

**MidAmerica Region, UUA**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**August 5, 2020**  
**Approved September 2, 2020**

**Call to Order**

7:30pm EDT: Meeting called to order. Opening reading by Rae Jane, followed by check-ins.

**Approval of Minutes**

Dorit moves to approve July minutes with spelling of Autumn's name corrected. Autumn seconds. Approved unanimously.

**Discussion of Group Read**

Planned a schedule for reading and discussing *Widening the Circle*. The plan is to cover two chapters per monthly meeting. September's meeting will cover the "Trends" and "Theology" chapters. We will try to rotate who will lead the book discussion each month. David volunteers to lead the first discussion in September; Sharon volunteers if David is not available. David will order print copies of the book for Autumn and Rae Jane.

**Retreat Planning**

The consensus is that the board will not be holding an in-person retreat as originally planned. The decision to cancel accommodations needs to be made and communicated by September 10<sup>th</sup>, but we are making the call now. David will handle the cancellation of the retreat accommodations.

We still plan to reserve the date of Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> to hold a virtual retreat.

If it is feasible in coordination with the Nominating Team, we hope to approve new board members at the September meeting so that they can join the board at that virtual retreat.

At this time, we are still planning to hold a board meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup> as planned, but it may be shortened or canceled depending on what is planned for the retreat agenda on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

We discussed inviting Jessica York, UUA Director of Congregational Life, to join the virtual retreat.

The executive committee will start creating a tentative retreat agenda to review and identify any business that needs to be on the agenda for the regular October meeting.

**Regional Lead Report**

David reviewed staff position changes, including Andrew Zallar shifting into a new position that is designed to potentially integrate into the UUA, and Gretchen moving from ½ time to ¾ time. Both transitions are going well.

Lisa Presley is working on a virtual extended leadership experience program to continue the tradition of the Midwest Leadership School, which may remain as a permanent extension to the in-person experience after Midwest Leadership School is able to resume in-person activities.

David shared information about his possible upcoming military deployment, and shared information about the plan that exists to cover his duties in the event of an extended absence. The Director of Congregational Life or an appointee would be Acting Regional Lead in such a circumstance.

### **Integration of MidAmerica Region Staff with UUA**

Discussed the current state of staffing, including the fact that MidAmerica Region is the only region with staff that are not UUA employees. There are currently two staff members, Gretchen and Andrew, who are MidAmerica Region employees. David reports that they are already de-facto integrated with UUA staff.

The benefits of migrating those positions to become UUA employees would be to reduce the overhead of running separate payroll and benefits administration for just two staff members.

Such a change would largely be administrative, as the positions would still be in a co-employed status between MidAmerica Region and UUA, and would allow for consistency and a savings of approximately \$4000-\$6000 per year. From the MidAmerica Region accounting perspective, shared employment costs would move from the staffing line item to the UUA co-employment line item.

The earliest this could happen would be November 1<sup>st</sup>, but it could wait until next fiscal year.

David recommends making this staffing transition. The UUA would only need two weeks' notice to implement the staffing changes. David would like a sense by September of whether the board will want to move forward with this.

If the board chooses not to integrate staff with the UUA, then there are some pending staffing system changes that will need to be taken care of on our side.

Dorit asked about possible negative arguments against this change. The main possible argument seems to be that the current arrangement gives the region greater flexibility to determine staff roles in theory, but in practice those roles are already determined in cooperation between MidAmerica Region and UUA.

Sharon responds that there is not a large argument for keeping the positions as MidAmerica Region staff instead of UUA staff.

Rae Jane asked about the Payroll Protection Program, since MidAmerica Region had to apply for that separately from the UUA. The paperwork is being filed to have that grant forgiven.

There was a discussion about the future role of the MidAmerica Region board and the MidAmerica Region as an independent region. If staff is fully integrated with UUA, and a decision is made in the future to integrate finances, then there would need to be a discussion at that point as to whether there is still a role for a separate MidAmerica Region board. In either case, MidAmerica Region as a region would still exist, but it could look like all the other regions that do not have independent governance.

David also reports that the MidAmerica Region and UUA have received PPP grants, and that congregations have not lowered their giving so far as a result of the pandemic. Next year could be different; if so, salary reductions would be on the table before layoffs.

### **Closing**

Process observations, followed by closing words read by Dorit.

Next meeting September 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30pm EDT.

Meeting adjourned 9:02pm.