

## **Minutes of the Annual Meeting Unitarian Society of Germantown June 2, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by Amy Birge-Caracappa at 11:45am.

### **Welcome**

Board President Amy Birge-Caracappa welcomed all in attendance to the 2024 Annual Meeting with an overview of the agenda. Quorum was met with over 30 attendees present.

### **Election of Chair & Secretary**

Jenn Bellott was nominated, seconded, and approved as the Chairperson of the meeting. Sharon Mafuru was nominated, seconded, and approved as Secretary of the meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the 2024 annual meeting were shared online and in person and approved by those in attendance.

### **Board Annual Report**

Amy Birge-Caracappa began by saying that since the 2019 pandemic behind us and that we have called Rev. Hannah Capaldi to be our settled minister, that it seems like we are settling. This is not the case. The transition continues. Rev. Cheryl Walker came in 2022 and “blew the doors off the place”, making us look at who we are. Rev. Cheryl put us on a path to USG to build a new and better day, to be a nurturing and growing community.

The board activities included:

- Ensured a successful start of the ministerial search committee
- Held discussions on finance committee discussion (ongoing)
- Developed an ongoing plan to review policies
- Held retreat in April 2024 for board members
- Revitalized the USG board goals
- Approved reparations committee request for special meeting
- Held USG leadership retreat in March 2024 which was attended by more than 30 USG leaders. The themes were: “Who are we, and who do we want to be, with the spirit of radical inclusion?”
- Oversaw voting process for Rev. Hannah Capaldi

### **MET and Minister Report**

Rev. Cheryl Walker shared that it is the end of her time as interim minister. Her work with us is nearly finished. Her essential task was to prepare us for our next minister.

Her main goal was to get to know us, who we were, who we are, and who do we wish to be, and leave well. We have done those things. The transitions team led exercises to help us know who

we are and who we wish to be. The ministerial search committee helped us realize who we want to be our spiritual leader. While Rev. Cheryl's work is done, there is more work for us to do.

She encouraged us to commit ourselves fully to our mission. Not the mission statement, the mission. Let us ask ourselves: Why do we exist? If it stopped existing, what would be lost? Nothing is more important than knowing the answers to these questions.

Life is change. That which does not change is dead. We are very much alive. Baker Purdon came in as music director after a long tenured music director and was able to get the organ fixed. Celeste Lamb did excellent work, we are grateful for her during the last 5 years. Rev. Kevin Debeck, Director of Spiritual Development, is also leaving, and he just arrived. He kept CSD going and supported ASD as well. We are filling these positions as acting positions so Rev. Hannah can choose who she wants to fill these positions.

Rev. Cheryl ended by saying she hopes the heart of this congregation does not change. We welcome new members. It is the people who make a congregation. We are good people who have love for this congregation and faith. We welcome strangers to become friends. The people are the best this congregation has to offer to the world.

### **Financial Report**

Phillip Bullard shared that \$340,686.00 was pledged in 2023-2024, with \$295,447.90 received, resulting in 87% fulfillment rate. The pledging went up over COVID, and has since declined, so we are now back to pre-pandemic levels. There was a \$359 operating surplus in the budget for 2023-2024.

We have seen investment returns in the endowment funds we track. The returns were sufficient to increase the total, notwithstanding that we took money out.

For the fiscal year 24-25 budget, we are anticipating an increase in pledges. The "Share the Plate" donations will increase 6% next year due to the current giving levels of the congregation. This year the operating budget relies on 4% withdrawal from CIF.

Regarding expenditures, the denominational dues decreased based on information we report to the UUA. They had been requesting \$33,000 and we pay \$30,000. We decided it would be better to use the money to maintain the building and pay employees. We reviewed peers and saw that it was appropriate to give \$23,800.

### **Open Forum**

The rental income was \$64,300 for 2023-2024.

The increase in the "Share the Plate" donations is because we underestimated what we would collect last year. The 2024-2025 budget is based on what we are actually giving.

The Reparations funding will come from the Sullivan Fund, which is meant for the congregation to support the poor. The goal of this fund is broadly worded and currently mostly used to support individual members when they need help.

Closing numbers were requested. They are not available yet as the year is closing July 1. The quarterly report will be available in early July, people can email [board@usguu.org](mailto:board@usguu.org) to get the report.

### **Awards**

Lifetime Achievement Awards were presented to: Linda Bernstein, Andrea Parry, Bob Williford (not present, will be presented at a later date).

Congregational Awards were presented to the members of the Ministerial Search Team: Lisa Dutton, Emily Joy Goldberg, Rick Rodes, Vanessa Lowe, Dennis Brunn, Sam Stormont, and Carolyn Cotton.

Hit the Ground Running awards were presented to Phillip Bullard and Jen Bellot.

### **Closing Words**

Rev. Cheryl closed by saying we have had annual meetings for 159 meetings. Nobody has been to all of them. This is the heart of UU – who's church is this? It is ours. We, the people of this congregation, decide who our leaders will be, who we will be. We have shining examples of how to be in Linda and Andrea. Let us give USG our heart and time. It does not exist without us. Give it love, we will receive love back tenfold.

The meeting was adjourned at 1pm.