



*The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn
is a joyful, loving, religious community that inspires and empowers people to
Grow spiritually, Care for one another, and Work for social justice and stewardship of the earth.*

Congregational Meeting November 15, 2015

1:00 Meeting called to order

Opening words by Rev. Ana

Quorum of 30 members declared

Julie Bero elected as moderator, by acclamation.

1:05 Election of Inspectors of Election

Mitch Major, Pat Steele, and Marty Bernstein nominated, seconded, and elected as inspectors of election, by acclamation.

1:05 Review of congregational meeting rules

Unison reading of purpose statement and right relations covenant

1:10 Forward Plan Update by Sean Fischer, Trustee

Sean reminded the group that the overall goals developed through our strategic planning process are to: promote spiritual growth, care for one another, and work for social justice and stewardship of the earth. He cited examples of strategies we're pursuing, such as holding more leadership trainings and working to become a more sustainable congregation.

Sean explained that, since adopting the plan, the board has begun reaching out to volunteers in the congregation to staff teams of 3 to 5 people to work towards each individual strategy. These teams will be independent of committees that may be doing related work. Some teams, including the Sabbath Team, have begun meeting, and we hope all teams will meet by the end of the year. Teams will be responsible for determining how best to work towards their individual goals.

Sean stressed that we should all remember that change is hard, and we should be patient with teams who are working to change the way we work together. Some teams may move more quickly than others; some teams may need a year to plan before they start to show results.

In response to questions, Sean explained that we have 13 to 15 teams in total. He noted that we are trying to be mindful of staffing the teams with people who have the diversity of perspectives and skill sets to do their work. He stressed that the work will be transparent to the congregation and will rely on participation from the congregation. Updates on the work will be included in congregational meetings and in the e-newsletter.

1:20 Budget Update by Lake Wise, Treasurer

Lake thanked Rob Petrillo, Mark de Solla Price, and Mitch Major for their work on the church's budget and finances. He noted that more than half the church's revenues come

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from building rentals and the endowment. This year's budget makes what we consider a prudent draw from the endowment. He noted that the more we raise in canvassing and contributions, the less we have to draw from the endowment. He also asked members of the congregation to think about remembering the church in our wills; money from bequests goes into the endowment and replenishes this resource for future generations.

Lake noted that there is some seasonality in our revenues and expenses, so members shouldn't draw too many conclusions about individual budget lines in this midyear report. Overall, we are on track to make a prudent endowment draw and have a balanced budget for the year, and Lake hopes that we will be able to pay our national UUA dues next year.

In response to questions, Lake noted that projections for the full year are not adjusted for seasonal variation in fundraising and expenses. Lee Pardee explained that special contributions from the Women's Alliance (of \$3,500 for a Youth Coordinator and \$1,000 for the general budget) were learned about after the budget was made, so they are not reflected in the budget, but we will attempt to fix that for the next report. Garnett Losak noted that a recent bequest was announced in the e-news, and the most recent bequest was just received last week, so that will be formally announced soon.

1:35 Reports from Delegates to the UUA General Assembly

1:35 Report from Dave Garvoille on the UUA's Statement of Conscience on Reproductive Justice

Dave said that he was very proud to represent the congregation and very happy to be in community with so many Unitarians on the day the Supreme Court decision establishing marriage equality was announced.

Dave noted that this Statement of Conscience has been deliberated for several years and is available on UUA.org/reproductivejustice.

He explained that the Statement of Conscience has been adopted by the UUA and represents the UUA's official stance on the topic; the question before the congregation is whether we want to adopt this Statement as our own official position. Mary noted that not all congregations vote on these Statements, but First Unitarian wants to make sure we decide together that we agree with the UUA's positions. When we adopt these resolutions, we are then enabled to march under our own congregation's banner and speak on behalf of our congregation in support of these positions.

No questions were asked about the Statement of Conscience on Reproductive Justice.

1:45 Report from Kurt Steele on the UUA's Action of Immediate Witness on supporting Black Lives Matter

Kurt noted that racial justice was a strong focus at General Assembly, with 10 workshops on the topic and a keynote address from Cornell West. He also noted that our Weaving the Fabric of Diversity group has been working towards racial equality for many years, and mentioned the Children of Abraham dinner which took place last night. He noted that our Forward plan calls us to work for social justice, and adopting this Action of Immediate

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Witness could help us work towards our Forward goals and also connect more deeply with the growing Black Lives Matter movement.

In response to questions, Kurt explained that approving this resolution doesn't commit us to joining any particular group or taking any particular action. This is a step along the road to potentially working with the movement; any specific actions would be decided on as part of our normal programmatic operations.

In the interest of time, Julie Bero asked that members read the Statements and Actions on their own.

1:55 Report from Michael Richardson on the UUA's Action for Immediate Witness on supporting a strong, compassionate global climate agreement in 2015

Michael shared that, when he first heard about "tree-huggers" and concern for the climate back in the 1960s, he did not think that we would get to the point we're at now with global warming so quickly. He urged the congregation to get on board with living a more sustainable life. He emphasized that working for stewardship of the earth is now part of our congregation's Statement of Purpose.

There were no questions on this resolution.

2:00 Report from Vonda Brunsting on the UUA's Action for Immediate Witness on ending immigrant child and family detention now

Vonda shared that she enjoyed her first General Assembly, and particularly enjoyed sharing the experience with other members of the congregation.

She shared that it was thrilling for her to be part of a religious tradition that speaks up and takes action in the world. She explained that this resolution relates to detention centers opened by the Obama administration for housing immigrants awaiting hearings. She said that some detention centers may close soon, and this success would be due to the work of UUs and other social justice activists in calling attention to this issue.

In response to questions, Julie clarified that these resolutions include suggested actions, and approving these resolutions empowers members to start working on some of these actions.

Garnett noted that there is a UUSC conference call coming up on the issue of how to support immigrants who are about to be released, and any members of the congregation are welcome to join this call and learn more about how to help.

2:05 Discussion and vote on the Statement of Conscience on Reproductive Justice
A motion was made to vote on the statement of conscience. The motion passed
unanimously.

2:10 Discussion and vote on the Action of Immediate Witness on supporting Black Lives Matter

Lee shared that UU congregations around the country have had Black Lives Matter banners defaced. She said she believes that UUs can be in the forefront of this movement and she hopes the congregation will take action on this issue.



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Julie noted that Meagan Henry went to a Black Lives Matter conference and can answer questions on this topic.

The motion to approve this action of immediate witness passed unanimously.

2:10 Discussion and vote on the Action on Climate

No discussion on this topic. The motion to approve this action passed unanimously.

2:10 Discussion and vote on the Action on Immigrant Detention

No discussion on this topic. The motion to approve this action passed unanimously.

2:15 Meeting adjourned.