

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF GERMANTOWN

ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 10, 2012

Welcome and Call to Order

The annual meeting was called to order by out-going Board Chair Mary Lee Keane at 12:55pm.

Reverend Kent Matthies offered opening words. As required by church by-laws, a member other than the Chairman of the Board is required to chair the annual meeting. Alan Windle was unanimously elected to this position, and Susan Smith was elected meeting secretary.

Minutes of 2011 Annual Meeting

A motion to suspend the reading of the minutes of the previous year's meeting was approved.

By-Law Changes

Two proposed changes to USG's by-laws were presented and approved. Originally the by-laws required that the annual meeting be held in the month of May. The approved change moves the meeting date to June so it will be aligned with the budget approval process and the seating of the new Board.

The second change pertained to the requirement that members be notified of the annual meeting by US mail. The change allows for e-mail to meet this requirement. It was explained that if the church has an e-mail address on file, that will be the first option for contacting each member. Should a member not have an email address on file, or if for some reason, an e-mail message cannot be delivered, a hard copy will automatically be mailed.

Minister's Report

Rev .Kent Matthies praised our excellent staff – Gloria Smith, Lida Holota, Mark Daugherty, Carolyn Cotton - and commented on contributions of three significant people whose formal service with USG will end this month. All have done an outstanding job, often in unusual circumstances. Rob Keithan, Consulting Minister, will return to Washington as the Director of Public Policy for the Religious Coalition of Reproductive Choice. Erick DuPree, Counselling Director of Faith Development , will embark on a Ph.D. program in English at Temple University (in addition to continuing his work at First Unitarian in

Philadelphia) And Sandy Campbell, Church School Coordinator, will continue to teach in the church RE program. On the facilities side, Kent noted that our current arrangement with Loida Zepeta for upgraded cleaning and maintenance is working well, as is our arrangement with Mike Rogers for sexton duties on Sunday mornings and for special events.

Kent announced that a full time intern minister, Joan Xavier, will be with us from September through June of next year. She comes to from Yale Divinity School where she received her Masters in Divinity. Kent also announced that a part-time Director of Faith Development has been hired.

Kent described several high points of the past year. First, USG will participate as part of a ten-church cohort that will be meeting in Washington, DC over the next year to address multicultural initiatives, with a focus on growing more diverse churches. Second, he noted the congregation's support for the Reverend Mark Kiyimba from Kampala, Uganda who spoke about gay rights (or lack thereof) in September 2011. Third, Kent noted the excellent budget adopted by the church for the coming year. The increase of funds to allow for a full time church administrator is especially valuable. Fourth, Kent expressed appreciation to the families that have provided a \$130,000 loan fund to support much-needed renovations to the Sullivan Chapel. Finally, Kent shared that member Dennis Brunn has been hired to direct the Unitarian-Universalist Pennsylvania Advocacy Network (of which Kent is the president). In this position, Dennis will support and lead advocacy efforts among 40 UU congregations and over 6,000 UU's.

Board President's Report

Mary Lee Keane reviewed a number of positive accomplishments but also discussed the troubling fiscal realities that face us. The 2012-2013 budget reflects a deficit of approximately \$25,000, and required painful cuts. Pledge income has fallen about \$20,000 for reasons that are not clear. Although the poor economy is undoubtedly a factor, church leaders will continue to examine this question to make sure that we have a complete and accurate understanding. Rental income has also fallen - in part, it is believed, because the buildings have been allowed to become a bit shabby. Previous budgets have been balanced by reducing Building and Grounds support, and we have reached a point where a renewed investment in the physical plant is required.

On a positive note, Mary Lee reported that endowment income has been good and that Trillium has done an effective job in managing church investments in instruments that are consistent with UU principles. The church has also benefited from a generous bequest from Edna Jones .

Mary Lee noted that hard conversations regarding USG's financial footing lie ahead. We will need wide input and significant discussion before critical decisions are made. Members are encouraged to attend an important meeting about the church's finances on September 23rd.

Ministries and Program Council Report

Beth Lazer thanked committee members who worked on critical projects and put together a survey to help them understand what kind of programs people wanted. She announced that Linda Brunn will chair a "Second Service" work group charged with determining if we should introduce a second service and if so, what it would look like.

Beth announced that Rev. Jody Whelden has been hired as our permanent part-time Director of Faith Development. She will be relocating from Madison, Wisconsin and will be joining us on July 30th. A Meadville Lombard Theology School graduate, Jody was ordained in 2005. In addition to her ministerial credentials, Jody holds an M.Ed. in adolescent counseling and is a Board-certified chaplain. Jody has shared that she grew up in New England but has lived in the mid-west for thirty years. She was interested in returning to the east coast to be close to her family, and she feels that USG is a perfect match for her skills and interests.

Heart and Soul Report

Members of the Heart and Soul Committee (Eli Scarse, Linda O'Gwynn, Leni Windle, Andrea Durham) reported on their 18-month work to craft a new Mission Statement for USG. Wide congregational input was sought through the small group ministries, town hall meetings, the all-church retreat, as well as through external resources. Meeting participants offered numerous comments and suggestions to the draft that was disseminated. Next steps involving reworking and refining the draft and creating a final statement of USG's core beliefs and values. It was suggested that members send written comments to the Committee or speak to them in person.

Social Justice Report

Consulting Minister Rob Keithan described the past year's efforts to restructure USG's Social Justice programs. He noted that when he arrived, the church already had some strong core projects – Philly ReBuild, the Lingelbach School partnership, NPHIN and the Martin Luther King Day of Service. Rob's focus has been on helping USG develop a systems approach linking the social justice work to the congregational culture and our UU principles. A leadership forum held in March produced an on-line inventory summarizing USG's Social Justice initiatives with clearly delineated priorities, on-going projects, identified leaders and multiple points of entry.

Dennis Brunn reported on our current work in four main areas: Public Education, Environment, Reproductive Rights and Economic Rights. He stressed that there are many ways to help, and that there is a distinction between direct service, education and advocacy. Dennis plans to return to the congregation in September to discuss a new Social Justice Coordinating body with clear information on how it will work and how effective communication will be achieved. Meeting participants offered a number of comments on our social justice work; one person noted that the summary of activities

incorrectly ranked climate change (Environmental Justice) second and Improving Public Education first. In actuality, the Social Justice forum ranked Climate first and Education second. Finally, Dennis encouraged people to attend “Lobby Day in Harrisburg” on June 20th to urge legislators to develop welcoming immigration policies in the Commonwealth.

Election of Trustees and Nominating Committee Members

Following instructions concerning the voting process, votes were cast for church trustees. Betsy Gabriel was elected to serve a one-year term. Dennis Strain, Treva Burger and Marina Patrice Van Gossen were elected to three year terms.

David Bernstein, Jenn Leiby and Eli Scarce were elected to the Nominating Committee.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Alan Windle at 2:03pm.