



*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

October 30, 2016

12:50 Call to order

12:50 Chalice lighting and opening words

12:55 Declaration of quorum

12:55 Nomination of moderator

Samira Kawash was nominated by Lee Pardee. The nomination was seconded and approved by acclamation.

12:55 Review of Agenda, Right Relations Covenant, and Meeting Rules

1:00 Election of Inspectors of Election

Lee Pardee nominated Chelsea and Eva, and they were approved by acclamation. Liz Davis was appointed as Parliamentarian and Roger Cooper was appointed as timekeeper.

1:00 Report from the President of the Board of Trustees, Lee Pardee

Lee shared that we started off the year in a very good place. We have a part-time intern and a part-time seminarian working with us in several areas, including the Pastoral Care and Coming of Age programs. The Board is also continuing to support Forward teams. The Social Justice team recently had a very well-attended forum, and other teams are working as well. Lee also noted that we are working on improving the accessibility of the building; we are in the early stages of moving this forward, and we hope to be able to accomplish this project this year.

Lee also noted that we have struggled in the past few years to find someone to chair UniFair. As a result, the Board has hired our seminarian, Kevin Jagoe, to coordinate the event this year, for an additional \$1,000 in compensation. She also noted that the Board has decided to extend the use of the custodial service we work with. In the past, they have cleaned the day care space 5 days a week; now they will provide all custodial services for the building.

1:05 Budget Update from Lake Wise, Treasurer

Lake shared that our budget for the current fiscal year represents about a 4 or 5% increase over the previous year. Revenue and expenses are on budget for the first quarter. We do have a new sexton, who is taking more action to maintain our building, and this does lead to slightly increased expense in the Facilities budget. Thanks to Elaine Macken's generous contribution, we have repaired the Chapel floor; she made a second donation to help get the project finished. Lake also noted that our endowment is growing and is wisely invested.

1:10 Accessibility Update from Garnett Losak

Garnett shared that she and Chris Johnson, our new sexton, are working together to try to find an accessibility solution that will be both effective and affordable. They have been meeting with potential installers. She asked that anyone with ideas, questions, or comments, reach out to her.

Garnett also shared that she successfully livestreamed Rev. Ana's sermon on Facebook today. This will make us accessible to people who are homebound.

1:15 Update on Phoenix Rebirth and Renewal Project from David Provost

David shared that there are over 60,000 people in NYC who are homeless; 20,000 of those people are children. The majority of people who are homeless live in shelters. They must get up and vacate the shelter by 8:00am and can't come back until the evening. Kids often have to travel great distances to get to school. Housing Plus Solutions is a

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Brooklyn organization that provides permanent supportive housing, giving homes to people who have been living in shelters.

First U is working with Housing Plus Solutions and the Beck School at Fordham University to run a program, Phoenix Rising, for women who are formerly homeless and are living in supportive housing. About 14 members of the congregation have agreed to mentor these women. Rosemarie Stupel has agreed to coordinate groups from the congregation to provide meals for the program meetings. The program will cost \$12,000, but we have raised a \$10,000 grant from the UU funding program in Boston, and we have also raised money from Share the Plate for the program. The money will pay for meals, transportation for the participants, and childcare during the meetings. The program begins on Jan. 16 and will run until May.

1:20 Reports of the General Assembly Delegates

Bob Bero, Kathy Ivans, Edwin Lord, and Derek and Rita Pearl were our delegates to General Assembly this year. Bob shared that GA was an exciting and overwhelming experience. He attended workshops on Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism as well as other lectures and debates. He shared that everyone should attend GA to experience it for themselves.

Kathy Ivans shared that 2 issues dominated the GA: Black Lives UU and a resolution on Israel and Palestine, which did not pass. She shared that the question of Israel and Palestine continues to be controversial in our movement. The resolution would have called on UUs to include Palestine in human rights screening for investments, while also recognizing the right of Israel to exist. She shared that Black Lives UU presented a series of workshops and conducted the closing ceremonies. UUs have pledged \$5 million to this group.

Rita Pearl shared that the Israel-Palestine issue was very heated throughout GA. She also noted that Rev. Ana and Garnett Losak's workshop on Sabbath Practice was very interesting, and she also attended an excellent workshop on doing social justice actions in black and white communities.

Derek Pearl shared that he really loved Rev. Ana & Garnett's workshop. He shared that GA has taken him to a number of places he would never otherwise have visited. He agreed that the Israel-Palestine question was very contentious and he also shared that people supporting the Palestinian cause felt that they were not treated as well as the people against divestment.

1:30 Actions of Immediate Witness

Kathy noted that these are issues that come up at GA and are not planned in advance.

The first Action of Immediate Witness is called *Some Guns, All Guns*. It supports restricting automatic weapons and instituting comprehensive background checks. There was a motion from the floor to endorse the resolution, a second, and the motion passed by acclamation.

The second AIW was called *Building Solidarity with our Muslim Neighbors*. The resolution asks us to connect with our Muslim neighbors, support refugees in our communities, challenge Islamophobia, oppose Islamophobic bills and actions, and work in this election cycle to encourage inclusivity. There was a motion from the floor to endorse the resolution and a second; the motion passed by acclamation.

The third AIW was called *Stop the Hate*. The resolution condemns anti-transgender legislation passed in North Carolina; supports the passage of the Fairness Act; and pledges us to educate ourselves, our communities, and our institutions, about the needs of gender-nonconforming individuals. Kathy moved to endorse the motion and the motion passed by acclamation.

1:40 Responsive Resolution

Rita shared that a Responsive Resolution responds to a report or situation that comes up in GA. The resolution is called *Reaffirmation of Commitment to Racial Justice* and asks UUs to find the will and a way to do a better job in the fight for racial justice. It asks us to hold ourselves accountable to less witness and more actions, and asks the denomination to report on our progress in this area at future General Assemblies. Rita moved that we vote to endorse the resolution; Roger seconded. The motion passed by acclamation.

1:45 Business Resolution



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The GA passed this resolution to mark the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower. It responds to concerns raised by Native American leaders, human rights activists, and environmental justice activists, about celebrating the colonization of North America. It calls for a study period and a period of reflection and hearing and asks for the denomination to work with Native American leaders to determine how to mark this anniversary; to enter into dialogue with local Native peoples about the history of our area; to reflect on the spiritual wisdom of indigenous peoples in our RE program; and to work with descendants of Pilgrims to better understand this history.

Bob moved that we endorse this resolution, and the motion was seconded.

Daniela G. shared that this resolution is crucial in light of the current crisis at the Dakota Access Pipeline site. Other members shared that UUs are supporting the Dakota Access Pipeline protest, and Black Lives Matter is also becoming involved; as well as that African Americans were part of the first Thanksgiving.

The motion passed by acclamation.

1:55 Study Action Issue

This study action issue is called *The Corruption of Our Democracy*. It calls for 4 years of study, reflection, and action on the issue of corporate influence on elections, and asks if we as UUs ought to support a constitutional amendment establishing that only human beings have constitutional rights and money is not speech, as an effort to revitalize our democracy and help move forward on many moral issues. It also asks if a moral revolution is needed to address voting rights, gerrymandering, and other issues that undermine our democracy.

Lee moved to endorse the topic of the corruption of our democracy as a study action issue for the next 4 years. Several people seconded. The motion passed by acclamation.

Samira led us in a round of applause for our GA delegates, who represented us so well.

2:00 Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn, and the motion passed by acclamation.