



First Unitarian Church of Rochester
Minutes of the
Annual Congregational Meeting
June 7, 2020

Moderator of the Congregation Barbara de Leeuw **called the meeting to order at 11:08 am** and found a quorum in attendance.

1. Welcome

- 1.1. The electronic Zoom hosts (a/k/a tellers) were introduced: Tim Farnum, Gregory North, Emily Clasper, Mary Hammele and Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan.
- 1.2. It was noted that First Unitarian Church Bylaws, Article Four Congregational Meetings, Section 4.8. Voting, Subsection F states: "Implementation of electronic attendance and voting at congregational meetings is determined by the board of trustees." The Board voted at its April 2020 meeting to hold the Annual Meeting online owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.3. Explanation of the Zoom process. The Tellers will mute everyone who is not currently speaking. The chat function will be off unless or until feedback is requested. The 'reaction' button on the toolbar allows individuals to clap or give a thumbs up.
- 1.4. Meeting Process – reviewed agenda.

2. Approval of the minutes of the June 2, 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting

Motion: To approve the June 2, 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes

Approved: with one person opposed

3. President's Report

As I complete my third year as President of this wonderful congregation, I am full of gratitude for the leadership team I have been able to work with as our church healed from deep conflicts and built a strong foundation on which to grow a living, creative community that gives us all opportunities to become more human and help the world become more humane.

I am happy that my skills and perspective have helped to reassure those who felt disregarded that they will be heard and included with respect and acceptance. We need that process to continue, and we need to incorporate active appreciation and inclusion of everyone into all of our actions and presences within and without our walls.

Those of us who think we are white are susceptible to the racism, ageism, classism, and ethnocentricity in which we are born, bred, and live. Our work to overcome patriarchy, privilege, sexism and other aspects of white supremacy must continue and become equally part of the lives we lead in the future.

One of the great fruits of work by amazing lay leaders of this church is our calling last year of Reverend Shari Halliday-Quan. Her intelligence, energy, perspective, and spiritual depth have already nourished us and will, I trust, continue to do so far into the future. In particular,

I applaud her leadership in marshalling the resources of our staff team to respond to the unprecedented pandemic crisis we are in. The many different virtual offerings they assembled to help us survive and grow through this trying time are incredibly impressive. We look forward to further enrichment of our spiritual and community lives through the work of our incoming Associate Minister, Reverend Margalie Belizaire.

To close, I want to express my gratitude to all the members of the Board of Trustees for their work and support over the past 3 years, and particularly Gregory North, soon to be elected President of the Congregation for the coming year. I am full of enthusiasm about Gregory's leadership: his prodigious knowledge, skills, and drive promise to energize the work of our congregation this year, and, I hope, for some years to come.

In Gratitude, Tim Farnum

4. **Minister's Report**

Thank you, Tim. I had forgotten that I should have predicted how embarrassing it would be to have you be so kind to me personally, but fortunately, your expectations around Gregory North's leadership got thrown in – I'm glad to know that I'm not alone in both the gratitude that you put out into the world and I'm also incredibly grateful to you, Tim, chief among the leaders who have held this congregation steady this year, and in the time, leading up to my arrival here.

There are many folks, and much work that's been done behind the scenes, but I'm so grateful to you and you lift up in your report two things that I want to highlight that I think you all also heard from Gregory North when we relaunched our stewardship campaign in April, that are really the two major threads of this congregation this year:

One of them is **massive change**. Having a new minister would be change enough, but we close out our year with changes that none of us predicted or expected. And in so many ways we have adapted gracefully and magnificently. Things like over 60 people (Caring Stewards) making phone calls, sending emails, texting other members of the congregation, making real the idea that we are a community of care. Things like Tommy playing over 30 instruments in our music services and our Sunday worship, as well as being a collaborator on the production side. There's an immense amount of work and learning and experimentation that's gone into that. But we're also seeing that partnership of people's presence and gifts is the story of this congregation and so we see the first thread of massive change. Whether you are sitting at home or calling in from wherever you happen to be or even driving while listening to this, the idea of doing three months of online worship out of nothing is a challenge that we've risen to in an immense way.

The other is consistency of **deep commitment to our values, our mission and our ends**. These have guided our decision making in lots of ways that are predictable. The first thing we look at when we engage in our budgeting process. It's what our spending is measured against. The budget is the moral document of how we spend our money, how we want to be in the world, what are our goals / our vision for our community and the wider community, for whom do we do this work. For those of you who have been in my office in the church

building before we moved to working from home, you know that I have our four ends posted on my wall. They are the thing that I see when I look up from my computer. They are now the thing that I see in my home office. They are the thing against which everything we do is measured. And so, when we had to shift really quickly to online worship and online RE, we realized we needed to be really doubling down on connections with our community while making sure that not only our elders but all folks who are at high risk or even relatively safe are cared for. Never have we believed that loneliness or risk or spiritual growth are limited to certain parts of the population. Those were written right into our ends. And so, when we were called to shift, we knew that these were the places we needed to lean into. And so the idea of being an inclusive community, a community of care, a community that's generous and a community that thinks dismantling the racial bias within us, but also in the broader society, a community that works in partnership, a community that cares about our spiritual development, as well as that of children, knowing that children are not separate from us. These are all the things that have consistently been the stated values of our congregation and having that sort of stability and steadiness has been an incredible gift to me as your new minister. I came in knowing what this congregation wanted to be, who you wanted to be. And I think if we've done anything together – and my goodness, we have done a lot – it is in growing into that.

I'm really looking forward to what our next steps are. Today, I'm in our building. This is not a fake background. You see me coming to you from our sanctuary and there aren't any people in the seats, but there are over 150 people here at this meeting. We've consistently had higher attendance at congregational events like this and I expect to see that continue. I'm in the building today because I will be interviewed on channel 10 TV six o'clock news tonight. Who knows what will happen with the news cycle but assuming all goes as planned, there's an interview with me talking about what it means to lean into our future together. I'll be talking about how we widen our horizons of inclusivity by continuing to worship online. I'll be talking about erring on the side of innovation so that those who are in high risk, those who want to be able to come to church with more than 20 people can continue to connect safely. For me, as a minister, not needing to do 10 or 11 services on a Sunday to be able to fit all our joy and all our bodies into one place. That's what we will lean into joyfully next year.

I'm really, really thrilled and humbled and grateful to be your minister. And in all the ways that this year wasn't always easy, wasn't always joyful, we created space to say important things. One of the proudest moments for me was our Memory Tree Service, where I hope that you saw what I could so deeply feel. Our entire worship team – Thom Snell, Sheila Schuh, Shannan Foos – gathered to create a sacred container for truth, beauty, pain, and joy in life. The worship, like so many others benefitted from the work of many hands: lay worship leaders to help bring the service alive, sextons to help with the tree, administrative help to research names, volunteers to assemble our leaves and bear witness. As a people of mission, community, and adaptability, great possibilities lay ahead of us, and I'm so excited to be here with all of you.

5. **Elections** for Moderator, Board Officers, Board Members and Leadership Nominating

Committee

- 5.1. Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz reports that the LNC nominates Moderator: Barbara de Leeuw (2-year term)
Tim Farnum stepped in for Moderator to conduct a voice vote. The candidate was approved by acclamation.
- 5.2. Tim Farnum, current President reports that the Board of Trustees nominated the following candidates for Board Officers:
 - 5.2.1. President Gregory North (1-year term)
The candidate was approved by acclamation.
 - 5.2.2. Treasurer Robert Lyubomirsky (2-year term)
The candidate was by acclamation.
- 5.3. Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz reports that the LNC nominates the following candidates for the Board of Trustees
 - 5.3.1. Jon Horne (3-year term)
 - 5.3.2. Lynn Kinsman (3-year term)
 - 5.3.3. Mara Sanchez (3-year term)The election of the three candidates for three Board of Trustees positions was approved by acclamation.
- 5.4. Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz reports that the LNC nominates the following candidates for the Leadership Nominating Committee
 - 5.4.1. Danette Johnson
 - 5.4.2. Maren KyleThe election of the two candidates for two Leadership Nominating Committee positions was approved by acclamation.
- 5.5. Thank you to outgoing leaders – you’ve done a wonderful job.
 - 5.5.1. President Tim Farnum who did an amazing job for us for the last three years working with Rev. Joel and Rev. Shari
 - 5.5.2. Board members Paul Minor and Mary Hammele
 - 5.5.3. Board member Gregory North who is transitioning to President.
 - 5.5.4. Leadership Nominating Committee members Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz and Julie Smith.
6. **Budget.** Approval of the proposed Congregational budget for fiscal year 2019-2020
 - 6.1. Senior Minister Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan and Treasurer Robert Lyubomirsky presented the proposed budget as approved by the Board of Trustees.
 - 6.1.1. Ending the year in a strong financial position. Expenses have been managed well.
 - 6.1.2. Stellar stewardship team this year ramped up their efforts and a third of the pledge units increased their pledge. Have reached 90% of goal
 - 6.1.3. Budget grounded in mission, value and ends.
 - 6.1.4. Key focus areas:
 - 6.1.4.1. Aligning staff with UUA salary guidelines
 - 6.1.4.2. Re-aligning staff to support online services
 - 6.1.4.3. Providing services and taking action consistent with Ends
 - 6.1.5. Draw from Operating Cash Reserve

- 6.1.6. Applied for and receive Paycheck Protection Program Loan
- 6.2. Robert reviewed the year-end projection that shows a surplus.
- 6.3. Rev. Shari Key Environmental Assumptions:
 - 6.3.1. Church services online – invest in tech for this
 - 6.3.2. Children’s RE – may open earlier
 - 6.3.3. Rental Income – will be lower next year. Nursery School and other renters who can use our building will come back as safely
 - 6.3.4. Delayed activities – installation, start-up
 - 6.3.5. Staffing Practices
 - 6.3.5.1. Alignment with UUA fair compensation guidelines
 - 6.3.5.2. Retraining and retaining staff
 - 6.3.6. Mission and Ends
 - 6.3.6.1. While services change, we follow our Values, Mission, Ends
- 6.4. Robert spoke to Income
 - 6.4.1. Pledges received is conservative with 5% default rate
 - 6.4.2. Building Usage
- 6.5. Robert spoke to Expenses
 - 6.5.1. Administration vs Building Operations – some expenses have been moved between these two
 - 6.5.2. Leadership & Governance – less expense in Associate Minister search
 - 6.5.3. Budget balanced between Income and Expense
 - 6.5.4. Bringing back activities that were delayed.
- 6.6. Questions
 - 6.6.1. Schools partnership coordinator budgeted at current year amount?
 - 6.6.2. Salary and Housing – budget is in line with actual expenses
 - 6.6.3. If anyone objects to Rev. Shari being in the meeting, she will be asked to leave the meeting. Otherwise, she will stay in the meeting. There is nothing in Bylaws and nothing in Robert’s Rules to require her to leave the meeting, although it is part of our culture.
- 6.7. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed compensation of the Senior Minister.

Senior Minister Salary	2019/20	2020/21
Salary	\$80,000	\$90,000
Professional Expenses	\$11,500	\$11,000
Housing Allowance	\$30,000	\$20,000
Total	\$121,500	\$121,000

Moved: Jenny Stanberry Seconded: Jeananne Thomas
 The motion passed on a voice vote with no opposition or abstentions.

- 6.8. Approval of the proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 was moved and seconded (see Appendix A)
 Moved: Gregory North Seconded: John Steepy
 The motion was passed on a voice vote with no opposition or abstentions.

7. Announcements:

- 7.1. Social Justice Grants Panel Awards, approved by the Board of Trustees in May

2020. Current charters are approved by the Board not the congregation. Anyone who wants to see the charters can contact Anne Perry.

7.1.1. Social Investment Fund (\$6,970 available):

7.1.1.1. The Avenue Children's Theatre Project \$2,970
Fiscal sponsor is The Field in NYC. year-long Youth Fellowship program that engages youth ages 14-20 in a 1-year creative fellowship.

7.1.1.2. REACH Advocacy, Inc. \$2,000
To address critical building issues. REACH provides transitional shelter for up to 50-55 chronically homeless men and women.

7.1.1.3. 540WMain Inc. \$2,000
"Environmental Justice is Social Justice Classroom Education Program" curriculum development.

7.1.2. Paul & Josephine Wenger Fund (\$4,110 available):

7.1.2.1. Volunteers for International Medical Aid \$2,110
VIMA was formed to help meet the needs of abandoned children, as well as children of widows financially unable to provide for their child or children in Ghana, West Africa.

7.1.2.2. Neelum Films Inc. \$2,000
Fiscal sponsor is NY Women in Film and Television. Post-production work (video editing, sound mixing, graphics, etc.) needed to finalize "The Injured Body," a film that showcases the voices of a diverse and international group of women of color

8. Thank you to

8.1. Social Justice Grants Panel. Sheila Olin (Chair), Mark Foos, Julé Sanchez, Allyson Dougherty, Pam Adams, Anna Cuyler, Ellie Stauffer, Roberta Buckle (representative from the Social Justice Exec.) for your hard work sorting through all the proposals

8.2. Associate Minister Search Team. John Dancy, Julé Sanchez, Kristina Williams, Nicole Delgrosso, Brownlee Field and Ajamu Kitwana

8.3. Rev. Bob Renjilian who is completing his 2-year interim at the end of July. Celebration will be on Sunday, June 21, following the service.

8.4. Please write thank you notes to everyone on staff and in lea

8.5. Gregory North expresses gratitude to Barbara de Leeuw for her leadership in making this online Annual

8.6. Motion to Adjourn

8.7. Moved: Tim Farnum Seconded: John Steepy Approved by voice vote

9. The meeting was adjourned without objection at 12:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne J. Perry, Clerk

Appendix A. Proposed Budget

Income

Pledges Collected	\$680,200
Building Usage	\$10,000
Fund-Raising	\$1,000
Income Endowment Draw	\$250,521
Op Cash Reserve Draw	\$77,275
Other Income	\$53,425
Total	\$1,072,421

Memo: Social Justice Plates & Grants \$70,000
Total with TSJ_Grants \$1,142,421

Expense

Administration & Finance	\$177,991
Building Operations	\$195,010
Denominational	\$66,902
Child Religious Education	\$99,300
Social Justice	\$4,750
Leadership & Governance	\$11,500
Congregational Care and Outreach	\$58,320
Worship, Music & Arts	\$85,090
Ministerial Staff	\$234,120
Staff Benefits	\$139,438
Total	\$1,072,421

Memo: Social Justice Plates & Grants \$70,000
Total with TSJ_Grants \$1,142,421