

Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting
First Unitarian Church of St. Louis

May 19, 2019

Ministerial Search Committee – Prior to the formal start of the meeting, Amanda Kracen made an announcement on behalf of the Search Committee and the upcoming candidating week of our new called settled minister, Kim Mason.

Policy Board President Kathy Wire called the meeting to order at 11:44 am and requested approval that George Grimm-Howell moderate the meeting. So approved.

Rev. Gary James gave the Opening Words.

Kathy Wire read the Congregational Covenant.

Policy Board Secretary Erin Milligan presented the Minutes from the 2018 Annual Meeting and thanked the congregation for allowing her to serve as secretary for the last five years. George Grimm-Howell asked for a vote that the Minutes be approved. So approved.

Kathy Wire provided a review of the President's Report, discussed the role and work of the Nominating Committee, discussed the work and dedication of the Search Committee in producing settled minister candidate Kim Mason, and discussed new membership in the church. Kathy discussed the new Board that will be taking over and described this as a positive for the church – those that are stepping up with new energy. Kathy described two big challenges facing the church – our finances and volunteer energy. George Grimm-Howell asked for a vote that the President's Report be approved. So approved.

Rev. Gary James provided a review of the Minister's Report and reviewed his work as Interim Minister over the last three years. He discussed the leadership development process. He discussed the conflict resolution process. He discussed processes involving the new settled minister and commended the Search Committee for their hard work. Gary indicated that church membership is stable and growing with the addition of 40 new members over the last three years. George Grimm-Howell asked for a vote that the Minister's Report be approved. So approved.

Church Council Chair Charlie Kindleberger commended the work of the Cluster Chairs and thanked Church Administrator Lynn Hunt for keeping the minutes of their monthly meetings. Charlie indicated that the committees continue to be engaged in goal setting and described this as a partial success for this year. Charlie indicated that the Church Council will continue to focus their work in the areas of race relations and homelessness. Finally, Charlie indicated that a goal is to improve involvement within committees. George Grimm-Howell asked for a vote that the Council Chair's Report be approved. So approved.

Kathy Wire thanked the hard work of the Transition Team and recognized those who have served.

Kathy Wire moved on to discuss the proposed amendment to the bylaws which would create a change with regard to Associate Member Status and gave a history of what Associate Membership status has meant in the church in recent years. Kathy discussed the proposed amendment and took questions from the congregation about what will come of current Associate Members. Kathy explained that current Associate Members will have the ability to remain if they petition to stay in that status. Kathy stated that any financial contribution by an Associate Member is sufficient to maintain membership. Kathy explained that there are no significant differences between a “friend” and an Associate Member. Kathy stated that the bylaws don’t clearly define what Associate Membership status is, and that the bylaws give authority to the Board to determine the minimum donation. Members still have the ability to ask for a waiver of their financial obligation. George Grimm-Howell facilitated the congregational vote on the change to the bylaws. Proposed amendment passed.

Nominating Committee Chair John Knoll discussed the slate of nominees prepared by the Nominating Committee. John discussed the work of the Nominating Committee and indicated that their work will be ongoing. George Grimm-Howell requested a congregational vote on the slate: Policy Board Sue Ashwell, President Margaret Weck, Vice President Pamela Geppert, Secretary Kathy Wilke, Treasurer Sarah Francois, Trustee (three year term) Gene Rubin, Trustee (three year term) Stephen Wilke, Trustee (three year term) Church Council Charlie Kindleberger, Church Council Chair Lisa Cary, Facilities Cluster Steve Smidowicz, Stewardship Cluster. Slate was approved.

Treasurer Kathy Wilke presented her report along with a budget presentation. Kathy indicated that as Treasurer, she’s been striving for consistency over the years. Kathy indicated that some additional monies have recently been located, she’s attempting to determine where they’ve come from. Kathy is optimistic about our financial situation. Kathy indicated that Steve Smidowicz is in the process of calculating our “fair share” contribution to the UUA. George Grimm-Howell requested approval of the Treasurer’s Report. So approved.

Presentation of the Anthony and Melanie Fathman and William W. Ross Awards were made to Larry Dusenbery (for the Anthony & Melanie Fathman Award) and Emily Jaycox (for the William W. Ross Award).

Incoming Board President Sue Ashwell thanked Kathy Wire for serving as the Policy Board President and presented her with a gift from the congregation. Sue also thanked Jim Wire for the many hours of assistance he provided in getting the church’s office in better shape. Sue then thanked Rev. Gary James (and Julie) for his service to the congregation as Interim Minister over the last three years. Gary was presented with a gift certificate as a token of thanks.

Rev. Gary James thanked the congregation for the gift and gave a benediction at the close of the meeting. He finished with a quote from T.S. Elliot.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 pm.

The meeting was followed by an introduction video prepared for our congregation by our new called settled minister candidate, Kim Mason.

