North Chapel Board of Trustees Retreat Agenda
August 7, 2022
“We are the trustees of the spirit of the North Chapel”

Ringing Bowl, Check-In 1:00 – 1:10

Review and approval of last month’s minutes 1:10 – 1:11

Treasurer’s Report/Financial Review 1:11 – 1:15

North Chapel Committees 1:15 – 3:00
   a. Current composition
   b. Where are the gaps?
   c. Reporting structure to the board
   d. Board liaisons
   e. Resurrecting the Committee Café
   f. Recruitment and development of new committee members
   g. Pastoral Care: clarification on role, composition, a definition (is this a committee or a stand-alone group of community members?)

Board calendar for the remaining months of the year 3:00 – 3:15

Adjourn 3:15

As a member of the North Chapel Board, I agree to:
   ● Be present to others and mindful of the needs of our community
   ● Speak the truth
   ● Listen with patience and an open mind and heart
   ● Articulate North Chapel values and champion initiative that support them
   ● Do the work that is ours to do and share the load
   ● Commit to continuous learning and self-assessment
   ● Ask challenging questions
   ● Encourage creative tension, among ourselves and in our community
   ● Take care of myself and of others
   ● Bring joy and kindness to what we do
North Chapel Board of Trustees  
Meeting July 17, 2022

Attending: Kathy Astemborski, Mary Blanton, Laird Bradley, Leon Dunkley, Clara Gimenez, Richard Schramm, Judy Williamson, Ann Wynia, Michael Zsoldos  
Absent: Richard Waddell

Check-In and Approval of Minutes: After check-in, the minutes for the June meeting were approved with no changes or corrections.

Treasurer’s Report/Financial Review: Ann reported that pledge reminders will be sent soon by Shannon. The Ukraine fundraiser netted $3,014. She will be cleaning up some of the Quickbooks activities with Shannon. In future Statements of Activity, reports will be up to date verses the end of the previous month. Per the Board’s request Ann will prepare a quarterly report that will have a comparison of the previous year’s numbers against those for the current year.

Minister’s Report and Discussion: Leon said he needs to get away as the retreats at Silver Lake are no longer restful. He added that since July 4th there were no children present. He thinks that summers tend to have fewer children present at Sunday services; perhaps when school reopens in the fall, the number will increase and be more consistent. He plans to reach out to parents to see what the need are and believes that Chloe should attend a board meeting in the next few months before the school year begins. Leon hopes to gather some people to discuss the various leadership roles that are needed and this meeting could also focus on what is happening in the church and what we would like to see happen. He emphasized that it would be important to recognize what calendar events are important. He also would like to generate new ideas/energy with an SE get-together and would like for the Board to plan a summer retreat—Kathy and Clara said they would develop a Doodle poll to see what dates would work for the most people.

Reopening Task Force Report: Reports are that Covid rates continue to be low so there are no changes to the current policy but there may be some changes about singing with masks should rates increase.

Endowment Fund Planning: Chris Bartlett reported on the church’s financial condition (the $30,000 PPD loan; Party for a Purpose revenue of $49,000; the benefit of being lay lead when we were without a minister; and the $48,000 settlement from the UUA. But he stressed the importance of developing sustainable sources of revenue. The goal of the Endowment Fund is to raise $500,000 from which we could take 5% from the interest the fund will generate to go toward the yearly operating budget. The primary focus for the Fund is to ask NC members to include the church in their wills. The Endowment would also provide a provision in case of a financial catastrophe that the church could use to keep the doors open. To help build the endowment, each Board member and some other church members would be assigned three people/couples whom they will meet with.
personally to explain the goals of the Endowment, explain how they can participate, and provide them with an Endowment Fund brochure and other forms for them to complete and return to Ann Wynia. This activity would begin in late July/early August. Currently, there is about $250,000 in the Fund that is invested with the Vermont Community Trust. Jim Swift has volunteered to assist members who wish to make the North Chapel a beneficiary of a percentage of their IRA for a tax-free donation.

**Other Committee Reports and Discussions:** Richard Schramm obtained a $1,000 grant for the North Chapel to purchase the OWL device; the grant challenges the Amazing Grays to meet the criteria of a certain number of disabled persons and those of lower income. Once this is met, the Amazing Grays will allow the rest of the North Chapel community to use the device. He suggested reaching out to the Thompson Center for ways we could work together. Richard thinks this technology may play a role in the work of the Worship Committee to make services more accessible to these people.

Richard also offered a two-prong Pastoral Care system. Currently, Anne Marinello and Laura Foley are the care team who meet needs as they arise. He suggested that a sub-group (to be recruited) would responds when needs arise, similar to the group that David Parker set up early on during the Covid pandemic (i.e., a phone tree), or people who reach out to Leon with need, or those needs expressed during the Sunday services during Joys and Concerns. Another idea is to create a Visitation Committee of people who would volunteer to visit or call on members who are house-bound or ill.

Following the Executive Session, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Williamson, Board secretary
Music and Worship Committee  
August 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes  

Present on zoom: Clara Gimenez, Jenny Gelfan, Leon Dunkley, Diane Mellinger, Anne Macksoud, Kristen McIntyre, Rowley Hazard as guest

Chalice lighting

Opening Words - “Send Love, it matters” by Carrie Newcomer

Check-ins

Approval of last two months’ minutes. Jenny commented we usually just send the minutes around for corrections before they go to Joanne for the board.

Update from Leon: We are at end of 7-8 months of going through themes. We’ve done a good job. We can touch on the 8th principle this month, explore how the UUA is handling this proposed theme and our NUCS with them. Noted ongoing conversation among board and congregation on how we gather, fellowship and pastoral care. We want to find ways to invite conversations - it is difficult to ask. He asked for feedback. Anne said she thinks this is a theme, and she’s concerned that the group is getting smaller and that is hard on her, wondering where people are. Before the conversation about asking for help, she is wondering what’s happening. For instance the choir, fewer people attend on zoom. Is this a manifestation of something bigger. Jenny reminded that Gathering was a topic that came up in a meeting before. Diane asked how he is thinking about addressing this. As we open up we are becoming aware of how we have been more isolated, how are we recognized, how do we connect, and is this individual or all of us. Leon wants to foster conversations about what we have lost and how we get our needs met now. Diane added how do people ask for help, the little and the big, what can we do to make people want to be together in our community. What do the people who are not present need to come back. Leon is looking for language, how to invite people back. Wants to find a way to say what we have lost and say what we need to do to re-gather. Can we ask individuals, one on one? How do WE steward community? Diane asks, who are we addressing, and how do we reach the people we want to reach, who we miss. How do the active members feel comfortable enough to ask for help. Yes, church services are smaller because of Covid. Kristen asked if activities outside services are less vibrant. Clara said they will talk about it at the board retreat. Hopefully in the fall more activities will resume with better numbers. Good topic for community conversation. Leon commented that when we went back to live services tube views fell off, but still we often have pretty good viewership. Many other similar UU churches have way less. Everybody is down. Diane thinks it might be incorporated into themes. Leon says he will take this up with the board.

Update from Diane: she is always nervous starting up again after time off. She plans to change choir rehearsal time to Thursday 4-5:30. They will rehearse singing with masks on. Occasional zoom rehearsals. She will wait for reopening task force to decide when singing in church can happen. Clara asked if it would make it harder to recruit new people at the earlier time. Diane said she will reconsider as needed.

Comments on last month services: Anne Marinello liked Melinda Haas and suggested we ask her back.

Reminder: joint service in August.
Planning Fall services: we need to start planning now. Pulpit swap with Jordan Nelson Long, New Bedford Church? Leon said they have not moved forward with this. Leon will check with her for the dates

Brainstorm who to ask to be guest speakers. Diane sent Jenny a list of presenters from Barnard. It contains threw viable choices. Clara and Leon know two of the people and will reach out to them. Diane sent the contact info to Jenny for the third, Tom Powers, and since none of us know him, she will reach out. Anne commented that every person she knows and asks has said yes and had a good response. We should be proud to ask people if we think they have something to share. Clara suggested we have three people talking on a theme again, maybe even the three weekends in a row Leon is gone. Kristen will ask her friend she has mentioned. Leon said we should let guests speak about whatever they want. Anne mentioned that Tim loved how much he liked the coordination of the service - readings and music on his topic.

Themes for September, October, and November: We discussed at length many ideas with the sense we would give this mishmash of ideas to Leon who would hone them down into the exact themes.

Anne - resilience. She experiences that when she gathers with people her resilience is lifted. Hope is a related word. Resilience is broader since you can be resilient without being hopeful. Kristen concurred with resilience. Loved is another topic. How do we feel loved and make others feel loved? That is what community does.

Clara - part of three themes. What does it take to rebuild community?

Anne - people need to be seen. Love is the most important thing. When we get together we feel loved and seen.

Diane - it is easy to list all the reasons we feel overwhelmed, but how do you address that or find a way to find a place that is manageable, do we want to talk about it or is that too hard. Do we want to face it head on, how we feel about this, maybe one month focus on the dark and one on the light. If is not super light and uplifting or distracting, or conversely confronting the disasters, the other themes don’t hit the mark.

Anne - we need to find a way to not shut down. Everybody is feeling these disasters. I want to find a way to address what is deeply troubling OR find a way to stop that. She is going to write something up and send it around.

Diane - liked that Tim addressed climate change in a way to say everybody can do something about it.

Rowley - faith. Related to resilience. Not to be confused with believing in something. A sense of connection with something that is greater than your ego, connection to the universe, that is what faith is. What I miss is a sense of freedom and connection with faith. I know people are feeling socially isolated. What goes with that is the loss of that thing you cannot say - I don’t know the words for it. People feel it in North Chapel.

Appropriate to the season might be resilience and renewal in September, then change is October. November...

Recording alternatives: is there still a need? Do we have the necessary volunteers to address it (both recording an editing)? Can it become an automatic process? The owl camera cannot be used. Diane offered her old phone; after it is wiped, it can remain at the church without a passcode for this use, stored somewhere easy to find. The recordings still have to uploaded by someone.

Strategies for service coordination. Can we find creative solutions for recruiting service coordinators? Do we need to reconsider anything about our service format that would make this an easier or less intimidating task? Leon said people want to contribute to Sunday morning, but don’t want to do the recording. He added that whenever he is there he will do the recording.
Long term planning: Should we have a MAWC retreat this Fall? Diane reminds us we need to have the agenda before scheduling the meeting. We can think about this between now and the next meeting.

Next Meeting - Tuesday, September 6 at 5:15.

Closing Reading - "Prayer Flag #10" by Hakim Bellamy

Extinguish chalice.

Respectfully submitted by Jenny Gelfan