UURMaPA Board Hybrid Retreat Minutes and Reports
Zoom and Bon Secours Retreat Center, Sept. 7-10, 2026

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

Present at Bon Secours: Joy Atkinson, Mary Ganz, Richard Nugent, Richard Speck, Charles Stephens, Janet Tillman. **On Zoom:** Christine Robinson. **Absent:** Fred Wooden

SEPTEMBER 7, 7 PM

Opening: Richard S. opened the retreat with a worship service that turned on a saying of Miles Davis: "Play what you know, and play above what you know." Check-in followed.

Agenda Review: It was determined that we might be able to have a short meeting Thursday morning if needed.

Land Acknowledgement: Richard S. read a statement acknowledging the native peoples who were the original inhabitants and caretakers of the Susquehanna and Chesapeake regions. Janet suggested we take action beyond the words, and Richard S. suggested UURMaPA make a donation to a group supporting Native health or culture in this area. The response was positive, and Janet will research and suggest possible recipients of a donation. *See Appendix A. for text of the Land Acknowledgement.*

SEPTEMBER 8, 9:15 AM

Opening: Charles opened with readings from Amanda Gorman, Henri Nouwen and Sheldon Kopp, and music, "Let the Mystery Be" by Iris Dement.

Common Read Discussion: Janet led a conversation about the Chapter on Privilege in "So You Want to Talk About Race" by Ijeoma Oluo. Janet also recommended as a companion read, "Why I'm No Longer Talking with White People About Race" by Renni Eddo-Lodge. Using a checklist adapted from "Demanding More," we talked about the privileges we as individuals hold and the privileges we do not enjoy. After a break, we returned to discuss: *What can we as UURMaPA do?* Richard S suggested we use the ESP rubric: economic, social, political. Here are some ideas:

- Inviting a person of color to be on the board. How to do it without making people feel like a token?
- Richard S. has reached out to have a conversation with DRUMM. They have not yet responded.
- Find out who is in the DRUMM leadership, and who among us knows them? Who are their allies? Is Anita Farber-Robinson a white ally we should reach out to?

- Reach out to TRUUSE
- Have conversations with ministers of color whom we know personally
- What about partners of color? Can we come up with a list of retired ministers of color and partners of color?
- Possibility of a connections group for retired members of color? [Janet had a previous conversation with John Gilmore about this. He noted that ministers of color have been doing the work of moving in white spaces; will they want to enter another one in retirement?]
- What do retired ministers of color need, and are there ways we could we address those needs?

Conversation about Common Read programming

- What is the goal of the Common Read? If we structure small group discussions of Oluo's book, we should include a BIPOC-only and a LGBTQ*-only group, whether it happens or not
- What does success of the Common Read look like? Christine: white people, male people, other privileged groups understand selves and impact a little better
- Need to structure conversation so everybody gets a chance to speak. So, limit each group to a certain number?
- Go chapter-by-chapter over several sessions?
- Maybe start with a general webinar, and evolve from there?
- Book is somewhat dated, written before the current administration's attack on DEI
- Need for action. What are you going to do about it? How do you take this into your daily life?
- Hope for outreach to long-retired ministers. Most of us got a head start on this in our ministries; perhaps not so for ministers who have been retired for 30 years
- Find some clips from Oluo to update it: she's still writing and is all over the Internet
- Mary, Janet, Christine will think together about the webinar
- Idea to do this around the time we would regularly do the spring conference or early in the year
- Is there a way to get word out during the Finding Our Way Home conference? Richard N will talk to Michael Crumpler at the UUA who has that portfolio
- There are a lot of queer and POC members of the UUMN

Beyond the Common Read; return to What UURMaPA can do

- Making UURMaPA more representative of the ministry is a long range project. It would be interesting to ask our working colleagues: *What do you think you're going to need from your colleagues in retirement?*
- Have representatives of under-represented groups as paid conference presenters
- Richard S will call Bill Sinkford and ask how we might diversify UURMaPA
- AI suggestion: write "welcome to elderhood" notes to newly retired ministers without inviting them to anything
- We also need to focus on Partners to increase that area of diversity. Joy pointed out there are many partners who come to the Seabeck pod (Ed. Note: 7 non-clergy out of 25 attendees in Oct., 2026). Are in-person events a better entry point for partners? Something to think about as we consider returning to in-person events

SEPTEMBER 8, 2 PM

Review 2025-26 Goals. How well did we do?

- *Strengthening connections:* Janet got the skill-sharing network going. A couple of new focus groups were added: book discussion and UU Mystics. Another is in the works for navigating aging. Christine is offering AI as a special interest meeting. Financial information is in the works. Mentor/companionship programs are up. Joy said training for mentors is close. Janet is working on and is willing to co-facilitate a group for members with chronic illness; Richard N. is considering co-facilitating.
- *Improve fund raising for UURMaPA:* planned giving program did not happen.
- *Send annual fundraising letter:* Done.
- *Inform members of new tax law changes:* did not accomplish.
- *Develop diversity, equity and inclusion:* moving in that direction, with the Common Read. We have Bill Sinkford leading a program in fall conference; Glen Rideout was keynote in last conference. Common Read is in the works. Barbro is working on inclusion with people of disabilities. Richard S. opened our meeting with a land acknowledgement.

We didn't have it in the goals, but we have started the adjustment to one conference.

UURMaPA Endowment: The 2021 Board revised the endowment fund and sent out a letter to all members. We can take up to 4 percent of the balance to support the annual budget if needed. There is about $100,000. Richard S and Richard N will develop a

program for informing our membership about planned giving to enhance our endowment.

A conversation ensued about a reasonable fundraising goal for the endowment. $1 million? $250,000? Is it right to tie up money that might be better used in circulation? Would supporting regional in-person gatherings be a good use of endowment funds? On the website, information about the Endowment is under Governance. Should it be more visible? Richard N will contact Jaco to update the website.

Rainbow History Book Celebration: There were two conferences in 2019 where people came together to document LGBTQ history in the UUA. The book was published this year just before General Assembly. We need to celebrate that we brought something to fruition. This could be a stand-alone webinar. Richard S will contact the author/editor of the book and enlist two others (Barbro?) to plan a celebration. There is still a rainbow history website that we pay for. Book is "Defiantly Joyful: UU LGBTQ History," $18 on Amazon, but we should buy it from Skinner House.

UURMaPA in the Loop Planning: 20-25 minutes at the fall conference to share what the board is doing. [See Appendix C.] Most will be 2-3 minutes: Janet's will be longer talking about small groups likely with video. She will also talk about the Common Read. Joy will talk about mentoring; Christine will offer a clarification of the UURMaPA and UUMA chapter of retired ministers; mention that the AI program recording will be available. Fred will do something about Elderberries. Richard N will talk about the Finance Seminar, state of finances, plea for donations. Finance seminar will be Nov. 16, 3 pm.

Special Zoom Programing: *Odysseys, Memorial Service, Planned Giving, Common Read.* We pay our Zoom Master for each one ($350?). Will Planned Giving stand on its own?

- *Odysseys:* Richard S is in charge of finding Odysseans. Suggestions were offered. All will look at the database esp. for partner names to suggest and send to Richard S. Format: partner first, musical interlude, minister, breakout, all return for Q&A with Odysseans.
- *Memorial Service:* would people on the conference planning team be willing to orchestrate? Richard S will ask Barbro. Requires obits, photos, worship format, music, closing words.
- *Other webinars suggested by Richard N:* Barb Greve and Robin Tanner, new initiatives within the UUA; International issues. e.g., Fred Muir and Morgan McLean at UUA, Zsolt Elekes (chaplain at Unitarian HS in Transylvania), Abi for Khasi Hills; a summary of Minns lectures by one of the recent presenters. *Suggested by Charles:* Evolution of UU theology. Denise Tracy, drafter of the original principles.

Scheduling for Spring:

AI Webinar Sept. 22
Fall Conference Oct. 19-21
Retirement Finances Nov. 16
Common Read Webinar Feb. 4
Odysseys April 6
Memorial Service May 4

We should budget $500 per event. Is the conference fee of $60 reasonable? Good question for evaluation; Richard S will communicate that to Barbro.

SEPTEMBER 9, 9:15 AM

Opening: Mary opened with a reading of Psalm 27 in the Zen-inspired translation by Norman Fisher, followed by silence and the story of Bree Newsome, who spoke the words of that psalm after she shimmied up the flagpole in Columbia SC to remove the Confederate Flag from the statehouse grounds.

Common Read Conversation: Christine led us in a conversation about the chapter on Microaggressions. We began by each sharing an instance where we were the victim of a microaggression. We moved to a conversation about the UUA handout, "Welcoming versus Othering." Christine reminded us of what Oluo says we should do if being called out for a microaggression: take a breath, say you're sorry.

Going forward: Should we investigate whether we can get Oluo to be a keynote for our Common Read conversation? Likely to be expensive but there are likely video clips that would be within our budget. Richard S will check on that.

We should offer possibilities with different commitment levels. Webinar is easily accessible. Perhaps offer webinars based on Janet's and Christine's presentations. Maybe also work one up on Intersectionality. Also possibly a chapter-by-chapter reading group, if there's interest. What is there we can do can be incorporated into each section.

In the invitation, we can link to several available clips so people can become familiar with her work.

Board positions:

Richard S raised the question of whether we need a Conference Liaison. Richard S will check in with Barry on the Nominating Committee as to whether they have identified anyone who is interested. We need to check what the by-laws say about how many Board members we must have. See Appendix B. for current position description.

Christine noted that we may need another person on the board to coordinate continuing education programs. She's been doing it, but it's a lot. Since the online programing is young, we should experiment a few years; Christine is willing to keep doing it for now, as long as Cynthia is coordinating the technical part. We might at some point decide to pay someone to do that. Christine and Janet will consider recruiting someone from the new UURMaPA retirees; Mary has agreed to work on the Common Read programming with Janet and Christine. Fred noted it's a way of inviting people into leadership.

Janet wondered if she could recruit someone to work with her on Connections – maybe a retired minister who could help her recruit area connectors. Some names were suggested.

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SEPTEMBER 9, 2 PM

Ideas for Goals for 2026-27

- Experiment with and develop new programing in lieu of the spring conference. Come out of the year with a plan for the next year and forward.
- Ensure that a conference planning team is in place, with a convener. Figure out how conference gets done, now that the structure is changing and the convener is not on the Board
- Institutionalize Mentor/Mentee program in Passages Coordinator position
- Streamline welcoming package for newly retired colleagues.
- Explore offering a webinar by Larry Peers on psychological aspect of retirement
- Endowment: take a look at whether our bylaws are sufficient to protect.
- Carryover from last year: program on tax law changes and to encourage planned giving
- Evaluate whether staff is needed to help with increased programming
- Increase fiscal transparency: Expanding flow of information about the budget to the members. Send a quarterly email to members with highlights of what has been important? Encourage members to ask questions.
- Expand contact with DRUMM and TRUUSE and LUNA; carry over goal of increasing diversity. Connect with Michael Crumpler, UUA liaison to various groups. Reach out to Marta Valentin and Eric Kamineski about who is in the pipeline toward retirement
- Area connectors: can it be revitalized? Goal to evaluate the Connectors program, revise or eliminate?
- Clarify who our real membership is. How many people should we be planning for?
- Make sure UURMaPA is included in the letter that goes out ministers who have filed intent to retire. Richard N will check with Mary Krimbaum.
- Goal of making Planning Center more useable for everyone. RS can train other board members to send emails out. Maybe today!
- Make Church Center more useable for members, or find another database that can be secure and also accessible

Richard S will make a first cut at fashioning these ideas into goals.

Action to honor original stewards of the land

Janet has discovered the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA), located in this county (Howard). All the officers are Native people. **Janet moves $500 donation; Christine seconded. Passed unanimously,** Mary will write the letter and Richard N will print it and send the check.

Church Center / Planning Center training and discussion

How do UURMaPA members use Church Center to communicate with each other? Is there a way to change the database sharing opt-in feature to an opt-out feature? Richard N will talk to Larry Stritof, IT Director, about the UUA system. We could have a paragraph on the website directing people how to find Church Center and telling them why they'd want to.

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APPENDIX A.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR UURMAPA BOARD SEPTEMBER 2026

Land acknowledgments are statements that recognize Indigenous peoples dispossessed of their relationships with land by settler colonists. These statements bring attention to the Indigenous peoples who are (and/or were once) local to the lands that settler colonists and settler colonial institutions currently occupy. Indigenous erasure, the set of processes that remove Indigenous people from places and narratives, has been exceedingly prevalent in the mid-Atlantic region for much of the past 500 years. Despite still living in the region, most tribal peoples are "disappeared" into the history books and are associated only with their colonial histories. Land acknowledgment statements are a minor way to acknowledge Indigenous sovereignty and correct the inaccurate impression that Native peoples no longer exist in Maryland.

We acknowledge the social, physical, spiritual, and kinship relationships this land continues to share with Indigenous nations of the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay; We acknowledge that these relationships have been displaced, damaged, and dispelled by colonists' insatiable thirst for acquisition and domination. We acknowledge a place out of balance with its true purpose in being. We acknowledge our occupation of Susquehannock lands. We acknowledge the continuing presence of Indigenous nations, and the shelter and nourishment that this place continues to provide all Native peoples who live here today. We acknowledge our responsibility to Indigenous nations to repair unhealthy relationships and to steward all life.

We acknowledge that the grounds of Bon Secours rest upon the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Piscataway and Susquehannock Peoples, who have stewarded the waterways and soil of the Chesapeake Bay region for generations. We also recognize the Lumbee People and other indigenous communities who migrated here and continue to make Maryland their vibrant home. We recognize the historic traumas of colonialism, displacement, and systemic health inequities forced upon Native nations. We honor the past, present, and future indigenous caretakers of this land and commit to fostering mutual respect, healing, and equity in our ongoing work.

APPENDIX B.

BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE #1
LIAISON TO THE CONFERENCE PLANNING TEAM

Job Description

(Approved by the Board June 27, 2026)

Rationale: This role serves as a liaison between the UURMaPA Board and the Convener of the Conference Planning Team, which organizes an annual fall conference and ensures that planning, content, and execution align with UURMaPA's goals, budget, and policies.

As a member of the UURMaPA Board, the Liaison to the Conference Planning Team prepares for and attends monthly Board meetings (conducted online via Zoom and, if necessary, in person at an annual retreat), participates in decision-making, and assumes other duties as needed. The Liaison submits monthly reports to the Board and keeps the Conference Convener(s) informed about relevant Board activities.

Expectations:

Liaison to the Conference Planning Team is responsible for these tasks:

- With the help of the Conference Planning Team Convener and the Board, recruit the next Convener(s).
- Provide support to the Convener(s), as needed.
- Assist in recruiting UURMaPA members to join the team.
- Assist the Conference Convener(s) in preparing a Proposed Budget for the conference, if needed. Conferences must cover their costs through registration fees unless special circumstances allow for grants.
- Submit monthly progress reports of conference planning to the Board.
- After the conference, arrange for InSpirit gift cards for Conference Planning Team members and Odyssey presenters.
- Be available after completing the term(s) on the Board to transition with the newly elected Board member, if needed.

Compiled by Barbro Hansson, February 2025
Revised March 2026
Revised May 2026

A P P E N D I X C.

UURMaPA in the Loop Timing (25 minutes total)

Richard Speck: Introduction - 2 minutes
Pass it on to Janet Tillman, Connections Coordinator

Janet Tillman - 10 minutes
Small groups Show video and discuss Common Read
Pass it on to Joy Atkinson, Passages Coordinator

Joy Atkinson - 2 minutes
Companions & Mentors announcing more groups
Pass it on to Christine Robinson, UUMA/UUA Relations

Christine Robinson – 3 minutes
UUMA Retired Chapter and UURMaPA
AI Webinar recording available later
Finance Webinar on 11/16/26, 3 pm Eastern
Pass it on to Richard Nugent, Treasurer

Richard Nugent - 3 mins
Financial update, request for contributions
Pass it on to Fred Wooden, Elderberries Editor

Fred Wooden - 3 minutes
Next Elderberries
Pass it on to Richard Speck

Richard Speck - 2 minutes
Outro