

**Unitarian Church of Lincoln Spring Congregational Meeting  
May 16, 2021  
Meeting Minutes – Draft Version**

Board of Trustees (BOT) President-Elect Lori Straatmann called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. and declared the quorum requirement of 66.2 was met. The meeting was held virtually on Zoom. At the beginning of the meeting, 77 participants were in attendance.

**Welcome**

**Chalice Lighting/Opening Words**

“In Faith” by Rev. Sunshine Jeremiah Wolfe read by Lori Straatmann. Rev. Oscar Sinclair lit the chalice.

**Meeting Rules**

On a vote of 69 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain, the members present approved online voting for this meeting.

**Meeting Procedure**

Lori announced that all agenda items to be voted on would be discussed before voting on anything.

**2020 Winter Congregational Meeting Minutes**

The following amendments to the minutes were suggested by Mary Sommermeyer:

- On page 3, second paragraph, replace “no” with “new” and in the last paragraph, correct the spelling of “Sorensen Fund”.
- On page 4, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, line 3, change “committee leaders and group task organizers” to “group leaders and task organizers”. In that same paragraph, line 7, replace “and” with “is”.
- On page 4, in the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, change “encourages” to “encouraged”.
- On page 4, in the “Board President” section, line 1, change “expresses” to “expressed” and “describes” to “described”. In that same section, in priority 1, “onsite” should be changed to “online” and in priority 3, add “church, ourselves, and the” so the sentence reads “Improve racial justice in the church, ourselves and the larger Lincoln community...”.

**Board of Trustees**

Lori thanked board members Dan Payzant, Colleen Kadleck, and Schuyler Geery-Zink and Emily Cameron Shattil, Past BOT President and ex officio, for their contributions to the Board and the congregation.

Lori introduced the 4 nominees for the 3 open BOT positions. Nominees Meg Mering, JoEllen Polzien, and Kim Ziemann introduced themselves and shared why they wanted to serve on the Board. Nominee Sue Goebel was not present.

**Judy Cole Funds**

Before discussion of proposals from the BOT regarding Judy Cole funds, Lori asked Judy Hart to share anecdotes from JoEllen Polzien, Julie Enersen, and Jan Buffum - all church members who knew Judy well.

Lori explained that the Judy Cole funds have already provided a wide variety of opportunities for our congregation and that the Board is now proposing two resolutions for use of the remaining funds.

**The first resolution is to approve the BOT’s transfer of up to \$20,000 in Judy Cole funds to replenish the Budget Standing Reserve Fund.** The Budget Standing Reserve Fund was

completely depleted at the end of 2020 in order to balance the books. The BOT feels that in order to be good fiduciaries of church finances, the reserves need to be replenished. Safeguarding the 2021 budget is of utmost importance and the reserve fund is part of this safety net.

**The second resolution is to authorize the remaining Judy Cole funds (around \$27,000) to be used at the BOT's discretion.** This is with the understanding that there is still around \$12,000 that have been earmarked for church music programming. The proposed BOT discretion would be a safety net for the church as it navigates the unforeseen needs that may occur following this unprecedented year of pandemic.

Lori took questions and noted that there was a total of approximately \$47,000 left in Judy Cole funds.

### **Share the Plate Nominees**

Lori stated that 13 organizations were nominated and 10 will be chosen. Summaries of the organizations were available to church members before the meeting.

### **Voting**

At 11:30 a.m. a 5-minute silent break transpired for online voting. There were 81 participants present.

### **Reports**

#### Minister

While the votes were being tallied, the Rev. Oscar Sinclair began his report, which was available on the church "Governance" website page. [https://www.unitarianlincoln.org/uploads/2/5/2/0/25200832/ministers\\_annual\\_report\\_2021\\_final.pdf](https://www.unitarianlincoln.org/uploads/2/5/2/0/25200832/ministers_annual_report_2021_final.pdf)

Rev. Sinclair gave an overview of the past year including response to the pandemic, worship, public witness, administration, and his personal family situation. He expressed many thanks and praise for the Board, lay leadership, and staff. He also presented a timeline of major projects that happened from June of 2020 until May of 2021. This timeline can be found in the online report (link above).

#### Religious Growth and Learning Director

Chelsea Krafska reported on the many forms that youth and all-ages religious growth and learning took over the last year. Chelsea's report was also available on the church "Governance" website page. [https://www.unitarianlincoln.org/uploads/2/5/2/0/25200832/rgl\\_annual\\_report\\_2020-2021.pdf](https://www.unitarianlincoln.org/uploads/2/5/2/0/25200832/rgl_annual_report_2020-2021.pdf)

Chelsea said big words for the year were options, connection, and relationship. Accomplishments included online gatherings and projects for parents, children, and others, including the stuffed animal sleepover. 60 Sunday school bags were delivered to participant's homes every 40 – 60 days. There were events held outside on the 6300 A Street property. One clever event that kept children and their families connected to the church was a poster in the church window that said "Be the "i" in kind." Children could stand in front of the letter "i" and have their photos taken.

Chelsea also reported on her professional development and other personal accomplishments and discussed projects for the next church year.

### **Voting on Minutes**

Due to omission from the earlier ballot, an online vote was taken on whether to approve the winter congregational meeting minutes. The minutes were approved with the amendments.

## **Other Voting Results**

Lori announced the results of the other votes.

Both resolutions regarding the Judy Cole funds passed.

Resolution # 1 – 76 yes, 3 no, 1 abstain

Resolution # 2 – 69 yes, 8 no, 1 abstain

Meg Mering, JoEllen Polzien and Kim Ziemann were elected as the three new Board of Trustees members.

Lori gave a special shout-out to Sue Goebel for putting her name forward.

The 10 “Share the Plate” recipients for the 2021/2022 church year are:

Planned Parenthood of North Central States

Fresh Start Home for Women

Child Advocacy Center

Community Crops

NAACP - Lincoln Branch

Voices of Hope

Nebraska Native American Task Force

Asian Community and Cultural Center

Malone Center

Little Free Pantries – Lincoln

## **Reports**

### Program Council

Program Council Chair Karen Heafer began her report with opening words from Henry David Thoreau. The Program Council annual report was available on the church “Governance” website page.

Karen reviewed the organizational model of the church, listing the 6 clusters and their cluster liaisons. The organizational chart can be found on the church website at <https://www.unitarianlincoln.org/org-chart.html>. Karen thanked Jackie Kehl and Duncan Case for their 3 years of cluster leadership.

Karen highlighted projects completed during this very busy church year. A full list of activities and accomplishments can be found in the Program Council annual report.

- August 2020 – Selected and installed the Black Lives Matter banner.
- September 2020– With the help of Treasurer Theresa Forsman, reviewed and modified cluster budgets to submit to the Finance Team.
- October 2020 – Selected and ordered the interior bench in honor of Amy Birky that will sit in the church entryway. This project was organized by church member Betsy Shipley.
- November 2020 – Discussed how to incorporate LGBTQA awareness into the body of the church.
- December 2020 – Approved concrete work on the driveway, which was completed in January. Chose projects that could be funded with LUF (Lincoln Unitarian Foundation) anniversary funds.
- January-March 2021 - Rainbow banner approved, ordered, and installed.
- March 2021 – Discussed reentry into the building.
- April 2021– Learned about LUF memorial funds and church auction planning.
- May 2021 – Reviewed the organizational model.
- June 2021 – Will review goals.

Karen asked Auction Co-Chair Barbara Pearson to give a report. Karen thanked everyone for their participation in the first-ever online auction. There were 150 offerings, 61 bidders and 49 donors. The committee was happy with the purchased software. Special thanks to Karen Heafer, Julie Enersen, Kate McDougall, Trevor Jones, Gene Hanlon, Barbara Pearson, and church staff. Profit for 2021 auction was \$11,232.40. Barbara said the Auction Committee is considering the creation of a “hybrid” auction for the future – part of the auction would be online and part in person.

Karen congratulated everyone for their participation in the “drive through raffle box” event, which sold out in record time. This event was part of the auction and raised \$500.

Karen announced that Patti Cuevas and Carrie Holloway will join the Program Council in June. Patti will be leading the Outreach Cluster and Carrie will lead the Adult Programs Cluster. The Grounds Task Force still needs a leader. Michael Straatmann has agreed to co-chair the task force.

Karen used Hope Johnson’s words to end her report.

### Board of Trustees

Lori reminded everyone that the monthly BOT meeting minutes are available at: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Dz1Eon8NqUvrBaRbQemgrAzhO9ldGthp>

Lori reviewed the 3 BOT priorities for the past church year.

1. Make robust plans on how best to return to the church building and improve onsite programs.
2. Maximize and improve the use of technology to better serve members remotely.
3. Address and engage in racial justice in the larger Lincoln community through training and education.

Lori reported the action taken to accomplish each priority.

1. The first in-person service was held May 9 and plans are being made for full reopening by June 1, 2021.
2. AV equipment was purchased to provide quality remote outreach to our congregants who cannot attend in-person services.
3. An active taskforce is addressing racial justice within our church and community.

Lori noted that each of these goals has far-reaching impacts that go beyond this year and are making our church community ever more vibrant and welcoming.

Note: The annual Treasurer’s Report is available on the church Governance website page.

### **Unsung Unitarian BOT Selection**

Lori announced that the Board had selected Mark Weddleton as the 2021 Unsung Unitarian. Julie Enersen led those gathered in singing the “You Have Done Marvelous Things” song.

### **Closing Words**

“Go in Peace” by Jim Magaw read by Lori Straatmann.

### **Adjourn**

Lori Straatmann adjourned the meeting at 12:22 PM.

Draft version of minutes submitted May 22, 2021, by Judy Hart.

Reviewed May 28, 2021, by Mary Sommermeyer.