**Lake Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists**
**Annual Meeting Minutes**
**Sunday, May 4, 2025**
**Board Members: Laurie Gauer (Chair), Dan Larson, Helene Mann (absent), Don Penn, Mike Eye**

I. **Call Meeting to Order**
The meeting began at 10:35AM with a quorum of members.

II. **Accept the Agenda**
Members voted to accept the agenda.

III. **Welcome to New Members**
Sam Devine, Jeni Shoemate, Joanne Kutzler, and Larry Hanke were welcomed as new members. Membership certificates were presented to Liz and Dustin Maddy who had not received them previously.

IV. **Approve Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting, revised approval process**
The board, with review from the membership, has the ability to vote to approve the minutes of an annual meeting at the next regular board meeting, rather than waiting until the next annual meeting to do so. Laurie shared that the board and membership did approve last year's annual meeting minutes at the first regular board meeting that followed, and this protocol will proceed in perpetuity.

V. **Report from the Chairperson**
Laurie shared that this has been a year of transformation in areas related to Lake Fellowship's structure, operations, and programming. This year's board strove to be more proactive rather than reactive, while retaining funds and resources to remain reactive when needed. They also made efforts to be as democratic, transparent, and flexible as possible, with Laurie highlighting several instances when changes were made to do so.

VI. **Report from the Treasurer**
Dan presented several reports including the budget, income and expense comparisons, and a look at how our (Charles Schwab) investments are doing. The 2024-25 season brought quite a few, large and unexpected expenses including new front stairs, a new water heater, water pump, and water softener. We didn't hold a regular auction this year, but the Art & Artifact auction did quite well. Annual operating expenses currently amount to just under $1000 per member. Current markets aren't doing well (globally), but we're in a relatively low risk mutual fund, so our losses have been less severe than others. Dan prefers to keep around $10,000 in savings. Vicki Larson asked about funds to be dedicated to gardening that aren't clearly on the budget. Dan welcomed feedback and requests, especially from committees who might need to adjust their budgets.

VII. **Election of Board Members for 2025-2026**
Helene Mann, Don Penn have each completed a two-year term. Helene Mann and Sam Devine have agreed to be candidates. There were no other nominations from the floor. The motion to elect Helene and Sam carried. Laurie thanked Don for his service and insights as a board member.

VIII. **Mid-America Regional Business Meeting**
Laurie reminded us that our annual donation to the UUA also supports the 7 staff members of the Mid-America region, of which Lake Fellowship is part. Our Mid-America representative, Phil Lund, is retiring at the end of this year.

IX. **Strategic Plan**
Rather than any overarching message here, Laurie stated that the board will be highlighting aspects of the strategic plan in upcoming sections of the agenda.

X. **New Business**

A. **Database**
The main goal is to consolidate and organize the disparate information we have. Terry McGlynn did a lot of this on her own up to this point. The board is looking to create a single source of

truth for who our members are, and streamline the process for adding and extracting information. Upon Matthew Tift's recommendation, Helene created an AirTable account for membership data, and has been learning how to use it. The next task will be to decide who will have access to this account, and how best to use it to fulfill various needs by Membership, Communications, and other committees.

B. **Member expectations**
Dan shared a document created by Helene to clarify Member expectations, financial and otherwise. These are not intended to be exclusionary, but rather to be informative and inviting for prospective new members. He also shared a second document that defines certain roles and opportunities at Lake Fellowship to be used as a guide for New Member Orientation. It also defines a lot of the "nuts and bolts" of running the facility itself including setting up before a program and cleaning up after a program. This is a living document open to change, and strives to outline the most basic and common aspects of our fellowship. Dan also expressed a desire to get more people in attendance on a more consistent basis, while acknowledging the efforts already underway to help with this.

C. **New member orientation**
Peggy Muehlberg shared that she and others are happy to provide new member orientations for anyone wanting more information about any aspect of Lake Fellowship.

D. **Document storage pages on our website**
Currently Sharon Dana holds on to most of Lake Fellowship's important documents (such as board meeting minutes and by-laws), and it's in various formats and in various storage places (physical and digital). The board is working with Matthew Tift and Marnie Karger on a more definitive, single location, with a more defined organization, searchable taxonomy, and privacy permissions, to be hosted, ideally, on our website. The board will be reaching out to committees for input and requests related to this ongoing process.

E. **What decisions require a congregational vs. board vote**
Matthew, as chair of the Social Justice Committee, asked about the membership or board voting on certain social justice issues, and this raised a question about how decisions are made at Lake Fellowship. The board looked into and found certain helpful guidelines to help make these decisions, and is seeking member input. Laurie outlined some of the types of decisions that would or would not require a supermajority member vote, and others on which the board itself could decide. There was general agreement that LFUU would abide by the broader UUA's decisions regarding issues to support, with grace for disagreements that have come up and will continue to arise. Terry McGlynn asked that there also be clarification in how and when votes will take place (via text, in person, at the Annual Meeting, at a regular program, etc.) and Laurie addressed this. Laurie also reminded us that if we want more input in the larger UUA, we could send delegates to attend the General Assembly more often. Fellowship donations to non-UU organizations (e.g. Soup Sunday beneficiaries) will continue to be voluntary and led by individual members.

F. **Annual donation to UUA and MUUSJA**
Matthew asked if LFUU might consider making an annual donation to the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA), and the board agreed. Dan shared that there is a flat, dedicated, and increased amount now listed in the new budget ($1700 for 2025-26), and whatever amount remains after paying our dues to the UUA, will go to MUUSJA. The suggested amount from the UUA next year is around $1300 so we will be sending MUUSJA about $400.

XI. **Other Business**
There was no other business.

XII. **Committee Recognitions and Reports, and Volunteer Needs**

Laurie iterated that committees are the lifeblood of our fellowship! She asked each of us to consider the following: What are your passions, interests and skill sets, and how might you contribute in-kind to Lake Fellowship?

A. **Sundays (Board Liaison: Dan)**
    1. **Programs** (**Dan**, Marnie)
    Dan thanked Marnie for Sunday set-ups and monthly programs, and Sam and Laurie for sending some great guest speakers our way. He also asked everyone to continue to consider ideas for programs, speakers, and other program-related recommendations.
    2. **Children's Religious Education/RE** (**Maia**, Liz)
    Maia has spent time and money to create a more kid-friendly learning zone in the basement, and it looks great. She echoed the wish to do whatever possible to get more kids to attend. Dan shared that Maia is paid $50 for each Sunday that kids attend.
    3. **Music** (**Maia**, Marilyn, Beatriz, Karen)
    We are still unable to broadcast music via Zoom, and not enough people tend to show up regularly to sing. Maia noted that she was now the chair of the music committee. She also offered to present non-singing music options to the program planning committee throughout the upcoming year. Peggy asked that someone else be the contact for Lauridsen, for piano tuning services. Terry suggested that Peggy change the contact number to the fellowship's land line, which will go to Terry, who can then direct it to Maia or whomever. Laurie clarified that the board has decided to stop putting effort into making music over Zoom happen. This is not to exclude all music on Sundays, but to recognize that a.) so few people attend via Zoom these days that it's maybe not worth the effort, and b.) having in-person only concerts/music programs might nudge more people to attend.
    4. **Sangha** (Peggy)
    Dan thought we might be able to resurrect this if there is interest. Marnie asked that, should Sangha resume on Sunday mornings, that the group please either be completed by 10 or be content with noises upstairs as that's when she typically arrives to start setting up and when guest speakers arrive as well.

B. **Building & Grounds (Board Liaison: Don)**
    Don put in over 300 hours on maintenance this year! This work included removing and replacing the front steps, assisting with the purchase of a new water heater, water softener, water pump, and upstairs carpet, removal of railroad ties from the parking lot, paving work, re-siding efforts, and hiring a new, low-cost business for snow removal and summer mowing. While no new major expenses are on the horizon, several smaller projects have yet to be completed. The wheelchair access ramp still needs a handrail, as do the deck stairs. New deck plates (1 of 4 is done) need to be installed where work was done for mouse mitigation. The basement restroom door needs repair as it currently doesn't close all the way. And the basement exterior door needs some weather stripping to cover the gap at the bottom. Don also discussed the dilemma concerning window shades. We cannot get shades for the triangle shaped windows facing the woods, because the angles are too steep. He is open to other ideas.
    Don thanked Larry Hanke, who will be picking up the day-to-day operations from here on, and also Sam, who will be the Buildings & Grounds liaison to the board. Don also thanked John Symchych and Dan Larson for all of their help this year. He noted there have been generous donations from the members to make sure things get done, and thanked Terry for keeping the budget on track, and Sharon for help with many interior issues, including the new carpet and locking credenza. He then thanked each board member for all of their help and leadership, and ended by sharing a great retrospective video of Lake Fellowship efforts and excursions.
    1. **Audio/Video** (**Don**)

The original a/v setup is still running strong. Marnie and Don will look into a lapel mic for guest speakers to reduce sound lost to gesturing.

2. **Building Usage & Rental** (**Don**)
   Don received a couple of inquiries about renting the A-Frame, but no one followed through to rent. We continue to rent the building to a men's group once a week, and it is a worthwhile source of revenue for the fellowship.
3. **Maintenance** (**Don**, Sam)
   Don will meet with Sam and Larry this summer to discuss ongoing maintenance efforts.
4. **Landscaping** (**Karen Wendt**, Vicki, Roberta Rott)
   Roberta and Vicki are discussing new plantings, including a butterfly garden, and incorporating native and deer-resistant plants throughout the grounds, and specifically along the new stairs.
5. **Supplies** (**Peggy**)
   Peggy shared that the price of coffee went up recently, but everything is fine. She reminded everyone to let her know when supplies are short.

**C. Social Action (Board Liaison: Mike)**

Laurie made note to thank Matthew for jumping in to do all the work he's been doing this year in this area.

1. **Community Outreach** (**Tim Wendt**)
   Mike read a report from Tim, who stated that LFUU's work with the Neighborhood Food Project (NFP) was very successful. We donated over 500 lbs. of food, more than 37 personal care items, and 100s of dollars in cash donations. Donation needs for next year will take into consideration the recent federal cuts to aid programs such as SNAP and Meals-on-Wheels.
   Tim proposes we do what we can and ask our neighbors and friends to join us in our efforts. Since many people continue to forget to bring their bag of donations for the NFP, Tim suggests a shift from bringing in a bag, to getting your bag picked up from your home by volunteers. He hopes to kick this off on September 7, 2025 with the first pick up to follow shortly. Dan shared concern that this will be more difficult to pull off. Vicki asked to table further discussion for later this year to get more input. Curtis Siller and Peggy shared that monetary contributions are easier and perhaps more impactful.
   Soup Sunday raised $1200 for various charities. An impromptu vote was held and the majority voted to continue participating in Soup Sunday.
2. **Social Justice** (**Matthew**, John Rasmussen, Amy Bodnar, Peggy)
   This year, Matthew became our MUUSJA Congregational Connector and also became the chair of the Social Justice Committee. He has also become a certified facilitator for Climate Justice Revivals and Our Whole Lives (OWL) Adult RE, and will be working with Helene on a UU read along later this year. Social Justice news, updates, and calls to action are now regularly included in our weekly newsletter.

**D. Engagement (Board Liaison: Helene)**

1. **Celebrations & Activities** (**Helene**, John R, Maia)
   Maia shared that they're looking for more volunteers to help, and that they're looking into a summer picnic to be discussed and decided later.
2. **Membership** (**Peggy**, Marilyn, Vicki)
   As mentioned earlier, we have 4 new members this year and lots of visitors. Peggy will be taking over some of Terry's jobs (namely, UUA membership data collection and name-tag inventory). The membership committee is now offering (but not forcing) orientations to new members.
3. **Small Dinner Groups** (**Vicki**)

All spring dinners have been going well so far, and Vicki is open to any feedback. Typically, the small group dinner planning takes the summers off, and will pick up in the fall.

4. **Sunshine** (**Marilyn**, Curtis)
Committee members continue to visit, bring cards, flowers, and such to those who need a little sunshine. As always, this work is much appreciated.

**E. Communications (Board Liaison: Laurie)**

1. **Archives** (**Sharon**, Don)
Digital archives are currently stored in the cloud-based app, Dropbox. Laurie suggests getting everything all in one place, perhaps on the website. Once we can establish a single storage place, we can also establish adding new documents and other things to store into these archives as part of a regular protocol, with help from the board secretary and others.
2. **Design** (**Sharon**, Beatriz)
Sharon was a big help getting the new carpet purchased and installed on the main level of the A-frame. She was also responsible for the new locking credenza and donation box. Sharon was also instrumental in setting up and marketing the Art auction.
3. **Directory** (**Sharon**, Terry)
The directory was last updated in September 2024. Sharon printed a limited number of hard copies, and all those included in the directory received a digital copy. Some current issues with receiving and updating information will be resolved once our new AirTable database is up and running.
4. **Marketing & Social Media** (**Laurie**, Liz, Sharon)
We have two, new, blue highway signs, located on both sides of County Road 19. After securing a permit and paying the relatively low fee for the printing, the signs were installed by a crew from Hennepin County. Those new signs, the sandwich board sign, and other public events have helped bring in visitors. The Art Auction brought in some prospective visitors as well. Social media posts have not done as well, and that's true for many other organizations. Laurie will continue to post on Nextdoor, but has cancelled meetup and other paid marketing efforts. She believes that getting out in person will attract people. She invites us all to be involved in our community, and to continue to consider events we can host for the public.
5. **Website & Emailing** (**Matthew, Marnie**)
Matthew outlined updates to the website, including the addition of a blog with different types of articles. He also shared a new Drupal initiative called Member Platform, which, although it's still just in the planning stages for now, might meet our database needs in the future while aligning with our UU values (more so than a proprietary platform like AirTable does). Laurie, as Board Chair, has been writing weekly messages this year, but may pare it down to monthly next year. Our website is a great place to share all sorts of information, through our calendar, blog posts and the weekly newsletter.

**F. Financial (Board Liaison: Dan)**

Dan first made a point to thank Mike for his efforts to obtain our new AED as well as the in-house training for its use.

1. **Bookkeeping** (**Terry**)
After meticulous work, Terry is retiring from this position and has been integral in training Jeni in the role. Jeni will step-in to this role moving forward, and Terry will assist with the transition.
2. **Fundraising**

Laurie shared that there have been talks of hosting a large-group rummage sale, where participating folks bring their own things to sell, and run their own sale (like a craft fair, but for used goods). Through a show of hands, there was interest in the group for participating in such a sale.

a) **Regular Auction** (**Tim W**, **Vicki**, Helene, Karen, Mike, Roberta)
There was no regular auction this year, but there may be one this summer or later in the year.

b) **Art Auction** (Tim W, **Laurie**, Sharon, Vicki, Kristin)
Laurie offered a quick wrap-up. The Art Auction had three goals: create a chance to own a Jo and Lee memento, raise money for LFUU ($4,110 profit + a very generous donation from Tom Lang), and promote our fellowship to visitors. It certainly accomplished all three goals. Sharon and Laurie will work on selling the remaining auction items through a variety of means.

## XIII. Announcements

### A. Spring Clean-up

Don is leaving the planning of a Spring Clean-up date to the incoming Building & Grounds team, and it is yet to be planned.

### B. Canoe Trip

Laurie said that possible dates are coming. She's looking into a new location as the one we've done recently, near Osceola, has gotten so busy, and this has made it difficult to gather on land and stay together. We might be able to go back to the old site at Wild River. Another option is the Cannon River. This river is a little longer and a little faster (with Class 1 rapids). A final option is the Namekagon river, but it would likely require an overnight stay since it's farther away. Sam mentioned that he has a 6-canoe trailer that we could use if it would be helpful.

### C. Summer Picnic

Maia said the Celebrations Committee will discuss this and should have a date to share soon.

### D. Other

Sam shared some thoughts and questions for the board and others to consider:

- Can we cast a survey to help understand what does or doesn't attract people to come to LFUU, as well as solicit feedback for what we might do to make it more attractive?
- Is the building rental a source of revenue or is it a drag. Is it a net gain? *Don quickly responded that the short answer is yes, it is worth it.*
- Is there any desire to host a youth summer program? This could be a one-time event or a summer long, day camp type activity. For example, Sam could help guide a canoe trip for teenagers. *Matthew would like to help with this.*
- Does the fellowship have membership goals? He mentioned it can feel more like a club rather than a church…
- Are we working on ways to submit memories, digital archives, etc.?
- Are there any plans to reach out to LFUU Alumni, perhaps to get them to return or check in more often?
- Can we plan some sort of community outreach event, like hosting a food/sausage truck in the parking lot and making room for people in our community to gather?

## XIV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1PM. *Minutes respectfully submitted by Marnie Karger (subbing for Helene).*