**Great Lakes Unity Region**Board Minutes 10/23/24

**Attending:** Rev. Kathy Harwood Long (President), Nancy Berdasco (Vice-President), Rev. Ray Nelson (Treasurer), Rev. Debra Carter Williams (Treasurer), Rev. Jeff Berry, and Rev. Diane Robinson (Regional Rep and Outreach Ambassador). **Absent:** Susan Liddell (LUT Rep)

Kathy Harwood Long offered the opening prayer and a reflection on “Forgiveness” from the Daily Word.

The board check-in focused on the question: “What is your intention for the meeting?”

Rev. Kathy welcomed the new member of the board, Jeff Berry, and also welcomed Diane Robinson.

The Vision, Mission, Values, and Intention Statement were affirmed

The agenda was reviewed and approved with the addition of a requested conversation about regional Zoom calls by Diane Robinson. This item was added to New Business.

Ray Nelson made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded and approved.

The minutes of the previous were moved for approval and seconded. The motion passed.

The minutes of the meeting to appoint officers of the region were moved for approval and seconded. The motion passed.

**Financial Report (see attached report)**

Ray Nelson presented the financial report and shared that the region is doing well financially. While income is down, so are expenses. The region shows a new profit that exceeds last year’s YTD by $25,000.

Ray shared that the 2024 conference was more expensive than expected. However, he also shared that conference doesn’t need to be a profit center. Connection may be the most important intention.

There was discussion concerning the reason love-offerings from centers and churches are down. Also, the board discussed how conference expenses are posted in the budget as well as how travel mileage is calculated.

Kathy encouraged the board to consider their personal support of the region as an extension of their giving/tithing.

**Regional Rep and Outreach Ambassador Report** **(see report)**

Diane shared some of her recent connections with regional ministries. Her goal is to call every ministry in the region and the average is 5 calls per day.

The board welcomed and celebrated all that she is bringing to the position already.

**LUT Report (see report)**

Susan Liddell, LUT Representative, shared her positive experience at the LUT retreat at Unity Village. There was great enthusiasm about the role of LUTs in Unity.

**YFM Report (see report)**

Cassidy Meeks is moving back to the US. She also shared that the upcoming fall retreat has great registration numbers.

**Conference Team Report**

Nancy Berdasco reported that the Conference Team had an after-event meeting. She shared that the team received favorable feedback. She also asked if satellite and hub expenses were reimbursed.

Nancy shared that Todd Davis has reached out to Stoney Creek Lodge in Moline, IL about accommodations for the 2025 conference and is negotiating a contract. However, he is also looking at other locations.

She was not sure if there were any signups at the recent conference for additional members of the Conference Team.

The team was pleased with the technological support for the conference.

There was additional discussion about the new conference model and how often it should be implemented.

The board acknowledged the team for their excellent work and for a successful conference.

**Communications Report**

Cindi Cousineau will send bylaws changes to the secretary for final review. The board was reminded to review board documents in Google Workspace.

Cindi was acknowledged and thanked for her great work.

Jeff Berry asked for a board roster and the board was asked to go into the Google Doc and add the information.

**Regional Advisory Committee Report**

The RAC meets every other month. A recent topic of discussion was new models for regional conferences.

**Earth Care Report**

New sign-ups from the conference were received for the team.

**Conference Minutes**

Debra Williams, board secretary, will get the recording of the business meeting and reach out to Cindi before the minutes are approved.

**Tithes**

Tithes decided by consensus to include the 2024 conference host ministries in the discretionary tithe rotation: 1. Columbus, OH (October); 2. Naperville, IL (January); 3. Cedar Rapids, IA (April).

A motion was made and seconded to implement the discretionary tithe schedule. A letter of thanks will accompany the tithes.

**Additional Discussion RE: 2024 Regional Conference**

Kathy read correspondence from Ric Shumacher expressing congratulations and insights from the conference which he attended in Columbus, OH.

The board discussed other models from various Unity regions. Some regions have retreats while some continue to be fully online.

A suggestion was made not to hold the Business Meeting at the Annual Conference much like UWM does presently.

There was discussion about continuing the online model each year rather than rotating with an in-person model. While the board was supportive of the hub and spoke paradigm, Debra Williams expressed concern about the ability to connect with the larger region.

**Treasurer Position**  
The appointment to someone as treasurer to replace Ray Nelson was tabled until November. Ray will remain on the Finance Team until the end of his term in September of 2025.

**Alternate Board Members**

Two candidates were discussed, and the unanimous consensus was to ask both candidates to serve as board alternates. These are Sandra Higgins-Smith (LUT), and Rev. Liesa Chase.

Alternates attend meetings but do not have a vote.

**Funding Request**

Unity of Farmington Hills requested funding to reimburse expenses for regional training. The request was $650. After discussion, a motion was made to approve half of the expenses. The motion was seconded and carried.

**The meeting adjourned at 4:38 PM CST.**