

Unity of the Valley
Annual Congregational Meeting
February 25, 2024 (final)

Welcome: Board President Serenee Smith opened the annual meeting at 12:20 pm following our Sunday service. The meeting was held in our sanctuary and on Facebook livestreaming. All board members were present. About 40 people attended in the audience, and the livestream had about 125 views.

Opening prayer and comments: Serenee introduced Rev. Inge Tarantola who led the opening prayer.

Introduction of current board members: Rev. Dick Everts introduced himself, followed by Michael Ticknor, Ted Taylor, Alice Sparks and Geneva Miller.

Minutes approval of 2023 congregational meeting: Serenee asked if anyone in the congregation had any questions about the minutes. There were none in person or online. Serenee asked for a motion from the congregation to approve the minutes. Larry Craig so moved and Dee Shea seconded. The motion was approved by a show of hands.

Election of 2024 Board of Trustees candidates: Administrator Géna Duel counted the mailed-in and dropped-off paper ballots and reported that Bonnie Paquin, Bonnie Chappa and Cindy Fulton-Tinawi were elected to join the board for three-year terms. Each of them was invited to introduce themselves to the audience. Serenee acknowledged our board Nominating Committee which includes Bev Forster, Justus Grose and Jon West. She encouraged anyone in the membership interested in serving on the nominating committee to contact her or Jon.

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

Board of Trustees report: Serenee read from her report on the activities of the board and recognized all the leaders in the ministry and board who guided us through a turbulent year. She highlighted the past year's board issues, such as the Unity Safety Emergency Plan, use of our facility by outside groups, the Unity Welcoming Team to greet newcomers, and our Youth and Family Program. She also talked about our ability to increase salaries and benefits to our staff, and the challenging process of dealing with Jon West's Special Dispensation Program through Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Treasurer's year-end report: We currently don't have a treasurer, so Ted compiled a report and talked about the contributions made by our former treasurer, Vicky Hills. Ted highlighted our small deficit this year, the \$54,000 surplus in 2021 from a federal PPP grant, and our growing income since we have reopened. He talked about moving most of our reserves into Treasury bills that earn much higher interest than local bank accounts, tapping our reserves for \$33,545 for facility improvements, our current accounts total of \$216,000, and our research into setting up a substantial endowment through the Oregon Community Foundation.

Ministerial report: Jon gave the report from the Ministerial Team that includes Jon, Rev. Sherry Lady and Rev. Inge Tarantola. Jon talked about how everyone in the congregation is part of our ministry. "Here at Unity," he said, "it's about all of us." He talked about the numerous and unique elements that contribute to the ministry. Inge also spoke, saying "it's been a joy to be part of this ministry." She noted that Unity of the Valley has supported the founding of Unity of Roseburg, and that seven ordained ministers have come out of this ministry.

Prayer Ministry report: Inge talked about the many ways our prayer ministry serves our community, from prayer chaplains to prayer shawls. Not included on her list, she said, was Laurie Cracraft who leads our meditation ministry.

Youth & Family Ministry report: YFM Coordinator Alice Sparks said the Youth Ministry is growing and we now have seven teachers and about 16 youth. She pointed out the excellent work of Karena Norton, who will be leaving. YFM Family Nights have begun and quarterly field trips are planned this spring. More volunteers are needed as this ministry continues to grow.

Shared Leadership Team report: Sunny Schneider submitted the SLT report. The SLT has representatives from the Ministerial Team, the board, staff and volunteers. Sunny said the SLT is looking at expanding the successful Shared Leadership model across all the ministries, so that “every member of the community can feel ownership of the community and feel empowered to offer their skills and opinions through expanded communications and gatherings.”

Administrator report: Géna Duel submitted a written report and highlighted the food drive, the Volunteer Appreciation Brunch, the Love-in-Action event, and her hope to sign up two more “Office Angels” to help out in the church office,

Facility report: Gary Wymore has been our facilities coordinator for at least 20 years and now at age 82 relies on volunteers to do the more strenuous work. “Thank God for Gary Collins,” he said, “along with Jon West.” Gary highlighted some of the work that was done in 2023, such as the HVAC system, entry door, dishwashers and lighting. He also requested more volunteers for his team to work on plumbing, electrical, whatever.

Music Ministry Team report: Music Director Laura DuBois submitted a written report. She said the music team is “going great” and asked for more people to join the adult choir and the youth choir. She also said violinist Christopher Stark is now part of the music team along with Jaylon Watts who has moved back to Eugene.

Other reports: Written reports from the Angel Network and the Unity Bookstore can be found in the 2023 Annual Report packet.

Questions and comments from the congregation: No written questions were received. From the audience, Theresa Skotchdopole voiced her appreciation for everyone’s work. Amy Raven asked about hot water heaters and was pleased to hear ours are electric. Sally Crum said she liked the way the church has come together to face challenges and have put Unity principles to work.

Closing prayer: Serenee invited our new board members to come forward to stand and join the board as Rev. Dick closed the meeting with a prayer, saying “We are a city on the hill, and our light goes out to everyone, and makes a difference to every life we touch along the way.”

The meeting ended around 1:15 pm and was recorded on Facebook. The Annual Report for 2023 was emailed to church members before the meeting, with an invitation to send in questions by email, or by Facebook comments during the meeting. Printed handouts of the annual report were made available to all in the audience. Printed ballots were mailed to members earlier, and were also made available at the meeting.