

First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati
Congregational Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2014

Call to Order: Larry Pytlinski, resident of the Board of Trustees, convened the meeting at 11:40 am and welcomed the congregation. Rev. Dittmar provided a reading. The motion to adopt the agenda passed.

Approval of Minutes for Prior Meeting: The minutes from congregational meeting on May 18, 2014, were approved.

Registrar's Report: There are four new members attending this meeting and established their eligibility to vote at future meetings. They are: Anne Dudley, Jack Niehaus, Criss Titschinger, and Katie Evans. The official membership is 288 members.

Minister's Report: Sharon explained that the worship theme for the first half of the year is UU History and Principles to help celebrate of 125 years in Avondale. She also reviewed her goals for this year and they are: 1. Enhance social media profile and communication 2. Uplift the role of mission at First Church 3. Focused work on Cincinnati Re-entry for Returning Citizens and Unitarian Universalist 4. Experience "Courage and Renewal" Model Developed by Parker Palmer. She also sees our 'underachieving' status as an opportunity for discernment and conversation to dig into our mission and clarify our purpose. Sharon thanked the following committee chairs-Tim Kraus, (Adult RE and Worship), Patricia Rohrer(RE) , Glenetta Blair Krause (Worship), Barb Rider (Membership), Jane Kay (Extended Ministry), the Executive Committee as well as the staff. She added that the RE will be focusing on a ministry towards families rather than just children.

Operations Manager's Report: Carrie Spiess commented that she has completed her first full year successfully due to the help of church members. Members now understand the vision of an operations manager and are realizing the results of this arrangement. She thanked members for all of their support. She related a story about a butterfly which illustrated that struggle is something that is not only needed in a process but can improve subsequent performance. She related this to our congregation as the Church is in transformation and there are some struggles but she believes that she and the members will not only master, but improve in the process. On church matters, there has Increase in rentals, due to members recommending the space and information packets.

Financial Report Dennis Finney provided the financial report for Tom Cottril. He expressed frustration that there is \$27,000 deficit due to unpaid pledges. Over a couple of years there has been a total of \$50,628 in unpaid pledges. This deficit does not include those members who have died, moved, or had an illness. This situation cannot be repeated if the church is to thrive. The Pledge Drive netted 345,000 and the congregation approved a budget with \$5 000 deficit. However, since then a couple of members have contributed so we do not have a deficit. The church continues to use Bookkeeping Express which has set up system with quikbooks. Dennis expressed Appreciation to Carrie Spiess and Tom Cottril for their time and work. He also thanked the canvassers- Eisha Armstrong, Nelson Horseman, Dave Wallace and Jason Zoller.

Endowment Fund Report and Vote Lee reminded members to keep church in mind in estate planning. The Legacy Society will present an "Estate Planning Seminar" in the spring again. Lee thanked Tom Brennan for his five years on endowment. Dick Miltner, recorder, presented the report for the Endowment Fund. As of June 30, 2014 the Fund had a value of \$1,020, 251. The net growth in value of the fund for the fiscal year was 9.95%. The Endowment Committee is pleased with Riverpoint which manages the endowment money. Dick addressed a question of whether the committee asked Riverpoint to restrict investments in oil. The church's funds are not invested in arms and tobacco, but the question of disinvesting in oil is more complex. The committee will continue to explore and discuss the topic of disinvesting in oil. There was a motion to appoint Bob Wones to the endowment committee. Motion passed.

Board President's Report Larry expressed concern with challenges the church faces in the upcoming years. There are changes in society as well as a decline in membership in traditional religions that could affect our church. Also, our building is expensive to maintain. The board, led by President Pytlinski, will address these and other matters during the year. President Pytlinski then reviewed the board goals. They are:

- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate (2year goal through 2015)
- Envision and articulate the future of First Church
- Ensure sustainability of our mission and programming with limited resources

Question: Can we change name of church? Answer: Yes, it can be done. George Vila volunteered to be chairman of a committee to investigate this.

Question: Can the church look at more aggressive marketing strategy? Answer: Two committees are addressing that issue. They are the Development Committee and Communications Committee. Comment: Put this item on the January Congregational meeting.

Introduction of Committee Chairs Larry introduced committee chairs.

Martin Luther King Interchange Presentation: City of Cincinnati wants to buy 2 ft. of church property and lease 5 more feet for the Martin Luther King interchange construction. For the sale of church property, the church members have to vote on the sale. However, PNC Bank holds a mortgage on church property and hence controls the property so we need to get permission from them. PNC did not get back to us about this issue so the church cannot hold a vote at this time. The board will hold a special absentee ballot vote when we have word from the bank. In addition, there are some other planning issues that need to happen with this change and the church will appoint a planning committee to address this.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:35pm
Alice Schneider