

Unity Church of Raleigh 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom Videoconference
November 8, 2020

Welcome

The meeting began with an opening prayer by our minister, Rev. Ellen Barron, at 11:03 AM.

Board President Andy Anderson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Andy introduced the board members and their current roles: Mary Butler (Secretary), Laura Dearth (Treasurer), Sharon Tamar (Member-at-large), Shamil Zah (Member-at-Large), and Rev. Ellen Barron, Ex-Officio Member. Board Nominee, McCale Penven-Crew, was absent. There were 23 members present.

Andy noted the purpose of the meeting was to look back over the UCR fiscal year (June 1, 2019 to May 31, 2020), review activities and to report on what to look forward to in the coming year.

Andy explained that this year's meeting normally held in June was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions for indoor gatherings. Consequently, the Board of Trustees decided to hold a hybrid format to live-stream our meeting with all trustees in person and the membership via Zoom. He stated that the 2020 Annual Meeting packet was mailed to all members in accordance with our Bylaws, and the packet included an Information Sheet, Meeting Agenda, 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes and Financial Report, Revised Bylaws and Summary of Changes, Updated Mission and Vision Statements, and 2020 Election Forms. He further stated that eligible members were requested to vote, sign-date and return the 2020 Elections Form by regular mail, e-mail, or drop off at the church no later than Friday-November 6, 2020.

Presentation of the 2019 Minutes

Secretary Mary Butler summarized the minutes from last year and invited members to ask questions or make comments. There were no other questions or comments. A motion was made by Andy Anderson to accept the minutes and was seconded by Shamil Zah. The minutes were approved with a verbal vote: All in favor with no one opposed.

Board Member Requirements

Andy referred everyone to the 2020 Annual Meeting packet for details.

Board Elections

Andy stated that there is currently one open board position with a 3-year term: Dianne Evans' slot was temporarily filled by Katharine Pellegrino who stepped down at the end of May for work-related reasons. In the interim, Trustees appointed nominee McCale Penven-Crew. In addition, Andy stated that he desires to extend to an additional one-year term.

Rev. Ellen explained that there were five election items for voting today using online polling where members will indicate "yes" or "no" as follows: 1) Election of Board Member Andy Anderson to a one-year term; 2) Election of Nominee McCale Penven-Crew to a 3-year term; 3) Approval of Revised UCR Bylaws; 4) Approval of UCR Mission and Vision Statements; and 5) Election of the Nominating Committee for 2021. Rev. Ellen then invited nominations from the

floor. There were none. She stated the Bylaws were revised in January 2020 to be in compliance with Unity Worldwide Ministries' re-formatted Bylaws requirement for all member church organizations, adding that Office Manager Louise Smythe had done a great job summarizing the Bylaws changes. Rev. Ellen then called for a vote on the five items. A total of 22 members voted "yes" on all items with one (1) member voting "no" on the Revised UCR Bylaws. The items were approved by majority vote.

Nominating Committee Elections

Andy announced the incoming 2021 Nominating Committee members, who will recruit and interview the Board Member candidates. They are Bonnie Patrick and Doug Walters. Andy explained that Doug is an alternate and will serve if Bonnie is not available. A motion was made by Sharon Tamar to accept the slate for nominating committee. Mary Butler seconded. This motion was approved by a verbal vote.

State of the Ministry Report and Minister's Report

Rev. Ellen combined these two reports and reported on accomplishments since the beginning of her tenure in July, as follows:

- ❖ The video recording and live streaming of the Sunday Services is going very well and helping us reach new people. She gratefully acknowledged Sharon Shehdan's diligence with weekly audio recording and video preparation.
- ❖ Our ministry is founded on Prayer; therefore, our focus will continue to practice praying with each other through offering small group discussions and prayer training. These meetings will be offered both in-person (masked and social distance) and for those who prefer participating from home via Zoom.
- ❖ Virtual classes have been very successful and are continuing via Zoom on a weekly basis. There will be more exciting events and interesting classes through the remainder of this year.

Finance Report

Board Treasurer Laura Dearth presented the Finance Report for the period June 2018 through May 2019. This report was mailed in the Annual Meeting Information packet to all voting members of the congregation prior to the meeting.

Sharon Shehdan motioned to accept the Finance Report and Melanie Raskin seconded. The motion was approved by a verbal vote.

Team Reports

Andy noted that many teams have not been active during church closure with the pandemic. He thanked all Team Leaders and volunteers for their participation, adding that new volunteers are always welcome. Highlights of team leaders' reports follow:

- **Prayer Ministry:** Melanie Raskin stated that this group fell under the jurisdiction of the Minister, and she took it on during Rev. Bev's illness and later transition. Melanie stated they actively pray for the church and on any prayer request received. This year, along with prayer chaplains Pat Anderson and Betty Sari, check-in phone calls were placed in April-May and well-received. They also participated in our World Day of Prayer in September. Melanie shared that as prayer is the foundation of this ministry, a focus will be made going forward spiritually.

- **Sound-Music-Video Team:** Gregg Bockover reported that since the new Sunday format in March due to COVID-19, the Music team has continued to participate in Sunday services with two musical selections, and a Song of the Week which is posted on Facebook and the church website. He gave special thanks to Sharon Shehdan for live-streaming and production of Sunday Services, adding that she will step down when a suitable AV support replacement comes aboard.
- **Youth Education:** Shamil Zah (Co-Director with Laura Dearth) reported on their progress in rebranding this group to Youth and Family Ministry which will have a focus on the full family in the future. They've launched Zoom sessions for Buds & Blossoms on Sundays mornings; as well as Youth of Unity classes for middle and high school students by connecting with Southeast Unity. YOU-ers will begin to participate in video production to share their feelings about Gratitude starting with our 5th Sunday Services. There are plans to commence parent meetings as a way to have spiritual support, conversation and discussion. Laura thanked Shamil as Co-Director along with Rev. Ellen for their positive energy, focus and support, and she looks forward to the opportunity to expand into the community.
- **Assimilation Team:** Dianne Evans (Co-Director with Cherry Lea who has stepped down) reported on recent discussions with Rev. Ellen to rename this team to Welcome (or Welcoming) Team. This will more accurately reflect their objective saying "Welcome" means "to greet or receive someone cordially upon entering or joining our space – friendly, pleasant, amicable". When church re-opens, Dianne's team will be happy to resume greeting visitors, making introductions, sharing church information, and escorting guests into the Sanctuary.
- **CORE Team:** Sharon Shehdan reported that 95 stuffed toys and animals were collected for Ronald MacDonald House; donations went to the Durham Food Mission; the Homeless Shelter, and Alliance Medical Ministries. Since COVID-19, they collected 175 lbs. for the Food Bank this month. Sharon stated the next outreach project is writing Holiday Cards for our military through the USO. She invited everyone to pick up cards in the church lobby (or use their own), adding that a link for sample messages are posted on our website.
- **Building & Grounds Team:** Sharon Shehdan reported on several building projects, including needed repairs to the restrooms and kitchen area; organizing the storage room; removing surplus items for donation to Habitat for Humanity ReStore; and renovating/painting the Minister's office. Future projects include painting, along with siding and window repairs. Sharon expressed her gratitude to Louise Smythe, Lin Shehdan, Andy Anderson, and Mary Butler. Mary then reported on the Grounds, stating annual flowers were planted around the church sign; they maintained the climbing roses and azaleas; container planters and seasonal plants were donated for the front entryway and the outside seating areas. Mary acknowledged Tissa Dobbins for supervising the installation of a brick retaining wall at the church sign. She also thanked Laura Dearth, Lin and Sharon Shehdan, and Andy Anderson.
- **Fundraising Team:** Melanie Raskin acknowledged and thanked Betty and Ken Sari (absent) for their efforts, especially the very successful Hearts In Unity Dinner and Auction in February. Andy Anderson stated that they had kicked off Bingo in early 2020 and also held one virtual Bingo since the pandemic.

- **Men's Group:** Doug Walters reported this group has been on-hold due to the pandemic, but have continued several activities outside church, including support for projects at Durham Rescue Mission where Al Henderson serves as an ambassador. They participated in two holiday luncheons as well as a Washcloth/Towel Drive with the Mission; and hosted two Mud-Cats baseball games over the past year. Al Henderson, Doug Walters and Cliff Dobbins also participated in our Sunday Service on Father's Day. The Men's Group regularly handles the chairs put-up and takedown in the Sanctuary. Team Leader Al Henderson stated they are hopeful to start Zoom meetings soon to continue supporting the church and community at large.

Question and Answer Time

There were none.

Conclusion

In closing, Rev. Ellen thanked everyone for their faith, love, and support, as well as sharing their time, talent, and treasures -- all of which serves as the spiritual nourishment for our church. She also recognized and thanked the Board members for their love, smiles, strength of purpose, and wisdom. Rev. Ellen noted that although the church is closed, we're very actively using our spiritual powers of zeal, enthusiasm and love. She invited everyone who is enthusiastic and wishes to share from their heart to please join the upcoming Team Meeting on November 19th via Zoom. Rev. Ellen then gave the Closing Prayer, and the meeting adjourned at 1:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Butler

Board Secretary