The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

Update from the Board of Directors

By Margot Kephart, Board President

I want to update the congregation on some of what the board has been up to. We meet monthly to govern our Fellowship by focusing on stewardship of resources, strategy and oversight, while leaving the day-to day operations and decision making to the minister, staff and ministry teams. One of the most important Board responsibilities is to develop the Fellowship's budget and oversee its execution.
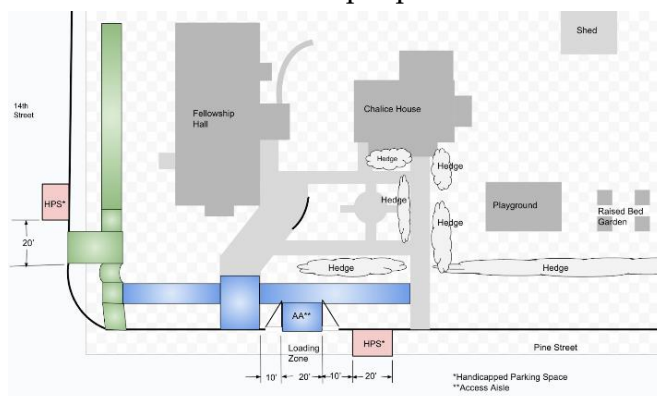
Rev. Paul is the liaison between the Board and the ministry teams. He works with team leaders to identify their funding needs and relies on the outcome of our Annual Pledge Drive and past history to develop a first draft budget for the fiscal year beginning in July. This process is happening now. He and the treasurer will present this first draft to the Board for our review and approval or revision. The Board's proposed budget is not finalized until the congregation votes to accept it at our Annual Meeting in June.

During the past year, the Board has been working on several improvement projects on our property. The money for these types of expenditures comes from our Special Projects Fund and requires Board approval. This fund is separate from the annual budget. The sources for this fund include member bequests, money remaining from our 2018 Capital Campaign and other contributions by members for special projects.

The largest project that the Board has been considering is a new sidewalk, which will connect to the sidewalk the city is installing on 14th Street, continue past the Fellowship Hall and connect to Chalice House sidewalk. The new sidewalk will be outside the boxwood hedge. It will be 4' wide. There will be a 20' access aisle (a ramp graded for handicapped accessibility) from Pine Street to the new sidewalk. There will be a loading zone in the street at that point to give handicapped accessibility to the sidewalk. A handicapped parking space will be right next to the loading zone.

On 14th Street there will be a second handicapped parking space, and the corner will have an access aisle for people to use.

This drawing is simplified to make it easier to visualize. Our project will need final approval by the city, which may require changes. The Board has put a great deal of work into the design and are hoping to get the city's approval and put out bids this spring. Phase Two of our plan will improve access at the back of our property. We will need to raise money not currently in the special projects fund for this project.

The Board also approved special project funds for the new kitchen counters in the Fellowship Hall. And we hired a new director of

religious education, Shannon Mills. We have also improved the music program by hiring a pianist for the choir. Thankfully, Charlotte Shnaider and Erin Milnes have continued their volunteer choir leadership.

When a vacancy occurs, the minister and a search group selected by the minister find a candidate to present to the Board for affirmation. The minister as head-of-staff supervises all personnel.

Please feel free to contact me with concerns and comments at president@uufw.org.

The Little Pantry at UUFW
By Heather Banks, Social Justice Team Member

In 2022, the Social Justice Team added a free "Little Pantry" to the "Little Free Library" near the Fellowship Hall. Often, everything donated before our service is gone when we leave. You may think the "Tree Streets" is a toney area, but some large homes have small apartments and apartment buildings are scattered throughout. Some people's housing may be like a hotel room with only a microwave and tiny refrigerator. Thus, Chef Boyardee may be better than canned spaghetti sauce plus pasta. Others with large households and regular kitchens must stretch food until the next paycheck.

I once had to make such a choice for six weeks in a new job with no paycheck! I had the phone cut off to pay for heat and light, as well as major car repairs and afterschool daycare expenses that had doubled. I told a friend, and she noted that with food assistance, I'd have cash for the phone bill! She happened to head the local pantry, and the next day a box of food was on my doorstep.

My teenage son and I volunteered monthly for five years at that pantry. We often knew nothing about recipients on the list of people approved for pick up that day or week. Many, however, told heart-wrenching stories.

- One mother had small children and a husband paralyzed in a fall from a ladder.
- An older woman could not continue a technical job because her adult daughter required 24/7 care after an auto crash.
- Five teens who arrived by bus said they shared a tiny apartment. Such are sometimes termed "throw away kids" after parents turn them out. Perhaps they were LGBTQ+ or had behavioral problems. But they were too young to be struggling on their own.

Here are some ideas when selecting items for the pantry box. I buy specials (e.g., Knorr rice at 10/$10, canned vegetables at 6/$5, half-price beef stew or BOGO). I bring a bag each week with makings for a full meal, a toiletry and/or toilet paper, which never lingers. Small toiletries and tissues are very useful. Many donate dentists' "goody bags."

I add evaporated milk if needed for a mix, instant oatmeal, or drinks like cocoa. It's inexpensive with store specials, digital coupons, etc., so I only spend a bit extra for the pantry. Although some people say drinks like cocoa, tea and flavored water are luxuries, a chocolate syrup special I contributed went fast! If herbal and other teas are on sale ($3 or less), I buy a few and add one on most weeks.

The most important things to remember are to think like a recipient when making choices, and **do not donate anything perishable, outdated, or in breakable containers.** Please let the SJ Team know if you have other tips.

Finally, we really need someone in the area who could check at least once a week between services and replenish items from the little red wagon or orange bins.