

The Fourth Universalist Society in the City of New York
Reverend Doctor Jonipher Kwong, Interim Senior Minister
Spencer Salzberg, President
Loretta Howard, Vice President



Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda – Wednesday February 14, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

2023 – 2024 Objectives:

- **Align our values in Fourth U's budget**
- **Celebrate and support our congregants, clergy and staff.**
- **Establish goals consistent with the Eighth Principle**

- I. Ingathering** **7:00 p.m.**
- A. Reflection / Chalice Lighting**
 - B. Unison Reading of Mission Statement**

Our mission is to build an inclusive, welcoming community that connects us to our spiritual centers and to one another, works to end systems of racism and other oppressions, and is grounded in reason, service, and love.

- II. Check-In** **7:10 p.m.**

- III. Approval of [Minutes \(January 10, 2024\)](#)** **7:20 p.m.**

- IV. Board Reports** **7:25 p.m.**
- A. [President's Report](#)**
 - B. [Executive Director's Report](#)**
 - C. [Treasurer's Report](#)**
 - D. [Minister's Report](#)**

- V. New Business** **7:45 p.m.**
- A. Revised Process for Board Reports**
 - B. Transition Team Report**
 - C. Ministerial Search Committee (5 to 7 volunteers?)**
 - D. Ministerial Search Nomination Period (March 3rd to March 31st)**
 - E. Notice of Ministerial Transition**
 - F. Settlement Handbook and Checklist**
 - G. Interim Period Progress Appraisal**

- VI. Old Business** **8:35 p.m.**
- A. 2024/ 2025 Board Slate**
 - B. Emergency Response Team (to be tabled until March)**
 - C. Start Up**

- VII. Comments, Announcements, and Other Business** **8:50 p.m.**
- A. Board Meeting – Wednesday March 13, 2024 – 7:00 p.m. (EST)**
 - B. Board Meeting – Wednesday April 10, 2024 – 7:00 p.m. (EST)**
 - C. Start Up Session – Saturday April 20, 2024 – 10:00 a.m. (EST)**

VIII. Acknowledgements and Appreciations

8:55 p.m.

IX. Executive Session

9:00 p.m.

X. Closing Words and Adjournment

9:15 p.m.

President's Report

President's Report

Spencer Salzberg

February 2024

Hello Team,

January 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting

I want to take a moment to thank and recognize Vice President Loretta and the Board for giving me the January 2024 Board of Trustees meeting off. There was lots of positive feedback about how the meeting went. Good job! Good teamwork!

Ministerial Search Committee

Our work to elect the Ministerial Search Committee has commenced. Reverend Jonipher provided us with useful resources to guide our congregation through the next year and a half. We're using them. These materials include a Settled Search Calendar, a Settlement Handbook, and a checklist. Thank you, Reverend for sharing the information and tools to allow us to move on to the next step of the ministerial search. We're on our way.

Additionally, Jim, Sheila, Carol and Loretta provided helpful information from the previous ministerial search. We will use the information and materials as we initiate this next search. The Board is editing and revising the draft insert for the order of service and for an email blast. We are editing a statement for me to read and I am fortunate to have terrific, helpful reviewers and editors. Thank you Liz, Loretta, Carol and Jim. We aim to kick the search for a search committee off on Sunday March 3. It will terminate on March 31st.

For those unfamiliar with this process, on March 3rd, the Board will announce that we're seeking nominations from our membership to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee for our next settled senior minister. We'll ask 4th U members to either nominate themselves or to nominate other members. Responsibilities of the Ministerial Search Committee include reviewing the search process handbook and schedule, meeting with 4th U members and groups and teams and RE to understand the qualities we seek in a minister, keeping the Board apprised, developing a benefits and compensation package, developing a job profile and conducting interviews.

2024/2025 Board Slate

I am delighted to hear Carol has volunteered to serve as President and that Jim will be our Vice President on July 1, 2024. We are fortunate to have such dedicated members. After July 1 2024, I will serve my last year on the Board as a Trustee-At-Large and step off in Spring 2025. I will support and endorse any of the current Trustees if they decide to serve again. Please don't forget we'll need to identify a Trustee to serve as a liaison to the Nominating Committee too.

Once our 2024 / 2025 slate is finalized and the congregation elects our next Board, I will schedule a transition meeting so the outgoing Trustees can connect with the incoming Trustees.

Chatroom Hackers

Although it isn't unexpected and it is an element of modern society, I'm still disappointed and saddened and sort of offended that our chat rooms have been attacked by hackers and hate speech. I'm so glad, though, that Sheila, Melanie, Brie and our tech crew are addressing this and that our members are attending a workshop on this. I hope that we'll hear about what they learn.

Executive Director's Report

February 2024 Report

Building - An interior wall was deteriorating in the downstairs bathroom closest to the gym, tiles were falling off the wall. I contacted Steven Garcia, contractor that performed the restorations on the church side of the building. When Steven assessed the damaged area, he determined that there was not a leak. The damage was caused by condensation gathering on the interior of the wall over the years and incorrect material in the wall. The wall has been repaired with the correct materials and waterproofing so this issue should not need to be addressed again.

I met with two potential vendors about an emergency PA system installed on the church side of the building. These are the same two vendors being considered by PCDS, our tenant, for installation of a PA system on the school side of the building. We all agree on which vendor to select for the work. I arranged a meeting with the vendor's sound engineer and Fourth U's sound engineer to see if the PA system could be integrated into our existing sound system. This would save money. Fortunately it looks like the two systems will work together. Next steps are our Fourth U's sound engineer contacting the manufacturer of our sound system to confirm specifics. After that, we'll hold a meeting with staff from church and school, vendor and sound engineer. This meeting will hopefully approve a final plan and design.

The design of an independent HVAC unit for the 3rd floor office on the school side of the building is almost complete. The goal is to have the design completed and have a cost estimate so that the work can be performed when the school is on spring break.

There was some minor plumbing repair work in the upstairs kitchen.

I've learned about a FEMA grant for not for profits that is to be used for security purposes. Other houses of worship have qualified for the grant and used the funds to install cameras and other emergency equipment. I am looking deeper into the grant to see if Fourth U qualifies for the program.

Events- I've been working with Purslane on marketing 160 Central Park West. We're continuing to work on the material available on The Knot and Wedding Wire website. There are 3 pages remaining to be built on the website and Purslane is finishing up a brochure. Next step is hosting an 'influencers' event to generate photos with the venue staged for an event. Also to launch the venue.

Warwick Retreat - We've received that contract for the Annual June Warwick Retreat, 6/7 - 6/9. We'll start promoting the retreat immediately to make sure that we meet the minimum numbers.

Finances - End of the Year documents have gone out. We're going to use available functions in Realm, our database, to simplify this process going forward. All payments from individual for any reason - pledge, donation, specific campaign, etc... will go thru Realm's 'Giving' module. This will both speed up the End of the Year process and help prevent any errors.

Based on the pledge payment as of 12/31/2023 we will be reaching out to members who have not made any payments on the pledge to date to gently remind them about their pledge.

It is time to start thinking about the FY 24/25 budget. Emails are going out this week to all staff, groups, teams, committees asking for the budget requests. Jon Arancio, Finance Chair, and I have gone over the timetable to complete the budget in time for it to be presented to the Board at the April board meeting. Then to the congregation at the May 1st Sunday Budget Meeting and then voted on at the June 1st Sunday Congregational Meeting.

Treasurer's Report



Budget Report - Revenue and Expenses

		31-Jan-24		Budgeted	Variance	%Realized
		Monthly	Year to Date (YTD)			
Income						
Unrestricted Contributions						
4020	Pledges	8,980.00	\$ 95,399.00	\$ 160,000	\$ 64,601	60%
4030	Sunday Plate	1,512.00	\$ 20,960.00	\$ 25,000	\$ 4,040	84%
4040	Hospitality	28.00	\$ 271.00	\$ 300	\$ 29	90%
4050	Event Rentals	2,777.00	\$ 63,228.00	\$ 150,000	\$ 86,772	42%
4060	Parish Hall Tenant Income	59,774.00	\$ 417,101.00	\$ 717,284	\$ 300,183	58%
4200	Misc income / donations	145.00	\$ 6,640.00	\$ -	\$ (6,640)	0%
4000	Other		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
4300	Restricted Income	50.00	\$ 7,731.00	\$ -	\$ (7,731)	0%
4301	Fourth Universalist Events		\$ 1,018.00	\$ -	\$ (1,018)	0%
4302	Capital Campaign		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Total Unrestricted Contributions		73,266.00	\$ 612,348.00	\$ 1,052,584	\$ 441,254	58%
Restricted Income (not included in this month's r		-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
0	Invstmnt Income (Incl Unrlzd Gains&Loss)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
TOTAL INCOME		73,266.00	\$ 612,348.00	\$ 1,052,584	\$ 441,254	58%
Expenses:						
6000	Senior Minister Payroll Expense	14,494.00	\$ 65,962.00	\$ 148,284	\$ 82,322	44%
6100	Staff Payroll & Related Expenses	39,629.00	\$ 264,438.00	\$ 427,873	\$ 163,435	62%
6200	Ministerial	525.00	\$ 3,550.00	\$ 6,000	\$ 2,450	59%
6300	Governance (long range strategy & consult)	-	\$ 9,832.00	\$ 30,568	\$ 20,736	32%
6600	Music, RE & Worship Arts	1,436.00	\$ 28,831.00	\$ 56,815	\$ 27,984	51%
6700	Committees	-	\$ 4,463.00	\$ 15,400	\$ 10,937	29%
6800	Building / Insurance / Contractors	12,543.00	\$ 92,177.00	\$ 415,008	\$ 322,831	22%
6900	Office & General Expenses	17,027.00	\$ 71,461.00	\$ 87,322	\$ 15,861	82%
7000	Hospitality	2,502.00	\$ 4,657.00	\$ 5,000	\$ 343	93%
7100	Other	2,003.00	\$ 31,265.00	\$ 37,760	\$ 6,495	83%
8000	Restricted Expenses		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
9999	Uncategorized Transactions		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Total Expenses		90,159.00	\$ 576,636.00	\$ 1,230,030	\$ 653,394	47%
Revenue less expenses		(16,893.00)	\$ 35,712.00			
Assets						
Bank Accounts						
	Chase Ckg 0017	\$ 68,666.00				
	Chase Restricted Funds 1572	\$ 1,932.00				
	Chase Set-Asides - 6803	\$ 199,827.00			*Includes \$100,000 for the ramp	
	Chase EFT 2272	\$ 30,643.00				
	Chase Ckg MDF - 0472	\$ 4,460.00				
	Chase Payroll - 9288	\$ (2,160.00)				
	TD Bank Checking - 4514	\$ 10,255.00				
Total Bank Accounts		313,623.00				
4500 Investment Accounts						
4540	Schwab Fund B Endowment 8100	490,708.00			*Includes Emergency Fund is tenant fails to pay rent	
4530	Schwab Fund A Rainy Day 8408	318,500.00				
4510	JP Morgan 5588	0.00				
Total Investment Account		809,208.00				
Total Assets		1,122,831.00				

Minister's Report

January was the kick-off month for our UUA Common Read, *On Repentance and Repair* by Danya Ruttenberg, which couldn't be more timely. Ember kicked us off with a heartfelt conversation around the challenge of repentance followed by my sermon on racism as an example of what a private and public confession might look like, which is the first stage Rabbi Ruttenberg mentions in her book. The following Sunday was an opportunity to say goodbye to Rev. Mark, so I thought it would be appropriate to talk about grief, tying it in to some of the emotions that were brought up during the start-up workshop the day before, including Rev. Schuyler's sudden departure last summer. It was a bittersweet moment for the congregation to celebrate Rev. Mark's eight year ministry at Fourth U and of course, we had cake. Finally, we capped off January with the annual and ever-popular Question Box Sunday, when the Senior Minister (and usually a new staff member—in this case, I was the only one), answered a few questions on the spot from members of the congregation. Liz Wolfe did a fantastic job collating the questions together and rephrasing some of them in a way that flowed well.

On January 20th, we held a two-hour start-up, facilitated by three Regional Staff from the UUA. Some difficult issues were uncovered including areas where trust had been violated between the minister and the congregation. It was also an opportunity for me to find out about some of the traditions that Fourth U holds dearly but not explicitly mentioned. Several people told me how appreciative they were to finally be able to talk about these issues in an open and honest way. I thought it was a success with almost 35 congregants participating (not counting staff and facilitators) and the majority wanting a part 2, which we are in the process of scheduling. As expected, feelings were stirred up during and immediately after the workshop. I scheduled follow-up pastoral care conversations with the ones that were brought to my attention. I am hoping that for the next one, chaplains will be identified so they can immediately join a breakout room if needed.

Speaking of chaplains, I am working with Rev. Jill, our new Minister of Virtual Engagement on coming up with a covenant for the virtual participants on Sundays. There have been some "lively" conversations that have taken place during a recent Virtual Community Hour and we'd like to come up with a container for these conversations that are respectful and in alignment with our values. I am also hoping to revisit our overall congregational covenant (which was officially adopted two decades ago) sooner rather than later.

Our relationship with West End Synagogue continued to deepen with three of us from Fourth U (me, Jim Saslow, and Loretta Howard) attending Refugee Shabbat on 2/2, with a sock collection drive for refugees here in New York to make them feel more at home. We prayed together, sang songs, and even danced together. We also broke bread and ate together afterwards in the fellowship hall. There was a very intimate feel to the worship experience. A couple of their members, when asked what felt like home to them, mentioned Fourth U during the High Holy Days! A congregant came up and expressed gratitude for our solidarity during this time of rising anti-Semitism.

Regretfully, we had another Zoom bombing incident that took place during a Sunday service that was handled in an expeditious way. We continue to strengthen our safe congregation policies and practices, especially when it comes to bad actors who threaten to disrupt our services.

I wanted to give you all a heads up after the Worship Arts Team and the Worship Associates Team met that perhaps it's time to figure out how to more closely align the work of these two teams—meaning is there a need for separate teams or can they merge together? This

conversation came about especially in light of recent resignations and the desire to take another look at the scope of lay involvement in helping shape the worship experience. I will be in further conversation with key stakeholders and draft a proposal in the next month or so of what a single Worship Team could look like. It's exciting to co-create with this group of people.

Another Team I've been working very closely with is the Transition Team, who met the week before the start-up to plan, debrief afterwards, and met with Rev. PK Curtis, Transformational Interim Ministries Director at the UUA. They've been busy and will make a presentation to the Board to talk about what this interim period could look like and if the interim goals can be refined further.

I was not expecting January to be as busy as it turned out to be—lots of things happening as Fourth U tries to figure out who it wants to become and what to prioritize for the remainder of my time here with you.

Interdependently Yours,
Rev. Jonipher