

First Unitarian Society of Chicago
November 22, 2019 Board Meeting – 6:45 p.m.

Board Members Present: Kristin Faust
Cindy Pardo
Ellen LaRue
Margie Gonwa
Grace Latibeaudiere-Williams
Amos Biggers
John Martin-Eatinger

Others Present: Rev. Teri Schwartz, Senior Co-Minister
Rev. David Schwartz, Senior Co-Minister
Monica Kling-Garcia, Ministerial Intern
Liz Harris, Treasurer
Kristina DeGuzman, Secretary

Opening

The meeting began with Opening Words by Amos Biggers.

Minutes from the October Board Meeting

Kristin distributed the minutes from the Board's October meeting. Grace made grammatical and typographical corrections. Rev. Teri corrected the name of Rev. Darrick Jackson, and Kristin made corrections to the spelling of Steve Serikaku. Cindy moved to accept the minutes as amended and Grace seconded the motion, which carried.

Report from the Director of Religious Education

In Beth's absence, Rev. Teri distributed Beth's written report and provided highlights. Twenty-four students attended religious education the previous Sunday, and a number of youth attended the CON and sleepover in Evanston, chaperoned by Beth who was volunteering on her weekend off. In RE classes, mindfulness programming in particular has been very joyful.

In RE personnel issues, one new teacher had to be let go, but the new hire is promising and will be starting the following week.

Rev. Teri also noted that Beth has a second job working as a librarian in the public school system. She noted there was low attendance (Beth was alone) at the Chicago Food Depository service project. Kristin inquired about the involvement of the RE council in planning and promoting RE projects. Rev. Teri indicated that the RE council serves more an administrative and feedback role, and that in many cases the RE council members are not parents and so largely lack peer engagement with the RE parents. Grace noted that in the past, the RE program has relied heavily on parents for organizational support.

Ministerial Intern Report

Monica distributed her written report, and provided highlights.

One month in, she is continuing to learn about congregational life and deepening relationships with congregants. This month she completed peace circle training and continued her involvement with the Good Relations Committee, which has been a highlight of the learning experience. Her work in November will be mainly forward-looking; she will be preaching in December, and is organizing the December 8 inter-generational Deck the Hull event. Board members are encouraged to attend and wear Santa hats.

Monica will have some extended absences from the church during the winter. She has been awarded the 2019 Transylvania Travel Scholarship, for which she will be spending a week shadowing an intern during a Unitarian Christmas service in Transylvania. Monica's intensive classes at Meadville-Lombard are scheduled for January 15-29.

Treasurer's Report

Liz distributed two documents: the current income statement, and the balance sheet for October 1. An adjustment was made to the budget through a transfer from the General Endowment approved by the congregation in June. Currently there are three outstanding pledges. Performance-wise, the congregation's financial situation is doing very well compared to last year. On the balance sheet, one of the issues that arose at the Finance Committee meeting the previous night pertained to the Borja estate, particularly the sales of artwork and other chattels and how to account for these funds. The committee decided to include this amount as a deferred income item under Assets, and as of October 31, that item amount was 0; next month it will reflect approximately \$3000 in realized chattel sales.

This issue led to an extensive conversation about what to do with the estate, and the Finance Committee is requesting that the Board identify someone with legal expertise to inform the church as to how to deal with issues related to the bequest, as it is not clear to the Finance Committee whether the church will be receiving the house, or whether it will be sold and proceeds given to the church, and these contractual issues need to be dealt with in advance. Therefore, the Finance Committee is recommending engaging an attorney on this matter.

Cindy noted that the church has not had an attorney since the passing of Tom Huyck, and that while the congregation currently counts a number of lawyers as members, they are not estate attorneys. Per Liz, the Finance Committee acknowledges that an attorney would be an additional incremental expense, but on the other hand, it is not clear to the Finance Committee when the house is to be transferred to the church, and what happens during the intervening period. Rev. Teri noted that functionally, the church needs someone to guide us on the legal issues, and that Margaret Huyck is the executor of the Borja estate and that the intent is to convert all of the assets into cash. Margaret has obtained insurance on the house, as Bob and Connie did not believe in homeowners' insurance. Kristin indicated that she will try and have a sit-down with Margaret, who has an attorney advising her on the execution of the estate. Margaret is trying to be extremely transparent about the estate with the church, and this makes the estate attorney

nervous. While there is little likelihood of a problem, the church should be as careful as possible, so Kristin will try to talk to Margaret and will put a committee together anyway.

The committee is beginning work on the balance sheet statement for the Capital Campaign, which will be refined by the December Board meeting. In terms of cash-on-hand and projected payables, and to accurately represent the loan that the church has made to the capital campaign effort, the \$250,000 note is carried on the balance sheet as a note receivable under assets, while the investment of \$300,000 from Fenn House funds is reflected as equity. The committee is working to refine the statement by next month, but the current summary gives an idea of where the campaign currently stands. The \$389,000 difference noted indicates the pledges still to come in.

The finance committee has spent a lot of time completing documentation for Bernstein Financial Advisory and E-Trade, which has been complicated by Betty's surgery and recovery, as she has not been able to execute the required paperwork. Liz is asking Ellen or John be the last of the five required trustees to sign some of the paperwork. Kristin notes that signing these documents does not convey power to the signees to execute any church finance decisions alone, and that Margie, Cindy, and Kristin have also signed as trustees. Per Kristin, the transfer from E-Trade to Bernstein hasn't yet happened even though the Board had hoped it would be. Liz hopes that by the end of the week the transfer will be done, and noted that the representative from E-Trade has been extremely helpful in this process, which is notable given that the church is transferring money away from them.

Kristin pointed out that Peace Circle training was not in the budget, and now it has already happened. Rev. David noted that the cost of \$2000 can be accounted for under Board and First U Organizations, and currently that item has \$1000 allocated to it, which would leave a deficit of \$1000. Kristin inquired whether the Board needed to vote on the issue, and Liz indicated she didn't think so. Kristin noted she wants obtain clear concurrence that the church has spent this money. Liz noted that the Finance Committee has ideas regarding the allocation of money that they will be making to Board shortly, and Cindy pointed out that the church is likely saving money on utilities based on building improvements.

Per Kristin, the Board needs to come up with ideas for spending the Borja estate, and believes that there should be a subcommittee with this responsibility. Liz indicated that two members of the Finance Committee are eager to begin this work. Kristin proposed a joint committee between the Board and the Finance Committee to make recommendations, and requested two Board volunteers to begin work. John and Margie volunteered. Liz explained that the Finance Committee is anticipating the new subcommittee will do congregational outreach seeking suggestions and recommendations for spending and/or a split between the endowment and operations. Rev. David volunteered to serve as the ministerial representative for the subcommittee. Rev. Teri indicated that the traditional endowment/operations split has been 80/20, and Joan mentioned that there is a gift policy as well as a separate bequest policy. Liz noted that the Board may want to revisit those policies, and Rev. Teri explained they were updated for clarity before the Capital Campaign for people who wanted to donate assets other than cash. Rev. Teri further noted that the current plan is that all chattels will be sold and the proceeds kept in the estate, except for those art pieces the congregation decides to keep.

John is appointed chair of the new subcommittee, with members Margie, Ellie, and Linn.

Liz then proposed that the Board adopt the policies and procedures document that was distributed at the November meeting, and noted that the Finance Committee had not received input, questions, or concerns. Grace moved to adopt the policies and procedures, and Cindy seconded the motion, which carried.

Good Relations Committee Update

Grace explained that the Good Relations Committee document sent out via email to the Board for the meeting constitutes the committee's inner-facing, internal document establishing the committee. Kristin announced and appointed Grace as Chair, with Rev. Teri as the ministerial advisor, with the intent of forming a permanent committee, which made it advisable for the Board to have a policy document for the committee. The document lays out the appointment of the committee and the services it intends to provide, and was drafted using similar documents from other churches which they then customized for this congregation. The document further addresses conflicts of interest and congregational outreach requirements. The committee will make a presentation at the First Forum on December 1. Grace welcomed any changes or suggestions.

Kristin explained that the committee, consisting of Lisa, Jean, David, Ellen, Joan, Grace, and Rev. Teri, first convened in September, and meets twice per month. Cindy expressed her admiration for the committee and the document's usefulness in the work going forward, especially given that congregants had felt there had previously not been a place to take these issues and concerns. Ellen noted that Lisa, in particular, put forth a great deal of effort in drafting the document, and Rev. Teri noted that Lisa is a skilled policy attorney who has been very generous with her expertise. Grace noted that the document is meant not only for current committee membership, but with the idea that the committee will continue in perpetuity with members rotating through in overlapping terms. Cindy noted that the congregation will be voting on these procedures in the spring. Kristin wondered whether the establishment of a permanent committee requires a new church bylaw; Rev. Teri responded that the Board is empowered by the bylaws to create and dissolve committees.

Rev. Teri further pointed out that while the current document under review is an internal policy document for the committee and the Board, there will also be a more user-friendly pamphlet with the same information prepared for congregants. Grace elaborated that the committee is working on three documents in total: in addition to the current internal policy document under review, the committee will also provide the Good Relations Policy which will go out to the congregation, and also the Behavioral Covenant which will be developed with the congregation, and be subject to a congregational vote. Rev. David added that because the Good Relations Committee is a Board committee and therefore the Board members have extensive knowledge of the committee's work, the Board members' role during this process should be to assist the committee in publicity and promotion (for example, at coffee hour), and Rev. David encourages the Board members to take general ownership of the committee's purpose and work.

Kristin and Cindy noted that if the Good Relations Committee's founding documents are adopted, the board is implicitly also adopting an additional line item in the church budget for training. Cindy also pointed out that training provided to congregants is only going to make church business better, not just for the work of the Good Relations Committee, but also for example through the recent Peace Circle training. Kristin noted that training is also beneficial for the creation and retention of new congregational leaders, and is therefore a wise investment. Rev. Teri pointed out that offering training to upcoming church leaders can also be valuable in their professional lives, and so is also a way to attract new leaders in the first place.

Rev. David floated the idea of setting up a fund for conflict training, since the congregation would like to have the Good Relations Committee members trained on these processes. Rev. Teri also spoke about the need for training to address structural issues stemming from past misconduct by church leadership.

Amos raised a question about the scope of the Good Relations Committee's work, and whether it would be defined by the training itself. Grace answered that it would be defined by the policy outlined by the proposed document, and noted that the policy will also be valuable by defining what is outside the scope of the committee's work, for example, providing therapy or legal advice. These boundaries will be set forth by the policy document itself.

Cindy moved to approve the formation policy document of the Good Relations Committee, and Margie seconded the motion, which carried.

Ministers' Report

Rev. Teri distributed the Ministers' Report and a handout on conflict resolution training options.

Regarding the most recent Work Day, Rev. David noted that there was an excellent showing from the Morris Dancers and a rather poor showing from the congregation. The old banners, which were mostly torn to shreds by ivy, have come down, and there was extensive ivy cutting. The remaining Pennington Center windows are due in the coming weeks, so that project is mostly done.

Kristin further noted that the Board received a written report from Richard on the capital improvements projects, and that Richard will update the Board in person at the meeting in December. The upshot is that everything is moving smoothly.

Per Rev. Teri, the ministers' major focus in the coming months will be worship, construction, and conflict. The ministers met with the Ad Hoc Disruptive Behavior about the fallout from the June Global Studies Meeting and another congregant's treatment of staff.

Additionally, the church now has five people trained in peace circles. Monica explained that the most recent peace circle training comprised four eight-hour days of training. The first two-and-a-half days consisted of going through the peace circle process, and the last day and a half consisted of theory and design for the congregation's own peace circles. She clarified that this training is not in conflict-resolution peace circles, but rather community and peace-building

training, and they discussed how this kind of peace circle process is very important in churches. Monica particularly cherished the opportunity to spend extensive time with different members of the congregation.

Rev. Teri noted that the most recent peace circle on Tuesday consisted of herself, the Good Relations committee members, Alan Lindrup, and John Saphir, which low attendance is not reflective of a lot of congregational buy-in. She hoped that this would be the beginning of monthly peace circles.

Margie inquired whether, given that the most recent peace-circle training was not focused on conflict resolutions, conflict-resolution peace circle training is in fact available. Monica responded that conflict-resolution peace circle training is considered an advanced training to be completed after one gains some experience in leading peace circles. Kristin further noted that the peace circles that took place over the summer were not for conflict-resolution, and that her experience of them was as a way to learn to know and listen and hear one another, and possibly to bring in a question. These peace circles can therefore be considered a supplementary piece of the broader conflict-resolution work that the church is undertaking.

Rev. Teri explained that the more advanced conflict-resolution training she looked at is geared more toward restorative justice models (of the type associated with prison abolition) and at an offender/victim level, whereas peace circles are meant to address conflict by encouraging listening and sharing behaviors, and posing questions that point toward conflict-resolution. Rev. David encouraged Board members to think of the church's conflict resolution work as an ecosystem that includes relationship- and trust-building, mediation, the behavioral covenant, and working with a congregational consultant to address the congregation's culture and history of conflict. There is no one thing that the church is doing that will solve all conflict, so the strategy is to deliberately tackle the problem in many different ways.

Rev. Teri provided a summary of the options for conflict mediation training.

- (1) The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center – this option is rather expensive, requiring a deposit of \$3000 and a minimum of 20 participants.
- (2) The Center for Conflict Resolution – costs \$1600 per person with a volume discount. The focus of this program is training people to be mediators in the legal system. Lisa feels this is over-and-above the needs of the congregation.
- (3) The Pollock Peace Center – costs \$425 per person with a 12-person minimum. The Center mostly works on workplace personnel conflicts, intimate-partner issues, and family conflict, but they are able to tailor their 2-day standard training to fit the congregational context, and will come to the church to do the work onsite. The program involves engaging a local consultant for the customization of the program.

Kristin inquired if this training is mainly intended for the Good Relations Committee members. Rev. Teri believes it would be useful to also have some Board members and congregants trained in order to create a pipeline of leadership into the committee as well as to have more options for specific conflict-resolution situations. Kristin asked whether the Board should solicit congregants for training via general announcement, or whether individuals should be approached

specifically. Rev. David suggested working with the Nominating Committee in order to affirmatively and deliberately select congregants for training.

Amos, who works in the training industry, noted that the rate offered by the Pollock Peace Center is quite a good deal. Margie asked whether the Pollock Peace Center is a standalone organization or whether it belongs to a larger institution. Per Rev. Teri, the Center is its own institute that has consultants in multiple major cities.

Rev. Teri is awaiting Board approval for the training and the funding before engaging with the Pollock Peace Center further. John voiced concern over the funding for the training, whether it would come from the Borja estate or the Fenn House surplus, and whether the church would pay upfront or whether individual trainees would pay and later receive reimbursement from the church. Kristin noted that the Borja estate is likely to be somewhere between \$350,00 and \$400,000. Taking into account fees and other expenses, she conservatively estimates approximately \$300,000 coming to the church. Twenty percent (the proportion that would be allocated to operating costs under the traditional 80/20 split) would therefore be about \$60,000. Probate for the Borja estate is likely to be completed sometime in the Spring of 2020. Given that this training is an imminent need for the church, it makes sense to allocate money from the Borja estate for the training. The cost will be approximately \$5000, including lunch and other expenses. Ellen inquired whether, given that the Borja estate will not be settled until the spring, the church has enough cash to cover the cost in the meantime; Rev. Teri indicated that it does.

Cindy moved to engage the Pollock Peace Center for conflict resolution training with \$5000 in funds allocated from the pending dispersal of the Borja estate; Amos seconded the motion. Ellen inquired whether the church should wait for additional recommendations and references before deciding firmly on the Pollock Peace Center. Kristin indicated she would feel more comfortable with one additional reference, and requested an amendment to Cindy's motion to that effect. Cindy accepted the proposed amendment, and Amos seconded. The motion that the church engage the Pollock Peace Center for conflict-resolution training with \$5000 in funds allocated from the pending dispersal of the Borja estate, subject to the Board's obtaining an additional reference for the center, carried.

Given his professional expertise on the subject, Amos requested to join Rev. Teri in discussions with the Pollock Peace Center regarding the customization of the training, to which Rev. Teri agreed.

Rev. Teri has also been researching congregational consultants to look at deeper systemic issues of boundary-setting and a history of clerical misconduct. However, because some of the clergy in question are still living and the misconduct cases were not officially adjudicated by the denomination (because the current code of conduct did not exist at the time the violations occurred), there are significant legal issues involved in the engagement of a consultant. Currently, Rev. Teri is in conversation with the UUA as to what records exist and to whom they can be disclosed in a disclosure meeting, and the attendant legal issues. The goal is to address the systemic issues caused in part by past clerical misconduct without getting into an ugly, expensive legal battle that would not be helpful to the congregation. Currently, Rev. Teri is engaged in conversation with the ministerial record-keeper at the regional UUA as well as the

Mennonite Peace Center. The ultimate goal of this project is greater congregational health going forward. Rev. Teri is also planning to speak with the Faith Trust Institute, which is the premier organization working with issues of clerical sex abuse and has been working with the national UUA to update guidelines for congregations to handle sex abuse and misconduct cases; the work is both retrospective and prospective.

Ellen inquired whether, given that the clergy in question are no longer with the congregation and that these issues occurred in the past, the congregation is currently damaged by what happened then. Rev. David explained that the pattern of conflict that is currently occurring was born and sustained through a pattern of misconduct that occurred through the 1970s, 80s, and 90s; the congregation learned to deal with conflict via denial, avoidance, and minimization from ministers who misbehaved for decades. Ellen asked if these workshops would be for everyone. Rev. Teri explained that they would, and that the process would likely consist of 12 months of deep, hard congregational work; much of the work is in understanding how past violations of trust translate into patterns of behavior that persist over time, and this is a process that is seen and known in many congregations across the country.

Kristin noted that even introducing this information to the congregation will be a time-consuming process, and that getting congregational acceptance of these issues may take even longer. But this resistance might also be indicative that the congregation does indeed have issues that need to be addressed, and so Ellen's reaction might be representative of the majority of the congregation. Ellen clarified that she wonders whether people who weren't in the congregation at the time of the misconduct are still affected by it. Rev. Teri analogized the situation to an alcoholic family system, where patterns of family conflict are set before some are even born, and then persist long after. Kristin asked Rev. Teri whether this information was shared at Coffee with the Ministers, and Rev. Teri indicated that it had not been, as the congregation likely isn't ready, and the information needs to be handled carefully due to the surrounding legal issues.

Rev. David acknowledged that this information was being given to the Board rather abruptly, and that they understand this approach will not work with the wider congregation, which is the purpose of engaging a consultant. Grace added that the Mennonite Peace Center would not work with us until the congregation is prepared and ready to go through the process. Ellen asked what that preparation would look like. Rev. Teri indicated it would require introductory work to acquaint members with the issues, and then a congregational vote to begin the work. Because these issues are so profound, the Mennonite Peace Center requires not just a majority vote but an overwhelming majority indicating broad congregational buy-in before agreeing to work with congregations, particularly since the issues in question have not been officially adjudicated. Ellen inquired what "adjudication" means in this context. Rev. Teri explained that for the Mennonite Peace Center, adjudication means that the offender has been brought up on official charges by the denomination. Ellen asked, given that there was no adjudication, whether the issues in question are rumors, or whether it's more the case that many people know precisely what happened, but there was never any official record made. Rev. Teri indicated that it was the latter. Kristin explained that the necessity of working with the UUA ministerial record-holders in order to find out what information is actually in the official records. Rev. Teri further noted that, should the congregation choose to move forward, the regional UUA would be supportive. Ellen asked what a disclosure meeting entails, and Rev. Teri explained that regional a UUA staff

person would disclose to the congregation, in their official capacity, what misconduct has occurred. Rev. David expressed his gratitude for the level of engagement shown by the Board members, and assured the Board that the ministers would not move forward without informing the Board, noting that the ministers are learning these facts alongside the congregation. He further noted that none of the ministerial conduct in question was illegal, and at the time, may not even have been considered inappropriate, even though such conduct is now widely understood to be quite damaging.

Kristin noted that the Sabbatical Committee was made aware of these issues several months ago and so members of that committee have had time to reflect and digest, and was heartened that other churches and denominations are also going through similar processes; all of the work Rev. Teri is doing will help the church sort out the legal and ethical issues with the help of a professional consultant. It may be that, in weighing the risks and benefits, the Board decides it would be best to only treat the symptoms rather than risk legal liability getting at the root causes; a consultant will help the congregation sort out these issues. Rev. Teri explained, and Kristin reiterated, that this process can be a perilous time for the settled ministers, because this is not information that people want to know. Kristin urged members to think hard about the Board's role and to support and buttress the ministers as they undertake this work, and hoped that the consultant will also be of assistance. Rev. Teri noted that the reflexive attitude in these situations is to avoid painful information and maintain homeostasis by making the problem the person pointing out the problem, and it is not unusual for the process to stall and the situation to end with a negotiated resignation of the ministers. But given what is known about organizational behavior, the congregation likely has only 20-30 years to address issues in the congregational culture before they cause the congregation to dissolve. Rev. David noted that both ministers are prepared for the resistance to this process to come at them personally.

Grace expressed her appreciation for the commitment, faith, insight, and perceptiveness that the ministers have shown about our congregational health, and explained that she views the church as a family and a house, and that no one new wants to come voluntarily into and stay in a house if there is major dysfunction in the family, and the instinct is naturally to walk away. She thanked the ministers and the Board for undertaking this work for the future of the congregation, and noted that everyone present spends a great deal of time on these issues, and volunteers to do so out of commitment to the church and a knowledge that we can be doing better than have been.

Rev. David reported that the Coffee with the Ministers event was most notable for its exclusive focus on conflict questions, particularly the Global Studies Group meeting, with congregants emphasizing how the problematic events did not occur during the group meeting itself. The discussion was highly contentious and stressful, and it was notable to the ministers that there were no positive comments on the Board's conflict-resolution work, or the Ad Hoc Committee's work, or even on the concept of engaging with conflict-resolution issues at all. Margie noted that attendees at the coffee asked about whether the Good Relations Committee would handle various specific conflict issues, so there was implicit recognition of the committee's responsibility.

Rev. Teri updated the Board on the situation with the Little People Learning Center. Initially the owner had planned to leave the space, but then didn't want to leave. Rev. Teri noted that the current religious education space that the church has doesn't serve the needs of the RE program,

and will not even after the renovations are complete. Mike and Rev. David met with the owner today, who indicated that she is interested in remaining on the second floor and moving the infant program, which is currently housed in the first RE classroom, to another facility for expansion. This change will also benefit the church, as the first RE classroom can now be dedicated exclusively to the RE program. Little People Learning Center will continue to lease the space on the second floor while giving up the space downstairs, which translates to between \$22,000 and \$24,000 in lost income. Kristin indicated there would be no more need for a dedicated committee to consider a new tenant.

The Board then went into Executive Session for an update from the Ad Hoc Committee on Disruptive Behavior.

Amos Biggers provided closing words, and the meeting adjourned.

First Unitarian Church of Chicago
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
November 21, 2019

Report of the Good Relations Committee

At its November 5, 2019 meeting, the Committee completed the final edits to the policy document on the formation of the Board-appointed Good Relations Committee.

The attached document "Policy on Formation of the Good Relations Committee" is hereby presented for the approval of the Board of Trustees.

In its upcoming meetings at the end of November and in December, the Committee will proceed with the development of a Good Relations Policy for the congregation. Thereafter, it will begin the process of creating a Congregational Behavioral Covenant through an interactive process with the congregation.

On December 1, the Committee will be the presenters at the First Forum.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Latibeaudiere-Williams
Chair

Attachment

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

Policy on formation of the Good Relations Committee

For approval by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on November 21, 2019

Charge

The purpose of the Good Relations Committee (GRC) is to foster a congregational culture that reflects our shared values and enables us to live out our covenant and mission.

To this end, the Good Relations Committee is charged with:

- Recommending a Congregational Behavioral Covenant for adoption by the congregation
- Creating a Conflict Resolution Policy
- With the Board of Trustees, identifying additional steps and processes needed to help the congregation address unresolved conflicts
- After receiving appropriate training, serving as a resource for congregants to turn to when they have unresolved conflicts in the church

Appointment of Committee Members

The Board shall appoint a chairperson to head the Good Relations Committee. Working in collaboration with the minister(s) and the Board of Trustees, the chairperson shall select at least six members from the congregation to serve on the foundational Good Relations Committee. Members shall be selected for their trustworthiness and their knowledge of various aspects of church functioning and serve on the committee to develop the foundational policies for good relations (i.e., the Conflict Resolution Policy and Congregational Behavioral Covenant).

The Good Relations Committee will establish a committee covenant and operate via consensus. After the creation and adoption of the foundational good relations policies, the GRC's work will consist of promoting right relations within congregational activities and serving as a resource for conflict resolution.

At that time, members of the foundational Good Relations Committee can continue to serve on the committee as conflict facilitators if they are skilled in or have received training in conflict resolution. In coordination with the minister(s) and the Board of Trustees, the chairperson shall select additional members to serve on the Good Relations Committee as needed such that there are a minimum of four committee members. Members will serve overlapping terms of at least two years.

Conflict Resolution Services

After the adoption of a Congregational Behavioral Covenant and a Conflict Resolution Policy, the Good Relations Committee shall provide conflict resolution services to any member or friend of First Unitarian (concerned person) who desires help in getting their church-related concerns addressed. These services can include the following:

- Advise the concerned person of appropriate processes for getting issues addressed at First Unitarian and, if desired, provide an advisor to accompany the concerned person to any meetings involved in the conflict resolution process
- Define together with the concerned person an appropriate conflict resolution process for the dispute in question
- Contact other parties to the dispute and offer the services of the Good Relations Committee to them as well
- Help arrange any meetings between the parties that are needed to complete the conflict resolution process
- Document for the parties involved any agreements reached to resolve the dispute to ensure a common understanding among the parties

The authority of the Good Relations Committee to resolve conflicts among members is not limited to achieving compromises. When they believe that a situation exists where behaviors are harmful to the church or not expressive of our collective values, the Committee can recommend counseling, limits to participation in church life, or other strategies. For a full accounting of the GRC's authority to resolve conflicts, see the Conflict Resolution Policy [currently under development].

Behavior that is unlawful, poses an immediate threat to the safety of congregants or the congregation, or constitutes misrepresentation or disruption as defined by the First Unitarian Policy Manual are subject to governance and resolution by the Board of Trustees.

Conflict of Interest

Members of the Good Relations Committee must disclose to the GRC when a conflict comes before the committee for which they have an inherent bias based on the individuals and/or topics involved. Members may serve as conflict facilitators in such situations with the approval of the committee. Members can also excuse themselves from any such involvement in the resolution of the conflict. In situations as needed, the Good Relations Committee can recruit additional members from the congregation to help in conflict resolution on an ad hoc basis if more capacity is needed. Members serving on an ad hoc basis must also be skilled in conflict resolution or be willing to receive training before engaging in committee work.

Outreach Requirements

The Good Relations Committee shall publicize its services to the First Unitarian community and encourage the use of its services to address conflicts as they arise. In cases where the GRC becomes aware of a conflict, GRC team members may privately approach one or more parties to the dispute to suggest they use GRC services to resolve the dispute.

Conflict Resolution Training & Soliciting External Resources

The Good Relations Committee shall arrange periodic conflict resolution training for its members and other interested members and friends of First Unitarian. It is recommended that members of the Board of Trustees and other congregational leaders take this training. In future years, the training required for GRC members will be an expense identified in the annual budget.

The Good Relations Committee may make recommendations to the Board of Trustees to consult with or bring in outside conflict resolution resources (e.g., from the denomination, private consultants) in situations where the GRC deems it advisable.

Therapy Policy

No member of the Good Relations Committee or any member or friend of First Unitarian working with the GRC shall provide mental health therapy or counseling in connection with any dispute. The minister(s) can refer members or friends to counseling assistance outside of First Unitarian.

Privacy Policy

All persons involved in conflict resolution with the Good Relations Committee shall ensure the confidentiality of discussions at all times. Documents provided or produced by the GRC that include identifying details related to specific conflicts shall be confidential unless the parties to the conflict express consent or the situation merits otherwise. (Part of the conflict resolution process will involve the conflicting parties coming to an agreement about what information from the resolution is shared with which people within the church, such as the minister(s), staff, or committee heads.) The GRC will determine a record-keeping format that provides reporting of its activities to the Board of Trustees and congregation in a manner that also ensures privacy.

Developed by the Good Relations Committee:

Lisa Christensen Gee

Jean Hester

David Hodgson

Ellen LaRue

Jim Proctor

Joan Staples

Grace Latibeaudiere-Williams, Chair

Rev. Teri Schwartz, Ministerial Advisor

Nov. 4, 2019

From: Ellen LaRue, de facto chair of Global Studies Group

To: Ad Hoc Committee

cc: 1stU Board of Trustees, 1stU Good Relations Committee

Dear Ad Hoc Committee,

At the Nov. 3 meeting of the Global Studies Group the letter from the Ad Hoc Committee to Finley Campbell dated Oct. 21, 2019, was passed out, read, in part, and discussed. The part that was read and discussed was the Summary of the Incident, first two sentences:

“At a meeting of the Global Studies group at a congregant’s home in July, one member of the congregation openly disparaged another member of the congregation who was not present. When the comment was made, no one present spoke up against it.”

The members of the GSG take strong exception to these sentences. We maintain that the incident did not take place at the meeting of the GSG. It took place after the meeting was over, during a social time when people were milling around, in different rooms of the house, getting and eating food, engaged in multiple private conversations. The offending remark that Finley made was not part of a general discussion; it was part of a private conversation, one of several going on simultaneously. By way of comparison, an incident during coffee hour would not be characterized as having occurred during worship service of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago.

The reason no one spoke up against the remark is because very few heard it because most were not part of that conversation. Most of us didn’t know anything about the remark until it was exposed in a mass email. Several GSG members would have said something if they had been part of that conversation.

Over the years, our group has self-governed, being conscious of language and behavior at our meetings. Sometimes we have vigorous (even very vigorous) disagreements, but we have managed to practice restraint and decency. We have grown fond of each other, we welcome newcomers, and we welcome dropouts to drop back in. We have a sense of community. So we feel injured by the repeated descriptions of a troublesome incident as having occurred at our meeting. We feel that our good name has been besmirched. We would like to see such public statements and descriptions and statements for the record corrected, and more careful use of language in the future.

Note: At our Nov. 3 meeting, Finley repeated several times that he accepts the decision of the Ad Hoc Committee as it applies to him. That is not in contention.

Note also: A number of our members have concerns about the procedure followed by the Ad Hoc Committee. Since that is a separate issue and does not much affect the issue raised in this letter, another letter will follow this one. Not to worry. Our aim is not to be accusatory or contentious but more to provide feedback and information about impact, for use in developing and effecting our framework of behavioral policies.

Acknowledgement is due to the Ad Hoc Committee for taking the necessary care and putting in the time and energy to deal with this matter as fairly as possible and in a timely manner. It was a difficult task. Thank you.

Yours,

Ellen LaRue,

on behalf of the Global Studies Group

joan Staples [redacted] [Hide](#)

T Kristin Faust [redacted] Margaret Gonwa [redacted] Grace
o Latibeaudiere-Williams [redacted] Jimmy
Proctor [redacted] Rev. David
Schwartz [redacted] Teresa
Schwartz [redacted] joan Staples [redacted] Finley
Campbell [redacted] Roberta Lammers-
Campbell [redacted] Dennis Koehn [redacted] Dolores
Cross [redacted] Ellen LaRue [redacted] David
Hodgson [redacted]

Dear Friends, I am responding to this e-mail as an individual member of First Unitarian. I have not been a regular member of the Global Studies Group, but was at the event on July 7 at the home of the Campbells. Chuck was there, also.

The description of the incidents on July 7 and their aftermath are confusing. While there was a Global Studies meeting that day, there were others invited because it was a July 4 picnic. A Global Studies meeting occurred, followed by an informal social event, primarily a picnic. There was some discussion of recent events at the church, including some conflicts, but it was not a formal discussion that everyone participated in. So the first response I have is that this informal discussion should not be seen as part of the GSG agenda. One member of the group made a one-sentence comment about someone who was not there. Privately, I have talked with the subject of the comment and the person who made the comment. I indicated that the remark concerned a matter that had nothing to do with the church and should not be made. I would guess that others have made the same point. The description of this incident makes it appear that the disparaging comment was made as part of a Global Studies discussion.

After the July 7 event, a member who had recently volunteered to be a co-leader of Global Studies sent out an e-mail to over 40 people, indicating that what he was e-mailing was a summary of the afternoon. It turned into an attack on one member, disguised as a report of what happened that afternoon. This person brought up events and opinions that were not part of the discussion and named people at the picnic who might have talked about negative things without their permission. When criticized later for doing this, the reporter became angry and insulting. Several of us who were at the July 7 picnic directly responded to the reporter.

I believe that the Board concern about disparaging language is important and needs to be part of a behavioral covenant that all of us at First Church agree to subscribe to. And we need to be held accountable for our behavior. The Board has constituted a Good Relations Committee to develop covenants and programs to address conflicts at First Unitarian on a more systematic basis. My only concern about this particular situation, on July 7, is that what really happened be reported, especially since the ad hoc report is going to the whole congregation, many of whom were not there.

Certainly, each one of us, myself included, needs to respond to disparaging comments and actions when we encounter them. But it is also important to be as accurate as possible about what really happened in a particular situation. There have been other recent e-mails sent by a number of folks that reflect misunderstandings and also hostility. I hope that the efforts of the church leadership will help us to rectify this situation. I believe (and I think Chuck would agree with me), that we as a congregation have much to offer the denomination as we grapple with conflicts and differences of opinion. Best, Joan Staples

Reply Reply All Forward

**Dr. Finley C. Campbell, Program Coordinator
the Racial Justice Task Force**



Date: 21 November 2019

Dear members of the Ad Hoc Disruptive Behavior Committee.

Although you have indicated that your inquiry is officially closed, it is not closed until all parties to the dispute agree to this. As I said in an earlier post to Board President Faust, I would not commit to the decision of the Committee until I had read the Congregational Report. Unfortunately, there are errors in that report which I thought my memo of explanation had dealt with and which would have been incorporated in that report. So, I am proposing the following amendments to the Congregational Report which keeps the spirit of the original conclusion while eliminating the error.

I have put in purple color coding which you might find helpful in negotiating my amendment to the report. Hopefully, these colors will be transmitted to your computers. The purple is strictly for my benefit to see what change my amendment prescribes (**light purple**) and the **darker purple** indicates replacement wording.

.....

Based on Rev T Schwartz's remarks that mistakes can/will be made in the process as we seek to develop systems for handling intra-congregational conflicts, then the way to deal with that is to correct the mistake. There are major errors in the congregational report, which have been elucidated already. However, the chief mistake has to do with the errors in fact. I propose that we amend the report with my amendments and resubmit to the congregation as a whole as a way to show the seriousness which the Ad Hoc Committee takes its responsibility in being fair and balanced in controversial situations.

Respectfully submitted, Dr. Finley C. Campbell, the individual who made the remarks

First, here is the original:

The committee then reviewed 18 printed pages of emails and letters. The committee spoke **with several members who were present to get clarity and confirmation on key points. Because this event involved a large number of people in the congregation, and because it reflects a pattern of conflict that we have seen repeated over time, we are taking this step of sharing our report with the congregation.**

Here is the amendment:

The committee then reviewed 18 printed pages of emails and letters. The committee spoke **with several members who were present to get clarity and confirmation on key points.** **Even though this event involved only a very few people, one of whom was not even a member, the incident nevertheless reflects a pattern of conflict that we have seen repeated over time; therefore, we are taking this step of sharing our report with the congregation.**

Summary of the Incident

At a meeting of the Global Studies group at a congregant's home in July, one member of the congregation openly disparaged another member of the congregation who was not present. When the comment was made, no one present spoke up against it. After the meeting concluded, another attendee wrote a summary of the meeting taking editorial license and subsequently using inflammatory language toward various people. That summary email, as well as follow-up emails, were sent to a list of 43 people that included those who were at the meeting and those who were not, members, friends, and former members.

Summary of the Incident

At the annual Fourth of July picnic of the Global Studies Group at a congregant's home, always convened after the regular meeting, one member of the congregation disparaged another member of the congregation, who was not present, to a small group at the picnic. When the comment was made, no one in the small group who heard the remarks at that time spoke up against it. After the picnic concluded, another attendee who overheard the comment wrote a summary of the remarks taking editorial license and subsequently using inflammatory language toward various people. That summary email, as well as follow-up emails, were sent to a list of 43 people that included those who were at the meeting and those who were not, members, friends, and former members.

Certainly, we agree the responsibility of speaking up against an offensive remark should be shouldered by those who actually hear the remark. But in relaxed, smaller settings, we are much less on guard. However, **the Ad Hoc Committee on Disruptive Behavior are seeking to develop guidelines for intra-church harmony that will apply to any situation, involving church members whether**

in a formal or informal setting, whether in a large group or just two or three are involved.

.....

Let me end my proposed amendment on a personal note: until this amended version of the Congregational Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Disruptive Behavior is circulated as the original one was, I cannot abide by the decision of the Committee, except as I see fit and based on my right of conscience. Moreover, until the Covenant is reconsidered, I remain outside the dictates of its norms, having seen it being applied in an inconsistent manner too many times.

For example, at the recent Coffee with the Minister, a congregant essentially attacked me and Bobbi by suggesting that the Good Relations Committee give additional consideration of the scurrilous Francis Short post. No one – including no one from the Ad Hoc committee -- challenged this congregant as an example of a disparaging aspersion. And when Bobbi asked him directly for clarification, the response was a lecture about semantics and the dropping of the request. I bring this up to show how difficult it is going to be to enforce your emerging policy of forbidding disparaging remarks against each other. And how impossible it will be to have a covenant to which not everyone has agreed to

Dr. Finley C. Campbell
Program Coordinator
The Racial Justice Task Force