

MINUTES  
Congregational Meeting  
First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn  
February 24, 2019  
(Draft 4/17/2019)

1. Call to Order & Declaration of Quorum:

- The meeting was called to order at 12:45 p.m. by Michael Alcott, Moderator. A quorum was declared. The meeting was held in the Sanctuary.

2. Chalice Lighting & Opening Words:

- After a chalice was lit, Meagan Henry, Director of Education and Family Ministry, gave opening words by the Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed, from the gray hymnal.

3. Appointment of Timekeeper and Parliamentarian:

- Michael Alcott, Moderator, appointed Dawn Elane Reed to serve as the Timekeeper, and Tom Kennedy to serve as the Parliamentarian.

4. Review of Agenda, Right Relations Covenant, and Meeting Rules:

The Agenda, Right Relations Covenant, and Meeting Rules were reviewed.

5. Reports by Co-Board Presidents Patrick Gunn and Cara Haft:

Co-Board Presidents Patrick Gunn and Cara Haft gave a brief report. Cara noted that we had two new-member ceremonies during this program year, and that we now have over 300 members for the first time. Patrick noted that we “depend on our dedicated staff” and named and thanked staff members, and also thanked volunteers and committee chairs for their work. Cara noted that the Board is taking steps to conduct “quarterly” reviews of our books, so that any issues are “spotted earlier.” Cara noted that the Board has introduced a “board liaison system” to provide a “direct channel of communication” between the Board and committees. Cara noted that construction for the chair lift accessibility project is expected to begin in May, 2019, following work in the Monroe Place garden that took place during the fall, 2018. Patrick reported that pledge giving through Stewardship program is off to a good start this year, and “exceeded” the goal set during the last fiscal year. Cara thanked Connie Newsom and Pat Lawrence for serving as co-chairs of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee. Cara noted that the Auction, a major fundraiser, is scheduled for Saturday, May 4, 2019 and that the Auction theme is the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Sanctuary building; and that as a part of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, a special worship service will be held

the following day, Sunday, May 5, 2019; that on May 11, 2019, a special event, “Breakfast With Tiffanys” will be held to celebrate our Tiffany stained-glass windows; and that a “Minard Lafever” Roundtable discussion is scheduled for fall, 2019. Patrick noted that it is our responsibility to “find ways to maintain our building” while still “respecting our investment assets.” Patrick noted that income from space rentals is an important part of our operating budget. Patrick noted that we are a “growing congregation” and that the Board has been meeting over the last few months with consultant John Wimberly to discuss how to “maintain our buildings” while meeting our own needs as a congregation.

6. Budget / Finance Update:

- Treasurer Lake Wise provided a brief budget update. Lake reported that revenues and expenses were “in line” during the prior fiscal year, except for the outstanding property tax bill. Lake reported that during the current 2018-2019 fiscal year, we are “doing better than budgeted” in “large part, due to pledge contributions.” Lake noted that “expenses are close to” what was budgeted, and that “revenues” including “contributions” are “a little bit ahead” of what was budgeted. Lake reported that he expected that “the endowment draw” for operating expenses “will be at the prudent draw level” except for capital items such as the accessibility chair lift project.
- In response to a question from Maria Petulla about prior fundraising for accessibility project chair lift and the proposed fire detection and alarm system, Lake noted that the “amount raised was less than the amount spent.” Director of Congregational Life Garnett Losak reported that the initial fundraising goal for the accessibility project was \$100,000, and that about \$70,000 in cash donations and a \$10,000 grant from the NY Landmarks Conservancy were received. Garnett also noted that the grant will be paid at the conclusion of the project, and that some stocks were also donated, and that \$1,000 was also raised this year. In response to a question from Maria Petulla about the property tax issue, which had been discussed at prior congregational meetings, Lake Wise reported that we had to pay “back taxes” in order to catch up, and that we also paid “a fine,” and that our property taxes going forward” will be higher. Lake noted that, as reported during congregational meetings last year, we had “not paid taxes that we should have paid” as a result of having a tenant who is engaged in a “profit-making enterprise,” and that “some portion” of our property is “subject to a higher rate of tax.”

7. Leadership Development Committee / Election of General Assembly (GA) Delegates:

- Sean Fisher, presented a slate of four (4) nominations for the 2019 General Assembly (GA) delegates, on behalf of the Leadership Development Committee (L.D.C.): David Reyes, Parrish Turner, Lee Pardee, and Amit Mehta.

- Sean Fischer reported that the L.D.C. received four (4) applications for five (5) open GA delegate positions. Alison Derevensky reported that she had submitted an application to serve as a GA delegate, on the date that applications were opened, but that she had not received a response from the L.D.C. Sean Fischer acknowledged that Alison had submitted her application on time, and indicated that she had not been included due to a “procedural error.” Motion: After discussion, above, Sean Fischer moved that the slate of nominations for the 2019 General Assembly (GA) delegates, as nominated by the Leadership Development Committee, be amended to include Alison Derevensky. Second: Bob Patterson. Motion approved by the Congregation, by a show of hands.

8. Stewardship Update:

- Sam McKelvie gave a brief update on behalf of the Stewardship Team. Sam noted that the Stewardship Team hopes to receive \$350,000 in pledges for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Sam provided a brief overview of the five-year pledge trend, and noted that the total amount pledged has increased for each of the last five years. Sam noted that during the 2018-2019 fiscal year, 204 pledges were received, which totaled \$339,000, and that this included 27 new pledges, for a “total increase” of \$64,000 over the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Sam noted that as of February, 2019, 92 pledges have been received, which total \$206,000 and which include 15 new pledges. Sam noted that she and Lee Pardee will be available after the meeting, with pledge forms, for those who still need to turn in their pledges.

9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

- Minutes prepared by Liz Davis, for Bruce Wilde, Clerk of the Congregation, who was unable to attend the meeting.