

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, March 4, 2026
Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Ryan Devine, Michael DeWitt, Selene Fabiano, Kristen Jensen, Beth Jerde, Carla McCasland, David Rosales, Pier Sun Ho, Helen Toy

Absent: (None)

Ex officio members: Rev. Marcus Liefert, Beth Pollard (Secretary), Lisa Maynard (Treasurer), Janae Heard (Operations Director)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING RITUALS

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Co-President Selene Fabiano, at 7:17 p.m. Carla McCasland did the chalice reading & lighting, Helen Toy read the Board Covenant, Michael DeWitt read the Land Acknowledgment Statement, and Lisa Maynard read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M/S, Beth Jerde/Michael DeWott) passed unanimously:

- a. Approve agenda
- b. Approve February 4 and 22, 2026 Board Meeting minutes
- c. Accept for congregational approval the minutes of the February 22, 2026 congregational meeting
- d. Accept Operations Director's report

3. MINISTER'S REPORT

Creating deeper connection: Using analogies from the book *Simple Church*, Rev. Marcus described how we've created a welcoming "entryway" with our Sunday morning greeting and worship. He called on us to consider ways we can expand on that, inviting people into a metaphorical "living room" for deeper small-group conversations, and then further into the "kitchen" where work is done and even more intimate conversations and greater familiarity emerge.

Worship attendance: Sunday attendance is growing: ~230 average (up from ~100 three years ago).

Meeting Space: Sunday afternoon demand for meeting space has grown, causing challenges for accommodating all the requests as well as creating scheduling conflicts. Staff is working with the Program Council to resolve.

Freestone Discernment Task Force update: The process is about a month behind the December timeline. Rev. Sam Wilson will facilitate a discernment circle with the Freestone Committee on March 15. A discernment circle open to all congregants will take place

March 22. Planning into May is underway for honoring and remembering important stories, as well as visioning.

Sunday Hospitality/Kitchen: Ann Harlow is retiring from kitchen leadership after an admirable tenure of around 20 years. To address this change, the Committee on Ministry is assessing needs for our Sunday hospitality ministry/committee, with assistance from Hilary Lorraine.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING

- a. **Board or Staff Announcements:** Pacific Western Region Regional Conference “Rising Resilient” April 10-12 in Sacramento. <https://www.uua.org/pacific-western/calendar/pwr-uua/rising-resilient>. Open to any member; UUCB leaders are encouraged to attend.
- b. **Report from Board listening presence (Helen Toy):**
Freestone: One person upset at the Board because she felt the covenant was broken over the action for a congregational vote; also, the Board needs to make it clear that the vote included either donating or selling the property, not just to sell.
Security: Heard about a security access issue, which has been reported.
- c. **Congregants who wish to speak to the Board:** No one asked to speak.

5. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

- a. **Welcoming new UUCB Members:** 18 new members have joined since September and were invited to attend the Board meeting. New members Maryann Maslan, Mark Jacobson, and Dee Stump introduced themselves, with Dee noting she had been an active UUCB member in the past.
- b. **Treasurer’s report:**
 - Financial report: Treasurer Lisa Maynard presented and explained the December 31, 2025 balance sheet and cash available schedule, providing clarity about the church’s assets, liabilities and fund balance.
 - Bequest: Lisa reported that a \$300,000 bequest has been received from the estate of Lee Lawrence. At the April Board meeting there may be a Finance Committee recommendation on its use, which could be to ask the congregation to approve using a portion of the bequest to repay the balance of the 2024 loan from the Board Designated Endowment to the Ministerial Housing Fund. Such repayment would allow all the rental proceeds from UUCB’s Lexington Avenue house to be used in the General Fund budget rather than for loan repayment to the Board Designated Endowment.
 - Calkins Trust: Lisa explained the work involved in administering the trust, and that appointing another trustee in addition to Anne Greenwood would help ensure the continuity of the work. M/S, Selene/Beth J. to appoint Anita Mermel as a second trustee for the Calkins Trust. Motion passed unanimously.

- c. **Board Orientation & Board Retreat:** The Board will be having an orientation and refresher on Board duties and responsibilities in a few weeks, as well as a visioning and goal setting retreat – likely in May.
- d. **Board Assignments; Board Listening Presence:** The assignments include the monthly Beacon column and Board meeting opening rituals. Selene will send google drive link. Helen will continue as the Listening Presence.
- e. **Board Committee Liaison Sign-ups:** Selene initiated a discussion, along with advice from Rev. Marcus, about whether liaisons were necessary or even appropriate given the Board’s delegation of authority to staff for managing programs. It was also noted that liaisons can create confusion about the Board/Board members’ roles. In addition, many of the liaisons are to programs covered by the Program Council. The board liaison to Program Council can provide updates to and get information about programs through Program Council. It was the consensus of the Board to focus its appointments to those positions required by the bylaws, identified in the Governance Manual, or otherwise needed for a particular purpose. See attached table for assignments made by the Board.
- f. **April Beacon Article:** Beth Jerde is writing her article about UUCB’s Red Resistance Mini-hat fundraising project for Cubans, Gazans, and local immigrants. A collaboration by the Peace Committee, Textile Arts Group, and Social Justice Council, the project is inspired by Norwegians who wore red hats in solidarity and resistance against Nazi’s during World War II.

Carla raised the concern that the Beacon is hard to read on a phone and asked if that can be improved. Rev. Marcus will ask Rev. Kathryn and Charis for an update on formatting changes they were exploring.

Kristin asked that the Board agendaize communications as a strategic issue, noting the need to keep up with and get ahead of changes in how younger people get information and communicate. Rev. Marcus supported the idea of Board vision and policy direction on communication. Congregant Larry Nagel added that visibility for visually impaired members is also a consideration for the website and other communications.

6. BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS:

Kristin noted that the Membership Committee and its welcoming team have an active role in engaging new members as a form of ministry.

7. CLOSING COMMENTS: None

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm, after which the Board reconvened in Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Pollard, Secretary

Attachment: Board Member Committee & Liaison Assignments

BOARD MEMBER COMMITTEE & LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS: 2026-2027

Per Bylaws or Congregational Action	Composition	Board Member(s)
Bylaws Review Task Force	Convenes every 3 years; no more than 2 Board members; total membership = 5. Updated May 2025	Will be needed by beginning of 2028
Discernment Task Force	Up to 2 Board members, minister + additional members	Pier Sun Ho, Kristen Jensen
Nominating	9 members + VP	Kristen Jensen

By Board Policy (Governance Manual)	Composition	Board Member(s)
Audit	3 members, includes at least one Board member who is not the Treasurer	Michael DeWitt
Awards	Past presidents + VP as ex officio	Kristen Jensen
Endowment	3 members + Treasurer as ex officio	Lisa Maynard, Carla McCasland
Finance	Treasurer + 1 member	Lisa Maynard + Pier Sun Ho
Widening the Circle	Up to 2 Board members, minister + 7 add'l members	Beth Jerde
Governance Manual	Board Discretion	David Rosales, Lisa Maynard, Pier Sun Ho

Other Board-Involved Committees/Task Forces	Composition	Board Member(s)
Safety Policy Task Force	Will report to Board in December & dissolve once Safety Policy Committee is formed	Helen Toy
Safety Policy Committee	Hasn't been formed yet	

Committee	Board Liaison
Appreciation	Carla McCasland
Program Council	David Rosales
Stewardship	Selene Fabiano
Buildings & Grounds	Ryan Devine