

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
Annual Congregational Meeting
Celebration and Planning
May 22, 2011**

MINUTES

Call to Order and Determine Presence of a Quorum

With 75 members present, Stephanie Ann Blythe, President, called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Lois Atkinson moved adoption of the agenda as printed, and it was adopted by voice vote.

Approval of Minutes of Congregational Meeting of February 13, 2011

Lois Atkinson moved approval of the minutes; they were approved by voice vote.

Presentation of Schweitzer Medal

John and Lynne Cahoon presented the Schweitzer Medal to Walter Gorski (see Appendix A)

Recognition by the Partner Church Council

Anne Greenwood read a letter of appreciation to Mary Pugh for years of service in the Transylvania Partner Church program.

President's Report (See Appendix B)

Coordinating Team Report (See Appendix C)

Treasurer's Report (See Appendix D)

Safe Congregation Commission Report (See Appendix E)

UUA General Assembly (June 22-26, Charlotte, NC)

Stephanie Ann Blythe encouraged congregants to attend the annual gathering, noting that UUCB is entitled to 11 delegates for the plenary (business meeting) sessions. She said this year for the first time there would be arrangements for voting by off-site delegates, and Susan Lankford would be one for UUCB.

Proposed Bylaws Amendment

Sue Thompson moved the following:

Section 6.10 of the UUCB Bylaws is modified to read:

The Board of Trustees shall establish a Nominating Committee to identify candidates for Trustees to replace departing ones. This Committee shall be composed of the Vice President of the Board and six (6) certified members recommended by the Board in consultation with Church members and elected by the Membership at the preceding Celebration and Planning Meeting.

The motion carried by a hand vote of 56 in favor, 0 opposed.

Endorsement of Nominating Committee Additions

Jean Gleason moved the following:

Jan Setchko, Maryann Simpson, and Josh Clark are appointed to the Nominating Committee for two-year terms, to join continuing members Paul Hudson, Amy Petré Hill, and Rebecca Mitchell. Appointed as alternate for two years is Karen Tripp, to join with continuing alternate Sara Roberts to serve in case of absence of another member.

The motion carried by a hand vote of 59 in favor, 0 opposed.

Budget for 2011-2012

John Tucker moved:

The Preliminary Budget is adopted for 2011-2012, with the Board of Trustees and the Coordinating Team empowered to make adjustments within the parameters delineated in the document entitled "Assumptions/Highlights for 2011-2012 Budget."

The motion carried by a hand vote of 58 in favor, 0 opposed.

Wheel of Life

Stephanie Anne Blythe read the list of births, marriages and unions, and deaths in our community during the past year.

Blessing and Adjournment

Stephanie Anne Blythe gave a closing blessing and adjourned the meeting at 12:48 p.m.

Congregational Meeting
May 22, 2011
Appendices

Appendix A. Award Presentation

Good morning. My name is Lynne Cahoon,

and my name is John Cahoon.

We are honored to present the Schweitzer Medal to Walter Gorski. Walter has been an active member of the UU churches since his college days.

We didn't ask how many years ago *that* was.

In January of 2004 he became a member of the UU CB.

He introduced himself to us when he first started coming to church.

That is one of the great things about Walter – he is always willing to make the first move.

We were impressed with this man, and we eventually made him a member of our family. Now this may be a dubious honor, but we all love him, and he is really good with our very active grandchildren.

He is an ambassador for Unitarian Universalism, and our church in particular, always seeking to put people at ease and make them welcome.

He served on the Membership Committee, at the greeter's table, on various canvases, on the Board of Trustees, at the book table, on the Partner Church Committee, and as a rescue service for folks in distress.

Professionally, Walter is a therapist, and he just can't seem to turn off the concern for others, especially the attentive listening.

Early in his career, Walter was a member of some crisis response teams that worked for various police departments around the country. There were times when some poor troubled soul, armed to the teeth, would try to take on a whole police force. Walter's friends on the force would ask: "Who can we send to negotiate with this guy?" Invariably, they would suggest Walter. Now Walter is good at what he does. After all, he is still standing here.

During Barbara and Bill's sabbatical he was especially active in offering caring and compassionate attention.

Walter is always willing to lend a hand.

How many times at partner church lunches, fund-raising Galas, RE field days, or Work Parties, have you seen Walter in an apron working and serving?

Walter is always there, and if you are lucky, he may even give you homemade jam!

Walter, we present to you the Schweitzer Medal, from a grateful congregation.

Appendix B. President's Report

It has been 10 years since I became a member of UUCB. One of the most important things we have done in that time is to adopt our Covenant of Right Relations. The events and controversy surrounding Rev. Richard Boeke and his recent resignation as Minister Emeritus is straining that covenant severely. There is still much to be done. Kay Fairwell will give a report on the Safe Congregation Commission that is dealing with the many issues that have arisen.

There are many more things we need to take care of to ensure a healthy and thriving congregation. We will be shortly losing our minister of religious education, Rev. Chris Holton-Jablonski. At the same time we are bidding him farewell we will be starting a process of examining our expectations for religious education and family ministry. That will help us discern how RE will be led in the future.

Our church facility is now fifty years old. There has been much deferred maintenance. We are looking at a list of our needs and setting priorities. More importantly, we have to look at how we will pay for the upkeep. Our annual operating budgets have not set aside any reserve for capital maintenance. What we might set aside in the new fiscal year's budget is only a start and really just a drop in the bucket. How we might ask you to fund these needs is a coming conversation.

The Board of Trustees adopted a transparency policy at its May meeting. We want our meetings, our committees and task forces to be open to view. Agendas and our documents will be available for view, whether posted in the Atrium or posted on our website. We are also making the Board's Governance Manual into a continuously updated product that tells everyone how the Board operates, how it directs and delegates to the Coordinating Team and church staff. Most importantly, at the intersection of transparency and governance you'll be able to see our Ends Statements and find out how well they are being met.

How our congregation engages with the Pacific Central District and Unitarian Universalist Association is another area for exploration. There are changes coming at the district and denominational levels, and we should be fully engaged in those changes. We have two of our members on the District Board of Trustees, Karin Hart and Susan Lankford, while Linda Laskowski will be serving a second term on the UUA Board. They should be hearing from us first before they hear from others.

These are just a few of the challenges and opportunities awaiting us. I hope you'll join me and our other church leaders in taking them on. Thank you.

Appendix C. Coordinating Team Report

Good afternoon. I'm Margaret Gudmundsson, a member of your Coordinating Team (which we call the CT), along with Cynthia Asprodites, Kay Fairwell, Anne Greenwood, and Bill Hamilton-Holway.

Under our Policy-Based form of Governance, the Board of Trustees has delegated to us the responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the church, in order that the Board may focus on the larger issues and the future. Because the Board has delegated this responsibility, there is a monitoring procedure in place. As part of this process, the CT reports monthly to the Board detailing our decisions, actions, discussions, and other information. In addition, this year we submitted an annual report to the Board on how our church community is addressing the Board's stated "Ends" or goals for this church, goals around Worship and Spiritual Development, Ministry, Service, Community, Education, and Stewardship. The CT meets twice a month with, as you can imagine, many phone calls, emails, and face-to-face conversations in between.

We often hear from some of you that you don't know what we're doing or how decisions are made. The monthly report to the Board that I referred to is posted on a kiosk in the atrium each

month for everyone to view. In addition, we have a column in the Beacon, which is usually a shorter version of the report to the Board. We are also working on getting these reports on the website so that anyone who is interested can check them out.

So what has been going on since the February Congregational Meeting?

1. Religious Education and Family Ministry. With the departure of Chris Holton Jablonski, our Minister of Religious Education, work is in progress to plan for the future of our RE and Family Ministry program. A committee is being formed with members of the current RE and Family Ministry Committee, the CT, and the Board to planning for the future; what type of position are we looking for? We are covered for this next year, with our Intern Minister Marcus Liefert, who is especially interested in religious education. The CT has also included in the budget for this next year a one-third time family minister to be a central leader and focus for the program.

2. The Florida property has finally sold! This property was given to the church years ago by late member Anne Lane for the Church to sell. Real estate being what it is, it has taken this long to sell it. We received \$2,300 for this .99-acre piece of land.

3. Tree Policy. The CT has adopted a Planting Policy. This policy states that trees (memorial and others) will be planted only in consultation with the Landscape Committee and the Facilities Manager to ensure the appropriate tree for the spot chosen, or the appropriate spot for the tree chosen. Trees will be drought resistant, easy care, fire resistant, and native whenever possible, among other characteristics.

4. Lucille Parker Loan Resolved. With the assistance of Bob Moore, Anne Greenwood, and Jan Setchko, the loan that Lucille Parker made to UUCB for Freestone has been forgiven. When Lucille made this loan, she stated that it would be forgiven when she passed away. It originally was a \$10,000 loan, but had grown to a \$39,000 liability on the books. After some years of legal wrangling, Lucille's wishes have been fulfilled and we no longer show this liability.

5. German School Request for Additional Space. We continue to discuss the German School's request for expansion. Aspects we are considering are: what our commitment to private education is, our need for income, what use we could make of the building, how long the German School sees themselves staying at this location. Options we are looking at include: giving them the use of the downstairs rooms in the RE building and/or installing portable buildings. They are currently consulting an architect regarding site plans and permits. Their current plan has them going through the fifth or sixth grade. Their dream is of going to the eighth grade. If we give them the first floor of the RE building, this would mean that we would most likely lose the Meeting Room (the room next to Barbara and Bill's office) as a meeting space to RE. We are in consultation with the Board of Trustees as we look to the future and how we use our building's space.

Appendix D. Treasurer's Report

Hello,

I have been your treasurer since June of 2007, which makes this my 3rd annual report to you. Each year I find different things to celebrate and other things to hope for. Last year we celebrated no staff furloughs, the start of the Maybeck Legacy Society and with it a significant reduction of our solar panel note balance. This year we have the good news and the not so good news.

As of April 30th, we have a surplus of nearly \$25,000. While this indicates our budgeted income is covering our expenses to date, it can lead to a false sense of security! Pledge income decreases for the rest of the fiscal year and community rental income is well under our hoped for amount. This has been balanced by some generous giving and some increased income from the German School for their space use. There have been some very successful fundraisers, namely Into the Woods, and our Fun(d) raising GrUUp has continued their efforts with Dining 4 Dollars

and other sales. We have been generous to many entities in the outside community, donating more than \$30,000 to date through our Good Neighbor program and special emergency appeals.

Looking to next year, we are presenting a budget with a shortfall of \$7576. This is less than 1% of our budget, and our Business Administrator has applied for the federal government health care cost rebate valued at \$8331 this year, which may end up balancing the budget. We are leaving the deficit to hope that we can actually fund the \$5000 salary reserve line and the \$5000 building reserve item. If we have a surplus by June 30th, we will carry it forward to one or both of these lines.

You have indicated to the Coordinating Team that funding our staff salaries and healthcare costs is a high priority. This year no raises were given and next year we are only giving the ministers a 1% raise. We are considering the staff increase to be the coverage of the 12% increase in health care costs, with no increase in staff co-pays. Like many of you, this means no increase in income to meet the rising cost of food, utilities and gas.

Our Stewardship campaign this year, Looking Back, Looking Forward has received pledges from 196 people and assumed pledges from 132 others, for a total of \$469,500. Discounting this for people who are unable to fulfill their pledge, we have put \$446,000 in the budget. This amount does not fully cover salary and benefits for our staff and ministers, which cost over \$648,000, and make up 67% of our budget. I would consider it more healthy if our pledges could cover our salaries!

Additionally, as has been pointed out previously, both in my reports, and by members of the Budget Taskforce, we are not funding our building reserve line, and our building is aging. The reserve study undertaken earlier last fall and reported in February, shows we have unfunded maintenance liabilities of well over a million dollars. This includes the need for a new roof, repairs to our entry doors, upgrading bathrooms, worn-out furniture, and many other items. Of course, not all must be done at once, but we must be aware of our lack of both short term and long term stewardship for our building and grounds.

Our investments with the UUA have continued to perform well, covering our 5% withdrawal rate, and inflation, so principal has not been eroded. The UUA CEF expects to see reduced return due to the global economic stresses, and low return on the fixed income portfolio, and is adjusting their holdings accordingly to maintain returns. The UUA website has monthly and quarterly performance reports, which you may look at for more detail.

In the next year we will be in discernment about how to continue our Religious Education ministry, both in staffing and space needs, how to fund our Maintenance Reserve, and how to continue to upgrade staff support, with additional hours and positions and hopefully, cost of living increases. We will change our rate structure for rentals, hoping to increase revenue, while decreasing usage. We are looking at more green energy investment, perhaps with additional Solar panels, and improved conservation efforts.

Believing that our church is doing important work for those in our midst, and those outside, know that, as part of a healthy spiritual practice, your giving nourishes you. And if you are receiving gifts as part of this community, you are benefitting the givers.

It is my hope that you, the congregation, can continue to grow your financial commitment to the church, so we can maintain our excellent staff, step up to our Stewardship needs and extend our positive efforts in the wider community.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Greenwood

Treasurer

Appendix E. From the Safe Congregation Commission

In response to the issue of ministerial misconduct from our previous minister, and all the hurt that has ensued, the Board of Trustees has formed the Safe Congregation Commission. Members of this commission are: Stephanie Ann Blythe, Kay Fairwell, Lynnette Delgado, David Lingenfelter, Dave Rockhold, and Judy Sam. The mission of this Commission is:

“The Safe Congregation Commission will promote right relationships among church members, offer compassionate listening and healing resources, work toward closure on controversial issues, and seek to enhance policies on personal or emotional safety at UUCB.”

The Safe Congregations Commission of UUCB invites members of the congregation to a Compassionate Communication Gathering on Saturday, June 4th aimed at beginning a process of healing and closure within our community following the resignation of Rev. Dr. Richard Boeke as minister emeritus and all that has preceded it. Members who have felt aggrieved or estranged from the community are particularly invited. The gathering will be facilitated by Rev. Cat Cox, a community minister of UUCB, and will be based on processes developed by the Center for Non-Violent Communication, which have been used worldwide in communities under stress to reestablish a sense of mutual care and restore harmony. The meeting will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 in the Fireside Room—if it’s available. We’ll confirm the room and let you know next Sunday and in the announcements.

The Commission will continue to work with all members of the congregation: those who have wanted to offer care to the Boekes, those who are in need of healing and care for their suffering from either this or other instances of misconduct in their past, and those without a direct interest in the issue who want a refocusing of church energies on other matters.

We will be providing more opportunities for us to get together as a community to answer such questions as: What for you remains unresolved? What for you would be needed to restore harmony? What do you need others to understand? We will be working towards getting to a place where we can open our hearts to what others are experiencing as well as having our own needs met.

The Commission has an email address: safecongregation@uucb.org. We also have a mailbox in the office: Judy Sam’s mailbox.

We have been setting up our procedures, attempting to set a regular meeting day and time, so that if you wish to speak with all of us, you can. Please feel free to use our email address or speak to any of us individually if that feels safer or more comfortable. Future updates on our schedule and process will be made available through weekly announcements, the Beacon, and any other venue we can think of.

Thank you.