



Congregational Meeting Minutes for Sanctuary Vote

October 22, 2017

First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor

Call to Order: President Erik Stalhandske called the meeting to order at 1:05.

Quorum Board of Trustees Secretary, Cathie Breidenbach, reported that we have quorum. Stalhandske introduced the agenda, procedures, and timetable for the meeting.

Move to approve Agenda Motion 17.10.22.01 Cristy Cardinal moved, Second Colleen Crawley Approved

Move to waive membership requirement for voting. Motion 17.10.22.02 Tim Richards moved and Spenser Thomas seconded the adoption of a waiver that allows members who have signed the membership book within the last 4 months to have voting privileges. Approved.

Overview of sanctuary history - Cheryl Valentine, one of founders of the Immigration Action Coalition (IAC), explained that the group was created three years ago to act in support of immigrants. UUAA has a history helping immigrants. The church housed the Rodriquez family in sanctuary for several years in the 1980's. In response to the recent increased activities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the IAC started a campaign for UUAA to become a Sanctuary Congregation.

Since January they've sponsored over a dozen educational events to learn about the sanctuary movement and they've published answers to frequently asked questions. The Immigration Action Coalition (IAC) of this congregation has over 70 pledges from congregants and has joined the Washtenaw Congregational Sanctuary, an interfaith organization pledged to advocate for, provide financial support for, and offer friendship to a family or person in danger of detention and deportation by ICE. Two congregations in town are now sanctuary congregations and more are in the process to join the over 800 congregations nationally that have made the pledge. The IAC task force has met with our ministers to plan how to make sanctuary guests safe, comfortable, and welcome in our building (including a special quilt made by congregants under Betsy Price's direction).

Guests would reside in the Marley room and volunteers would provide for their basic needs and be in the building when staff is not here and guests are present. The IAC has consulted with immigration lawyers, community groups, and other congregations who have actually hosted sanctuary guests. The Board of Trustees voted last February to support becoming a level-one sanctuary congregation, but due to the importance of the commitment, the Board decided congregation must also vote to approve.

A Sacred Song Concert on Dec. 2 will take place at UUAA. Proceeds will benefit Washtenaw Congregational Sanctuary.

Q&A Cheryl Valentine, Erik Stalhandske, Jim Lee and others answered questions.

Q John Preston volunteered to stay in the building during times the staff is not present and we have a guest. He asked where overnight volunteers would sleep.

A A sleeping space separate from where guests are staying has been selected. It has a fold-out sofa.

Q Bobbi Coluni asked about the living space in the Marley room and what we will need to invest to make guests comfortable. Does the nearby shower work?

A Ed Lynn assured that the shower works and there's a kitchen nearby and a TV, plus Washtenaw Congregational Sanctuary is committed to help us prepare a space for guests. Our investment would likely be minimal.

Q Colleen Crowley asked whether a simple majority is sufficient to pass the resolution.

A Erik Stalhandske explained that the board decided 75% of members voting on the resolution today will be needed for it to pass.

Q Will guests be allowed to come and go when they're in sanctuary?

A Cheryl Valentine said that adults usually need to be in the building 24/7 while they await decisions on their cases. Children may not be required to stay inside at all times.

Q Sara Gibb asked if medical issues arise, how are we responsible?

A Cheryl Valentine said decisions in a medical emergency would be made by the person in sanctuary. Everyday medical issues may be handled by medical volunteers.

Q Must volunteer helpers be members?

A Volunteers can be members or non-members. All volunteers will be trained.

Q Marianne Cameron asked whether we will run background checks on volunteers.

A During volunteer training there will likely be vetting.

Q Els Nieuwenhuijsen asked whether we'll use the first year as a pilot. How long is the commitment?

A Erik Stalhandske explained that this is a permanent commitment.

Joanna Courteau moved to call the question. Bob Hospadaruk seconded Approved

Dee Dishon called a point of order. She moved to extend the Q&A Pros and Cons period before we vote. Beth Hospadaruk seconded the move to extend questions until 1:35.

Passed

Q Vilma Mesa asked how long a guest or family would be with us.

A We can set limits on how long a guest can stay with us in sanctuary. Some sanctuary congregations say they will house a guest until their case has been decided which could

take days, weeks, months or even years. We can decide to re-evaluate after a designated time period.

Jim Lee said the Frequently asked Questions flyer stated that a guest could be with us up to 3 months and then we could revisit our commitment.

Q Phil Tuchinsky asked about weather emergencies.

A Erik said we have designated tornado-safe places here. Ed Lynn added that we have a fire alarm system in place and that the Marley room has direct access to the outside

Dee Dichon supports the resolution, but is concerned that being a sanctuary congregation could divide us if problems arise. She commented that housing sanctuary guests should be a consensus decision.

Q Richard Douglas asked who's in charge at the local level if a guest is disruptive or damaging or threatening?

A Erik Stalhandske said the professional and lay leadership and leadership of the IAC would address that situation and decide what to do. He cited Eleanor Roosevelt who said if we waited until we had everything resolved, we'd never do anything. We've done due diligence and may not have answered everything, but we have a great national and local network in place.

Q Steve Lundy asked what we would do about security issues and protestors.

A Jim Lee said that when he was congregational president, he found it would be hard to protest here without trespassing on private property and that's illegal, so we'd need to decide whether to prosecute.

Cecillie Cordovilla said that when a community is oppressed, our job is to step in and carry the weight of the oppressed community.

Congregants voted. Ballots were collected. While the congregation waited for results, they sang *There is More Love Somewhere, We'll Build a Land*, and *We Are Not Our Own*.

The Board returned from counting votes and President Stalhandske announced the results on the paper ballot motion 17.10.22.03: 207 approved 4 objected.

Meeting was adjourned amid general celebration

Respectfully submitted,
Cathie Breidenbach, Board Secretary