

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
Policy Board Meeting Minutes
12 December 2022 via Zoom

Meeting was called to order by President Steve Wilke at 6:36 pm.

Others in attendance: Erin Milligan, Vice President; Alison Lamothe, Secretary; Jeremy Colton, Treasurer; Susan Lammert, Trustee; Norma Vogelweid, Trustee

Absent: Joel Hickman, Trustee; Rebecca (Becca) McBride, Trustee

Staff: Rev. Kim Mason, Lynn Hunt

Church Council: Cathy Rauch

Chalice Lighting: Steve Wilke

Opening Words: Steve Wilke

Reading of Board Covenant: Norma Vogelweid

Process Observer: Alison Lamothe

Consent Agenda. Documents submitted to Board to review prior to meeting:

- a. Minutes of Previous Meeting: 11-17-2022
- b. Report of the Minister – Rev. Kim Mason
- c. Report of the Administrator – Lynn Hunt
- d. Report of the Board President – Steve Wilke
- e. Budget Report – Jeremy Colton

Based on the recent success of Music Sunday/Hanging of the Greens on Sunday, December 11, Norma Vogelweid suggested we revisit our idea of hosting an event during coffee hour. She suggested we hold a bake sale in lieu of serving coffee, and that we choose a Sunday when the Choir performs since their presence tends to boost attendance. A bake sale would not duplicate Augie's responsibilities. Board members may choose to bake or purchase items for sale. One concern mentioned is that we already have 11 fundraisers planned. If we do not want to schedule another we could gift our items, like we do when we kick off our annual canvass. Whatever we decide, other committees can host similar events if our approach proves successful.

Also regarding Board outreach, Jeremy Colton has made name tags for the staff and some Board members. He will figure out a way to provide them for all of us. We are willing to pay for his professional services.

Supporting the Gospel Music Hall of Fame

Rev. Kim presented a letter, which we were asked to sign, that supports the conversion of the Second Baptist Church on 500 N Kingshighway Boulevard into a Gospel Music Hall of Fame. Rev. Kim noted that the Romanesque building is architecturally and historically significant, and if left unoccupied it will continue to deteriorate.¹ Alison moved to sign the letter of endorsement. Erin seconded. During the discussion, Lynn asked to whom the letter would go? Rev. Kim answered it would go to Monica Butler, a local film and television producer who is one of the proponents of this project.

¹ A description of this historic building and its current state of disrepair can be found here:
<https://preservemo.org/second-baptist-church/>

Jeremy added that we should edit the letter so that it better aligns with our beliefs. Motion passed.

“Secret” Item

Jeremy submitted a budget report for review prior to the meeting. This has not been but should be a regular feature of our meetings going forward.

Board committees (Ministry, Personnel, Nominations) update

The Personnel and Nominations Committees did not meet since the last Board meeting. Although the Committee on Ministry did meet, Susan could not comment on their work since they are currently involved with Rev. Kim’s review. She did, however, report that she attended a Webinar with Interfaith Power and Light. She summarized the webinar as follows:

“The Inflation Reduction Act makes funding for energy conservation available to Houses of Worship for the first time. It will be several years before details are worked out. In the meantime congregations should get ready. A start up kit is available for downloading at the Cool Congregations website. We should learn about cost effective strategies by forming a green team (the facilities committee is the obvious one). Next we should do an energy audit to develop a baseline and plan. We should encourage members to take similar measure at their homes. There are existing sources of funding by utilities and other congregations. One example is a challenge grant from Cool Congregations.”

Lynn attended this same webinar and wants to forward this information to the Facilities Committee. Jeremy prefers we approach this initiative cautiously, as he is not fond of the bluish light emitted by LED bulbs. Rev. Kim noted with dismay that many of our light bulbs in the building are not working at all.

Exercise in defining our Values, Part I: What do we Value? (Brainstorming)

Rev. Kim prompted meeting attendees to list things or qualities that are important to us (“ones that we would publicly proclaim”) and/or that we perceive to be important to our congregation, which she then jotted down on a virtual white board. The final list included: tolerance, tradition, spirituality, community, justice, inclusivity, compassion, kindness, integrity, diversity, open-mindedness, love, progressive, free-thinking, learning, education, intellectual, careful, cautious, charity, outward looking, balance, inward focused, ecumenical, interfaith, Welcoming Congregation, Green Sanctuary, formality, comfort, structure, flexibility, collaborative, anti-authoritarian, musicality, participation, democratic process, engagement, non-dogmatic, non-creedal, covenantal, faith, search for meaning, creativity, generous, and stingy.

Exercise in defining our Values, Part II: What do we really Value? (Prioritization)

Rev. Kim then asked participants to select their “top three” priorities from the list that we generated. There was a lot of overlap. Justice was mentioned most often (7 responses), followed by community (5 responses). Two participants mentioned faith; tolerance, compassion, kindness, intellectual, non-creedal, and formality received one mention each.

Church maintenance issues: The roof, gutters, walls, and other structural concerns

What are the issues? What to do? And how to do it?

Steve ended the meeting with a discussion of the maintenance needs of our church building. For example, the roof of the RE wing (constructed in the 1950s) needs repairs that are estimated to cost approximately \$95,000. Gutters need repairs. A wall is taking on water. In sum, the necessary repairs

will total in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. We should ask the Facilities Committee to look at the entire project, which will cost more than we have in our budget. In the future, a major task for the Board will be to determine how we will pay for this maintenance. Possible options include taking out a mortgage, tapping the General Fund and/or our investments, and/or launching a capital campaign as we did to build Hope Chapel.

Check-in with process observer: Alison observed that we went over time but that we treated each other well.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.

The next Policy Board meeting will be held Tuesday, January 17, at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Lamothe