

## MINUTES

### Board of Trustees: January 20, 2021, Virtual Meeting First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

**Board Members Attending:** Scott Smith, President (2021); Ebe Emmons, Vice-President (2022); Lynne Porterfield (2021); Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary (2021); Sam Hens-Greco (2022); Lee Carnes (2022); Heather Masterson (2023); Kate Snow (2023); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2023)

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Ex Officio Members:** Rev. Constance Grant, Interim Minister

**Others:** Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

1. **Call to Order (7:04) (Scott)** Scott called the meeting to order.
2. **Opening Words (Kate).** Quotes to live by. Henri Nouwen and Dag Hammarskjöld.
3. **Welcoming new Board member Lee Carnes (Scott)**
4. **Welcoming Guests (Scott)** None
5. **Announcements (Scott)**  
Next regularly scheduled Board meeting: February 17, 2021, 7:00pm.
6. **Consent Agenda (Scott) (handouts)**
  - a. Approval of December 16, 2020, meeting minutes. Moved by Scott, seconded by Eleanor. Approved.
7. **Minister's quarterly report (Connie) (handout)**
  - a. Preliminary membership number: 266, including three new members this week. (It actually turned out to be four at the service welcoming them to the congregation.)
  - b. Reopening task force is still being recruited. This is next on her priority list.
  - c. Reservations are being made for weddings in September and October with the understanding that if it is not safe, reservations will be canceled and deposits will be refunded. Scott suggested that the reopening task force be asked to propose safety protocols for special events such as weddings as well as for church-related events and that consideration be given to increasing rental fees to cover the costs of cleaning the church for special events.
  - d. The Membership Team placed ads for the church on public radio in early January. The following spot was featured on NPR twice a day: "Today's programming is supported by The First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh in Shadyside, a theologically diverse, progressive congregation committed to human dignity, community connection, and spiritual growth. Services livestreamed Sunday mornings at 10:30. Learn more at First (hyphen) Unitarian (hyphen) P-G-H dot org." The team is also researching Google Ads grant that are free to nonprofits and can provide up to \$10,000 a month in in-kind text advertising. Accepting a grant requires setting up a Google Ads account and following the basic rules for managing the account. The Board will need to be involved in that decision. Some churches have policies about only doing business with organizations that are consistent with UU values.

- e. Covenant decision deferred. The task force looking at the Congregational Covenant has been delayed. The plan is still to bring this to the congregation for a vote on whether to adopt the covenant as a statement of the congregation's foundational and aspirational identity.
- f. Kris Rust has requested a suspension of his salary for several months, with payment on an hourly basis for minimal work for now and a return to his prior job description and hours in September.
- g. Connie will participate in an Interim Ministers workshop in late January/early February.
- h. The Minister's Benevolence Fund (aka Marion's Purse) currently has a healthy balance.
- i. Stuart Hastings has proposed hosting a humanist lecture on March 28 in memory of his late wife Eileen. The speaker will be Rev. Dr. David Breeden, Senior Minister, First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. The event will be advertised widely.

**8. Pledge Drive Committee update (7:44) (Heather).**

The total amount raised remains at \$375,000, with no significant change since last month's report. Letters have been sent to about 30 "pledge units" that have not yet submitted 2021 pledges. The Committee's work has wrapped up. Kyle: The church office has received a few "paper" pledges.

**9. Treasurer's Report, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2020 (Kyle) (handouts)**

We ended 2020 in reasonable financial condition. There could be small adjustments over the next couple of months, as congregants review their year-end pledge statements. We had budgeted for a loss of about \$25,000 in 2020; the actual net loss for the year was \$15,000. As planned, the remainder of the 2019 budget surplus will be put toward covering the 2020 loss. Income was 95% and expenditures 92% of what had been budgeted; spending was \$36,000 below budget, largely due to decreased programming due to the pandemic. Revenue from events, sales of Giant Eagle gift cards, and plate cash declined significantly due to the church building closure. Pledge units fulfilled 96% of the amounts pledged, which is consistent with previous years. Investments have rebounded from the hit they took early in the pandemic, so endowment funds have recovered their value.

The Board needs to decide before the end of March whether to apply for PPP loan forgiveness. A discussion about PPP loan forgiveness will be on the agenda at the February Board meeting.

**10. Creating a Planned Giving Committee (Kyle)**

The UUA has some good materials available on this topic. Sam has experience in crafting bequests in wills and is willing to help. There was general Board support for the creation of a planned giving committee. Kyle and the Finance Committee members will develop a formal proposal.

**11. Program Endowment Committees (8:10) (Kate, Board liaison; Kyle) (handout)**

- a. Social Justice: Margaret Stevens, who is the new chair, has put forward three names for new members.
- b. Campus Ministry: Nick Izzo, 2020 chair, states that there was no activity last year. He is happy to stay on as chair for 2021. Nothing in the policies or procedures prohibits this.
- c. Children and Youth: Currently without a chair.
- d. The Music Endowment Committee has submitted a report on their activities.

- e. Membership of the endowment committees is aligned with the fiscal year. Each committee consists of three members, with one new member joining and one rolling off each year.
- f. Action:
  - i. Kate will give Scott a list of endowment committee vacancies that need to be filled. Scott will talk to Becky Studer (Nominating Committee “point person”) about filling these vacancies as well as about recruiting new members for the Pledge Drive Committee.
  - ii. Kate will write a short article for the weekly email newsletter to let congregants know about the types of funding available from the endowment committees and how to apply for a grant.

**12. Building and Grounds update (8:25) (Sam)**

- a. Update on replacement of garden shed: Sam will follow-up to confirm that this work has been completed.
- b. Update on Ellsworth Ave bike lane proposal: The general Advisory Group meetings have ended. Instead, several Working Groups have been organized, including a faith-based group. Sam will make inquiries to find out who is in that group.
- c. Welcome desk (Christine Doreian Michaels grant). The contractor recently visited the church to look at the woodwork so he can match the stains. It is hoped to have the desk in place and have a dedication for it when the church reopens. Action: Sam will follow up with the contractor.

**11. Nominating Committee (Scott, Heather)**

Replacement of Michael Safran: Heather has put an “ask” out and is waiting for replies.

**12. Dates for Annual Congregational Meeting and May Board meeting (Eleanor)**

- a. Annual meeting: May 23rd
- b. May Board meeting: May 19th
- c. Ministerial Candidating Week and vote (tentative): Apr 24-May 2

**13. Appreciations and Aspirations (all)**

**14. Adjourn (8:47) (Scott)**

**15. Executive Session.** Board membership.

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

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