Notes from Four Zoom Meetings

**John’s Chapter One**: 7/20/22; 7 PM, moderator Nancy Ulrich

Participants: Joy & Rob Carroll, Rochelle Paris, Teresa De Lise, Bill Reynolds

Question 1: Want to be part of the future?

Want to be part but not optimistic; want to be part but too virtual now; want others to benefit; stepped away but not giving up; we meet needs; short term yes but long term questionable; intend to be less active; center of my social life, wants to be part

Question 2: Merge?

Stay independent; is there a way to be part of larger UU but retain assets and identity? likes that idea but prefers independence and worries about our future; has hope for FUSW but we can’t sustain ourselves the way we’re going

Question 3: Next home?

What about renting from Barvinok? home should be in Hastings or Dobbs Ferry, but it will be hard to afford rent; lower Westchester; need meeting room, kitchen, and parking; yes, all that and bring us back together; support for Barvinok rental; location in river towns near 25 OJA

Question 4: Best use of money?

Investment income will be available; don’t waste money on rent; money for staff? preserve assets; leave First Pres; invest in rent; find a place that is ours; we’re not visible; need a location and an identity; our best chance to grow is a full-time minister and some UU ministers are expert on this; space and minister together

Question 5 Preferred demographics?

Yes, more diverse – old, young, etc.; yes, wide range; near public transportation; Sunday morning is the most segregated time in America

Question 6 How to get new members?

RE is needed; we need an identity (can’t be whatever we want day to day); nothing to attach to; what would attract people? Space + minister; bring a friend; either bloom or let it all go; our only chance is a full-time minister with the assignment to grow

Question 7 Other ideas?

Activities at other times during the week

**John's Chapter 2:** July 24, noon, Lisa deMauro moderator

Participants: Larry Greenberg, Adelaide Di Giorgi, Debbie O’Donnell, Nancy Ulrich, Micheal Dowling, Gary Haas

Question 1: Continue? Be a part?

Rent 25 OJA; yes, continue, but declining pledge numbers and amount are concerning (102 six years ago, 51 this year); don’t want shrinkage

Question 2: Merge or stay independent?

Open to considering merger; merging OK but not far away;

White Plains is too large for us; merging is a last resort; we get selected, so independence is better

Question 3: New home?

Yes, if we want to grow; look at closed Catholic churches; don’t be interested in sharing $1mm; personal sharing makes us special; program groups are dear; synagogues seem like a possibility, but likes moveable chairs, not pews; yes, flexibility is good, but symbols could be bad; want space for Sunday morning and ability to come & go during the week; nondenominational; back to 25 OJA temporarily; wants what Barvinok got from us, South Church is too different; 25 OJA inaccessible without a car; OWK is important; need full-time minister who should make us grow; need parking; what are our options? 25 OJA was limiting

Quwstion 4: What to do with $1mm?

That’s not enough to buy property; concerned about actually getting the money from the State of New York; we must be appealing in order to increase pledge number and amounts; preserve money until we have a plan to invest in; we are not viable without growth; spend early to get a strong minister; if the place is too crowded, growth won’t happen

Question 5: What kind of a congregation?

Experience with other organizations shows that it is difficult to attract racial diversity; need children and youth; wants racial diversity anyway; is racial diversity a priority? In Yonkers, diverse people are poor, unlike some Manhattan neighborhoods; noble goal, but must get younger

Question 6: How to attract new members?

Full-time minister already mentioned; need a social media presence; is there UUA research on getting young people? Are parents taking them anywhere now? Need a message from the pulpit to grow

Question 7: Other issues?

We need a committee to find out how to attract younger members; How about Fun Fairs? Our Sunday services are not inviting visitors because of the prominence of candles of joys and concerns

**John’s Chapter 3:** July 26, 7PM, Nancy Ulrich moderator

Participants: Susan Greenberg, Denise Woodin, Craig Butler, Marietta Api

Question 1: Continue? Participation?

All yes to both, but one will be reducing involvement

Question 2: Merge or stay independent?

Saty independent; stay independent, but is this possible? Stay independent, but this depends on our views of the future; there is no possibility of merging, but we should join with others for mutual benefit

Question 3: Qualities of new home?

Within 5 miles of 25 OJA; meeting room, office, parking, not look like a church; yes, but more space is better; don’t care what it looks like; don’t be isolated; want public involvement – fairs, invite people

Question 4: What to do with money?

Don’t save at the expense of growth; invest in location; invest in space, not minister (we’re doing fine with Arlin); yes to space, and spend on staff to assist with outreach; yes, we’re OK this year, but we need pledges; we need leaders and lots of scheduled events

Questions 5 & 6: Future demographics and how to attract members?

Need a multi-generational congregation and diversity in other ways; need to explain ourselves; multigen, yes, but depends on location; be welcoming but won’t happen quickly; Sundays may not be enough; OWL special and valuable; could do this elseahere and what else could we charge for?

Question 7: Other issues?

Keep gifts at the forefront – no freeloaders; get book group into the Enterprise and do a press release when the sale of property is final

**John’s Chapter 4:** July 29, 7 PM; Craig Butler, moderator

Participants: George & Sue MacAnama, Claudia Gisolfi, Eric Kemperman

Question 1: Continue? Participate?

Mostly yes to both, one doubtful about the future but wants to be part of the congregation

Question 2: Merge?

Not totally opposed, but do we have enough members for this? No to merger, non-UU totally out of the question; merging a last resort – we would lose uniqueness and may as well close; no to other faiths; not worried about uniqueness, no to other religions but maybe Ethical Culture

Question 3: New home qualities?

Bus line, space, storage, defunct church better than ugly space; visible is better but strip mall OK, offer community services; space relates to our plans; what about Ridge Hill, South Church is too small, but Zoom is a help; want flexibility and ventilation is important and so is our time when we can meet

Question 4: What to do with our money?

Don’t go into debt, don’t sp[end assets; No spending on the congregation, put money in a safe place, no spending without several big meetings, it’s our patrimony; want a big place with good ventilation; spend on community outreach; invest in the future – money is there to be used, spend on what we want to do; we need a five-year plan, our situation is dire and we can’t shool from the hip; Arlin is a great resource; be open-minded, don’t waste resources, won’t be able to recrreate the past; could Arlin be full-time and bring in new members/ look at all possibilities – we need research; need more updates on sale of 25 OJA

Question 5: Future demographics?

If we have age diversity, we’ll be OK, but need good relations with others; young members important; does location influence this? We haven’t come to grips with our losses of 4 years ago (this has been sugar-coated) and now we have lost the building also; we need kids before we need an RE Director

Question 6: How to attract new members?

It’s not the time right now, we need a 5-year plan; we are great because we mix Judaism and Christianity, but no to Episcopals and Easter; organized social action can attract people on issues, misses social action; everybody doing their own thing, no outreach; Midnight Run is fulfilling; Midnight Run is currently lonely and expensive

Question 7: Other issues?

We need report on the current small meetings; religions are losing members; real work may require hiring expertise; yes, need an outsider for in-person services