

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting Unitarian Society of Germantown  
June 4, 2023**

The meeting was called to order by Lee Meinecke at 11:45am.

**Welcome**

Board President Lee Meinicke welcomed all in attendance to the 2023 Annual Meeting with an overview of the agenda. Quorum was met with over 30 attendees present.

**Election of Chair & Secretary**

Amy Birge-Caracappa was nominated, seconded and approved as the Chairperson of the meeting. Jen Bellot was nominated, seconded and approved as the Secretary of the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the 2022 annual meeting were shared online and in person and approved by those in attendance.

**Reports**

**Board President's Report:**

Lee Meinecke began by acknowledging the extraordinary turnover at USG since 2022 (Minister, Director of Spiritual Development, Music Director, Board President). The USG Board welcomed 4 new members in 2022 and accomplished the following:

- Reviewed and prioritized all recommendations from Widening the Circle Task Force.
- Performed a performance review, extended contract and supported Latifah Griffin's transition to Interim Director of Spiritual Development.
- Achieved 100% Board participation in pledges and the annual fund.

Ms. Meinecke acknowledged that this has been a year of rebuilding, rejoining and rejoicing on a firm footing at USG.

**Minister's Report:**

Rev. Cheryl Walker opened by acknowledging that this has been a time of much change and uncertainty at USG with major staff changes in a post-COVID environment. It has also been a year of understanding who the congregation is becoming. In the previous year, USG welcomed Interim Reverend Walker as well as Baker Purdon as Music Director. The USG Search Committee continues activities to fill key positions.

This was the first year of the Sexton's Ball. USG has seen a slow increase in weekly attendance, but levels are not yet at pre-pandemic levels. Zoom has increased USG outreach. Rev. Cheryl encouraged attendees to ask themselves "What does it mean to be part of this community? What does it mean to be 'here'?"

USG has faced daunting problems obtaining volunteers this year, particularly in children's programming. Rev. Cheryl extended high praise and thanks for all volunteers and to staff Celeste Lamb, Carolyn Scott and Mike Rogers. Rev. Cheryl noted that there is more transition to come and this is a lesson that all things must change. It is time for congregants to re-commit.

Rev. Cheryl indicated that the number of delegates each congregation sends to General Assembly is based on the size of the congregation. This year, USG will send 5 delegates and 2 administrators: Cheryl Walker, Latifah Griffin, Louise Lisi, Lee Meinicke, Andrea Barsevick, Lisa Dutton & John Dewey.

Gerry Whalen provided the status of the Search Committee. The Director of Spiritual Development position has been posted online in "UU Circles."

### **Awards**

Andrea Barsevick was presented with the USG Lifetime Achievement Award for her significant contributions to USG, notably the creation of the COVID relief fund. Ms. Barsevick stated that "It has been a privilege to serve you all."

Maggie Birge-Caracappa, Margaret Thompson and Brandi Kirksey were presented with "Hit the Ground Running" Awards, recognizing their distinct contributions to USG as members for less than 5 years.

### **Raffle**

Eric Foster directed a raffle for those who submitted their annual pledges early. Marci Pitkin was the recipient of 2 tickets to a Broadway show in Philadelphia.

### **Budget**

Eric Foster presented the Budget Report. The goal for annual pledges last year was \$390,000 and USG reached \$363,000—a 7.7% decrease from the previous year. Next year's pledge goal is \$350,000 and so far we have reached \$325,000. The pledge fulfillment rate has been very high since 2017 at over 95%.

The Board has revised the budget process. The Ministerial Executive Team (MET) looked at all accounts and removed anything dormant. They also created a procedure to review.

Revenue is down, mostly due to decreased pledges, but the budget remains balanced. Expenses have also decreased, with a slight increase in utilities. The auction is accounted for in the programs section of the income statement. UUA dues are calculated based on USG's previous year budget and include an allowance for building expenses.

Mr. Foster clarified that the Edna Jones Fund is earmarked for urgent maintenance concerns. Lois Murphy said that she would like the Board to start conversations regarding growth. Eva

Finney noted that the capital campaign is attempting to raise up to \$350,000 for 7 projects. Donators will have 3 years to complete their pledge and USG will begin soliciting capital pledges again in the fall. A brochure is available that details the 7 earmarked projects for the capital campaign.

It was moved and seconded to approve the budget, with unanimous approval. Attendees then danced.

### **Open Forum**

Eva Finney indicated concern about how to bring people back to USG after COVID and queried what the Board is considering in this regard. Ms. Meinicke stated that the Board's goal is to support and promote efforts to bring people back, but it has not yet addressed return specifically.

Andrea Barsevick is concerned about the role of GA delegates representing USG in regard to revisions to Article 2. She asked to receive input prior to GA. Rev. Cheryl clarified that a "yes" vote at GA will continue discussion regarding amendments to Article 2 and indicated that the text to Article 2 may be found on the UUA and USG websites as well as in the weekly communicator.

### **Elections**

Elections were conducted for open Board of Trustee, Nominations Committee and Ministerial Search Committee. Paper ballots and online linked ballots were accepted. Results will be final and announced by June 6.

Ms. Meinicke reviewed the process for determining candidates for the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) that involved soliciting volunteers, input from the Nominating Committee and querying the congregation at large. The MSC processes are directed by UUA.

### **Closing Words**

Rev. Cheryl conveyed thanks to attendees, noting the importance of attendance. They advocated that congregants continue to "love USG and love harder." USG is on the precipice of change and can be excited for the future.

Gerry Whalen moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:23pm.