

UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting Minutes — February 24, 2026

Board decisions are in bold-face type; action items are in red.

Reports, NOT incl. Treasurer's (which is delayed), follow the meeting minutes.

Present: Joy Atkinson, George Buchanan, Barbro Hansson, Anne Marsh, Richard Nugent, Christine Robinson, Richard Speck, Janet Tillman.

Absent: Charles Stephens

Opening: Richard S. called the meeting to order at 3:02pm Eastern - 2:02pm Central - 1:02pm Mountain - 12:02pm Pacific. Barbro offered opening words by Kate Lore, inspired by this year's Super Bowl.

Agenda Review: Barbro asked to add "UURMaPA in the Loop" to the agenda. Christine reported that the Transitions Review team will do a webinar with the UUMA Retired Ministers Chapter instead of UURMaPA, so that item was removed from the agenda.

Check-in followed, responding to the question: *What is blooming inside you this month?*

Consent Agenda was accepted.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Conference Coordinator Issues:

A. Conferences: Barbro had sent a revised Conference Coordinator job description. All agreed that the job as presently constituted is huge, and that it will need paring down to make it manageable. This in turn depends in large part on whether the Board decides to move from two full conferences each year to one. A long and thoughtful discussion followed on this latter issue, and a variety of perspectives were shared.

We took a ten-minute break, after which discussion resumed.

Although we were not in total agreement in every particular, we recognized that holding two full-fledged conferences each year is not sustainable. We simply do not have enough volunteers, and those we have are at risk of burnout. The general sense of the meeting was that we hold one full conference each fall, and have smaller-scale, less labor-intensive programming at other times of the year. These smaller programs could include the most popular elements of our conferences (Odysseys, Remembrance Services, and Connecting Rooms), either as one mini-conference or as separate events; webinars on topics of interest; and/or programs offered by members (e.g., a meditation retreat). We could experiment with various offerings, but whatever we do will require volunteers. Barbro noted that the planning team is committed to ensuring that the fall 2026 conference will happen; any changes would take effect in 2027.

Barbro moved that Board vote to go to one annual fall conference with alternative programming at other times. Christine seconded and offered an amendment that Board will work on mechanisms to get feedback and participation from membership. Barbro accepted this amendment. There were seven yes votes and one abstention. The motion passed.

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Richard S. will draft an email within a week or so, conveying this decision to the membership and inviting folks to volunteer to help with annual conferences and alternative programming. Board members are welcome to suggest edits to Richard's draft. Christine suggested that we also use the upcoming conferences to raise awareness of these issues and put out calls for proposals for alternative programming.

B. Conference Coordinator: Going to just one full conference each year may help efforts to recruit a Conference Coordinator to take Barbro's position when she steps down at the end of June. Even so, we need to redefine position to reduce the number of tasks. Christine offered to work with Barbro on reducing or reallocating tasks and restructuring the job description, possibly breaking it down into several different jobs.

It was suggested that the Nominating Committee could go back to their nominees to see if the one-conference-only decision would help them say "yes" to taking the position, and to ask what else might make it possible for them to accept. Richard S. and Barbro will discuss the folks on the Nominating Committee's list and see what might be possible. We could also consider having two co-coordinators. Richard N. wondered about Keith Kron as a possibility. He will reach out to Keith to see if he has officially retired.

George will put the bios of the other Board nominees in the February *Elderberries*.

2. BIPOC Members:

Janet would like to see if BIPOC UURMaPAs are interested in forming an affinity group. Richard S. had compiled a list of BIPOC members and sent it to the Board for additions. Janet will reach out.

3. Skill-sharing network: Janet reports that this is off to good start. She'll keep the website updated as additional skills are offered and/or requested.

4. UURMaPA in the Loop:

Barbro asked the Board to get started on planning content for the "UURMaPA in the Loop" presentation at the fall conference. We will have 20-25 minutes. Awards presentations will be in a separate time slot. Richard S. will include information on the changes we made in conference plans, and Janet could include the possible formation of a BIPOC group. Last year, Board transitions were announced, but we have less time this year, so may skip that.

5. Fundraising: We will postpone the update on fundraising to a future meeting.

6. Board Goals: Richard S. included a revised set of our Board goals with the agenda he sent out. He asks that everyone take a look and let him know if there are any changes or updates.

7. Thank you, Barbro!

Janet offered thanks to Barbro for all her years of hard work on our excellent conferences, and noted that Barbro has been doing the work of (at least) 12 people. Those shoes will be hard to fill. The Board joined in heartfelt gratitude.

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Closing: Barbro read from "The Pond in Winter," from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*.

Adjourned at 5:04pm Eastern - 4:04pm Central - 3:04pm Mountain - 2:04pm Pacific

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 24, at 3pm Eastern - 2pm Central - 1pm Mountain - 12pm Pacific

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REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR FEBRUARY 24, 2026, BOARD MEETING

1) Vice President's Report - Charles Stephens

I am happy to report that the Committee of the UURMaPA Awards met on Feb, 9th via zoom. In attendance were Susan Rak, Ned Wright and Charles Stephens. We discussed the two UURMaPA Awards, past procedures and potential recipients for 2026. We have two strong candidates for these awards, but we want to meet again, via Zoom, on March 4 to finalize our choices for these two awards.

Between Ned Wright and Susan Rak, the most recent procedure that has been followed in presenting these two awards has been that the VP has presented both awards--reading from the certificates prepared for both award recipients. And presenting them each with the \$500 that comes with each Award. There is also the memory that in previous years, the VP may have presented the Creative Sageing Award, and the President may have presented the Unsung UURMaPAN. I would appreciate the Board discussing if they have recommendations for how these two awards should be presented at our April 2026 Conference. The Conference Planners have designated 20 minutes for the presentation of these two awards.

One additional request I have is that the Board give approval (if need be) for the treasurer to expend the amount of \$1000, \$500 for each of these awards. I will inform the treasurer and the Board of who the recipients will be, after our March 4 meeting and after conferring with our UURMaPA President.

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2) Connections Coordinator's Report - Janet Tillman

A. Status of 2026 Board Goals assigned to the Connections Coordinator

1. Explore (and develop, if feasible) a member skills exchange/skill sharing section on the website.
 - In January, I sent an email to the membership asking them to imagine UURMaPA as a virtual community where members share their unique talents, knowledge, and skills. In response to the email and to initiate the establishment of the Skill-Sharing Network, three very generous UURMAPA members are offering the following skills.

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Beginning Spanish – Jeff Jones (Smyrna, GA)

Composting/Recycling – Jaco ten Hove (Bellingham, WA)

Appreciating Technology + Tips on Maintaining an Old Building – Norm Horofker (Halifax, Nova Scotia)

- As a result of the email announcing the Skills-Sharing Network, a member stepped up to offer his skills as a webmaster to a minister who had expressed the need for this skill. I think it will take a while for additional skills to be added to the Network and more desired skills to be identified by members. Thus far, I am pleased with the initiation of this project.

B. Create new focused-interest connection groups.

- As a result of the discussion at last month's Board meeting about the formation of a focused-interest group on supporting members experiencing financial stress, I have rewritten the description and given the group a new title. See below:

Living with Less: Supporting each other as we deal with financial challenges such as rising healthcare costs, reduced or fixed incomes that may not keep pace with inflation, accumulation of debt from previous decades, managing the costs of senior living, and adapting finances after the loss of a spouse. Participants can share experiences and learn practical strategies for navigating financial stress.

I am looking for a convener/facilitator for the *Living with Less* group and will publicize it as soon as I find the convener(s).

- I continue to work on the formation of a *Living with Chronic Illness* group. As soon as I have identified two co-facilitators/conveners, I will publicize the group.
- Of the three new focused-interest groups publicized in November 2025, two of the three successfully added members. The *Living and Dying Sustainably* group did not have sufficient members to start the group.

C. Explore a focused-interest support group for BIPOC members.

- With the help of Richard and other board members, I am compiling a list of BIPOC UURMAPA members. Originally, I planned to form a work group of BIPOC members to discuss how to go forward with a BIPOC focused-interest group. I can do this, but it may be best that the Board forms a work group to address how to be more diverse and inclusive. So far, the list of BIPOC members is around 13.
- The bigger question may addressing what needs to be done to see that BIPOC retired ministers/partners feel welcome in UURMaPA. It may be best to put this group on hold until we have had the common read on diversity and inclusion. Area Connectors

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- There has been no change in the number of Area Connectors since my January 2026 report Recruitment for Area Connectors is an ongoing and challenging process.
- I am in the process of sending all Area Connectors and updated roster of the retirees/partners in their areas.

D. Connection Groups

- There has been no change in the General-Interest Groups. (Total Groups Active – 12, Total Participants – 69).

E. Connecting New Retirees/Partners

- I was not notified of any new retirees in February.

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3) Conference Coordinator's Report

I'm happy to report that our UURMaPA Zoom Master, Cynthia Becker, subscribed to an annual Vimeo video hosting account, which enabled us to make all the video recordings from the fall 2025 conference available to the 37 registrants who requested them.

Regarding the Conference Coordinator's responsibilities and job description, look forward to a productive conversation during our February Board meeting.

I approached Cynthia Becker a month or two ago to check in with Jaco ten Hove about the UURMaPA web page and reorganizing the Activities page. They are in the process of making it more user-friendly.

In a separate conversation with the NomCom chair, I mentioned that I'm eager to begin transitioning with whomever is nominated to serve as Conference Coordinator.

Spring 2026 Conference, April 27-29: "Keeping It Together When Democracy Is Falling Apart"

- Plans are coming along well. As of this writing, we have 42 registrations. Of those, 38 are ministers, 5 are Partners, 2 signed up for the Wilmington pod, and 3 for the Kingston pod.
- The registration form includes a new question with a checkbox: "The conference team strives to follow best practices for accessibility. Would you like a private consultation about your needs?" Those who check the box will be contacted to discuss their specific needs and how the planning team can provide appropriate support.
- Alison Stephens has joined the Planning Team as Scribe, and Jef Gamblee is returning as tech assistant.

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- At this time, we are aware of only two regional pod locations, one at the UU Church in Wilmington DE, and one at the UU Church in Kingston MA.
- The draft program schedule has been uploaded to the UURMaPA website, and I have included a PDF copy of it with my report.
- I will have more to report in March. The next planning team meeting is scheduled for March 6 at 1:30 pm Eastern Time.

Fall 2026 Conference - October 19-21:

Jeff Briere and I hope to plan a fall theme gathering before too long. It would be great to have the Conference Coordinator nominee on board to attend.

Duane Fickeisen and Roger Rochester are our two Odyssey presenters for the fall. Thank you, Richard.

Spring 2027 Conference - April 5-7

Fall 2027 Conference - October 25-27

The above dates do not conflict with major religious holidays.

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4) Passages Coordinator's Report - Joy Atkinson

The following Board Report combines the reports for January and February.

Since the December 18, 2025 Board meeting, I have sent notices to the membership regarding the deaths of the following beloved colleagues: the Revs Walter Wieder (1944-2025), John Fordon (1925-2025), Margaret Barnhouse (1955-2026), Patricia Trudeau (1952-2025), Michael O'Kelly (1934-2025), Christopher Raible (1933-2026) and James Covington ((1942-2025). They will be missed. I received no new notices regarding the deaths of partners in that time frame.

After some confusion about what was being asked of potential new volunteers to prepare more complete obituaries for ministers, to be published in Elderberries and added to the archives, it looks like we have just one person willing to take on this task, the Rev. Kathleen Fowler. It would be helpful if we could find one or two more volunteers. Jay Atkinson is wanting to step back from doing this, though he is willing to consult with others willing to take over. I will work with Jay and Kathleen to try to find others to help.

Mentor/Companionship program: As soon as we have about 20 new members since we last asked new members if they would like to work for a year with a mentor, we can begin a new mentoring/companionship program. The pilot program begun last year will wind up in March. Reports from mentors and mentees have been positive.

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5) UUA/UUMA Liaison and Chaplain-at-Large - Christine Robinson

This month I have focused on finding ways to introduce the 117 (at last count) UURMaPans who have asked for access to *Sing Out Love*, mostly through attempting to get a couple of its pieces included in the Spring Conference. Still working on the logistics of that.

I am also planning to take the webinar on how to use *SOL* this week along with the UUABQ music team, looking for more information for myself and to see if that webinar might be put on for UURMaPAN's sometime in the future.

I am pursuing getting a workshop from the Transitions Review Team for later in the Spring. They expressed interest in talking to UURMAPANS, not only to explain their project and some of their findings, but also to hear about our experiences in searches of the past so make sure they are not re-inventing the dysfunctions of the past. (This is the sort of honoring of Elders and our experience that we want to encourage and I am being very nice to them!) I expect more information by the time of our meeting.

The UUA's Pre-Retirement Seminar planners have declined our offered participation at their seminar next month, which is a disappointment. Richard Nugent will be a speaker, however, and he has agreed to put in an 'advertisement' for UURMaPA in his remarks.

The group from the Retired Minister's UUMA chapter has produced some resources to head off conflict between working ministers and retired colleagues who are participating in their congregations. I asked Richard for permission to put them on our website and have been working with Jaco to that end.

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Treasurer's Report has been delayed...