

Report of the Town Hall Meeting 12/18/22

The Town Hall Meeting was convened by Lynn Liston, Board Trustee and Jim Ward, Committee on Ministry. They acknowledged that Covid significantly impacted the church's interaction with members and members experienced isolation and pain. Even after re-opening, disruption continued due to changing levels of risk from Covid. Lynn and Jim asked the participants for their input as the church moves forward, acknowledging that we are changed from this experience. A brief reflection was shared from the Ingathering Ceremony to create community and help participants prepare to share their thoughts about the church.

A brief description of the purpose and process of the Town Hall meeting was shared. Participants were asked to share their thoughts about how the church was functioning and what they hoped for as the year proceeded. Clipboards were located around the room with the headings: Mission and Vision for First Unitarian, Building and Grounds, Sunday Services, First Unitarian Church's engagement with the local community, Strategic Plan document for our church, Volunteers at First Unitarian Church, and Children's Religious Education. Participants were encouraged to write their thoughts and suggestions on these clipboards. Those on Zoom were informed that the headings from the clipboards were in the chat, and they were encouraged to share their comments there. Participants were advised that notes were being taken so that all responses could be shared with the congregation and given to the appropriate committees to work on. It was shared with the participants that this was being done in keeping with the Board of Trustees' chosen theme of the current church year: improving congregational communication.

The discussion notes, recording and clipboard comments are contained in an addendum to this report. These sources were used to compile a list of comments, grouped by topic, and sorted into the committees that could most effectively address them. Each board member has been tasked with sharing these suggestions with the chairs of the committees for whom they serve as board liaison. They are listed below:

Building & Grounds

A camera to see the congregation for the folks on Zoom. It doesn't have to be included on the recording.

A camera on Ian or other musician, so we can see the music being played.

Events

Maybe we can host open mic nights? Poetry, music, etc. This room has great acoustics.

Marketing

Physical bulletin boards, including pictures after an event has happened, would be good. We can also support other groups' events.

We desperately need to be represented during Pride Month next year, because the church wasn't last year.

There should also be a rainbow flag or banner, or other exterior sign, to appear more welcoming from the outside.

Peace & Social Justice

Getting the Center for Sustainable Future started up again. Maybe the church can take part in that.

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RE

We can bring back the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program.

We can also offer OWL leadership training.

Peg Carmen is willing to babysit on occasion.

Worship Arts

Can we share services with Elkhart or Chicago?

I would like to see more musicians on Sunday, as well as a dedicated cantor to help with the singing.

Other Task Forces

Peg Carmen is willing to be on a committee to update the Strategic Plan.

Volunteer management

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Liston, member, Board of Trustees

Florence Klecka, Secretary, Board of Trustees

Lynn McDonald, member, Committee on Ministry