

MINUTES – DRAFT

Annual Meeting: May 23, 2021 (Virtual Meeting) First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

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

Board Members Absent:

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

Others: Claus Makowka, Election Manager; Pat Schuetz, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order and Welcome (Scott Smith) (12:00).

2. Opening Words (Heather Masterson)

3. Chalice Lighting (Scott).

4. Approval of May 17, 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes. (Eleanor Mayfield).

Claus Makowka requested to amend the minutes as follows:

Paragraph 16 Voting Results change as follows:

~~125+ votes~~ 126 online ballots and 2 absentee ballots...

Motion to approve the minutes as amended carried.

5. Approval of Minutes of May 2, 2021, Special Congregational Meeting. (Eleanor Mayfield).

Claus Makowka requested to amend the minutes as follows:

Paragraph 6 Voting Results

...was exceeded. ~~167 electronic~~ 173 votes were cast ...

Motion to approve the minutes as amended carried.

6. President's Report (Scott) (see report).

- a. He thanked everyone for holding together through a difficult year. In particular he thanked Connie, Ellen and Kris, Erika, Stephanie, the liturgists, the guest musicians and the technology team for ensuring we stayed together as a congregation, and recognized all the committee chairs for keeping the Church stable and its work moving forward.
- b. He noted the Board's cautious approach to closing and reopening the Church building. He commended the Reopening Committee advising the Board, and mentioned the Reopening Working Group, assuring the Congregation that the building would be open soon.
- c. On the Church's financial outlook, he reported that the board had kept all the staff employed and repaid the PPP loan, and credited the work of the Finance Committee and generous donors.
- d. The new Fundraising Imagining Task Force will try to improve the way the Church raises money.
- e. He expressed deep gratitude to the other members of the Board and thanks to Connie.

- f. He reflected that the Congregation called the Reverend Kate Walker to ministry, approving her with 100% of those voting. He noted that the Board has formed a transition team and asked the Congregation to funnel communications to Kate through it. He thanked the Ministerial Search Committee.

7. Minister's Report (Rev. Connie Grant).

- a. She reported that it has been a great year, through not what anyone expected.
- b. She especially thanked the technical team, noting that the Church's YouTube channel currently has 301 subscribers, including a new member who joined remotely and will be moving to Pittsburgh.
- c. She thanked Ward for the photo that helped her get her next job in Napierville, Ill., near her home.
- d. She thanked the administrative staff for working both on-site and at home.
- e. She thanked the Congregation and congratulated everyone on a new minister.

8. Lifespan Religious Education Director (LRED) Report (Erica Shadowsong) (see report).

- a. She was glad for all she's learned this year about how to do things differently.
- b. She reported that all the RE classes had been collapsed into one, with low but fairly consistent attendance. Young Adults have continued to meet regularly, with an increasing involvement in racial justice and a winter project to collect and distribute blankets to those in need. Adult RE has been the most successful, with many people able to attend because of the virtual platform; she noted that an exciting cross-generational range.
- c. There were four Coming of Age participants, despite their inability to hold social events. Erica is trying to continue activity through the summer. The youth are struggling in a particular way with Zoom, and she's exploring the way other congregations are dealing with the problem. She hopes that as they become vaccinated the participants will be able to get together this summer. She has summer activities planned for 4th through 8th grade.
- d. RE has relied less on volunteers this year so the RE Committee has been on hiatus, but it's reconvening now and searching for new leadership.
- e. She thanked Michael Safran for stepping in on Sundays when she was absent.

9. Music Directors' Reports.

a. Ellen Gozion (Director of Instrumental Music) (see report).

She is grateful to the technology team, without whom we would have had no services, and for the musician participants who performed under unprecedented conditions. She noted that it's lonely performing in an empty sanctuary.

b. Kris Rust (Director of Vocal Music) (Video report).

He celebrated the members' maintenance of important musical connections within and outside the Congregation.

10. Financial Report (Kyle Gracey) (see report).

- a. The Church weathered the pandemic well. At year-end, assets stood at \$375,000, liabilities at \$324,000. Kyle noted that these figures include the PPP loan, which has since been repaid. There were \$53,000 in unallocated assets at year-end, about \$8,000

lower than a year earlier. The major losses in income came from rentals and plate cash while the building has been empty. The major savings were in Building and Grounds and utilities.

- b. The endowment weathered the storm and ended the year strongly. He noted that the Church cannot access the endowment directly – each year we spend either the interest or a percentage of the principal, depending on the fund. The total is currently \$3.2 million, which is healthy for a Congregation of our size.
- c. He acknowledged the work of the Finance and Investment Committees and mentioned extensive updates to the Policies and Procedures Manuals.

11. Annual Report (Eleanor).

12. Nominating Committee Report (Becky Studer). She noted that Zoom meetings worked well and saved time, and thanked the team for persistence.

13. Introduction to Bylaw Amendments (Eleanor). The congregation approved a thorough overhaul of the Bylaws at a Special Congregational Meeting in November 2020. These amendments are to correct small oversights in those revisions.

- a. To amend Article IV, Section 6, of the Bylaws by adding the words in bold italics as follows: “*At the discretion of the Board of Trustees, as announced in advance of any Congregational Meeting*, Members may vote by secure online ballot, absentee ballot, or proxy. Voting procedures will be explained in the meeting notice. A Member may hold up to two (2) proxies at a given Congregational Meeting.”
- b. To make the following technical correction to Article IX, Section 3: Correct "as specified in Article IV, Section 3" to read "as specified in Article IV, Section 4."

14. Questions Regarding Bylaw Amendments (Scott, moderator).

Denice Galpern noted that the amendments were not on the early ballots and Scott explained why that would not have been possible.

15. Review of Electronic Voting Procedures (Scott; Claus Makowka, Election Manager).

a. Board of Trustees Nominees 2021–2024:

- I. Amy DeChicchis
- II. Bob Mitchell
- III. Rob Schwartz

b. Nominating Committees Nominees 2021–2024:

- I. Sue Oerkvitz
- II. Melody Platz
- III. Bob Sullivan

- c. Claus directed attendees to the email sent this morning to vote for candidates. He then sent the email to vote on bylaws amendments and directed attendees to cast their votes. There was a question about the quorum and a question about the close of voting.

16. Musical interlude (video).

17. Voting Results (Claus).

At 1:35 Claus officially closed the voting.

a. 2021 Election of Candidates.

There were 97 ballots cast online and 2 absentee ballots. All candidates were elected.

c. Bylaws Amendments.

There were 63 ballots cast online and 2 absentee ballots. Both amendments passed unanimously.

18. Questions from the Congregation (Scott, moderator).

- a. Mary Schinhofen expressed her gratitude for virtual services and Ray's memorial, and hoped there was a way to continue live streaming. Scott said he thought there would be.
- b. Ward Kelsey asked if there was a congregational or denominational policy on reopening the building. Scott invited Rev. Connie to respond: UUA has provided information but left decisions to boards. Our Board, on the advice of the Safe Reopening Task Force, will open in September at the earliest, possibly for the Ingathering service.
Ward asked if any churches had opened yet. Connie knew of one that was allowing members in five at a time, but not in Pittsburgh that she's aware of. Scott noted the minister has discretion to open the building to groups of 10 or fewer; that discretion has thus far been reserved for memorial services. The Safe Reopening Task Force is evaluating partial reopening.
- c. Sue Oerkvitz requested the continuation of the use of live streaming for memorial services and other special Congregational events.
- d. Ellen Gozion warned that a move to a hybrid model will require an entirely new learning curve.
- e. Scott observed that the Safe Reopening Task Force has done an excellent job and urged the Congregation to bear with them a little longer.
- f. Ward thanked Scott for faithful service during a trying year.
- g. Scott thanked Julie Downs for running the technical aspects of the meeting.

19. Benediction (Rev. Connie).

20. Adjournment (1:35)

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Schuetz, Recording Secretary

(To be) Approved by the Congregation: _____

Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary