



Foothills Unitarian

LOVE UNITES US ALL

FOOTHILLS UNITARIAN CHURCH

Notice of Meeting Nov. 15, 2020

Foothills Unitarian Church will convene its 2021 Budget Approval Meeting of all members at 9:50 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020 via Zoom.

OFFICIAL AGENDA

- 1. Establishing quorum, approval of standing rules and approval of agenda**
- 2. Chalice lighting and celebration of new births and remembrance of members who have died**
- 3. Restoring Wholeness report from the Board of Trustees**
- 4. Presentation and vote on the 2021 annual budget from the Ministry**
- 5. An update and check-in from the Ministry**
- 6. Update on the building expansion project from the Ministry**
- 7. Closing remarks and adjournment**

1. Parliamentary procedures

a) Establish a quorum

b) Approve Foothills' standing rules for congregational meetings as follows (with a reminder of our Covenant of Right Relations):

1. Members shall abide by the Foothills Unitarian Church Covenant of Right Relations.
2. No member shall speak more than once in debate on the same question until all members wishing to speak have done so.
3. No member shall speak more than twice in debate on the same question.
4. Comments made in debate shall be limited to a maximum of two minutes.
5. Any motions to amend must be in writing and in the hand of the President before the motion is made from the floor.

Our Covenant of Right Relations

We covenant to build a religious community guided by love and sustained by respectful relationships, which work towards the greater and common good. Believing that building healthy relationships is a spiritual practice, we aim to listen appreciatively, speak with care, express gratitude, honor and value our differences, and assume good intentions. We will communicate directly, honestly and compassionately, particularly when we are in conflict, and we will not expect to always get our own way. When we feel hurt or when we hurt others, we will try to forgive, make amends and connect in a spirit of love. In celebration of the common purpose that unites us, we will do our best to abide by this covenant.

2. Chalice Lighting and Celebration and Remembrance

3. Restoring Wholeness Report from the Board

The Board of Trustees is wrapping up two major pieces of work in the wake of former professional staff misconduct disclosures in 2017 and 2018 -- work we have termed Restoring Wholeness, because it represents the efforts of four successive boards of trustees to help the congregation heal and restore a sense of safety and trust in our beloved community going forward.

This board work has consisted of:

-- Drafting board policies that define professional misconduct, outline expectations for disclosure to the board of trustees, set considerations for disclosure to the congregation, and delineate expectations for ministerial self-care and accountability. We expect to finalize and approve these new policies by next month.

-- Compiling an archive of primary source documents, writing a timeline of known ministerial misconduct, and writing three layers of narrative of varying levels of detail, aimed to help different groups in the congregation to understand what happened; how to speak of it openly, compassionately, and faithfully with each other and newcomers to Foothills; and how these episodes of misconduct have shaped our past and will affect our congregation going forward.

This work represents the efforts of congregationally-elected lay leaders to restore our church covenant that was broken by misconduct and secret-keeping, and to help congregants who may still be struggling to process and integrate either the misconduct itself, the decision by two boards of trustees to disclose that misconduct, or all of it together.

Our intention with these narratives of varying length and detail is to protect the victims, respect the legacies of the religious professionals who misconducted, and extend a compassionate understanding and the possibility of restoration for relationships that have been broken by our individual reactions to the misconduct and disclosures..

This work has been difficult but very much necessary to heal and to protect the health of the congregation in the years to come. Congregations that do not acknowledge and speak openly about their history of misconduct create a culture of secret-keeping and a power imbalance between members who are "in-the-know" and "in-the-dark." Avoiding speaking honestly about past misconduct also makes it harder to report misconduct in the future.

The shortest narrative we have written is intended as a guideline for how to have a brief conversation. It is meant to be a jumping off point for those of us who are uncertain about what to say. It does not need to limit how we talk about our history of misconduct. Ultimately, we should feel free to speak what we know and understand about ourselves and our congregation, with two important caveats -- we should respect the privacy of victims, and we should speak of all involved with the respect and dignity that our complex and shared humanness deserves.

The second length of narrative is a slightly expanded summary of events intended to be shared with newer members of the congregation who want to understand the general scope of past misconduct that they were not personally impacted by.

A final, fully-detailed narrative has also been written. Its intended audience is future board members who may have to, in their leadership roles, deal with complex interpersonal or legal reverberations, and who need to understand how a decades-long history of porous boundaries and outright misconduct affect the ways that we behave in community together.

All of these materials, though, we consider to be “on-the-record” within our congregation, and we feel should be available -- with protections against sharing them outside Foothills Church -- to any engaged congregants who are still working to process for themselves this recent history and the ongoing reverberations.

The pandemic risks and the closure of the church’s physical space has created a layer of complexity around making the complete materials available to members who feel they need to understand more about what happened to integrate their feelings and thoughts. We also feel strongly that pastoral care should be available to those who are wanting to sit with these materials and understand more deeply our recent past.

The board of trustees is considering several ways that we might support the healing that we believe an honest and compassionate account of a complicated and painful period can bring to long-time members of our congregation. We invite congregants to reach out to the board of trustees at theboard@foothillsuu.org, and we will make arrangements for access to materials and any pastoral support that feels helpful.

In the meantime, all are free to read the [briefest summary](#) of our recent experiences of misconduct here. We chose not to include the summaries in the packet itself, because we understand and respect that some members prefer not to engage with this part of our history further. There is also a [slightly longer narrative](#) intended for new members.

4. Presentation and vote on the [2021 Annual Budget](#)

5. Ministry Update

[2021 Vision Interpretation](#)

6. Update on the Building Expansion Project

7. Closing remarks and adjournment