

Minutes of UUCS Special Congregational Meeting

March 1, 2020

Approved by UUCS Board March 9, 2020

The meeting was called for by the Committee on Ministry to vote on sending a statement to the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association.

Copies of the statement were distributed before the meeting began.

The text of the statement to be discussed and voted on follows:

“Public Statement to UUA and UUMA

“Members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem, Oregon, encourage discussion of controversial topics. We oppose recent efforts by ministers in our denomination to discourage discussion of *The Gadfly Papers: Three Inconvenient Essays by One Pesky Minister* as well as the censure of its author Rev. Todd Eklof by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association.

“Following extensive discussions of the book, we conclude that condemnation of it and its author as racist are incorrect. White privilege is inherent to those of us identifying as Caucasian, but we reject the characterization of the Unitarian Universalist Association and its member congregations as being white supremacy institutions.

“Our congregation celebrates its status as one of the first designated Welcoming Congregations in the UUA. Our social justice team is active and resilient. We participate in local and regional efforts for immigrant justice, and we were the first and remain the only Sanctuary Church in Salem.

“We call on the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association to rescind its censure of Rev. Todd Eklof, to cease referring to the UU movement as a white supremacy movement, and to encourage discussion and action to counter oppression and injustice wherever they are found.”

The chalice was lit and a reading was shared at 12:14.

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. by the Board Chair.

Quorum was certified by the Board Treasurer: 79 voting members were present, 20 proxies were assigned by absent members for a total of 99 voting members. 52 people would be a quorum therefore the need for a quorum was met.

Lynn Cardiff explained the discussion process which was also projected at the front of the sanctuary and explained a few relevant aspects of Roberts Rules of Order.

Joel Martin presented the history of UUCS Statement. Committee on Ministry called for this meeting. He explained the brief history of the events around the censure of Todd Eklof.

Members of the Committee on Ministry have read the *Gadfly Papers* at least once (and several

have read it more than that) and have not found that it makes racist statements. During a series of discussions after services it was suggested that UUCS make a public statement. Joel stated that the focus of concern is the 5th principle of UUism (“the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large”).

The statement was read by Joel.

Joel Martin moved and it was seconded that those voting members present approve the statement and have it sent to the UUA and the UUMA.

There was discussion by voting members expressing support of and concerns about the statement and/or making it as a public statement for the whole congregation.

Member Benjahmin Boschee moved “I call the question” and it was seconded and approved unanimously.

The motion to approve the statement was voted on: 88 yeas and 5 nays with no abstentions. The motion passed.

The yea chits were collected to get a firm count. One proxy and one member chit were torn in half and turned in. These were removed and not counted.

Board chair mentioned the suggestion that Reverend Rick would like to convene a meeting with those who would like to continue to dialogue on matters related to today’s vote.

Point of privilege used by Kate Walker who suggested that we consider withholding our dues from UUA.

Two statements made by nonvoting members.

Mike Becker moved to adjourn and it was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.