

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
2021-2022 Annual Meeting Minutes
15 May 2022

held in person in the Sanctuary and online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order by President Gene Rubin at 11:39 am.

Gene welcomed the congregation. Lynn Hunt counted the in-person attendees and Andrea Berin counted those attending via Zoom. They confirmed that a quorum of at least 54 members was present.

Opening words were offered by **the Rev. Kim Mason**.

Vice President Steve Wilke read the **Congregational Covenant**.

Secretary Alison Lamothe directed members to the **Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting** included in the Annual Report. She asked for a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and that they be approved. Dan Wilke seconded. Motion passed.

Affirmation of Business from 2020 and 2021 Annual Meetings

We obligated ourselves to affirm all business that transpired at the 2020 and 2021 Annual Meetings that were held on Zoom. The following motions were all passed by the congregation during these meetings:

- Motions to dispense with Reading and Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes from each prior year.
- Motion in the 2020 meeting to amend bylaws in Article VI Section 2, Article VII Section 1 and Article VIII Section 4 in such a manner to make the Programming Cluster Coordinator on the Church Council an elected member of the congregation rather than the minister.
- Motion in the 2020 meeting to allow Secretary to correct punctuation, misspellings and formatting errors within the Bylaws.
- Motions to approve the slates of nominees for the Policy Board and Church Council from both years.
- Motion in the 2021 meeting to amend the bylaws to amend the Mission Statement of the church.

Alison asked for a motion that we affirm the official business conducted during the 2020 and 2021 Annual Meetings. Margaret Weck seconded. Motion passed.

President's Report and Remarks

Gene referred members to his full report included in the Annual Report. He commended church members for their strengths, skills, opinions and force of their personalities. He noted the strengthened organizational structure of the Policy Board and the Church Council and how they worked extremely well together to accomplish their differentiated tasks. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its various variant surges, throughout his tenure Gene focused on "safety, safety and safety." In addition, he prioritized "welcomeability," and communication via his "Rubin's Ramblings."

Minister's Report and Remarks

The Rev. Kim Mason referred members to her full report included in the Annual Report and shared some highlights. She opened with a reference to a 2019 sermon by the Rev. Molly Housh Gordon entitled, "How to Survive the End of the World." The Rev. Housh suggested two lists of necessities: one, a list of material supplies; the second, a list of cooperative behaviors required. The Rev. Kim noted that shortly after the sermon was delivered, the pandemic proved its author right: for society and for our

congregation, “it was our community oriented, connection-based practices that dictated our survival during the pandemic – and not whether we stockpiled toilet paper.”

Rev. Kim celebrated the return of in-person events to our congregation and increasing in-person attendance for church services. She reminded us that, although our canvass did not meet its goal, our shortfall was modest compared to other congregations of ours and other faiths. Overall, we raised more than last year and 92% of those who pledged contributed the same amount or more than last year. Additional funds were raised to help pay for a Cost-of-Living Adjustment for our staff. She thanked the congregation for its resilience and generosity.

Church Council Chair’s Report

Cathy Rauch referred members to her full report included in the Annual Report. She named and thanked all Church Council Cluster Chairs. She remarked that church committees were very active in spite of the church being closed during much of the past fiscal year. Finally, she noted that “the Council’s main focus this year was on the Unitarian Universalist principles and how those principles relate to and inform the work of the committees.”

Church Treasurer’s Report and Budget Presentation

Kathy Wilke noted that she is concluding her 6th year in the role of Church Treasurer. She recognized other people who are also involved in the church’s finances and with whom she worked during her tenure. She explained that the **FY 2022-2023 Budget** published in the Annual Report is generally flat except for 1) a Cost-of-Living Adjustment for members of our staff; and 2) an increased contribution to the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Consideration of and Election for Proposed Slate of Candidates for Policy Board and Church Council for FY 2022-2023

Catherine Hunter of the **Nominations and Leadership Development Committee** presented the following slate to the congregation:

Policy Board

Board President – Steve Wilke (2023)

Vice President – Erin Milligan (2023)

Secretary – Alison Lamothe (2023) second term

Treasurer – Jeremy Colton (2023)

Member – Rebecca McBride (2025)

Member – Norma Vogelweid (2023) filling a vacancy

Member – Luke Steffen (2024) filling a vacancy

Church Council

Council Chair – Cathy Rauch (2023) second term

Cluster Chair Coordinator, Stewardship – Kathy Wire (2025)

Cluster Chair Coordinator, Growth and Engagement – Kevin Kellogg, (2023) filling a vacancy

Catherine made a motion to accept the slate of candidates as presented. Emily Jaycox seconded. Motion passed.

Gene commended the members of the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee for their important work.

Presentation of the Melanie & Anthony Fathman and William W. Ross Awards

Although Sarah Francois served on the Awards Committee and recommended the award recipients, she was out of town and unable to present the awards. Instead, Gene Rubin had the honor of bestowing the **Melanie & Anthony Fathman Award** to **Pamela Geppert** and the **William W. Ross Award** to **Betsy and George Grimm-Howell**. Gene explained that the former is like a Most Valuable Player award and the latter akin to a Life-Time Achievement Award. Pam was able to accept her award in-person; Betsy and George made their acceptance speech via Zoom.

Gene recognized **Officers, Trustees and other Leadership**, as well as staff.

Remarks from the new Policy Board President, Steve Wilke

Steve recounted his three-year journey towards this leadership role. While serving on the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee, he decided to help fill a vacancy on the Policy Board by becoming a nominee for Trustee himself; in that role, he agreed to be a nominee for Vice President the following year, and now is assuming the role of President. He and Gene met weekly throughout the year in preparation for this transition.

He thanked the Covid Task Force for their efforts during the past year and stated the following goals for the next: he would like to see more members volunteer, and he would like all members to see themselves as part of the Membership Committee and help us to GROW.

The Rev. Kim Mason offered **Closing Words**.

Meeting adjourned at 12:34 pm.