

**First Unitarian Society of Ithaca  
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes  
August 17, 2022**

Vice-President Therese O'Connor called the annual Board retreat to order at 6:00pm on Wednesday, August 17th, 2022. The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) occurred within the retreat.

**Trustees Present:**

Don Barber (President), Valerie Graves (Clerk), Dick Kurtz, Nancy Miller, Margaret Nichols, Therese O'Connor (Vice President), and Walt Peck (Treasurer, ex officio).

**Trustees Absent:**

None

**FUSIT Members & Guests:**

John Gaines, Rod Howe, joAnn Kowaski, Emily Richards, Michelle Waffner.

**Handouts:**

- Personnel Committee Appointment
- Congregational Life Offers
- Treasurer Report
- Social Media Usage Policy
- Digital Communication Guidelines
- Database Communication Policy

## **Agenda Item # 1: Consent Agenda**

**Consent Agenda Items:**

- Personnel Committee Appointment
- Congregational Life Offers
- Treasurer Report
- Social Media Usage Policy
- Digital Communication Guidelines
- Database Communication Policy

**Motion:** A motion was made by Don Barber and seconded by Therese O'Connor to approve the Consent Agenda Items.

**The motion passed.**

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**Resolutions and handouts:**

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Resolved, the Board of Trustees hereby appoints Carolyn Emerick to a 3 year term on the Personnel Committee

Email announcing interest:

Hi Don,

I have reviewed the Personnel Committee charge(s) document that Fred Balfour sent me and feel that my commitment to and appreciation of FUSIT and its staff will benefit this committee. I believe that my problem solving, listening, and writing skills will contribute to the committee's work. I recognize the importance of maintaining a vibrant and healthy atmosphere for the staff and members of FUSIT in order for the community to thrive.

I hope you and the board will consider me as a candidate for membership on the Personnel Committee.

Thank you,

Carolyn Emerick

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Resolved, the Board of Trustees hereby directs the President to sign job offer letters to Emily Richards for the position of Director of Congregational Life and Rev. Peaches Gillette for the position of Associate Directors of Congregational Life and amended Pastoral Care contract with Rev. Janet Shortall to include four (4) sermons per year

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## **Social Media Usage**

FUSIT currently maintains an external Facebook page in order to communicate important information to our congregants and help to reach new members or attendees. In addition, we have an internal Facebook page where congregants can communicate church activities to others within the FUSIT community.

### **External Facebook Page**

The external Facebook page is maintained by an assigned volunteer, and the information is supplemented by the DRE and Congregational Administrator. These

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three individuals are the only ones able to create new posts; however, anyone reading the page is able to post a comment.

- Items communicated must be relevant to the life of the congregation, and help the congregation live into its mission and vision. These posts may include announcements of upcoming worship services, FUSIT events, UUA events, content from the Soul Matters curriculum, and local social justice events.
- All comments will be moderated at least once a day, and any content that does not comply with the [Digital Communications Guidelines](#) will be removed.

### Internal Facebook Page

- The internal Facebook page is a place for congregants to communicate directly with other congregants.
- FUSIT members and friends may request access to this page through Facebook.
- ~~Access is approved and posts are moderated by assigned appointees.~~ Access and posts are approved by assigned moderators.
- Once an individual has been granted access to the internal Facebook page, they are able to post information, with prior approval, about activities of interest to the FUSIT community, including FUSIT events, social justice activities, etc.
- Individuals can comment on posts of others. But this is not a place for ~~ongoing discussions~~ debate.
- All posting and commenting must comply with the [Digital Communication Guidelines](#). Noncompliant posts will be removed, and the person posting them will be notified. A person who persists in posting inappropriate content may be denied further access.

FUSIT has the right to delete any inappropriate content from social media pages, as listed in the FUSIT Digital Communications Guidelines and Facebook policies.

Monitors will be designated by the Operations Administration Team.

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## Digital Communications Guidelines

### Purpose

To establish healthy boundaries and accountability with regard to the official digital communication and communication channels for both internal and external communication at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca.

### Our Covenant

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca adopts a covenant to sustain our commitment to each other, affirm our connections when we struggle, and form the foundation of our respectful relationships with each other and the world. As we communicate digitally, we strive to maintain these promises.

We covenant to:

Be together in community, guided by love and respect.

Be open, friendly, and welcoming to all.

Be engaged in congregational life.

Communicate compassionately, directly, and honestly.

Listen deeply and kindly to each other.

Believe in others' best intentions.

Support and inspire each other's quest for truth and meaning

Acknowledge, respect, and value our differences.

Work to serve our community's shared goals.

### General Information about Digital Communications

We are now communicating digitally in a number of different ways including email, Facebook, listservs, and Twitter. Before engaging in any digital communication, please note:

1. Interactions in the virtual world are visible to all, are not confidential, and may be shared or re-posted to others.
2. In the virtual world, healthy boundary practices must be adhered to, as they are in the physical world.
3. Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse/neglect/exploitation of others apply in the virtual world, as they do in the physical world.

4. It is never advisable to post when under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

### **Recommendations for the Use of Digital Communications**

1. Digital communications can be an appropriate and effective means of communicating basic factual information, such as the time of an event, agenda for a meeting, or the text of a document.
2. They are generally not an appropriate communication method for matters that are pastorally or legally sensitive, emotionally charged, or require extensive conversation.
3. If a message is longer than a couple of paragraphs, then the matter might more properly be addressed via live conversation.
4. Humor and sarcasm can be easily misinterpreted in social media.
5. Take time to consider the ramifications of a message before clicking on the "send" button.

### **Unacceptable Activities**

All digital communications should be friendly, kind, and safe. Anyone failing to maintain that friendly spirit will be removed from further participation by the appointed monitor. Opinions are welcome, but nastiness is not. Some activities that are prohibited:

1. Trolling - posting controversial messages aimed specifically at generating controversy and dishonest discussion.
2. Mail bombing - inundating the list with many messages.
3. Signing up someone else to a listserv, without their knowledge or consent.
4. Flaming - sending angry email messages to others.
5. Inappropriate adult material or links (URL's) that lead to such material. Remember that our sites are open to all of our members, including young adults and minors.
6. Abuse of service (hacking) - any deliberate action by a list member that damages the computer system that manages the list or the computer systems of other list members.
7. Messages or posts which are not in alignment with the principles of our faith.

### **Harmful Digital Communications Act (HDCA) 2015**

In addition to the information above, the HDCA has 10 communication principles which say a digital communication should not:

1. disclose sensitive personal facts about a person
2. be threatening, intimidating or menacing
3. be grossly offensive
4. be obscene or indecent
5. be used to harass a person
6. make a false allegation
7. break confidences
8. incite or encourage anyone to send a deliberately harmful message
9. incite or encourage a person to harm themselves or commit suicide
10. denigrate a person's color, race, ethnic or national origins, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

Any digital communication between church members or friends of FUSIT should follow these recommendations and be mindful of our covenant. Anyone who experiences a member acting ~~out of covenant~~, **disrespectfully**, causing serious offenses that cannot be settled between them, is encouraged to report such activities to the Healthy Congregation Team, who will work toward resolving the issues.

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## Database Communication

The FUSIT database (currently Breeze) can be used for member communication in a number of ways outlined below. All communication through Breeze must follow the [Digital Communication Guidelines](#) and align with our covenant.

### Breeze Communication Methods

1. **Direct individual communication:** Individuals can be looked up in Breeze to find their email address or phone number in order to communicate directly with them. Contact information should never be shared outside of the FUSIT community.
2. **Through Tags:** Each team, committee and group has a "tag" in Breeze that lists all the group members. This allows for an easy way to contact all the members of a particular group. To access the tags: sign in to your Breeze account (if you do not know how to do this, contact [office@uithaca.org](mailto:office@uithaca.org)),

click on “tags”, click on the name of the group you are looking for and click on “email people”. This will allow you to email the entire group and should only be used to communicate information that pertains directly to that group.

3. **Through the listserv:** The listserv was created to have a place for FUSIT congregants to communicate about subjects that may be of interest to many, but are outside the scope of the other communications modes (including the internal Facebook page and Breeze tags). This can include information about events that are outside of FUSIT, request for advice, solicitation of contractor suggestions, etc.

a. Individuals must sign up for the listserv through the office. An email will be sent to the full congregation every 6 months to remind people about the listserv and to solicit signups. People can sign up through [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org) or the Wednesday Weekly Announce at any time.

b. The listserv will be moderated by an appointed person(s). Anyone sending messages that are outside of the FUSIT covenant or Digital Communications Guidelines will be reminded of the guidelines. If the inappropriate posting continues, the person will have their Breeze emailing abilities revoked for a period of time to be determined by the moderator in consultation with the Operations Administration Team.

c. After signing up, people will be sent information on how to access the listserv.

d. If someone thinks that there is listserv communication that is outside of the FUSIT covenant and/or the Digital Communication Guidelines, they should contact the listserv moderator.

4. **To the full list:** Users of Breeze have entrusted their email addresses to the list with the understanding that their privacy will be respected. The full Breeze list includes all FUSIT members, friends, and visitors. Emails to the entire list should only be sent through the Congregational Administrator. This is to help ensure that list members are not inundated with emails and that all emails are appropriate for the full list. Email [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org) to request to have an email sent to the entire list. ~~(Please note, most items for the full list are best to be put into the Wednesday Weekly Announce. The deadline to submit items is Monday at noon.)~~ The Administrator will consult with the Operations Administration Team when the content of a given email

may not be appropriate for this list. Please note, most items for the full list are best to be put into the Wednesday Weekly Announce. The deadline to submit items is Monday at noon.

If someone thinks that any communication through Breeze ~~is outside of the FUSIT covenant and/or the Digital Communication Guidelines,~~ **is not in accord with the Digital Communication Guidelines**, they should contact the Operations Administration Team. We aim to provide safe and healthy modes of communication in order to build community and dispense important information.

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