Committee of Chairs Meeting, Jan. 21, 2025 – Notes – DRAFT

Rev. Joan

Elaine Ball, Congregational Life Coordinator, Communication Team and Membership Committee

Carl Etnier, Production Team

Steve Finner, Denominational Affairs

Paula Gills, Caring Network

Steve Gold, Board and Climate Resilience Study Group

Judith Hinds, Adult Spiritual Exploration Team

Susan Koch, Spiritual Exploration Committee and Climate Resilience Study Group

Janet Poeton, Community Lunch Committee and Community Pouch Committee

Donia Prince, Music Director

Donna Russo-Savage, Executive Team

Anne Sarcka, Climate Action Team

Peter Thoms, Church Historian, Property Committee, Planned Giving Team

Susan lit the chalice and offered an opening reading: “Choosing the Light” by James Crews (<https://jamescrews.substack.com/p/choosing-the-light>).

She also facilitated the meeting.

Each person present checked in with a comment on their groups’ status with three months remaining in the church year. Rev. Joan reported for the Lay Pastoral Care Ministry Team, Worship & Arts Committee, Committee on Ministry, and the new LGBTQ support group.

Board Update – Steve G.

Two Board members will be stepping down. Please notify him of anyone you think should be nominated. Likewise one more delegate to General Assembly is needed. Development of a new Strategic Plan is underway. The first meeting to seek congregational input will take place on 4/18/25, facilitated by Erica Baron of the UUA.

Board review of the Bylaws is ongoing. Possible revisions will be presented at UCM’s Annual Meeting on 5/17/25. ***Committee reports for the Annual Report are due to Donna by 4/15/25.***

Climate Resilience Study Group Update – Steve G. and Susan

The CRSG is researching 5 options for improving UCM’s future survival strategies. The options have been briefly described in the weekly e-news and on the website. Findings will be presented to the Board by 12/31/25. Congregational discussions will take place in 2026, to culminate in a decision-making process yet to be determined. A central goal is to avoid divisiveness. All process suggestions are welcome.

Budget and Pledge Drive Update – Rev. Joan

FY2026 budget development process is underway. The pledge drive is nearly complete and has not met its goal. Budget does not include an Administrator position. Given the current economy, it is unclear how we will be able to add staff hours or positions in the near future. Budget Forum will be held 5/4/25.

“Committee Structure and Guidelines” Update – Donna

The current version of this living document is complete and ready to post, possibly on the website.

Idea Share for Recruiting New Members

There was no time to discuss this. Susan will start a Google doc so all of us can contribute our ideas.

CoC Social Gathering in August

Rev. Joan and Susan will identify a date for this and start to organize. Judith and possibly others will help make it happen.

Additional Agenda Items

1. Rev. Joan noted that the ET has been in touch with Montpelier PD regarding some safety issues that arose during emergency shelter nights in the building. UCM doesn’t really have emergency guidelines or training for how to respond to a threat. We agreed such training is needed.
2. Anne asked if other committees or teams are interested in partnering with the Climate Action Team on projects/activities. There was general openness to this possibility. The Racial Justice Group had already indicated interest in the past. CAT will reach out to other groups with specific needs.

Next CoC meeting dates TBD. Usually in October, January and April. All of us are encouraged to start planning now for our groups’ priorities and schedules for next year.

Susan offered a closing reading, “A Gift” by Denise Levertov:

Just when you seem to yourself  
nothing but a flimsy web  
of questions, you are given  
the questions of others to hold  
in the emptiness of your hands,  
songbird eggs that can still hatch  
if you keep them warm,  
butterflies opening and closing themselves  
in your cupped palms, trusting you not to injure  
their scintillant fur, their dust.  
You are given the questions of others  
as if they were answers  
to all you ask. Yes, perhaps  
this gift is your answer.