



First Unitarian Church of Rochester
Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, June 4, 2023
11:05 am in person and by Zoom

1. Establish a Quorum (73 people in person and 20 people online) and Call Meeting to Order at 11:22 am — Barbara de Leeuw, Moderator
2. Chalice lighting – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan
3. **MOTION:** To approve minutes of June 5, 2022, meeting
Moved: Anne Perry Seconded: Linda Friedman
The motion was approved.
4. Annual Report
 - a. President – Gregory North and Senior Minister – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan
The presentation began with a statement that written annual reports would be posted on the church website. Meanwhile, given the three-year relationship between Senior Minister and President, the verbal report is in the form of the two engaging in a mutual interview.
 - b. SH-Q: Gregory, as you end your term, what have you learned as President of the congregation?
 - i. The most important thing is that ultimately the power of this congregation is its beating heart, its energy and its soul. Again and again, I'm amazed by the level of service, engagement, and commitment that we have. Our congregation has been and continues to be amazing.
 - c. GN: Rev. Shari, we came out of the pandemic this year, and we ended up in a situation where we're now kind of fully re-emerged back into fellowship together. But online and here in the sanctuary. What has most surprised you this year?
 - i. It shouldn't be a surprise . . . people love this church and I mean all of you . . . the way that folks who are deeply committed to the congregation engage in new and different ways. So, let's all go out and be in a tent with First Universalist. And, by the way, sing the doxology that we don't do here, but they do downtown. You all were here for that. And then this year, in a totally new chapter of pandemic, the lingering effects of COVID impact the community. We never know how things will unfurl until it happens.
 - ii. Then, the ways in which the committed core leaders have been flexible and have created space for new leadership. That's been a big surprise and it's a thing we hope for.

- iii. I have been most surprised when I look out on a Sunday morning by how many unfamiliar faces I see. I don't know how many newcomers are among us, and how this sort of emergence period is shaped both by a deeply committed core, and people who want to be a part of this community, and who have been coming for a week or a month, or maybe a year.
- d. GN: . . . if I could piggyback on that, Reverend Shari. What maybe is not so surprising to many of us, but also gratifying is the springboard to action of people coming back together after having been apart for so long. It's resulted in a year dedicated to deepening connections with each other. I want to congratulate the staff who did a remarkable job and so many lay leaders who planned and arranged activities through Connections time, who planned and arranged so many dinners. I think the fact that we've had more time to spend together is a hallmark of why so many of us have been here so long at First Unitarian. Let's pledge to spend more time together in the future.
- e. SH-Q: Gregory, what do you think is the biggest challenge facing First Unitarian right now?
 - i. The Board has spent a lot of time in the last 3 years understanding and thinking about this challenge. I give great credit to our treasurer, Robert Lyubomirsky, who's done an amazing job bringing analytics to Board discussions. We are an aging congregation. The great historic legacy of First Unitarian is at risk, unless we bring in younger people, more people of color, more LGBTQ+ people, more families with young children, more people who represent the wider region of Western New York and the Greater Rochester community we serve. If they're here, they're here to carry on our mission tomorrow and into the future, and they're also here to make sure that as some people age out, new members come in, and that gives us the resources we need to invest in our future together.
- f. GN: Rev. Shari, when you think about our mission, how do we connect with people outside our walls. First Unitarian is something that people hear about, know about and want to learn more about. What are we called to do?
 - i. I think there's a spiritual threat for us. I understand that the term 'spiritual threat' feels like really dramatic language. But if we forget that we have something good to share and if we forget how to listen, then those are spiritual threats, and they are deeply important. When I talk about Rochester, I mean the greater Rochester area. The truth about where we live is a tale of two cities. It's easy to have a life that doesn't intersect with major parts of Rochester. I hear people say, Rochester's really white. But, Rochester's 40% black. Rochester is not really white, but if your whole community has been defined by a history of redlining, it can seem that way. I think what we learn here at First Unitarian is how to practice building community, taking risks, being vulnerable and connecting with each other. It's not just because it's good to have a long-term connection with your soul matters group, although that does really matter. It matters that someone misses you when you don't show up on Sunday. It matters that someone knows that you're going into surgery. But we do all this in rehearsal for

how we operate in the world. We need to take risks and connect with the whole community.

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ii. I heard two stories at a recent auction dinner. One person said they've been coming here for the last year. I had met them outside of church and reconnected at the Pride Festival last July. They said, "what are you here at the Pride Festival for?" And I said, "I'm here with my church." They've been coming since then and have been pleasantly surprised and delighted to find Unitarian Universalism. At that same dinner, someone shared that he and his wife were married in a UU church in Ohio. He knew nothing about Unitarian Universalism before that. He said that we are way too secretive about this good thing. Are we too scared about changing this good thing in our life? To make ourselves vulnerable to share what we love with other people? What if they don't like it or would like it to be a little different? Isn't that what is required of us?

iii. GN – If I can build on that, one of the things the Board has been thinking about and working on with your cooperation and congregational support is investing in this specific area. We need to explore new formats for worship, new formats for music, and creating a more multicultural environment. We don't know all the answers. Yet we need to ask really good questions. This summer Reverend Verdis Robinson will be joining us to help us begin that journey together. g. SH-Q: Gregory, what did you like about being President?

i. Wow. That's a trick question. I would like to start by saying, working with you. It has been . . . now I'm going to cry . . . I've had so many wonderful nurturing partnerships in my professional career. As a volunteer, you are the third minister I've been president of a congregation with. Oh, my gosh! I've had so much fun just talking to you, Rev. Shari. I've learned a lot. I think we've learned together. We've developed trust from the moment when you first arrived here. It hasn't been perfect. We continue to make stumble steps along the way. Just a quick show of hands. Which of you is perfect? Of course, we're not perfect, but I've had a perfectly amazing time working with you. The second thing I've enjoyed most is that the board has grown so well together. We've deepened our relationships. We've made our focus more strategic versus tactical. We focus on the future, not the moment. This is so important. I learned a lesson from my good friend John Solberg that the job of the Board is to help us think about what's coming next. And I'd like to think that another contribution as a board has been to give our amazing staff the room to run with innovative ideas and to lead the congregation.

h. SH-Q: it feels almost callous after that to say anything. But thank you, Gregory and the Board. There'll be time for more expressions of gratitude after the meeting. I'd like to name three things that I want everyone to have in mind about next year:

i. Rev. Verdis in the minister for growth position. I think what growth requires from each of us is to think about how we are together to deepen our souls. How can we do what we do differently? If Rev. Verdis brings a new musical offering to us, it doesn't mean it has to be everyone's cup of tea. It does mean that we need to make space for

it in our community. We grow our community spiritually by forming a denser web at the middle . . . a shout out to Amy Stockwell in the soul matters writing group for bringing me this language of a denser web from space

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exploration and how it applies to the connections that we form. We make a community strong through the connections we have with each other. That doesn't mean a whole bunch of connections with me. It means a whole bunch of connections with the people around you, so that it allows us to move out even further.

ii. In the coming year, we're going to emphasize covenant in our community. What are the promises we make to each other? It is the core spiritual practice of our collective. And so, what does that mean for us as a full community.

iii. Thirdly, I'll speak for myself. What is likely the last total solar eclipse that I will see in my lifetime is coming through the Rochester area April 8th of next year. Very cool. It means a lot of different things. It's THE spiritual event that is going to shape our year, and I'm really excited about it.

i. SH-Q and GN: Thank you for honoring us with your attention. Thank you all very much.

5. Elections – Leadership Nominating Committee Report and Elections

a. President (1-Year term) Lynn Kinsman - Approved

b. Clerk (2-yr term) Emily Clasper – Approved

c. 3 Trustees (3-year term) Keith Abel, Erin Collier, David Pinto – Approved

d. 1 Trustee (2-year term) Craig Lending - Approved

e. Farewell to outgoing Board of Trustees members:

i. John Farrell & Jon Horne, as well as Lynn Kinsman & Emily Clasper who are now officers.

ii. Gratitude expressed to continuing Board Members: Ken Buckle, Barbara Gawinski, Carl Olsen, Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz, Elise Wall & Treasurer Robert Lyubomirsky.

f. 2 Leadership Nominating Committee members (2-year term) Gabe Siftar, Nicole Delgrosso - Approved

g. Farewell to Outgoing Leadership Nominating Committee members:

i. Brownlee Field and Jenny Gaul

ii. Gratitude was expressed to continuing members Nancy Wesson and Kristina Williams.

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6. Budget July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024.

Treasurer Robert Lyubomirsky gives immense gratitude to Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan and to Director of Operations Florence Jessup who is responsible for all the background work for this budget presentation. This budget reflects our values, mission and ends.

a. 2023-24 Budget and motions

i. Approve senior minister's compensation:

Senior Minister Compensation	Current 2022- 2023 Budget	Proposed 2023- 2024 Budget
Salary + Housing	110,000	112,405
Professional Expenses	16,830	11,700
Total	126,830	124,105

i. Approve total budget

OPERATING INCOME	
Category	Proposed Budget 2023/24 (7/1/23-6/30/24)
Pledges Collected	\$ 680,000
Building Usage	\$ 50,000
Fund-Raising	\$ 15,000
Income Endowment Draw	\$ 335,534
Op Cash Reserve Draw	\$ 39,000
Other Income	\$ 73,000
Total	\$ 1,192,534

OPERATING EXPENSE	
Category	Proposed Budget 2023/24 (7/1/23-6/30/24)
Administrative & Finance	\$ 255,338
Building Operations	\$ 196,346
Denominational	\$ 65,269
Child Religious Education	\$ 98,162
Social Justice	\$ 5,227
Leadership/Governance	\$ 9,700
Congregational Care/Outreach	\$ 46,960
Worship, Music & Arts	\$ 105,707
Ministerial Staff	\$ 232,206
Staff Benefits	\$ 177,619
Total	\$ 1,192,534

MOTION: To approve the 2023-2024 Senior minister's compensation (Salary + Housing) & Professional Expenses in the amount of \$124,105

Motion from the Board does not require a second.

The motion was approved. Fifty-five + 17 online = 72. Two opposed and one abstention.

MOTION: To approve the 2023-24 Budget.

Motion from the Board does not require a second.

The motion was approved. Fifty-seven + 18 = 75. One opposed.

7. Funding for part time minister for growth. Sources of funding are all outside of the operating budget.

8. Bylaws Changes. Last year was the **first reading** of a motion from the Board of Trustees. It will be voted on this Congregational Meeting:

MOTION: To add clarifying language to bylaws Section 7.1.B. Leadership Nominating

Committee and to Section 6.5. Clerk as follows:

Section 7.1.B. Leadership Nominating Committee, insert a new second sentence to read: For the board of trustees, this includes three trustee positions of three years each (Bylaws Section 5.2.A.) and the remaining term of any trustee position that is open because of the resignation or death of a trustee (Bylaws Section 5.3.).

Section 6.5. Clerk, insert a new fourth sentence to read:

The clerk notifies the Leadership Nominating Committee, in a timely manner, of the number and terms of open positions and the number of years each current trustee and officer has served.

Motion approved.

9. Announcements:

- a. Encouraging attendance at the UUA General Assembly at the end of June.
- b. Retirements – Gregory North, President and Anne J. Perry, Clerk
- c. Gilbert Spirit Fund and Social Justice Grants Panel awards deadline was extended to June 20, 2023.

10. Adjourn.

Moved: David Friedman Second: Jonathan Kyle

There being no further business and with no objection, meeting adjourned at 12:43.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne J. Perry, Clerk