

UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF TAOS
ANNUAL MEETING
January 23, 2022
11:00 AM Via Zoom

AGENDA

Chalice Lighting - Margot Coleman

The flame of our chalice this morning is symbol of the warmth and brightness of our connections. The flame lights our way back together again from our separate lives and it lights our way forward into this new Congregation year of renewal and promise.

Reflections - Bob Aubrecht

Bob expressed the importance of our annual meetings to include the congregation in the governing of our organization. The past year has been a difficult one with COVID and the two following variants, delta and omicron. A great deal of resilience has been required to deal with all the changes. Resilience is a journey and not a destination and requires practice. Bob has been most proud about the local food assistance programs the congregation contributed to through our UCOT Cares drive. We were able to donate \$12,850 to food programs.

Bob was also pleased with the 5th Sunday programs which were initiated this past year.

Overview of Agenda - Bob Aubrecht

Bob went over the agenda and asked the congregation to hold questions until the end of the presentation of each item. He wanted the congregation to know that at the end of the meeting there would be time for questions, comments and suggestions and that he would moderate that section.

Minutes of 2021 Annual Meeting - Margot Coleman

Margot asked if the congregation had any corrections or additions to last year's meeting minutes. There were no suggestions and the minutes were approved as presented.

2021 UCOT Financials - Joe Mazza

Joe went through the income and expenses for 2021 and explained to the congregation that in spite of the fact that our pledges were down almost \$5,000.00, we still had an operating income of a little over \$5,000.00.

Bob Silver asked why the pledges were down and one of the reasons was that some of our members have moved and no longer support the congregation. Some people didn't meet their pledge and others have expressed the desire to meet their pledge but haven't followed through and some haven't responded at all. Chuck Doughty thanked Joe for his hard work on the budget.

Bob asked for a motion to accept the 2021 budget and a motion was made, seconded and approved by the congregation.

2022 Proposed Budget - Joe

Joe explained that this coming year will be running on a deficit because the pledges are down by almost \$5,000.00. The board has been considering three different ways to deal with this issue.

1. Maintain the level of programs and services and fund the deficit out of our reserve.
2. Ask the congregation to increase their pledges by 15% to cover the deficit.
3. Cut expenses by decreasing the number of services and donations.

Joe said that the board has decided on the first option.

Lucy Jackson mentioned a way for guest and others to donate to a UU congregation through an application called Venmo. Rachel will talk with Lucy later and see if that is feasible.

Bob Silver asked that the 3 suggestions be repeated.

Gael Minton asked Joe about the people who have pledged but not followed through and Joe said he really couldn't guess how many if any of those members would follow through with their pledges. Gael also mentioned that she and Ty had not been contacted by anyone from the board as has been usual in past years during the pledge drive. She feels strongly that the personal contact is very important.

Bob Aubrecht is hoping that the reduction of our pledges is a short-term issue due to COVID and not being able to meet in person.

Bob asked for a motion to approve the 2021 budget. The motion was made and seconded and approved as presented by the congregation.

Mimi told the congregation that the Charitable Giving Committee had added 3 new organizations during the last year. They are the St. James Housing Assistance program, The Field Institute of Taos, and the Taos Coalition to End Homelessness. The committee also moved their support of the Navajo nation to our Taos Pueblo. Mimi suggested that everyone go to the UUSC website to see all the amazing work they are doing.

She then moved on to the Little Food Pantry which the committee has been supporting for the last year or so. Each of the members of the committee is responsible for filling the pantry on one day a week.

Mya asked why the committee doesn't give money to the Taos Community Foundation and Mary Gray answered that they have a large amount of money and that because it is a large organization, trying to get money on an immediate basis is difficult.

Bob Silver wanted to know why we give a little to a lot of organizations. Mimi answered that the committee had gone over this question a number of times and because Taos is a

small community, even though the sums seem small they mean a lot to these organizations. Joe said that he is the one who receives the letters of thanks from these organizations and that our donations mean a lot to them.

Bob added that the committee has been trying to get a man to join the committee for quite a while and invited one of the men to help out and join. Jim Schultz agreed to join the committee.

Nancy Schultz said that she and Jim would like to be included in the group of committee members who cook for the men's homeless shelter on the 4th Friday of every month.

Yvonne said that she believes that the members should be acknowledged for their commitment to the Little Food Pantry and Mimi was asked to name each of the members who are: Bette Myerson, Mimi Owensby, Linda Aubrecht, Patsy and Dennis Scott, Margot Coleman, Emily Gillispie and Mary Gray.

Bette added that she is really proud of the work the committee does and she is proud to be a member.

Bob Aubrecht said that the committee is responsible for picking the organizations but that they are also responsible for following up regularly to be sure the organizations can use the money and are still viable.

Chuck Doughty said that direct giving is fine but that it should be balanced with organizations that support justice like the UUSC.

2021 Fifth Sunday Programs - Bob Aubrecht and Gael Minton

Gael outlined the 3 programs for last year's 5th Sunday presentations. The group focused on local issues being, land, water and forest. Gael said that the group is looking for topics to cover in the current year. Patsy Scott said that she thinks the housing situation in Taos is vitally important and would like to join the group. Emily Gillispie and Lucy Jackson said she and Fanda Bender would also like to work with the group. Chuck Doughty said that he was impressed that they were able to show the film Kiss the Ground but also feels that it is important to tie the programs to justice on a larger scale, statewide and nationally.

UCOT Circles Program - Dennis Scott

Dennis told the congregation that the circles are a very successful program. They are planning on adjusting the format and they sent out a survey to get input on how they might update the program. 25 people on the mailing list returned the survey but generally only 6-12 people attend the circles. There are people who are uncomfortable with Zoom and others who are uncomfortable with the writing. They are currently considering 22 sharing circles this year with 11 covering topics and 11 for sharing. Dennis plans to have the new program figured out in about 4 weeks.

Someone wanted to know how the circles fit in with the congregation's mission statement. A number of people spoke up and talked about how important they are especially since we

are no longer able to meet in person. In general, the circles help to foster a supportive community. Nancy Schultz believes that an organization needs a strong core and the circles support this for togetherness. Dennis asked that next year they move the Circles portion of the agenda higher up on the program.

Return to Lodge for Services/Circles - Bob Aubrecht

The board is monitoring the data from the New Mexico Department of Health and also those from Taos County. In the last year we have had the original COVID plus two more waves of Delta and Omicron. Because our congregation is not a young one, the board is being very conservative in regards to bringing the members together in person. The board is looking forward to possibly returning to in-person services in the last half of the year. As part of the in-person services, Nancy Schultz is hoping we can continue the Dinners for 6 and she offered to spearhead this program.

Presentation of New Board and Election - Bob Aubrecht

Bob thanked Margot for her service to the board and as Secretary for the last couple of years. He then presented the new board as follows:

Bob Aubrecht - President	Mimi Owensby - Vice-President
Joe Mazza - Treasurer	Dennis Scott - member
Chuck Fawns - member	Emily Gillispie - member
And Be Scott returning as an ex-officio member	

Bob asked that a motion be made to accept the board members proposed. The motion was made, seconded and the congregation approved the motion.

Question, comments and suggestions - Bob Aubrecht

Bob started with letting the congregation know that Munro and Gary are going to be interim ministers at the Durango Unitarian Congregation because their minister left with no notice and the UUA wasn't able to find a new minister until possibly June of this year. Our ministers will still be with us on the regular 2 service a week.

Emily asked if we had looked into a hybrid platform for services so that those who are still uncomfortable with in-person services could still be a part of the services. Bob said that live-streaming is something the board is looking into with Rachel's help.

Bob Silver asked if it might be a good time to review our mission statement. Bob said it was on the to do list.

Rachel asked if she should continue to post the announcement of the Circles in the Tempo portion of the Taos News and Dennis said yes.

Gael Minton believes that the church should offer some kind of program every week of the month and she referred to B Scott who felt this was important. Bob Silver asked if we could look into having a part-time minister and Bob said that financially, the congregation just can't support that financially.

Then a number of the congregation brought up the Town of Taos election coming up and gave everyone some information about candidate forums.

Chuck Doughty let the congregation know that the men's group is still together and that a few of the men also have an existential group looking at possible coming disaster like climate change and the political system.

Bob then turned the meeting over to Chuck Fawns for the closing reflection and extinguishing of the Chalice.

Closing Reflection and Extinguishing of the Chalice - Chuck Fawns

Chuck acknowledged that it has been a difficult year with many challenged both personal and global. He then read a piece from the UU website about community. He then asked us to join him in the extinguishing of the chalice.

We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts and minds until we are together again.

Bob asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made and seconded and the congregation approved the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:46 PM.