

UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting — April 21, 2026

Board decisions are in bold-face type; action items are in red. Reports appended to minutes.

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

Opening: Richard S. called the meeting to order at 3:06pm Eastern - 2:06pm Central - 1:06pm Mountain - 12:06pm Pacific. Janet offered opening words by Bernadette R. Burns.

Agenda Review: Joy asked to add an item for setting Board retreat dates.

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

Consent Agenda was accepted.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Treasurer's Update

Richard N. announced that we're financially sound, and that he will have a report for us soon. Richard S. noted that both our endowments are doing well. Richard S. also communicated with the law firm handling disbursement from a member's estate to clarify that we did indeed receive these funds.

2. Conferences Coordinator Job Description

Barbro had sent out her revised job description. Janet moved to accept, Charles seconded. **Board voted unanimously to approve.**

3. Spring Conference Items

- Barbro announced (with a big sigh of relief) that income from the Spring Conference registrations has reached the budgeted goal. We now have 184 registrants. Inviting survivors to attend the Remembrance Service is a big task, but reaching out is worthwhile, as we will have nine next-of-kin guests this time.
- Raising the registration fee: The Planning Team feels that theme presenters should receive \$1,500 (rather than the \$500 we've offered in the past) and we also need to re-negotiate compensation for our Zoom Master, who has been going above and beyond her job description. In addition, we have a tech assistant who is volunteering this time, but should be paid in future. Barbro estimates that total conference expenses will need to go to \$10-11,000. After a thoughtful discussion, Christine moved and Janet seconded that beginning with the Fall Conference, **fees will be \$60 for early registration, \$80 for late. Passed unanimously.**

Bio/stretch break for 10 minutes

UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting — April 21, 2026

Spring Conference Items (cont.)

- In the Loop (Tuesday afternoon session): Barbro reviewed the schedule and asked speakers to describe themselves for those with visual impairments. As previously decided, Richard S. will talk about conference changes, Janet will discuss small groups and skill-sharing, Joy will talk about the mentoring program, and Christine will discuss *Sing Out Love*, changes at the former Office of Church Staff Finances, and special webinars. **All were asked to send their scripts to Zoom Master Cynthia or to Richard S., so that Cynthia can make smooth transitions. Barbro reminded all speakers to submit a video release form.**
- Barbro noted that Diane Miller's Odyssey and Deborah Pope-Lance's introduction will mention sexual misconduct and abuse. Christine is the Wednesday Chaplain, so she may be called upon by folks who need to talk about the issues Diane and Deborah raise.

4. Webinar Funding:

Christine has found a presenter for a webinar on "AI for Retired Ministers" in September, and inquired about a budget for that presentation. Richard S. noted that funds are available in the budget we already approved. **Christine will contact the presenter.** Charles noted that the New Member Welcome event is also held in September. **Charles and Christine will check with each other on dates to avoid conflicts.** If we decide to charge a small fee for webinars and ask attendees to register, Christine would need someone to take on registrar duties.

In response to a question, Christine said that the *Sing Out Love* virtual hymnal may not make a good webinar topic after all. What about presentations by UUA and/or UUMA staff? We usually have some denominational programming in the Fall Conference. Suggested speakers included Sofia Betancourt, Rebekah Savage, and the new UUMA Director.

5. Rainbow History Project Update:

Richard S. has corresponded with Mary Bernard at Skinner House. They have again had delays, but now plan for the book to go to press in May, with hopes that it will be out in time for GA.

6. DRUMM Donation:

Richard N. has sent a check to DRUMM for UURMaPA's donation, so we will be listed as a sponsor. Richard S. has been exploring how best to reach out to DRUMM and BLUU to encourage their retiring members to join UURMaPA.

7. New Obituary Editor:

Joy reported that Kathleen Fowler will be taking over the writing of ministers' obituaries from Jay Atkinson. Richard S. will draft a thank you letter to Jay for his many years of service. Barbro suggested to Charles that Jay be considered for next year's Unsung UURMaPAn award. Janet has asked Area Connectors to let her know of partner deaths.

UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting — April 21, 2026

8. Conference Coordinator:

Now that a new job description has been approved, Richard S. asked Board members to think about people to suggest to the Nominating Committee for this position and to send names to Beth Miller. Barbro reminded Richard S. to send out his e-blast on conference changes. According to our bylaws, if a nominee cannot be found for a Board position, the person currently in that position remains until a new person is found. Barbro is willing to do this for a short time (e.g., nine months) and will help with the Fall Conference, if needed. The Board did not see any reason why Barbro could not be a member of the Planning Team in the future, once she is no longer the Conference Coordinator.

9. Retreat Planning:

The Board tentatively set August 24–27 (Monday–Thursday) for its in-person retreat at Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center. Richard S. will contact the new Board members to let them know these dates. Richard N. will contact Bon Secours to see if we can book the space.

10. Retirement Seminar:

Richard N. reported that he was a presenter at the UUA's biannual retirement seminar, and that the program went well. In his remarks, he spoke about UURMaPA and about aid funds and the service gratuity.

Closing:

Richard S. reminded us that Richard N. will do our opening and closing in May, and Richard S. in June. For our closing words, Janet read "Spring," by Roland Morin.

The meeting adjourned at 4:58pm Eastern - 3:58pm Central - 2:58pm Mountain - 1:58pm Pacific

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 3pm Eastern - 2pm Central - 1pm Mountain - 12pm Pacific

REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR APRIL 21 MEETING

1) President's Report - Richard Speck

I have had correspondence with the Planning Committee to be the moderator for parts of the Spring conference. I have communicated with DRUUMM to see how we can let BIPOC retired ministers know about what we offer. I communicated with the law firm that gave us a donation from Jeanette Morgan, a deceased member's estate. I am working with Charles on the presentations at the conference. I wrote my president's message for the newsletter. I solicited items for the agenda and sent it out to the board.

Still to do is transferring Google Drive items from conferences to another shared drive.

* * * * *

UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting — April 21, 2026

2) Conference Coordinator's Report - Barbro Hansson

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

Registrations as of March 24 at 10:00 am Eastern:

182 total Registrations (170 paying registrations budgeted)

2 Guests (Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, Cynthia Becker)

3 First Timers (UURMaPAs who have not yet attended a virtual conference)

1 New Member (accepted the discount as a guest, other New Members are registered)

4 Scholarships (non-paying registrants)

157 Ministers (four of whom are also partners)

19 Partners

\$8,400.00 Received in Registrations (\$120.00 not yet paid) (\$8,500.00 budgeted)

\$1,555.00 Received in Scholarship Donations (\$1,500.00 budgeted)

5 plan to attend the Wilmington Pod

10 plan to attend the Kingston Pod

One registrant has indicated they want to be contacted about special needs.

Video Release Forms Received:

Kathleen Rolenz - Opening Worship

Wayne Arnason - Opening Worship

Jan Carlsson-Bull - Obits for Remembrance Service

Deborah Pope-Lance - Introduces Minister Odyssey

Barry Finkelstein - Odyssey Presenter

Judith Campbell - Introduces Partner Odyssey

Rosemarie Smurzynski - Worship Team

Next of Kin who will attend

Jacob Allderdice, son of Rev. Penelope "Penny" Witte Allderdice

Frances Witte-Holland, daughter of Rev. Penelope "Penny" Witte Allderdice

Rev. Kiya Heartwood (UURMaPA member), wife of Rev Margaret "Meg" Barnhouse

Karen Newell, daughter of the Rev. Dr. John Fordon

Joan Morris (UURMaPA member), wife of Rev. Dr. Everett Morris

Ann Beasley, daughter of Rev. Christopher Raible

Rev. Bill Sinkford (UURMaPA member), husband of Maria Chenoweth Sinkford

Janet Wieder (UURMaPA member), wife of Rev. Dr. Walter Frederick Wieder

Fall 2026 Conference - October 19-21: No theme selected yet

Jeff Briere and I hope to plan a fall theme gathering before too long. Duane Fickeisen and Roger Rochester are our two Odyssey presenters for the fall.

Fall 2027 Conference - October 25-27: No theme selected yet.

UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting — April 21, 2026

* * * * *

3) 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.
 - The Skill-Sharing Network is up and running. Beginning Spanish classes offered by Jeff Jones has eight participants and began on April 2, 2026. This first course will be for eight weeks with participants deciding if they want to continue for another eight weeks. This is a very enjoyable class and Jeff is an excellent (and fun) teacher.
 - To date, there have been no additional skills offered for the network; nor have the two other skills offered had any takers.
2. Create new focused interest connection groups.
 - I am still working on recruiting facilitators for groups focused on *Living with Less* and *Living with Chronic Illness*. As soon as I have identified two co-facilitators/convener, I will publicize these groups.
3. Explore a focused interest group for BIPOC members.
 - I plan to talk with John Gilmore during the Wilmington POD about forming a focused interest group for BIPOC members.
 - With John's assistance I will write articles about UURMaPA for BLUU, DRUUM and UUMA newsletters.

B. Area Connectors

- There has been no change in the number of Area Connectors since my March 2026 report. Recruitment for Area Connectors is an ongoing and challenging process.

C. Connection Groups

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

D. Connecting New Retirees/Partners

- I received no notifications of new retirees in April.
- Two Area Connectors were notified of deaths in their areas.

* * * * *

4) Passages Coordinator's Report - Joy Atkinson

Since I was out of the county during the March Board meeting, this Board report combines the reports for the March and April Board meetings,

UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting — April 21, 2026

Since the February Board meeting, I sent notices to the membership regarding the deaths of the following beloved ministers and partners: the Revs. Frank Hall (1940-2026), Lynda Sutherland (1952-2026), Donald Wheat (1933-2025), Robert MacDicken (1940-2025), Myron Andes (1954-2026), Barbara Hebner (1935-2026, and partner Larry Allan Squire (1960-2026).

We have a new obituary editor for ministers' obituaries: the Rev. Kathleen Fowler. I am grateful that we had Rev. Jay Atkinson to write them up for so many years, and I welcome Kathleen as the new editor for ministers' obituaries. Partner obituaries are still being written by Eleanor Robinson.

The pilot Mentorship program has concluded, as March marks a year since the mentors have been meeting with their mentees. I expressed thanks to the mentors for serving in this capacity. I was waiting for a few more new members to enter UURMaPA to start a new program, but at this point in the yearly cycle, we are unlikely to get many new members, so I would like to launch a new program and train new mentors sometime before summer if there are enough interested new members.

* * * * *

5) Denominational Liaison's Report - Christine Robinson

I attended the Spring Meeting of the Office of Church Staff Finances constituent group, as a representative of UURMaPA. This most interesting quarterly meeting gathers folks from UUMA, AUUM, and other professional staff groups for networking and feedback about staff compensation and benefit issues. UURMaPA is included because of our participation in the Retirement Plan. Their news is that the Office of Church Staff Finances has outgrown its name, as they are no longer working simply with churches, or on staffing finances. Its latest successful project, for instance has been finding UU institutions the property and operations insurance coverage we used to get from Church Mutual, which canceled many congregations' policies in the recent past. They have rebranded themselves as "Benefit Plans and Services". The Retirement plans which we care so much about "reside" here, with pretty much the same staff as previously, but for a new director, Hugh Dennis.

Jan Gartner has joined the Congregational Life Staff with her portfolio of equipping congregations to be excellent employers. She joins several other people who serve congregations throughout the nation, and not just in one region (congregational stewardship for instance). Jan is planning to continue her constituent advisory group, but her issues are no longer our issues. I do not know what Hugh plans in terms of constituent input but I will keep you posted. Anna Geheres, the Retirement Plan Specialist, knows that we appreciate the webinars that Richard did and will continue them. They may also create webinars of their own, based on topics that came up at the recent Retirement Planning Seminar.

I have found a presenter for what I think will be an interesting and informative Webinar, for what we once thought would be a second "free-standing" (90 minute) program of the year (a decision we made before deciding to move to one Conference and several other programs during the year.) Our new colleague, Emma Farrell, has offered two webinars to UUMA members on AI for Ministers, which have gone very well, and is intrigued by the idea of working on a 90-minute program aimed at informing and involving retired ministers and spouses in this new technology. She is a very skilled presenter, and we hope to offer something in late September.

UURMaPA Board Zoom Meeting — April 21, 2026

* * * * *

6) *Elderberries* Editor's Report - George Buchanan

I have been delayed in preparing the February *Elderberries* issue. I am still not sure when I will be able to publish – I hope sometime late this week for the electronic version. This delay has been because of personal and family challenges. I appreciate the timely work of all those who provided copy for this issue.

Monday May 11 is the submission deadline for the issue coming out at the end of May.

Treasurer's Report is delayed.