

**Annual Congregational Meeting [Draft]
Virtual and In Real Life
First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh
May 22, 2022**

1. Call to Order (12:45pm) (Heather Masterson, Board President).
2. Opening Words and Chalice Lighting (Rob Schwartz, Board member) “Annual Meeting Invocation” by Heather Janules
3. Quorum was established.
4. Opening Hymn #1014 *Standing on the Side of Love*
5. Approval of 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. (Kate Snow, Board Secretary). Kate moved that the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes be approved as submitted. Approved as submitted.

6. President’s Report (Heather Masterson). (See written report in the 2022 Annual Report.) Some highlights:
 - a. What an amazing year it has been, capping off last week with the formal Installation Ceremony for Rev. Kate and our congregation!
 - b. We are back! It’s been a long 2+ years. We are still limiting attendance at services to about 75 people. We still require masks, social distancing, and proof of vaccination. We will continue both live and remote options, thanks to the dedication of the volunteers who work with the technical aspects.
 - c. Startup Workshop with Rev. Sunshine from the UUA, and all members and friends were invited to participate at various points in the weekend. This really helped to communicate and start this new ministry well.
 - d. Several Committees of the Board were established this year: Stewardship, which reimagines and combines the different types of fund-raising under one umbrella, including pledging and planned giving; Marketing and Communication will help with both internal and external communication; Committee on Shared Ministry will provide advice and counsel to our Minister, our Board of Trustees, and our Congregation to help strengthen the shared ministry among them. This will include an annual evaluation, and on alternate years they will evaluate the minister and the Congregation’s ministry as a whole.
 - e. The church entered into a covenant of affiliation with Rev. Stephanie Gannon, who has been working with the Green Sanctuary and Environmental Justice groups.
 - f. We are installing solar array panels on the Mason Wing, and the project will be in memory of Ray Schinhofen.
 - g. Thanks: to everyone for their commitment to the church; to the Board members and ex-officio members, Kate Walker and Kurt Summersgill, recording secretary; the church staff: Erica Shadowsong, Ellen Gozion, Kris Rust, Rita Gates, Cicely Moultrie, Dan Laity, and Kenzie McElfresh.

7. Minister’s Report (Rev. Dr. Kate Walker). (See written report in the 2022 Annual Report.)
 - a. This whole year has been filled with love and affirmation from the initial emails during the candidating process through this whole year here.
 - b. We, as a congregation, are constantly assessing. Who are we in relationship to each other and to the wider world? We are constantly balancing safety and connection.
 - c. Something that I have been emphasizing through my candidating and through our time together is under the umbrella of radical hospitality, and we will be grappling with radical hospitality, so all feel welcome here.

- d. We will be addressing racial justice and climate crisis/environmental justice in the coming years.
 - e. We will also be considering adopting an 8th principle, and I hope you have been reading my emails about racial justice and the 8th principle and raising our awareness. How are we holding ourselves accountable?
 - f. The committees here are so high-functioning!
 - g. We have added seven air filters in staff offices and the Undercroft to mitigate the risk factor.
 - h. How do we do ministry in the 21st century? We will be working on that.
 - i. She will continue her ministerial education, attending conferences, etc. She is a teacher, too, and we are a teaching congregation, so she is hoping to bring on an intern in the next fiscal year.
 - j. She and Erica are looking at hiring a person as a young adult campus minister.
 - k. She wants to grow the congregation by reaching out to us and the younger generation for ideas of ministry in the 21st century by using connection, strong pastoral care, and a community of curiosity.
 - l. Going into the 21st century there will be a balance of faith and abiding love, safety and connection, strength and flexibility, confidence and humility, and an attitude of “I don’t know,” which is OK.
 - m. She thanked the staff: Rita, Cicely, Ellen, Kris, Erica, Kenzie, and Dan; and Heather Masterson and the Board; as well as Claus, Margaret, and Kyle for their contributions to the finance team.
 - n. We absolutely need to grow the church, so she asks for our help to do that.
8. LRED (Lifetime Religious Education Director) Report (Erica Shadowsong). (See written report in the 2022 Annual Report.)
- a. She is in her 4th year with this church. This Church is a special place and has a blessing on it. It is a special place where everybody is positive and willing to step forward and help where needed. Even volunteers, such as the Board, treat their jobs like a staff member. Families were ready to meet in person. Because of all these things, she has such great hopes for this community and wants to be part of it.
 - b. We have consistently had families engaged during the pandemic, which is not all that common, as she has found out in meetings with colleagues. Youth came twice in the fall and then in the spring to participate in Dungeons and Dragons games. Younger children have come, too.
 - c. We have about 33 registered, and our average attendance has been about 12. Young adults have phased out, but that is to be expected, as they move on with their cohort. That is why now is a perfect time to bring a young adult and campus ministry coordinator aboard.
 - d. She has led a couple adult faith classes. Building Your Own Theology was well attended. Then she led a spiritual practices class. She is hoping these become standard classes that are offered over and over again, as well as book groups, and that some of those who take them will become leaders and facilitators of those classes.
 - e. All of us are ministers, in one way or another.
 - f. She wants us to become empowered and to trust in the power of the things we cannot see that magically come together in relationship with each other. Be in relation with the children and youth. Be present for the youth. Let’s make this a place where people want to be and have fun together.
9. Music Directors’ Reports (Ellen Gozion, Director of Instrumental Music. [Kris Rust, Director of Vocal Music] is in North Carolina with family,) (See written reports in the 2022 Annual Report.)
- a. Her job totally changed in the pandemic. Well into 2021 she was still spending a lot of time on the computer creating videos, so that we could have a variety of experiences of music with choir members, members of the community, and guest artists.

- b. She has invited many music professionals from the greater community.
- c. She loves to invite people of all abilities to share their talents.
- d. She likes to provide a wide range of music, as people respond to different styles of music.
- e. She is very grateful for Kris Rust. He has opened the choir to the community and to a range of talents, which is wonderful.

10. Financial Report (Kyle Gracey, Board Treasurer). (See written report in the 2022 Annual Report.)

- a. We are in a good position.
- b. Do we have the resources to advance our mission? In many ways we do.
- c. Coming into the pandemic, we actually had a surplus. That is gone now, but we were able to be resilient.
- d. With hard work from the financial team, we are coming out of the pandemic and a challenging time very well. With the new budget that was put into place we are actually able to come out even and make up for some of our losses. We were able to keep everyone employed. The building is still here. We still had wonderful programming. These things show the commitment of the community to pull together.
- e. Our investments and endowments grew over the past couple years.
- f. There are ways that we are challenged. Staffing is our largest financial challenge, and we are looking for ways to increase our resources.
- g. We are in a good position. We are still looking to fund a lot of projects, such as the solar panels, and there is always an effort needed to keeping this building and the grounds up-to-date and repaired.

11. Annual Report (Kate Snow). The report is an amazing testimony to how important this church is to the members of this congregation, because these individuals and these committees are a sign of our commitment. They have continued contributing to the wonderful experience we have as a congregation. Please read the report.

12. Nominating Committee Report (Martin Schmidt, Nominating Committee Co-Chair)

- a. Thanks to the members of the nominating committee: Jenn Layman, Heather Cunningham, Susan Regan, Linda Fleming, Chris Milcarek, Sue Oerkvitz, Melody Platts, with special thanks to chair Jenn Layman.
- b. Vote. Three new Board members, for three-year terms. Nominated for Board of Trustees, term to span May 2022-2025 are: Nicholas Izzo, Christine Milcarek, and Raeann Olander-Murray.
- c. Vote. Three new members for the Nominating Committee for three-year terms. Nominated for the Nominating Committee are: Stuart Hastings has agreed to fill a 2-year term. Nancy Latimer has agreed to fill a one-year term vacancy. Mary Pat Mengato, Margaret Fuhrman, and Cathy Rohrer have agreed to fill regular 3-year terms (term to span 2022-2025).
- d. And a special thanks to all who said yes!

13. VIM (Vision, Identity, Mission) (Bob Mitchell, Board member)

- a. VIM was created in 2017 as a Committee of the Board. The other VIM committee members are Lee Carnes, Lynn Porterfield, Cathy Rohrer, Michael Safran, and Jean Schmidt.
- b. VIM stands for Vision, Identity, Mission. It was created to help the Board understand what members of the congregation are thinking. VIM organizes small group meetings (cottage meetings). The conversations are built around three or four open-ended questions. They are designed to figure out where we are now, where we want to go, and what steps we can take to get there. Each group has a facilitator and a note taker. Members of VIM then go through and aggregate those responses in order to synthesize them and produce a document for planning

purposes. It is like holding up a mirror to the congregation, so we can see and listen to what we are.

- c. They have presented that information to the Board to help with planning purposes.
- d. During the cottage meetings in 2019, in which about 50 people participated, the two issues that were most common were racial justice and environmental justice.
- e. By far, people wanted to partner with other groups in the community to pursue our goals.
- f. In the fall at a Board retreat it was decided to pursue an environmental justice initiative as a unifying theme. That issue was explored in cottage meetings this past March in which 59 congregants participated. They were asked, “What is your vision, and what specific things could be achieved to move toward that vision?” Almost half prioritized better air and water quality, and about a third identified more equitable housing and better integrated neighborhoods. When asked what the church should do, by far the response was to partner with existing organizations that are already leaders and already doing that work, such as Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN), Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers of Pittsburgh (aka BUGS), Mayor Gainey’s new administration, GASP (Group Against Smog and Pollution), Valley Clean Air Now, UU Justice PA, and, of course, other churches.
- g. This contributed to the content of the proposal to be voted on today. If approved, the Board will create an environmental justice action team that will generate a plan to allow congregants to participate. Three congregants, Sonia Wellington, Becky Studer, and Bob, have agreed to take leadership roles to work with other members of the congregation, Rev. Kate, Erica, and other staff members, especially our affiliate minister, Rev. Stephanie Gannon, as she shares our passion for environmental justice.
- h. The team hopes to give every congregant a way to participate in three main ways: direct action; public advocacy at local, state, and national levels; and changing our own social and environmental behaviors. Supporting all these will be educational programming.
- i. If anyone has other ideas, please reach to the VIM committee members or members of the Board.

14. Introduction to Bylaws amendments (Kate Snow, Board Secretary) See document. In November 2020, a whole set of bylaws was passed. Now we are presenting two changes to those bylaws. In Article 3, Sections 3 and 4, words were added to make the language more specific.

15. Questions RE: Bylaws Amendments (Heather Masterson, moderator). No questions were posed.

16. Procedures for voting (Heather Masterson, Board President, and Claus Makowka, Election Manager)

17. Votes:

- a. Board of Trustees. All candidates are elected.
- b. Nominating Committee. All candidates are elected.
- c. Adopting *Environmental Justice* as a unifying theme for First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh. “Proposed: That the congregation of the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh vote to commit to a year-long, church-wide focus on Environmental Justice, in order to take appropriate actions to address the issue.” The Board will establish a team to spearhead this. *Environmental Justice* is approved as a unifying theme.
- d. Approval of Bylaws amendments. Amendments are approved, no votes opposed.

18. General questions from the congregation (Heather Masterson, Board President, moderator)

- a. Ellen played incidental music while the votes were counted.

- b. Stuart Hastings: What is the situation with the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program? On-line trainings have just begun. We are short on volunteers right now, but we have some interest; and she hopes to return to this in the Fall.

19. Closing Hymn #1014

20. Benediction (Rev. Dr. Kate R. Walker, Minister)

21. Adjournment (2:11pm.)

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary
Kate Snow, Board Secretary
Approved: