



First Unitarian Society of Chicago
Minutes of Special Congregational Annual Meeting, June 18, 2017

Parish Clerk Evelyn Johnson reported that a quorum was present at 11:35 a.m.

President Joan Pederson called the meeting to order and led a unison reading of the congregation's Covenant and Keystones.

Rev. David Schwartz and Rev. Teri Schwartz offered opening words and led a unison affirmation.

J. Pederson reviewed the rules of procedure, which had been distributed in writing, then introduced the sole item on the agenda: conclusion of the debate, tabled during the Annual Meeting on May 21 due to time constraints, on the resolution to ask the congregation's delegates to the 2017 UUA General Assembly, June 21–25, to oppose departing from usual procedure if action arises to add final adoption of a proposed 8th Principle to this year's agenda, and then action on that resolution:

The First Unitarian Society of Chicago is opposed to the addition of the 8th Principle as proposed by the Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism Organizing Collective without the two–three year period normally required for such a change, and we further recommend to our delegates to the 2017 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association that they vote against any attempts to bypass this normal procedure.

J. Pederson reported that the number of lay delegates that could represent First Unitarian for the 2017 General Assembly (GA) had been discovered after May 21 to be three rather than four due to a dip in voting membership, and that one of the elected delegates, Ellie Hall, had resigned to allow the other three to serve. As a result, the lay delegation affected by the resolution, should it pass, now consisted of Marie Cobbs, Finley Campbell, and Allan Lindrup.

Cindy Pardo moved, with second by Finley Campbell, that the motion be removed from the table so that debate could resume. The motion passed by a clear majority of hands.

The debate included many voices on both sides of the issue.

- Points in favor of the motion included sticking to existing procedure as a form of democratic process, lack of familiarity with the issue making immediate adoption premature, and the conviction that the 8th Principle is too important to be rushed.
- Points opposed included the unlikelihood that UUA procedure would be overturned, opposition to advising our delegates on voting before they can make and hear other delegates' points during GA, opposition to the content of the 8th Principle, and the failure of the UUA to make good on past promises to overturn systemic racism within it and its congregations.
- Points of information included these: immediate adoption of the 8th Principle is not on the 2017 GA agenda; current intentions are to propose study of the 8th Principle during 2017–2018 rather than proposing immediate adoption; the congregation has not directed or advised its delegates on how to vote before this; Black Lives of UU is not the same as Black Lives Matter, it is a separate thing.

Hank Henriques moved to close debate; there was a second. The motion passed by a vote of 28 in favor, 8 opposed.

The vote on the motion followed. **The motion passed with 34 in favor and 13 opposed.** Four visibly abstained from voting.

Several of those present who had not had a chance to speak sought that opportunity after the voting was done. Pointing out that their comments could no longer affect the vote, J. Pederson invited them to voice their views. Points made included hope that the 8th Principle would be adopted following regular UUA procedure; the view that the 8th Principle would be superfluous; that our delegates feel the support of the congregation; that the vote count be reported (it was not clear to whom); that the matter before the congregation had not been the content or merit of the 8th Principle but about whether to advise our delegates on the procedure for possibly considering it at GA; and excitement that the congregation seemed ready to move into more difficult discussions and issues.

After those who had sought a chance to speak before debate was closed had been heard, J. Pederson accepted a motion to adjourn.

The meeting ended at 12:50 p.m.

Julie Larson, Secretary

[Approved May 20, 2018]