

DRAFT 12/04/2017

**ALL SOULS CHURCH, UNITARIAN
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING
December 4, 2016**

Call to order at 1:22 pm by Cledwyn Jones, Moderator.

Opening prayer and meditation led by Rev. Rebecca Parker.

PROCEEDINGS:

1. Confirmation of Quorum – Laurie Lester, Membership Secretary, confirmed a quorum.
2. Adoption of Rules and Agenda – Motions were passed to adopt rules and the agenda.
3. Approval of Minutes of 2015 Annual Meeting – Motion was passed to approve the minutes without change.
4. Senior Minister's Annual Report – Rev. Rob Hardies noted that we gather today in a world very different from last year, citing attendance on the Sunday following the presidential election at 1,602 – an all-time high for this church. During the course of the year, new initiatives included designating this church as a sanctuary church; agreeing to support a refugee family for one year; serving as a gathering place for local community activities for people of color; agreeing to explore means to support transgender and deaf and hard of hearing friends. He also cited the music program and vespers; the religious education program; coming of age groups (including offering free hugs after one service); and the upcoming Posada service with La Clinica del Pueblo.
5. Leadership Development Nominating Committee report – Liz Coit recognized members of the LDNC committee and acknowledged the resignations of Tim Rhodes and Valerie Briggs, each nominated for other positions. Liz noted that more than 22 persons completed the LDNC's leadership development course in 2016, and together with Erika Lindgren, encouraged registration in the next course beginning in January 2017.
 - a) Trustees - Liz then invited each candidate selected by the LDNC for the office of trustee to speak for one minute and to respond to questions: Russell Cross, Patricia Lambert, Tim Rhodes and Georgia Yuan. A motion to elect all four to the office of trustee was approved without dissent.
 - b) Officers – In the absence of any nominations from the floor, a motion to re-elect officers Cledwyn Jones (Moderator), John Strongman (Treasurer), Reeve Tyndall (Assistant Treasurer) and Laurie Lester (Membership Secretary) was approved without dissent. In the absence of any nominations from the floor for the office of Secretary, a motion to elect Valerie Briggs to that office was approved without dissent. In the absence of any nominations from the floor for the office of Assistant Secretary, it was noted that this office remains unfilled.

- c) LDNC members – In the absence of any nominations from the floor for LDNC members, a motion to elect nominees Victor Branham, Kerry Reichs, Chuck Wooldridge and Sophia Fisher was approved without dissent, and it was noted that the LDNC is still seeking one more member.
6. Financial Report – John Strongman presented the proposed 2017 budget and led the discussion. He noted that the 2016 financial result was positive, with the surplus helping to fund 2017. He advised that the board has taken a strong interest in financial oversight. In addition to the investment committee, which oversees the church’s endowments, and the audit committee, which ensures compliance with the church’s policies and oversees an audit every three years along with intermediate financial reviews, the church now has a five-person finance committee with broad oversight of fiscal management and long-term strategy.

John noted that although the 2016 financial result was positive with the surplus helping to fund 2017), he had concerns about expenses exceeding expectations.

John then presented the proposed 2017 budget and led the discussion. Factors affecting the 2017 budget include an expected increase in donations, pledges and contributions and proceeds from a spring fundraiser; lower investment income (with the UUA warning of a reduced distribution in 2017); rental income slightly lower due to the rental period ending mid-year; a mortgage beginning in April 2017 of \$95k; and increased maintenance costs (including sanctuary repainting and steeple repair, among others); income projected to be \$27k less than 2016 due to a \$19k reduction in rental income and \$58k less endowment income; fewer personnel.

With respect to the Third Century Challenge (TCC), total income, including bequests and grants in addition to pledge fulfillment (91% rate), is estimated at \$8.4 million. The cost estimate approved in March 2014 at \$10.4 million has now risen to \$11.1 million. The existing line of credit will be paid off in April 2017, and the debt refinanced with a mortgage of between \$2.5 and 3.25 million. John urged congregants to pay off TCC pledges before April to bring down the size of the fixed monthly payments. The mortgage will be paid out of TCC pledges, future unrestricted bequests and the annual operating budget. John noted that the board had passed a motion for unrestricted bequests to be applied either to pay off the mortgage or to be applied to capital expenses.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget, and discussion followed. A second motion that no funds be taken from the Beckner or Shively Funds was tabled by a vote of 53 in favor, 20 opposed. The motion to approve the budget passed.

7. Lay Leader Reports

- a) Membership Secretary – Laurie Lester reported on two major accomplishments: creation of the membership directory and a major clean-up of the membership rolls, resulting in 1,028 voting members and 1,257 not-voting members (members who had not made a financial gift during the preceding 18 months. She stressed the need for ongoing efforts to retain members.

- b) Board of Trustees – Peg Barratt, president, thanked those officers whose terms had ended, and John Strongman thanked Reeve Tyndall for his work. Peg recapped work of the board, including receiving annual monitoring reports from various committees (Finance, Audit, Investment, Personnel, Right Relations, Ministry and Governance); budget review; review of the governing process; allocation of unrestricted bequests; annual performance reviews and ensuring adherence to UUA pay guidelines. She indicated that the board would be developing a 5-year strategic plan in advance of the church’s 200th anniversary.
- c) Church Council – Cledwyn Jones noted that the council is “the home of shared ministry,” with more than 50 active committees. Council meetings have included themes such as reflections on shared ministry; recognizing empowerment and responsibility, and building beloved community. Special focus has been on committees connected to anti-racism work of the church. The council has undertaken goal setting and establishing metrics for measuring progress.

8. Building Renovations

Katie Loughary reported that certain renovation-related tasks related to renovations are pending, notably solar panels (for installation in the upcoming first quarter), securing storm water credits (forecast to take two years or so), steeple repair (with wrap costing \$90k – less expensive than feared – and good for at least five years, and a long-term plan to address full restoration before the 200th anniversary at a cost of at least \$2 million).

9. New Business/Open Forum

In response to the moderator’s invitation for questions:

- a) John Tambornino noted that four vision statements had been adopted at an annual meeting several years ago, but that only three appear to have been addressed. Cledwyn responded that the fourth was an action taken by the board related to the Third Century Challenge.
- b) Brendan Orsinger requested an update on efforts to provide American Sign Language interpretation. Rev. Rebecca Parker reported that she and church office manager Rose Eaton were actively working on a detailed proposal to resume ASL interpretation on Sunday mornings, and expected to present a revised proposal to secure seed money from the Beckner Fund to fund such services for 12 months.
- c) Emily Koechlin requested that the board provide draft agendas to the congregation and that it make an effort to provide minutes to the congregation in a timelier manner.
- d) Tracy Zorpette lauded the church’s strong social justice program, especially in its support of those potentially negatively affected by the incoming administration, including Muslims and people of color, and expressed the need to expand support to include women who have been victims of assault and low income women in need of reproductive care.

- e) Eric Hoy pointed out that a question raised earlier in the meeting about background checks had not been addressed because it was deemed irrelevant to the financial discussion and that discussion on this matter was needed. Referring to the action earlier in the meeting to table a motion that no funds be taken from the Beckner Fund, he expressed concern that such an action had the effect of squelching relevant discussion.
- f) Paul Bailey expressed concern that the church was renting space to a charter school and could be seen as expressing support for charter schools over public schools. He commented that half of DC children are educated in charter schools, and they are not all created equal.
- g) Carrie Davidson, referring to the issue of background checks, pointed out that the question was whether the church could use federal background checks as a substitute for the current method. Katie Loughary responded that the church uses a low-cost system that she likes, and that she was not interested in expanding ways to perform background checks.

The moderator invited the congregation to share other ideas with him after the meeting.

Following a closing prayer by Rev. Rob, the meeting was adjourned at 3:38 pm.

Minutes submitted by Mary Swanson, 2017 board secretary, based on notes taken by 2016 Board Assistant Secretary Allison Ralph.