

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
Congregational Meeting Minutes
Date: September 24, 2017

Call to Order: Board of Trustees President Shelly Wallace welcomed the congregation and called the meeting to order at 11:19 am.

Adoption of Agenda: Tim Kraus moved and Dot Christenson seconded that we adopt the proposed agenda. Unanimous approval.

Interim Minister's Report: Reverend Maucere reported that last year we looked at the past and present of First Church. This year we will look at its future. We developed a timeline of our past, and Rev. Maucere preached a follow-up sermon on fulfilling our promise, which is available in printed form and online. In the past First Church has demonstrated a pattern of growth followed by conflict, which causes us to slip back to our former size. We will work on learning to have respectful dialogue and move forward based on clarity. The Transition Team will offer a workshop on how to communicate during conflict on Saturday, December 2. We will develop a relational covenant. We will also examine our mission and vision and how we live them out. The search process is going very well, and First Church will be highly desirable to ministerial candidates.

Approval of Minutes: There were no corrections to the minutes of the May 21 meeting, and the President declared the minutes were approved as submitted.

Registrar's Report: Linda Miltner reported that the following eight members were attending their first congregational meeting and establishing their voting privileges: Bobby Chambers, Virginia and Jack Copley, Laura Pipitone, Kate Rosselot, Joyce and Bob Stewart, and Craig Vogel. Since the church year began on July 1, 2017, two members have passed away and one has resigned. Three people have joined. The current active membership is 288.

Bylaws Revision: President Wallace expressed appreciation for the hard work of the committee that has worked on the revision: Chris Dendy, Mimi Gingold, Beth McGrew, Sarah Estes, Gaut Ragsdale and Barb Rider. Chris Dendy introduced Sarah Estes, who described the four input sessions that have taken place, with the proposed revision being introduced today and a vote scheduled for the January meeting. Gaut Ragsdale referred members to a handout with information on all proposed changes and discussed the changes. The Bylaws revision is derived from the existing Bylaws and Constitution, and it has seventeen articles. Article VI, Trustees, includes strategic planning as a Board responsibility rather than listing it in a separate section as is done in the current Bylaws. Article XV, Committees, reduces the number of committees from the twenty-one in the current Bylaws to fourteen because some have merged and some are inactive. Article XIII describes the Church Council as a coordinating committee and has no changes from the current Bylaws. Article XIV, Committee Structure, has been streamlined and describes the structure and function of committees. Article XVI, Rules

of Order, has no changes from the current Bylaws. Article VII, Amendments, combines language from the current Bylaws and Constitution and allows a special meeting to change the Bylaws. Article I, Name, Article II, Purpose, and Article III, Denominational Affiliation, have no changes from the current Constitution. Article IV, Membership, has two classifications, active and inactive, and deletes the absentee and friend classifications. Article VII, Officers, adds the Treasurer position, and deletes the word "presiding" from the current Bylaws. Article VIII, Nominating Committee, updates language to make it similar to language passed at the May 2017 congregational meeting allowing notice to be given by electronic mail. Article IX, Endowment Fund, deletes a reference to November 1, 1987 because the date is now moot. Article X, Minister, has no change from the current Constitution. In Article XI, Church Staff, the content is unchanged except that specific positions are no longer listed because these positions may change to meet staffing needs. Article XII, Select Roles, is new and focuses on the Historian and Registrar roles. The Bylaws revision will be available on the church web site. There will be a vote at the January meeting to replace the existing Constitution and Bylaws with the Bylaws revision.

Ministerial Search Committee Update: Tim Kraus provided the update. The proposed Bylaws revision will help us attract a new minister. We have had phenomenal engagement of congregational members over the last year. Over two-thirds of our members (186) provided feedback on a survey, 71 participated in the Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop, and 135 participated in 20 input groups that got everyone talking in a constructive way. We have reaffirmed our sense of good will and our willingness to tackle big projects. The committee will combine the survey and input group results and will provide a lengthy report in November. We have demonstrated a remarkable congruity of where we should go in the future, and that will help us market this church. We are seeing a divergence of opinion on social justice, specifically, the question of whether we should focus on Avondale or on citywide action. There is interest in a more unified approach to social action. The committee is building web sites for prospective candidates. One will be a Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) site for prospective candidates, and the second, which will be for targeted candidates, will include a video and will be available after Thanksgiving. After January 1, candidates will declare their interest to the UUA and to churches. The committee will review applications and conduct phone interviews. Following the phone interviews, the committee will narrow the field to three to five candidates and schedule sermons at neutral sites where members of the committee will meet with the candidates. The committee will then narrow the field to one candidate, who will visit us the week of April 15-22, preaching two sermons followed by a vote on April 22. An approval vote of at least 90% would be convincing for the candidate to come here. The committee will not settle for someone who is not right for the position. They want someone to electrify us. Tim concluded by asking everyone to remain engaged in the process.

Board President's Update: Shelly Wallace expressed appreciation to the Ministerial Search Committee and described the goals for 2017-2018 established by the Board of Trustees at its August retreat.

Goal 1: Continue work on updating our bylaws so that governance document revisions are near completion by the time our new minister starts.

Goal 2: Support the ministerial search committee through developing a proposed contract, job description and organizational chart.

Goal 3: At the UUA's recommendation, gain an understanding of what a Committee on Shared Ministry is, and consider how this committee might work at First Church. The roles and responsibilities of this committee would be finalized with the settled minister.

Goal 4: Support Reverend Maucere and the Transition Team in helping our congregation question and examine our mission and vision in relation to First Church programming.

The board will communicate information with the congregation and committees during

- 1) Church Council meetings
- 2) Congregational Meetings and
- 3) Update forums

Shelly recognized two members for exemplary service. **Joe Busby** led the way to the purchase of a new boiler that will save us money now and in the future. Shelly also recognized other members, including Becky Algenio, Bill Baker, Dick Bozian, and George Vila, who, along with Joe, did a great deal of volunteer work to help with the installation and saved the church money. Secondly, Shelly recognized **Rolf Wiegand**, who diligently responds to spontaneous sound needs and helps whenever needed.

Financial Report: Dennis Finney, Finance Chair, reported on the Operating Budget. The results for fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017) were great. In comparison with a projected deficit of \$21,039, we had a surplus of \$6,247. We had the highest support ever on pledges, building rentals increased, gas and electric charges decreased, committees finished below budget, and Benjamin did not start until August. Virginia Copley asked why there is no transition budget for fiscal year 2018. Dennis replied that there should have been no transition budget included in the fiscal year 2017 budget and that transition expenses will come from the Treasury. Jean Phillips asked about the level of pledge fulfillment, and Dennis replied that it was more than 95%.

Dick Miltner gave the Treasurer's report. The Capital Budget aims to have a carryover of about \$30,000 each year. Fiscal year 2017 began with a balance of \$30,410 and ended with a balance of \$33,944. Income from the Heart & Hand Fundraiser, which included art wall sales, was at an all-time high of \$24,606. Other income came from the Endowment Fund Historical Building Account (\$33,451) and the Endowment Fund

Restated Building Account (\$4,404). The second mortgage of \$7,804 was paid off using money from the Phil and Doris Froehlich estate. Paying off this mortgage early will save the church about \$35,000 in interest over the next eleven years. Major capital projects included improvements to the Ellen Hall Room and the kitchen. The Treasury Report showed \$315,549 in assets as of June 30, 2017. That amount includes restricted money in the Capital Fund, bequests and First Church Restricted Funds. The Board of Trustees has approved paying for the boiler and related expenses from bequests. After subtracting restricted funds, the church had \$115,114 in the unrestricted General Fund on June 30, 2017. This represents 3.36 months of operation and is considered to be a very healthy number.

Shelly thanked Dennis and Dick for their hours of work on the congregational record that will be used by the Ministerial Search Committee.

Endowment Fund Report: Lee Koehler reported that the Endowment Fund has \$1,131,000, an increase of approximately \$100,000 year to date. Lee described the UUA Wake Now Our Vision campaign, which offers \$5 million to be used to match legacy gifts to the Endowment Fund and to other UU organizations, such as the UUA or the UU Service Committee. The match would be an additional 10% up to \$10,000. Lee has a brochure with more information, and he encouraged members to take advantage of this opportunity to maximize their giving.

Comments and Questions: Alex Resly commented to the Ministerial Search Committee that we need to make choices, and that as the committee writes its report, we would like to understand the context of these choices. Tim Kraus replied that in the committee's report to the UUA, due November 2, members would see the ministerial attributes related to mission, vision and priorities. There will be further opportunities to give input between November 2 and the first week in January. Lynn Ambrosini offered thanks for those who have worked to clean up our records and documents. Jane Kay asked about what happens next if the Ministerial Search Committee and the congregation cannot agree on a ministerial candidate. Tim Kraus replied that there would be an abbreviated second round search. If that second search were not successful, the search would be delayed for another year. Chris Dendy commented that we require 75% approval vote, but the candidate would expect a much higher approval. Rozy Park pointed out an error in wording in the Bylaws revision, in which Family Programming is mistakenly referred to as Family Planning. Rozy also commended the Building and Grounds Committee on the new lights in the sanctuary, which make it a more friendly setting. Shelly Wallace commented that the change makes the sanctuary more rentable, and Chris commented that the May Festival Chorus now holds rehearsals in our sanctuary.

At 12:29 pm, Pat Smart moved to adjourn, and Jane Kay seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.