

UoT Annual Membership Meeting
September 27, 2020

Welcome

I am Jim DeFontes, the President of the Board of Directors for UoT, and on behalf of the Board, Ministry and staff, I'd like to welcome you to our 2020 Annual Membership Meeting, and officially call this meeting to order.

However, before we start, I need to remind all of you that I am a physician and not a Parliamentarian. Robert's Rules and UoT's by-laws are all new to me and I want to thank MJ, Connie, Erin and Steve for holding my hand and teaching me the lay of the land. If I stumble during our proceeding, please assume unknowing, not intention, and I ask for your forgiveness in advance...

The Board would like to thank Erin Hostetler for arranging and planning today's meeting and for Amy Jahn who is managing this Zoom application.

This will be our first virtual annual Membership Meeting and we appreciate your willingness to work with us on today's format.

Be advised that we are recording these meeting and it will be archived in our UoT webpage under the Board's tab.

One of the most valuable attributes of an annual Meeting is its open fellowship and esprit de corps, and as such, we recognize the challenge that today's meeting presents us. We are hoping that our **intent, transparency and content** will meet your needs today. And so that we may better represent you, we are planning on having another meeting no later than November, probably in October, as there are a number of pressing issues that we need your input, preferences, and perhaps vote on.

To make today's meeting more efficient and effective we asked the community's permission to adjust the usual format.

Since we are not voting on anything or proposing any actions during this meeting, the bylaw requirement for a quorum of 50 members or 25% of the membership is not required.

We appreciate you supporting the delaying of our annual membership renewal process until we can begin offering **Membership classes** and **Spiritual Baptism**, and giving us the opportunity to come back to you with a by-law proposal for an open, transparent and democratic process regarding the **selection and election of board members**. One that would have the attributes that so many of you appreciated during the **last board member selection process**, and which is not currently in our by-laws.

Everyone's opinions and questions are important to us, so rather than picking a few questions or comments from the community today, we will be addressing those submitted to us earlier. And we ask that you submit any questions or comments that may arise from this meeting to MJ. That way, everyone's voice can be heard and the Board has the opportunity to respond in a meaningful way.

Again, the virtual format is new and challenging, and we thank you for helping us to navigate through this, lovingly and effectively, and helping us to learn how best to communicate and work together. Be assured that we are actively learning how best to manage virtual meetings so that we may have polls, votes and active 2 way conversations together.

At this time, I would like to ask our Minister, Reverend Clive De'Laporte to lead us in our prayer...

Agenda Approval

At this time, I am submitting today's Annual Membership Business Meeting Agenda, Exhibit A, as having been previously distributed via email and approved by the community.

And now, I hand off to our Secretary of the Board, Connie Carter for the approval of last year's minutes and the Annual Secretary's Report.

President Report

I must begin with gratitude for those who came before us. Blessings to Reverend Marj and Reverend Caroline, and to their Staff and the Boards. We are in appreciation and recognize your collective wisdom, courage, Spiritual foundation and vision.

I would like to announce today, that the Board sees the state of UoT as one that is reflecting, emerging and moving into a future of Prosperity.

Over the past year, UoT has met a number of challenges and achieved several milestones.

The **first challenge of course** was managing the impact of the quarantine. Reverend Clive, the staff and previous Board were instrumental in cutting costs, applying for the government PPP loan, and creating a meaningful virtual presence on line.

It is amazing to note that we were down only one week for the Sunday services, that the choir wasn't even down for a week, and that our Reiki, MUT's, Women's circle, and I of the Storm groups were up and running in a very short time. We were really fully functional in a new format almost immediately across the board within weeks of the shutdown.

A huge shout out to our Ministers and Ministerial teams.....

The **first milestone** for this Board was the signing of our **Minister's contract**. As you are aware, the current contract runs to January 31, 2021. Let me assure you that we are moving toward what is in the best interest of all concerned. We are also looking forward to meeting with you, most likely in October, to give you the most current state, to hear your thoughts, get feedback and to discuss our next steps.

Another milestone was the safe opening of our campus to outdoor services. It was joyous to have our Gardens come alive with prayer, music, and community. We plan on continuing our outdoor services until the weather forbids it and then move inside-following CDPH and CDC guidelines.

Another recent milestone was the purchase of A/V equipment which allows us to live stream. This is transformative as it allows our community to be together at the same time, be it at home or on campus. AND it is freeing us from the expense of pre-recorded services. We are aware that last week's service came on-line late, and that today's service was not streaming at all. We apologize for the inconvenience. We have identified the issues and will be addressing them. Please tune us back in next week as the service is really beautiful and you will be proud of it.

Another milestone was that the Board approved a Minister Director position and we are delighted to report that Mary Jeanne Hawes has accepted this role. MJ will spend a few minutes discussing this with you later today.

And a milestone in the making, comes from Rev Clive and one of his contacts from Unity of Albuquerque. It is preliminary and we will need to work this with you, but we might have the opportunity to have our very own Minister in Training. Someone that was a student in Richard Rohr's School of Light... We are just evaluating its feasibility right now, but once it appears to have wings, we will get back to you. It's early, it's exciting, and more is to come....

One of the board's roles is to plan for our financial success and stability. To do this we must understand and recognize the forces within and without our control, and to build and manage a budget that is an accurate reflection of our expenses and revenue. It must also include provision for annual maintenance, repairs, depreciation, training, growth, and contingency funds.

As you know, we are a small spiritual community with a large piece of property. The truth is that our small membership's tithing and donations do not cover our expenses and they haven't for some time now. The budget has been met primarily by deferring preventative maintenance and repairs to our grounds and property, none of which can be passed over anymore. Of course the quarantine has adversely impacted our donations and tithings, but honestly our revenue has been flat to falling for sometime now, while our expenses increased. An additional impact has come from the internet and its virtual presence. The days of on campus workshops, intensives, and Master Teachers generating revenue are not over, but they are not nearly the revenue enhancer that they use to be, and if not managed well they can become an expense.

So what does this mean?

It means we need to be open to new and enhanced revenue streams for UoT. We need to consider revenue streams coming from events, groups, and individuals that are aligned with our values and mission. We need to consider leveraging our assets to our community's advantage.

One example:

Last week, Inside Edge used our Meditation Garden to host a Sound Bath. They gave the Church a Love offering and a discount to our members. Those that I met are very much like us and are interested in visiting our services and how we might collaborate together.

Another example:

As I mentioned earlier, we have recently purchased equipment to provide state of the art live A/V streaming. In affect we now have a recording studio. Imagine for a moment that we become the recording studio for SCAL's spiritual communities, groups, and leaders. They pay us to record or we collaborate with them regarding the use of our services and theirs. I see us developing an A/V or Digital Production Ministry and in effect becoming a magnate for Spiritual Groups seeking Digital production services.

Another example:

What if UoT became a Regional training center for Unity? For S.E.E. training? For Ministers in training?

These are just few ideas and possibilities that can lead us into Ministerial and Business Prosperity. The board knows that many of you are just brimming with other ideas and concepts and we want to hear them from you. So send them in to us. Let's set up phone calls to discuss.

To be successful, every Organization must hear from, benefit from, and honor its teams. Today we are taking the time for you to hear from our Board, our Ministry and staff .

Reverend Clive will share with you his service and event plans for the remainder of the year. Our Treasurer, Todd Bopell, will go over our financial report in more detail with you. MJ Hawes, Amy Jahn, Darrell Holdaway, and Nevin Valentine will share with you some of their thoughts and experiences from this year, as well as, some of their 2021 aspirations. Connie Carter will share some insights and strategies for our Property and Grounds. Lisa Kolipar will discuss some ideas and efforts regarding Prosperity. And Erin Hostetler will share our plans to answer your questions.

Before we move to the rest of the agenda though...

The Board recognizes the economic and cultural challenges that are facing churches and spiritual organizations across our country and that UoT is no exception. However, we also recognize the advantages that we have in our Ministry, people, and campus, and the import of our vision and mission statements.

Let me take a moment and remind you...

A Vision statement describes what an Organization desires to achieve in the long-run, what they hope to become.

Our Vision states: Centered in Divine Love, we participate in radical global awakening of consciousness, honoring all.

A Mission statement includes the values and purpose of the Organization

Our Mission states:

We are a vibrant, spiritual community, committed to individual and collective awakening, through sacred teachings and practices. One God, One Heart, many paths.

Our Vision and Mission statements are honorable, worthy, and important to our UoT Community, AND relevant to our country and world community. ...

It is your Board's intention to help us move collectively toward this vision and to help make it possible to practice our mission, by providing financial and ministerial stability, through interdependence and guided by the Devine.

We take very seriously the trust that you have placed with us, the goodwill that you send us, and we reflect our loving intention back to you through our effort.

At this point, I would like to hand the agenda over to Rev Clive.

Adjournment

All agenda items having been completed and community questions to be sent to MJ Hawes, I call this meeting adjourned.

Thank you
Jim DeFontes, MD
Board President, Unity of Tustin