

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OAKLAND

2014 ANNUAL MEETING : MARCH 16, 2014

9:40 Meeting Called to Order

Welcome - Chris Sutherland, President, Board of Trustees

- Reading of Congregational Covenant - Congregation
 - Quorum Count – need 15% of 249 members (38), we have 88
 - **MOTION TO ELECT MODERATOR**
Motion: Claire Eustace, Second: Sherry Larsen-Beville
 - Review Agenda, Rules of Order, and Voter Eligibility – Steve Thomasberger, Moderator
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Elections for Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee (private balloting)

- Paper ballots distributed at check-in
 - There are 4 board positions, vote for up to 4 people for board (there are 4 candidates)
 - Vote for up to 3 people for nominating (there are 3 candidates; 5 open positions)
 - Write-ins are acceptable
 - Board Nominees
 - Samantha Ames (3 yr term)
 - Emily Stoper (3 yr term)
 - Kris Wedding Crowell (3 yr term)
 - Charles Masten (1 yr term)
 - Nominating Committee Nominees
 - Dennis Rowcliffe
 - Claudine Tong
 - Bev Smrha
 - Discussion about percentage of total votes needed to be elected to BOT or Nominating Committee
 - Lack of clarity on whether it is 50% +1 or whether a nominee can be elected if they receive any votes at all (since there are an equal number of openings as there are candidates)
 - Moderator said people counting ballots can make this decision. A discussion and lack of agreement on this followed.
 - Additional question raised: whether nominations can be made from the floor. A discussion and lack of agreement on this followed.
 - After a review of the bylaws by member Ingrid Mittermaier and discussion with Parliamentarian Emily Stoper, it was determined that church bylaws indicate that a nominee must receive 50%+1 of the total votes. (Bylaws indicate that Roberts Rules of order govern, but only where the bylaws are silent. Bylaws indicate rule is 50% + 1).
 - Decision to revisit question of whether nominations can be made from the floor after the counting of votes.
 - Move on to next agenda item while votes being counted.
 - Additional question raised as to whether it is fair that any write-in candidates or nominations from the floor have to all run against each other for one spot, where other 4 candidates didn't have to.
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Response was that this is the process as it is laid out currently so this is how we will proceed.

- *Ordination of Marcus Liefert - Dan Goss*

Proposed Motion to Ordain Marcus Liefert: "We, the members of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, vote to ordain Marcus Liefert to Unitarian Universalist ministry in 2014."

Ordination of Marcus Liefert – Dan Goss

- Committee: Dick Bailey, Sharon Dolan, 3 members Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley (UUCB, in Kensington, which has already voted to ordain Marcus)
- Ordination Committee and Board of Trustees have reviewed Marcus' candidacy and unanimously recommend ordination
- Motion: We the members of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland do hereby ordain Marcus Liefert to Unitarian Universalist ministry
- Claudia Morgan so moved, Anna Foss seconded
- Questions/discussion about cost followed
- The committee is charged with raising \$4,000 in conjunction with the UUCB; no church operating funds will be expended
- Ordination will be planned and coordinated in conjunction with UUCB.
- General words of praise for Marcus
- B Avalon called the question. Moderator asked for vote to call the question. Passed with more than the required 2/3.
- Vote to ordain Marcus Liefert unanimous.

Fundraising for ordination

- Dan Goss said we need to raise funds for ordination of between \$2,000 and \$4,000, though exact expenses have not yet been determined, but no expenses will be incurred by the church. Julie Baeder said that the budget for an ordination is \$2,000, this was confirmed by finance team leader Molly Hermes. Sharon Dolan requested donations to meet the goal for cost of ordination, a basket was passed and donations were collected. A collection will also occur in following Sunday service.
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Report from Community Ministry Task Team and Discussion regarding Calling of Rev. Jacqueline Duhart

- Committee met with ET and board and recommended renaming position: Minister of Faith in Action (board needs to approve this name)
- Committee members: Cile Beatty, Judith Hunt, Stephanie Thames, Lisa Dyas, Bill Blakely, and Jill Miller (Anne Blackstone for a while)

Committee recommends:

- Position stand in parity with any other ministry position that the church chooses to call
- Board of Trustees call special meeting before end of church year (June 15) to vote on Rev Jacqueline's call
- Structures be set up to support the Faith in Action Ministry that help mitigate the effects of white privilege and structural racism that can cause the ministries of ministers of color to fail
- Interim ministry process include ample conversation with congregation on this position

Discussion

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- Discussion followed about who will be accountable for setting up structures described above. Board of Trustees feels it is their responsibility (Dan Goss stated).
 - Brian Jeffries explained financial support for Rev Jacqueline's call. Tom Haw has made a \$90k (over several years) commitment to support this ministry and the congregation is working to match it. Currently have sufficient match for over one year.
 - Question raised: unclear on process going forward for how this fits with new minister and who's driving this process. No response given.
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Announcement of Voting Results

- All 4 candidates for Board of Trustees elected with vast majority but not unanimous
 - All 3 candidates for nominating committee elected with vast majority
 - There were 3 write-in candidates for the Board of Trustees position: Amber Bell (not present), Dick Bailey (declined), Dennis Rowcliff (declined)
 - Jill Miller written in for Nominating Committee, accepted nomination
 - Leslie Brandt moved Jill be elected to Nominating Committee. Anne Lown seconded. Moderator moved to call the question. Vote was unanimous to call the question
 - Vote to elect Jill to Nominating Committee passed unanimously.
 - Moderator asked whether there were other floor nominations for board to be made from the floor. There were none.
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State of the Church, Transition Report – Rev. Ed Brock

Minister of Community Engagement Report – Rev. Jacqueline Duhart

- Looks forward to partnering with new minister whoever it is.
 - Parish ministry and faith in action will begin to walk together
 - We march to a different drummer here and so does she so she thinks it's a good fit
 - Some of glimpses of 'paradise' here at First Unitarian include: cottage conversations, Trayvon Martin conversations, Holiday Concert, Martin Luther King Day worship with Rev Dorsey Blake, SSL team, Breaking Bread and Building Community events, Ella Baker partnership, New Jim Crow read, Tuesday Vespers/meeting night, church-wide educational faith in action.
 - Need to connect dots of our ministries internally and externally
 - Bring back internship program, CUFL (Center for Urban Family Life)
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Financial Report – Molly Hermes

- Last year was really difficult financially (largely because of settlement to outgoing minister)
 - But we made it (had \$12k in operations account at end of fiscal year)
 - Raised \$56k for Rev Jacqueline's ministry
 - Raised \$351k for operations budget for this year
 - We have 3 budgets: Operations, pass through (things that are supposed to break even where fee is charged, etc.), and designated accounts (for specific things)
 - There will be a capital campaign this year to help retire mortgage
 - Question about where fund to restore organ is. Molly will take that under research and consult with board
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- Question about maintenance of church—how will ongoing maintenance issues have financial resources to be better addressed. Molly said this is in part what capital campaign is for. Brian said Stefan and Frank have done remarkable job with limited resources, and have brought in more rental revenue than budgeted through additional events, which also increases wear and tear.
 - Clark Sanford said he's working on tech to bring costs down.
 - More information available in meeting packet .
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Auction of Oakland A's Box

- *Sold for \$150 to Therese Jimenez*
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Recognition of Outgoing Leadership

- *Recognition of Outgoing Trustees: Andy Lee, Anne Lown, Jill Miller, Margaret Woodside*
 - *Recognition of Committee on Ministry: Charlotte Dickson, Chair; Gerre McKenna, Liam Alequire, Noemi de Guzman, Dick Bailey*
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Benediction and Closing Words – Rev. Ed Brock

11:25 a.m.

Adjourn Annual Meeting

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2014 ANNUAL MEETING : COMMUNITY MINISTRY TASK TEAM REPORT

The Committee entitled the Community Ministry Task Team (CMTT) consisted of Rev. Kurt A. Kuhwald (Facilitator), Cile Beatty, Judith Hunt, Stephanie Thames, Lisa Dyas, Jill Miller and Bill Blakely.

For this Annual Meeting, we offer the Document entitled, "Position Description, Minister of Faith in Action" for the Board of Trustee review and approval. (See attached) The position as described is intended to be responsible to the Board and the Congregation and to stand in parity with any other professional ministry position the Church chooses to create, hire and/or call.

The CMTT strongly recommends that the BOT convene a special congregational meeting, no later than the end of this church year, for the purpose of Calling the Rev. Jacqueline Duhart to the position of Minister of Faith in Action (MFA) as described in the attached document.

In researching similar ministerial positions in other UU churches across the U.S., and in discussing the needs of the position and role here at First Oakland with UU leaders who have responsibilities for anti-racism, multiculturalism and countering oppression within our Association, it was clear that any congregation that hires or calls a minister of color needs to set up specific structures of support sensitive and responsive to the dynamics of racism and particularly white privilege. Further, to insure a successful ministry, the congregation must engage in appropriate educational experiences specifically geared to create a climate of support for the minister and their relationship with the congregation. This is particularly necessary because the history of UU congregations is tragically replete with ministers of color whose ministries do not succeed. The CMTT, therefore, strongly recommends that these needs be addressed as part of the Call process of Rev. Jacqueline Duhart.

While the CMTT determined that describing the entire professional ministry structure for First Unitarian Church was of a scale beyond its purview, we do recommend and support that the Interim Ministry process should include ample opportunities for members of the congregation to express their views, hopes and desires regarding the MFA position. As I wrote to BOT member Dan Goss in an email little over a week ago:

After encountering the issue of the whole professional ministry as a conundrum at the center of our work, we determined that it was not our job to design, assess, or conjure any picture of that whole ... except to say that it will have to be worked out, and worked out in relation to the commitment of the fact that Rev. Jacqueline will be called into the MFA prior to calling and settling [a] second minister.

That process is, of course, backwards. But it is, in the opinion of the CMTT, where the congregation is, and where the congregation seems (Deeply!) to need to go. And many, including Rev. Ed, seem to believe that it is workable, if not elegant.

In addition, while the CMTT heard reports from the Finance Team and from Interim Minister Ed Brock that the monies necessary to fund the position of Minister of Faith in Action were sufficient to offer a

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Call to Rev. Duhart, and while the CMTT accepted these reports as valid, we leave the report of the actual figures of the funding for the position of MFA to the appropriate Church Committees.

In conclusion, I will repair to the words I wrote to Dan in the same email quoted above:

“I am firm in my sense that First Oakland is on the right track, and that great and powerful currents bending toward justice are assisting all our work, toward justice and [toward] love, the love that is at the core of Beloved Community.

“Blessings to you all as we follow that unmade path”

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Kurt A. Kuhwald

Community Ministry Task Team, Facilitator

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2014 ANNUAL MEETING : POSITION DESCRIPTION MINISTER OF FAITH IN ACTION

Status: Part time, exempt. Thirty (30) hours, plus benefits.

Summary of Position:

The Minister of Faith in Action (MFA) works to strengthen the Oakland congregation's justice ministries within, among and beyond the walls of the Church. The MFA collaborates with clergy and staff teams, lay leaders and volunteers to manifest the Beloved Community both in the Oakland and East Bay communities and within the congregation.

Essential Functions that Define the Minister of Faith in Action:

- Organize, support and convene Faith in Action Teams.
- Evaluate, revise and build upon faith in action efforts.
- Monitor and/or coordinate new proposals that involve the church in social justice projects.
- Train and support justice teams in using socially responsible and spiritually reflective practices.
- Organize and communicate information to the congregation about the social justice ministries within, among and beyond the church.
- Nurture deep engagement with and build partnerships with community groups and agencies.
- Develop and monitor budget allocations for MFA ministries.
- Support the Church in developing radically welcoming, inclusive an intentionally multigenerational, multiracial, multicultural, anti-oppressive Unitarian Universalist religious community. We work for spiritual and social transformation within, among, and beyond ourselves in support of our vision, mission, and ends.
- Dynamic multicultural worship by participating in services, and preaching up to 8 times per year.
- Monitor/communicate UUA and District programs to the congregation that relate to "beyond the walls ministries."
- Performs rites and rituals such as weddings and memorial services as time and circumstances permit, and as appropriate to the MFA position.
- Collaborates as needed with the Pastoral Care and the Membership Teams.
- Collaborates with the Executive Team as a spiritual advisor.

Core Competencies:

- Passion for Unitarian Universalism and supportive of high expectation membership.
- Experienced and pastoral in working with a diverse population of varying emotional, spiritual and practical needs.
- Positive attitude and ability to function well as part of a staff and volunteer team.
- Ability to manage multiple project, processes and budgets.
- Excellent interpersonal, relationship building and communication skills.
- Experience with community health assessments and developing action impact plans for community outreach initiatives.
- Experience working with diverse boards, professional groups, grassroots and neighborhood associations.
- Organized and professional, keeps to a schedule ; can gather and organize people and materials.

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- Enjoys identifying and supervising volunteers, can maintain an open, active dialogue as well as communicate expectations clearly.
- Supports the church's vision and ministry as an antiracist, multiracial, multicultural, multigenerational congregation.
- Abides by UUMA guidelines, staff covenant and other church covenants.

About the Church:

For more than a century, the First Unitarian Church of Oakland has been a progressive religious voice in the heart of downtown Oakland. We are a community where people with different beliefs worship as one faith, where religious inspiration comes from not one but many sources.

We believe that every person is a unique person of worth and that our religion calls on us to create a world where all people are treated with dignity, respect and compassion. We come together in friendship and caring to support one another through the many changes of our lives, to give love and hope along the way. We encourage one another on a lifelong path of personal discovery and development, of religious and spiritual growth and responsibility and action in our community and wider world.

Our growing congregation is committed to the creation of a radically inclusive community. We warmly welcome those who by reason of race, class, dis/ability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity have felt excluded elsewhere. As a justice seeking community, we are open to the transformation of mind, body and heart that comes by being authentically engaged in ministries to eliminate the oppressions that have systemically marginalized human beings and contributed to the ecological destruction of the planet.

First Unitarian Church of Oakland is a place for all those seeking a place to grow in spirit, to deepen connection to the human family, and who wish to join with others to create a better world.

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2014 ANNUAL MEETING : INTERIM MINISTER REPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning.

A Transition Team is being formed and will likely be approved by the board at the next board meeting. The Transition Team aids the Interim Minister in the work of the Interim period.

The Board will be deciding soon when to begin the process to form a search committee for a new settled minister; that decision will include whether the congregation will have a two- or a three-year interim period. Whether or not I will be serving beyond my two year contract, for a third year, or whether it would benefit the church to have another interim minister, or some other professional for that third year, or some other configuration not yet imagined, is on the board's agenda for consideration as well.

I would like to share a few reflections with you.

Bear in mind that my own thoughts are in a state of continuous development. What I share with you grows out of my own experience but also out of numerous conversations – with members of this congregation, with former members of this congregation, with persons who have been settled ministers and interim ministers here, as well as a host of outside resources.

My views and perspectives are partial, imperfect and incomplete. If I wait for my views to congeal into perfection I would never speak, so I press on with my commentary in hope my remarks might serve some useful purpose for the long term good of the congregation.

During the period prior to the last minister the ideals of 'lay ministry' were of paramount importance: lay leaders worked in partnership with professional ministry to do the work of the church. Over the last eight years, lay centered ministry receded in significance as more conventional forms of polity and governance rose in importance. This was a very understandable change: the form of polity and governance increasing practiced over the last eight years is closer to the models of ministry and governance practiced widely in UU congregations nationally. As the practice of a 'normal' model of governance met resistance, the counter response was intensification of control around the Senior Minister. This movement led to a set of actions and response that took on a life of its own and, once it reached its climax, the church was at a place far removed from the governance and ministry structure formed during the critical years of the church's early development. From beginning to end, this was a huge shift occurring over a thirteen year period. It seems apparent to me that the older model in which 'lay ministry' is of central importance, and in which professional ministry is primary a ministry of empowerment, lies closest to the heart and soul of the church. To move too far away from this model of church life is to court institutional crisis. Furthermore, this model of ministry, in which 'lay ministry' is of central importance, will best match the church's aspiration to be a multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-generational church.

The Oakland church is right now in the middle of a process of moving back toward a model of ministry in which lay ministry plays a very strong role. It is important that the church make this movement as calmly, peacefully, and as effectively, as possible.

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It is also very important for the church to define as clearly as possible exactly what this type of church model looks like, so that future ministers, arriving here, can more readily understand and be better prepared to begin their ministry here.

Church leaders now find themselves free of restrictions once experienced over a period of years and have begun to explore vigorously the full range of what their leadership may mean.

In my view, the truth obscured in this movement is that a strong lay centered model of the church will function best in balance with strong ministerial leadership with carefully defined roles, responsibilities and authority. Ministers engage most effectively in collaboration and empowerment of others from a safe, secure, unambiguous and clear basis – as this occurs within the framework of a solid monitoring process, and in harmony with goals established by the board. To put together all of these pieces will be a lengthy and slow process because enormous distrust has accrued around the notion of ‘ministerial authority’ – and therein lies one of the church’s greatest challenges. There is no way to speed up this process of restoring trust but that is part of the church’s healing and the pathway to reach its potential. Because the aim to be a multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-generational church is so important, striving to reach a place of functioning well becomes imperative.

As we make this transition described above, we are moving in a period with some significant degree of unclear or absent or arbitrarily changing structure, which has allowed a more invisible power structure to play an important role in events.

In organizations where the experience of abuse of power, or harmful patriarchal systems, have left deep wounds – either in the recent experience of a person, or in experiences early in their life or in experiences in another religious tradition - there is a tendency to have a high tolerance for minimal organizational structure. In “structurelessness” organizations, power and decision-making are hidden behind informal social interactions, often by people who have strong social connections to one another. In this environment, a significant number of decisions are made within small social circles and move from there into the more formal governing structures of the church. This precludes new people from finding a secure path into meaningful leadership roles with untrammelled freedom to see and do things in truly new ways. Thus there is a need to bring issues of authority, and policy and process out into the open for discussion and resolution. As an institution priding itself, and rightly so, on striving to be a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-generational church, clear process and guidelines that are revised formally and made clear and accessible to all becomes a profoundly important issue. I am delighted to see our leaders heading in this direction.

I wish to stress again that as the congregation looks out ahead toward its future, and to having a relationship with a new settled minister, the model of ministry you have here, deeply rooted in your history, requires a unique brand of collaboration and shared ministry that is not widely embraced much less practiced by the vast majority of UU congregations; therefore being specific about what you want and need, and expressing that with as much transparency and clarity as possible, becomes very important.

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In conclusion, this congregation has an amazing depth and range of talent for every aspect of church life; the challenge for the church is channeling this great energy into coherent and sustainable ways that serves the highest good of the church and having truly open and transparent systems for doing that. It is particularly important for the church to focus a significant portion of its prodigious energies on goals directed toward service to groups, causes and organizations external to the church – and avoid focusing that energy internally to an inordinate degree as it seems to be the case now. This strong outer focus not only serves the goal of being a healthy church but facilitates the church’s vision of being a multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-generational church.

This church has an enormously bright future. The people of this church are incredibly resilient and resourceful. This institution will be sitting on the corner of 14th and Castro for a very, very long time, continuing to do good works and being a beacon of hope.

I think there are great benefits to opening up the myriad discussions taking place at the church regarding the church’s future to as many ‘outside experts’ as possible – to let ‘outsiders’ see what is happening and unfolding here - not so they will ‘control’ the process but to bring fresh perspectives about church dynamics for the long term good of the congregation. There is sometimes a feeling that the church has been isolated from meaningful, regular and unfiltered interactions with the larger UU world of resources on the District and Regional and National level for a very long time.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude for the privilege and honor of serving as your Interim Minister.