

The Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist
Congregational Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2022 – 11:30 a.m.-12:30p.m.
Sanctuary & Zoom

Opening Reading/Chalice Lighting/Congregational Covenant

The opening reading was presented by Erin Gottschalk, Insch Intern.
Joe Swain, Board member, lit the chalice.

Barb Chapman, Board President, led the congregation in reading our Congregational Covenant.

Welcome & Thanks

Barb Chapman, Board President, began by welcoming ALL in attendance, in the Sanctuary and via Zoom, to the first hybrid Congregational Meeting. She continued with the following remarks:

I want to begin with “thanks” this morning

Thanks to all who helped pull this meeting together:

1. Rachel Rose with communication
2. Marion Hirsch with arrangements for child care and Zoom monitoring
3. Rev Thom for all manner of advice and arrangements
4. Katie Heineman, Wendy and Jenny Warnasch management of the sound room
5. Bonnie Nelson editing the PP so it’s readable and pretty
6. Gail McKinley & Bill Poteat for running the projector

Thanks to the staff – no superlatives are adequate to describe all you have done to keep us keeping on since Friday, March 13, 2020.

- Rev Thom
- Rachel Rose
- Marion Hirsch
- Kat Good
- Dana Lundquist
- Glenn Mehrbach
- Ariadna Nacienceno
- Anibel Castaneda

And, finally, thanks for forgiveness from those I may have over-looked.

Heather O’Connor will be sharing the myriad, wonderful successes of our church, and I want to address what I know is the foundation for much of that success. It’s something most of you don’t even know exists – and that’s as it should be.

This year is the 10th anniversary of our church adopting Governance by Policy. In 2008 Susan Spalt, Susan McDaniel, Celia Warshaw, Maggie Scarborough, and I were made the Governance Task Force. We spent 3 years, meeting at least twice a month, working with UUA’s Dan Hotchkiss developing policies for the Board – over-arching way of doing things.

In 2011 the Congregation agreed to a trial year – that is we’d see whether this policy thing would work. It did and in 2012, the congregation adopted Governance by Policy. Much gratitude is owed to Paige Smith and Kari Andrade, Board Presidents in 2011 and 2012, because if they hadn’t embraced this, it would have died.

So why should you care about our governance structure? Well, this the underlying structure that allows us to focus on what we come to church for – our mission – nurturing spiritual growth, supporting and caring for each other, and effecting change through our love for the world.

Every action the Board takes, from a social media policy to financial policies, is developed, implemented, and reviewed as it relates to our mission.

What has this done for our church?

We are in much stronger fiscally because our Policies require set asides or savings for things as maintenance and the minister’s sabbatical. We have an emergency fund. As the result of sound financial planning, we have been able to bring staff salaries up to the UUA recommended mid-point range.

We now have a workable, coordinated Policy for stewardship in our church thanks to Bonnie Nelson, Jeff Blass, Becky Wilkes, Cathy Cole, and Heather O’Connor – the Board’s Stewardship Task Force.

We have a Policy that established a Capital Fund that will help us complete those things necessary to make our new building more livable, including acoustics, equipment, and furniture as well as fund new capital projects.

And this is just the financial part.

We owe a huge dept of thanks to every Board and Board President since 2011 who has made Governance by Policy work for our church as well as to Reverend Tom Belote, who as both our minister and Chief of Staff helps

Our Church's Accomplishments – Look What We've Accomplished in Community

Heather O'Connor, Past President, summarized our church's accomplishments from 2014 to the present in the following remarks:

Ours is a progressive church. The Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist is progressive in that it is a community in constant forward motion. We are continuously experimenting; appreciatively evaluating our programs, behaviors and cultures; and evolving to ensure a strong, vibrant and beloved community.

In 2013, our church adopted a 10 year strategic plan that has served us well and is now winding down. The last ten years included changes in our church, like recruiting a new minister. It also included facing big world challenges we couldn't have imagined, [[PAUSE]] how about that worldwide pandemic?

The 2013 strategic plan set us on a progressive course, landing us here today, at this moment—thriving—finally starting to reap the reward of congregating in our larger space. Through a coordinated and expertly executed capital campaign, we fulfilled a major goal of our strategic plan.

As the Board of Trustees considers how to set its sights on the future, we first wanted to celebrate our many accomplishments. The following list is by no means comprehensive. We are extremely proud of our church and grateful to the dedicated staff and members who have served so well to ensure our efforts were successful.

I think you'll see we have a lot to be proud of.

Worship and Arts

Our ambition for **Worship and Arts** called for us to provide transformative and inspiring worship, artistic inspiration, and *also* inclusion of those unable to attend in person.

Some of our accomplishments included the launching of Thom's Preaching Practicum class; collaboration on uplifting multigenerational worship; and the use of live-streaming and YouTube to broadcast our services.

Lifespan Religious Education

Within **Lifespan Religious Education**, we envisioned a dynamic ministry with children and youth, supporting multigenerational ministry, and creating better spaces for our programs for children and youth.

Some of our accomplishments have included adopting the Soul Matters curriculum; establishing Chalice Camp, Hogwarts on the Hill, and the Insch Leadership Program; creating an on-line option for religious education; developing racial equity programming for children and youth; renovating the Jones Building religious education spaces, such as the OWL's Nest; and, expanding the building, which means Children's worship is no longer held on the floor of our coffee hour space.

Welcoming & Membership

To meet the goals of our **Welcoming and Membership** vision, we launched the Exploring Membership class in fall 2015; created systems to track and engage visitors and help them to connect; trained the welcoming team on inclusiveness; helped new groups to form; supported connection and fellowship during the pandemic; and so much more. Our membership has grown from 350 to more than 400 members since 2013.

Music

Where would we be without **Music**? Our robust and emotion- and thought-provoking Music program is indeed woven into the fabric of our ministry and includes an annual Children's Pageant, a musical every other year, two annual choir services, the annual music gala, and so much more. Of special note is Glenn's extraordinary ministry during the Pandemic which included taking our choirs on-line; producing worship videos; launching the Vespers program; holding in-person hymn sings in the courtyard; holding on-line choir services, two on-line Music Galas, the virtual holiday pageant, and the Tony-worthy outdoor, holiday pageant.

Social Justice

How many of us here are driven by our deep belief in **Social Justice**? Our Social Justice vision called for active engagement by our church members in working for a more just world.

To fulfill this vision, we held three Community Days of Service; launched the Immigrant Justice Initiative; and participated in Side With Love's UU the Vote.

Annual Congregational Awards

The annual Congregational Awards were presented by Board members with the following remarks:

Nathan Kosiba, Board Member

Each year, we give out a trio of awards to congregants for outstanding service within and beyond our church community.

This year's first award is **The Gertrude Willis Lifespan Religious Education Award**

Named for Dr. Gertrude Willis, a founding member of the congregation and passionate advocate for children, the Gertrude Willis Lifespan Religious Education Award is presented annually to members and ministries who make significant contributions to religious education in the congregation.

The 2022 Willis Award is presented to Nicole Graysmith. Nicole's involvement in the Children and Youth Ministry is extensive and her contributions are numerous. She has been a member of the Children's Ministry team including serving as the chair. As chair, Nicole organized the very successful shower that furnished our nursery and preschool rooms. Her visionary skills are so appreciated.

Nicole is also an accomplished teacher leading numerous compelling programs for young people. Nicole is also a member of the Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education Ministry as an OWL facilitator. She was memorable as Professor Amaris Astrophel for Hogwarts on the Hill leading Defense Against the Dark Arts class. In 2021-2022 Nicole was the leader of the Neighboring Faith Class for 6th and 7th graders on Sunday mornings. Neighboring Faiths is one of the classic programs offered to Unitarian Universalist youth where youth learn about world religions and then make field trips to the house of worship for different religions. We were so lucky to be able to offer Neighboring Faith this year, after having been virtual for a year. Nicole's program was so organized (which a program based on field trips needs to be) and full of compelling content. In the words of one of the 7th graders who participated in Neighboring Faiths, "we are thankful Nicole volunteers her time and isn't here against her will."

Glenn Davis, Vice President

This year's second award is the **Joe & Lucy Straley Beyond These Walls Award.**

Named for long-time Community Church members and dedicated activists who worked to change the world locally and internationally, the Joe & Lucy Straley "Beyond These Walls" Award is presented to a member or ministry in our church who lives our Unitarian Universalist values in the larger world.

The 2022 Straley Award is presented to ECO. ECO, our church's environmental ministry, supports and encourages our congregation to take actions toward sustainability and better stewardship of Earth.

Each April we see ECO taking the lead during Earth month, with environmentally-friendly projects including an electric car show and fun activities about the importance of native plants. But ECO is active throughout the year, hosting educational events dealing with the climate crisis and global climate change; holding recycling events helping our congregation to properly dispose of difficult-to-recycle objects; and organizing advocacy work to help our congregation push for our federal, state, and local government to lead in a greener and more sustainable way.

We are grateful for all that ECO does each April and throughout the year to inspire us all to live greener lives and promote our Unitarian Universalist environmental principles.

Jay Johnson, Board Member

This year's third award is the **Al & Ann Sawyer Within These Walls Award.**

Named for long-time Community Church members, this award is presented annually for outstanding service to our church community.

The 2022 Sawyer Award is presented to Andrew Wright. Andrew Wright serves the Community Church with faithfulness and devotion as its Treasurer. While much of his service happens behind the scenes, Andrew makes significant contributions to help our church to thrive.

Report of Results of Congregational Vote

On behalf of Board Secretary Brian Pence who could not attend, Board President Barb Chapman announced the results of the on-line voting to (1) fill the 3-year term vacancy on the Endowment Committee and (2) grant \$9000 from the Endowment Fund to the Capital Fund.

1. For Charles Lee to fill the vacancy on the Endowment Committee: 86 YES, 1 ABSTENTION
2. To grant \$9000 to the Capital Fund: 86 YES, 1 NO

Endowment Update

On behalf of Endowment Committee Chair Cathy Cole who was unable to attend, Endowment Committee Member Larry Ross covered the Endowment update as follows:

Endowment Fund Committee Membership		
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kari Andrade• Cathy Cole• Jay Miller• Larry Ross• Charles Lee, newly elected to replace Jeff Blass who is completing his 3-year term		
Endowment Fund Financial Status – Invested in the UU Common Endowment Fund		
• December 31, 202 Fund Balance		\$236,610.95
Donations	\$50,000.00	
Interest Earned	\$16,415.14	
• December 31, 2021 Balance		\$303,026.09
• April 30, 2022 Fund Balance		\$266,648.22
Endowment Fund Grants		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amount available for grants may be up to 3% of the fund balance on December 31st• No grants were awarded for FY 2021-22 because of uncertainty caused by the Covid pandemic• For FY 2022-23, \$9,000 available for grants• The committee unanimously decided to award a noncompetitive grant to the Capital Fund to support efforts to complete the capital projects approved by the congregation. Church members have approved this grant through online voting.		
Endowment Committee – Donor Intent Form		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designed to give church members the opportunity to designate how they wish their legacy donations used• Committee members are contacting church members to introduce and explain this new form• This is NOT fundraising• Please contact any committee member if you are interested in learning more		

Treasurer's Report

Andrew Wright, Church Treasurer, presented the following:

Treasurer's Report – Current Fiscal Year FY2022

- For FY2022 we passed a budget that included spending down \$32,522 in excess operating reserves.
- However, we are now projecting that we will finish FY2022 breaking even, with no draw down of excess operating reserves.
- We anticipate heading into FY2023 with \$110k+ in Operating Reserves

Treasurer's Report – Budget Highlights FY2023

- \$30k increase in pledges
- 6% COLA for all staff
 - Staff compensated at (or above) midpoint of UUA recommended compensation levels

- Includes a drawdown of approximately \$30,000 of excess operating reserves, similar to the prior year budget

Closing Reading/Extinguishing Chalice

The closing reading was presented by Joe Swain, Board Member.
Erin Gottschalk, Insch Intern, extinguished the chalice.

Q&A

President Barb Chapman called for questions regarding any aspect of church operations. As there were none, the meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m., and all present were encouraged to join the new-member reception and stay for fellowship in the courtyard.