of the Ingathering time before Sunday services as an opportunity to encourage the congregation to sing in community so that we can teach our youth songs of our faith. Sometimes we sing a cappella and sometimes with accompaniment. We sing both the familiar as well as learn new songs. I find that congregational singing during the service is usually better if they are “warmed-up” and if some of them have had a “preview” of the unfamiliar.
- **Ingathering** – I have experimented with different arrangements for this. Currently, on Sundays when I am here, I am playing meditative music beginning 10 minutes prior to the service; at 5 minutes prior to the service, I begin congregational singing. The interest and participation in this is increasing, and I plan to continue this format. When I am not at MVUC, I usually request that 5 minutes of meditative (background) music be played prior to the service. It is my hope that we can encourage the practice of creating meditative space in the Chapel prior to the beginning of each service. Currently, there is excessively loud talking during most instrumental music prior to the service. This is very distracting to those trying to meditate and unsupportive of the musicians. This is a practice that I hope can be modified over time.
- **Special Musicians** – Michelle Coon played baritone on 1/6 and Phyllis Gonigam played violin on 1/27. Cheryl Sabo (flute) and Daniel & Stephen Stern (handbells) joined the choir for a selection on 1/20. Ron Brandt, Alan Bunner, Angel Collins, and MyraSands Lusk were soloists on 1/20.
- **Administrative** – I wrote a brief announcement “calling for musicians” for the February *Windmill*. In addition to face-to-face meetings and rehearsals, I respond to dozens of emails and many phone calls each week in regards to activities related to music at MVUC.
- **Other** – I continue to work closely with Angel Collins to organize rehearsals and select repertoire for the Kids Choir (ages K-5th grade) and Voices of Youth (ages 6th-12th grades). Voices of Youth and I provided music for the Green Sanctuary service on 1/27. Discussions are underway to clarify the goals and rehearsal time for the Kids Choir.

Denominational/Community

- I continue to work with the GA Planning Committee to prepare for GA 2008 in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, on June 25-29th. I attended a face-to-face meeting in Salt Lake City from January 10-13th.
- I attended the Chesapeake UU Ministers Association meeting at the Cedar Lane church on January 23rd. The musicians were invited to join the ministers for a workshop on collaborative worship presented by musician and minister, Rev. Jason Shelton.
- Ten adults, eight youth, and I participated in the Mt. Vernon Community MLK service on the evening of 1/20. Their “solo” selection was very well received by the audience, and it was a wonderful opportunity for us to embrace our middle-school aged youth!

MOUNT VERNON UNITARIAN CHURCH
Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Revenue & Expenses
As of January 31, 2007 - 58% of the fiscal year

Account	ACTUAL 1st & 2nd Qtr	ACTUAL Jan-08	ACTUAL To Date	ANN Budget	ToDate as % of Budget
REVENUE					
Stewardship Pledges	195,715	53,458	249,173	360,000	69.21%
Contributions	6,607	1,736	8,343	18,000	46.35%
Facilities use and rental (other)	10,333	4,481	14,814	19,860	74.59%
Weddings(net)	36,691	5,483	42,174	45,000	93.72%
Fund Raising Income	8,004	22	8,026	20,650	38.87%
Administrative & other income	1,845	0	1,845	500	369.00%
TOTAL INCOME	259,195	65,180	324,375	464,010	69.91%
EXPENSES					
Worship programs (incl music)	1,666	259	1,925	4,500	42.78%
RE programs incl youth ministries	4,517	509	5,026	7,600	66.13%
Home community programs	118	0	118	200	59.00%
Our larger world/social justice	121	0	121	0	
Communications	3,116	320	3,436	3,200	107.38%
Stewardship campaign	0	0	0	100	0.00%
Denomination Responsibilities	16,251	3,960	20,211	29,841	67.73%
Adm programs					
search committees	1,652	1,537	3,189	16,700	19.10%
other comm. & expenses	158	0	158	0	
Operating Expense	14,032	578	14,610	27,700	52.74%
debt service	0	0	0	0	
Property maintenance	22,439	3,072	25,511	54,600	46.72%
Utilities	11,356	4,199	15,555	25,800	60.29%
Employment compensation					
Minister	46,971	7,806	54,777	109,399	50.07%
Staff	83,820	11,799	95,619	159,966	59.77%
Employee benefits					
payroll taxes	6,441	935	7,376	12,605	58.52%
insurance	2,885	373	3,258	5,103	63.84%
pensions	5,142	1,037	6,179	13,371	46.21%
conferences & contin. edu.	3,110	335	3,445	5,000	68.90%
TOTAL EXPENSES	223,494	36,719	260,213	475,685	54.70%
NET REVENUE(EXPENSES)	35,701	28,461	64,162	-11,675	-549.57%

MOUNT VERNON UNITARIAN CHURCH
Building Fund Finance Report - December 31, 2007

INCOME:

Balance brought forward	984,747.19	984,747.19
Received in Dec		
At McLaughlin	20,393.70	
At MVUC	32,341.00	
	52,734.70	
Total received for Building Fund (includes interest)		1,037,481.89

EXPENSES:

Paid on B&H line of credit	265,000.00	
Campaign	20,626.37	
Consultant	20,890.00	
Architect	232,689.00	
Engineers, contractors	28,898.00	
Permits, fees	4,147.00	
Other Expenses	7,606.73	
Total Expenses to Date	<u>579,857.10</u>	579,857.10
NET Funds on Hand for Building		<u><u>\$457,624.79</u></u>

WHERE FUNDS ARE:

Funds at McLaughlin Inv.	226,143.37
Cash in B&H	103,025.28
CDs at B&H	128,456.14
	<u>457,624.79</u>

MVUC MEMORANDUM

TO: BOT
FROM: BILL CLONTZ
SUBJECT: PROGRAM COUNCIL REPORT
DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2008
CC: MINISTER, ADMINISTRATOR



1. Attachments: Minutes of the January Program Council Meeting, Memo on Single Services on Sundays, and Music Committee Charter

Highlights from the January Meeting:

2. Wednesday Fellowship Nights

Tamara and Meagan reviewed final planning for this new series of programs, with the first to be on, to January 16, the second Wednesday of every month thereafter). At the end of the first quarter, we will examine attendance and willingness of others to support the program. If both factors are positive, the program will continue.

The first event was, by all measures, an unqualified success – we clearly tapped a need with this program. Over 70 people signed up and they all showed up. The communal meal was a fine opportunity for people to get to know each other who may not cross paths on Sunday, the Vespers service was well received, and all the program events were more than full. Young families especially seemed to enjoy the dinner hour. We'll raise prices slightly in February, but otherwise the format seems about right.

3. Single Service Sundays

As the attached memo states, the Program Council, after careful review, elected unanimously not to recommend going forward with this recommendation, but notes that the Sunday Services Committee has raised important issues and provided a serious proposal that enabled us to consider these issues in an informed manner. We recommend the BOT vote on this matter in February if possible so that planning for the remainder of the church year may go forward. Copies of the submission from the Worship Committee are also attached for BOT review as desired. The Worship Committee has been advised of the Program Council decision and a copy of the Council memo to the BOT provided to the Committee

4. Spotlight Sundays: Kim has this program under way, with the first service conducted in January. There are one per month scheduled up until the Summer break, with each featuring the work of a designated committee.

5. Music Committee Charter

The Council reviewed and approved, with minor changes, the attached music committee charter, and recommends the BOT approve it as well.