

1-19-2014 Mid-year Congregational Meeting
1-19-2014
UUCNH West Room

There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 12:15 pm

I. Welcome and Introductions – Ed Rockman. Ed provided an overview of the agenda.

II. Chalice lighting – Rev. Scott Rudolph

III. Report from President on the State of the Church – Ed Rockman

Ed expressed his pleasure that the state of the church is outstanding. He offered his appreciation of the music program (“thriving and inspiring”); the Director of Lifespan Faith Development, Greta (“wonderful resource for this church”); the minister, Rev. Scott Rudolph ([for his] “ability to guide gently without dictating”); the religious education programs, and Sunday Services. He commented that the Board and support groups are healthy and active. (applause for Greta, Scott, and Mary Doubleday [Music Director])

Ed described how the many programs at the church have been categorized into Faith Development, which fall under Greta, and Fellowship. Bob Delaney is the liaison between the Board and the Fellowship program. (recognition and applause for anyone who leads a Fellowship or Faith Development program)

Ed offered his thanks to Sunday Services, Buildings and Grounds, and Finance committees; as well as the Board of Trustees. He commended the Board members for all they do for the community.

Ed described how 5 Strategic Task Forces have been created, which were reported on later in the meeting.

Finally, Ed thanked all the volunteers. (applause)

IV. Peace Pole Project Presentation – Doug Ickert

The Peace Pole Project began in 1959 in response to the bombings of Japan. Each pole has the phrase, “May peace prevail on Earth” in up to 14 different languages. Currently, more than 100,000 poles are located in 180 countries. This includes poles at several UU churches. The process for establishing a pole includes the formation of a local committee. The committee determines where the pole will go and which languages are portrayed.

If it is decided to install a peace pole at UUCNH, a donor has already offered to cover the cost. The pole does not have to be purchased through the Peace Pole organization, but it does to be part of the official goal.

A motion was made to approve installing a peace pole at our church. Motion by Marsha Albright; second by Hal Dixler.

An amendment was offered by Midge Miles, that the Board appoint a committee to work on the project.

Members discussed whether it was necessary for the Board to decide.

Connie Ritzert seconded the amendment, with the proviso that the Board approve the final location.

It was determined that a paper ballot was not necessary.

The amendment passed with a majority; 2 opposed.

The motion passed with 1 opposed.

V. Threshold Congregation Team Presentation – Chris Hill

Chris introduced the team members and gave an overview of their activities. The team's purpose was to collect ideas from the congregation for how we will move forward. This was accomplished through 11 90-minute sessions. About 80 people attended, and over 500 ideas came through. These ideas were broken down into many focus areas, including Community Building, Pastoral Care, Sunday Services, and Professional Ministry.

The team presented to the congregation a word cloud based on the focus areas. The largest "cloud" was Outreach, followed by Community Building, and then Social Action.

The team also is working with a leadership consultant from CERG, the Central East Regional Group of the UUA. They are looking at different types of growth, such as maturational, incarnational, associational, and numerical.

Currently, the team is looking into each focus area, grouping ideas, and synthesizing them to develop future goals. The conversations have been exuberant, optimistic, and visionary. Areas of growth that were proposed most included Social Action, Living Our Values with Increasing Energy, Community Visibility and Involvement, Physical Plant Expansion, and Sunday Services as a Source of Strength. These goals will be refined as the team moves forward, and they are still looking for input.

The team offered some suggestions to keep the interest alive, e.g., talk to non-UU people about UUCNH, get involved in church activities, and support outreach efforts that church is currently doing.

The congregation then asked questions and discussed the presentation. One concern expressed was the potential loss of community. The team responded that the need for community was identified as being something people really love about the church.

Ed Rockman is the liaison between the Threshold Congregation Team and the Board. The Board is working closely with the team.

VI. Hunger Garden Project Presentation - Jennifer Behun

As part of our social action program, a hunger garden was approved by the congregation last year. The garden grew herbs and flowers, and over \$1,000 was raised for North Hills Community Outreach and Northside Common Ministries. The garden and particularly the church “farmstand” were successes. However, the garden was not a congregation-wide project, with just a few individuals doing most of the work.

This year, the congregation is being asked for suggestions for how to get more people involved. Questionnaires have been handed out in order to see what level of interest there is to make the garden continue. (the questionnaires were collected at the end of the presentation)

VII. Reports from Board Strategic Task Forces

a. Congregational Communication – Amy Wilks. This team is working to increase communication within the congregation. As part of this effort, a new website should be up next month; the church’s Facebook page is very active (kept up-to-date by Susan Cox); and there’s a “Bravos from Board” each month as a “thank-you” to one person. Also, all Board members are interested in reaching out to members through 1-on-1 conversations. This includes doing “kidchats,” which are brief conversations with children and youth (pencils are given out after each conversation). Further, Board members have fancy name tags, and soon committee chairs will too. Any input is welcome – contact Amy, Lynn Richards, or Rachel Smart.

The team is working on redesigning the Intercom and phasing out paper copies to transition to an electronic version (recognizing that some people will still like paper copies). As part of that process, Scott is talking with Dawn Fitzgerald, who now does the Intercom.

b. Bellwood – Amy. Bellwood Preschool is a community service of UUCNH. An important goal was to further define the church’s relationship with Bellwood. The new Document of Understanding has now been revised and signed. A copy will be placed in the office.

c. Policies – Mark Draa. The church’s policies are in a red binder in the office, and will eventually be posted on the website. This year, the Policies Task Force is working on new policies for gift acceptance, buildings and grounds reserve fund expenditures, coffee hour, and bon fires. The task force is comprised of Bob Delaney, Susan Powers, and Mark.

d. Congregational Covenant – Susan Powers. Susan and Bob Delaney are working to define a plan for creating a covenant, which is a promise between church members regarding how they will act with each other. This is considered the foundation of our congregation. Creating the covenant will be a task left to the congregation. The current timeline is to review the plan and present it at the annual meeting in May. Then, the task force will begin engaging the congregation in the fall to define a covenant.

e. Charge, Authority, Responsibility - Midge Miles. The CAR Task Force is comprised of Rob Willig, Lynn Richards, Rachel Smart, and Midge. They are working with the various church groups to define each group's charge from the Board, area of authority, and specific responsibilities. Out of approximately 23 groups, initial CAR documents have been received from all but 2. The task force is reviewing what has been submitted, and hopes to send back edits in February, with final Board approval in May. It is expected that the documents will be adjusted and amended as they are used.

VIII. Extinguishing the Chalice – Mission Statement.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn. Motion by Sue Duda; Second by Bill Faulkner.

Meeting adjourned at 1:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Andrew Zadnik