

General Assembly Planning Committee
September 13-16, 2017

Ila Klion, Tuli Patel, Debra Boyd, Rev. Jenn Gray, Oshara Messa, Chelsea Surfus, Denise Rimes, Elandria Williams (for some of the meeting)

Values Exercise by Tuli

- Top Three Shared Values
 - Justice
 - Compassion/Empathy
 - Integrity

Evaluation & Reports from GA 2017

One of the reports that isn't in the packet is from Sandy Weir. Jan will forward that. Sandy worked with CELSJR (Center for Ethical Living & Social Justice Renewal). May have asked for funds to travel the UbuntuGlobe around the Association.

- Concern about not being able to see the screen by people in scooters when the rest of the assembly stands. **So, going forward we will issue songbooks with scooters.**
- We almost doubled our feedback participation by sending reminder emails.

Intro to GAPC Mission Conversation by Denise

- Started this process in April
 - Begin with "what is the purpose" or "why did you agree to serve"
 - Is there anything missing from the list on page 8 of the packet.
 - Moving UU forward & out into the world so it isn't the best kept secret
 - Multiculturalism/doing the work
 - Justice
 - Interweaving of the work & community
 - Financial Sustainability
 - Components of individual drafts that people really liked:
 - Many years to come
 - Manifest spiritual community
 - Modeling beloved community
 - Create change, sustainability, joy,
 - Opportunities for change, joy, connection
 - Facilitate deeply grounded connections
 - Associational transformation
 - Common Faith
 - **Grounded in Unitarian Universalism, the General Assembly Planning Committee creates opportunities for intentional, transformative change towards beloved community.**

Worship Arts Team: Michelle Favreault

- How do we maintain relationship between WAT & GAPC?
- How does WAT select who is on stage for worship?
 - Quality
 - Representation
 - Location (funding reasons)
- How does collaboration work between religious professionals for worship?
- How did GA go?
 - It went. There are a lot of job & surprises. And, the scope of surprises is BIG. Which creates opportunity to create a solid table is important. The greatest challenge is how do we create collaboration to work through that. And, how do we ground that in our faith. We held the arc even as the last weeks and months passed before GA. The challenges come from the logistical concerns.
- What was the biggest surprise?
 - Some of the timing stuff. A lot of the logistic changing at the last minute. Flights were rebooked to make closing work. The timing surprises with the opening by the Co-Presidents. We found deeper understanding about roles and responsibilities in this change.
- What worked well?
 - The theological arc went well. What we want to hold for the spirit of the community. Regrets, disappointment, aspirations, welcome. We've had confessions services three years in a row without having to have a debate about the role of confession in our faith. People have responded to the depth of feeling in those services.
- Who is on WAT? Who is remaining? Who is coming on?
 - We've had a committee of about 6 folks. This last year we had almost all new folks. This year we are planning on a couple of leaving and a couple of folks coming on. A lot of attention is being paid to skills which includes administration and detail management. The committee wrote a lot more this year. The team became the designers. Some of the homilists wrote their pieces, but WAT wrote much of the rest.
 - Michelle
 - Alexis Capin
 - Todd Ekloff
 - Patrice CurtisByron
- Is there a plan for who will be Chair in Spokane?
 - Yes, we need someone to shadow, but I expect that person to be on the Committee.
- What are you thinking about the theme and worship?
 - We expect that the arc will be similar to prior years. Opening will center on celebration and All Are Called. Wednesday morning may be looking at hospitality through a possible multi-lingual service. Looking to involve RRT & Chaplains

involved in service Wednesday & Thursday. SLT All are Called is clear. Friday is about ritual at the table - may look like a ritual of sharing. Synergy is right of passage. Saturday morning will be a contrition service how we miss the mark and are all in this together. Sunday is about gratitude & we did this together. Julie Shaw will be managing SLT & Sunday morning.

- Elandria wants to remind us that all Spanish isn't the same Spanish and it has class overtones. And, we are looking to incorporate Islamic sources as well.
- Elandria shared about the desire to be able to be nimble.
 - That has been one of the challenges of this work in these times. That is one of the big meta-challenges of the needs of GA & the needs of spirit. We want to figure how to have the scripting of the worship services be later while maintaining the relationships & support/legal needs of the Assembly.
- What do you need from us?
 - Clarity. Because of the up ramping time we now know how to work better with Stephanie about the transition on Opening between the Board & worship. Also, when we find out about decisions after the fact. The relationship building with the President's office is encouraging.
- Shared Leadership & Best Practices?
 - We'll be looking at who is at the table & who is on the stage. How do we incorporate the Chaplain & RRT into the service? How do we understand vision & collaboration in the process?
- Banner Parade still needs to be ironed out based on prior experiences.

Board & Moderator

- There will be a special election in 2018 for Moderator for 2018/2019. Barb has agreed to run for that position. Someone can run by petition. They would need to have that completed by Feb 1. If there is a contested election, we'll need to plan for the expense & process for announcing the results.
- There will also be candidate(s) named for the regular Moderator election for 2019-2024.
- We are anticipating bylaw changes to support a co-leadership structure.
- There is more time in the General Sessions. We are envisioning a different way of doing that discernment. The Commission on Institutional Change will also be working on having large gathering discernments as well.
- We want good governance that speaks to our faith movement.
- Part of All Are Called is about how all of us need to be part of conversation about who are we, how do we engage, and what does that mean for our structure and bylaws. And, we need your help.
- Reduce the number and types of reports. We anticipate video reports for some of the reports, written for some, and in-person for others.
- Leon: Wants to be in conversation about how music can support the Board & Moderator on surfing the energy flow. We usually start that in April.
- Michelle & WAT will want to know the energy flow earlier.

- Some have reservations about the empty chair on stage. It didn't sit well for some people because of it harkening back to slavery times so that they could ensure that slaves were attending worship & was there to be imposing especially when it was empty.
- Ila: How is the Board doing?
 - This GA was the hardest GA I've ever been through. It is slightly overwhelming. Folks are coming in without knowledge. We want to do things right. People are moving & transitioning position. Barb had more complicated surgery than expected. We are planning on building in a different way. We came together in crisis & now the question is how do we stay together. We are trying to figure out what our role is & isn't. We want to be in accompaniment with the Committees & Congregations. Take the time to listen. The Board shouldn't & can't do it all. We rely on a lot of other people. We have to all be the bees together.
- October board meeting is going to be focused on how are we doing this work together. People there will be there & not just a casual observer. It will be a workshop time.
- CCCE: The board would like to know when should CCCE meet.
- Safety Teams: How do we construct a team of people 40 total for 2000 people with a planning team of 10. What does it mean, look like, feel like, what are restorative practices that the gathering will need. A lot was about how we hold each other. We are at the doors, at the stage, are the space. We are the people that interface with the police. We engaged with the attendees about how we are together. With witness, they are around the edges - how needs help, how to mediate conflict because it is not chaplain work, but mediation work. This is marshall & they are holding space for community safety. They can be called on when stuff is happening. We tried to get people who didn't have big roles. These folks sign-up onsite. A few people at each hotel. What do restorative practices look like is the most important aspect. A volunteer job with additional training. Need to provide designations. This is a recruited core of folks. The board & other leadership will be part of this, but not in an identified ways.
- Please be honest & tell us what we need to know. Don't leave stuff to fester.

Local Area Task Force Chair: Gaby

- Reviewed local ministers' letter
To Whom It May Concern,

We, the ministers and leaders of UU Churches in Kansas City, are gathered today to discuss the issue of racial division in Kansas City as it affects GA 2018. We are a heartfelt and intelligent people who are bravely preaching and living the moral voice into this community; a community that many of us chose because of the dire need for and creative potential for ministry in this area.

Kansas and Missouri are (and have always been) important players in the national political scene, considering specifically the events of Ferguson and Columbia, MO and the connections between Kansas' political leadership and the current presidential administration. We feel that GA's presence in Kansas City right now is actually timely, and an incredible

opportunity to do work in a city that badly needs the oxygen of organizers and thinkers to descend upon it for a week.

Of course we are all working in our own congregations about issues of whiteness, from all angles. We are not only thinking through how to create radical hospitality and counteract the microaggressions of whiteness, but are organizing to raise up the voices of those who are directly affected by these issues. Also, Rev. Kendyl and Rev. Rose are completely comfortable to ask for accountability with city officials in our communities to ensure the safety of UU's of color. We would be grateful for the chance to partner with CELSJR, as they clearly offered such a rare service to GA 2017, provided that the UUA is prepared to pay for this effort.

Further, with just six people in the room, we are closely linked to many organizations in our bi-state area. We are lead organizers or partnering with the Kansas People's Agenda, MORE2, Women of Color Makers LFK, the Kairos Center at Union Theological Seminary, The Poor People's Campaign, Kansas Interfaith Action, Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance, BLUU, The Dialogue Institute, the ACLU, NAACP Johnson Co Chapter, Stand Up KC, Aim 4 Peace, the Concerned Clergy Coalition and many more. We have been in close contact with Rev's. Molly Housh-Gordon, Sarah Ogelsby-Dunegan, Jonalu Johnstone, Judith Cady, and Jill Jarvis, as well as the Mid-America regional staff. We are, frankly, a powerhouse of solo female ministers on the front lines, and hope to be considered colleagues who are both doing innovative ministry *and* welcoming partnerships with other thinkers. In fact we are already feeling *grateful* for the accountability and support we have found so far in this planning process.

Warmly,
Rev. Kendyl Gibbons and Rev. Rose Schwab

- Started to send traveling chalice around the Region. There is a link on the homepage of Mid-America to request the GA chalice. To date, the chalice has visited 4 congregations.
- KC GA Planning 2018 has been established on Facebook. Currently has 78 local folks. Meetings & minutes/notes are scheduled & distributed here.
- Our next meeting is October 14th. We have been alternating meetings between the urban & suburban congregations. GA is providing an opportunity for the two congregations to reconnect.
- Banner registration was challenging so we are recasting that process
- I have not assigned volunteer posts in part because I've been waiting for theme.
- CELSJR is interested in working in Kansas City. And, the Committee is concerned about non-local folks driving that process.
- The Committee can work on making the experience more safe and manageable for people of color. Missouri has more small precincts than any other State other than Florida.

Prioritized Discussions:

- Scholarships: last year was successful & not sustainable. We have competing commitments and values. Breadth versus depth is always a consideration. There was a request from the Board to do fewer scholarship in larger amounts.

- Middle School Camp: The Committee has been interested in supporting UU identity development for middle school aged children at GA. In Columbus, the camp was capped at 25 and this year we had 50 children and there was still a waiting list. There were different expectations & understanding about the behavior and goals of the camp. The directors wanted children to be there for the full camp everyday & not drop in. We've also had challenges with coordinating about food.
- Hearing Loop: We have a commitment to accessibility. And, this is a competing piece with other financial commitments. As an accessibility initiative, the vendor says that you do the entire room. And, the cost is not in the wire so the cost is not reduced by limiting the space. **Propose that we continue to have the hearing loop - passed.**
- Meditation Room:
 - The prayer rugs were used for sleeping which is not respectful. Three competing needs: (a) people need a break space (b) people need a meditation space (c) people need a space for particular spiritual practice. **Propose: That we put a sign in the meditation room that says the room is for meditation, prayer, and silent reflection only, but that we not monitor and enforce that request. - passed.**
 - **If there are enough groups with enough interests & we have the space, then we could create a new room for religious & spiritual practices. - passed.**
- Chaplain Accessibility: **Going forward the chaplains will have a radio.**
- Evening Entertainment: **Proposal to having a single evening entertainment of a UU Dance.**

Director of GACS Staff Report

- Working on Finding Our Way Home, International Religious Leaders, and other UUA gatherings in addition to GA
- Staff
 - Don: 18 years, space, program, AV, onsite meeting requirements
 - Stacey: 17 years, works off site. Administrator, Registrar, All the statistics, posts stuff to website, liaison to the web team, was on the design team for this building. Met Don at Freshman Orientation at BU
 - Steve: Joined team 5 years ago. Exhibits & Housing. Currently working off-site in Florida with his partner who teaches at Simmons. Will work off-site until the beginning of December.
- Tim Byrnes has returned to 24 after the attack in New Orleans.
- Big fan of Susan Fredrick-Gray. She is encouraging and supportive of staff and is looking at mission as being at the heart of what she wants to do. Appreciate the shared leadership model that she is taking on.
- Jan is going to be on sabbatical for parts of October, November, December. And, had been named to the Board of the Living Legacy Project.
- We had the highest percent diversion from the landfill in New Orleans. 97%
- Jan is going to KC to get a signed contract for the convention center and further look into campus housing. The campus housing is looking to be around \$30.

- 2019 has signed contracts
- Providence: Wants signed contracts which is unusual this early out.
- 2021: RFT from Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Louisville, St. Louis.
- Staff trip to Kansas City is normally in December. Staff, Greening, CMI (AV), Patty Cameron for Accessibility. Can do a meeting with the local committee.
- The Local Team having an accessibility perspective is helpful.

Budget

- Reviewed the 2017 accounting
- Total loss of \$330,000 including \$240,000 in Board assigned expenses including \$210,000 in scholarships and administration for people of color and an additional \$30,000 for unplanned expenses of process observations
- This loss was covered by the GAPC reserves

Youth & Young Adult Ministries: Bart Frost & Jennica

- Youth Caucus: Jennica Hockett-Davis
- YA@GA: Annie Gonzalez:
- Y&YA of Color: Elizabeth Nguyen:
- 18% of attendees were youth or young adults. Typically 10%. We had 320 youth. 425 young adults.
- Shared space with UUSJC Activate and Grow were in our space.
- We also had local connections in our space
- Thrive Youth was successful. They had lunch for networking & used the Vice Moderator's suite
- The Office seeks support from the broader GA community to support youth & young adults.
- The office did \$9,000 in youth group grants.
- The YYA received over \$20,000 in donations from GA registrants to support youth.
- Want to create Jr. Sr. positions for young adults
- If we weren't fully funded, we would likely reduce volunteer positions, adult chaplains, connection coordinators, supplies.
- Considering a no-pre-site option, but bringing folks in early. If we had seniors in leadership, some of them graduate high school the week of GA. We need time to build trust. Pre-site builds trust and it makes GA real. If this goes forward, we will be intentional about maintaining a relationship between youth/young adults and the GAPC.

Deepening Our Covenant:

- Social Media Conduct Guidelines:
 - Speak with one voice
 - One person represents the Committee on social media.
 - Disagreements should be addressed in private with individual or committee

- Be responsive, not reactive, by checking in with the Committee
- **Will be adopted after Debra tidies language.**

ARAOMC Training

- Historically, GAPC has a 3 to 6 hour retreat at the September meeting.
- We have different experiences around ARAOMC training
- Having a Common Read will create a Common Vocabulary which is how we want to create that common vocabulary.
- We will add an ARAOMC piece to all our meetings including our zoom meetings.
- The consultant will be at our January meeting and stay for process observation. And, then continue working with us via zoom for the remainder of this year.
- Questions:
 - Is what we do white centered?
 - This is more open than much white centered space
 - We have a desire for perfection
 - How we do the work is very white centered. This serious business & this is how we do serious business. And, I participate in creating that structure.
 - There is a tension between we need to know right now & I can't tell you right now.
 - How do we create relationships with the Board & Administration if we were to shift away from a white centered approach?
 - Not just white, but class. Where do you see yourself.
 - The table only feels marginally less "white" than many of the other tables where I sit.
 - The PEX cards were helpful in making the Committee available for people without means to serve in the way it was handled in the past.
 - We are & we aren't like used to be. And, we aren't anywhere near where I would like us to be.
 - How do you feel about the way we currently function?
 - We need to acknowledge the holy - the extra in the room - that gives us the strength to continue.
 - There seems to be a change in the nature of this committee. Trying to make space for everyone at the table. How we create strength through engagement.
 - The way we function is relative. How held & supported do you feel by the committee. How do you center the voices from the margins become a problem especially for folks of color?
 - Maybe we can have chalice lighting & extinguishing. We will also have a moment of silence & possible sharing of gratitude.
 - How uncomfortable are you willing to be?
 - I am willing to be in discomfort as long as it is constructive and for the common good.

- I have practice with my universal translator and want to use it.
- I dislike open conflict. I struggle with severe restrictions.
- OK, with my own discomfort. Struggle more when I sense discomfort in others.
- I've been uncomfortable for as long as I have been a UU. And, I experience an openness to expressing my discomfort around the table. Unseen connections can happen and we need space for that at the table.
- I'm willing to be uncomfortable until I am required to be uncomfortable when everyone else around the table is comfortable. As long as everyone have some of their needs met some of the time.
- **Read Principle 1 of Salsa, Soul, and Spirit before the October zoom meeting.**

Task List Review:

- Reviewed the Accountability Group from Justice GA 2012
- Current list of historically & marginalized group and the professional groups
 - Professional
 - LREDA - Chelsea support from Tuli Patel
 - AUUA - Tuli Patel
 - UUMA - Ila Klion
 - UUMN - Leon Burke
 - Affinity / Constituency (provided space, information, access/voice to GAPC, some provided funds, onsite support, etc.)
 - BLUU - Oshara Meesha
 - Youth - Chelsea Surfus
 - Young Adults - Chelsea Surfus
 - DRUUMM - Tuli Patel, Oshara Meesha
 - Be sure to learn about how be engaged with individual caucuses
 - ARE - Debra Gray Boyd
 - TRUUST - Debra Gray Boyd/Ila Klion
 - Regional Leaders Group
 - EqUUal Access - Jenn Gray
 - How?
 - Try to find the GA Coordinator for each of those groups.
 - Build the relationship by establishing expectations.
 - Provide information/collect questions/requests
 - Report back to GAPC.
 - Imperative not to make up answers or make promises
 - Report back by Oct Zoom Meeting
- Groups that exist & report to GAPC
 - Chaplains - Jenn Gray
 - RRT - Jenn Gray

- Middle School Camp - Chelsea Surfus
- Childcare - Chelsea Surfus
- Social Media - Jenn Gray
- PDG - Debra Gray Boyd & Jenn Gray or Oshara Meesha
- Orientation - Ila Klion/+someone
- Witness - Ila Klion
- Feedback - Jenn Gray
- Evening Events -

Parking Lot

- Middle School Camp:
 - There is a goal in the local area for large family participation in GA 2017 and Mid-America canceled their large regional gathering to increase attendance
 - **Propose: We continue to have Middle School Camp. -passed**
 - **Propose: Change charge for camp from \$30 a day to \$55 a day per child to camp - passed**
 - **Propose: Middle School Camp will run Thursday through Saturday with drop-in daycare on Wednesday & Saturday offered by KiddieCorp - passed**

Evening Entertainment:

- Historically, we had a lot of evening entertainment. We have a request from GAMAP to just have a GA dance to create more spaciousness on the GRID.
- Kansas City has already become excited about some music possibilities.
- There are both money & person time to support it.
- There are a variety of opportunities regardless of the number of evening entertainment options
- **Proposed: We accept the proposal of GAMAP to only have one evening entertainment and that would be the multi-gen dance. - passed**
- Reducing the number of evening entertainment was about creating space.
- We generally link to the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Scholarships:

- Historically, the GAPC scholarships are up to a \$250 match of congregational support plus registration which is a total of close to \$900. People of color & first time attendees have historically
- More recently, GAPC has taken a breadth not depth.
- Elandria: We need attendees & delegates from all congregations. And, we need balance. Having a diversity
- And, we need to keep in mind that there is a mad rush when GA approaches. Having the deadline is challenging for some folks.
- There is a point system. Points for delegate, POC, first timer, etc.
- What would it look like for the Board & Administration to make the GAPC \$25,000 budget for scholarships.

- **Propose: Keep the scholarship line in the budget to \$25,000 - passed**
- **Propose: Work with Board & Administration to move toward closing the gap between last year & this year for sustainable funding of attendees. - passed**
- Elandria is open to making an ask for additional funds for scholarship around the Board table, and is open to having part of the Sunday morning collection go toward scholarships.
- Stewardship Development asked that Sunday Morning Collection go to BLUU instead of an outside group.
- Taking a percent of the Sunday Collection for scholarship undermines the position that Sunday morning is externally focused.
- Our dreams are larger than our budget. And, we can continue to work towards the dream.
- We need to create passion & compassion within the movement to support individuals who can't afford to be there.
- Elandria: You have to support movement within our own house.
- We need to work against the "generous donor who make it possible for this struggling person"
- **Propose: Increase \$20 increase to registration to fund a scholarship fund for people of color. -**
-

Budgeting:

- Raise Camp Registration from \$3,000 to \$6,000 based on the
- Propose Childcare to \$45 a day and the budget to \$5,000
- Propose that we increase the volunteer committee line to \$90,000 to support Safety Team that includes an addition 20 people in the volunteer corps
- Proposed raise chaplains to \$4,000 from \$3,000
- Questions:
 - Can we make cuts that are reasonable
 - Of course you need to prioritize your values
 - While we can't budget to use the reserves, you can create a budget that requires a larger attendance than you actually expect
- Increase registration by \$35
- Double scholarship
- Accept budget as amended (see separate budget document)

Local Area Coordinator for Spokane

- **Proposed that we accept recommendation of Stephanie Samson as Local Area Coordinator for GA 2019. -passed**

Spiritual Practices room

- **Oshara Meesha & Debra Gray Boyd will make a recommendation for the November meeting about how/if we are going to have a space for specific religious practices.**

CELSJR's interest in being involved in Kansas City & Spokane

- **Propose: Ila Klion will have a conversation with CELSJ and send a follow-up email -passed**

Review of Timeline:

- Oct 17; 1 EST; reach out to liaison & build relationship & report back.
- January meeting: 11th - 13th; packet information by Jan 2.

Debra Gray Boyd is going to to ARE.

Parking Lot:

- Spokane:
 - Update the Committee about the conversation about the partnership between the Board, Administration, & GAPC to close the gap for funding attendees at the Spokane.
 - Does Boston make sense for the September meeting
- October Call:
 - Safety Teams
 - Social Media

Respectfully Submitted,
Debra Gray Boyd