

**Great Lakes Unity Region**  
Board of Trustee Meeting | October 29, 2025  
*Minutes*

**Attending:** Rev. Kathy Harwood Long (President), Rev. Debra Carter Williams (Secretary), Rev. Jeff Berry, Rev. Diane Robinson (Regional Rep and Outreach Ambassador), Nancy Berdasco (LUT Rep/Acting VP and Treasurer), Rev. Sandra Higgins-Smith, Rev. Liesa Chase, Paula Land (LUT), and Rev. Peggy Konkel.

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Kathy Harwood Long and the board shared prayer requests. Rev. Peggy Konkel lead a prayer.

**Agenda and Minutes:**

The minutes of the September meeting were reviewed and approved with a name correction.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Nancy Berdasco shared the treasurer's report (see attached). She was thanked for cleaning up many areas of the financial reporting and accounting duties. Additionally, she was asked to calculate and request the 3rd Q tithes to be processed in October if possible.

**Team/Staff Reports:**

Diane Robinson reported that she is working with groups in the region who are experiencing conflict. She also shared that she held a successful training in Lansing, Michigan focused on "Vision, Mission, and Core Values." The center was very appreciative of her work with them. Diane was asked to think about reporting processes and other responsibilities within her position in preparation for her review.

There was no LUT report

In her written report, Cassady Meeks shared that there were 87 in attendance at the recent YFM event. This exceeded expectations. Additionally, Liesa Chase (board liaison for YFM) encouraged the board to get the word out about the upcoming YFM Summit at UWM on November 19<sup>th</sup> via Zoom.

There was no Earth Care Team report; however, Kathy Harwood Long has been appointed as the lead minister for the Unity Earth Care Alliance Special Ministry.

**President's Report:**

Kathy Harwood Long shared that there were several positive remarks about the recent conference and for the renewed energy in the region. She also shared that the Annual Business Meeting required more time than planned but was grateful for how it came together.

Kathy has been diligently attending RAC and Town Hall Meetings, stressing the need to remain informed about the upcoming UWM acquisition vote. She will lead a regional discussion for delegates via Zoom at 2 PM on Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> given the lack of time after the Annual Meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup> for this discussion.

Kathy stressed that despite some conversation the acquisition does not appear to be financially motivated.

**Appointment of Board Alternates and Election of Officers:**

The Nominating Team identified 2 well-qualified candidates to serve as Board Alternates. A motion was made by Jeff Berry to appoint Paul Land (LUT) and Rev. Peggy Konkel to these

alternate positions. The motion was seconded by Liesa Chase. Motion passed. Alternates are nonvoting members of the board.

Three voting members were elected at the recent annual meeting. The positions to be filled are 2 three-year terms, and 1 one-year term. Kathy Harwood Long and Sandra Higgins-Smith will fill the 2 three-year terms, and Liesa Chase will fill the one-year term.

The officers for the 2025-2026 term are:

President: Kathy Harwood Long

Vice-President: Debra Carter Williams

Secretary: Jeff Berry

Treasurer: Sandra Higgins-Smith

After revisiting the role and responsibilities of the secretary, Liesa Chase moved that the slate of officers be accepted, with Nancy Berdasco offering the second. Motion passed.

The bylaws allow for a seventh board member; therefore, Paula Land was appointed to the board as a full voting member.

Liesa Chase will continue to serve as the YFM board liaison.

**Annual Meeting Minutes Review:**

Revs Sandra Higgins-Smith, Deb Hill-Davis, and Cindy Yamamoto agreed to review the Annual Meeting Minutes. Debra Carter Williams will contact them and forward the draft for review.

**Conference Team:**

Debra asked for the final numbers for the conference to compare the project budget to the actual figures. Nancy Berdasco will send the information to her. There was discussion regarding shifting the conference to a more central location for 2026, as well the kind of venue for the conference--such as entirely in a church or entirely in a hotel, or a hybrid of the two. Debra will get a list of possible sites to the board and will also work on a Request for Proposal (RFP) to send out to possible locations.

**COLA Salary Adjustments:**

The board approved 2.8% COLA salary adjustments for the regional employees beginning in the new fiscal year. Nancy Berdasco made a motion to approve, and it was seconded by Sandra Higgins-Smith. Motion passed.

**Additional Business and Agenda Items:**

The board discussed realignment of employee duties and performance. Additional and noncritical agenda items were tabled given the length of the meeting.

**The meeting was adjourned at 5 PM (EST)**