

Unitarian Church of Lincoln Spring Congregational Meeting  
May 22, 2022  
Meeting Minutes – Draft Version

Lori Straatmann, the Board of Trustees President, welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided opening words from Susan Megan, a Naval chaplain.

Lori Straatmann and Karen Heafer led the congregation in singing the hymn “Breathe in, Breathe out.”

JoEllen Polzien lit the chalice.

### **Meeting Procedures**

Lori Straatmann reviewed the voting procedures for voting. Immediately following the meeting, Church members received an email from the church office, which included a link to the ballot. Paper ballots were provided to those who notified the church that they prefer not to use electronic ballots. Those who have signed the membership book and made a pledge for this year were eligible to vote. All ballots, electronic or paper, were due to the church office no later than Tuesday, May 24 at 11:00 a.m.

### **2021 Spring and Winter Congregational Meeting Minutes**

Spring:

Page 2, under Reports, under Program Council: Remove “Error! Hyperlink reference not valid”

Winter:

Page 1, in the paragraph beginning with “Dorothy Ramsey provided report from LUF committee ...” Remove “Written report will be attached”

Page 1, next paragraph beginning with “Theresa Foresman ...” correct spelling of Theresa’s last name to Forsman.

At the end of the minutes, an addendum was added that shows that the Congregation voted and approved by electronic ballot to:

- Approve the change in Rev. Oscar Sinclair’s title to Senior Minister,
- Suspend the 2-week review period for the nomination of Kristi Wamstad to continue on the Nominations Committee
- Approve Kristi Wamstad for continuation on the Nominations Committee.

### **Board of Trustees Nominees**

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, Kristi Wamstad introduced the five nominees for the three open BOT positions. Dorothy Ramsey, Allison Hope Starr, and Melody

Vaccaro introduced themselves and shared why they wanted to serve on the Board. Kristi read statements prepared by nominees Michelle Lynn Howard and Peg Pelter.

Lori Straatmann stated that three of these candidates would be replacing Trevor Jones, Keith McGuffey, and herself. She thanked Trevor and Keith for their service and wisdom. She also said that Tonya Haigh, the current Board secretary, would be resigning her position as a Board member, leaving 1 year left on her term. The Board expresses their appreciation for Tonya's service during her 2 years on the Board. Per the Church By-laws, the Board will appoint someone to finish out Tonya's term.

### **Share the Plate nominees**

Judy Hart read the twenty-four Share the Plate nominations. The Congregation will vote and select ten of the nominations. All of these are non-profits. Judy reminded everyone that Give to Lincoln is another time to support our community.

### **2022 General Assembly**

The 2022 General Assembly will be held June 22 to June 26 online or in-person in Portland, Oregon. Delegates who serve virtually but are not able to attend the rest of the conference can do so without a registration fee. Church members interested in attending all or just the delegate business sessions should contact Oscar Sinclair or Lori Straatmann. The Board of Trustees will vote on who will serve as our six delegates during their June 15 meeting.

### **Minister's Report**

At their annual leadership retreat in August 2021, the Board of Trustees set out three priorities for the congregation for the Church year.

- Develop a timeline and funding plan for our building and grounds maintenance and replacement needs.

This goal was set to get a long-term sense of what our goals are for the building and grounds. This goal is largely the work of the Program Council and Board members.

- Continue engagement with the world through our commitment to dismantle racism, address the effects of climate change, and recertify our LGBTQA+ Welcoming Congregation status

The Church has spent a lot time on all of these issues this year.

Twenty members of our congregation have participated in the Beloved Conversations program.

The Green Sanctuary Committee asked the Church to partner with other churches on Faith to Forest, a city wide initiative.

Oscar's term as President of the Faith Coalition of Lancaster County, an apolitical organization, has ended. As a result, he is much freer to speak his mind in public. He has, for example, spoken on abortion rights at the state house and developed more of a relationship with Out Nebraska.

Oscar highlighted his work with DART ((Direct Action Research and Training Center). Within the last year, he has worked with 40 clergy in Lincoln to develop an organizing network to work for justice. They are now beginning to include members of those congregations. UCL has the single biggest cohort.

- Deepen connections and increase engagement within our Church community, including our children, youth, and young adults

The connection remains one of the central challenges for our church as well as other organizations. This priority reflects the Board's optimism that the worst of the pandemic was behind us. Instead this year, we continued to respond to changes with the pandemic. For example, the Delta variant and then the Omicron variant closed UCL's building. Singing together and having coffee hour for the first time provided us with opportunities to connect.

Oscar thanked Lori Straatmann for service as Board president.

### **Program Council Report**

Karen Heafer, chair of the Program Council, thanked Jackie Egan, Congregational Cluster, Carrie Holloway, Adult Programming Cluster, and Harry Heafer, Facilities Cluster, for their service. She welcomed new liaisons Kathy Disney, Marcia Cederdahl, and Barbara Pearson. They will join liaisons Emily Kazyak, Patti Cuevas, and Jamie Radcliffe.

Karen mention the Program Council's top eighteen accomplishments for the year

- Helped Black Leaders Movement with Back-To-School Drive
- Started a new card sending project
- Mary Monell stain glass window was hung in the Church's front hallway
- Supported Black Leaders Movement in collecting hair care products
- 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Display in the Gallery
- Rewired several ceiling lights and installed new emergency lights
- Sorensen Lecture on Critical Race Theory
- Discussion of Covenant of Right Relations
- Sunday School in a Bag continued
- Trees were trimmed
- Comfort Shawls and Afghans delivered to church members as appropriate

- Purchased new table cloths for memorials
- Choir members teaching a musical Sunday School monthly
- Participated in Faith to Forest initiative
- Youth in Action resumed with a new leader
- Facilities Cluster developed a suggested long term repair/replacement plan
- Book discussion: Breathe: a letter to my sons by Imani Perry
- Volunteer trained to operate new AV streaming equipment

Three projects will be carried over to the next Church year:

- A pandemic/150 Anniversary time capsule
- Cabinet for the memorial tablecloths
- Memorial Garden Plaque

Karen provided an update on the auction. Barbara Pearson, Julie Enersen, and Karen coordinated the auction. They believe they have reached their \$10,000 goal. 50 individuals donated 177 auction items. 73 people placed bids. Thanks to Rob Herpel for contacting artists, Kate McDougall for contacting Tasty Treaters, and Gene and LaVonne Hanlon for managing to collect over 100 gift cards for the raffle.

### **Treasurer's report**

Wendy Hestermann, Vice Treasurer, delivered the report. She thanked Theresa Forsman for her service as Treasurer. After two years of pandemic impacted finances, our finances for this year are in good shape. Early in the year our income is relatively high because we had 2022 pledges that were prepaid in 2021 and the surplus of 2021 was transferred over to the new year's income line. Our expenses are on a normal track. We ended 2021 with a cash surplus of just over \$59,000. According to Board policy, the budget standing reserve fund and the major repair and replace fund were replenished. The remaining balance was added to the General operation fund. From this fund, \$19,817 was transferred to balance our 2022 approved budget. For 2021, the church's expenses amounted to 100.9% of what was budgeted. We were within \$5,000 of our budgeted expenses. 2020 and 2021 were difficult budget years. Wendy and Theresa thanked everyone who assisted in managing our finances during this time. Our church has no debt. The Church's assets including the building and property are valued at over 3 million dollars.

### **RGL Report**

Chelsea Krafka spoke about the struggles of parents and children during the pandemic. The big words of the year have been connections and options. It has been a lot of adapting and shifting. Parents and guardians have different needs. They select different resources from the church. We did online and in-person events. For more information, see her written report.

## **Music Ministry Report**

Bob Fuson remarked that the Church has worked vigilantly in its efforts to become a home of culture. In the last year, the Church became home to the Nebraska Chamber Players. In addition to providing rental income, they will be responsible for tuning and repairing the Church's piano. We are also exploring a relationship with the Lincoln Music Teachers Association. In September, we are going to resume our Way Station Concerts. Next year, we are going to form a children's choir. The adult choir will begin to wear stoles. The A Street Band continues to perform at a high level as shown by the recent tent revival. The tent revival and the Antelope Park concert have become yearly events. To continue to grow the music activities of the church, the financial support of Church members is needed.

## **Unsung Unitarian**

Lori Straatmann announced that the Board had selected Jackie Kehl as the 2022 Unsung Unitarian.

Lori thanked the congregation for all of its support for her during her presidency. She said that being president has been a tremendous honor.

Judy Hart thanked Lori for mentoring during the last year.

## **Closing Words**

Judy Hart provided the closing words. She read Dori Summers' A house for our dreams.

## **Adjourn**

## **Addendum**

After the meeting, the Congregation voted by electronic ballot:

To approve modification of voting procedures

To approve the May 16, 2021 and December 12, 2021 meeting minutes.

To elect Peg Pelter, Allison Hope Starr, and Dorothy Ramsey to the Board of Trustees.

To select the following Share the Plate nominations:

- Planned Parenthood
- Lincoln Indian Center
- Clyde Malone Community Center
- Center for People in Need
- Center for Legal Immigration Assistance
- Fresh Start
- Little Free Pantries

- Out Nebraska
- NE Religious Council for Reproductive Freedom
- Voices of Hope