

MINUTES

Board of Trustees: May 13, 2020, Virtual Meeting First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Martin Schmidt, President (2020); Claus Makowka, Treasurer (2020); Lynne Porterfield (2021); Scott Smith, Vice President (2021); Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary (2021); Ebe Emmons (2022); Sarah Benson (2020); Sam Hens-Greco (2022)

Board Members Absent: Julie Downs (2022)

Ex Officio Members: Rev. Constance Grant, Interim Minister

Visitors: None

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

1. **CALL TO ORDER (7:01) (Martin)** Martin called the meeting to order.
2. **OPENING WORDS (Connie) “In the Time of Pandemic”**
3. **WELCOMING GUESTS (Martin).** None.
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS (Martin)**
 - a. The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held via Zoom on Sunday, May 17, from 12:00-2:00p.m.
 - b. The Board will meet in executive session on May 17, 2020, immediately after the annual meeting to elect officers for the 2020–21 church year.
5. **CONSENT AGENDA (Martin) (handouts)**
 - a. Approval of March 18, 2020 meeting minutes. Approved as amended.
 - b. Approval of April 15, 2020 meeting minutes. Approved as amended.
6. **Publicizing virtual Board meetings and facilitating attendance by guests (Martin, Claus).** For security reasons we can't just publish the Zoom link. We could have a recurring message that people who wish to attend the Board meeting as observers should contact the Board Secretary, who would send them the Zoom link to join the meeting. Any member or friend of the church has the right to attend a meeting as an observer. To get on the agenda, they must contact the Board Secretary with a request and a brief explanation of the issue they wish to bring to the Board. Action: For the next Board. Eleanor will craft a message and guidance for this.
7. **Update on SBA Paycheck Protection Program application (Claus).** According to the UUA, 400 UU congregations have successfully applied for a loan through this program. Approximately 90% of our loan amount will cover payroll expenses. Loan forgiveness is based on submitting documentation of payroll and utility expenses for the 8-week period following receipt of the funds, which was April 29. The forgiveness amount will be about \$63,000.
8. **Financing for exterior sign project. (Martin) (7:17).** Martin raised some funds for the sign project, and in March 2019 the Board agreed to cover the difference, up to a cap, from endowment funds. Additional costs for installation and fees came to \$4,278, which was not on the initial invoice (which covered the cost of fabrication only). Asking the congregation for donations to cover these additional costs seems not such a good idea during the pandemic, and since the sign is already up. Claus suggested that the necessary funds could come from the Simons Future Fund, which is for capital expenses. Motion to approve \$4,278 from the

Simons Future Fund to cover additional costs for the new exterior sign. Moved by Martin. Seconded by Scott. Motion carried unanimously.

9. **Morewood doors. (Claus)** The cost of refurbishing the doors and installing crash bars went over budget, but we may have been overcharged about \$4,000. Claus and Ray Schinhofen are investigating this.

10. Minister's Report (Connie) (handout)

- a. Delegates for General Assembly (virtual). We are entitled to 5 delegates, whom we need to designate by June 24. Connie recommended announcing this in the weekly email newsletter and asking those interested to submit their names to the Minister or Board. Action: Lynne will create an announcement for the email newsletter.
- b. Extending the building closure date. Currently the building is officially closed until at least the end of June. There have been some inquiries about rentals for small summer gatherings. Cleaning and security costs need to be considered for any events that take place in the building. Motion: To extend the building closure to at least August 31, 2020, for all gatherings, to be extended as necessary. Moved by Martin. Seconded by Claus. Motion carried unanimously.
- c. Connie is expecting to continue live-streaming worship services on YouTube. A Zoom social hour has now been added following the service, with around 20 people attending each week so far.
- d. Connie has started an online credo building workshop, with 7 registrants. She is looking at starting some other *ad hoc* activities. Many church groups are now meeting virtually.
- e. Soul Matters. This subscription will need to be renewed for the Fall; this is already in the budget.
- f. Following up on attendees. Have we been following up with newcomers who have been attending the streamed services? Ebe did pass on one person's information. Claus has also seen online donations from new virtual attendees.
- g. Connie said that planning will begin soon for a virtual new member orientation session.

11. **VIM (Vision, Identity, Mission) Annual report and proposed 2020 congregational questions (handout) (Ebe, Lynne).** The VIM team wishes to contribute to the priorities and planning process that will be undertaken in the coming year as part of the search for a new settled minister. Bob Mitchell has said that VIM is "the tape recorder and the mirror" of the congregation. They have proposed several questions for a new round of congregational open questions. The plan is to do Zoom meetings, with attendees broken into facilitator-led groups. There was general Board support and appreciation for the work VIM is doing. Participation in the open questions could be another way to help the congregation to stay connected.

12. Plans/preparation for Annual congregational Meeting (handout) (Martin, Claus, Connie, Eleanor)

- a. Zoom meeting. The link will be private and will be distributed to voting members by email on Saturday. A quorum will be determined by ballots cast (absentee or live).
- b. Voting process: Using Election Buddy, a voting time window can be pre-set. Voting members receive an email with a link that allows them to vote once. Then the absentee votes will be added to the e-votes. Eleanor has received two absentee ballots so far.
- c. Connie will make an announcement about the Annual Congregational Meeting during the service on Sunday.
- d. Draft agenda. Eleanor will contact Kris, Ellen, and Erica about whether they will be presenting a report.

- e. The Nominating Committee is still short one nominee for Board. Eleanor now has bios for the confirmed nominees for the Board and the Nominating Committee.
- f. Connie will create and send the Zoom link for the meeting. Nancy Latimer will help manage the meeting. . Several Board members volunteered to participate in a practice meeting Friday afternoon to work out any “kinks” in the technology.

13. Leadership of incoming Board (Scott).

- a. Martin thanked Sarah and Claus, who are going off the Board, and Eleanor, who will continue for another year, for their wonderful service.
- b. Scott: The six continuing Board members have met and discussed leadership for the coming year. He thanked Kurt for agreeing to again serve as recording secretary.
- c. Scott thanked Martin for addressing the challenges that he had faced during his 2 years as Board President.

14. Adjournment (9:00) Martin.

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Board: June 17, 2020
Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary
