

Minutes for
The Annual Meeting
May 18, 2014
of The Unitarian Society of Germantown

Welcome
Opening Words

Presentation of Congregational Awards

Tom Ott, Board President, presented **David Dearden** with a Congregational Award and **Dr. Peter Walsh** with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Leni Windle presented **Bill Blasdel** with a Congregational Award and **Ken and Jan Eng** with a Congregational Newcomers' (Hit the Ground Running) Award.

Tom Ott thanked **Betsy Gabriel**, previous Board President, for graciously stepping in for the several months while he was ill, and also thanked members of the Board of Trustees: **Leni Windle, Treva Burger, Ann Schoonmaker, Marina Patrice Nolan, Bob Williford, and Dennis Strain**, who will be the next Board President .

Acknowledgement of Board of Trustees

Rev. Kent Matthies honored the following outgoing officers for their dedicated service: **Leni Windle** for her co-chairing of the Stewardship Committee, and **Andrea Parry**, for chairing Governance and Ministry; and **Tom Ott**, for serving as Board President for the last two years. Kent honored all for the depth and quality of the service they gave, and further thanked Tom for his "self-differentiated leadership," for how well-prepared he was for meetings, willing to state his opinion as well as creating an environment where others could voice their opinions.

Annual Meeting

Call to Order & Election of Annual Meeting Chair and Secretary

Alan Windle was elected as chair; Carolyn Scott was elected as Secretary; and Bob Williford audio-recorded the meeting.

Minister's Report

This past year of spiritual growth, of instituting the experiment of having not one but two services, was USG's 149th year. Kent thanked all who made it happen and praised the "superb" staff team, especially Associate Minister Joan Javier-Duval, whose ordination will be within the month, on June 8th; our new Director of Faith Development, Daniel Gregoire; Music Director Mark Daughtery; Administrator Gloria Guldager Smith; retiring Assistant Administrator Lida Holota; sexton Mike Rogers; and Elmer and Loida Perez's cleaning crew. Kent mentioned also that we will be receiving in September a student minister from Princeton, McKinley (Kin) Sims. At the national level, Kent is "delighted you have empowered me to serve on the continuing education team for the UU Minister's Association." He has been working with 25 ministers on a two-year preaching and worship arts improvement program. He is on its staff but also feels the program has benefitted his ability to lead worship.

Kent thanked Dennis Brunn, who retires as director of the UUPA Advocacy Network. Our congregation worked with 40 PA UU congregations. We got U.S. Senator Toomey to vote on the Federal Employment Nondiscrimination Act. We are working to enact Bill 300, which would make it illegal to fire a gay person from his/her job based on sexual orientation. We are working on immigration justice, environmental justice, a fair living wage. Thank you to all for helping us to live out our UU values in the state.

Report from Craig Miller on Greater Philly UUs, aka PhillyCluster

“Greater Philly UUs” or PhillyCluster is a cluster of fourteen Unitarian congregations from SouthEastern PA and a few from NJ. The group is about a year old. The website is jpdoua.org/phillycluster. The group’s Mission is to “Share our Message, Grow Our Faith, Strengthen Congregations.” They hope to have a greater social justice impact. On June 8th, some members will be attending a Philly Gay Pride Parade (but for us, that coincides with Joan’s ordination). Craig has attended the past few meetings; Dennis Brunn and Gloria Guldager Smith also have attended. Craig has pamphlets available for folks who wanted them.

Vote on Bylaws Change – Article VI: Committees of the Society

Proposal presented by Dennis Strain to change By-Laws pertaining to the Nominating Committee. The proposed changes were:

- Expand the Nominating Committee to 6 people, not just the current number of 5.
- Have Nominating Committee members have terms of 3 years each, not 1 year.
- Rotate or stagger those persons so that each year would see two new members come on board. In the first year, two people would begin a term of 1 year, two of 2 years, two of 3 years. After that first rotation, subsequent members would serve 3-year terms.
- Nominating Committee Members would share more information with committee chairs as to the interests and skills of people they interview for the Board of Trustees. (Every year the Nominating Committee interviews 20 to 40 people who are being considered for the Board. A lot of information is gathered but then when the Nominating Committee goes out of existence after a year, all that information is lost. The fact that the N.C.’s terms would be longer helps retain the information. The Nominating Committee would also be expected to make this information to committee chairs.)
- If this change to the By-Laws were approved today, the changes would take effect in September, 2014.
- Every year the Nominating Committee will nominate the next two incoming members. Questions arose about the wisdom and health of this practice: some folks felt it seemed too insular. Others pointed out that it was really not a new practice: the Board used to nominate two members of the Nominating Committee and the congregation just basically agreed. In response, the point was made that having to think about and make a choice is better than just agreeing with nominations already made. Someone else reminded us that having safeguards in place would be wise in the event that the congregation ever is more divided politically.

Question raised: Why was the clause removed that said “No member of the Nominating Committee shall be on the Board of Trustees”? Answer: (It was an accidental oversight.) A motion was made and passed to add the sentence back.

A vote was taken to defer this procedural motion until the fall of 2014. 30 voted in favor of deferring the motion till fall; 19 opposed the motion. The issue was tabled until the fall.

Discussion: Extension of Second Service through the 2014/2015 Church Year

Report by Linda Brunn.

Linda stated that this is a report “with assumptions based on results of the congregational survey of the 2nd Service and a straw poll taken by the Board.” The 2nd Service Committee will recommend to the Board to continue the two services for one and even two years with the goal to improve the process of the two services and items that we know need to be fixed. The Board will be taking into consideration this Committee’s report.

She reminded us of the reasons USG started the 2nd Service in the first place: to plan ahead for continual growth; to live up to our mission; to have more diversity of worship and music experience; to be more welcoming and have physical space for new members, as we were already over capacity (80%) in the pews on Sunday and in the parking lot.

130 people responded to the survey; about 90 people commented. Some results of the survey: 69% (88 members) liked the option of having two services; 26% did not. 76% recommended trying and improving the 2-service model for another two years.

A “hot button” topic was Fellowship Hour. People like the Worship Services but not so much the Fellowship Hour. The key worry is splitting the church, having the congregation feel dispersed and disconnected from each other. 50% feel that Fellowship Hour does not yet work for them. Only 62% of the respondents even go to Fellowship Hour. So who is really affected?

Impact on Volunteer folks on Sunday morning: Welcoming Committee, RE volunteers, choir, worship associates, ushers, audio folks, all of whom voted positively even though many often have to stay from 8:00 am till 1:00 pm. RE has the issue of needing to attract teachers, compounded this year by having two services. This year, the only new element is the 9:00 RE one-classroom model. The 11:15 RE is the same model as it had been before. Are the two services impinging on this RE teaching shortage issue or are there a complex of factors?

Amount of money in collections has increased. Last year, we low-balled what might change in the offertory, but incoming monies went beyond expectations by about \$3,000 in both the offertory and the share-the-plate collections.

No one complained about the parking.

Some liked the quality and variety of refreshments; others said don’t make them so fancy.

We need to keep asking ourselves, “How does our Worship meet our Mission?” Our ambivalence about growth feeds into the issue of the two services. What does it mean to say, “We want to grow”? Are we willing to do the necessary changing?

Linda concluded by inviting church members to talk to her or others in the 2 Services Committee in the next few days.

Questions:

- Do we have statistics on overall attendance growth? A: Average of 18 more people per Sunday, increasing as the year has gone on.
- We increased the offertory over 34 Sundays.
- Have we lost money? A: Yes, there has been a net loss. Committee had projected \$13,250 as cost for TWO services. Net Cost of the two services actually came in at \$9500.
- Should we have just one service but to accommodate young families, move the **one** worship service to an earlier time?
- When Task Force talked to other churches, when did other churches see growth? A: Most churches gave the experiment a 3-year trial. Many now have full classes for RE during BOTH services. We now usually have about ten babies on child-care.

The 2nd Service Committee will recommend to the Board at the next Board Meeting that the two worship services model be continued for another one or two years and focus on ways to improve FH, to increase small-group experiences, and to include more people in volunteering on Sunday morning. They will also consider reducing the time spread for Fellowship “Hour,” starting the 9:00 service a bit later and the 11:15 at 11:00.

Change of Governance Structure

Report by Andrea Parry.

Currently, everything at USG reports to the Board (except for staff other than the minister): the minister, committees, councils, etc. Why change that governance structure? Because that model is diffuse, indistinct, and redundant AND...

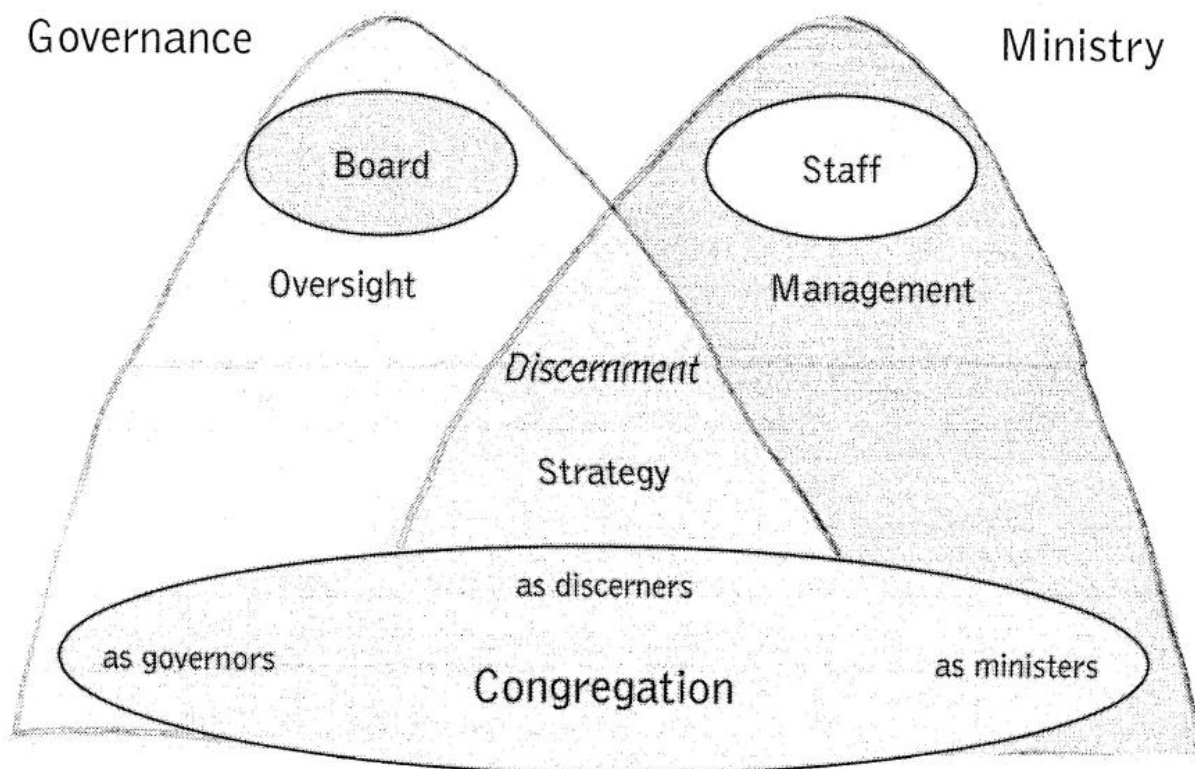
- It puts too many responsibilities on the Board’s shoulders, so it is hard for the Board to focus on the bigger picture, our goals, our global strategies.
- It is complicated to know whom to see if you have a question or idea.
- There is a duplication of efforts.
- The staff has responsibilities but not always concomitant authority.

Since the mid 2000s, USG has had multiple discussions and reviews of best governance structures. A Council structure was tried with mixed results. At the beginning of this Church year the Board authorized a Task Force to study a possible change to our governance structure. Members of the Task Force include Treva Burger, Linda Brunn, Marina Patrice Nolan, Linda O’Gwynn, Scott Murray, Beth Lazer, Kent Matthies, Gloria Guldager Smith, Dennis Strain, and Andrea Parry. Everyone on the Task Force read and discussed the book Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss (The Alban Institute 2009). The Task Force recommended a revised governance model, which has been approved by the Board.

Below is a diagram of the revised governance structure (from Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss, Alban Institute 2009, all rights reserved):

Figure 4.5

ROLES OF BOARD AND STAFF



Under this new governance model, there will be two bodies, working in collaboration:

- Ministry, headed by the Ministerial Executive Team. The MET is comprised of the Minister (who has the ultimate responsibility for Ministry), two lay leaders, and the Church Administrator. The MET is responsible for all the regular operations of a church: bill-paying, worship services, religious education, building maintenance, etc.
- Governance, headed by the Board of Trustees, which has ultimate oversight, envisions and strategizes for the “big picture”, and delegates power to those who will do the work, holding them accountable.
- There is overlapping, as collaboration between Governance and Ministry will be key, and the congregation will be involved and provide input on both sides: they act as governors in helping to set policy, as ministers in carrying out church operations, and as discerners in helping make good judgments about how best to live out our mission..

The Board will delegate to the Minister the authority to manage the regular operations of the church. Those regular operations will be run by the Ministry Executive Team, not by the Board. The Board will provide direction, not micro-manage. The Ministry Executive Team will abide by the policies set by the Board.

Q: What will change? **A:** For most people, not much. Committee structures and the Council structure will stay the same. A member of the MET will serve as liaison to each committee or council.

Q: How will members of the Ministry Executive Team be chosen? What will be the criteria? **A:** They will be members regarded as leaders, who are familiar with church operations, who get along with people, and who have a productive working relationship with the minister. For the first year, they will be selected for a one-year term in collaboration between the Minister and the Governance and Ministry Task Force, with names presented to the Board president, president-elect, vice president and secretary for input. This will be further defined next year. **This new structure is still a work in progress.** The MET is “not another layer” to have to work through, but “more arms” for the Minister.

Q: Under the new structure, what would the annual budget process look like? **A:** Budget development will be overseen by the MET and approval will be required by the Board. The budget development will be a collaborative, iterative process, with the Finance Council involved.

Election of 2014 -2015 Board Members. Paper ballot.

Adjournment