

First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati
Congregational Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2014

Draft until approved at September Congregational Meeting

Call to Order: Lyn Martin and Linnea Lose, Co-presidents of the Board of Trustees, convened the meeting at 12:00 noon 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 January 26, 2014, were approved with the following correction- in the registrar's report-Linda Miltner reported that Debbie and Mark Morenz Harbinger established their voting rights.

Registrar's Report: Linda reported that new members attending first congregational meeting are Gary Gebhard, Jamie Cahill, and Denys Steele. There are 293 current, active members. Since July 1, 2013, 13 members have joined. The church has lost 26 members- 5 deaths, 11 inactive, and 10 resignations.

Senior Minister's Report: Sharon reported that there are many members are ill or dying and she is relying on lay members to help visit. Sharon referred to the constrained budget and noted that the staff is looking at the possibility of equal opportunity pain. She and the staff will use this opportunity to discuss the larger issues at hand such as what do we care about? Why do we (as a church) exist? What is our promise to the world? Sharon thanked the staff and board and stated that "it is my privilege and my honor to serve with you."

Operations Manager's Report: Carrie Spiess reviewed her nine months at the church by comparing the difference between THEN (November, 2013) and now (May, 2014). Finances: THEN - nonstandard accounting practices would make a possible an audit costly and time consuming, NOW - standard accounting practices, working with BookKeeping Express which will provide stability and clarity. FACILITY: THEN- there were volunteers who had Alice, do you mean "rental marketing" ideas? ideas but did not have resources to enact them. NOW, a dedicated staff person who has been able to increase revenue by 45%, also many thank you notes from customers for quality and consistent service. BUILDING MAINTENANCE: THEN- sporadic maintenance. NOW- the church maintenance check is now complete with a maintenance schedule instituted. Human Resources: THEN- inconsistent standards. NOW-consistent personnel standards. Computer systems: THEN-outdated computers, IT security concerns. NOW- computer system updated, backup solutions for trouble spots. Carrie noted that the minister, Sharon, has been a valuable resource.

Election of Board of Trustees Nominees: Susan Christy explained nominating process. Susan then presented the slate of board nominees. Bill Baker (2016) will complete the remaining two years of Andy Chirch who has moved away. Susan French moved and Joe Rohling seconded a motion to elect Bill Baker. Motion passed. Joy Haupt moved and Lucille Blocksom seconded the election of the three board nominees Chris Dendy (2017), Cynthia Heinrich (2017), Carly Wise (2017).

Motion passed. Larry Pytinski moved and Tom Rohrer seconded the motion to elect the nominees, Lyn Martin (board rep. 1 year), Laurie Frank and Linda Miltner(2 years) to the Nominating Committee. Motion passed. Linnea thanked the nominating committee -Tim Kraus, Heather Zoller, Mike Schmidt, Bev Baker, Susan Christy (Chair).

Recognition of Exemplary Service: Lyn thanked the Finance Committee members, including Treasurer Tom Cottrill, Chair, Dennis Finney, Nelson Horseman, Gary Gebhart, Eisha Armstrong, Chuck Schmalz, Andy Chirch, and Alice Schneider She also thanked the IT committee members Ray Sinclair, who served as Chair for the Committee and his team- Joe Busby, Eric Elfner, Jody Johnson, Linda Miltner, and Doug Rohrer. Lyn recognized the Hand & Heart Committee. This year's Heart & Hand event, under the leadership of Vicki Ragsdale, raised an impressive \$22,000 for the Church's capital budget. She was ably assisted by Rebecca Algenio Jr., Katie Campbell, Tim and Susan Christy, Laurie & Dennis Finney, Jane Hopson, Linda Miltner, and Larry Pytinski. Thanks to the Art Wall Committee, Dutro Blocksom, Dottie Weil, Dutro will continue to with his Art Wall role, but Dottie will retire after serving for 10 years.

Canvass Results and FY 15 Budget Approval: Dennis Finney presented the fiscal year 2015 budget. Canvass brought in \$19,000 less than last year so some cuts will need to be made. Dennis thanked Eisha Armstrong, Nelson Horseman, Jason Zoller, and Dave Wallace for their work on the canvass this year. Dennis outlined the budget and explained the tough choices that the church must make to resolve the budget shortfall. Dennis Finney moved and Larry Pytinski seconded the motion to approve the budget. Motion passed.

Board Co-Presidents' Final FY 14 Report: Linnea informed the congregations that the shortfall in the canvass is one of several vulnerabilities in the church, such as constant requests from committees for more volunteers, need for more members, and financial plans that favor the facility preservation over program development. She also noted there are opportunities for us, such as superb staff, more activities at church on weeknights than any previous year, high-impact events by Social Justice Committee, diversity of children's and adult RE programs and Music, reputation citywide as a liberal spiritual voice, and senior minister in demand by progressive groups.. Linnea outlined the next steps for the church. She asked church members to commit themselves and accept the Board's call to participate in "First Church Future" discussions in the next six months.

Lyn Martin, co-president, reported on the progress of the board goals this year. The programming this year benefited so significantly from the collaboration and coordination among staff and committees. The board made its second goal for improved communications a two-year goal. This year, at the Board's request, the Committee Support Team conducted a survey of how committees communicate among themselves. Next year member, visitor, and community leader communications and channels will be assessed and improved.

Perhaps the Board's biggest success this year was the smooth on-boarding of new staff Carrie Spiess, operations manager, and Susan West, office administrator. Lyn

expressed the gratitude of the church to Sharon for embracing the new staffing model .

It has been a productive and satisfying year, but one that has revealed some inconvenient truths. The board hopes that members will stay the course and pitch in with sleeves rolled up as the Board, staff, and members all work together in the coming year to plan for the future of our beloved church.

New Business: None

Announcements: None

Meeting Adjourned at 1:05pm
Alice Schneider, Secretary