

All Souls Unitarian Church
Congregational Meeting (via Zoom)
December 13, 2020
1:00pm

Note: Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Congregational Meeting was held via Zoom. The meeting began with Lei Rumley providing the congregation with detailed instructions on how participate and cast their votes (via Zoom or a phone). The instructions were also displayed on the screen during the meeting.

Board of Trustees President Flo Reed called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and welcomed the All Souls congregation to the December Congregational meeting. She thanked everyone for attending the Zoom in order to handle the Church's business. Flo asked the BOT secretary if there was a quorum. The secretary was able to certify there was a quorum.

Rev. Marlin Lavanhar provided the Invocation. He read words written by Rabbi Arthur Waskow, who is an American author, political activist and rabbi associated with the Jews Renewal movement. Marlin said he was reading the words in honor of the theme of the day, 'Light' and the Hanukkah holiday. The reading is titled, *Between the Fires: A prayer for lighting candles*. "We are the generation that stands between the fires. Behind us, the flame and smoke that rose from Auschwitz and from Hiroshima. Before us, the possibility of the flood of fire, the flame and smoke that could consume all Earth. It is our task to make from fire not an all consuming blaze, but the light in which we see each other fully".

Flo announced to the congregation that a letter was received from Ren Pasco, requesting to be ordained at All Souls. Ren may be familiar to some members because she grew up at All Souls. Since the BOT received the request after the agenda was posted for the congregational meeting, Flo asked the congregation to approve adding this request to the agenda to be voted on later in the meeting. There was no objection to this addition.

The minutes for the August 23 meeting were approved as posted.

President's Report

Flo told the congregation that this was a challenging year for everyone. She then listed some of the things the Church had done or may still be facing into the coming year. During the August meeting, the Church voted to repair, remodel and expand our present location on Peoria. Prior to taking the vote, Jim Rusher presented an overview and estimated cost for the repairs, remodel and expansion. This project is titled, All Souls Centennial Master Planning Project. The three committees listed below are working on different areas of the project.

Building Repair & Maintenance

Terry Lastinger-Chair
Hugh Burleigh-Vice Chair
Shelley Mackin
JoJo Ogundare
David Smith

Building Renovation & Design

Gabe Palacios-Chair
Jim Rusher
Denise Dutton
Colin Bent
Glen Hall

Leisa McNulty
Shirley Vincent

Conservage Property Sales Committee

John Greene
Rebecca Sherwood
Jim Perrault

Flo thanked each committee member for stepping up and volunteering during this critical time. She added, this is a time for all members to take the opportunity and be a part of what our future will look like. She said these committees can use church members' help and expertise in any of these areas, so please respond to their request for help, if you can. She noted that All Souls has plenty of talented people to get the job done.

A Finance Review Committee has been established to help make sure we are spending the funds efficiently. Members of this committee are from the Board of Trustees, they are: Craig Jones (Finance), Beau Brock (Finance), Jill Webb (Legal) and Clarence Garrison (Project Management).

Flo anticipates that All Souls will reach its goal of a balanced budget by the end of December 2020 as the pledges continue to come in according to the revised budget plans. All Souls was fortunate to received approximately \$292,000 from the Cares Act (Paycheck Protection Program). We were able reduced our pledge income to \$1,400,000 from the estimated \$1,630,000 for 2020 & 2021. Unfortunately, the Board fundraisers ran short last year because our biggest fundraiser the 'Gala' could not be held indoors due to COVID-19. Instead, we held an alternate event at a drive-in theater that raised about \$23,000. The golf tournament did well as usual.

The church building is having some issues with its air-conditioning system. Due to COVID-19, the air flow system will need to be changed. The BOT has received two bids from two different system repair companies. After careful evaluation and the BOT will determine which company offers the best system for us. The approximate cost ranges from \$13,000 to \$20,000 depending on the system chosen. Presently, the church can only have up to 50 people in the sanctuary at a time. Fixing the air flow system is a priority to make sure everyone in the building will be safe.

Flo said there is a mold issue in Emerson Hall. A company has been contacted to evaluate that situation and determine if we can mitigate the mold and what it will cost. If the cost is too much, a decision may have to be made to tear that part of the church building down. Flo reminded the congregation of the long term plans for the Emerson Hall. The plan is to replace that old portion of the building with a newly constructed and much larger Emerson Hall. Flo said if it is not cost effective to mitigate the mold, we will have no other choice.

Flo informed the congregation that they will be voting on three (3) Motions during this meeting. Motion #1 is the Sale of Real Properties on the south side of 30th Street. The committee will be determining the best steps to take toward the sales, keeping in mind, some of the houses have tenants that still may be under lease. Motion # 2 has to do with our Virtual Members. This motion is being tabled at this time and Flo said she would explain later in the meeting. Motion #3 is concerning the 2021 Budget and Motion #4 is the ordination of Ren Pasco,

Flo informed the congregation that over the past year All Souls had three of our treasured staff members to leave the church staff for other positions. They are: Dave Manson-Exec. Director of Finance/HR, Knowlan Randza-Facility Manager and Nicole Ogundare-Special Events Coordinator. Each former staff member did an outstanding job in their position, often going

above and beyond what was required. We wish them the best in their new endeavors. We know each of their futures will be bright. Flo ended her report by saying that Barbara will introduce the newest member of the staff, the Exec. Director of Finance Manager/HR later in the meeting.

***Motions #1 Sale of Property (Vote Participants: Traditional Members 18+)**

Board of Trustee, William (Tip) Jennings read the Motion for the Sale of Real Property. He reminded the congregation that during the August meeting it was decided by the Church to remain at the current location on South Peoria Avenue. While Tip read the motion it was also posted on the screen for everyone to see. He noted All Souls owns several homes on the South side of East 30th Street and to expand our present location the Board of Trustees formed a task force to analyze the options for how to use the properties on the South side of East 30th Street. On August 23, 2020, the congregation of All Souls approved a plan to stay at its present location and expand to the West. It was decided that All Souls will not be able to utilize the properties on the South side of East 30th Street and therefore has no need for the properties. Article X, Section 2 of the By-Laws states that any sale of real property requires the approval of the congregation. The Board of Trustees of All Souls move that the congregation approve the following resolutions: The Congregation of All Souls resolves as follows: All Souls shall sell the real property located on the South side of East 30th Street at the following addresses:

1214 E. 30th St	1222 E. 30th St	1226 E. 30th St	1232 E. 30th St
1236 E. 30th St	1240 E. 30th St	1250 E. 30th St	1260 E. 30th St

The sale of the properties will be done with the oversight of the Board of Trustees or a committee established by the Board of Trustees. The houses will be evaluated for best market value and the sale will be conducted by professional real estate individuals. The proceeds from the sale of the properties will be utilized to retire the debt owed by All Souls to the Bank of Oklahoma, as much as possible. The final part is the President and Secretary of the Board of Trustees are authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to sell the properties.

Flo explained to the congregation that since the Board of Trustees is presenting the motion, a second is not required. She then called for any questions before the vote was to be taken.

Question: How many of the properties are currently occupied? And, how will the removal of tenants be handled?

Answer: All properties currently have tenants. Each tenant will be informed about the vote, once it becomes official and the authorized officials of the church, along with the tenants, the sellers and the buyers will engage in conversation as the process move forward.

Question: Will the sell of the properties retire the BOK debt?

Answer: The total appraisal amount is not known at this time, but it is Marlin's understanding, it should cover the debt on all the houses. Flo added, the value of the above mentioned properties has increased over the years and this should be more than enough to cover the debt. She did note that the motion says to retire the debt as much as possible.

Comment: This is a difficult time for people to move.

Response: That will be taken into consideration when the process starts. The authorized church officials will work closely with the tenants and the buyers to make sure they are taken care of respectfully, to the best of our ability.

Note: All Souls is not currently subsidizing any of the properties being rented at this time. The total loan from the BOK is \$1.85 million.

Question: Does the current rental amount received cover the payments on the debt?

Answer: Yes, they have historically cover the payments with some surplus. But, we are approaching the point in the last year, where that will no longer be possible and the Church may need to pay back part of the loan from the operating budget. The cash flow is no longer in our favor and we will need to eventually sell the properties. Also, we no longer have the person to do the landlord duties, which required a lot of work from Dave Manson and then Knowlan Randza, after Dave left. Since both Dave and Knowlan are gone, Jim Perrault has generously been handling the landlord duties as a volunteer, with the expectation these responsibilities will end once the properties are sold in the near future.

Question: Has the Church looked at the Zillow's estimated market value?

Answer: Zillow market value estimates are available to anyone who would like to look them up, but they are not actual market values that can be used in our case. Marlin said the value of the properties has gone up considerably since the Gathering Place as come to the area. We expect to get a good price for the homes, we do not expect to lose money.

Question: What was the original purpose for buying the homes and has that purpose changes?

Answer: We originally the properties were bought for possibly expanding the church in the future. We have since learned that it is unlikely that we can get the zoning changed to use those properties as was envisioned . Also, All Souls was blocked from buying all the properties on that block, which is another reason keeping us from getting a zoning change as well.

A member 'Called the Question' and further debate was stopped. To limit the number of times the congregation would have to go through the voting process online, Flo asked the congregation if anyone objected to forgoing the Call to Question vote. Since there were no objections, she was able to move on to the Motion #1 vote.

Motion #1-Vote results: Yes: 204 No:12 Motion #1 passed with majority yes vote.

Motion #2 By-Laws Update (Vote Participants: Traditional Members, 1 year, 18+)

Flo explained that Motion #2 was being tabled for the December meeting and will be presented at the next congregational meeting in May. She said that there are a few items needing correcting and have more clarification to be given. The changes being made have to do with the virtual members and the changing trends in attendance online.

Motion #3 2021 Budget

Craig Jones, the Board of Trustees-Vice President-BOT presented the 2021 Budget to the congregation, a copy was displayed on the screen for members viewing. The congregation was told that a copy of the Budget is also available online or by mail from the church office.

Income

Craig began his report by focusing on the left column showing the 2020 Budget and said these numbers were approved by the church members back in November 2019. The numbers were representative of what the Board of Trustees felt could be done in 2020. The revenues were at

a level we had experienced a few years previously. No one was aware of COVID-19 or the impact it would have on people's lives. The bottom line is that 2020 was a tough year for the Church and very challenging. The desired plan is to break even with the Budget and to have enough revenues to cover our programs, keep the church doors open, provide programs for our members and outreaches to the community, etc. Our pledges and general contributions have usually run about \$1.6 million. This has dropped to a little more than \$1.4 million which is a loss of a little more than \$200,000 in pledges and contributions. As long as the pandemic is in place and the church is closed, this is the 'run rate' the Church will likely be facing. Additionally, our ability to do fundraising has also been compromised. The Gala was held at a drive-in as a family event and we were only able to raise about \$23,000. That was certainly better than nothing since the past goal of \$100,000 was not makable. We still face the same problems with raising funds in 2021, but hopefully things will get better. The pandemic is expected to continue through 2021 and that may mean the Church will not be open for possibly the next eight (8) months or more. If the Church stays closed through the end of August, that will mean the Church will only be open the last four (4) months of the year. We will still be under pressure to hit the \$1.4 million mark from pledges and contributions. The BOT will closely monitor our operating expenses to make sure we can get to a break even position.

One highlight of the 2021 Budget is the run rate of \$1.4 million on the pledges. Under the Endowments Funds showing \$348,000, the rules states the Church, if necessary can take out as much as 5% of the cumulative earnings in the general endowment. This means the corpus or principal amount is not touched. The stock market has done well over the last ten years which has allowed us to build up some head room on our principal amounts and cumulative earnings. The decision was made to pull down the full 5% at this time which adds an additional \$60,500 to our revenue. The amount is allow according to the rules of the General Endowment.

The Board Fundraisers were tasked at raising \$55,000 and not the usual \$100,000, like in the past. If everything get back to normal and the city of Tulsa opens up, there is a possibility we can have our indoor Gala and raise the funding we are use to raising. The golf tournament continues to do well and has proven to be the perfect fundraiser during this pandemic, because it is held outdoors.

During the pandemic while the church building was closed, we were unable to receive any rental income. In 2021 we anticipate getting about \$10,000 in rental income if the building can be opened the last four months of the year.

Operating Expenses

Craig said that since the building has been closed the operating expenses have been much lower. Ministerial expenses are down about \$84,000 from what it was in 2020. This was mainly due to a saving in salary and retirement benefits after Yadene Hailu left the Assistant Minister position at the end of 2019 and the position was not re-filled. He added that the professional expenses for the ministers that are usually budgeted for year have been cut by \$11,000 for 2021 to help deal with the short fall in pledges.

The Denomination & Community Affairs line is our annual pledge to the UUA. In the past few years we have pledged \$100,000 per year, but with the decline in our pledges we have decided to cut that pledge to \$65,000. The amount will be reviewed as the circumstances changes for the church.

The General Congregation Expenses are down due to having the church building closed and the level of security needed is down. Craig told the congregation the reserve account of \$13,000 for Barbara Prose and Marlin Lavanhar's sabbaticals was also put on hold.

Religious Education Programs operating expense is down about \$79,000. A large part of that is due to the reduced cost of child care since the church building is closed. The building has been closed since March 2020 and we have saved about \$45,000. Some of the youth education programs have been curtailed due to closure, as well. We also have a large savings in the Building and Grounds expenses because we are not renting out for functions/events, so the need for custodial services has been lessened. All Souls is down to having only two sextons on duty, with a savings in salaries, retirement & insurance of about \$103,000. The janitorial supplies and grounds maintenance savings is about \$13,000. Utilities across the board are much lower. The good news is all this is helping to lower the cost of most things. But, we will still need to continue to maximize our revenues and minimize our expenses to break even. Craig ended his report by saying that Marlin, Barbara and the staff have done a great job in managing the Church's expenses and making good decision in personnel matters to keep everything in balance. He also made a plea to all the members who have not put in their 2020 pledge to please do so, as soon as possible, if they can. This will help the Board of Trustees and the Church staff with better planning and management of the Church and its funds.

Question: Why have the General/Admin. Church expenses gone up?

Answer: When the pandemic happened, some of the staff were re-assigned to another positions under Administration in order to maintain employment within the church and after their prior position was not needed because of the building and some programs shut-down.

Question: Please explain the funds from adult music to the children's music?

Answer: In the past, David Smith salaries were reflected in the adult music and the children's/youth music programs. His salaries were later consolidated for accounting purposes into one line item. In 2020, Dave Manson moved most of David Smith salary into the adult music line item. After reviewing it, it was determined that it would be better to have it under the children's/youth line item. This gives a better reflection of how the money is being spent.

Questions: Is the \$60,000 referred to represented in the Budget or the 'possibility of just in case'?

Answer: The \$60,000 is included in the Budget. It is from the Endowment.

Question: If circumstances change for the better, we will need to look at revising the Budget?

Answer: Yes, we will. That will be the best case scenario. If we end up with more money than we anticipated, we will be able to put some money back into the different programs. Also, many of the staff are working extra hard and it would be nice to reward them for a job well done.

Question: Why are payroll expenses not listed separately?

Answer: Ministers' pay are posted, but for privacy reasons, some of our staff not comfortable with having salaries and other things listed for just anyone to see, online. If someone has a relevant reason to know someone's salary, they can contact the church directly. To honor the privacy of our staff, we do not list each staff members' salaries separately.

Question: What is the total payroll for the Church?

Answer: That is something we do not have readily available for this meeting, but it is something we can certainly have for future meetings. We can show the total that is spent on salaries and payroll which is certainly a large percentage of the total budget.

Motion #3 Vote results: Yes: 206 No: 6 Motion #3 passed with a majority yes vote.

Note: Unfortunately, Virtual members were not allowed to vote on the Budget during this meeting due to changes not yet made in the By-Laws at this time. Flo apologized to the virtual members and let them know the Board of Trustees working on making changes to the By-laws and having the changes ready for a vote by the next congregational meeting. The original plans were to have the changes in place for the meeting and take a vote on it, before voting on the Budget. Flo thanked the virtual members for their patience.

Motion #4 Ordination of Ren Pasco (Vote Participants: Traditional member making contribution to church for at least one year)

Flo announced the next item on the agenda is a vote to ordain Ren Pasco. Ren completed her training last week and has just passed her ministerial fellowship committee, making her eligible for ordination into the UU ministry. Her official title will be Community Minister, as she will be serving in a non-congregational role. She has already accepted a position as a chaplain at St. John Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Dorothy Checotah, the Board of Trustees-Secretary read Motion #4 concerning the ordination request of Ren Pasco. The Congregation of All Souls Unitarian Church of Tulsa votes to ordain Ren Pasco into the Unitarian Universalist Ministry and to hold a ceremony of ordination in 2021.

Flo said since the Board of Trustees are putting the motion forward for a vote, a second is not required. Flo called for any questions and there were no questions posted.

While the vote was being tallied, Ren was able to speak to the congregation via Zoom. She is a chaplain at St. John Hospital and she love being there. She has been a UU since she was a little girl. She did her Credo and Senior Sunday at All Souls Tulsa, where she preached about wanting to be a minister. This is the realization of a dream she's had since being a youth under the Kate Starr's days. She feels Tulsa and All Souls is home and she is glad to be back.

Motion #4 Vote results: Yes: 197 No: 5, Motion #4 passed with a majority yes vote.

Question: Ren, where did you go to seminary?

Answer: Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago

2021 Centennial Celebration '100 Years'

Barbara reported on the plans for the 2021-All Souls Centennial Celebration. She also acknowledged 2021 being the 100th year of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Some highlights are: A birthday party for the Church is planned for March 2021, details will come later. The centennial leadership team is already working, going through the archives, searching through many boxes of Order of the Service, looking at old newspaper articles and hundreds of photos, so the Church can take a glance back over our history.

The Made with Love Cookbook is available for purchase. There are links on the website and facebook. It will make a great gift for the holiday season. Cost: \$15.

The Christmas Eve Candle is available along with the Christmas Eve Order of Service for pick up at the church, check the website.

Specially made earrings handcrafted from the copper of the old steeple are still available for purchase. Find out more on our website.

The next All Souls publication coming soon is a collection of Prayers and Meditations from ministers who have served at All Souls over the years. An announcement will come soon.

Carlos Moreno (All Souls member) is writing an incredible book on the History of Greenwood, Before and After the Race Massacre. It will include really important stories to understand the significance of Black Wall Street. He has been publishing some of the chapters online and on the All Souls 'Beyond Belief Blog'. Carlos' book is being published with the support from All Souls, Jenkins Lloyd Jones Press Funding, it will be available for purchase this coming year.

We are looking forward to celebrating our history in all sort of creative ways. Even if it means we will be doing it online.

Marlin reminded everyone to please pick up their Christmas Eve candle for the candle light service. A schedule will be posted online of the pick-up times. You can have your own commemorative candle at home to light during the service and it can be a beautiful souvenir and reminder of how we stayed together while dealing with the challenges of the pandemic.

Barbara introduced Cindy Ranae, All Souls new Executive Director of Finance/Human Resources. She is originally from Boise, ID and has lived in Bartlesville with her husband for 8 years. She has 25 years of experience as a financial executive in both the non-profit and the for-profit world. Barbara said, "She is a numbers gal with a big heart." She has 3 children and 5 grandchildren. She loves to knit and service on several non-profit boards. All Souls is very fortunate to have her. She has only been at All Souls for two weeks and staff says she already 'feel like part of the family'. Welcome to the All Souls family, Cindy.

No New Business

Flo ended the meeting with a brief encouraging and inspiring message to the congregation.

"Thanks everyone for your participation today. These are challenging times, right now. This Church has met them before. Next year we will celebrate 100 years, which means our ancestors have faced many obstacles. Two Worlds Wars, the Pandemic of 1918, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Afghanistan & Iraq Wars, the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, the Right to Vote for Women & Minorities, Civil Unrest and a Financial Crisis in just about every decade since this church started, but, we are still here. We have hit bumps in the road, but we continue to move forward. We support our community in so many ways. We as members have to stay connected to the Church and to each other. I know it is hard. You are not coming to church every Sunday and you're not going to your group meetings. The staff has done an outstanding job in keeping us connected electronically. Yes, it's difficult times, but we have faced them before and I know we will live up to the challenges that we are facing now. We continue to ask you for your financial support. We had to cut our budget back, as you have seen already to make some difficult decisions. The Board will continue work hard in the best interest of this Church. We will make it through. This is the Christmas season, my most favorite time of the year. I love it because it is the giving and sharing time. I believe we will thrive in 2021, our 100th year. Think about it, how many places have been around 100 years. We have a lot to be proud of. I've only been here for 11 years and this is the first church that I have actively participated, since leaving my childhood church. And, that is because of what we do

for the community and for those less fortunate. This is what a church is about, helping one another in love. May you have a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, Happy Holidays or which ever way you celebrate. Just celebrate! We will face these and some other difficult times over the next three months, with this pandemic. We have to hunker down and stay safe. Wear your mask, wash your hands, practice social distancing and I know we will be all right. It will be at least a year or longer before we can get back to church. But just think, what is a half year or year and a half, out of 100 years, not much. We are as strong or stronger than our ancestors. Thank you for your support and we will see you at the next meeting in May.”

Marlin gave the closing by thanking everyone for coming to the meeting via Zoom, especially the virtual members. He apologized again to the virtual member for not being able to vote to due some errors that could not be corrected before the meeting. The corrections will be made before the next congregational meeting. He told the members in Tulsa and other parts of Oklahoma to go out and enjoy the snowy day. He thanked everyone for taking time out of their afternoon to get church business done. We voted to move forward on the ordination of a minister in 2021, passed the 2021 Budget and done some other important work for the life of our Church. Go forth on this day, be blessed and know you are a blessing.

Before the meeting ended, Flo said a big thank you to the staff and tech team who made the congregational meeting possible. It was a lot of hard work and she wanted them to know the Board of Trustees and the congregation truly appreciated it.

Meeting adjourned at 2:18pm.

Respectfully submitted
Dorothy Checotah, Secretary-Board of Trustees