

DRAFT Minutes of June 12, 2022, Annual Meeting  
Please send any comments to secretary@uuwestport.org  
(The following minutes will be presented for approval at the June 11, 2023, Annual Meeting)

**MINUTES OF THE 71<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN WESTPORT  
JUNE 12, 2022**

**Call to Order:** Luke Garvey, President of the Board of Trustees (the Board) and Moderator for this meeting, called the 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting to order at 11:14 AM. This meeting was conducted in the Sanctuary, with members who were unable to attend in person participating virtually on Zoom. This is TUCW's first Annual Meeting to use a hybrid format. Sincere thanks go to Jim Cooper (our technical manager for the Zoom session), to David Vita and his tech team for handling all other technical needs for the meeting, to Sudha Sankar and Kathy Roberts who assisted with member check-in and vote counting, and to all others who helped with this meeting.

**Opening Reflection:** As the chalice was lit, Senior Minister Rev. John Morehouse shared a chalice-lighting reading by Denny Davidoff.

**Quorum Report:** Stapley Emberling, Secretary for the Board, confirmed that the quorum had been met in accordance with our Constitution and that this meeting qualified as a Member Meeting. There were 72 members in attendance in person and 22 additional members who had signed in on Zoom, for a total of 94 members attending the meeting. Our quorum number for this meeting was 60 members.

**Motion to Allow "Hybrid" Voting:** A Motion was made by Ken Vogel on Zoom and repeated for the audio in the room by Stapley Emberling that the Congregation approve the hybrid voting process to allow votes from virtual attendees on Zoom to be counted along with the votes from members present in the Sanctuary. The Motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote by members in the room. (A simultaneous vote was taken from members on the Zoom call, and the motion was approved on Zoom.) Subsequent voting will include a count from both the members on Zoom and in the room.

**Approval of Member Meeting Minutes:** Luke Garvey introduced the Minutes from the Annual Meeting on June 13, 2021. A motion was made and then seconded to approve the Minutes. A vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously. The Minutes from the 70th Annual Meeting on June 13, 2021, were approved.

**The Very Fine Lifetime Volunteer Service Award:** Board member Catherine Onyemelukwe announced that the winner of the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Very Fine Lifetime Volunteer Service Award is Sudha Sankar. Congregants expressed their joy and heartfelt endorsement, and virtual attendees also sent congratulations to Sudha via Zoom Chat.

**Gratitude to Catherine Onyemelukwe:** On behalf of the entire Board, Luke Garvey expressed the Board's sincere gratitude to Catherine Onyemelukwe for her 6 years of service on the Board of Trustees, serving 3 of those years as Treasurer for the Congregation. Catherine will now rotate off the Board, having completed two full terms of

service. We thank her for her many contributions to the work of this Board and for her support and wise counsel.

**Board of Trustees Report:** Luke Garvey, President of the Board of Trustees, gave the report for the Board. He mentioned general challenges that TUCW has been facing in this post-COVID environment and gave a summary of the work of the Board over this past year, reporting on current and future goals as well as some of the frustrations and hard-learned lessons. He discussed the controversies and strong feelings that surfaced when two issues that had once caused discord and disagreement within the Congregation in the distant past (a potential change to our name and the possibility of a new organ) were reintroduced to the Congregation this year for fresh consideration. Neither initiative came to a satisfactory resolution. From this experience, Luke reported that the Board has learned that “Unless circumstances are dire, we must allow as much time as possible to allow full involvement of the Congregation in education, discussion, alternatives, etc. It is a mistake to try to hurry.” Consequently, with the Board’s endorsement, the Naming Committee (consisting of volunteers from the Congregation), has been collecting feedback and suggestions from congregants since last fall to explore the possibility of changing our name, but on a much slower timeframe than had been originally planned and with as much participation from as many congregants as possible before any name suggestions will be offered for a vote by members. Town Hall discussions will continue during the summer and fall (including an interactive Summer Service on the topic on July 17), and, depending on the feedback received by the Naming Committee, Member meetings may be called in November and December to decide on a name. Concerning the fallout and upset on all sides caused by the issue of the organ, Luke stated that, “We are currently working with the UUA and other entities to foster healing and reconciliation discussions in the aftermath of this bruising experience.” The full report is available in the 2022 Annual Report.

## Financial Reports:

**2021-2022 Pledge Report:** Elena Rockman-Blake, Co-Chair of the Year-Round Stewardship Committee, gave some highlights for the year in Stewardship. Our final pledge number was \$478.6K, with 203 pledgers. As of June 1, 2022, there is still \$50K from pledgers that hasn’t come in. Stewardship managed two successful “off-cycle” fundraisers this past year and supported fundraising efforts on behalf of the Youth trip to Alaska, as well as managing the third and final year of the Capital Campaign and the ongoing Share the Plate initiative.

**Endowment Committee:** Chair Mark Corcoran reviewed the income and disbursements from the Endowment. The Committee manages all capital funds of the Congregation “with the objectives of preserving assets and enhancing the long-term financial security and well-being of the Congregation.” These funds include The Endowment, which was established by our Constitution, The Bernhard Music Fund, and The Scouler/Nelson Fund for Family Faith Formation. The latter two funds were established by Board Resolutions. Mark explained that, for the upcoming year, \$350K has been set aside as the Endowment’s remaining matching commitment to the Capital Campaign Fund, and the Committee has agreed to

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commit up to \$156K to the operating budget this coming year to assist on a one-time basis with the budget gap in our 2022-2023 Budget. Details are in the Annual Report.

**Financial Results & Proposed Budget:** Steve Grathwohl, Treasurer, explained the 2021-2022 Profit and Loss (P/L) statement for the year, and presented the proposed Budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. He also observed that TUCW is a different Congregation now from what it was ten years ago, still strong and vibrant, but not as large. "And that size difference is being reflected in our finances and our pledging," he said. "We have fewer pledgers, especially on the higher end, and total pledge dollars have not kept pace with expenses." He explained that our current financial situation is very like last year's: From a Balance Sheet perspective, we are in good financial shape (strong asset position, no mortgage and almost no liabilities, lots of positive equity, and a healthy endowment). However, from an Annual Operating Budget perspective, we are still operating with a significant Budget Gap (\$182,500), and this is not sustainable for the very near future.

At last year's Annual Meeting, Steve had stressed that 2021-2022 would need to be a transitional year for TUCW, that we had to "right-size" our operations to reflect changes in the Congregation, and that there must be a balance between Pledges and Expenses. Unfortunately, however, our operating budget has not transitioned very far, and attempts to make even small cuts to staff hours and compensation have been met with strong resistance and complaints from staff and members alike. To close the Budget Gap for the 2022-2023 year, we no longer have additional Cash and Reserves available (which is how we were able to manage last year's Budget Gap), so we have asked Endowment for emergency funding. "Endowment has approved \$127K in additional funding," Steve said, "but this emergency funding is available only on the condition that the Congregation must work toward a truly Balanced Budget. A Balanced Budget means either increased Revenue or reduced Expenses. Reduced Expenses means reduced People Costs. Reduced People Costs means reduced services to our Congregation."

"In the future, we will not have cash or reserves available to fund the Budget Gap, which only leaves Endowment or taking a loan out on the church property. We cannot ask Endowment for emergency funding every year. Endowment is only authorized to provide emergency funds within the limits of our Constitution and the donor's wishes. Further, the Endowment is intended as a place to create wealth over the long term, not as a source of short-term cash. If we continue to use Endowment to bridge the Budget Gap, we will eventually run out of Endowment funds." The full report is available in the Annual Report.

**Ratification of the 2022-2023 Budget:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2022-2023 budget as presented. The motion passed by unanimous vote and the 2022-2023 budget was ratified.

**Elections:** Tom Croarkin, Co-Chair of the Nominating Committee (with Lynne Laukhuf), thanked the members of the committee for their hard work and presented the following slate of nominees for election to office.

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- **Board of Trustees**  
Brian Lasher (1<sup>st</sup> term to 2025)  
Stapley Emberling (2<sup>nd</sup> term to 2025)  
Wendy Levy (2<sup>nd</sup> term to 2025)
- **Endowment Committee**  
Tom Hearne (term to 2027)
- **Committee on Ministries**  
Joanne Orenstein (term to 2027)  
Julyen Norman (term to 2024)
- **Nominating Committee**  
Eileen Belmont (term to 2024)  
Cathy McElroy (term to 2024)

A motion to approve the slate of nominees was made and seconded and the vote to approve was unanimous. The 2022 slate of nominees was approved.

**Installation of New Board & Elected Committee Members:** Luke Garvey, President of the Board, welcomed the newly elected Board and other Elected Committee members, charging them to serve the Congregation to the best of their abilities, and charging their fellow committee members and the Congregation to support them in the work they are taking on.

**#MeToo Resolution and Gender Equity Report:** Rev John Morehouse reported on TUCW's progress to date on the directives of the 2018 Congregational #MeToo Resolution and noted highlights of the work done by the Gender Equity Team (GET) this past year. The GET also acts as a resource to educate other TUCW groups and committees in broadening their perspectives and awakening awareness and responsiveness to minority voices and sensibilities in our community and beyond that may have been previously ignored. This work has been meaningful in the lives of individual women in the Congregation and powerful in inspiring leaders to rethink the words they use and the ways TUCW can be more inclusive and welcoming. The full report is in the 2022 Annual Report.

**Report on the Anti-Racism Resolution:** Rev John Morehouse reported on TUCW's activities and initiatives in support of the Anti-Racism Resolution, passed by the Congregation in June 2021.

**Committee on Ministries (COM) Report:** Chuck Harrington, chair of the COM, reflected on the COM's role in support of the Ministry this past year and mentioned highlights of the work that has been done. He thanked the committee for all its hard work. The full report is in the Annual Report.

**New Business:** There was no new business.

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**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stapley Emberling,  
Secretary for the Board of Trustees  
June 12, 2022

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