

MINUTES
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
May 20, 2018

- I. Opening of meeting - David Cox 12:42
- Introduce Chris Dickey as Parliamentarian
- II. Reading of Congregational Covenant - Todd Stark
- III. Statement of Quorum - David Cox (54 is 10% of 540, have 154)
- IV. Adopt Meeting Rules
- Motion to Adopt Rules -William Lemon, Chuck Schuder seconded
 - Chuck Schuder proposed an amendment to limit meeting to 90 minutes. Seconded, discussion held, Nay, amendment failed. Rules adopted without amendment.
- V. Approval of Agenda
- Agenda Accepted without vote
- VI. Approval of Minutes of 2017 Annual Congregational Meeting
- Motion to Approve minutes from 2017 – Gary Gray, Tim Gardner seconded
 - Discussion: correct spelling of names: Jan Erdman, Lynn Murphy, Jim Lyon misspelled
 - Approved with changes
- VII. Statement of Outgoing Board Chair - David Cox
- See David Cox's Annual Report Document
- VIII. Lead minister statement - Rev. Barbara Gadon Summary of Comments:
- Thank you to the congregation and Board Chair.
 - Every year we learn something about our church. Answers to the congregational survey were informative and indicated we have a Triangle: Social Justice, Caring Community, Spiritual Maturity. We see them as one thing not in competition with each other. Good work for us as a church. Example: Youth went to Memphis together and did all three as a group.
 - Many took the Pledge to end Racism. Intensive training to speak up. Urge everyone to do it as part of being a UU. Can't help but notice that our country has become bolder and harsher in it's hatred I and we have to become bolder and more loving in our response.
 - Working towards becoming a Green Sanctuary - collective mission to take on the Environment. Thrilled Terry Jones has come along to help us with that.
 - We are taking steps towards being a Sanctuary Church gauged by the level of participation and interest in the scheduled conversations about the process. Our neighbor, Kirkwood United Church of Christ is also voting about this issue right now.
 - Money – We learned we are a generous congregation relative to the supplemental campaign. Community is deeply grateful for your gifts. The other thing we learned is

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that we are also vulnerable. We have a tight budget due to a lower canvass than usual and it's not an easy place to be in. A lot of churches are struggling to use a once a year canvass. It will likely be a change for us.

- We have 32 new members since last Annual Meeting and we are a growing, vital place, but we still have to figure out the money thing.
- Update on 222 Argonne: Will have strategic planning discussions in the Fall so we can figure out what to do with it. We have to work together. We should have clearance to take the house down in September and do landscaping.

IX. Old Business - None

X. Presentation of Budget Information - Sheryl Foster

- Budget details are in printed packet. How is your pledge money used?
 - Worship – provide spiritual growth
 - Faith Development – Religious Education, covenant groups, workshops
 - Help sick and ailing members through Pastoral Care
 - Go beyond our boundaries - spread UU principles with community partners & causes (social justice)
 - Emphasis on people keeping the church running
 - Building maintenance
- Review numbers in packet – provides a blueprint to where we put our resources. Pledges were down this year. Church leadership decided to place our emphasis on people. Programs will be maintained or slightly reduced.
 - Q: What are sources for Rent? A: Nursery School, AA, Weddings, Recitals etc.
 - Q: Partner church question – why reduced to zero? A: Had confusion – thought it was the pass through funded by St. Martins Fund, but the \$3500+ was in addition to that. How can we come up with our commitment to the partner church? Possibly fundraising, or use the money left above the principle in the St. Martins Fund.
 - Bill Coalson - head of the Partner church committee. He would really like Eliot to support small amount of \$200 to officially join their church to become a supporting member of their counsel. Allows us to officially have a partner church and it opens a pathway for other funds to go to the partner church (like Bread Sunday collection).
- David Cox: we do not have time to go through each line item on budget. Staff and Treasurer will be available at the end of the meeting.
 - Bruce MacKensie - Comment: when you speak, can you please announce your name.
 - Q: William Lemon – Status of sale of Bergfried property? A: Property sold \$107k, actual proceeds of \$85k are in the Bergfried Fund.
- Eliot has investments – UUCEF Common Endowment Fund for rainy day. Bergfried Fund to support that property. Intern Minister Fund. Dunlap Fund, excess interest goes to Minister's Discretionary Fund. St. Martin Fund goes towards Romanian partner church. Nutt Fund is for Music.

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- Women's Alliance is not really Eliot Fund, we are the custodian of their funds. They park their money in our account.

XI. Presentation of Sanctuary Church Proposal

- Sanctuary Statement from Rev. Barbara Gadon: Encouraged by the level of participation in the discussions held about becoming a Sanctuary Church. It has been an eye-opening endeavor, as we found out that this is a need here in the midwest. Last Fall we joined a coalition as a supportive body including UCC Maplewood & watched a miracle transformation of them to turning their basement into someplace to allow Alex Garcia to live there. What is the law, how does it affect others, both your head and your heart have to be engaged as we consider this. Picture all the undocumented people and people who might be impacted by the commitment of churches to provide Sanctuary to them.
- How would you like your church to respond as it pertains to this difficult situation? Very few bodies can do anything about this situation, but churches can.
- Turn to page 22...we are voting on whether to sign the Declaration of Sacred Resistance. We have been an informal member of the St. Louis Coalition for Sanctuary. But would be signing as a church formally committed to this.
- We would work out the details of whether someone would meet the criteria and whether we would house them. We don't know of anyone seeking sanctuary right now. We would not need another vote if it became apparent someone was in need.
- If we can come as a body we can come to a whole-hearted solution. Think about your concerns as well.
- Board is formally putting this motion forward: ***"That Eliot Unitarian Chapel sign the St Louis Coalition for Sanctuary's 'Declaration of Sacred Resistance'¹ thereby declaring itself to be a sanctuary congregation"***

Discussion:

- Gene Hutchins – Q: if we identify such persons needing sanctuary, are we obligated to turn someplace into living space? Barbara: we are not obligated, but we are enabled. We would consider if we have the resources.
- Gene Hutchins - Q: Will we meet Kirkwood Zoning Laws? Barbara: No, but we do host people overnight through Room at the Inn. 1100 churches have done this, they have worked it out.
- Doris Yohe - Q: Do we know how much it would cost to fix up our basement? Barbara: We have identified Room 006, we are ahead of some places, we would probably need some work, but minimal work would need to be done.

¹ <http://www.stlsanctuary.org/declaration.html>

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- Doris Yohe: Comment - since someone needs to be here 24 hours a day to witness – would hope we have the support of the whole community. Barbara: Brought up in meetings – Maplewood has seen that many other organizations have provided volunteers, including some Eliot people.
- Jerry Higginbotham: What are the media implications? Barbara: We would be making an Open Declaration – being very deliberative, not secretively. You can do a search on Maplewood, they are deliberately trying to draw attention to the issue. We would want that PR. Could there be negative attention – could be possible, have not seen that.
- Joanne Prats: Q: We host guests for Room at the Inn who are vulnerable and they need to feel safe. What is our proposal ensure their safety? Barbara: We are keeping our commitment to RATI and we would do a police background check, get to know the proposed family before extending an invitation.
- Dotty Storer: In favor of motion, it's important for us to take a stand. Too much hate in our country and we need to stand up for people who are vulnerable. Concerns will not prohibit me from voting for this. Concerns are money (fundraising can come from outside community as we have seen from the Maplewood congregation). Volunteers are a concern, but overnight Volunteers do not have to come from our community. Are we spreading ourselves too thin? NO, activities tend to bring new members and more excitement. Environmental and Racial justice program go hand in hand.
- Emma Prats - Q: Could the youth group still have lock ins? Barbara: Yes
- Gail Rock – was part of sanctuary church in California. 1100 churches around country participate. This is more of a policy issue rather than a people issue. Only 40 people in sanctuary currently and we can still be involved in policy change. Need to take a stand. Very much support this.

MOTION TO EXTEND 5 more minutes passed.

- Suzanne LeLaurin – in support of motion. Believe in the rule of law, but we have a terribly broken immigration system. MLK fought unjust laws. Would like us to consider this as taking a stand against a broken system.
- Charlie Fogleman – in favor, concerned about how we vet these folks? Don't want someone in our basement that we can't get rid of. What is that plan?
- Gary Gray: I would encourage us to think about what we believe is right. Is it right for immigration and deportation to take place that take parents away from children? Let's decide what's right and then we can figure out how to do it when the time comes.
- Sharon McCarron – Believe it coincides with our UU principles, but there is a gap to figure out how to provide people and resources. If we say yes without figuring out how, we are missing a piece of the decision.

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MOTION TO EXTEND 5 more minutes - Paula Fulks, Chuck Schuder

- Paula Fulks – sincerely and with all my heart support this motion. One reason is because I come from an immigrant family. We are all immigrants, it's only an accident of earth that we can sit in this beautiful church & know we will not be told to leave. Can't say the name or ethnicity of the person who may come to Eliot looking for Sanctuary. But that person will be desperate and will have no other choice. Will be willing to go inside the church only to be able to stay with the people that I love. They will be well known by the people who send them to us. I promise that they will be fully vetted. I genuinely understand the concern about not having enough people and enough money. I see what happens in Maplewood...we will have enough of both with no trouble. Other people will help us.

Motion to extend was denied by show of flags.

VOTE:

- In Favor: Majority
- Opposed: very few

XII. Presentation of the Candidates for the Board of Trustees - Jordi Pratts

- Thanks to Jim Gender who is moving off Leadership/Nominating committee.
- Hosted Leadership Workshop to strategize about the long term leadership of this congregation. Should be a better way. Many other churches are doing the same thing. Happy to present a great slate for this year, but we already have a really good idea of nominees for next year and 2020.
- Nominees:
 - Ken Denson – Treasurer - passed
 - Cathy Converse & John Speisman to serve three years on Board of Trustees - passed
 - David Rohan to serve 3 years on Nominating Committee - passed
 - David Cox is the Board's appointment to Nominating committee (does not need to be voted on).

XIII. Transfer of the gavel to the new Board Chair - David Cox/Todd Stark

XIV. Statement of Incoming Board Chair - Todd Stark

- Thanks to David Cox and Angie Bowland for the last 3 years of service as they complete their terms.
- Respect for Rev Barbara Gadon and the positive people that surround me in this place. Especially Amy
- For the Strong Hearts here today. Thank you.

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XV. Comments/Questions from the Floor

- Flo Reaves: Just one statement - Do not abandon the programs that we already have like RATI, vigils. Agree with you, please extend it to these other important areas.
- David Cox – week 183 is 183 more weeks than most congregations. Keeping that spirit burning bright.
- Lynn Murphy – 2006 that we took a poll to become a Welcoming Congregation. So to me the Sanctuary is similar. Keep the energy going.

XVI. Adjourn

2:02

MEETING RULES

Your Board of Trustees recommends that the following rules be adopted for the duration of this meeting:

- That we follow Robert's Rules of Order;
- That we limit discussion of any agenda item to no more than 10 minutes, unless a majority of the members vote for an extension, each extension to be no more than 5 minutes;
- That all speakers will identify themselves by name prior to speaking;
- That we have a limit of two minutes per turn at the microphone, with a maximum of two times at the microphone per person;
- That a member will not speak a 2nd time until all those wishing to speak have done so; and
- That we will listen to each other respectfully and in a spirit of fellowship.

The congregation will be asked to approve the rules.