

DRAFT MINUTES
All Souls Church, Unitarian
Congregational Meeting
December 7, 2014, 1:07 p.m.

Call to Order, Brian Marshall, 2014 Board of Trustees President

Opening Prayer and Meditation (The Rev. Robert Hardies)

Meeting Administration

Moderator Erika Landberg assumed the role of chair.

Introduction of the parliamentarian, Cledwyn Jones, and timekeeper, Dori Phelps.
Meeting rules explained.

Quorum achieved. 95 were required (10 percent of membership); 135 attended.

Motion to adopt rules and agenda. Passed by voice vote. **Motion**, seconded, to approve minutes of the December, 2013 congregational meeting minutes. Approved by voice vote.

Motion to approve minutes of the March, 2014 congregation meeting, with correction of a misspelled name. Seconded; approved by voice vote.

Opening Statements and Reports

–**Rob Hardies**: Much of the year was devoted to renovating our spiritual home. He recognized important roles played by the Comprehensive Assets Planning Team, the Construction Oversight Task Force, and Executive Director Katie Loughary. Strategic enhancements to the worship service included African-inspired drummers; a bluegrass band; expanded Children’s Choir, adjustments to the Story for All Ages and child dedications, and a multigenerational Coming of Age service. Voting rights advocacy took All Souls members to North Carolina for a march in Raleigh and canvassing in Mecklenburg County, which saw increased voter turnout. A flash mob on the U.S. Supreme Court steps was viewed by 13,000 on the web. “A prophetic voice was heard out in the world.” Clark Olsen, who survived the 1965 attack in Selma, Ala. that killed former All Souls minister James Reeb, recalled that era during a special service. Members also conducted a Heiwa Peace Pilgrimage to Japan. All Souls was voted the best house of worship in the district by City Paper readers, who named Rob Hardies the best religious leader. The coming year will see a new church effort to expand affordable housing and a reciprocal visit by Heiwa partners from Japan.

–**Anne Bradley, Membership Secretary**: All Souls drew 159 new members; 84 left; four died; total membership stands at 1,380. Voting membership dropped by 10 to 957, indicating that not all who join are contributing financially.

–**Brian Marshall, Board of Trustees President:** The Board approved creation of a new Chief Program Officer position; appointed a Right Relations Committee to help resolve intra-church conflicts; studied a biennial review of the ministry conducted by the Committee on Ministry; reviewed goals reports from the Church Council Steering Committee; took responsibility for construction oversight, appointing a task force that includes two engineers. A 2015 balanced budget, a cornerstone of All Souls’ financial future, reflects a great deal of spending restraint and a responsible 5 percent distribution from the endowment. The Board is devoted to expanding annual giving, making an effort to visit one-third of All Souls households. The Board backed an approach to anchor tenants, including the Church of the Advent and a long-term school lease. The board also met its obligation to have a clean audit every three years. He thanks members for cooperation, support, and for sticking together. [Erika Landberg commends Brian for stellar service, prompting applause.]

–**Erika Landberg, Church Council Chair:** The main areas of focus for the Council in 2014 were: Council meeting agendas aligned with the interests and needs of lay leaders, Officers and Staff; Leadership Development initiatives; and the church's Visioning Goals. The major themes covered in this year's Council meetings were Intercultural Communication, Shared Ministry, and Goal Setting. Leadership Development initiatives included staffing the Engaging All Souls in Service (EASIS) table in Pierce Hall each Sunday, and collaborating with the Nominating Committee to conduct the annual Leadership Course. The Council Steering Committee has the primary responsibility for collecting data and providing two Goal Progress Reports a year to the Board of Trustees.

Ministerial Ordinations -- Nadine Dutcher, Mary Rojas, Committee on Ministry: Both enthusiastically endorsed the application to be ordained at All Souls of Catharine Clarenbach, former Assistant Secretary, Interim Minister and Coordinator of Pastoral Care; and Abbey Tennis, former Intern Minister and initiator of the Vespers Service. Catharine, whose ordination is set for April 19, 2015, hopes to be involved in a small church in the west and broaden her experience and advocacy. Abbey wants to serve an urban church. Her ordination will be February 28, 2015. Congregant Meredith Higgins-Hargrave notes that financial contributions will be needed – above members’ annual pledges.

Motion by Mary Rojas to approve the ordination of Catharine Clarenbach, seconded by Fred Tipson. Approved by voice vote.

Motion by Mary Rojas, seconded by Emily Koechlin, to approve the ordination of Abbey Tennis. Approved by voice vote.

Goals Progress Report – Cledwyn Jones, Leo Jones: The fourth year of progress toward 12 measurable goals saw robust activity in social justice, including the Reeb Project and Supreme Court flash mob; training for Caring Souls; strong participation in the Weekend on the Bay and Vespers; and growth of the music program. Unique challenges required attention: Adult spiritual development was hampered by construction; membership and attendance flattened; staff turnover. There’s a need to renew commitment to diversity and outreach to reach a goal of 30 percent nonwhite membership (now 25 percent). Questions arise: Are we collecting data that

inform decision-making and drive action? Are the goals clear, measurable and attainable? How can we gather data more efficiently? Tools and training are needed.

Third Century Challenge

- **Tom Fox, chair, Construction Oversight Committee:** Praise for Katie Loughary's "fabulous job" of keeping everything going. Congregation gives Katie a standing ovation. Construction is ahead of schedule and should be finished by February. The elevator is functioning. Besides essential envelope repairs, improvements include lower level classrooms with skylights, offices and bathrooms; reuse of storm water and other sustainability enhancements; Harvard Street gathering space; patio; a new accessible entry; plumbing; electrical work, lighting. The original \$10.3 million budget could rise to as much as \$11.5 million because of the kitchen renovation as well as some blips. The bell tower and steeple were found to have loose mortar and are unsafe. Until money is found for repairs, the tower and steeple will have to be wrapped. Additional electrical work was needed for safety, along with removal of hazardous material. We've had a wonderful relationship with the construction firm and architect. It's been a great experience.

- **Fundraising Update – Laura Lester, Taryn Null:** Of the \$8.5 million in pledges, 61 percent has so far been paid, with \$3.3 million outstanding. About 300 pledges are 99 or 100 percent fulfilled, while 31 have yet to pay anything. It's important for us to know what to expect, so if members are having trouble keeping up, they should be forthright about their need to restructure payments. We also need to make sure new members are invested and give. Once a building is finished, people feel fundraising ends; we need everybody often, always, and forever.

- **Financing Update – Bob Bonner, chair of Investment Committee:** Pledge fulfillment is needed by March 2017, when the construction loan converts to a mortgage. With total fulfillment, there would be a slight shortfall in April 2016 and again in April 2017. Fulfillment below \$8.5 million or project cost above \$11 million will require additional funds. The Board asked the committee to look at bridge financing from the endowment. A good source would be an internal loan from the \$650,000 Holmwood Fund, which is intended for the building and grounds, repaid at a 5 percent interest rate. This would add to budget stress. Other issues: The Shively, Beckner, and Holmwood funds have not kept pace with inflation. Future large mortgage payments - \$150,230 per year – require careful long-range planning.

Financial Report and Budget Review – Cheryl Gray and Katie Loughary: There has been careful stewardship with a lot of eyes on church funds. No one should leave with a sense of panic. 2014 ends with close to a balanced budget, with total expenses at their lowest in quite a few years. Good bequests include the Pfeiffer legacy, which will bring in \$80,000 a year. However, core donations are at their lowest since 2009, placing stress on the annual budget. We've been conservative in estimating 2015 donations. Rentals will increase income, but there will be higher personnel costs with a full staff and 2 percent COLA. Program operating expenses

will go up. The 2015 budget provides a 75 percent payment to the Unitarian Universalist Association and 100 percent for the Joseph Priestley District.

During questions, Chuck Shields wondered why the budget didn't specifically include the Pfeiffer distribution (it's included in the revenue estimate); another member asked why religious education and music program budgets don't match the pie chart that breaks down spending. The reason is that building and overhead are allocated across programs. The questioner urged that the allocations be made public. Eric Hoy voiced concern about the values of charter schools who may become tenants. While the initial tenant would be D.C. International School, which needs eighth grade classrooms, All Souls is looking at a 5-7-10-year agreement with Building for Hope, which helps charter schools find space. Eric: "That only increases my concern."

Motion by Tom Fox, seconded by Jim Heltman, to approve the 2015 Budget. Approved by voice vote with one audible "No."

Rob Hardies: New and increased pledges are needed to meet \$500,000 in added renovation costs. "Talk to me about increasing your pledge in a way that inspires others."

Bylaws Amendments – Susan Crim, co-chair, Nominating Committee: The main proposed change would alter the name of the Nominating Committee to reflect its expanded mission. Article XII, Section 1 would now read: "Committee Establishment and Purpose: There shall be a Leadership Development and Nominating Committee (LDNC). The LDNC shall oversee leadership development programs and conduct the search and nomination process for Trustees and Officers." Section 3 would spell out the role of "[w]orking with the Church Council, Board, and Executive Team to identify leadership gaps and recruit new and emerging leaders; and cultivating and developing new lay leaders by, among other things, providing training, workshops, and individual outreach." Elsewhere, there are changes to improve organization, grammar, and consistency. A brief discussion arose over a change that would put the committee in charge of the nomination process *up to* instead of *through* the annual meeting.

Erika Landberg commended the effort by Susan and others.

Motion, seconded, to approve the bylaws changes. Approved by voice vote without opposition.

Brian Marshall assumed the chair for Election of Trustees, Officers

Susan Crim, Morgan Duncan, Nominating Committee: Other members of the committee are asked to stand. The committee plans to repeat its Leadership for a New Era course in the spring. For the 2015 slate, it met with the board president and other current leaders, held a leadership social attended by 50, asked all interested to submit a resume, checked references, and conducted interviews.

Nominees for the Board of Trustees

- Ken Ambrose: He has found at All Souls a compatible "community of spiritual explorers"; met his wife Jennifer at Weekend on the Bay; service on the Comprehensive Assets

Planning Team was one of the best projects of his life; he seeks to be guided by the watchwords “compassion, collaboration, and communication”; program evaluation and managing change are part of his professional life.

- Peg Barratt: She’s a lifelong UU; was active in a lay-led UU fellowship in Madison, Wis. when her older boys were small; All Souls has been a spiritual anchor. Her youngest son, Nick, started coming at 8 and continued through Coming of Age; she gained administrative experience over six years as dean of Arts and Sciences at George Washington University and is now ready to invest time, energy, and her background at All Souls.
- Chuck Dulaney (not present): He and his wife Donna, who introduced him to Unitarianism soon after they met in 1976, after retiring in the Washington area, they joined All Souls in 2011. Soon thereafter, Chuck and Donna led the annual giving campaign. He has a background in K-12 administration and had a leadership role in North Carolina UU churches.

Brian Marshall asked if there are nominations from the floor. There were none.

Motion, seconded, to approve the three Board nominees. Approved by voice vote.

Nomination of Officers: incumbents Cheryl Gray, Treasurer; Anne Bradley, Membership Secretary; Erika Landberg, Moderator; Mark Matthews, Secretary; Uta Allers, Assistant Treasurer.

- First-time Nominee for Assistant Secretary, Allison Ralph: When she was preparing to move to Washington, a North Carolina pastor said she’d have to go to All Souls and join the choir, which she did. She’s pursuing a Ph.D. at Catholic University, specializing in early Christianity and the history of religious justification of violence. “As a doctoral student, I have a lot of a specific kind of organizational experience: I take a grand, nebulous idea, and break it down into smaller pieces, then ask the right questions and follow through to be able to fill in each of those pieces. I’m excited to help in the work of All Souls, because I think I can help take our giant, nebulous ideas and put them into peaceful yet effective action with the same kind of organizational skills.”

There were no nominations from the floor.

Motion, seconded, to elect the officers’ slate. Approved by voice vote.

Nominees to the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee – Church Council; Erika Landberg, chair. The committee totals 15, with staggered terms. Remaining from 2014: Janine Chambers, Susan Crim, Elizabeth Coit, Marlana Valdez, George Reid; Morgan Duncan. **Today’s vote** – Nine new members: For 2015-2016, Marean Duarte, Sterling Lloyd, Thurman H. Rhodes, Sr., Lisa Swanson. For 2015-2017, Jennifer Ambrose, Jen Bolick, Jennifer DuMond, Tom Fox, Will Hayes.

There were no nominations from the floor.

Motion, seconded, to elect the new members. Approved by voice vote.

Julia Sayles, outgoing Trustee, presented Brian Marshall with a chalice as a token of appreciation for presiding over the Board this year. Applause for Brian.

The Rev. Susan Newman Moore, Associate Minister, delivered the closing prayer.

The meeting ended at 3:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Matthews, Secretary