

# **MID AND ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES 2023**

## **MID-YEAR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES**

January 29, 2023

President Jen Suehr noted a quorum being present and called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m.

### *Opening Remarks*

Jen Suehr opened the meeting by encouraging the congregation to celebrate small wins, appreciate how far we've come since the pandemic, and take a deep breath to prepare for what's next.

### *Green Sanctuary Update*

Matt Mehalik discussed membership and participation in the Green Sanctuary team. The Church's Green Sanctuary accreditation was formally granted at the end of last year. The UUA's updated requirements included a focus on the community. Over the past 5 years, the team identified community partners and connections. These included HEARTH, the Hunger Garden, Allegheny County Clean Air Now, and more collaboration with local Native American groups. In addition to their work with these groups, the team also conducted an energy audit of the church in 2018. Many of these recommendations are included in the capital improvement plan.

### *Systemic Change Update*

Liz Perkins began by giving some background information about the Systemic Change Team. This included reviewing the CAR document and discussing connections with PIIN, Faith in Action forums with other local congregations, and Fair districts PA. She described other projects their members have been working on, such as Get Out the Vote with the UUA, Vote Forward nationwide letter writing campaign, a sermon and workshop on racism and the racial wealth gap, and efforts to fix Harrisburg. The team welcomes new visitors and friends to join.

### *Capital Campaign Team Update*

Robyn Travers announced the Capital Campaign raised nearly a million dollars. She reviewed the agreed upon plan and discussed prioritization of the items included within.

Joe Meier gave an update as to the progress to date. He noted that the silo masonry work is completed and the next items to begin work as soon as possible are the new roof on The Barn and Bellwood and the soffits of the silos. Projects to begin working on next include ADA initiatives, floor plan revisions, and the AC system.

### *Finance*

Dennis Doubleday gave an update on Church finances. The savings in ministerial salary have been partly allocated to the UUA Fair Share contribution and Sunday Services Team to pay guest speakers as needed. Going forward, the Church will have to address the trends of compensation and fixed expenses outpacing revenue gains. Prior year surpluses and the Federal Payroll Protection Plan Program had been used to make up the difference. The 2023 budget exhausted the remaining surplus. The Board must consider alternate revenue sources. There were no questions from the membership.

### *Stewardship*

Jen Suehr reported on Stewardship. We do not currently have a stewardship committee. Jen encouraged the membership to get involved and contribute in small, but meaningful ways. She suggested a potluck or party for a pledge event. All those interested in contributing should contact the Board.

### *Contract Ministry Review*

Jen Suehr gave a review of contract ministry. She took questions from the membership and asserted:

- The purpose of the Town Hall meeting held on January 22, 2023 was to gauge the congregation's support with the concept of a contract minister. The Board will meet tomorrow (January 30, 2023) to develop a task force to determine specific details.
- We will reach prospective ministers through our UUA contacts, including Rev. Sunshine.
- The Motion will pass with a simple majority vote, unless there is another Motion from the floor.
- There will be a second vote in the future to approve the final plan. The current vote is to obtain the Membership's approval to move forward with the plan to investigate contract ministry with a task force.
- There will be additional Town Halls in the future at other checkpoints.

**Ballot: I support moving forward to explore contract ministry, with the understanding that the specifics still need to be worked out. [Yes / No]**

MOTION, seconded, and passed.

### *Call for New Business*

Robyn Travers noted that the Youth Group made over \$500 from today's soup sale and thanked the Membership for their support.

MOTION to adjourn, seconded, and passed.

## **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES**

June 4, 2023 12:00 pm

*Minutes approved 6-09-2024 at the Congregational Meeting*

President Jen Suehr noted a quorum being present and called the meeting to order at 12:24p.m. The number needed for a quorum was 38. There were 67 members in attendance and 7 members were represented by proxy.

*Presentation of the UUCNH banner to be displayed at General Assembly - Craft Group*

*Opening Remarks*

President Jen Suehr discussed the agenda and expressed thanks and appreciation for a tough, but fun year.

*Approval of the 2021 - 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes*

**Motion to approve:** Robyn Travers

Second: Barb Draa

Vote approved by show of hands without objection.

*Approval of the 2022 - 2023 Mid-Year Meeting Minutes*

**Motion to approve:** Julie Kant

Second: Carol Ballance

Vote approved by show of hands without objection.

*Capital Campaign Planning Team - Joe Meier*

Joe Meier began with team member recognition. He gave updates on money raised to date, money borrowed during the previous roof repair, estimated costs, quotes received, and accepted contracts.

Of note, the UUA consultant was not budgeted for; however money was saved elsewhere.

The largest cost is the roof replacement, both the Barn and Bellwood, which came in under budget. The work is scheduled to begin within a month. Skylights were not included in the original plan, but they were advised to replace the existing ones with energy efficient ones. This will be done with the savings from the roof. The additional solar panels are being added in coordination with the roof.

The ADA initiatives will be considered next. They are looking for an architect.

Storm water runoff in the Memorial Garden must be controlled before moving ahead with the sidewalk.

Obtaining a quote for air conditioning in the Barn has been difficult. The one that was received was much higher than anticipated. This project might have to be postponed until the following year.

*Covenantal Relations Team - Lynn Richards, Joyce Kepner, and Maggie Wilson*

They began by reviewing our relational covenant, the nine covenantal agreements on how we engage with each other.

They discussed the Right Relationship training that was funded by the Craft Group and attended with Jen

Seuhr and Beth Zak (Chair of LDT). This training resulted in new insight and a shift in perspective from policing the covenant, to tending the covenant. They also learned the Minister should not be on the team in order to provide pastoral care to everyone and not be involved in conflict.

*Compassionate Service Team - Dawn Lindsay*

Dawn discussed the many great things the Compassionate Service Team accomplishes. These include Share the Plate selections, North Hills Community Outreach (NHCO) collections, Northside Common Ministry shelter dinners, and the Bellwood Harvest. She ended with an invitation for congregants to join the team.

*Approval of the 2023 - 2024 Operating Budget - Dennis Doubleday*

Dennis discussed the revised mid-year budget that included the UUA Fair Share Contribution and an extra \$10k to the Sunday Services Team to fill the pulpit, with a \$35k projected surplus.

This year's budget is 5.5% smaller than last year due to a lack of Stewardship Team resulting in a slower stewardship campaign.

Fundraising was omitted from the budget, as it has been unpredictable post-pandemic.

He is also avoiding using surpluses from previous years to balance the budget, because it is not sustainable.

He discussed changes to staffing and UUA salary recommendations.

He noted the Endowment Fund was roughly flat for the year.

He took questions from the floor and the responses included:

We are still withdrawing a percentage from the endowment fund.

The SST will still have a budget to fill the pulpit on Sundays that we don't have a scheduled Minister in the pulpit. It will no longer include the additional \$10k.

**Motion to approve:** Marsha Albright

Second: Carol Ballance

Approved by voice vote without objection.

*Congregational Vote on Article II Revisions - Jen Suehr*

Jen advised that the purpose of today's vote is to gauge the congregation's feelings at present regarding how our delegates should vote at the General Assembly pertaining to the Article II revisions. The Board is not in consensus in support for the revision and as such does not recommend that the congregation vote in a particular way.

Connie Ritzert spoke about the amendment process. Beginning in April, the website opened to submit proposed amendments and almost 500 amendments were submitted. The study commission hosted three virtual workshops in May. There will be meetings at GA about some unknown number of amendments, and delegates can bring forth more amendments. There will also be a mini assembly for delegates to discuss. Connie advised that the best we can do is to count on our delegates to use good judgment and get direction from us about how they can lean in this voting.

She took questions from the floor. The responses included:

The delegates are Stephen Fuegi, Jen Seuhr, Dawn Lyndsay, and Lynn Richards.

The proposed revisions are too long to be displayed on the screen at this moment to be reviewed.

The reason for the second question on the ballot is to affirm that the congregation supports the delegates using their own judgment, as opposed to voting on the proposed Article II as it sits and voting no to proposed amendments that are discussed.

It was suggested that the congregation can express their concerns regarding amendments to the delegates following the meeting.

It was commented that delegates are sent to a convention informed, but not instructed.

The delegates were thanked for their hard work and participation.

**Ballot ----- Proposed Revision of Article II of UUA By-Laws**

Congregational Guidance to UUCNH Delegates to General Assembly:

I support the proposed changes to Article II as presented by the Study Commission in Jan. 2023.

YES NO ABSTAIN

In the amendment process at GA, I support authorizing UUCNH Delegates to act on their own judgment, considering previous congregational input plus any new developments.

YES NO ABSTAIN

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The ballots were collected and the votes were tallied as follows:

Question 1:

yes: 18

no: 36

abstain: 19

no choice selected: 1

total: 74

Question 2:

yes: 62

no: 7

abstain: 5

total: 74

*Approval of the 2023 - 2024 Slate of Nominees - Bill McAdams*

Bill McAdams began by discussing the Leadership Development Team's goals for the coming year. They are seeing more engagement as we move out of the pandemic. He then gave an introduction for each of the candidates on the ballot.

**Ballot** -----Election of Board of Trustees and Leadership Development Team Members

Board of Trustees Nominees (three-year term):

YES NO ABSTAIN

Trustee: Geoff Coleman (Leadership Track)

Trustee: Chuck Berry

Leadership Development Team Nominees:

YES NO ABSTAIN

Kathi Finch (two-year term \*)

\*Kathi Finch replaced Melinda Geiger mid-2023

Nancy Kepner (three-year term)

The ballots were collected and the votes were tallied as follows:

Geoff Coleman: Yes: 73, No: 0, Abstain: 0

Chuck Berry Yes: 72, No: 1, Abstain: 0

Kathi Finch: Yes: 72, No: 1, Abstain: 0

Nancy Kepner: Yes: 71, No: 1, Abstain: 1

*Thanks and Appreciation- Alison Smith*

Alison began by expressing admiration and gratefulness for our entire church community. She thanked the following teams and individuals specifically for their hard work and accomplishments this year:

The Green Sanctuary Team; The Capital Campaign Team; The Covenantal Relations Team; The Craft Group; The Contract Minister Search Teams, 1 and 2, and the Transition Team; The Safety Team; Sybil Baumwell; The Personnel Committee; and Jen Suehr.

*New Business*

Jen Suehr discussed the open Faith Development position and the status of the search to fill that position. The new position will be part time at 10-12 hrs a week to start with the goal of expanding and regrowing the program. The team, composed of Jen Suehr, Robyn Travers, Kathie Maloney, and Katie Smith, has so far

interviewed one candidate.

**Motion to adjourn:** Marsha Albright

Second: Dennis Doubleday

Approved by voice vote without objection.

Meeting adjourned.