

Unitarian Church of Lincoln Spring Congregational Meeting Sunday, May 19, 2019, 11:35 a.m.

Ninety-three members checked in at the sign-in table and received meeting materials. Each member who checked in received a packet containing the Annual Report, a Board of Trustees ballot, a Share the Plate ballot and laminated green, yellow and red cards for Modified Consensus Voting.

Board of Trustees President Linda Brown opened the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Opening Song: Julie Enersen, interim choir director.

Chalice Lighting: Jamie Radcliffe

Voting Topics

Unitarian Church of Lincoln Modified Consensus Voting

Kristi Wamstad explained the Modified Consensus Voting process, which she described as a process in which “we are all sharing with one another and engaging in decision-making.” Members use green, yellow or red cards in this voting process. Modified Consensus Voting, first introduced at the December 2018 Congregational Meeting, will replace Robert’s Rules of Order if the congregation votes for it.

Kristi’s summary of Modified Consensus Voting:

First, a facilitator introduces, in five minutes or less, the proposal to be voted on. Second, the floor is open for anyone who would like to ask clarifying questions. Third, there is a straw poll. In the straw poll, members use either the green card (to indicate they are leaning to agree) or the red card (to indicate they are leaning to block the proposal). Those who are leaning to block bring up their disagreement(s) with the proposal. The congregation discusses how to address these concerns and the proposal may be modified accordingly. Then there is a Test for Agreement on the modified proposal: At this time, members hold up either a green card (I support the proposal and I am willing to help implement it), a yellow card (I have reservations but I am willing to let the proposal pass), or a red card (I have a fundamental disagreement with the proposal).

The discussion is reopened to see if there is a path forward. After the discussion and, possibly, further modification of the proposal, there is another Test for Agreement. Green and yellow cards are counted as being for the proposal; red cards are counted as being against the proposal. The majority decides.

A member pointed out that with both Robert’s Rules of Order and Modified Consensus Voting, the majority rules. Kristi responded that the discussion and decision-making processes are different with Modified Consensus Voting.

Board of Trustees President Linda Brown asked the congregation to vote, by a show of cards, whether to adopt Modified Consensus Voting: All the cards raised were green.

Approval of 12/9/2018 Congregational Meeting Minutes

Linda made a correction to the 12/9/2018 Congregational Meeting minutes. The minutes referred to a quorum as 80 members. Our quorum, she noted, is 20 percent of membership, which would be 60. The minutes, with correction, were approved by Modified Consensus Voting.

Board of Trustees Election

There are three nominees for three open seats. They are Trevor Jones, Lori Straatmann and Michael Krumm. (Trevor Jones was appointed to the Board of Trustees in January to fill the unexpired term of Rich Little.)

Karen Dienstbier, chair of the Nominations Committee, said she was very pleased with the slate of candidates. She explained the process for arriving at these candidates: The committee invited a number of members to attend a question/answer session with the Board of Trustees several months ago to learn about board work. A number of those who attended considered whether it was the right time for them to join the board. Three decided yes. "These are very good candidates for the board," Karen said. "We are in good shape." She noted that several potential candidates who would be interested in serving on the board are currently heavily involved in other work at the church, which they would like to finish before considering serving on the board.

Members voted via paper ballots, which were collected by volunteers.

Share the Plate Voting

Members voted, by paper ballot, for 10 non-profit organizations to be recipients of our church's monthly Share the Plate collection during the next year. In all, 20 organizations had been nominated. These ballots were collected by volunteers.

Musical interlude: Julie Enersen, interim choir director.

Reports

Signage Task Force Proposal

Colleen Kadleck, Board of Trustees member who co-chairs the Signage Task Force, outlined the options the task force is considering to replace the church's sign on A Street.

At the start of her presentation, paper forms asking for feedback from members were passed out to each member. Another paper, with a grid comparing the three sign options, was also passed out.

Coleen said the Signage Task Force will make a recommendation to the board by fall and the board will bring its decision to the congregation for a vote at the December Congregational Meeting.

Examples of each type of sign were projected onto the screen as Colleen described the options:

Sign #1: Gives the name of the church, would require minimal maintenance, and has an estimated price of \$9,000.

Sign #2: Includes the name of the church and four lines of 4-inch letter that are changed manually (like the current Wayside Pulpit) on each side, and has an estimated cost of \$11,000.

Sign #3: Includes the name of the church and an electronic panel for announcements and events. It allows for dynamic displays and multiple messages. Messages are changed remotely via software. The estimated cost is \$32,000 to \$50,000.

Colleen pointed out that city code allows only one sign, so the current sign would have to be removed when a new one is added. She also said the cost of the new sign is not part of our budget and would require fundraising.

She also emphasized that the signs projected onto the screen were not necessarily the actual sign we would have but are examples of each category of sign. Colleen encouraged feedback and said she is collecting feedback sheets (passed out at the meeting and available in the church office or from her) through June 2. Members providing feedback can email her or can turn in the feedback sheets to the church office or to her.

In response to member questions, Colleen provided the following information:

All three signs are two-sided.

Sign #3 would be under warranty for seven years but probably would last longer. Individual panels, rather than the whole sign, can be replaced as needed.

When we apply for a permit for the new sign, the city will come out and inspect and will not allow us to keep both a sign and a banner, as we currently have.

The new sign will be approximately where the Wayside Pulpit is now; this site has electricity.

The current sign is barely standing up. The posts holding it up are rotted. A video of this was shown at the December congregational meeting.

The church's name on the sign is a permanent part of the sign.

There are city restrictions on light pollution. An electronic sign would have to be turned off at a certain time and it would be programmed to do that.

The signage task force has not consulted the church's neighbors regarding our sign options.

In response to a member's question, Harry Heafer, chair of Building and Grounds and a member of the Signage Task Force, said Sign #1 would be aluminum and plastic with LED lights, sign #2 would be brick, plastic and aluminum with LED lights, and sign #3, with electronic components and LED lights, would have the most environmental impact.

Minister's Report

The Rev. Oscar Sinclair referred the congregation to his report in the Annual Report they received. He emphasized the following accomplishments:

- Implementing the Realm database
- Adding a service on the third Thursday evening of the month
- Relaunching adult religious education programming
- Updating all job descriptions, employment agreements and personnel policies
- Forging new and deepening connections in the Lincoln community.

Realm Database: Oscar encouraged all members to fill out their member profile in Realm, which puts the congregational database in the cloud, making it accessible to any member, remotely.

Congregants can log in and update their contact information as well as obtain contact information for fellow members. Oscar pointed out that Realm also allows each member to monitor his or her own pledge/donation history. In response to a member's question about security, Oscar said Realm is as encrypted as our other communications in the church. The only way to get in is to have log-in credentials. We are not a huge target for hacking, he said. If you want people's personal info, there are databases much more valuable than ours.

Third Thursday Services: These services use a slightly different format, Oscar said, often including the A Street band, and are an opportunity to play with the written and spoken word. Sixty people attended the last Third Thursday service. He said he hopes to do a Third Thursday type of service on one Sunday this fall, to introduce it to more members of the congregation.

Adult Religious Education: Oscar praised Duncan Case, Adult Education cluster liaison, for putting together a committee and providing programming to adults. "This is how as a congregation we teach one another."

Personnel: In the last year, Oscar reported, he and the Personnel Committee have updated all paperwork for the staff, including completed and signed job descriptions, completed and signed employment agreements, and an updated personnel policy to ensure that the church is in compliance with UUA policies.

In response to a question, Oscar said summaries of all job descriptions would be published in the fall.

Community Partnership: Oscar reported that he has joined the board of the Faith Coalition of Lancaster County and has focused on building relationships with local and national organizations.

Looking Forward: Oscar said that in the coming year he will work with the Board of Trustees and lay leadership to get the vision of our congregation ingrained in everything we do, will add a second service and will focus on making our congregation more visible in the community.

In response to questions from members, Oscar said the church would be sending out an electronic survey in the next few days to ask members what type of second service they would be interested in. He noted that two dramatically different services every week would not be within his professional capabilities. He said the Second Service Task Force would be in the Gallery after church on the next two Sundays to take comments and questions about a second service.

Oscar thanked the church staff, Julie Enersen for filling in as interim choir director, the executive committee, and the board of trustees, including the three members whose terms are concluding: Mark Shiffler, Linda Brown and Rich Little.

Program Council Report

Charles Coley, chair of the Program Council, commended the current cluster liaisons (Michael Straatmann, Jackie Kehl, Schuyler Geery-Zink, Keith McGuffey, Duncan Case, Kim Ziemann and Heather Fox) for their service.

He noted that the Program Council serves as the decision-making body at the program level, so that the Board of Trustees can focus on governance and finances.

He highlighted two accomplishments: Inventing procedures for appointing new liaisons so that no positions are vacant for long; keeping the RACI (responsible, accountable, consulted, informed) model in front of the Council because it's a good foundation for the decision-making and oversight process.

He said that Michael and Jackie are working on charter templates for determining decision-making vs. oversight roles, which they will bring back to the Council for consideration. Charles noted that his term as chair of the Program Council will be ending in a year and said the church must evaluate the Program Council model. He said the Board and Council would work together on that evaluation. He invited anyone interested in the role of chair of Program Council, in the future, to speak to him.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Dorothy Ramsey said the church's finances are right on track so far this year. She noted that the Finance Team puts a priority on transparency and invited anyone with questions or suggestions to contact her.

She shared the following information from Mary Sommermeyer, special vice treasurer for member loans. The church is almost debt-free. There are only two loans totaling \$35,000 left to pay, plus interest of at most \$1,262. For perspective, this is 1.4% of the \$2.58M cost of the church renovation project.

Stewardship Committee

Vice-Treasurer Theresa Forsman discussed the goals of the Stewardship Committee, created earlier this year by the Finance Team. She said that as Sunday attendance has been growing and as the church is setting itself up for membership growth by adding a second service, the Stewardship Committee wants to help ensure that our church has the financial resources to meet our annual budget. This committee will oversee the pledge drive. She shared the committee's goals for 2019: to enhance online giving options, as well as other donation options, to make sure that our church's finances are transparent, and to make it easy for our members to see how their donation support our church's values. She invited all members to attend the Financial Stewardship Session on Sunday, June 9, at 11:30 a.m. in order to find out more about church finances, ask questions or make suggestions.

Voting Results

Linda announced the results: New trustees, elected to three-year terms, are Trevor Jones, Michael Krumm and Lori Straatmann. Share the Plate choices are UU Youth or Young Adult to UU Conference, Fresh Start Home for Women, Clinton Elementary Partnership, Voices of Hope, Food Net, ACLU Nebraska, Planned Parenthood, CLIA Center for Legal Immigration Assistance, Friendship Home and Nebraska Appleseed.

Closing Song: Julie Enersen

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm

Next Meeting: Winter Congregational Meeting, Sunday, December 8, 2019

Submitted May 21, 2019, by Theresa Forsman on behalf of Board Secretary Trevor Jones