

Subject: Board of Trustees Chair Report
From: Mark de Solla Price, Board of Trustees Chair
To: Our Congregation
Date: March 30, 2008

Since today is the first congregational meeting since the January elections, I'd like to take a moment to introduce you to the new trustees, as I introduce you, could you please stand up or wave so folks know who you are so they can ask them those tough questions later...

Deborah Gambs (our vice-chair who couldn't be here today), **Diane Kaylor** (also on the board's executive committee), **Douglas Anderson**, **Fay Bennett Lord**, **Gary Geoghegan** (our recording secretary and on the executive committee), **Jennifer Hampshire**, **Mary Dugan** (our Treasurer), **Nancy Ruckes** (our Clerk, who also couldn't be with us today), **Natalie Webb**, **Peter Robinson, Jr.** (who is the chair of the Church Council) and **Wade Hampton**,

There are also non-voting ex-officio members of our board of Trustees: **Bruce Southworth** (our Senior Minister), **Anthony Johnson** (our Affiliated Minister), **Janice Marie Johnson** (our Director of Lifespan Religious Education), **Rosanna Rosado** (our Administrator) and **Jonathan Hampton** (our Youth Group Representative).

I'd like to begin my "Board of Trustees Chair Report" with a personal story: As most of you know, for Vinny and me, Community is very important. **We socialize with our neighbors in Greenwich Village**; we talk on the street and at the coffeehouses; Vinny cuts their hair, and we have folks over for dinner all the time. Knowing these facts, it's not surprising that **we love to shop at the Green Market in Union Square on Saturdays**.

A few weeks back, **an elderly neighbor asked us if we'd do some shopping for her**. She gave us some folding money which I put into an envelope to keep separate from the rest of the cash in my wallet and I wrote down a shopping list of sorts of her wishes. Being that it was the Green Market, it wasn't a checklist of things to buy, but concepts and directions of what she had in mind.

Shopping for her things took a lot longer than normal. When buying for ourselves, we just pick things up that look good as we go along, but in shopping for our elderly neighbor, we walked through all the vendors at Union Square before we started buying, so we'd make the best choices.

Vinny's college training was in accounting, so he kept tallying up and re-counting the money and receipts in that envelope to make sure we didn't lose track of anything, and that we spent it wisely. I kept checking our "marching orders" to see that we were buying what she wanted. There was an extra level of care picking out each item for her.

If we were Catholics, the Dioceses would own this building and all the clergy and staff would work for them. If we were Catholics, today's Congregational Meeting would be much quicker, as us congregants wouldn't have a lot of say in running things.

Happily, we are **Unitarian Universalists**, and our system doesn't work that way. As Peter read in the opening words "I Am Your Church", **this is our church, quite literally.** This arrangement is called **Congregational Polity.**

[At our Congregational Quarterly meeting I distributed a yellow handout on **Congregational Polity**, which is attached as pages 6-7 of this report]

Our budget is that envelope of money, and our bylaws is that shopping list or those marching orders.

As voting members of our congregation, we collectively own this building and the rest of our real estate on this block. It's hard to know what **"market value" is for real estate** unless you actually sell it, but I'm told that it's somewhere in the range of **\$40,000,000** (some might say it's only worth \$20,000,000, but I'll use the \$40,000,000 guess for now) and we have something like 300 members, so **each of you own something like \$130,000 worth of real estate** on this block. Community Church of New York Unitarian Universalist also has an **"endowment" or investment fund of about \$15,000,000**, so **each of you have about \$50,000 of income-producing investments**, in addition to the real estate.

Unfortunately, to keep this place running so we can grow as a caring, justice-making, anti-racist, diverse, spiritual community, **it costs us about \$2,000,000 each year**, so before we get to the section where we budget for next year, don't worry, I'm not going to actually ask each voting member to actually write that check for the full **\$7,000 at each voting member would really owe for this next year.**

As you know, the **annual budget pledge drive kicked off today**, and you might have noticed that our goal this year is \$140,000, or **about \$470 per voting member.** So where does the remaining **\$6,530 of extra income per voting member come from, you might ask?** I'm glad you asked.

That's how much we have to make through **wise endowment investments that produce income** and wise use of our **real estate for rental**, such as our **Guest House Off Park**, that generate that much needed **rental income**.

If we didn't have that, **we'd have an annual budget of only \$140,000, which many congregations have to cope with**. They can't afford paid ministers, professional religious educational programs, and their own physical space for Sunday worship service and great program spaces for events throughout the week that further the mission of the church.

They can't afford to fund programs like our amazing Music program and Volunteer Choir, Action for Justice, Anti-Racism, Buddhist Explorers, Community Women, UU United Nations and Global Affairs, or have Intern and Sponsored Students

There is no way they could afford to run a homeless shelter or give **Ethelwyn Doolittle Justice and Outreach Fund** grants each year.

Nor would they be able to have their minister's sermons broadcast on **WQXR** and cable TV to such a important audience who so desperately needs to hear the voice of liberal religion, especially at times like these.

Fortunately, with your help, we can and do!

Many of you have said that you're not really clear about our Bylaws mean or what the Board of Trustees actually do. Let me read from our bylaws:

Section 7.3. Powers and Duties. Subject to actions taken by the Congregation pursuant to Section 5.2, **the Board shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Church. The Board shall have custody and control of all property and funds of the Church, shall conduct the business affairs, shall supervise the management and administration of the Church, it being understood that the conduct of worship services and pastoral duties are reserved to the Ministers.** The Board shall provide what it deems to be succinct reports at all regular meetings of the Congregation, covering what to be all important discussions and decisions of the Board which have taken place since the last regular meeting of the Congregation, and the Congregation shall have the authority to deliberate upon, and make decisions with respect to such of these matters as it seems advisable.

Well, that's what we're doing here today. And just like that story I told earlier, the board of trustees has a huge, extra responsibility more than all other congregation members, committees, or staff people, because **WE are the one's who** are spending **YOUR money** and caring for **YOUR assets**.

That is why we lose sleep and countless meeting hours working and worrying about **OUR budget** and **OUR bylaws**. After all, we're not spending some Diocese money, **we're spending YOURS**.

I urge you to **read our bylaws – there are two-dozen copies around the room today** they are a living document that defines our responsibilities, accountability, and expectations of how things should work. If you'd like a copy, it's on the website, or we can e-mail you or send a paper copy.

The Board of Trustees meet usually on the **third Wednesday of each month** [with additional meetings on April 8th and May 13th] and **all members are welcome to observe**. The minutes of every meeting are posted on the Board of Trustees bulletin board and is sent out electronically to any member who signs up on our website under "**Community**" and then under "**Opt In-Mailing List**" and check "**CCNY Board Minutes**")

In a little bit, Natalie Webb will introduce what we'll be doing in our **Congregational Assessment** starting next year and Winifred Zubin will be introducing our **Budget Process** for 2008-09.

This is all **part of our stewardship process together**, which starts with our **Budget and Annual Plan** (what do we intend to do) and continues with our **Congregational Assessment** (evaluating how are we doing) and then our **Strategic Planning and Vision** (what sort of place do we want to be in ten years).

Right now, as a board, we're working on Improving accountability and strengthening these plans, following up on the facilitators' reports and clear ways of communicating with one another, with the congregation, and with the senior minister and staff.

As you all know, Molly Scott retired last week; Rosanna has announced that she'll be moving on once her contract with us is over at the end of June, **so the question of staffing is taking much of our focus these days.**

Part of this stewardship process is included in the bylaw amendment we're proposing today to help clarify administrative staffing accountability and empower Ministerial work.

Some other specific accomplishments have been the hiring of Victoria Fedechko, **Off Park Guest House** Operator and Facilities Scheduler; adopting an **Earth Stewardship Policy** [distributed as a green handout, which is attached as page 8 of this report]; the long broken **sidewalk out front has been replaced,**

We've fixed problems with our Church's computer server, fixed or **added internet network jacks** in every rentable or **program space** and this has get us ready for the next step in better communications.

Thanks to Erin Tower's great detective work, and Rosanna's efforts we've finally found a vendor who has repaired the oven and stove and we're thrilled that **our kitchen is back in operation.**

We're working on Leadership Development and Volunteer Empowerment **with tools such as our BOAT training day and upcoming Right Relations programs** and participation in **Metro NY District Annual Meeting, General Assembly,** and **Unitarian Universalist Leadership Team Institute (UULTI).**

You'll notice index cards and pens around the chairs. You can use them to scribble a note of an idea you have while waiting for your turn to speak. **You can also use them for any Questions, Ideas or Suggestions about our meeting today or anything about our church, please write it on a card and give it to me** at our break or at the end of the meeting [or put them in the Board of Trustees mail box]. **If you'd like me to follow-up and get back to you, please include your name, phone or e-mail address.**

If there is any document or piece of information to you hear about today that you'd like a copy of, we have a clipboard up front where you can give us your e-mail address and request, and we'll send it right out to you.

There's another clipboard up here with a signup list to be considered as a delegate to the Metro NY District Annual meeting in Stamford on May 2/3.

If any voting member would like to request more information on anything, or introduce resolutions not specifically listed on the agenda, please do so at the start of our **Questions and Answer** section of today's program.



Congregational Polity

A view by Mark de Solla Price

**Administration
[and Membership]**

Board of Trustees Resolutions
(Must be approved by a majority of elected trustees at a board meeting)

Board of Trustees
Representing the best interests of the congregation

Congregation Resolutions
(Must be approved by a majority of voting members at a congregation meeting)

Our Bylaws
The Enduring will of the Congregation
(Must be approved by a 2/3 majority of voting members at a second congregation meeting)

Congregation

**International, Federal, State and Local
Government**

Interdependence: renewing congregational polity

A publication of
The UUA Commission on Appraisal 1997

Mutual Accountability

Governance of a congregation is spelled out most clearly in its bylaws. However, custom and practice govern much of the day-to-day operation. Ministry is the task of the whole church - the governing board, minister(s), staff, and membership. How this group works together to further the goals of the church is critical to its success. Understanding that these relationships are based on mutual accountability can help correct the anti-clericism that sometimes occurs in our congregations. While not spelled out in our formal agreements [except, for example, in the minister's letter of agreement], the concept of sharing the ministry of the church is a part of the congregation's polity.

THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NEW YORK

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Earth Stewardship Policy

1. The Community Church of New York and its administration will adopt environmentally responsible practices to advance consciously sustainable living by the church within a larger context of the neighborhood, city, region, nation and world. Practices of concern include: building construction and renovation; carbon offsetting; management and planning for energy, lighting, food, and water; procurement; public or private lands; transportation; waste and disposal; and other areas.
2. Church administration will report to the Board in the areas of (a) waste reduction, recycling, and reusability; (b) energy conservation and efficiency; (c) reduction of toxic substances in product procurement; and (d) fair-trade consumption with an increased awareness of the good and services.
3. The church will proceed to improve accommodation and adherence to the spirit of this policy, in alignment with responsible stewardship practices, reasonable decision-making processes, and avoidance of conflicts with bylaws and previous policies.
4. The Board, church operating committees, ministry and staff will support a reverence for nature, environmental education, and environmentally responsible procurement, providing guidance to the church and its units, including the Council, Buildings and Grounds, Finance and administration.

Board Approved 24 January 2008