

# First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

## Annual Meeting

May 26, 2021 Minutes

---

Board President Andy Turner called the annual meeting of the regular annual meeting of the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca (FUSIT) to order at 6:01pm on Wednesday, May 26, 2021. This is our second Zoom-based virtual annual meeting.

**Scribe:** Diana Nier

**Parliamentarian:** Elton Hall

**Quorum:** 53 members present

### **Handouts:**

- [2020 Annual Report, including FUSIT Annual Meeting Minutes](#)

Opening words of welcome and chalice lighting by the Rev. Weis

### **Item #1: Year in Review Presentation by Rev. Margaret Weis**

- Gratitude to all team and committee leaders for getting reports in for the Annual Report, despite the challenges of this year
- This has been a largely virtual year
  - Our weekly services moved entirely online, averaging 130-180 viewers per week. YouTube views are a new way to track attendance
  - Thank you to our tech team (Ball, Zinda, etc.) for making virtual services possible
  - Our services are streamed weekly on channel 13
  - All services available on YouTube, as well as some other content such as the "Love Is" video
  - We had our first collective virtual memorial service, to honor multiple people who died and allow people to attend from far away
- We welcomed 2 new members, and 6 people finished the NICE program
- Engagement team began highlighting outreach work by FUSIT members and groups
- Small group engagement is up, and some have shifted from meeting once a month to meeting as often as once a week. Zoom has added flexibility to meetings, particularly in regard to inclement weather
- We began running Living the Pledge workshops. Over 50 people have now completed the workshop, and we have over a dozen trained facilitators. Thank you especially to Beth Howard, Jennifer Streid-Muller, Nancy Miller, and Jens Wennberg for their initial support.
- Our sanctuary is newly renovated, plastered, and painted, and our organ is repaired!
  - In-person Flower Communion on June 6, with a chance to view the sanctuary
- Thank you various groups and teams for hard work in a challenging year
  - The Stewardship team, for their invaluable service without a chair
  - The Board: retiring members, continuing members, and incoming members.

# First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

## Annual Meeting

May 26, 2021 Minutes

---

- Thanks especially to Jennifer Streid-Mullen for her excellent work as treasurer, and for stepping up during transitions over and over again
- Thank you to the staff team!

### **Item #2: Year in Review Presentation by President Andy Turner**

- Although it's been a challenging year, it's also been rewarding and inspirational to see how the FUSIT community steps up to the challenge and continues moving forward
- Our new members from 2020-21 came on during a tumultuous period and jumped in without much chance for adjustment -- the Board is grateful for their energy and good humor.
- We are grateful to all Board members for hard work and innovative thinking in challenging times
- We're especially grateful to Jennifer Streid-Mullen for navigating the PPP loan and finding her successor as Treasurer, Walt Peck.
- Notable Board efforts from 2020-2021:
  - Supporting FUSIT's racial justice work and finding ways to make it sustainable
    - Create goals
    - Create ways to measure progress
  - Working to move the Service Auction online
  - Looking at our communications strategies, finding ways to improve lines of communication between the Board, the Minister, the staff, the various committees and teams, and the congregation at large
  - Listening circles to discuss and process Rev. Margaret's resignation
  - Established an Interim Search Committee

### **Item #3: Interim Search Committee Update from Walt Peck**

- The Search Committee received names of 5 excellent ministers and interviewed all 5 candidates
- FUSIT was not any candidate's #1 congregation, so we did not receive a match in the first round. The reason given was mostly related to geographic location.
- We have now moved to a second round and have a new set of names. This second round of interviews should be completed in the second week of June, 2021

At this point Kim Wilkinson raised the question of whether to record the Zoom meeting. Hearing no objections from the floor, the meeting was recorded from this point onward.

### **Item #4: 8th Principle Update from Beth Howard, Jess Brown, and Miles Brown (youth)**

# First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

## Annual Meeting

May 26, 2021 Minutes

---

- Jessa and Miles Brown presented the proposed 8th Principle: *“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”*
- This has been proposed at the UUA General Assembly, but has not been adopted by the UUA. Some individual congregations have adopted the 8th principle for themselves.
- Proposal for FUSIT to consider the 8th Principle with the goal of holding a congregational vote at or before the 2022 Annual Meeting. We do NOT intend to vote on the issue today.
- Beth Howard spoke about reasons in favor of adopting the 8th Principle
- Miles presented the next steps: educate ourselves about the 8th principle, starting by exploring what UUs of color have to say about the issue
- We hope to hold information sessions and discussion sessions through the coming year, with the goal of either calling a special meeting to vote on the 8th Principle or adding a vote on the 8th Principle to the 2022 Annual Meeting
- Floor opened to questions:
  - How can a UU who does not attend the 2022 General Assembly have a voice in the denomination's decision?
    - If individual congregations adopt the 8th Principle ahead of the UUA vote, that lends support to its adoption. Additionally, FUSIT sends delegates to GA, and congregation members can make sure those delegates are aware of our views
  - When will plans be solidified for information, education, and discussion sessions within FUSIT?
    - The Anti-Racism ministry team will handle these plans. Summer sessions are up in the air, but there will be fall sessions. The team will request aid and engagement from the congregation at that time.
  - How does this interact with the Living the Pledge program?
    - This will run alongside Living the Pledge rather than be integrated into it. However, participating in or running an 8th Principle session can be part of one's work in the Living the Pledge program
  - How many other UU congregations have adopted or intend to adopt the 8th Principle?
    - [www.8thprincipleuu.org](http://www.8thprincipleuu.org) has lots of useful resources
    - As of May 2021, 61 UU congregations have adopted the 8th principle and many others are considering it

### **Item #5: Overview of Zoom Voting Procedures by Kim Wilkinson**

# First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

## Annual Meeting

May 26, 2021 Minutes

---

- The minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting will be approved in an open vote via Zoom
- After the vote on the Minutes, Jennifer Streid-Mullen will present the budget, with pauses for clarifying questions. Once the presentation is complete, the floor will open for potential amendments.
- Arthur Woll will present the candidates for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee
- After the budget and candidates are presented, we will vote on those items via a Google form

### **Item #6: 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION:** Approve the minutes from the 2020 Annual Meeting. Moved by Therese O'Connor, seconded by Marie Benedetti. **MOTION PASSED, 43 yes / 0 no**

### **Item #7: 2021-2022 FUSIT Budget**

- This year's budget includes a contingent component, and will probably be a deficit budget
- We have created a faith-based budget to assure core services while also providing flexibility to the Board and staff
- Revenues are down compared to the projected 2020-21 budget, but expenditures are also down
- Key assumptions for 2021-22 budget:
  - In-person services resume in September 2021
  - Rentals, RE, and choir will not resume until January 2022
- Quote from **[name???**
- For interim minister: budgeting at the midpoint of the UUA recommendation for a congregation of our size
- **Fill in details from Jennifer's power-point**
- Question from the floor about contract choir services: is this feasible? Answer: yes, this is a standard practice for freelance musicians
- Stewardship is contemplating the possibility of a short fall campaign, with hope that once we return to in-person services and have an interim minister, people who are uncertain now will come forward once again
- Contingent budget: there is \$32,000 of expenses we will not pay out until and unless we secure revenues beyond our \$396,000 forecast
- Proposal: Adopt the Proposed 21-22 Budget with spending of \$443,000, of which \$32,000 of expenses are contingent upon securing revenues beyond current forecast of \$396,000. This will limit our potential deficit to a maximum of \$7,000.

# First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

## Annual Meeting

May 26, 2021 Minutes

---

**MOTION:** That the Proposed 21-22 Budget be adopted with spending of \$443,000, of which \$32,000 of expenses are contingent upon securing revenues beyond current forecast of \$396,000. Moved by Therese O'Connor, seconded by Elton Hall.

Voting withheld until after presentation of candidate slates.

**MOTION PASSED, 53 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain**

### **Item #8: Slate of Candidates for the Nominating Committee**

- Presentation of the role of Nominating Committee *[copy this from Bylaws]*
- Fred Balfour for a 2 year Nominating Committee Term, 2021-2023
- Amber Harris for a 2 year Nominating Committee Term, 2021-2023
- Beth Howard for a 1 year Nominating Committee Term, 2021-2022
- Sue Roenke for a 2 year Nominating Committee Term, 2021-2023

### **Item #9: Slate of Candidates for the Board of Trustees**

- Don Barber for a 3 year Board Term, 2021-2024
- John Gaines for a 1 year Board Term 2021-2022
- Valerie Graves for a 3 year Board Term, 2021-2024
- Nancy Miller for a 2 year Board Term, 2021-2023
- Margaret Nichols for a 3 year Board Term, 2021-2024

### **Item #10: Voting**

- Kim Wilkinson provided a link to the Google Forms ballot. Members were instructed to click the "raise hand" icon in Zoom after voting.
- Results: Budget passed, all candidates elected.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN.** Moved by Kevin Moss, seconded by Geoff Dunn. **PASSED**

Welcome to our new Board members and NomCom members!

**Meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.**

Minutes taken by Diana Nier, 5/26/2021.