

BCL Policy 5.1 Public Witness (approved 10-19-2016)

Approval of the Board of Trustees for members and church groups to make public witness on behalf of the church through speech or in the print media can be acquired in the following ways:

1. Individual ministers, called by the congregation, may claim to represent “the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh” in public witness efforts.
2. The Board of Trustees, following a majority vote in which a quorum is present, may claim to represent “the Board of Trustees of the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh” in their public witness efforts.
3. Elected leaders of social justice groups recognized by the church, following a majority vote at a meeting called for the purpose of taking public witness action and publicized to all in the group, may claim to represent “their specific group of the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh” in their public witness efforts.
4. Public Witness purporting to represent the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh, whether through
 - speech or print media,
 - banners or signs placed on the church or church grounds,
 - words or images placed on the church website, or
 - statements made in public on behalf of the entire congregation

will be done under the following guidelines.

Proposals regarding such actions may be brought to the Board of Trustees from

- a called Minister,
- a committee of the church,
- an individual member of the church, or
- a called Minister-Board of Trustees discussion.

Following the receipt of a proposal, a called Minister together with the Board of Trustees, after determining among themselves that the proposal is consistent with our principles, will call for a Listening Meeting with the Congregation, in accord with the By Laws, to elicit feedback from the Congregation.

To measure congregational sentiment at this meeting, a formal vote or a straw vote may be called for at the Board's discretion. If the Board of Trustees in discussion with a called Minister decides that the proposal represents the majority of the congregation, the Board of Trustees may authorize the proposed public witness action on behalf of the Congregation and/or may designate any member of the Congregation to represent "the Congregation of the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh" in public witness efforts relating to this issue.

5. First Unitarian Church acknowledges the importance of working in partnership with social justice groups within the Unitarian Universalist community and beyond. However, we also acknowledge that public witness statements made by our social justice partners do not necessarily reflect *the majority sentiment* within our congregation. Such statements may be brought to the congregation through the processes listed in sections 1-4.

[New text highlighted]