

Unitarian Church of Lincoln Spring Congregational Meeting, May 20, 2018

At the door, members received an Annual Report packet that included: an agenda; Covenant of Right Relations; Minutes of the Spring Congregational Meeting 2017; Board of Trustees candidate statements and ballot; Share the Plate Nominations descriptions and ballot; Governance Organizational Model chart; Bylaws changes; Key Leader annual reports (Minister's, Director of Religious Growth and Learning, Treasurer's and Member Loan); and Committee Descriptions and Annual Reports (AV, Building, Friendly Faces, Grounds, Church Kitchen, Leadership Development, Membership Umbrella, Religious Growth and Learning, Worship Associates). The Board of Trustees Annual Report was inadvertently left out of the packet.

Call to Order and Welcome – Board of Trustees President Kristi Wamstad-Evans called the meeting to order at 11:22 a.m.

Covenant of Right Relations—Kristi read the Covenant of Right Relations, in adherence to the intention to make the Covenant prominent in the life of the church.

Quorum—A quorum was declared to be present. The count of people who checked in was 99.

Consideration of Minutes—It was pointed out that Charles Stephen was misspelled in the Winter Congregational Meeting Minutes of December 10, 2017, after which it was realized that this document was not in the member packet. Other agenda items were dealt with while the appropriate document was prepared and handed out. The December minutes were considered later in the program after Reports, but are included here. After providing time for comments on the Dec. 10 Winter Congregational Meeting Minutes, *without hearing any objections, Kristi declared that the minutes stood approved as corrected.*

Voting Topics

Board of Trustee Elections

Kathy Disney of the Nominations Committee presented the five nominees for Board of Trustees and had them introduce themselves: Burt Smith, Colleen Kadleck, Tricia Monzon, Dan Payzant and Denise Debose.

Sue Brauer moved and Bob Egan seconded to vote by ballot for BOT nominees. The motion passed by show of cards. The vote was tallied, and it was announced later that Denise Debose, Dan Payzant and Colleen Kadleck were elected to the Board of Trustees.

Share the Plate Selections

LauraLee Woodruff moved and Peg Pelter seconded to vote by ballot for Share the Plate recipients. The motion passed by show of cards. The final tally was announced later that the following were selected to be Share the Plate recipients:

- Fresh Start Home for Women
- Planned Parenthood of the Heartland
- Yazidi Cultural Center
- Voices of Hope
- Camp Summergold
- Center for Legal Immigration Assistance
- ACLU Nebraska—Campaign for Smart Justice
- Youth/Young Adult to General Assembly, MidWest Leadership School or Regional Assembly
- Center for the People in Need
- Food Net

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Program Council Model Vote

Charles Coley, Program Council Chair, provided an overview of the budgeting and communication processes that were developed and used by the Program Council while instituting the provisional Program Council model over the past year.

Kristi called for a motion to consider the Program Council model, in order to open the topic for discussion. *Kathy Disney moved and Evelyn Weymouth seconded to consider the Program Council model. The motion passed by show of cards.* The discussion for considering whether to adopt the Program Council Model is captured here:

Sandra Washington and Chelsea Krafka asked for comments on the greatest accomplishments and challenges of the Program Council.

Kristi singled out the budget process as both a great challenge and accomplishment. Liaisons worked hard to reach out to all within their clusters to make the budget process work. However, one liaison was not able to provide the necessary leadership for one cluster. On the other hand, the Program Council instituted a process to replace a liaison in such circumstances, which is seen as a positive development. There were instances where we needed more communication between the Board of Trustees and Program Council. An understanding was reached early in the process that the Program Council would deal with day-to-day work of the congregation, thus freeing the Board of Trustees to focus on its appropriate function of handling policies, finances and vision-setting.

Charles saw major strengths of the Program Council in enhancing staff relationships and putting together the budgeting process. Charles agreed that the work of the Program Council in focusing on the Ministry of the church allowed the Board of Trustees to “be what it should be.” The Program Council also accomplished putting together a policy manual based largely on policies of the previous Management Teams. Oscar Sinclair pointed out that success of the Program Council resulted from the clusters working together every month.

Concern was expressed that the organizational chart of the Program Council model is not in total agreement with the Bylaws. Kristi and Megan McGuffey noted that the Bylaws are the ultimate authority and override the chart. The use of single arrows in the chart were thought to be confusing in cases where the single arrow seems to indicate a hierarchical relationship that does not exist, such as between the personnel committee and staff. Megan said that the chart would be tweaked to better coincide with the Bylaws. Kristi said that a note would be placed on the chart to indicate that the Bylaws override the chart.

Confusion was expressed regarding the use of the term “executive”, a term that, according to Christine Starr Davis, referred to the Management Team in the past. In response, Kristi pointed out that Section 7.6 of the Bylaws clearly defines the members and duties of an “executive committee,” which is totally different from the membership and duties of the previous Management Team. [Clarifying note by the Secretary: The Program Council, not the executive committee, replaces the Management Team].

Denise Dickenson noted that the structure of communication is simple in the Program Council Model. As an Open Circle leader, Denise reports to a liaison who reports to the Program Council Chair.

Kristi asked for a show of cards to move the question. Members voted in favor of moving the question.

The congregation voted by show of cards whether to adopt the Program Council Governance Model. None were opposed. One abstained. The rest were in favor. The Program Council Governance Model was thus approved.

Congregational Bylaws Changes

Kristi pointed out the main change to the bylaws since the May 13 Town Hall Meeting: A reference to the “Covenant of Right Relations” was added in the membership Section 5.2.a. of the bylaws to read: “Members shall read and understand the Covenant of Right Relations, adopted by the Congregation, which describes our expectations for how we treat each other and engage with those in the broader community.”

Kristi asked for a motion to consider the Bylaws changes. *Christine Starr Davis moved and Pam Wakeman seconded to consider the Bylaws changes. The motion passed by show of cards.* The discussion for considering whether to adopt the changes to the Bylaws is captured here:

KK Munson asked why the Covenant of Right Relations was placed under section 5.2 rather than under Article 3 that includes another covenant. Kristi responded that the Governance Task Force conformed to the way that other churches handled the same question by keeping the text of this type of covenant out of the Bylaws. Since the Covenant of Right Relations is a specific covenant guiding our personal interactions within the congregation, it is different than the broad covenant in Article 3 that reflects the congregation’s goals in relationship to the larger community.

Christine Starr Davis identified herself as the person who suggested putting the text of the “Covenant of Right Relations” into Article 3 or into a preamble of the Bylaws. She remarked that the way it is included in the proposed change as a part of membership is really helpful. Richard Little pointed out that the purpose for including a reference to the “Covenant of Right Relations” as part of membership is a way of highlighting it for new members. The Board of Trustees is also committed to making the Covenant more prominent on the church’s website.

Bob Shipley said that we might be setting ourselves up for problems by removing Robert’s Rules of Order from the text of Section 6.5. Jamie Radcliffe shared Bob’s concern, saying there may be situations in which we need to invoke a Bylaw that specifies the need to use Robert’s Rules of Order. Kristi replied that Section 6.5 does not eliminate Robert’s Rules, but rather refers to a congregational meeting administration policy that can specify Robert’s Rules for governing meetings. Christine Starr Davis suggested that it might help to capitalize the congregational meeting administration policy. However, Kristi had responded to feedback to keep references to policies in lower case. Others argued for flexibility for the congregation to develop other methods. Sandra Washington appreciated the attachment of many who have grown up using Robert’s Rules. However, the Rules can be limiting to discussion. The Rules are culturally structured in a European Model. Sandra thought we could do better. KK Munson agreed with Sandra, in that Robert’s Rules prevent methods that might lead to greater agreement (rather than just a mere majority). Kristi called for any member to join a task force to write this policy.

Alan Worth expressed concern that there is no mention of the Lincoln Unitarian Foundation in the Bylaws or in the organizational chart. Kristi answered that LUF is within the Finance Team. Section 13.3 defines the Finance Team and references the Financial Model that delineates the relationship between LUF and the Board of Trustees. The Financial Model was accompanied by a chart that depicts this relationship.

Tom Winter wondered why we were not presented with a Bylaws document that shows where the changes were made. Kristi responded that we distributed documents for comparing proposed and current bylaws at Town Halls and took input frequently over the past month. A printed document with tracked changes would have been difficult to read, with many extra pages. Evelyn Weymouth pointed out that the proposed Bylaws document is a complete re-write, and to have the old Bylaws in the packet

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would have created confusion. Kristi noted that if we don't approve the Bylaws, we would have to insert references to the Program Council into the old Bylaws.

Sandra Washington called attention to a procedural problem. Sandra understood that a year ago when we decided to test the model for a year, we had also decided that when we finally approve the Program Council Model we would confirm the PC Chair for another two years. Mary Sommermeyer noted that the 2017 Spring Congregational Minutes did not specify a term for the Program Council Chair. The minutes read: "details are expected to be codified by the 2018 Spring Congregational Meeting." Kristi and Megan McGuffey had interpreted this to mean that the codified details will become policy. Charles accepted the position as a three-year position based on materials that Megan had prepared for the 2017 Spring Congregational Meeting. Megan admitted that we lacked clarity at the meeting; nevertheless, institutional memory is important and would be lost if we did not affirm Charles for another two years. Kristi pointed out that she could do nothing at this point to fix the perceived procedural problem, since changing the agenda to include a vote for Program Council Chair would require two weeks lead-time. Megan said that a vote for the Bylaws changes would be a vote for affirming Charles Coley's 3-year term as Program Chair as codified in the Bylaws.

Kristi asked for a show of cards to move the question. Members voted in favor of moving the question.

The congregation voted by show of cards whether to adopt changes to the Bylaws. None were opposed. Two abstained. The rest were in favor. The changes to the Bylaws were thus approved.

Reports to the congregation

Board Of Trustees Report

Kristi Wamstad-Evans, president of the BOT, highlighted two major BOT accomplishments over the past year: A financial review was completed, with no recommendations for changes in our accounting methods. Revisions were made to Bylaws and Policies. Kristi thanked outgoing BOT members Keith McGuffey and Amy Birky for their service to the church.

Program Council Report

Charles Coley, Program Council Chair, having presented earlier, added that the Program Council fostered leadership development, as exemplified by Denise Debose's year of service as a liaison leading to her current election to the Board of Trustees. Several people stood when Charles asked for all previous Management Team members to stand and be recognized.

Minister's Report

Accomplishments outlined in Oscar's written report included: regularly using Soul Matters theme-based worship material in leadership meetings; changing the default order of service; establishing Committee on Ministry; posting of sermons as audio files on the church webpage; attending or facilitating several retreats, workshops and seminars; conducting staff reviews; and leading staff planning.

Oscar said that each year of a parish minister is defined by a question. This year the question was "What key does this door open?" For the coming year the question is "Where do we go?" Oscar was excited that a new membership database software and app will take the place of a hard copy membership directory. Oscar opened the floor for questions. Jackie Egan wondered how many new members joined in the past year. Keith McGuffey quickly replied "17". Michelle Dobszewicz inquired about ideas for new ways for worship. Oscar requested that members vote on a survey that is circulating on this topic.

Treasurer's Report

Duncan Case referred to his one-page annual report which highlighted: creating a Finance Team; receiving high marks in the financial review prepared by HBE accounting firm; codifying goals and structure of Reserve Funds (with a growing General Reserve Fund with authorization to increase the amount to \$30,000 over the next three years); and developing a Gift Intake process and form. A supplemental document shows the current status of church accounts for May, with income at 45% and expenses at 39% of budget at 33% of the year's passage. [More detail on monthly Treasurer's Reports can be found in Board of Trustees minutes].

Dorothy Ramsey, who has done a remarkably fine job as Vice Treasurer for the past year, will succeed Duncan as Treasurer in June for a two-year term.

Member Loans Report

Mary Sommermeyer, Assistant Treasurer for Member Loans and Capital Funds, detailed the status of Member Loans. From December 2013 through March 2015, UCL borrowed \$430,000 from church members to help finance renovations funded by a capital campaign of which \$155,000 is yet to be paid back. Of the \$185,000 made available from Judy Cole's bequest for matching congregation funds to pay back loans, \$60,000 remains. Of the \$96,870 collected as donations to match Judy Cole's funds to pay back loans, \$26,870 remains. Estimated future receipts from pledges to this fund are \$63,600. Of \$64,029 (from a starting point in 1-1-17) of carried-over capital campaign and mortgage pledge funds, \$8,465 remains. Interest payments are scheduled to total \$6,091.88. Line-of-credit renewal fees are estimated at \$260. The line of credit with Union Bank, which would expire June 15, 2018, is being extended for two years.

Jackie Egan called out applause for Duncan Case for his successful service as Treasurer. Harry Heafer called out applause for Mary Sommermeyer, who has been handling member loans for 6 years.

Director of Religious Growth and Learning Report

Chelsea Kafka highlighted the following accomplishments from her written Annual Report: collaborated with Oscar Sinclair for an All Ages Bridging Ceremony for UU seniors; directed a "White Supremacy Teach-In" for our RGL program; hired Lindsay Bartlett as Preschool Lead Teacher; hired Medora Jones as Summer Ingathering Leader; conducted a successful canned food hunt; hired Ashleigh Fuson as Youth in Action leader after resignation of Liz Bonney-Heerman; and directed Adult/child switch Sunday program. Chelsea has taken on a new role of defining the roles of new hires. Not included in the written report are plans to schedule a 30-session middle school OWL class, as well as OWL classes for high school students and adults. This is Chelsea's 8th year. Chelsea looks forward to the possibility of a sabbatical to finish her master's degree, with a thesis closely related to her job as RGD.

Closing Words

After considering the previous congregational meeting minutes (see above), Linda Brown, incoming Board of Trustees President, expressed deep gratitude to Kristi for bringing the Bylaws changes to closure during her tenure as president.

Adjournment

Receiving no objections, Kristi adjourned the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

V4 Draft Submitted on May 23, 2018 by Richard Little, BOT secretary