

From the Board – A Report on the December 13 Congregational Meeting

This summary was provided by Stuart D. Yoak, President of the Board of Directors.

The Agenda for the December 13, 2020 Congregational meeting is printed below. The meeting was recorded and the link to view it will be available soon.

The December 13 congregational meeting was an opportunity to hear reports from our ministers Rev. Macklin, Rev. Manvel Leite and Rev. Clements, as well as committee reports from Molly O'Donnell (Green Building), Anna Knust (Green Grounds), Libby DeVoe (Planned Giving), -Denise Ogren (Social Justice Funds), and Rich Slabach (Treasurer).

Special recognition was given by Rev. Macklin in honor of Libby's extraordinary accomplishments as she steps down as chair of the Planned Giving Committee. We honor Libby's dedication in leading the Planned Giving Committee and appreciate the importance this committee and all those who leave a legacy for the future generations of our church. Following her report and through the miracle of a virtual meeting, Libby was able to show us the bouquet of flowers that Rev. Leite left for her by the bird feeder in her front yard!

Rich Slabach's Treasurer's report documented that since the June 2020 congregational meeting, our church revenues have been consistently above expenses. This will enable us to increase wages and expenses in the budget for audio/visual support.

The motion to approve the December 2020-21 Budget was voted on and passed.

Following these reports, the remainder of the three-hour meeting was taken up with a discussion of whether our church should adopt the 8th Principle as proposed by Black Lives of UU.

1. Prior to the meeting, the text of the 8th Principle was distributed in the Prologue/Friday Update as follows:

"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

The motion presented at the Congregational Meeting, however, read as follows:

"We, the members the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

In keeping with the tradition of congregational polity in Unitarian Universalism, the revised text listed directly above accurately reflects that the members of our church would be adopting the 8th Principle.

2. There was additional discussion regarding the grammar and the wording of the 8th Principle. Concerns included it did not follow the structure of a principle, it was too vague, that the first seven principles already covered these issues, it did not cover additional kinds of oppressions, etc.

Responses included that our traditions as Unitarian Universalists are not fixed and must be responsive to new understanding; that adopting the 8th Principle would clearly identify our commitment to dismantling racism; that it is simply not enough to dismantle racism in ourselves. We must acknowledge and dismantle racism in our institutions. Adopting the 8th Principle would honor and clearly demonstrate our solidarity with Black Lives of UU, the group of Unitarian Universalists who proposed this principle.

Following the discussion, the vote to adopt the 8th Principle overwhelmingly passed.

Congregational Meeting Agenda
Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana
December 13, 2020; 4:00 p.m. – 5:30p.m.

CALL TO ORDER – Abby Gitlitz

- Chalice Lighting – Abby Gitlitz
- Introduction of Parliamentarian – Guy Loftman
- Motion “The Board of Director’s shall approve Congregational Meeting Minutes at a future Board Meeting.”

MINISTERS’ REPORTS

- Rev. Mary Ann Macklin, Senior Minister
- Rev. Emily Manvel Leite, Minister of Congregational Life and Religious Education
- Rev. Dave Clements, Interim Minister Consultant

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Green Building – Molly O’Donnell
- Green Grounds: – Anna Knust
- Planned Giving Committee – Libby DeVoe
- Social Justice Funds Report - Denise Ogren

TREASURER’S REPORT – Rich Slabach

- Vote to approve the December 2020-21 budget.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Quorum Report – At Large Member

NEW BUSINESS

- Motion to Approve Adoption of the 8th Principle – Abby Gitlitz
“We, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”
- Opening background information provided by At-Large Members of the Board: Julie Lawson, Jane McLeod, and Drew Schrader
- Discussion and Vote

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT- Stuart D. Yoak, President
SENIOR MINISTER'S CLOSING WORDS – Rev. Mary Ann Macklin
MOTION TO ADJOURN – Abby Gitlitz

Report by Stuart D. Yoak, President
Board of Directors
UUCB December 13, 2020 Congregational Meeting

At the June 2020 Congregational meeting, we recognized that the Covid19 pandemic confronted us with serious local, national, and world-wide challenges. Sadly, these challenges are still very much with us.

However, I hope that over these past months you have been found comfort and inspiration in the ministerial leadership and staff support that has enabled our church community to remain strong, vibrant, and safe.

We have so much to be thankful for.

The creative and inspiring leadership of our ministerial team:

- Senior Minister, Reverend Mary Ann Macklin, and Minister of Congregational Life and Religious Education, Reverend Emily Manvel Leite.
- Our semi-retired and ever active ministers emeritus Reverend Barbara Carlson and Reverend Bill Breeden, and friend of our congregation Reverend Barbara Child.
- And, the newest member of the ministerial team: Reverend Dave Clements, Interim Minister Consultant

Their spiritual and practical guidance through this time has been outstanding. They have held us together with their love, their wisdom, and their laughter.

And, their work would not be possible without our amazing staff who have found creative and successful ways to stay in touch with each other and with all of us.

Watching and working with our ministers and staff prior to the pandemic enabled me to see first-hand how important the informal and daily communications are among the ministers and staff, including the easy and unplanned ways they remind and support one another in their work for all of us.

As with all of us, the pandemic has distanced us to our individual home locations and turned our in-person gatherings into flat video screens.

And yet, under these seemingly impossible conditions, our ministers and staff developed new ways

- to stay in touch with one another,

- to keep the members and friends of our congregation in touch with one another, and
- to expand the ministry of this congregation to the local community and beyond.

On behalf of your Board of Directors I want to thank each one of our ministers and staff.

Our entire congregation has responded to the challenges of this pandemic with strength and creativity.

Your continued financial support and involvement in all of our work – from each small chalice circle, to all of the Task Forces and Committees, and to the amazingly creative efforts that resulted in a very successful fall Bazaar – it has all been outstanding.

A true affirmation of the collective engagement in the important work of this church.

As we close out 2020 and look ahead to a new year, there are so many people to recognize and to thank.

I want to close with two recognitions that are, for me, indicative of the future and the possibilities that lie ahead for our church.

First, an example from our creative and inspiring worship services.

On Sunday, October 25, Rev. Macklin, our ministerial team, and staff, along with members and friends from the local Bloomington community, supported by our truly out-of-this world audio/visual technicians, created

“Star Trek -- Inspiration for the 21st Century” worship service.

I hope many of you saw this service and, if not, it has been saved so you can stream it from our website.

This service with our ministers in Star Trek uniforms, with Rev. Leite speaking Klingon, with the Star Trek USS Enterprise flying over our city and landing on our parking lot complete, with a crew of dancers including our senior minister, was simply amazing from start to finish.

However, what makes this service – like many of our services – so very special is the response we had, following the service.

We received an email from a woman in Australia who watched the service and wanted to express her sincere gratitude for our church. She also wanted to tell us - not only how much it meant to her - but that she was sending the link to all her Facebook friends around the world.

One example of our mission “Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World”

My second recognition is to our growing membership

As a member of your Board of Directors, I have the privilege to represent our Congregation in welcoming new members into our church.

Ann LeDuc, our Connections Coordinator, organizes and leads these membership ceremonies throughout the year and now, of course, they are conducted virtually.

Since our last Congregational meeting in June, we have added 24 new members to our rolls.

Many of these new members have never actually set foot in our church building or attended an in-person worship service.

However, they have been touched by our online worship services and they have attended our virtual Newcomers Unitarian Universalism Class.

They bring their questions and their insights. They bring their skills and their willingness to participate and to be engaged with us. They bring new hopes and dreams to our congregational community.

An ongoing example of our mission of “Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World” in action.

We have so many blessings to be thankful for. And, for me, being a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bloomington with each one of you is truly a blessing.

Thank you all. I look forward to seeing you on zoom in the days and weeks ahead.

Stuart Yoak,
Congregational President