

UUFM Board Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present:

Penny Herickhoff, President

Bob Finley, Vice President

John Knox, Treasurer

Cheiron McMahill, Member at Large

Kathryn Vonderharr, Member at Large

Rev. Rita Capezzi, Minister — ex officio

Tony Flipovich, Past President – ex officio

Liz Kipp, Joint Task Force Chair

Sarah Sifers, Personnel Committee Chair and Licensed Psychologist

Personal check-in—Each board member offered a short personal check-in.

Opening Reading— Rita read “On the Brink,” by Leslie Takahashi, from the book, *The Spirit That Moves*.

Chalice Lighting—We are a welcoming people of diverse beliefs who commit to nourish the spirit, broaden the mind, nurture the earth, and build community. May this flame we kindle remind us to strive, today and every day, to love beyond belief.

Visitors: Penny welcomed Liz Kipp and Sarah Sifers as visitors.

Mid-America Leadership Experience Team Members arranged a presentation on Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST). Prior to the meeting, members had received a copy of a Power Point on Congregational Systems, created by Rev. Sharon K. Dittmar, and summary notes prepared by Dr. Sarah Sifers which contained essential definitions and examples. UUFM member, Sarah Sifers, shared her professional background and training. She is a Licensed Psychologist, holds a PhD in Psychology, has over 20 years of private practice experience, has held university faculty positions teaching psychology for 13 years and currently owns and operates 5 Rivers Mental Health Clinic in Mankato. She said the field of psychology “had her at hello,” and her personal appreciation of the practical science of psychology has only deepened with the passage of time.

Bowen Family systems theory uses genograms to illustrate the dynamics in family and organizational relationships. Genograms pictorial codes inserted in organizational diagrams, to identify bonds, conflicts and sources of dysfunction.

The dynamics in all Families and organizations resemble floating mobiles. The counter-balanced parts are responsive to one another. Each person's behavior is rooted in learned family dynamics we are exposed to in our family of origin.

Self-awareness of our personal histories focuses attention on the interpersonal dynamic we were grew up in as children. One's childhood experience gives shape each to individual's preferred styles of interaction with others, our behavior, view of the world and likely points of conflict. This information coupled with use of genograms serve to illustrate the status of relationship dynamics in a diagramed system. With knowledge and tools, we have the opportunity to shape and re-shape the dynamics in our families and other organizational systems.

One central concept is: when individual relationships change in a family the entire dynamic shifts to reflect that change. Much like a floating mobile, shifts in one set of relationships affects the balance of all relationships in turn. Addressing conflict can result in greater system balance or destabilize existing relationships, creating dysfunction. A consequence of conflict is system disruption and reduced productivity.

BFST theory pays attention to power sources and power differentials in roles. BFST acknowledges that marginalized individuals in families and communities are systemically afforded less power than their counterparts. Justice requires that marginalization of individuals and groups within systems be addressed to achieve re-balancing. Like all change, this change will shift the balance dynamic system-wide and conflict is likely.

Differentiation is a strategy that individuals can adopt to manage their own emotions – to be responsive without being reactive. BFST instructs that mature individuals respect other people's ability to solve their own problems in novel and sustainable ways. Sarah gave a personal example from her workplace: several employees who would be essential co-workers of the individual to be hired were empowered to screen candidates and make the final decision.

Those with a "helper mentality" are inclined to "step in" when they observe others experiencing struggle or problems. Helpers assume that rescue is needed and take responsibility. BFST instructs that mature individuals compassionately acknowledge struggles of others offer encouragement that reflects the belief the individual is capable to manage. Rather than "step up" when others struggle, BFST recommends "step back," as a respectful choice which enables the other person, or work unit, to discover and experience their own competence and resourcefulness in problem-solving. Mutual respect that all are competent to navigate life's challenges includes "freedom to fail." Life

consequences are an important learning tool for all ages. “Acts of rescue,” interfere with and often prevent this form of essential learning.

The Board thanked Sarah for her introduction to BFST and the Leadership School Team for arranging Sarah’s presentation. The Team will consult further and suggest next steps for our February Board meeting agenda.

Consent Agenda: Motion to approve by Bob Finley, 2nd by Kathryn Vonderharr. The Board’s Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

Announcements: The following announcements were shared:

- **3rd Party Accounting services** – low bid has been accepted
- **UUFM has arranged to tune Nancy Cramblit’s piano** & facilitate Worship music recording
- **January Thank You letters are being sent to all UUFM donors** w/ year-end giving statement
- **UUA Annual Recertification** - opens in January, closes Feb 3, 2021 – is a 6-section process
- **UUA annual, pre-COVID survey** – state of the congregation – due this month – Penny lead
- **Ventilation assessment -Tony Effenberger of ISG toured UUFM** - Proposal due this week.
- **Chalice Lighter Grant** – Tony is preparing an addendum to be added for the Feb round
- **UUFM On-line Auction Fundraiser** – opened for bidding on Jan 1st
- **PPP - 2nd round has been approved by Congress** - Finance Comm. & Treas. are following this.
 - John Knox was contacted this week by our mortgage banker in support of our PPP 2nd round application. John’s quartile analysis suggests that we probably meet the criteria. SBA guidelines have been issued and will provide essential additional details.
- **Mid-America Leadership Experience** – registration opens in late January; Mar-May-4 sessions
- **Mid-America offers Stewardship Learning:** Registration required.
 - Saturday, Feb. 6th: Effective Pledge Drives: Connecting Online and Off
 - Saturday, Feb. 13th: Asking for Contributions During These Times

Penny will send Board members a link to Mid-America’s monthly newsletter. It’s a quick read and offers a rich variety of learning tools and leadership support.

Reports:

Ministry—Rita spoke of the commitments she has made this year to personal spiritual growth, described in her December report. Demands of ministry in a time of COVID and the death of her father are considerations in fashioning self-care. She commented favorably on progress in UUFM’s leadership development and the benefits of increased worship resources. She reports positive conversations with Fridley’s minister regarding mutual support. Working is in progress on UUFM Web page revisions to offer clear directions and links for congregant use of Breeze software or our 2021 pledge drive.

Personnel Committee - Committee Chair, Sarah Sifers, summarized committee initiatives and accomplishments over the past year, including comprehensive update of UUFM's Employee Handbook, development and adoption of a "values-based" policy to be used in evaluating bids for 3rd party contracts. 3rd party hires of snow removal and cleaning services are complete in accord with this policy.

Recently the committee has evaluated all bids and selecting a 3rd party bidder for accounting services, as authorized by the Board. Final details of that contract are being negotiated. At present, Morken, Eckberg, Steiner LLC, our Accounting firm, is evaluating UUFM's QuickBooks Desktop data files to determine the extent of formatting interface that will be required to accomplish data transfer. The firm's integration of UUFM banking and Breeze software will follow.

The OA job description will remain in draft form, until the 3rd party accounting contract details are finalized. UUA pay equity research has been done to reflect proposed OA communications and administrative duties. Research shows the positions duties and funding cap the Board approved for the ½ time OA position, fall within UUA midpoint salary guidelines. The Committee will finalize the description, advertise the position and begin to screen applicants in February. Just today, Rev Rita received an initial position inquiry from an interested party.

Joint Task Force – Liz Kipp chairs the Joint Task Force the Board authorized in Fall 2020, to develop responses to the Eide Bailly analysis of UUFM Financial Policies and Procedures. She summarized the accomplishments of the Task Force to date in a 10-point written report, which was screen-shared and discussed with the Board. A copy of her written, summary is attached.

Stewardship—This month Tony is approaching members of teams and committees with invitations to pledge. By the end of January, 34 households will have been canvassed through his appeals. Our pledge brochure and a stewardship letter have been developed and finalized. Final wrinkles in the Breeze on-line pledge mechanics continue to be worked out, with Linda's assistance. The general pledge drive, which will canvass the remainder of the congregation, will take place in February and March. Final wrap up and community celebration will be held on April 14. Draft Budgets will need to be in place by that time.

Communications: Bob reported on the committee's work to draft guidelines governing the Weekly Update. Design aspects of UUFM's Web site have also been discussed. Todd will help the Committee understand Google ads Web traffic data which reflects areas of visitor interest as well as content areas needing particular attention. Specific conversations with the minister and staff, regarding

proposed Web improvements, will wait until our new OA has been hired and has had an opportunity to train with Linda and learn the operational details and functions of our current systems. An inventory and assessment of OA office technology & software are needed

DISCUSSION:

Semi-Annual Meeting: January 24. Tony screen-shared the updated agenda. In discussion, modest revisions were made on-line. A copy of the final draft is attached to these minutes. The Board asked for more time to consider how to frame the Final Question to be discussed with the congregation.

This will be discussed further at our mid-January Board check-in.

Proposed topics: “Framing Future expectations (Jan – June ‘21)
Building momentum to empower our future,
Perhaps shape congregational focus and as well as hearing member comments, questions and concerns.

Adjournment: Motion by Bob Finley. 2nd by John Knox. Unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted: Secretary pro tem, Penny Herickhoff

January Board Check-in: Wednesday, Jan 20, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

MID-YEAR Meeting – Sunday, Jan 24, 2021, after service – 11:30 a.m.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, Feb 4, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

All of the above will be held via Zoom