

Focusing on Worship

Meeting Minutes
May 31, 1-3 PM, Applied Research Center, Oakland

Opening:

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM on Sunday, May 31, 2009 by Lisa Fry. Richard Stromer lit our chalice and started us off with an opening reading. Jay Roller then led us in singing *Spirit of Life*.

Present:

Lisa Fry, Jay Roller, David Fry, Darlene Pagano, Sharon Slaton, Peter Hand, Kate Hand, Richard Stromer, Judith Heller, Debra Temple, Elizabeth Keir, Bill Pezick, and Bob Hood.

A. Discussion of Agenda

Several items were added to the agenda: time to discuss the need to plan for Religious Education, Social Justice, agenda for the next meeting, and developing a mission/vision for our community. In addition, we added time to report on District Assembly and time for announcements.

B. Agenda

Scheduling Meeting with Cilla: Lisa Fry asked for input on dates that would work for rescheduling a meeting with Cilla Raughley, the PCD District Executive. We came up with a couple of dates and will see if any of these work for Cilla. Our first choice is Sunday, August 2. Alternates include Aug. 23 & 30. We also decided we should invite Cilla to attend one of our worship services.

501(c)(3) Progress: David Fry reported that he had hand-carried our Articles of Incorporation to the Secretary of State office in San Francisco. We expect to get our official copies of the approved and dated Articles back this week. It was also noted that the Nonprofit Committee (Jody Savage, Bill Pezick, Peter Hand, David Fry, Ruby Reay, and Lisa Fry) met to assure consistency in the documents and to answer questions arising from the tax-exempt forms.

District Assembly Reports: Darlene, Bob Hood, David and Lisa all affirmed the benefit of attending District Assembly and spoke about a few of the workshops each attended. Darlene spoke about meeting with the Rev. Chris Bell, Santa Rosa, to ask if he would be open to doing his workshop for our community and his positive response to the idea. Darlene spoke about needing to include Denominational Affairs in our structure.

Being Fair Share: Bob Hood stressed he hopes we will be a Fair Share congregation by paying our full dues to both PCD and the UUA. Several others affirmed this desire. The cost per year for both right now is \$79/member.

Religious Education: We talked about wanting to begin offering RE as soon as it is possible, with no particular date yet set. Several good free curricula are available for us to use, including Tapestry of Our Faith. Richard has taught the adult level of this class and highly recommends it. In addition, we recognized that providing RE is a priority for small congregations – and ours, in

particular. It was pointed out that often the first paid staff person for a small congregation is a Direction of Religious Education (DRE) or teacher(s).

Mission/Vision: We briefly talked about the need to set a time for the larger community to talk about who we are and what we want from this community. It was noted that such a statement should be considered dynamic and should be reviewed (and possibly revised) on a regular basis.

Developing a Church Calendar: It was mentioned that we need to establish a calendar that includes such things as reviewing the mission, reconsidering our bylaws, etc. The Board will take on that task

Extended Discussion on Worship: Richard led us through an exercise to help us think about what worship means to us. We then discussed what elements we feel are critical for high quality worship. Richard and the worship committee will put together a basic structure that assures those elements are included in a balanced way. This tool will also make developing a service much easier for worship leaders – and provide consistency for the community.

Several people spoke about the need to have our services more often. This was for our own spiritual nourishment and to help us grow our community. After some discussion, the group voted to begin having two services a month starting in September of this year. That will require more worship leaders (probably 16). This allows for 2 leaders at each service or 4 people per month. Including those who expressed an interest in worship planning on our survey and several more people who volunteered at this meeting, we are well on our way to that number. Having enough trained leaders will make it so no one person will be in the pulpit more than 3 (or 4) times a year.

We also decided that we want to include children in the first 15 minutes or so of each service. To do that well, we need people willing to help create that portion of the service with the assigned worship leaders. That part of the service should further the theme set by the leaders using a story and/or music that will engage the children (and adults). Several people at the meeting volunteered to help with this task, but more are welcome.

We also briefly discussed a worship calendar and whether we want to include some of the rituals that are common in UU churches (tolling of the bells, flower communion, solstice celebration, e.g.). The worship committee will address this further, but it was decided that such rituals might best be a part of a service rather than the whole theme of a service.

Richard and Sharon Slaton will lead our July worship. We do not have leaders scheduled beyond July, but Richard will begin working on the worship calendar. Richard will send out an email again inviting people to participate in a training for new worship leaders, given that several people present would like to have that training.

Announcements: Darlene will investigate the possibility of us joining several other UU congregations (including Palo Alto) at a family camp (weekend retreat) at Bass Lake near Yosemite. Darlene, Kate & Peter Hand, and Bob Hood highly recommended the PCD Leadership School. Bob noted we are probably not eligible to send anyone to the weeklong school until we are an official congregation.

C. Agenda for Next Meeting

We hope to meet on both Aug. 2 and Aug. 23. One meeting, hopefully, will be with Cilla. The other will be spent developing a better sense of who we are (vision/mission). The point of this is not to come up with a florid statement, but with a better idea of the direction we plan to take.

Adjournment:

After thanking Darlene for providing the meeting space for us, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM. We stood in a circle and Jay led us in song. Richard then shared a closing reading.

Minutes submitted by: Lisa Fry, June 2, 2009