

**First Unitarian Society of Ithaca  
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes  
December 21, 2022**

Don Barber (President) called the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:32 pm on Wednesday, December 21, 2022.

**Trustees Present:** Don Barber (President), Valerie Graves (Clerk), Dick Kurtz, Margaret Nichols, Nancy Miller, Therese O'Connor (Vice-President), Walt Peck (Treasurer)

**Trustees Absent:** None

**FUSIT Members & Guests:** Elizabeth Bixler, Hans Fleishmann, John Gaines, Emily Richards, Sue Roenke, Barbara Shew, Michelle Waffner

**Handouts:**

- [Proposed Amended Public Witness Policy](#)
- [Policy for Memorial Services at FUSIT tao\(1\).docx](#)
- [Ministry Evaluation](#)
- [Fall Open Question Summary](#)
- [Copy of Fall 2022 Open Question CODED Response Spreadsheet.xlsx](#)
- [Team and Committee Reports Folder](#)

## **Agenda Item # 1: Welcome and Chalice Lighting**

Walt Peck lit the chalice and Therese O'Connor read a selection.

## **Agenda Item # 2: Congregational Communication Period**

There were no issues raised.

## **Agenda Item # 3: Changes to Agenda**

After the Vision of Ministry process agenda item the Memorial Policy will be discussed for 10 minutes, pushing the meeting to 8:15 PM

## **Agenda Item #4: Visioning Question**

What is FUSIT's purpose?

## Responses:

- To offer a space for religiously unaffiliated people to find a spiritual home.
- To continue our traditions and keep the momentum going.
- To continue to learn and broaden our religious, spiritual and community perspectives.
- To be a mechanism, physical place, organization, for people who are like minded to get together to grow and help others grow. For individuals and collective groups to go out in the community to do something helpful.
- To sustain a community of free thinkers and represent that group locally and as far into the community as possible.
- About a year ago, the 8th principle movement came here and members of the congregation followed the steps for public witness. Public witness was created when people wanted the church to support the New York state health act. The tradition of having the church associated with action in the community is an important one.
- A place where people can come together to learn and find support amongst themselves and then broadly engage the broader community.
- Anti racism work is starting to spread out to the community and that is an important church function.
- To be the home of liberal/free thinking religion. To be an open community - a place for people to come where they are not connected to a religious denomination. Whatever we come up with has to be simple.
- The point about a precise statement is an important one.
- FUSIT is not just a physical space - FUSIT could continue without the building. As stated in a Jack Taylor sermon - "we walk backwards into the future." Unlike a vision statement, when discerning our purpose the past has an important role. The purpose or the organization is the largest bowl in the nested bowls of partnership governance and the bowl to which the Board reports. After having read FUSIT history and had 4 decades with FUSIT, the seven/eight principles have been a time tested pathway for our society. Over the long haul, have strived to exemplify the principles in the community. Living out values through individual and collective actions. Our purpose is to live into UUA principles.
- To welcome people who are not members of mainstream religion - or broadened that to being a welcoming space for people who do not fit into mainstream categories. To stand for the people who are not the majority.
- The congregation has lost a lot of folks in the last few years - a lot of pillars in the community have died. The church can welcome all sorts of folks, but should also provide them with continuity. The good work people do is remembered. Our purpose is to pass the good work along.
- To pass the light on.
- Young people who have grown up in the church have completely stopped engaging. Why isn't there more to capture their interests? It is an ongoing challenge - young people are not going to church anymore - what purpose speaks to younger people?

- There were lots of young people at the service on Sunday the 18th for the pageant.
- How do we keep them coming back? The church must continue to engage and embrace everyone, even younger people.

Determining next months visioning question:

- What can the church be doing that benefits the community? The Babies first program is needed and it isn't that much work. What other ideas are there that can also take advantage of the space the church owns. Could it be something like loaves and fishes?
- Something like the recycle sale - something that has the capacity to involve people and help the community.
- Will the recycle sale be In person?  
Response: The church would need volunteers to have it in person. All the tables and racks were sold.
- Work with the homeless community would be amazing for hte community.
- The visioning question could be: what can we do as a community that is more visible and year round?
- Another question idea - what is important to you other than the Sunday Service?
- Long ago there was a decision that there would be a separation between what FUSIT does and what the social justice council (SJC) does - should that stay separate, or should social justice work be brought back into FUSIT?
- SJC as an affinity group rather than integral to the church, because it was considered improper for the church to take a political stance. It is probably not appropriate to back candidates, but the church can take a stance on political issues.
- It would be interesting to find out what other churches do. History is also important. There was no separation in Dick Gilbert's time. He was very politically active, which made it hard for him in the congregation. Jack Taylor was also politically active and it was hard for him. It is hard to make political stands in a divided congregation or climate.
- It is hard to get a lot of free thinkers to agree on anything. And stances can be exclusive - can someone be a member of the community if they do not agree?
- But we make political stances all the time - we display a pride flag, and signs for Black Lives Matter (BLM).
- Given that social justice is an issue, how can the church reimagine social justice work?
- The purpose is to help people come in and feel they belong here.

**Action Item:**

Don Barber will ask Renee Rutchotzke of the UUA to provide input on social justice work in UUA churches ahead of the Board meeting next month.



- This month the focus is on the advocacy center, with a shared plate, a table at coffee hour, a related RE activity, and some speakers for matters of our lives. This is a way to

include other organizations in some of the things the church already does. What does it look like when we focus attention on one organization for a period of time?

- The church needs to find a way to tie in people who have the time and interest to do things that would help the community.

## Agenda Item #5: Consent Agenda

### Consent agenda items:

-  Board Meeting Minutes 111622
-  Treasurer's Report,. December 2022.docx

**Motion:** A motion was made by Don Barber and seconded by Therese O'Connor to approve the consent agenda items.

**The motion passed.**

## Agenda Item # 6: Monitoring Function - Team and Committee Reports, MVT and OAT

### Highlights:

- The Governance Committee (GovCo) reviewed policies to determine what should be updated with the adjusted governance structure. The updates are in the discussion folder. Board members should look them over so that they can be moved next month.
- The Board would like to congratulate Michelle Waffner, church administrator, on creating a manual for her position.
- Rentals are taking up more of the administrator's time. Church rooms are being used 40-50 times a month. All the activities are on the events tab in breeze.
- The Team Leadership Council (TLC) had great engagement from all participants.
- The Way Forward plan has been updated (related to reopening during and after the pandemic). Hopefully the group is done meeting.

### Discussion:

- The Board has never received a report from the Transition Team (TT) or the Ministry Fulfillment Committee (MFC). Do those groups have a written charge? They are not moving into a role that some of us expected.
- They were informed by email and they were not given a role. The transition team is available, but it depends on the needs of the minister(s). When the Transition Team was contacted about job descriptions for the new ministry positions, that was the first time they thought about doing something as a transition team.
- Is there any agreement about what they should be doing going forward?

- It was mentioned at their last meeting that people were surprised they were not meeting with the congregational life team more often. The TT agreed they would ask if more meetings were needed.
- The TT didn't realize, and it wasn't communicated to them, that the transitional team was important after the congregational life team was in place. Is there any opposition to the transitional team being a sounding board for the congregational life team.
- The reservation is for the congregational life team to have to talk to too many entities - they also have to meet with the Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) and the Operations and Administrative Team (OAT).
- I think the issue is: what does the congregational life team need?
- This would be creating bureaucracy, but not creating power. Meetings with the transition team could be a place to talk in a confidential way. With three people on the congregational life team it might be more complicated.
- The TT can help find where the holes are in this new system. How to take what we have created and create some glue, some communication, and clarity.
- If there are holes, they should be discussed at the retreat in January. Previously, the TT was a support structure. Something to be used if needed but not forced on anyone. The Congregational Life Team has MVT, OAT, and the Board, but they might want to talk and get a candid response. However, it isn't a serious issue.
- The personnel committee and OAT both interact with TT - OAT supervises staff and does reviews - the charge is clear. The responsibilities of the TT are not clear. From the perspective of personnel, which is trying to write job descriptions, TT is expected to look at the draft job descriptions. Personnel only had the spreadsheet from MFC to work with. The TT will talk to people in positions to make sure the descriptions are accurate.
- The TT moved from a committee to a team, so is it under MVT?
- The TT doesn't fit in the organizational structure.
- The personnel committee knows how to get the information for the job descriptions and if it doesn't exist they can work with the players involved to compile it and create it.
- At the last meeting the TT expressed a lack of clarity between the personnel and TT roles.
- There is now enough information to go back and talk to them.

**Other Highlights:**

- OAT report - on bullet number four, a meeting with the care team was mentioned. The care team was listed as working on pastoral care - those needs should be addressed between Rev. Peaches Gillette and Rev. Janet Shortall. It is not part of the care team role to handle pastoral care. And the care team is under MVT not OAT.

**Other Highlights:**

- Emily Richards was congratulated on her acceptance into a Masters of divinity program at Starr King School for the Ministry.

- In the OAT report there are comments written in that can be discussed at the January retreat.

## **Agenda Item #7: Open Questions Fall Report**

The fall Open Question: “What would make FUSIT more relevant to your life or the lives of those in your community?” received 60 responses, mostly centered around Sunday services rather than the work of the church as a whole. Some responses came from small groups who spoke with one voice but were recorded multiple times for the number of people in agreement. Other answers highlighted diversity through action, the need for more social and holiday events, the importance of intellectual pursuits and learning, and spiritual practices from other religions. There were no surprising answers, but the answers may not have answered the question.

### **Discussion:**

- “Matters of our lives” has been reinstated, with some parameters.
- In the future, the question could have more information about what the Board is looking for.
- The question could have more specific wording
- It was not disappointing to hear that the Sunday service was a point of focus - it is good to know that what happens on Sunday morning is important.
- But the Sunday service accounted for 12 out of the 60 answers.
- Open questions are meant to be open and broad to offer an opportunity to hear what is on the minds of the congregation.
- The summary was not distributed to the congregation.
- It was great to hear ideas about expanding programming, and that social justice is something people want to be involved in.
- The Church has done a lot of things on the list already.
- The Board needs to figure out what answers they want to get and then write the right question to get those answers.
- The answers came in just as things were starting back up and much of the things people are interested in are happening. It is good to know the staff and MVT is in sync with the congregation.

The winter Open Question needs to be developed. MVT would like to help. Everyone should work on ideas for the next board meeting.

### **Action Item:**

Valerie Graves will get the fall Open Question summary to Michelle Waffner for inclusion in the weekly announce, and will write a piece for the newsletter by January 18th with an update on FUSIT events that are inline with the open question responses.

## **Agenda Item # 9: Vision of Ministry Process**

The Board needs to develop a process for the creation of the next Vision of Ministry (VoM) so that teams submitting ideas for the budget for the next church year can consider the VoM as they plan.

### **Action Item:**

Nancy Miller will bring some past examples of the VoM to MVT for consideration and to give some context.

### **Action Item:**

Ad Hoc committee: Don Barber, Nancy Miller, Therese O'Connor and Emily Richards agree to work on the VoM.

## **Agenda Item # 10: Memorial Policy Discussion**

The Memorial information from Michelle Waffner was edited to read like a policy and added to the shared discussion folder for consideration. A lot of detail was removed from the procedure that Michelle will still use for a handbook.

### **Discussion:**

- Under the fee structure it states that TLC would appoint long standing members
- It is best not to include names in a policy.
- MVT or OAT should hold that responsibility.
- It should be MVT.

The change was made to the Memorial Service Policy document.

- It states that there are certain things OAT looks at - what are those things?  
Response: Pricing, specifically.
- The price information is probably old and needs to be updated. For the volunteers for baked goods - there should be a cost associated with service.
- The memorial service coordinators should be asked to see if they are willing to provide baked goods and service for non-fusit members.
- The service can be purchased for \$50.
- There is a cost of the service, but it is not available outside of FUSIT.
- That just needs to be stated clearly  
Response: It is stated in the policy.
- The policy can be adopted once it is updated by OAT.

## Agenda Item # 11: Ministry Evaluation Process

Andrew Quagliata, who does work in this area for For-Profit business leaders, passed along the Balanced Scorecard Strategic Planning Model by Jan Ronchetti. He suggested this model to evaluate all members in a similar framework. The strategic theme map on page 31 of the balanced scorecard is used to build evaluations for all leaders, staff and congregants. It also allows us to create plans for a 3-year span. It provides a consistent framework for the Board OAT, congressional life team, and all staff. But the development can be time consuming. Any good strategic planning is time consuming. It would be wonderful to incorporate work from the dream catchers in 2019 and 2020, before the pandemic. The concern is that there are different evaluations for all the different positions.

### Discussion:

- The Balanced Scorecard is voluminous - it could be simplified a little bit. It is important that everyone uses the same evaluation tool, that is clear.
- The process as described is a lot of work.
- The UUA tool from last year could be used for the three teams as a jumping off point and for the evaluations planned for January 25th. But it is just a starting place, not a perfect tool.

### Action Item:

Therese O'Connor will send the revised UUA tool to the Board over SLACK.

- As the Board works through this, MVT and OAT should be included in the evaluation development to know if it is relevant to their work.
- The UUA evaluation is a 15 question scoring list that could be done ahead of the January retreat. The form is entitled, church leadership assessment. It might be good as it is.
- OAT has not done much on evaluations. The job descriptions are not yet written. OAT is intimately aware of the technical core of the organization, but OAT will have some trouble evaluating congregational life because that is not involved in the technical core.
- This is a broader discussion and needs to be discussed in retreat. The Board created leadership over multiple teams, with one team having a supervisory role. In order for OAT to do this function, they need communication with all players on how things are going. But will be in big trouble if MVT is supervising some staff and OAT is supervising others.
- Does OAT evaluate everybody?  
Response: Yes.
- Doesn't Emily Richard evaluate the religious exploration assistant and child care coordinator?



Response: Yes, if there is a hierarchy within the staff, they evaluate those that answer to them.

- Who supervises Stephanie?
- The staff has been told about annual performance evaluations. Those evaluations are included in the general goals in the personnel manual. The manual says there is an annual evaluation, but it does not say how or with who. The personnel committee set up goals, but not the process.

Response: OAT evaluates Emily Richards, Peaches Gillette, Janet Shortall, Michelle Waffner and Stephanie Ortolano.

- Michelle is on OAT.
- Emily Richards holds two different roles, so will they meet with her twice?
- This will not be resolved tonight, but it is good to have the discussion on table. Evaluations will be discussed at retreat.
- What does it mean to supervise?
- There are two evaluation needs. For the immediate evaluations, the UUA tool could be used along with the job description. For the longer term evaluations, the Board can take on the project of coming up with a comprehensive evaluation process.
- At the retreat, evaluations of individuals can be discussed, but also a way to evaluate the governance and ministry model.
- When the structure is studied, the individual tasks might be more clear.
- It is super unclear who is supervising everyone - the staff just check in with each other.
- For the staff that has been holding things together, who just rolled with everything and made things happen, now the structure created more questions. Things are now more complicated.
- If OAT is supervising the staff, they need to have regular, direct contact. Otherwise they perform the evaluation with no information, but also with no guidance for what the staff are working on.

## **Agenda Item # 12: Leadership Retreat Agenda**

### **Discussion:**

- The leadership retreat agenda will be shared in Slack for the Board to review based on prior discussions.

## **Agenda Item # : Closing Words**

The closing words were read by Nancy Miller.

## **Meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.**

Minutes taken by Valerie Graves, 12/21/2022.

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## Resolutions and handouts:

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Date: December 19, 2022

Team/Committee Name: Treasurer's Report

Submitted by: Walt Peck

Monthly Report:

For a number of reasons, it has been a relatively quiet month. I secured an interest bearing 14-month Certificate of Deposit at the Tompkins Community Bank in order to garner some returns on the cash surplus in the operating accounts. By and large, income and expenses on the budget are within expectations, though there are a few areas of concern which may need to be addressed in January and around which discussions have already begun. At this point, we are looking forward to the upcoming budgetary season, at which a number of matters will be addressed more fully.

Respectfully submitted,  
Walt Peck

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### Public Witness Policy

GovCo is recommending the following language changes be made to this section 3.5.9 of Board Policy Book (this change can also be found in the Adapted BPB document in this Board 22-23 folder) D. Barber 12/12/22

#### **3.5.9 Public Witness**

As active members in the broader society, we are regularly faced with actions and opportunities that either align with our understanding of UU principles or run counter to them. This policy establishes the process to make FUSIT aware of the moral issue that society member(s) want recognized and addressed by official resolution of FUSIT membership or its elected leadership.

The process for creating FUSIT Public Witness is (for process flow graphic see Addendum 1):

1. The Proposal Form (see Addendum 2) must be submitted to the *BoardMinistry Visioning Team*, after having been sponsored by a ministry team.
2. The BoardMinistry Visioning Team will consider this proposal and do one of the following:
  - a. acknowledge the issue and seekprovide counseling on how to proceed
  - b. After due diligence and deliberation by the Board, it can decide that the public witness issue does not merit FUSIT action.assess that a response is needed and best handled by a public statement of the Ministry Visioning Team, Board Chair, or both
  - c. If the Board assess that a response is needed, it can determine if
    - i. The issue is best handled by a public statement of the Board Chair

OR

  - ii. if it assess that a broader democratic process is needed it shall,
    1. direct the proposing team to congregational education and discussion to raise awareness.
    2. After congregation education and discussion, the issue may be brought to the membership for an up or down vote on proposed action. assess that a broader democratic process is needed
3. In the case of a broader democratic process,
  - a. The Ministry Visioning Team brings the proposal to the attention of the Board
  - b. After due diligence and deliberation by the Board, it can decide that the public witness issue either
    - i. does not merit FUSIT action
    - ii. direct the proposing team to congregational education and discussion to raise awareness.
  - c. After congregation education and discussion, the issue may be brought to the membership for an up or down vote on proposed action.

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## **Proposal for Policy**

### **Memorial Services at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca**

A memorial service takes a great deal of planning and time on the part of the staff and volunteers to assist a family for a memorial service. It also involves costs of opening up a building, securing a minister's services, setting up a service or reception, using digital equipment, and cleaning up. With this in mind, the following policy should be used to guide the protocol for memorial services at FUSIT.

- **Scheduling**
  - People looking to hold memorials generally contact the Church Administrator.

- Church Administrator checks the building rental calendar and emails current or active minister(s) to check schedules to see if we can accommodate the request.
  - Church Administrator adds the building rental to the calendar and writes up a building space use agreement to be signed.
- **Fee structure.**
    - The most up to date rental rates are available on the website [Church - Rental Fees \(ithaca.ny.us\)](http://Church - Rental Fees (ithaca.ny.us)). Please see Building Use Policy.<sup>1</sup>
    - The fee for renting the sanctuary for a memorial service is \$150.00
      - This fee may be waived for current active or involved *members or congregants of record*. This is defined by either financial support (e.g., pledge) or time commitments (e.g., committees/teams).<sup>2</sup>
      - On an annual basis, the MVT will appoint 2-3 long-standing members to assist the Church administrator in determining whether a member has been active in time commitments. This is an ad-hoc, necessity-only group.
      - This fee may also be waived for current/active members of congregant's immediate family members. Immediate family includes spouse/partner and children.
      - This fee may also be waived if it poses a financial strain on the deceased's family members.
      - If there is a request to have a reception after a memorial service, the fee is \$50 to cover the cost of beverages, cookies, supplies, and sexton's time. This is handled by the Memorial Reception Team. Please see *Memorial Reception Team* below.
      - Non-FUSIT members/congregants do not receive the support of the Memorial Reception Team.
      - The fee for the minister for memorials is \$350 for outside or consulting ministers. This is paid directly to the minister.
      - The fee for current or acting FUSIT ministers \$300.00.
- **Members/Congregants**
    - There are several types of congregants and members. In order to facilitate the use of the church spaces, staff, and memorial team for memorial services please refer to the footnotes.<sup>2</sup>

- **Details of the service**
  - Current or active minister handles the details of the service with the requesting family.
  
- **Memorial Receptions Team (MRT)**
  - This team is a group of volunteers that help with the reception part of the memorial service. The MRT may help the requesting family to plan the reception if possible.
    - One of the team members contacts the family member whose information is provided by the Administrator or minister.
    - Often information regarding set-up needs to be communicated to the sexton.
    - The MRT historically has provided cookies and beverages, (punch, coffee, tea), condiments and supplies.
    - The MRT may help usher, monitor reception tables, and assist the family with clean up .
    - The MRT coordinates with the Sexton to turn off lights and secure the building.
  
- **Sound System requirements and procedures**

If a family requests the use FUSIT digital/projection equipment to live stream their event, the following applies:

  - Fee: \$75.00 for equipment set-up and use.
    - This fee may be waived for active members/congregants. <sup>2</sup>
  - Requesting family must hire a technical specialist from our list of people who are familiar with FUSIT equipment and procedures.
  - The technical specialist will charge their own fee depending on event circumstances. Both FUSIT members and non-members must pay this person.
  - The requesting family can provide their own technical person who must be oriented/trained on FUSIT equipment prior to the event. This training session is a \$50.00 fee and training must be documented by the trainer.
  
- **Sexton**
  - The family and/or Memorial Reception Team will clean up after the event. The Sexton will do any final clean-up and furniture arrangement.

**Notes:**

Weddings. These same policies and procedures apply to weddings, with the exception of the MRT which is not involved with weddings.

### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Per the Building Use Policy, “It is our intention that an active member of record shall not be expected to pay a building rental fee for a wedding, child dedication, funeral, or memorial service. Nor are they charged the ministerial fee.”

<sup>2</sup> Members/congregants of record: (a) An individual who signed the book has been currently active in the past 10 years (pledging annually, volunteering on a team, etc.)

(b) An individual who is an active congregant, i.e., who has not signed the book, but is active in pledging, volunteering time and energy). (c) A long-time member who signed the book and may have been a board member, committee chair, team leader, but has not been active/engaged in the past several years.

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### **Ministry Evaluation**

December 15, 2022

The Board performed a brief evaluation of itself has Spring. My guess is that with more resources and time devoted to thinking about evaluation of religious society’s leadership we can refine that process.

I connected with Andrew Quagliata who does work in this area for For-Profit business leaders. He passed along the Balanced Scorecard Strategic Planning Model paper by Jan Ronchetti to stimulate our thinking now that we have a new spiritual leader framework, as opposed to minister, and an expanded leadership model with MVT and OAT. (You can find that paper in 11/16/22 Board packet- Discussion Items- Board Evaluation Folder).

I find this model provides a comprehensive framework for the prospect of evaluating all branches/partners of FUSIT’s leadership in a common framework.

The Balanced Scorecard begins with an articulation of Vision and Purpose. The Vision is word picture of what FUSIT intends to become. Perhaps our discussion of this Fall's Open Question will provide some insight

The Purpose, which we have discussed before and is our visioning question for today, is the reason why FUSIT exists.

A SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Strengths) tabulation is a precursor to developing a Strategic Plan. You can find Dream Catcher Team data from 2019-2020 in the Final report folder within the Strategic Plan– SP Committee folder in Board 22-23 Google Drive.

Armed with this information, this model builds a Strategy Theme Map with four broad categories for capturing strategic planning data and ideas: Customers/Congregants, Learning & Growing (skills, culture, information systems), Internal Processes (which lead to congregant satisfaction), and Financial. A graphic can be found on page 27 of the article.

The Strategic Theme map (example on page 31) is then used to build Strategic Objectives and Performance Indicators for all four categories. These Objectives and Indicators provide Church leadership with overarching direction which transcends annual Vision of Ministry goals. And they provide a consistent framework for Board, OAT and MVT, Congregation Life and all staff, and Ministry teams to measure their impact on the collective ministry of FUSIT.

The article points out this can be a time-consuming process, but any strategic planning process is time consuming. The good news is that much of the work was coordinated and documented by the Dream Catcher Team in 2019-2020. The one wrinkle not included was operating in a pandemic world and the impact it has on community gathering.

My suspicion is that recognition of time involved is the reason FUSIT hasn't done a Strategic Plan yet. It is also the reason the Finance Committee asked us to do some visioning ahead of their financial planning work.

I welcome your thoughts on the Balanced Scorecard model as a tool for FUSIT and any other models for developing an evaluation structure for our expanded leadership model.

Sincerely,  
Don Barber

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Fall Open Question Summary

By Valerie Graves  
December, 2022

With about 60 congregants responding, finding ways to connect in meaningful ways through our Sunday Services emerged as the most common theme in answers to the fall Open Question: “What would make FUSIT more relevant to your life or the lives of those in your community?” Members of the community shared a desire to bring back “matters of our lives” a time when members of the congregation would speak about their lives and offer inspiration to others, and to make the joys and sorrows more personal by having individuals speak them rather than having them read by one person.

Another common theme was an interest in learning about other religions and religious practices, such as yoga, meditation, and tai chi. FUSIT currently hosts many groups and could share information about those hosted events more widely, where appropriate, so that all community members knew what was offered at the church building and annex.

Some other ways to make FUSIT more relevant to our congregation, and the community, according to individuals’ answers, included social justice work with diverse groups in the area; having more social events that are fun and playful; and offering opportunities for learning and intellectual pursuits.

~~The Board will continue to take responses to the fall open question and compile them.~~ Through Open Questions, the Board works to plan the Vision of Ministry for the coming year, and the answers also help inform the current direction of the organization. The Board expressed gratitude for all who responded to the fall Open Question ~~thus far.~~