

# **Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) Board of Directors Meeting**

**October 23-24, 2008**

**Present:** Maureen Killoran, Stefan Jonasson, Laura Jones, Gail Geisenhainer, Lucia Santini Field, Lois Reborne, Frank Wells, Mark Gibbons, Lynda Bluestein, Brad Bradburd, Jane Rzepka, Lorraine Dennis, Amber Beland, Lisa Kielt

Unable to be present: Abhi Janamanchi

**Opening words** - Lynda B., Closing doors

**Welcome Stefan and Gail** – Maureen and board

**Check in** - Everyone

**Agenda – Motion** to approve (Lucia/Mark) Passed, unanimous

**Minutes, Mar 28, 2008 - Motion** to approve (Lynda/Frank) Passed

**Staff Reports** – Jane and Lorraine

Jane welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially our new board members, Stefan and Gail. She suggested that board members each read a section of the CLF brochure aloud and she read some testimonials from CLF members. Jane introduced the Rev. Amber Beland as the CYF Young Adult Minister. This position is paid for by a grant from the UUA Young Adult and Campus Ministry Dept.

Jane reported that we are in great shape in every way – though we worry about the impending doom of the economy. We are planning for many eventualities. The CLF's contract with the UUA was extended for a year. We will negotiate with the new UUA administration. Jane has been on sabbatical since July 1 – Oct 1, back for six weeks and then out Nov 15 – Jan 31. She was involved in the hiring of Amber, in editing the UUFPP grant, uu&me editing, and worship negotiation with UUA during the sabbatical. She also upgraded all of her technology. During the second half of the sabbatical, she will take a trip to Panama.

Lorraine reported that we submitted an application to the UU Funding Program, Fund for Unitarian Universalism for the September 15, 2008 deadline. The grant, titled CLF's UU Web Initiative, asks for \$20,000 for the creation of CLF videos, for creating CLF presence on Face Book and My Space, for a consultant to help make our website more visible in search results, and for money to create a Military area on the CLF Website. We will hear about the grant in late November. Lorraine also reported that we have a consistent, committed group of staff members who are doing the work of the CLF. Iris Hardin, our Membership Administrator and Quest Production Manager, will be leaving the CLF in January to attend Andover Newton School of Theology. She plans to become a chaplain. We will miss her terribly but are very excited for her new adventure.

**Ministry for the Earth Award follow up** - Lois. A CLF member was given our award and nomination for the continental award. We sent her a certificate. If we hear of someone like her again, we can nominate someone for this award in the future.

**Nominating Committee** - Lynda Bluestein

Maureen is willing to continue for another term, as are Lucia, Mark, Brad. Lynda will talk with Abhi to see if can continue. Lynda goes off the Nominating Committee this next year. Someone else from the board needs to step up to be on the Nom Comm. Brad would do Nominating if Gail or Lucia would take over as Treasurer.

Since John Crestwell has resigned from the Board, Lynda asked for some time for brainstorming for another board member - what qualities are we looking for? What constituencies? What is the charge from the board? Skillset? Needs? Maureen will find some time on Friday morning.

**General Assembly Report** - Lorraine's written report was in the packet (attached). There was some discussion of our ability to control expenses if registration is down because of the economy. Many board members confirmed that a strong presence at GA is essential for the CLF

GA 2009 report from Lynda Bluestein:

Wed, 10PM – all Ingatherings - the CLF will consider asking the CYF to host the CLF Ingathering this year.

Workshops have changed - taken on UU University tracked programs. First big blocks of time will be taken up with these programs. There have been many cuts to regular workshops. 20 lbs of potatoes in a 10 lb bag. No evening entertainment. There will be more attendance in Salt Lake City. Vote for Lynda since she is running for GAPC again. The UUA Election will happen with two presidential forums at this GA.

Synergy worship on Thursday, replaces YA worship/soulful sundown/bridging ceremony. Frank suggests Amber be the worship leader. GAPC will require one person for accountability. Staff will check with UUA YA-CM dept. to see what the plan is for the Synergy worship. Lynda suggests some outreach from Amber to Erik and Nancy at UUA. We might like to be part of the planning team.

Laura Jones says that the CYF would be very interested in working on worship. There is a commitment by CYF Steering Committee to try their best to be at GA.

**GA Worship** – CLF worship has been in the piano room for years. People are turned away - 14 or 15 evaluations mentioned that that CLF worship was their best experience at GA. GAPC offers Plenary Hall, large ballroom, piano room. Issue with ballroom is that the only piano is in the choir room. GAPC wants to purchase a digital piano for about \$2,500. When worship? Thursday, Slot #1, 9:15 AM. Could be slot 6. Lorraine will request the #1 slot in a ballroom.

**Fundraising Committee-** Frank/Lisa

Frank reported that in spite of fundraising challenges, we are in good shape. We made an excellent investment in the development director expense. Spring appeal was lower than expected. We are expanding the electronic appeals. About 80% of our members pay by check. More and more income in contributions via the website and email. Fairly close to achieving budget this year except for \$20K in major gift fundraising. Lisa did the work to make lists and cultivate, but it has not been fruitful so far. The Fundraising Committee talked about how to talk with CLF members about what the CLF means to them. The 20K for major gifts is all budgeted in December. We will do one more appeal before the year end. Budget for 2009 is flat for annual giving. We would love to see it increase as we do more and more to engage our members and new UUs. We could see a fall off from our members, especially from our less well-off members. We will do a special appeal if we need to in 2009, asking those who can to help fill the gap if donations are lower.

Since 2006, Lisa has seen a significant uptake in contributions. Since 2006, 32 % increase in contributions. We had a strong beginning – great canvass – helped to fill the gap later in the year. Average gift is up from \$166 to \$176 which is quite low. Median gift is \$100. We rely on a relatively

small number of donors to help pay for those who cannot give as much. We will do the board solicitation tomorrow morning.

Lucia will share a report on how to do ACH transfers instead of credit cards.

There is still time for the board for refocus on the major gifts solicitation.

We have \$86,000 contributions budgeted for the rest of the year. Last year 77K came in between October and the end of the year.

The process of cultivation takes time and has languished. The board hasn't done the work of defining the steps and committing to do them. We must build the relationship first. (Lynda)

**Process Observation:** Mark Gibbons

On time – amazing...

Focused, on topic. A few times gate keeping was needed. Some disagreements in process were handled respectfully. Wonderfully efficient meeting. Thanks, from Maureen.

**Adjourn for the day at 5:20PM**

**Reconvene Friday morning at 8:30AM with chalice lighting.**

**Brainstorming for a board member** to be appointed for the rest of this year to replace John Crestwell, then the Nom Comm will place someone on the ballot to fill the rest of the term.

Frank – suggests that the board consider not appointing anyone and perhaps change the bylaws to lower the number of board members. After thumb vote, it was decided that we will not appoint anyone to replace John Crestwell and there will be a larger discussion about the size of the board.

After some discussion, we are mostly in favor of downsizing the board, but there is another conversation about the way the board meets to allow for more relationship building. Stefan: The ideal board size is 5-9 – not an even number, 5 politically impossible, 7 sometimes, 9 often, which is as large as a deliberating body should be. Attendance is almost always perfect; meaningful work is more possible.

Jane: a reduction could take place at the “speed of church” - by attrition, as people go off the board.

Proposal: Reduce the board to 9.

**Motion:** (Frank/Brad) We do not fill the vacancy of JC and ask Stefan to do propose some language for a bylaw change.

**Motion:** to write a thank you letter to the UUFP (Frank/Lynda) Lynda will write the letter.

**Web Tour** – Lorraine gave a tour of the CLF website, highlighting the Church on Loan program, the new Make Your Own Sunday website, and the beginnings of the CLF Military website.

**CYF Report** - Laura gave a web tour of the CYF website, including the administrative area. All steering committee members have access to the admin area.

**CYF Surplus Policy language:** The CLF will establish a balance sheet account named CYF Surplus/Deficit. At the end of the fiscal year if the CYF program has a surplus, that amount will be added to the balance sheet account. In the event of a deficit, it is anticipated that CLF would fund the deficit and record it on the balance sheet. Any deficit or surplus should not be carried forward more than 12 months from the fiscal year end in which it is recognized. Such deficits or surpluses are not anticipated to exceed \$4,000.

**Motion:** (Lynda /Laura) passed.

Lynda suggested that the board write a letter to former CLF board members to tell them that we appreciate their work to create the CYF and we stand on their shoulders. Lynda will write the letter. Staff will gather the names/contact info.

**Laura's report** - GAPC matching incentive was a big success. Looking at a membership purge in January. Working to inform new members about giving. Steering Committee is doing some visioning – they had a two hour meeting last week. SC members will all try to get to GA. They could decide to downsize the SC. They will try to cultivate volunteers in case of SC resignations.

**Amber's Report:** She has been working for three weeks, keeps a project/list, weekly calls, has a long range plan, is helping the SC stay on task. There are lots of great ideas which need prioritizing. She hopes to help increase the communication with members. Amber will be the website chaplain and will be introduced to the membership and be an active presence on the site.

**Motion:** Another letter from the board thanking the UUA for the grant and telling them what a difference Amber's presence has made to the (Gail/Frank) Approved.

**Motion:** Thank you letter to Laura, Erik, Jonnie (Gail/Brad) Frank will write thank you letter.

**CLF Board Solicitation:** Frank

Frank passed out pledge cards to board members and staff, and asked everyone to be as generous as they can in making their 2009 pledges.

**CYF Budget** – Zero net to the CLF budget, with revenue projected to the CLF for Administrative costs and APF contribution.

Laura suggested that the CYF can help with the military ministry.

**Financial Report** – Brad

Operating budget for 2008 is in good shape. Any questions about the operating statements? None.

**Investments** – Lucia

Given the state of affairs in the financial markets, the CLF endowment is doing pretty well. The UUA's CEF (formerly the GIF) is a soundly run fund and we are comfortable about the majority of our investments there. We will keep some cash in case of emergency and for planned transfers in the Money Market account.

Beginning value \$2,112,754 and ending \$1,968,815, a 4.7% decrease. Quite good, considering, and better than the FTSE for Good. UUA recently put performance report for the CEF up on the website, a very

helpful report. The market has been so difficult that the numbers now will be worse than the Sept 30, 2008.

Do we want to adopt the UUA's investment policy? We will talk about that at a future meeting.

Staff should recommend (look back to 2001, 02, 03 to see the impact of recession) for an amount to reserve as cash.

### **2009 Budget – Brad/Lorraine**

Income projections slightly under this year's. Holding expenses just a bit lower.

Lorraine will get a price for a review – maybe not too expensive. Not Donna Clifford since she has done so much of the work on the balance sheet. Brad recommends a reserve fund for (possibly) sabbatical, professional development (large church conference), ministerial discretionary fund, audit/review. Suggested extra expenses in a document in case we have money to spend – what could we reserve for? Include amounts.

Lois would support some money for GA match for CLF members at \$250 – at least two scholarships for the CLF a total of \$500. Lynda said that the GAPC intention is to give scholarships to the leadership of churches. Identify leaders in the particular circumstances of the CLF – show the person's leadership role in the minister's letter.

What is happening in the economy? Greatest downturn since the great depression. Could be very severe. If that is true, we will have a difficult time raising money. We could see a contraction of monies from the investments. These dire things could happen. Think about the unthinkable. Staff has looked at possible 5% 10%, 15%, 20% cuts. There is virtually no cut that wouldn't mean cutting staffing somehow. It's certainly very difficult since we have such a great staff. Luckily, it would take an additional 25% of lowered value to impact the planned transfers. We are in good shape relative to many other organizations. The staff will need to be very frugal and prepared to make cuts, if necessary.

**Motion:** Add a line item to the CLF budget for Lay Leadership development, ask the staff to revise the budget to include \$500 and an appropriate offset made in another line item, and to keep the line item in future budgets. (Brad/Frank)

The staff has already done some work on possible cuts in a dire financial situation. The Board is committed to increasing revenue so these eventualities don't occur.

**Motion:** Move the budget be approved (Frank/Gail) with note re \$500 for GA scholarships.

### **Discussion of Jerry Davidoff's request at the Annual Meeting in Ft. Lauderdale that the board consider changing the name of the CLF.**

Name Change history: Jane said that this issue comes up every few years. Some people have objected to the word 'church', some think it's weird, some think it should be more descriptive. When we did the last member survey, focus groups said "almost universal opposition to the idea of a name change." The board in 2004 decided not to act. Since WWII, the name has been the same. Before that, the Post Office Mission was a clever and appropriate name. The idea was that the name would cause people to think twice. After some discussion, the following motion was made.

**Motion:** (Lucia/Brad) Move to defer consideration of the name change discussion until a time no more than 3-4 years in the future, when the board has the resources to consider it.

Lucia will write a careful letter to Jerry.

**Task list:**

Stefan: Bylaw re downsizing of the board

Lucia: Letter to Jerry/materials for asset allocation for Feb meeting.

Laura: check into working with staff on UUMIL, phone calls to CLF members.

Frank: Thank you note.

Lynda: Thank you notes. Nom Comm. Possible script for use in member conversations.

All: Get to know you phone calls.

**Process observation (Gail):**

Efficient meeting; start time; thumb vote playful and helpful in moving things along; thank yous brought the group alive; brought energy; clarification process on the GA scholarship question was a building exercise for the well being of the larger group; confidence today about what we're doing.

**Motion to adjourn** (Gail/Mark) 1:05 P.M. to be followed by an Outgathering worship by Laura.

**Attachments:**

## **Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) General Assembly 2008**

This year, General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale, was much smaller than the 2007 GA in Portland. Although there is no question that the lower registration numbers affected our booth sales, the **CLF Worship service** was filled with energetic worshippers who seemed to enjoy the music and preaching very much. It was a wonderful service with Jane and Meg Barnhouse preaching, and our friends from the UUMN providing the music. Beth Norton, Music Director at the Concord MA church has coordinated the music for the last few years and we hope she will help us again in 2009, but we have now made so many connections in the UUMN that we're confident we can find someone else to assist with the music if Beth can't work with us. With Beth's guidance, musicians were paid for their participation.

Once again, we gave pledge cards to the people at the service and we received a \$1,000 pledge and \$1,087 in donations. That number is nearly identical to the pledge/donation total from 2007 GA worship.

The **CLF Ingathering** was held on Wednesday afternoon during the District Ingathering time slot. We had about 40 people there with plenty of lively conversation and getting to know each other. Lynda Bluestein was able to stop by and give some GA orientation to CLFers in her role as a member of the GA Planning Committee. Many thanks to Lynda for all her help in preparation for GA. This year, we missed seeing Lois Reborne's smiling face and helping hands at the Ingathering and in the GA hallways. Other board members came to the booth and several attended the CLF worship service. The **Annual Meeting** was held without incident and CLF delegates received CLF pins. The CYF Steering Committee made a presentation to Denny and Jerry as Denny steps down from the CLF Board.

The **CLF booth** was reasonably busy considering the number of people at GA, with the usual rush times after workshops and during lunch. The booth hours are long (Noon-8PM, Wed, 10AM-7PM, Thurs, Fri, Sat, and 9AM-3PM on Sunday), so we had three staff members who were able to take some breaks and still have enough coverage in the booth. We had 11 volunteers to help on the CLF side of the booth and they did a great job talking with people about our unusual congregation. Our booth placement was not ideal this year, so Lorraine is planning to work with the GA Office to request a better location next year.

Once again, we had a little surge in membership activity in July and we think this a benefit from the GA booth.

Because this GA was in Florida, we were able to get flights for four staff people by using our American Express Membership Rewards Points. Jane has now ended her tenure on the UUMA Executive Committee, so we paid for a couple of night's hotel for her. In 2009, there is a much larger amount (\$11,400) in the budget since Salt Lake City is a more expensive place to fly and we will be paying for all of Jane's expenses for GA. We always welcome donations of frequent flyer miles to help defray GA expenses.

The CYF booth was across the aisle from us. They staffed their booth with volunteers for the whole conference and took in \$575.00 in donations and t-shirt sales.

We were also able to do some program development at GA. Jane and Lorraine met with a group of UUs in the military about collaborating to provide programming on the CLF website for military people. We have just launched a new page on the CLF website for this purpose with materials supplied by David Pyle, a Meadville seminarian and Chaplain Candidate in the US Army. We also met with some folks from Second Life – a virtual online community with a virtual UU church. We are now advertising the CLF with a poster up on Second Life. We provided 10% off coupons to the GAPC orientation, to the UU Administrators, to the ministers' professional days, and Lorraine served on a panel for a UUA workshop on Ministerial Interns.

Here are the numbers:

GA Booth sales (jewelry, books, COL, note cards)	\$3,346.94
GA Booth membership donations	1,110.00
CYF Booth (donations, sponsorships, t-shirts)	575.00
CLF Worship (donations, pledges)	<u>2,087.00</u>
<b>GA total</b>	<b>\$7,118.94</b>

Here is a calculation that Brad suggested to us at GA. We wondered what relationship our revenue number has to the total number of registrations at GA. As you can see, the numbers are pretty close.

## GA Comparison 2007 vs 2008

GA/location	No. of Registrations	CLF Revenue	Revenue per registration	CLF cost	Notes
2007/Portland	5,657.00	\$ 14,505.06	\$ 2.56	\$10,451.00	Revenue does not include \$1,500 for UU Cantata
2008/Ft. Lauderdale	2,917.00	\$ 7,118.94	\$ 2.44	\$ 9,490.00	Rev. per reg. is just 4.7% lower than 2007

Once again, Iris, Beth, Cindy and Patty did an outstanding job at the booth. The booth hours are long and time mostly spent on our feet. These excellent staff members keep their enthusiasm and humor throughout GA. We are very lucky to have them representing our unique congregation in this way.

Please let us know if you have any questions,

Lorraine and Jane