

Minutes of Zoom Conference Board Meeting November 16, 2020 Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association

Board Members Present: Diane Miller, Susan Rak, Richard Speck, Gloria Perez, Marni Harmony, Jaco ten Hove, Cathie Severance and Anne Spatola
Absent: Art Severance

Note: Board decisions are in bold type. *Action items are in red italic type.*

Opening Words from Spilling the Light by Teresa Soto: “Boldly You Must Hang Your Light” read by Marni Harmony

Learning Community- Richard led us in a discussion of three more chapters of the Ibram Kendi book, How to Be an Anti-Racist.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Standing reports:

Secretary- Gloria Perez- **The minutes of the October 21,2020 meeting were approved.** They will be sent to Duane Fickeisen for posting on the web site. I submitted the update of the Resident Agent to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Corporations Division. There was a \$10 filling fee which I paid. I have the receipt. *I will send it to Richard for reimbursement.* I continue reading the Kendi book. I am finding the Beloved Conversations curriculum very interesting and am feeling a spark of ideas that we might be able to use as we work on becoming more welcoming to retired ministers and their partners of color. *We may talk about that in our virtual retreat time.*

Treasurer- Richard Speck:

The 2021 budget planning will be put off to next meeting.

The spreadsheet for this month reflects a running figure from month to month. Starting in January I will do a month-by-month accounting posting in the spread sheet. This month \$400 was paid to Tanner Linden for the tech

work for the Odyssey. There was income of \$3400 for the month which brought brings us to a total of \$9800 leaving us \$6000 to the good which brings down the deficit. There were \$1000 in donations that were added to our account in several deposits during the past month. The balance of Glenn Snowden's bequest was put into the money market. At this point a question was raised about the ability to take money out of the endowment. Discussion followed about the procedure for taking money out of the endowment. Richard cited information from 2008 regarding the use of endowment funds. *Diane will look at current documents regarding ability to use funds from the endowment.*

Richard and Diane will confer on the endowment issues for the December meeting. We provided tech help to the Odyssey presenters to enable them to record their presentation. This was a part of the cost of the conference. Perhaps we could think about income and expenses for next year's conference.

Diane will confer with Jaco and Richard regarding wordage about an ask for donations possibly in Elderberries

The financial statement was approved.

Old and Ongoing Business:

Conferences – Anne Spatola

Planning for this spring conference is going ahead. Anne has our prospective tech person. She contacted several people regarding ideas for who could do the tech, finally checking in with her own congregation and is proposing her congregation's tech person, Evelyn Warren, for the job. Anne and Evelyn are both excited about the prospect of working on the conference together. Anne will check in with the planning team to discuss it. Roger Rochester will become the third person on the planning committee. Anne is feeling confident that things are going well. Keynote speaker will be Fred Muir. The planning team would like two odysseys. It would like to keep the same time scheme of a two-hour morning session and a two-hour late afternoon session. There will probably be a change to the breakout rooms. We will probably make out well cost-wise. Barbro volunteered to do a photo gallery again. There was discussion about the registration process noting that some people would like to send in the form with a check and some people would make payment online; the size of the registration form in Elderberries and the possibility of a subgroup to handle the process. *Anne*

will work with Jaco, Duane and Roger to set up a plan addressing these issues. The conferences dates are April 26th to April 28th. Fall conference dates are Oct.18,2021 to Oct 21,2021. The deposit from the Fall 2020 conference has been rolled over to be the deposit for the 2021 Fall conference. This deposit represents 20% of the cost of the retreat center. We committed to 50 attendees. We have until August 31st to decrease that number in order to avoid paying the full fee for the guarantee of at least 50 attendees. Barbro agreed to be on the planning team for this conference if it is held in person. Discussion followed about this being a conference for those able to get to the northeast corner of the country safely, will there be 50 people who will want to, or be able, to get there? The deposit of \$3700 is nonrefundable. There was discussion about whether we should reduce the number of expected attendees now or wait to just before the deadline, should we cancel the conference or continue with it just as it is. *Anne and Barbro will have conversations about these options.* Other thoughts which were brought up also included that any in person conference should have a virtual component; the need to think carefully about virtual conferences and creative envisioning about how UURMaPa wants to spend its energies; the difficulties in having a hybrid model of broadcasting a live conference with interaction from those virtually attending; difficulties of livestreaming a conference; having regions offer regional conferences and us doing continental conferences; a need for us to rethink how we do things. Diane is going to propose two Odysseys for the conference and is open to suggestions.

GA Planning Virtual- Susan Rak

Susan is proposing doing an event having some of the same components as we do in the in-person luncheon. We would welcome new retirees, share information and update any new information for retirees, offer the Creative Sageing Award. Should we do it before GA? **We will decide on that in next month's meeting.** *Susan will check for possible dates.* She may want to talk with Evelyn about tech support. There was a question about the recording of videos and where they might be posted. There was a suggestion to call this event an "In Gathering". **The board agreed on that terminology.**

Susan would like to come back in January with more information on support groups. Diane spoke about Zoom subscriptions and using personal

zoom accounts. Can the people involved in committees use their own accounts?

New Business:

Alternative to in person annual board gathering in 2021. *Diane will do a doodle for choosing perspective dates for the virtual retreat.* **The board decided on two-hour sessions once a day for four days.**

We are due for a financial review. Richard has a recommendation for an outside person to do a review. This person is the Treasurer of Richard's congregation. **The board agreed to asking this person.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gloria Perez, Secretary

President's Report- Diane Miller

My report:

- 1) The fundraising letter was mailed, and I didn't get it posted on UURMaPA website and FB, so that is on my to-do list. Question: Should I do another fundraising end-of-year message? Printed and postal mailed or electronically via Announce/FB/Website?
- 2) Printing done for notecards and letterhead, so I can mail those to you as needed.
- 3) I invite the two Odysseys for the spring conference, and welcome suggestions of possibilities
- 4) We need to make decisions in advance about how to use recordings of programs, etc. so that we have the right permissions.
- 5) I have a note about requests for publicity. Not sure what the Board needs to do on this.

Addendum to my report

Correspondence:

I had a request from Mira Mickiewicz and Karen G. Johnston to contact colleagues via our Facebook page about their research project on use of psychedelic substances, legal and not, in our congregations. I've sent the info on to Jaco for possible inclusion in Elderberries and to Theresa Novak for possible inclusion on our FB page.

Virtual GA program proposals:

We've had mixed results in the past for getting our proposals accepted. Now it is a new virtual world, with different options. Do we as UURMAPA want to propose some content for GA? Endorse something? Here are the UUA guidelines so you can think about this before our December meeting: <https://www.uua.org/ga/program/contribute/proposing>
Note -- this is separate from our Ingathering event.

Diane

Vice-President's Report – Susan Rak

Firstly, it is confirmed that UUA GA 2021 will again be a virtual event. So, in the new year we will have to create another event to replace the Luncheon - I expect following the excellent model created by Phyllis Hubbell.

Second, if any of you have suggestions for who might serve on the Creative Sageing panel - or who might be a candidate for that honor this year, please, please let me know!

My UURMaPA activities this month have been taken up with trying to get a handle on the "Peer Support Group" program UURMaPA sponsors. I am of the opinion that in this current state of not meeting in person, these virtual groups may take on greater importance. However, there may be logistical and financial challenges as we go forward.

In the VP job description, it states: "The VP organizes peer support groups for retired ministers as well as other groups that may be requested and reasonable."

In conversation with a few folks, notably Marnie Harmony, here is what I know.

background:

This program began in 2014 (?). It was intended to be for those newly retired and would be active for one year to allow participants to engage the process of adjusting to a new life as a retired UU minister. However, some of those groups continued on, adjusting their focus as the participants' needs shifted.

Some of those continuing groups are closed, limited to the original participants with the rare addition of a new member. Other groups seem to be open as participants come and go. (However, I do not know exactly how many groups are out there - I imagine not a huge amount - and who is convening them.)

Enrollment was via sign-ups at the Annual Luncheon at General Assembly, and the VP organized the groups after following up with those who indicated interest.

observations/questions:

- What is the UURMaPA Board's responsibility to these groups? Should there be any further accountability?
- Or is UURMaPA's role limited to just the start-up, and after that groups are free to do as they please?
 - IMO, I think it should be something between these two options: e.g., ask groups to just check in once a year to let the Board know if the group is continuing on and how they're doing - what's working, what's not. That means we'd need to know what groups are out there and who the conveners are. Getting this information is my next step (*).
- This year, without a in-person luncheon, we missed the opportunity to gauge interest and collect names. Some of the responses I received to my email in "UURMaPA Announce" might be in this vein, but I need to clarify with the respondents.

- Assuming we'd use the same process for organizing these groups as has been done, after identifying initial conveners, determining who has Zoom Pro accounts and thus can administer these groups. And if the potential conveners don't have a Zoom Pro account of their own, do we give a one-time fee reimbursement?

next steps:

- via Announce, send a link to a survey try to gather information about existing groups (*) ["if you currently convene or participate in a UURMaPA "peer/support" group, please complete this very brief survey."] and see what we learn
- follow up with those who responded to the first Announce message
- also, follow up on the "partners of color" group idea - that has been difficult to get off the ground as my initial messages did not clearly impart the Board's intention, as proposed by Marni Harmony.

respectfully submitted,

Susan Veronica Rak

VP UURMaPA Board

Addendum to Veep Report

I was invited by Melissa Carville-Ziemer to be part of a UUMA Chapter meeting to offer information on UURMaPA - but it was really to help address some issues or concerns some colleagues were dealing with. This was the Michigan Chapter who met yesterday (19 November) and the underlying concern was relationships between retired and settled ministers in the congregation (*). I was invited to simply "talk about UURMaPA" and share information.

(*) Melissa shared this story as background: a retired colleague was preaching as pulpit supply in the congregation and used the opportunity to contrast or object to the direction the settled minister seemed to be leading the congregation vis-a-vis antiracism work and confronting white supremacy and all the attendant issues that have arise re: the direction of the UUA.

This was offered as background and was not the context for the presentation I offered [attached].

But in follow up conversation/Q&A concerns around occurrences like this arose [not this particular one, but similar ones].

The question of how we can build better relationships between retired and serving colleagues arose...

- How do we do this and not lay it totally on the serving (younger) minister's shoulders?
- How can UURMaPA help? [realizing that there are no teeth (consequences?) in any of the UUMA/UURMaPA recommendations laid out in the 2012 TF report]
- How can we help our retired colleagues deal with the grief around the loss of "old ways" or the presumed passing of our liberal religious tradition, making way for (or even welcoming) the new?

(there might be other things - I will reread my notes at a later date and report further if I find anything)

I made no promises but thanked them for their input and promised I would take it back to the UURMaPA Board for further conversation.

I hope you all find ways to enjoy and savor the upcoming harvest festival holiday... honoring the people on whose land we rest.

bests,
Susan

Secretary's Report – Gloria Perez

I submitted the approved minutes of the October 21, 2020 board meeting to Duane Fickeisen for posting on our website under Governance on October 23, 2020. I filed the new Resident Agent information with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on November 9, 2020. There was a \$10.00 fee for doing so. I used my credit card and I have a printed receipt from the Mass. website confirming the transaction. I had a question about how I should sign the form. Since I could find no information about how to put my actual signature on the form, I decided that I would type in my name. The confirmation tells me that if the submission is rejected for any reason, their office will contact me. If the typed signature is not acceptable, I am sure they will tell me how to submit the form in the appropriate manner.

I am reviewing the chapters of How To Be An Antiracist.

The conversations we have had about how to be a welcoming place for ministers and partners of color are adding to my experience of the Beloved

Conversations curriculum. As I work on each lesson, I become inspired about possibilities which may have relevance for us. I look forward to more conversations on this topic in our meetings.

Respectively submitted Gloria Perez

Treasurer’s Report – Richard Speck

Here is my spreadsheet for finances. We have paid all the submitted expenses for the October conference. Not all of them were paid in October. We received more income than expenses. The current solicitation for donations is ongoing. We have received \$7,850 in September and October. I have deposited over \$4,000 in November thus far. We are closing the gap between income and expenses. I am writing thank you letters to all who have donated so they have a record for tax donations. I have begun planning the next budget and will have a draft shortly for your review.

Richard

	2020 Budget Revised	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	N ov -2 0	D ec -2 0	2020 Total	Budg et vs. Actua l				
INCOME	Septem ber 2020													
Member Donations	\$24,000.00	\$3,670.00	\$150.00	\$425.00	\$175.00	\$4,905.00			\$9,325.00	38.85%				
Member Donations Paypal	\$1,000.00		\$350.00	\$60.00	\$175.00	\$2,945.00			\$3,530.00	353.00%				
Memorial Gifts	\$100.00		\$35.00	\$18.00	\$5,011.08	\$0.00			\$5,064.08	5064.08%				
Faithify	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00			\$0.00					
Conference Fee Income	\$12,000.00	\$8,707.00	\$60.00	\$1,975.00	\$1,715.00	\$620.00			\$13,077.00	108.98%				
Conference Fee Income PayPal			\$60.00	\$760.00	\$880.00	\$380.00			\$2,080.00					
GA Luncheon Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00			\$0.00					
UU Grant - LGBT Program	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00			\$0.00					
UUMA Subsidy	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00			\$2,000.00	200.00%				

Luncheon Cost	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					
Transportation- President	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					
Transportation- Vice President	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					
Room and Board	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					
GA Fees & Misc	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					
Total General Assembly	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					
Communications													
Elderberries Publication	\$4,000. 00	\$2,067. 00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,257. 58	\$0.00		\$3,324. 58	83.11 %				
Fundraising Appeal	\$1,800. 00	\$53.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,101. 22		\$1,154. 22	64.12 %				
Peer Support Groups (video calls)	\$320.00	\$53.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$53.00	16.56 %				
Website	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	0.00 %				
Zoom				\$53.31		\$159.83		\$213.14					
Database Management	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	0.00 %				
Total Communications	\$6,420. 00	\$2,173. 00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,257. 58	\$1,261. 05		\$4,691. 63	73.08 %				
Other Expenses													
Retirement Planning Seminar Expense	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					
TMP Program Expense	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					
LGBTQ Program Expense	\$6,000. 00	\$4,225. 00	\$1,400. 00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$5,625. 00	93.75 %				
Saging & Unsung & Navius Awards	\$1,500. 00	\$1,500. 00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$1,500. 00	100.0 0%				
Postage	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$55.00	\$0.00	\$4.10	\$0.00		\$59.10	59.10 %				
Board Misc.	\$200.00	\$85.00	\$37.80	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$122.80	61.40 %				
Connections Network	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00					

President's Expense	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %					
Memorial Gifts - UUMA and Others	\$1,500.00	\$1,150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$250.00		\$1,600.00	106.67%					
PayPal Fees			\$13.09	\$28.58	\$37.50	\$109.94		\$189.11						
Bank Expenses			\$3.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$3.00						
Total Other Expenses	\$9,400.00	\$6,960.00	\$1,508.89	\$28.58	\$241.60	\$359.94		\$9,099.01	96.80 %					
Total Expense	\$45,520.00	\$38,694.00	\$1,508.89	\$28.58	\$4,039.18	\$3,405.99		\$47,676.64	104.74%					
Profit/Loss	-\$7,120.00	-\$26,317.00	\$146.11	\$3,504.42	\$4,161.90	\$6,444.01		-\$12,060.56	169.39%					
OPERATIONS SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)														
Donations to the Endowment														
Investment Earnings/(Loss)														
TOTAL SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)														
Ending Account Balance														
Endowment		\$54,689.95	\$54,689.84	\$56,910.45	\$58,589.68	\$57,762.02								
Money Market		\$14,180.53	\$14,182.93	\$14,185.33	\$18,187.87	\$19,202.16								
Checking		\$5,165.69	\$5,443.95	\$5,350.65	\$5,811.01	\$8,028.88								
Total		\$74,036.17	\$74,316.72	\$76,446.43	\$82,588.56	\$84,993.06								

Elderberries --Jaco tenHove

My nearly entire workload has been, as you probably know, the editing and layout of our Autumn Elderberries, which should be hitting mailboxes any day now.

Meanwhile, I anticipate a double lead for the next, Winter issue: *Our Online Support Groups* and *Our Precious Writings—Archived or Not?* So if any of you have anything to comment on either of those subjects, I'd welcome a statement toward this end, perhaps even sooner than later. Needn't be long, but your experiences and impressions are of interest, at least to me. As you wish, Buttercup.

And without a February conference to report on, the following Spring issue is currently without a lead focus, so any larger ideas for what our readers might be interested in come May would also be most welcome.

Appreciatively, --Jaco

Connections – Art Severance
Connections Board Report 11/2020

-I finally received a list of about 22 names of people who have retired with all the folders in one attachment, which I couldn't open. I asked for a smaller grouping like had been sent previously and am still waiting to hear, so new retirement notices have been sent this past month.

-I'm sorry to miss this meeting and last one due to schedule conflict with the UURMAPA Writing Workshop, which ends today.

-I continue my antiracism reading in *Stamped From the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi, after having finished his *How to be an Antiracist*.

-I continue leading weekly UURMAPA small group chat with 4 colleagues.

-I attended the Southern Region's virtual Regional Conference "Turn, Turn, Turn: Where Do we Go From Here" with UUA President, as Keynote Speaker.

Shalom, Art Severance, Connections Chair
Assistant Connections Chair – Cathie Severance

Hello,

There have been two minister deaths this week: Rev. Bruce Edmund Kennedy, and Rev. William Chester Mc Call.

Previously, obits and condolence cards were sent for Rev. Bruce Edmund Kennedy, Rev. Robert P. Throne, Rev. Linda M. Hansen, and Rev. Carl Bretz.

Until tomorrow,
Cathie

At-Large – Marni Harmony
11/20 UURMaPA Board Report
At-Large

Conversation with Barbara TenHove re: Nominating Committee Represented UURMaPA at Church Staff Finances “Council” meeting

Conversation with one UURMaPA member in my Good Offices role

Conversation with VP Susan re: peer groups

RE: Commission on Institutional Change report “Widening the Circle. I am finding it increasingly challenging to come up with actions that actually make sense for UURMaPA to consider. I am looking now at the section on “Living Our Values” and its recommendations. So here are two possible actions:

1. On our Zoom account, invite all retired ministers of color to join for their own conversation about why they are or are not involved with UURMaPA. After they have met as a group, ask if some/all/spokesperson might be willing to meet with the Board with thoughts to share, noting of course that we want to do our own work to be as welcoming as possible.
2. Perhaps create a communication/relationship with BLUU as allies to support older UUs of color....?

Conferences – Anne Spatola

November Board Report 2020

My focus this month has been working with Dennis and Lyn on the upcoming Spring conference. Following the Fall conference, the energy level has been somewhat heightened to move forward with more specific actions.

We developed a draft conference schedule and also a job description for a tech pro.

I sent out several messages to various sources soliciting names or leads for a tech. At this point, interest has been expressed by the individual who does our Sunday services. She and I have spoken in detail about the expectations and time commitment. A call with the planners will be set up and final determination will be made soon.

I am still working on securing another individual to work on the conference planning. So far, two have refused. A third contact has proved successful as he is willing to work on registration. Again, I need to introduce him to Dennis and Lyn and get their approval.

Rev Fred Muir has agreed to be the keynote speaker for the Spring. Barbro will be involved with preparing a slide show of attendees and securing photos for the memorial service.

Many contacts with Barbro and a zoom call to go over budget, evaluations, problems and recommendations for future conferences. There was an \$1885 profit from the conference. Evaluations were generally very positive with a many wanting a virtual component at future conferences. This enabled many more to participate. We had 138 individuals, 36 couples and 55 singles and 11 nonpaid attending. The highlight for many was connecting with others.

A strong recommendation was that we have all online registrations.

The planning team's full report is attached.

Barbro has volunteered to lead the planning for the Fall 2021 conference assuming it is **live**. She has broken down various roles needed for planning a live conference. She believes that smaller tasks involving more individuals is much more manageable. I look forward to working with her again as the Board liaison.

Regarding the Fall conference at Barbara Harris Center, I reviewed the contract and contacted the center to clarify some issues. Our deposit of approximately \$3700 is nonrefundable. Unless they cancel, we are obligated for at least that amount which represents a minimum of 50 attendees. We can reduce that number up to 45 in advance

without penalty. We can certainly increase up to a couple of weeks before the conference if they are able to accommodate us. We will have to be very firm on our registration deadlines.

Barbaro's final report:

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

UURMaPA Virtual Fall Conference October 12-14, 2020

Report from the Planning Team

Planning and implementing the first ever virtual UURMaPA conference was definitely a challenge and we learned a great deal in the process. Charles and Alison Stephens and I appreciate very much the leadership by and support we received from Ginger Luke and Anne Spatola. The decision by the UURMaPA Board to go 100% virtual was obviously the right one and so was the decision to hire a Zoom Master. Jaco and Barbara Wells ten Hove gave us invaluable advice early on about the world of virtual conference planning

We understood from the beginning that planning a virtual conference meant everything had to be prepared in advance, unlike a traditional conference where some planning always is done on sight. However, we did not realize how intense a virtual conference is starting a week before it begins and continuing through the conference. The amount of details needing attention before, during and after each session were unexpected and at times overwhelming.

As far as the overall schedule, offering a total of six segments of about two hours each over three days and having all segments begin at the same time each of those days worked quite well. To minimize "screen fatigue" the two daily segments were separated by a long break. Having six distinct segments allowed us to focus on core conference events: A worshipful ingathering with small breakout groups for check in; a Remembrance Service; a Theme Presentation; Topics of Interest for Small Groups; the Odyssey; and UURMaPA business with reports from the UUA and the UUMA, with a closing worship service to bring the conference to a close.

Registrations began materializing soon after the summer issue of Elderberries was published and continued even as the conference began. In total, 138 individuals were registered:

36 couples;
55 singles;
1 couple with waived fees;
8 individuals with waived fees; and 1 individual on scholarship.

The budget income, which was all from registrations, came to a total of \$4,360.00, surpassing our estimate of \$2,600 by \$1,760, while actual expenses of \$2,474.34 came in lower than the estimated \$2,960, resulting in a \$1,885.66 windfall.

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Overall, the conference was very well received. From evaluations and feedback, we received, it is clear that the best part of the conference was all about connecting with friends and colleagues in meaningful ways. It also became clear just how much members appreciated and valued being able to attend, members who could not afford travel and registrations for a conventional conference as well as members with mobility issues. A majority of evaluations included the expressed hope that a virtual offering will remain an option even when we are able to move back into a conference center location.

As is expected, there were offerings that got very high evaluations by some people and not so high by others. One evaluation expressed concern about the odyssey presentation, that it missed the mark of being a “spiritual” journey. On the positive side, the last-minute addition of a slide show featuring photos of registrants was a huge hit and ended up being played at the beginning of each day, before the first segment of programming.

We could naturally go on with much more information about virtual conference planning, but here are some “if we had known then what we know now” comments that may be helpful in future planning.

First, recruit a larger Planning Team to manage the distinct areas of responsibilities without overburdening any one Team member:

1. **A Convener:** Oversees the overall program schedule, recruits and works with Theme Presenter, coordinates with the conference center staff, works closely with the Zoom Master for the virtual elements of the conference, interfaces with the Board Liaison, coordinates Board participation and programming, who meets regularly with the entire Planning Team on Zoom or other platform, and provides timely reports to the Board.
2. **Registrations:** Handles all registrations and interfaces with UURMaPA’s Webmaster and Treasurer, works with conference center

staff and puts together name tags and packets with information for on-sight conference attendees and appropriate information for virtual attendees.

3. **Publicity:** Responsible for articles in Elderberries, E-Blasts on UURMaPA- announce and postings on UURMaPA's Facebook page.
4. **Worship and Odyssey:** Recruits individuals to lead Service of Remembrance and worship services as well as work with Odyssey presenter(s) once UURMaPA President has identified who that is.
5. **Program:** Plans for and recruits individuals to lead Topics of Interest offerings for small groups and breakout groups for check-ins as well as possibly facilitating virtual Hangout Time at the end of each day.
6. **Virtual Enhancement:** Puts together slides featuring photos of all individuals memorialized in the Service of Remembrance, creates a

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slideshow featuring photos of all registrants and recommends and produces any additional enhancements that fits the theme.

7. **Hospitality:** Plans for on-sight conference's daily happy hour and evening gatherings to ensure appropriate beverages and snacks.

Second, it is essential that all registrations be done exclusively on-line, both in terms of paying and providing all the needed registration information.

Third, emphasize the importance of couples logging in on separate devices (with exceptions for those who benefit from partner's help or presence) for those events that feature breakout groups. That way one device represents one individual and group size can be better managed.

Fourth, provide multiple opportunities for small group connection and interaction.

Fifth, hangout time at the end of each day featured only on one Zoom account (which translates to one room for all who want to hang out).

Sixth, allow more time for transitions from a main presentation to breakout groups and have more explicit signage/slides to help people during transitions. Redundancy is a positive concerning in the virtual world.

Seventh, offer Topics of Interest for Small Groups in a second time slot if leaders are willing and able to offer their topic a second time.

Eighth, be more directive about music and song selections during the entire virtual conference.

Ninth, make time to review in detail the “order of service” prepared by Tech Professional to make sure every “I” is dotted, and “t” is crossed.

Tenth, having a tech professional who is experienced, has appropriate equipment to handle more than 100 attendees, is able to seamlessly manage and navigate whatever virtual platform is used (Zoom or other) and is responsive to and works well with retired folk like us.

Even with knowing now what we did not know then, planning the Fall 2020 Conference was both enjoyable and meaningful. And, it was a real privilege, and honor to be able to bring the Virtual World of Zoom to a device near so many of our members.

Respectfully Submitted

The Reverend Barbro Hansson,
The Reverend Charles and Alison Stephens