

Summary Notes
UCOT Annual Meeting, January 31
by Margot Coleman, Secretary

The meeting was opened at 11:05 a.m. by Dennis Scott, who performed the Chalice lighting.

2020 Reflections

Barbara Scott reflected on the past year and all challenges the church has dealt with regarding the COVID-19 restrictions, and our congregation being unable to meet in person. Thanks to the Board, many of these issues have been met so that Services and Sharing Circles have continued, thanks to email communications and Zoom. The church was also able to present Sally Savage's video, *Spirit of Life*," to the Congregation via Zoom during the Fall Harvest Service.

Financials

Bette presented the year-end statement for 2020 and the proposed budget for 2021. She mentioned that because we don't meet in person, plate donations are down and asked the congregation for help in this area. Bette, who is stepping down as Treasurer and passing the baton to new Treasurer Joe Mazza, asked those who are sending pledges to send them to the UCOT post office box 510, Taos, NM 87571. The Financials and budget forecast were accepted as presented.

Charitable Giving

Mimi Owensby presented the report on the Charitable Giving Committee, which included the organizations it no longer supports, and the new organizations added to the list. She also explained a major new plan started last year called the "Little Food Pantry," which members of the committee are personally supporting. The cost of keeping the Food Pantry stocked is about \$2,200 per year, and she asked that the congregation help in this new endeavor by increasing their pledge donations by \$60 per year. A motion was made to support the Little Food Pantry and to ask the congregation to increase their pledges by \$60. The motion was accepted as presented.

By-laws

Chuck Fawns presented the changes to the by-laws. There was one clarification requested, regarding the appointment of a new member of the board prior to the annual meeting, and it was agreed to change the wording. It was also suggested that we add 'Universalist' to the name of our Congregation and it was decided to consider that at the next Board meeting.

Fifth Sundays

Gael Minton presented information on the Fifth Sunday programs, which will start in May with the topic *Land, Water & Forests in Taos*. There are two further fifth Sundays, in August and October. She said that the presentations will be designed on the Chautauqua method, and she and her committee are excited about the planning process.

Earth Day Planning

Chuck Doughty presented information regarding Earth Day Planning and Climate Action Week. He and his committee are waiting on a packet of information from Interfaith Power and Light.

Sharing Circles

Barbara Scott then shared the information regarding the new format for the sharing circles. It is a hybrid program that includes an email correspondence on the second Sunday of the month and a Zoom meeting on the fourth Sunday of the month. Both sessions will focus on the same topic.

Stewardship and Finance Committee

Bob Aubrecht spoke about the Stewardship and Finance Committee report and how the pledge campaign was virtual this year. He also explained why the surplus is no longer in CDs and is in the church's checking account. The Committee is looking for a local credit union to place the money if interest rates improve.

Bob then discussed an opportunity for a second UCOT CARES. It will depend on stimulus checks, which are expected, and will mirror the original UCOT CARES program. The original target was about food insecurity and this would be the same this time. However, Marjorie Luckey spoke up and said that what is even more urgent for our community is homelessness. There are 90 students who are homeless and 140 families on the waiting list for housing. The Board will discuss priorities at the next Board meeting.

A motion was made to carry forth another UCOT CARES, and the wording was changed to help with critical humanitarian needs. The motion was carried as presented.

Presentation of New Board

Barbara presented the new Board for election: Bob Aubrecht, President; Mimi Owensby, Vice-President; Margot Coleman, Secretary; Joe Mazza, Treasurer; Dennis Scott, Member at Large; and Chuck Fawns, Ex-Officio Member. The members were elected as presented.

Bob Aubrecht then recognized Barbara and Bette. Barbara has been President for four years, and Bette has been Treasurer for nine years. They are both stepping down. The Congregation is donating \$100 each to a charity of their choice.

Looking Ahead

Bob then discussed the upcoming year and the most likely scenario that we will continue to be virtual until the majority of the population has been vaccinated. Bob also recommends that everyone read the weekly email so that we all know what is happening with church services and sharing circles plus anything special planned.

Mary Gray asked the members to send cards and or emails to Bette and Barbara to thank them for all they've done. It was suggested that there might be ways to enhance services on Zoom. This suggestion will be added to the next Board meeting.

Closing

Joe Mazza then closed the Annual meeting with a reflection by James Morison, *Share Your Glorious Light With the World*, and by extinguishing the chalice at 12:40 p.m.