

The Fourth Universalist Society in the City of New York
Reverend Samuel Trumbore, Interim Minister
Carol McLoughlin, President
James Saslow, Vice President



Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda and Minutes
Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Board Members Present: Carol McLoughlin; James Saslow; Liz Wolfe; Monica Diaz McMillan;
C. J. Pares, Brian Kramer, Jillian Ashley

Staff Present: Rev. Samuel Trumbore, Interim Minister; Sheila Powers, Executive Director

Others Present: Bob McMillan, Search Committee Chair, Arnie Weintraub, Nominating
Committee Chair

2025-2026 Interim Goals

- Select a Settled Minister
- Increase our membership
- Increase our donations from members and friends
- Improve worship practices
- Improve communication between ministers and the congregation

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I. Ingathering

7:02 pm

- A. Reflection / Chalice Lighting : Jim
- B. Unison Reading of Mission Statement
 - a. *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

7:06 pm

Attendees check in, mostly everyone is enjoying the spring weather.

III. Approval of Minutes ([February 11, 2026](#))

7:15 pm

Brian motions to approve, Jim seconds. Unanimous vote to approve,

IV. Board Reports

7:20 pm

- A. [President's Report](#)
 - a. Expresses gratitude to the Nominating committee, the Stewardship committee, Staff (Melanie and Sheila) for their support despite being shortstaffed, the Covenant team, and appreciates new innovative ideas that have been proposed.
- B. [Executive Director's Report](#)
 - a. So close to getting the screen set up, and the team is preparing to lift a 200 lb screen 20 feet and install it. Pledge reminders will be coming out soon, and moving forward they will be sent out quarterly. Hot water issues are being resolved, and planned for summer.
- C. [Treasurer's Report](#)
 - a. Pledges slightly behind, but they should ramp up once the Stewardship committee begins their campaign. The large Estate gift has been received, which makes our finances look exceptionally well. We are exploring options to invest our set-aside funds.
- D. [Minister's Report](#)
 - a. Rev. Sam attended 2 Hands Off NYC training sessions and a D3 Open Arms Meeting at the JCC nearby. The rest of his report will be covered in our meeting.

V. New Business

7:33 pm

- A. **Timeline for Budget Process for 2026-2027: Jillian**
 - a. Board Meeting 4/8: review & board approval
 - b. Budget Town Hall 5/3
 - c. Annual Meeting 6/7: vote

VI. Old Business

7:40 pm

A. . Board Trustee/Board Slate Announcement : Arnie & CJ

- a. Danielle Abushanab has agreed to join the board

B. Covenant Team Update: Rev. Sam & Jim

- a. Hope to finalize by May 17th, and be ready for a vote on June 7

C. Settled Minister Search: Bob McMillan

- a. Developed References & UUA Research Calls
- b. Rankings submitted on 3/23; Offer Day is 3/26
- c. **Before 4/5 Announcement of Candidate at service:**
 - 1. Refer to Negotiating Team for Agreement on Contract with Minister
 - 2. Initiate Background Check
 - 3. Minister to inform their congregation
- d. Letter to Members Mailed by 4/9 for Vote to Call on 4/26
- e. Assignments to Contact Members Tracking Sheet (Board, Search Committee & Nominating Committee= =15; about 6 members each. Start after 4/5
- f. Candidate Week; 4/18-4/26. 4/19 & 4/26 services; 4/26 vote to call

D. Membership Update: Brian & Rev. Sam

- a. Membership Exploration Session 3/22. 5 or 6 people signed up. Brian will send an email invite.
- b. Benefits of Membership. Two docs: [Benefits](#) and [Why Bother?](#)
- c. Membership Coordinator Coverage

E. Stewardship Campaign Update: Jillian

- a. Testimonials: speakers signed up to speak during the 4 weekends of the month of March
- b. Tabling: at the back of the Sanctuary for people who can pledge
- c. Scrapbook is being created for the new minister

F. Delegates for GA: Carol

- a. Elizabeth Anne will attend in New Jersey; Erin White will do the business meeting; Connor considering it

G. Welcoming Congregation: Preparing for 2026 Jim

- a. Requirements needed every year to fulfill the designation; but we can do better than we did last year
- b. Jim exploring relationships in the neighborhood to help maintain our designation
- c. Rev. Sam will lead Days of Observance, and acknowledgments during 3 services this Spring (i.e. reading, song, or chalice lighting). This includes:
 - i. International Transgender Day of Visibility 3/31
 - ii. International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia 5/17
 - iii. Stonewall Riots Anniversary 6/28 (during Pride Service on 6/28.)
- d. **Education:** Rev. Michael Crumpler: Open Circle Discussion (5/28?) More education needed in the fall

H. Estate Planning & Incentives: Monica

- a. Draft in Progress; interest in a speaker sharing?
- b. Create a “Legacy Society” With Recognition Benefits
- c. Offer Named Endowment or Program Opportunities
- d. Provide Free Estate Planning Workshops for Members
- e. Honor Legacy Donors Through Storytelling and “Legacy Sunday”
- f. Offer Values-Based Legacy Options (Unique to UU Culture) (Plaques, etc.)

I. Youth Survey: Monica

- a. Waiting on survey results

VII. Comments, Announcements, and Other Business

8:35 pm

- A. Next Board Meeting 4/08/2026 7:00-9:00pm (online)
- B. Membership Exploration Session 3/22 12:30-1:30pm (in-person & online)
- C. Candidate Announcement 4/5 Service 11:00am-12:00pm (in-person & online)

VIII. Acknowledgements and Appreciations

8:35pm

Appreciation shared for hospitality and food contributions, Barbara Woods and Steve Marcus, Zach Young, DLRE, and his coordination with the Open Circle groups; Brett Essler, Arnie Weintraub, Charles Heller, Alex Gordon and Eric Halperin; Search Committee, Stewardship Committee and the Board

IX. Executive Session:

N/A

8:42pm

X. Closing Words and Adjournment: Jim and Reverend Sam

8:43 pm

- A. The meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm

President's Report - Carol McLoughlin 3/8/26

Every month we are closer to hiring our settled minister thanks to the hard work of our Search Committee. Pre-candidating weekends have been completed and the discernment process has begun. Rankings will be submitted to the Transitions Office by both congregations and the ministers on 3/23. Offer Day is 3/26 when the Search Committee will be notified of their identified candidate. Bob McMillan will make the announcement of our candidate at our 4/5 service. In order to prepare for the "vote to call" on 4/26 we will have a major campaign in April to contact each member to ensure their participation. Not only do we need a superquorum and a supermajority as per our by-laws, but the minister will feel confidence in Fourth U by a huge turnout and a 90–95% plus vote.

Our Nominating Committee, after a diligent selection process, has chosen Danielle Abushnabab to be added to the Board Slate for the 6/7 election. She will replace Brian Kramer as a Trustee who is running as President, Danielle will start attending board meetings in April as part of her orientation and we look forward to her joining the board on 7/1.

Our Covenant Team, led by Rev. Sam, continues a thorough, inclusive process to develop a new Congregational Covenant. I found their survey to obtain congregational input to be quite thought provoking about what aspects are most important to me. The Team has analyzed the results and will be sending out a first draft this month. After obtaining more input, a second draft will be sent out in April for further review.,

The theme of our Stewardship Campaign for 2026-2027 is "A New Chapter, Shared Commitment; Our Story Continues Together." I am grateful for our Stewardship Committee who had a great kickoff at our 3/1 service on "Generosity," led by Rev. Sam. This month there will be more testimonials by members during services and a table with friendly members of the committee giving out brochures, pledge forms and candy, I love the scrapbook they will give our new minister with messages from members

Our Membership Exploration Session is now scheduled for 3/22, (which worked out with the blizzard on 2/22.) Recruitment for a good turnout is needed. I spoke to a couple of people on Sunday and other board members can consider working an invite into a conversation. The Membership Team has been exploring additional benefits of membership to help increase motivation to join Fourth U.

I am proud to announce Fourth U has received our certification as a LGBTQ+ Welcoming Congregation for 2025. I appreciate Jim Saslow submitting our application. This year we plan to increase our participation in Days of Observance during services and our Pride Service will be on 6/28. I am looking forward to Rev. Michael Crumpler, LGBTQ and Multicultural Program Director, leading an "Open Circle Discussion" as part of our Adult RE in May.

We have been fortunate in recent years with members including Fourth U. in their estate planning. Monica Diaz McMillan, Clerk, will be looking into ways to encourage and recognize legacy giving., Thanks to Monica for coming up with ideas to improve our operations and services,

Executive Director's Report - Sheila Powers

Building - Fourth Universalist is in the last phases of planning before ordering the drop down screen over the mosaic. The total cost of manufacturing the screen, installing, wiring, scaffolding, protecting the mosaic and other associated tasks is roughly \$39,000.00. I am attending a meeting on 3/11 to go over the final logistics of the project before signing the proposal to have the screen manufactured. There are several unique features of the space we want to install the screen that have needed to be accommodated. We think we have worked out all the wrinkles for manufacture and installation of the screen. Hopefully when I attend the board meeting I will be able to say that the screen has been ordered.

There has been an ongoing issue with the hot water pump associated with the boiler on the church side of the building. NY Heating, our maintenance company, has recommended replacing the pump at this time rather than continuing to spend money on repairs. The Finance Committee has approved the proposal to replace the boiler at a cost of \$16,500.00. The good news is that the double boiler system itself is in good repair and with regular maintenance should have years of life left.

PCDS, Fourth U's tenant, is on spring break for the last two weeks in March. In that time period I have arranged for the maintenance work on the fire alarm system, the HVAC system and minor repairs in the gym and staircase leading from the gym to the 76th St door. We are also continuing to work on rat control - filling all cracks in the cement outside the building and doing whatever is possible in the garden to keep the rats at bay. Understandably the school doesn't want parents to see rats frolic in the garden when they are dropping off and picking up their children.

I had a very productive meeting with Pamela Stark, the new Director of PCDS, last week. We discussed maintenance issues and went over our landlord/tenant relationship. This was a positive step, in past years staff at PCDS have not been familiar with a landlord/tenant relationship and sometimes had unrealistic expectations of what Fourth U is required to do for the tenant. Pamela and I also discussed a joint project in sprucing up the Garbage Pit off the 76th St door. Either painting or possibly replacing the fence and upgrading the garbage collection bins. This was again a very positive step. No one at PCDS has been willing to discuss this before now. We also talked about long range plans for the shared downstairs storage area.

Finances - As discussed previously FY 25/26 Pledge statements will be going out this week. Jililan, as Treasurer, is going to write a message to include with the statements so people will understand why they are receiving a statement of their pledge payments to date. Going forward statements will be issued on a quarterly basis. This project has prompted streamlining of how we import information into Realm, Fourth U's database program, which will speed the process up going forward.

Other - I have been working with Rhonda White, an admin at PCDS, to ensure that the school and Fourth U are compliant with various agencies paperwork and permits. For most of these agencies the view PCDS and Fourth U as the same building.

Minister's Report - Reverend Sam Trumbore

Last Friday Charles Heller and I went out for dinner and a movie while his wife Karen Chamberlain and the Search Committee entertained the final pre-candidate in the congregation's condo. In just a few weeks we will have the name of a candidate who will be coming in April and hopefully will get the overwhelming vote they need to be called to serve as 4th Universalist's next settled minister. That announcement will happen Easter Sunday, April 5th, at the end of the service. I hope that will stimulate attendance on the not favorite UU Sunday full of people ambivalent about what happened three days after Jesus was executed by the Romans as a troublemaker.

I also realize that Sunday will focus the congregation on the Candidating Week that will begin April 19th and end April 26th. I will not be here during that process as per the requirements of being an interim minister. I will leave for Albany probably April 17th and return April 27th. The UUA Board meets on Zoom April 18-19 and I'll be working on home projects maybe with a possible short trip too. The condo could be used by the Candidating minister if they wish to do so. It could also be a good place to entertain small groups of people. Anything I can do to support the process besides being here – just let me know.

At home, Philomena had her first cataract surgery two weeks ago and will be having her second one the day of our meeting. I hope her results are as good as the first one. I will be home during the week to support her and will be back on Friday morning.

I've attended two Hands Off NYC know your rights and ICE neighborhood watch and intervention trainings, one in Brooklyn at the UU congregation there and one at the Riverside Church. Some of the information I knew but there are always new angles. We had a Zoom meeting with a Minneapolis neighborhood activist who was quite informative about what their experience was like and what we could learn from them. At the D3 Open Arms meeting at the JCC just two blocks away on 76th and Amsterdam we saw a presentation by a PTA mom organizing to protect their school from ICE raids. It is wonderful to be part of these larger networks we can plug into.

The Covenant Team was to meet last Tuesday but needed to reschedule for next Monday to process the results of the Covenant Questionnaire. I did a careful analysis consolidating all the feedback from the 33 people who took the survey. Lots of both valuable confirmation of some of our ideas as well as comments and suggestions that will be helpful in producing the first draft. I hope we can have that first draft by either Sunday, March 22 or 29. Then we'll need to figure out how to collect feedback as this backs up into Candidating Week. We might do another questionnaire format online. We'll see.

The combination of bad weather and low enrollment caused the cancelation of the last membership exploration session February 22. We've rescheduled for March 22nd. I anticipate we might have some dip in membership interest as people wait to see who the new settled minister will be as we are so close. May may be the month to push to membership!

I find I'm pulling back on initiating activities as we are so close the start of a new ministry. I don't want to put the new minister in the awkward position of wanting to go a different direction than the way I have initiated something. It is the beginning of my letting go process and making room for the new minister. The UUA Settlement Handbook suggests not starting anything at this point and preparing for the start of a new ministry. Hard to start stepping back but April will be the beginning of that process for me.

Rev. Sam

March 8, 2026