

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence  
December 18, Zoom

Our Mission is to **love** inclusively, **nurture** spiritual growth and connection,  
freely **explore** life's big questions, and **act** for justice.

Goals for 2025-2026

6:00	Chalice Lighting- Board Member Check-In - What is on your heart/mind?	
	Congregational Comments: (3 minutes per person)	
6:20	Approval of Consent Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November Minutes</li> <li>• Treasurer's Report and Financial Reports</li> </ul>	
<b>Information Items/Reports</b>		
<b>6:30</b>	Board Member UUCL Updates  Minister RE Report ( provided in November) Refresh and Renew November Follow Up Review	
<b>Discussion/Action Items:</b>		
6:45	Set date(s) for Board Planning Retreat  Approve date for annual meeting  Credit Card selection - approval to apply and begin process  Potential process for space utilization and changes  Other Items Awards - request for board member lead, process should begin Februaryish  Executive session - if needed	
	Process review, follow up and Board Member Closing Comments	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is there anyone you would like to give appreciation to for tonight's meeting?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is there anything you would like to repair/resolve from tonight's meeting?</i></li> </ul>	
Next Board Meeting: January 15		

## Minutes

- **Congregational Growth:** Women's spirits group expanded to 14 members, indicating increased community engagement and interest in fellowship activities.
- **Event Planning:** Major report from Refresh and Renew team planned for January; focus on congregational inclusion through informative sessions.
- **Space Utilization:** Optimized shared staff areas; informal communication for space changes to avoid confusion among members.
- **Financial Oversight:** Credit card process review ongoing; difficulties accessing financial records delaying nonprofit-specific options and recommendations.
- **Strategic Planning:** In-person goal-setting session scheduled for January 8; annual meeting tentatively on June 14, budget prep due by April.
- **Community Support:** Safety network initiative for vulnerable congregants discussed; accessibility improvements with expert input planned for next year.

## Congregational Engagement and Program Development

The congregation is seeing strong growth in community participation, particularly with the women's spirits group expanding to 14 members.

- This group's rapid growth signals increased interest in targeted fellowship activities, suggesting potential for similar programs to boost engagement.
- Mary Holm and others are encouraging broader attendance, with plans for men's and co-ed groups to maintain balance in community offerings.
- The Religious Education (RE) program reports consistent weekly attendance numbers tracked in detailed summaries, indicating stable youth engagement.
- Plans for January include a major report from the Refresh and Renew team, with a board-led rollout strategy aiming to include the congregation through informational sessions rather than open debate, to maintain confidence in board decisions.
- Rilie Kafer emphasized the importance of storytelling to explain the board's rationale and how congregational input shaped the plan, helping members feel heard while respecting leadership authority.

## Facility and Space Utilization

The board is actively managing office space reallocation to optimize shared staff areas and reduce surprises in room usage changes.

- The shared staff space created between Clay and Kristen is functioning well with couches and a relaxed atmosphere, which supports collaboration.
- The printer remains upstairs for convenient access during meetings, while the repurposed room will serve as a supply and counting area, with secure but accessible key management.
- Communication improvements around space changes were highlighted as a key need to avoid confusion, with the decision to handle changes informally unless they involve non-designated rooms.
- The board is using a loose decision tree for space requests but prefers flexible, case-by-case documentation rather than formal protocols at this stage..
- Rilie Kafer and others see this approach as empowering to leadership and staff while minimizing bureaucratic overhead.

## Financial Oversight and Credit Card Process

The credit card process review is underway but remains incomplete due to security and access challenges.

- Treasurer Brad Wertz reported difficulties accessing necessary financial records, delaying progress on nonprofit-specific credit card options and policies.
- Brad is investigating appropriate credit card products for nonprofits but has not finalized recommendations.
- The board offered support to Brad for navigating these financial complexities to ensure compliance and efficiency.
- The credit card topic remains open for further discussion as the treasurer and finance team clarify operational details.

## Governance, Planning, and Meeting Scheduling

The board is organizing strategic planning and goal-setting sessions for early January, aiming for an in-person meeting on January 8th from 6 to 8 PM, with the library as a preferred venue due to whiteboard availability.

- This session will focus on setting clear goals and steps for the coming year, with flexibility for weather-related rescheduling.
- The annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 14th, balancing timing after KU graduation and avoiding late-month conflicts.
- Budget preparation will be completed by April to allow for May informational sessions, supporting timely congregational approval.
- The board is mindful of scheduling conflicts and members' availability, prioritizing Thursdays for meetings where possible.

- The approach reflects a desire to maintain steady governance rhythms while accommodating member input and external calendars.

## Community Safety and Accessibility Initiatives

Rilie Kafer highlighted the need to formalize a safety network for congregants living alone or with health risks, addressing anxiety and emergency preparedness.

- This initiative aims to reduce fear and improve community support for vulnerable members through clear protocols.
- Accessibility improvements are planned with input from Julie Loring, a former disability counselor and regular attendee, who will consult with Kristen and Nori early next year to enhance the website, E-Blast, and communication channels.
- These measures aim to make the congregation more inclusive and welcoming, aligning with broader strategic goals for growth and radical welcoming.

## Staff Development and Clergy Updates

Minister Nori will attend the UUMA Institute training in Albuquerque late January through early February, funded by a \$775 conference fee waiver, opting for train travel to balance costs and personal preference.

- This week-long clergy training supports ongoing professional growth without missing Sundays, maintaining continuity in services.
- Staff evaluations have been summarized and shared with the board for December, providing transparent insights into performance and development areas..
- The board is considering using the Mid America minister's self-evaluation resource to complement staff assessments and support constructive feedback.
- Nori emphasizes empowering elected leadership and committees to take ownership of initiatives, promoting growth through entrusted responsibilities rather than micromanagement.

### Action items

#### Mary Holm

- Coordinate and book library room for board goals session on January 8, 6-8 PM
- Share proposed work day dates (late March/early April) with Nathan and committee for coordination
- Check and facilitate communications for space utilization changes among staff and board
- Discuss and plan coordination with Buildings and Grounds for upcoming work days
- Follow up with Brad and others regarding UUA data collection responsibilities for membership and budget

#### Rilie Kafer

- Assist Refresh and Renew team in preparing communication to congregation regarding project plans and announcements

## **Brad Wertz**

- Continue to research nonprofit credit card options and clarify policies for transition between treasurers

## **Kristin Suter**

- Work with Julie Loring post-New Year to improve website and email blast accessibility

## **Decisions**

### **Approval of November Minutes and Treasurer's Report**

- Motion to approve was moved by Rilie Kafer and seconded by William Hagel; all in favor.

### **Scheduling Board Goal-Setting Session**

- The board decided to hold a goals and steps planning session on January 8th, 6:00 - 8:00 PM, with a weather date of January 22nd; location likely a library room with whiteboards.

### **Annual Meeting Date Set**

- The annual meeting will be held on June 14th to avoid conflicts with KU graduation and Father's Day.

### **Work Day Planning**

- Potential work day for building maintenance and projects in honor of Graham to be planned for late March or early April, with April 11th proposed as a good candidate date.
- Coordination with Buildings and Grounds committee is suggested but not definitively assigned.

### **Space Utilization Moves**

- Temporary use of the former DRE office as a shared staff space approved; printers to remain upstairs for accessibility and supplies storage.
- Clear communication protocols to be used for future space changes to reduce surprises.

### **Communication and Empowerment Philosophy**

- Board supports empowering committees (such as Refresh and Renew) to execute projects with oversight but minimal micromanagement.
- A town hall or informational meeting to share Refresh and Renew's progress is proposed, emphasizing trust in leadership and elected representatives.

### **Credit Card Process Review**

- Finance Committee is examining nonprofit credit card options; Treasurer Brad Wertz is gathering information and checking process for smooth transitions between treasurers.

