

Unitarian Universalist Society
Congregational Meeting Minutes, May 22, 2022
(Multiplatform meeting via Zoom and in-person)

President Alan Swanson called the meeting to order at 11:27 am. Rev. Diana Smith provided opening words as the chalice was lit. Joe Rasmussen reported a quorum was established with 48 members present in person and 23 members online. This method of establishing a quorum was necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic which prevented in-person voting for this meeting. Materials for the meeting were distributed to members by email or USPS two weeks prior to the meeting. Voting took place using Election Buddy online and Absentee voting on paper. Online voting would remain open until 5 pm on the following Friday 5/27/22.

The slate of candidates passed with more than 98% voting "yes." Support for the Eighth Principle passed with only 2 people voting "no." There were 9 abstentions.

Approval of the December 19, 2021, Congregational Meeting Minutes

Swanson asked for unanimous consent to accept the December 19, 2021, minutes as printed and distributed prior to the meeting. The motion was seconded by Sue Otto. No corrections were raised by the congregation.

Recognition of Outgoing Committee Members

Swanson thanked outgoing Board Trustees Past President Joe Rasmussen, Finance Trustee John Raley, and Secretary Paula Miller; Leadership Development Committee member Marsha Cheyney; and Endowment Committee member Gary Lawrenson.

Election of Officers

Three nominations for the Board of Trustees were presented:

- Vice President John Bowman: Sue Otto moved to accept the nomination, seconded by Peg Bouska
- Secretary Christine Etlar: Sue Otto moved to accept the nomination, seconded by Jim Laughlin
- Finance Trustee Jerry Wetlaufer: Sue Otto moved to accept the nomination, seconded by Valerie Bowman

1 nomination for the Leadership Development Committee was presented:

- Phil Beck: Sue Otto moved to accept the nomination, seconded by Virginia Melroy

1 nomination for the Endowment Committee was presented:

- Paul Pomrehn: Sue Otto motioned to accept the nomination, seconded by Gerry Pearson.

Report from the President

Swanson said that in the months since the last congregational meeting, we've experienced an emergence of creative and strategic activity to enhance the UUS's mission programs and to find new ways toward long-term financial stability to support them. He praised the Balance and Growth Initiative's (BGI's) work to create a plan to help bring UUS out of many years of deficit budgeting and

added that the focus will now be on carrying out these plans and measuring our success. Swanson summarized some key progress the Board and UUS had made in other areas as well, and ended with a reminder that we're progressing in our third year of shared governance with the Board and the Ministry staff sharing and cooperating in forward movement but with clearly separate responsibilities. The new form of governance is evident in the topic-searchable *UUS Shared Ministry: Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures Manual*, regularly updated for all our benefit on the UUS website.

Report from the Treasurer

Mike Pavelich's Treasurer's Report was read by Swanson. As of April, we had \$350,000 in our bank accounts. The spending in the First Quarter of 2022 was well within budget; the extra withdrawals from General Endowment earnings are serving us well. Our 2020-21 Operating Budget had a deficit of \$125,000. This shortfall in regular income was covered by \$125,000 in extra funds we had in the bank accounts. Pledge support for 2022 topped the Stewardship Committee's goal, Rev. Diana has redefined some staff positions to better fit our needs, and activities that increase our visibility to the larger community are falling into place. The BGI group and the Board will be supporting and monitoring the actions outlined in The Plan they created as we go forward. They will report periodically to the congregation with metrics, and next steps are in the works toward a yearly balanced budget.

The Eighth Principle: "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

Reverend Diana Smith discussed the history of the 8th Principle and presented it as a connector to build a deeper culture of inclusion. UUS member Kirk Witzberger advised that other churches in Iowa have already passed it, and People's Church in Cedar Rapids passed it unanimously last year after a 2-year discussion and educational campaign. Voting "yes" tells the UUA that we agree with the essence of the 8th Principle. Vice President Rochelle Honey-Arcement advised that adopting the 8th Principle encourages the entire UU community to take action, and that today's vote is just the starting point to move forward on this.

Motion for UUS to endorse the Eighth Principle for adoption by the UUA: Gerry Pearson moved to adopt this motion, seconded by Miriam Kashia.

Adjournment

Reverend Diana Smith provided closing words, and the chalice was extinguished.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 pm.

-Submitted by Paula Miller, Secretary