

**Unity of the Valley
Congregational Meeting
February 27, 2022 (final)**

Welcome: Board President Serenee Smith opened the annual meeting at noon on Facebook livestreaming which was linked to the presenters who logged in remotely on Zoom. Serenee asked those watching to submit questions and comments on Facebook that would be collected by Vicky Hills and forwarded to the presenters.

Opening prayer and comments: Serenee introduced our ministerial team, Rev. Inge Tarantola, Rev. Sherry Lady and Jon West, our “three shining lights.” Inge led the opening prayer, a meditation on the different kinds of love.

Introduction of current board members: Board members John Garrett, Vicky Hills, Ted Taylor, Michael Ticknor, Alice Burch, Geneva Miller and Alice Sparks introduced themselves on Zoom video. Serenee acknowledged our two outgoing board members: Alice Burch, who is completing a three-year term, and Heather Breckinridge, who resigned when she moved to Maryland in February. Serenee read a message from Heather expressing her love and appreciation for her four years on the board.

Minutes approval of 2021 congregational meeting: Serenee reported no concerns or corrections had been submitted to date but asked if anyone in the congregation had any questions about the minutes. Vicky, checking the Facebook livestream for comments, said there were none. Serenee asked for a motion from the board to approve the minutes. Alice Burch so moved and Alice Sparks seconded. All board members approved with a show of hands.

Approval of by-laws amendments: Proposed changes to our by-laws (recommended by Unity Worldwide regarding approval of remote meetings) were emailed to the congregation earlier. All who responded by email approved the changes. Serenee asked that anyone who wished to vote now could do so in the comments section on Facebook. The changes were approved. Serenee added that anyone who had questions or comments about the by-laws or anything else is welcome to contact her or Jon West after the meeting.

Approval of 2022 Board of Trustees candidates: Our Administrator Géna Duel counted the mailed-in paper ballots and Michael Ticknor, Alice Sparks and Serenee Smith were reelected unanimously for three-year terms.

Nominating Committee update: Last year Justus Grose and Barbara McKie were selected by the congregation to serve on the Nominating Committee for prospective board members, but there were no candidates to interview. Serenee moved that the congregation have Justus Grose and Barbara McKie continue to serve as the Nominating Committee in 2022, Geneva seconded the motion. Members of the congregation were asked to vote in the comments section on Facebook and the motion was approved.

ANNUAL REPORTS (see full reports online or in booklet form at the Unity office)

Board of Trustees report: Serenee presented her report on the activities of the board and talked about the past year and the difficult policy decisions regarding closing and reopening the church. She said we are working on reopening the facilities soon as the trends are changing. Going forward, all those returning to in-person services will need to provide proof of booster vaccination.

Ministerial report: Jon gave the introductory report from the Ministerial Team that includes Jon, Sherry Lady and Inge Tarantola. Jon highlighted the dynamic, collective nature of the

ministry and outlined three themes of the report: dedication, patience, and love, expressed in so many ways. Inge talked about how rewarding and nourishing it is for her to be part of the ministerial team, even though she is retired. Sherry, involved in Unity since 1985 and also retired, said the shared leadership model created at Unity of the Valley could serve as a model for churches and other organizations around the world.

Treasurer's year-end report: Board Treasurer Vicky Hills submitted her report and talked about the challenges and blessings of 2021, saying the blessings far outweighed the challenges. She noted our year-end net income was \$54,056, in large part due to the federal Payroll Protection Program loans that were forgiven, and continuing support from the congregation. Simple Giving donations are coming in at about \$9,000 a month, but our expenses are around \$13,000 a month. The church has also benefitted from a sizable donation from the estate of Tim Harrow, a longtime Unity member who had also served on our board.

Prayer Ministry Team report: Inge said she is looking forward to reconnecting in-person, and in her report she mentioned the many ways the Prayer Ministry serves the congregation, including prayer requests, the prayer chain, prayer shawls, the prayer line, Power of 8 prayer team, chaplains, and second grief group which is soon to restart.

Youth & Family Ministry report: Alice Sparks and Doris Hicks lead the Uniteens group for middle-school-age youth, both in-person and on Zoom, and Alice talked about how they try to follow the theme of the Sunday services, such as the Burning Bowl and White Stone ceremonies. She said the Uniteens are also encouraged to take on leadership roles and community service projects.

Shared Leadership Team report: Géna Duel has been our administrator for 14 years and gave the SLT report. The team has representatives from the Ministerial Team, the board, staff and volunteers. They meet weekly on Zoom to deal with the day-to-day needs of our spiritual center and its congregants. Current SLT members are Laura DuBois, Géna Duel, Vicky Hills, Sherry Lady, Geneva Miller, Sunny Schneider, Serenee Smith, Inge Tarantola, Jon West and Gary Wymore. One highlight of the SLT in 2021 was organizing a Thanksgiving dinner for 40 people for pickup or delivery.

Facility report: Gary Wymore has been coming to Unity since 1989 and gave his report about our building, its improvements, and its ongoing needs. Highlights are replacement of our stage lights and dealing with sump pumps under the sanctuary. Future projects are parking lot resealing, fixing a roof leak over the Fellowship Hall, and installing permanent video cameras.

Music Ministry Team report: Music Director Laura DuBois gave her report. She said she was surprised that dealing with the pandemic has made the Unity music program stronger, “beyond my wildest dreams,” and the music team has grown closer and gotten stronger. She encouraged everyone to watch the new “Cabaret 2021” video, and she thanked those who have donated to the music program, including our piano fund.

Angel Network Report: Julia Linebarger-Taylor has been our Angel Network coordinator for the past two years and said we currently have 27 volunteers serving a wide variety of needs in the congregation. In 2020, the Angel Network only had five requests for assistance, but in 2021 had 29 requests, ranging from rides to light moving and home repair jobs. She said the service provides a “safety net” for people needing temporary assistance.

Questions from the congregation: Vicky collected comments and questions from the livestream and passed them along to the presenters. Brian Alexander asked why we are going beyond CDC guidelines regarding booster shots in our policies now that restrictions are easing. Serenee said the CDC is recommending booster shots within five to six months of second

vaccinations. Jon said the CDC makes recommendations, but not requirements. The board needs to decide what is in the best interests of the congregation, and every population is unique. Jon said if we had a group of 20-somethings, we might be making different decisions. He also asked the congregation to send in their opinions on masks and other issues. Vicky then read many of the positive comments posted on the Facebook page during this meeting.

Jon and Serenee expressed their appreciation for all those who participated in the meeting. Serenee encouraged people watching the meeting to email additional questions and comments anytime to her, Jon or Géna.

Jon said a decision will be made soon on a reopening date, meanwhile the church needs to hear from volunteers who are ready to help with the many tasks involved in in-person services — and under what conditions they are willing to return.

Closing prayer: Sherry closed the meeting with a prayer celebrating and honoring the blessings that keep this community together, affirming that “all is in divine order.”

The meeting ended at 1:10 pm and had 190 Facebook views as of March 10.