



Minutes
First Unitarian Church of
Des Moines
Annual Congregational Meeting
June 4, 2017

Welcome and Chalice Lighting

Zac Bailey, BoT President

This light we kindle
is set in the lamp of our history.
We inherit this free faith
from the brave and gentle, fierce and outspoken
hearts and minds that have come before us.
Let us be worthy inheritors of this faith
and through our good works, pass it boldly to a new generation.

Audette Fulbright Fulson

Call to Order

Barb Royal, Moderator

11:14am

Establish quorum

Barb Royal, Moderator

Reported that 74 members are required for quorum. There were a total of 156 members checked in establishing a quorum.

The Year in Review and the Year Ahead

Rev. Mark Stringer and Zac Bailey

This year we have continued to put emphasis on growing opportunities for small group engagement for all ages, through religious education programming, social justice opportunities, and the spiritual deepening of Soul Matters, Small Group Ministry and Wellspring.

We've continued to seek improvement in the functioning of our Caring Ministry approach, but acknowledge there is still much more work to do, particularly in the area of better understanding how the congregation wants to be cared for and how it wants to provide care. I suspect the upcoming interim ministry will continue to focus on this area of church life.

Toward a goal of nurturing generosity and stewardship, we worked this year with stewardship consultant Mark Ewert and put together a budget drive approach based in cottage meetings that involved far more people than recent budget drives and saw pledge dollars increase by around 8%. Thanks to all who helped make this year's drive such a success!

Rev. Erin and Membership Coordinator Laura Berardi continue to re-vision our approaches to welcoming and integrating new members, with new class formats and tweaks to visitor engagement strategies.

Our faith-in-action partnerships continue to provide us with opportunities for meaningful social justice collaborations and activities, notably including our commitment to Family Promise that

saw us caring for families in our church for a week at a time on a quarterly basis. Meanwhile a dedicated Sanctuary Congregation Discernment Team educated the congregation this year toward a resolution to be voted on at this meeting.

Finally, we've navigated the news that I shared in December that I will be stepping down as senior minister later this month and have taken the steps to secure an Accredited Interim Minister who will begin in August and whose name will be announced later in this meeting.

Thank you to our lay leaders, our dedicated staff, and our members and friends for another great year in the life of our church. I look forward to celebrating the 16-year ministry we have shared next Sunday June 11 at 10am at the Performing Arts Center at Valley High School so we can all be together for one service. Hope to see you there!

Now Board of Trustee President Zac Bailey

So, what's the next year or two look like? I'm excited about what's possible and the opportunities we have coming to us.

I won't steal much of Mike's thunder, he tell you about our Interim minister later. I will say, the Board, and the Interim Task Force is very excited about how the selection process went this year, and who we have coming here.

Early next Spring, we'll reach out to each and every member of the congregation for input about who should be on the Selection Committee for the next Settled Minister. We'll hold a special meeting of the congregation, and vote on a slate of candidates you've nominated. Once that group is in place, they'll gather your input about who we are, who we want to be, and what we want to do, and use that information to guide their work as they spend considerable time looking at and getting to know candidates, and ultimately select a candidate to present to you.

The Interim time is about partnership. I ask you to stay mindful of the give-and-take required for all successful relationships. Things may seem somewhat confusing at times. From the Board of Trustee's position, things in our organization are going well. And, we don't want to take our success for granted. A lot of you have been working hard in a lot of areas, and we have much work to do over the next couple of years, and beyond. We need to be deliberate and honest with ourselves. It might be part of the Interim Minister's ministry to us, to shake us up a little. I acknowledge, things are changing, and, for some of us, change can be difficult. Please know, things are going well. Many of us are feeling charged up, ready for action. You should be proud of your accomplishments and your contributions. I am.

The next two people on the agenda will speak to some of these accomplishments and contributions.

25 Years of being a Welcoming Congregation *Barb Royal*

Our church is a Welcoming Congregation. Of course it is, you're thinking. We welcome people here all the time.

While that's true, what I'm referring to is *Welcoming* – with a capital W.

Twenty-five years ago, in 1992, First Unitarian was designated by the Unitarian Universalist Association as Welcoming Congregation. We were one of the first UU churches in the country to complete the UUA's curriculum about the social, cultural and political issues facing the lesbian, gay & bisexual community, and how we could support them. Notice that I said Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual. Back then we really weren't talking about Transgender or much of anything related to gender identity.

Think back to 1992 – AIDS was still a stigmatizing health issue; most non-discrimination policies did not include sexual orientation, let alone gender identity; gay marriage was practically inconceivable, and transgender people were rarely, if ever, even mentioned.

At this church, fewer than 90 of our current members and friends were here when we originally explored becoming a Welcoming Congregation. After a year of educational classes, workshops, films, and panel discussions, choosing to become a Welcoming Congregation required a vote of the members at the annual meeting. What might seem to most of us as a no-brainer now, was a bold move then. Our decision in 1992 was bold, and it continued our heritage as a community committed to social justice for all.

I believe the choice we will make today regarding becoming a sanctuary church is an opportunity for another bold move. It is completely in line with our decision 25 years ago to become a Welcoming Congregation. Times change – the need for compassionate support does not.

After 25 years, it's time to revisit our Welcoming Congregation status and "re-up" as it were. I was on the original committee and I'm thrilled to announce that a new committee is being formed to help us examine our current relationship with an even broader range of LGBTQ issues than were addressed 25 years ago. They're the same and they're different; and we could all use a tune up if we're going to continue to live up to our designation. Right now, we are looking for several additional people who would be interested meeting with us over the summer to review where we are, where we need to go, and how we are going to get there. If you think you might be one of those people, please contact someone who's already signed up:

Ben Spick & I are serving as temporary co-chairs, and are joined by

- Doug Aupperle,
- Gianfranco Berardi,
- Devon & Jean McClurken,
- Marilyn Lantz,
- Bill Paxson,
- and "Special Consultant," Dave Witke (when he's in town).

If you are interesting in helping us to plan forums, workshops, panels, film discussions and other activities for the coming year, please get in touch with one of us or with membership coordinator, Laura Berardi.

Whether you choose to help with the planning or not, we hope you'll all find ways to participate, whether you were here in 1992 or have joined us since then, to be part of this new exploration of what it means to be a truly Welcoming Congregation.

And we hope you and many more will be here to help celebrate the renewal of our Welcoming Congregation status our next annual meeting in 2018.

Outreach Partner Program

Kate Allen

Every year, the Faith in Action team selects six community non-profit organizations nominated by a church member/friend to partner with for a 2-month period of time, to give not only of our financial resources, but our time and talents as well. Each Community Outreach Partner receives a financial donation from the congregation (range of \$1000 – \$2000 is typical), plus volunteer assistance to help with one or more projects. This year we received 12 applications – the most we've ever had. I want to thank our Faith in Action team members - Gene McCracken, Ginny Malcomson, Laura Berardi and John McDonald, as well past champions, those who submitted applications and those who have given of their time and treasure.

The 6 partners for 2017 & 2018 are:

LSI Global Greens
Planned Parenthood
Habitat for Humanity
Family Promise
Iowa Justice for our Neighbors
Project Iowa

Minutes of 2016 Annual Meeting

Zac Bailey, BoT President

Call for corrections to the 2016 Annual Meeting Minutes

Bruce Martin moved approval of the 2016 Minutes as written in the Annual Meeting packet.

Harvey Harrison seconded.

Voice vote-unanimous approval.

Endowment Fund Bylaw Amendment

Margaret Schultz and Doug Hoffman

Endowment was created 30 years ago. There are two committees that make up the Endowment Team: investment committee and disbursement committee

Investment Committee - 3 members for as long as they want and these individuals determine where to invest the endowment

Disbursement committee – 5 members voted on at annual meeting and they are responsible for managing the Reach Grant process.

We use the UUA Common Endowment Fund to invest our money. We weren't calculating the income for REACH grants based on the bylaws correctly.

The UUA is trying to grow the value of the fund and because of economic conditions, the amount of money generated for REACH grants varies significantly each year.

Look at the percentage of the value of the fund and disperse it to do good works. What is the right amount? 2% of value of fund ... for today's value that is \$10,000

We are proposing to consolidate the two committees into one team of 7 members elected by the membership for 3 year terms.

Move our grant funding to a 2% of fund value basis. On December 31st we will take the value and that amount would be available for Reach Grants.

Adele Villimez – Q: Addition of authority to the DFA wasn't mentioned – is that still involved?

Doug Hoffman – The old document that was on the board did that, but some of those strategic decisions would still come from the board. The DFA would not make decisions.

Steve Evans – Change to policy governance since original material was made so trying to get this in line with how we do things now. We could choose to do something different with the UUA investment fund with our investment activity.

Kate Garst – Q: How was the decision made to take 2% vs another method?

Doug Hoffman – taking many things into account when trying to structure this, we selected % of value for two reasons

- More consistent level of funding for Reach grants
- Common method that other endowment funds use

Historically the UUA fund has created 5-15% growth so this new approach shouldn't be decreasing the value of the fund.

Steve Evans – We have left in place the floor that the balance of the Endowment Fund can't go below \$400,000. 2% isn't a strong draw down. There is an alignment of interest to grow the fund and thus will increase the Reach Grant.

Doug Hoffman – nothing says we have to spend the 2% the committee could decide not to do anything

Heidi Lackman – Background on decision making process, using the knowledge of Greg Nichols. This decision fulfills the needs of the church.

Doug Hoffman moved the adoption of the new revised articles of the endowment fund. Bruce Martin seconded.

Voice vote to approve revised articles of the endowment fund - unanimous

Conforming Amendment to Church Bylaws ***Zac Bailey, BoT President***

Since we just approved the change to the articles of the Endowment Fund. We need to keep the church bylaws in line respectively. This is in regards to Bylaws, Article IX, Section 2, Item b.

Zac Bailey moves to adopt the amended church bylaws. Steve Herwig seconded.

Voice vote to approve amendment to church bylaws - unanimous

Resolution to Be a Sanctuary Host

Michael Lauer

I am Mike Lauer and I am a member of the Sanctuary Discernment Team.

Team Members include: Stephen Coverdale, Judy Davis, Sue Huber, Karen Lauer, Gene McCracken, Theresa Miller, and David Witke. The team has been meeting weekly since February and providing regular learning opportunities to share understanding of immigration issues and our role in supporting change to our current immigration system. We believe First Unitarian should become a Host Sanctuary congregation. Meetings were open and attended by a number of additional members. We also consulted with staff and others in the Discernment process.

Sanctuary is about providing safe space to those who are victims of unjust laws.

Involvement in the Sanctuary movement is a way to be in solidarity with the undocumented community by creating safe spaces for the prophetic voices of immigrant leaders to be lifted up as we together confront unjust laws. Through the Sanctuary Movement, faith communities can powerfully enact and embody their commitment to justice. A church that declares itself a Sanctuary congregation is one willing to engage on a spectrum of solidarity actions including welcoming undocumented people, advocating to help stop deportations, assisting with legal clinics, and physically sheltering an immigrant in danger of immediate deportation.

Sanctuary is one way for faith communities to resist destructive and racially charged policies. Grounded in our core religious truths that celebrate diversity, advocate for racial justice, and honor the dignity of each person, we help create the world we envision.

So why should we, the congregation of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, do this? The banner outside the auditorium says "Continue our legacy, 140 years strong." For 140 years our church worked to promote justice in society. We advocated to win women the right to vote, fought for racial equality in the forties, welcomed and supported Vietnamese refugees in the 70s, welcome LGBTQ people into our community. We work to give people death with dignity, we mediate in schools, we advocate for women's right to control their own bodies, we affirm that Black lives matter, we stand on the side of love, we work to interrupt the school to prison pipeline. This is our history and our present.

Becoming a Host Sanctuary Congregation can become part of our history. It will require us to work together in interdependence and community within the congregation. We do this and we will grow together in community and our faith will grow stronger. We will build relationships with the immigrant community and supporting churches, learning to become strong reliable allies. We do this to change unjust immigration laws that tear at the fabric of our society, to nurture justice in our community, to become an even greater force for positive change.

In alignment with our faith and principles, becoming a Host Sanctuary Congregation presents an opportunity for transformation that comes through authentic relationships within and beyond our church. It offers us an opportunity to live our faith and realize our ends statements.

RESOLUTION:

Therefore the Congregation of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, as a member of the Iowa Sanctuary Movement, will answer the call to live out our principles and actively provide Sanctuary to individuals or families at risk of deportation. We also will work with partner congregations to help provide food, supplies, and volunteers, as needed, as we work to advocate for policies that will provide long-term protection, create welcoming communities, and update our nation's immigration system.

Michael Lauer moved to becoming a sanctuary congregation. Liam Bicsak seconded

Questions/Discussion:

Mark Profit – Q: are we going to partner this resolution with a written legislative agenda to partner with those laws. If we don't change the laws, we will be a lifelong sanctuary congregation and someone could live here for the duration of their life.

Michael Lauer – part of our commitment is to advocate for better laws. Supporting the immigrant community to let their voice be heard – how can we best support them in our community. This is a long commitment.

Linda Bacon – Add to the list of things we do in this congregation, we explore our white privilege and supremacy. What I've experienced through the sanctuary movement has been an unprecedented opportunity to meet and interact with others outside of our white circles.

Karen Lauer – as a member of the discernment team, I'd like to comment on the legislative advocacy question. There is one other faith community to become a host sanctuary and other faith communities or groups that are in the discernment process. We are starting to have meetings with the larger Iowa sanctuary movement. Different groups are gathering. This past week, we began forming other committees of which one is advocacy. Among the sanctuary movement in central Iowa we will also plan as many learning opportunities as we can – potlucks, film series, etc. that create community amongst all of us. More going on besides just our church and we recognize that we bear a responsibility to change laws.

Heidi Lackman – Q: what does it involve to host or provide sanctuary to someone?

Michael Lauer – if someone is accepted into sanctuary, it may be one person or a family. If it is a large family, we may not be able to provide sanctuary. What would it take to support this? We have experience with Family Promise. We know it is a big endeavor. To do this well we need to have a volunteer at the church for 24/7. That is an invitation for all of us to be involved. Other people committed to this that don't have resources to host a person will be called on to volunteer. We will need to build community with others to do this. The opportunity is huge and while it is scary, it is good to be vulnerable in this way to invite others to be in with us. There isn't a definitive answer and we will learn as we go.

Mark Metz – Q: As our church expands Family Promise, are we realistically running into space issues to accommodate someone that needs sanctuary as well as our vision to expand Family Promise? Are we taking that into consideration?

Michael Lauer – The space issue appears to be no conflict with Family Promise. We are going to raise funds to build a shower. With having someone here as sanctuary, there could be rough spots, but we will grow and adapt. We think that Family Promise has been a good resource to gain our capacity at doing this type of work.

Sue Huber – Family promise isn't expanding; it is just continuing. We host families four times a year for one week each time.

Unknown Name – Q: Could you address how a family or individual would be selected for sanctuary? Would it be someone who is urgently in need? Is there vetting? How is it going to be done?

Michael Lauer – We have a document ready to post on FAQ. Vetting done by Iowa Immigration Movement to look at their legal background. If someone is entered into sanctuary it is a public announcement. By being open about it no one can accuse us of hiding/harboring someone which comes with legal complications.

The person will be a vocal spokesperson for the unjust laws that exist. A public face, not likely to be someone with a “criminal” background. All of that is laid out in the extensive interview process. For us to accept them into the church – the minister with the social justice minister, the president of the board and the discernment team will decide if the person is right for the church.

Dave Witke – I am strongly in favor of the resolution. I encourage that if you don't want to vote yes, don't feel pressured to do so. If you are planning to vote yes, that vote I think should be accompanied in your own mind by your commitment to support the program – volunteer labor, meals, cash contribution. We must back up our yes vote with actual commitment it will be a difficult road. It will take all of us in collaboration with the community. I hope you will find it in your heart to vote yes.

Winnie Williams – Q: Has anyone looked at the legal issues with having someone staying sign something so we don't get a squatter situation?

Having people stay without an in and out agreement is risky. What kind of agreement are you going to have with them so they don't stay unwanted?

Michael – As long as someone is working to have their case resolved they will stay here. Once their case is over, they will leave the congregation.

Winnie Williams – Q: Are they signing something to this effect?

Michael – Yes if that what it takes.

David Chivers – Q: Funding perspective, what are we thinking will happen with unforeseen expenses?

Michael – The question about funding, the added cost to utilities will be easily absorbed. There will be financial contributions from other support congregations. The Iowa Sanctuary community will help support. We will have fundraisers to help raise money for expenses. There are people all across the country to support this if they understand the value that will come from it. What we have thought about is various ways to deal with the financial impact - ways to build community.

Darcie Vandegrift – Q: How do we create intentional accountability to groups that are run by immigrants?

Michael – How do we actually become strong supporters without taking over? We have reached out to some churches already – look to them for leadership and accountability. This church is largely white we are not used to surrendering leadership to others. Excited to be held accountable and learn new ways of behaving. Need to hold each other accountable. Hoping that we will be tough on each other. As the other communities to help us in accountability.

Karen Lauer – “Host” is the operative word. We will be hosting. The person here will be our guest. That person will be in charge of their life and decision making. We aren't in charge. That

person will still have a community of their own that will be welcome in our church. Asking the person how we can best host them – do they want our support in meals, shopping, etc. We will learn through the interaction with the immigrant community. We will take our lead on advocacy with what the immigrant community says is important.

Proceed to vote. Paper ballot was requested. Ballots will be collected and results announced later in the meeting.

Annual Elections

**Heidi Lackmann,
BOT & Nominating Committee member**

Board of Trustees - (3) - 3 year terms are available this year.

I am here to help facilitate the election of board of trustees and endowment committee. Look to page 26 and 27 for the names of those nominated.

Katherine Vance
Bill Brauch
Gene McCracken

They bring a lot of experience to the board - experience in our church and other churches as well.

Barb – are there any nominations from the floor? Hearing none.

Heidi move to approve the three individuals brought forth by the nominating committee. Motion seconded.

Voice vote to approve board of trustee members - unanimous

Endowment Committee - Slate of seven nominees. Those nominated include:

For a three year term: Tim Wilson, Margaret Schultz, Liz Bredeson
For a two-year term: Jill Philby, Todd Lackmann
For a one-year term: Doug Hoffman, Steve Evans

Please see page 27 and page 4 of the ballot packet for your list of nominees. I am excited to have Tim Wilson join the committee.

Barb – Any nominations from the floor? Hearing none

Heidi move to approve the slate of candidates for the Endowment Committee. Unknown name seconded.

Voice vote to approve endowment committee members - unanimous

2017/2018 Operational Budget

Rev. Mark Stringer

1. Personnel:
 - a. Staff 2.1% COLA
 - b. Increased Associate Minister pay closer to current UUA mid-point, which recently increased by several thousand dollars
 - c. Increased hours for DFA from 33 to 37 hours per week
2. Staff shifts:
 - a. Eliminated the paid Children's Choir director position, choosing to handle children's music opportunities in house.
 - b. Created a lead Child Care position to provide more focused management to our child care approach
(9hrs a week Sept-May; 3 hours a week June-August)
 - c. Compensate a coordinator of special music, which had been a volunteer
3. Restore some cuts from last year:
 - a. Restored groundkeeper position (8 hrs a week April-Nov)
 - b. Again allotted money to the budget for a future audit (\$2000)
4. Capital Maintenance Reserve Fund:
 - a. A refinance of the mortgage this year enabled us to reduce our monthly payments such that we can set aside \$4300 each year for capital maintenance reserves.
5. Ministerial Transition:
 - a. Budgeted to cover the moving costs for the interim minister (\$7500)
 - b. Set aside 1/3 the costs for the senior minister ministerial search which will begin in earnest next spring.

2017/2018 Operational Budget *Committee*

Jean Rommes, Financial Oversight

From the board's perspective the proposed budget came to us in April and we spent some time discussing the various parts of how we were going to be able to afford these things.

We had time to ruminate on the proposed budgets. During this time, we could meet with Deb and Mark. We gathered in May and were able to pass the budget after discussion.

After that the budget is reviewed and hopefully approved by the congregation.

We do not have an annual audit of our finances by a professional auditor. We are working towards one, however, audits are expensive and we don't have funds at this time.

We have a financial oversight committee. We meet quarterly where we pick some accounts and dig down into the depths to see original expenses and ensure that they were approved by the appropriate people. We also confirm that the funds went where they were supposed to go. It is the same actions as what an audit would be just at a smaller scale.

We have done a good job making sure our financial operations are in keeping with accounting practices. The Financial Oversight Committee feels that if we were to have an audit we would come out with a clean audit.

The committee digs in quarterly and the board at its monthly meetings has an opportunity to ask questions.

**2017/2018 Operational Budget
Finance and Administration.**

Deborah L. Dessert, CPA Director of

Mark covered the highlights. Turn to page 28 in your booklet. In other years we've talked about the Budget Process. Erin, Tracy and I will be more involved in the finances going forward with Mark's departure. Per usual there were three budget forums this year.

Page 29 is the summary of the budget. Projecting that the total budget will be \$750,000. This congregation depends on the pledges and contributions. Smaller amounts from other sources.

Still using some bequest money. We had a great annual drive. We project to use \$28,000 from the bequest funding. Want to use \$4000 from the capital funds from the last capital campaign.

Expense side of the budget – broken out by budget. Percentages per program change year over year. The percentages don't change that much from 2016/2017 to 2017/2018. Those numbers and percentages include the changes that Mark talked about.

Turn to page 30. When we finish this fiscal year at June 30, 2017, we will have around \$72,000 in bequest funds left. With the addition of an associate minister need to use some of this and some budget shortfall.

During 2017-18, if we use \$28,000 in the budget, we will have approximately \$45,000 left.

The \$4000 to be used from the Capital Campaign is to repair damage to the outside of the building from carpenter bees.

Page 31 gives you categories under each expense program.

Page 32 staffing position changes.

Jean Rommes moved to approve the 2017/2018 budget as presented. Deidre Fudge seconded.

Voice vote to approve budget- unanimous

We have the results from the Welcoming Congregation resolution vote.

157 votes cast for the Welcoming Sanctuary resolution
146 in favor 11 in opposition - the motion is approved

General Assembly Delegates

Zac Bailey, BoT President

The following individuals submitted applications to represent First Unitarian at General Assembly: Karen Lauer, Michael Lauer, Barb Royal, Diedre Fudge. Your Board of Trustees reviewed the applications and concurred with these sending these individuals as our Delegates.

It is my understanding that we can send up to 8 official delegates, and since the may board meeting, I have received one additional applicant, Terry Lowman.

I want to honor the timeliness of the applicants that submitted applications prior to the May Board of Trustee's Meeting, and at the same time send as large a delegation as we are able to. I will now ask for any additional nominations to fill the four remaining four slots, and add Terry Lowman to that list now.

Deidre Fudge would like to add Ellen Taylor and Harvey Harrison

All in favor of slate: Barb Royal, Deidre Fudge, Karen Lauer, Mike Lauer, Ellen Taylor, Harvey Harrison, Terry Lowman.

Anyone want to watch the votes online

Amanda Dubois – would like to be a remote delegate

Vote to approve Amanda as a remote delegate – yes all approve.

UUA General Assembly in Kansas City in 2018, so keep that in mind for next year.

Announcement of Interim Senior Minister Mike Stimson, BoT Vice-President

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce our Interim Senior Minister, Rev. Jennifer Brooks, who will begin her ministry with us on August 1, 2017.

Rev. Jennifer Brooks currently serves as the Interim Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus, a 600-member congregation in Central Ohio. Committed to transition ministry, she is an Accredited Interim Minister (AIM); a member of the interfaith Interim Ministry Network; and she serves on the three-member Steering Committee of the UUA's Interim Ministry Guild, which is the professional organization for UU ministers committed to intentional, focused, attentive transitional ministry.

Rev. Jen says that effective transitional work “creates a solid foundation for a successful new settlement.” Her background in multicultural settings, her sense of adventure, and even her experience with managing conflict all translate well to intentional interim ministry. After an eight-year settled ministry, she says, “I gave in to my yearning to accompany congregations through the challenge and possibility of transition. In this work I find deep joy. It is the outpouring of my love for Life and for my UU people.”

Rev. Jen raised her two adopted children of color in what the kids called “our UN family.” Jamie, who traveled to the U.S. from South Korea at the age of four months, is now married and lives with her husband, Chris, in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Kevin, who is African-American, joined the family at the age of one day. Now in community college, Kevin will come to Des Moines with Rev. Jennifer.

Rev. Jen says: “The tapestry of my life informs and energizes my work as a parish minister. I've learned the importance of treating people with respect, listening carefully, and trying to spot the way that different ‘perception filters’ create misunderstanding. The most satisfying moment is when people who see things differently begin to understand one another. It may not cause them to agree, but it keeps them working together, keeps them moving toward compassion. Life is a journey, and we're all traveling together in our small ‘blue boat’ home.”

Before coming to Columbus, Rev. Jen served as Interim Senior Minister of the 700-member congregation in Oakton, Virginia. She has been an intentional interim minister since 2011; previously, she served for eight years in settled ministry on Nantucket Island in Massachusetts. Before entering the ministry, she was a lawyer in international development and a law professor.

Unsung UU Award

Nina Richtman

We had an excellent group of nominations for this award. We were amazed to receive 7 nominations for this particular person. Among the many things this person is involved in: HS Youth Group Facilitation, Chaperon for Coming of Age, OWL, Coordinator for services, Faith in Action team, he has written REACH Grants, is a hospitality team leader, always makes an offering during FFFF, is on the Sanctuary discernment team and overall volunteer extraordinaire!

This year's Unsung UU Award goes to a humble and dear person, Gene McCracken!

Recognition of Retiring BOT members

Mike Stimson, BoT Vice-President

At this time, I would like to thank our outgoing board members for the incredible service.

Heidi Lackman – filled a board position that was left prematurely by someone else. She came to the role with past experience.

Jean Rommes - past president of the board. Showed tremendous leadership throughout. Organizational skills and ability to move things along.

Zac Bailey - Voice of reason, inspirational way of bringing the board together, calming presence.

Extinguish Chalice & Closing Words

Zac Bailey

Look at our 140-year history, we've been going in the right direction. There is a lot of change ahead and I trust we are headed in the right direction. It is an honor, blessing and privilege to be on the board and serve you.

I'll close with two quotes, the first from Alan Watts

The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance. The second is Lao Tzu. If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.

Motion to Adjourn

Barb Royal

Bruce Martin moved to adjourn, Andy Curl seconded. Voice Vote – Unanimous. Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Luebbert