

### **Update – The Mailing List**

In early October, we reported here that the group calling themselves the Congregant Action Organizing Team had asked to inspect and copy the Church's membership list. After we made that report, the Congregant Action Organizing Team notified the Board it wanted to change their original request. On October 28, Board Moderator Leslie Pohl-Kosbau confirmed receipt of the group's later correspondence, and advised the group the Board would respond after properly deliberating over their new requests.

Here's the full text of Leslie's message:

The Board and members of Church staff received your October 8 and October 12 emails. We understand you contacted us on behalf of Amy Freeman and that your purpose was to modify Amy's September 30 request regarding the Church membership list. Based on your email messages we understand your current requests to be as follows: "We want the opportunity to send a message to all members. We could accomplish that by providing the message to you and watching you send it, unedited, to the whole member email list...You would be welcome to review our message in advance and work with us to sort out any factual inaccuracies."

The Board needs to consider and discuss your latest requests before it can decide on an appropriate response. As soon as the Board has the opportunity to address the matter in a manner that is appropriate under our bylaws and governing policies we will send you the Board's response.

Sincerely,

Leslie Pohl-Kosbau, Moderator  
First Unitarian Church Board

We thank the congregants who have communicated with us about their views on this matter.

– The Board of Trustees

### **Special Announcement – Mailing List**

October 7, 2024

We, the Board, wanted to let you know that we have received a request from the protest group self-identified as the Congregant Action Organizing Team, to inspect and release First Unitarian Church's membership list. Our church Bylaws, Governing Policies, Safe Church Policy, and Oregon State Law all speak to this issue. The Board would like you to know that we are taking this request under discernment and getting assistance from legal counsel but we are not fulfilling this request during this period of discernment and counsel. We will keep you, the members, informed as we progress on this issue.

We are also asking that you please, do not sign the petition about Reverend Alison, and if you have done so, consider removing your name. This action is unwarranted and prevents us and her from focusing on our collective work of healing and building community. UUA regional leaders have also told us that this petition could do harm to our community's present and future ministry for years to come.

It is time to move forward collectively, with a focus on healing in our beloved community, and with a focus on turning outward and centering the work of love in the world beyond our walls.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

There is a lot of work to be done at our church, and it is not work that the Board can or should do alone. We hope you will join us, either by volunteering to be on a committee or task force, or at a minimum keep engaging in our upcoming forums.

If you are interested in volunteering, please email [board@firstunitarianportland.org](mailto:board@firstunitarianportland.org), or talk to one of your Board members at the Board table in Buchan or Fuller Hall, and look for additional notices in the Front Steps eNews and on the Board's webpage.

### **Your Board of Trustees Strongly Supports Rev. Miller**

September 25, 2024

We've heard from many congregants their distress at the continuing protests in and around church property. We've also heard distress and concern about the church's governance structure. And we've heard distress and concern about continued attacks and accusations focused on our Ministers and staff, particularly our Senior Minister.

Here's what your Board of Trustees and Executive team are doing, as well as some resources.

#### **About Rev. Miller**

We, the Board of Trustees, strongly support Rev. Miller. She was recommended by our Ministerial Search Committee and affirmed by the congregation by a vote of 99%. In extremely trying circumstances, she has put love at the center and the health of the congregation in the forefront. We are lucky to have her.

Attempts to remove her from her position, and divide our congregation, will not succeed.

There is important work to be done including addressing our governance structure, which leaves too many congregants and church friends on the margins; providing a healthy and supportive workplace for our staff; and seeing to the financial health of our congregation.

Rev. Miller's leadership is key to our efforts and success.

#### **About Protests**

Guidance on protests was posted in the Front Steps eNews on August 4, 2024, and email was sent directly to protesters on September 22, 2024, notifying them that their conduct violates our congregation's Safe Church Policy. See links to these documents below. Conduct includes disrupting worship services and, most recently, approaching and addressing youth in the Learning Community without knowledge or consent of their adults.

A Frequently Asked Questions document was created to describe the investigations and events that led to the resignation of the former Director of Music. It details the multi-year history of investigations and attempts at mediation that resulted in him being asked to resign.

A subsequent FAQ document is being finalized to provide more transparency, including details on the costs related to these efforts.

Board members assisted the Lay Ministers in presenting Listening Circles, which are uncovering decades of hurt that need attention, repair, and healing. They also reveal deep connection, devotion, gratitude, and joy. Additional sessions are in the works.

### **About Church Governance**

The Board and Executive Team are eager to address our congregation's governance structure. Conversations began shortly after Rev. Miller's arrival, at her instigation and by multiple Board members. Current activities include first steps toward the formulation of a Right Relations committee and adding congregants to the Board's standing committees, for a democratic expansion of governance.

Preliminary work has also begun to create a 5-year Strategic Plan for our congregation. This process is expected to include congregation-wide conversation regarding our governance structure. Input from the Listening Circles will inform this work as well.

### **Resources**

[Request FAQ here.](#)

[Safe Church Policy](#)

[Front Steps Notice on Protest](#)

[September 22 Letter on Protest](#)

[Listening Circle Executive Summary](#)

### **Music Ministry Transition**

Many congregants have asked questions about the recent and upcoming changes in our Music Ministry transition. The Board of Trustees has written a "Frequently Asked Questions" document.

To read this document, please email [FAQ@firstunitarianportland.org](mailto:FAQ@firstunitarianportland.org), and the Board will send you the on-line link. New Q&As will be added in the coming weeks based on congregant questions and other feedback.