

DRAFT
UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NEW HAVEN
MINUTES OF THE FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
January 28, 2018

Approved _____

Attendance: 107

Quorum requires 35 members.

D. Gelperin called the Meeting to order at 12:00 pm and P. Miller recorded the minutes. C. Hutton read the USNH Covenant of Right Relations. M. Lloyd Joiner read an invocation from Laila Ibrahim.

D. Gelperin and M. Lloyd Joiner counted 107 members present for a quorum.

S. Connolly, a member of the CONECT task force, introduced CONECT and its work. Member congregations decide what issues to bring to CONECT assemblies. Delegates from member congregations attend the assemblies where decisions are made on which issues to address. Individual congregations can pursue other issues outside of the CONECT umbrella. She discussed USNH activities which lead to this congregational meeting and the reasons why the CONECT task force recommended that we adopt the motion to join CONECT.

K. Foscue read the motion to join CONECT: USNH will join CONECT for a trial year commencing 2/12/18. The dues of \$7000 will be paid from the following sources:

- (1) \$3500 UU Funding matching grant
- (2) \$1000 anonymous donation
- (3) \$867 Christmas Eve collection plate
- (4) \$550 Social Justice Task Forces contribution
- (5) the ministry's discretionary fund.

The CONECT Core Team and Social Justice Council will conduct an ongoing evaluation during the year and provide a report to the Board of Trustees by year's end.

To facilitate discussion of the motion, J. Messner assisted with a portable microphone.

L. deVos representing the Social Justice Council endorsed the motion. She listed several areas where CONECT efforts were aligned with USNH activities.

J. Trimble Shapiro asked what will happen next year if we join this year?

D. Gelperin replied that it will require another congregational decision.

L. Smith noted that this is the second time that we considered connect. It was discussed while she was BoT president. At that time, it was impossible budgetarily. She is grateful for this task force and is heartily in favor of the motion.

G. Seaman asked when the evaluation would be made - after a calendar year, fiscal year, or at the end of 1 year's membership?

K. Foscue replied that the evaluation will be ongoing and will culminate in a report.

D. Gelperin suggested that the spring congregational meeting 2019 would be better time to do this. That would produce a gap. There could be another congregational meeting 1 year after joining CONECT.

P.J. Deak stated that our denomination partners with UU-UNO to make the world a better place. CONECT is the same thing at a local level. It is worth a try. The important thing is to join and be part of something bigger to accomplish our goals.

C. Hutton commented that the Permanent Committee on Right Relations endorses this motion. It is a wonderful platform to build relations, including within this congregation. 1x1 meetings are very good in this area.

K. Foscue noted that CONECT will provide more training on 1x1s. This is useful for reaching out to new members. CONECT will also provide training on house meetings.

F. Morrison asked what are the opportunity costs of spending \$7000 to join CONECT? He remarked that there is an overwhelming feeling of support but we should hear from anyone who opposes the motion.

D. Gelperin replied that opportunity costs are considered in making the budget. We need to hear from everyone.

L. deVos commented that \$3500 is specifically for this purpose. It can be used for this or not at all. A donation, social justice funds, and the collection plate were all intended for this purpose. Next year we can request another smaller grant from UUA.

E. McCarthy had a few questions: How many members support withdrawing troops from Afghanistan? How will CONECT know the opinion of the congregation? If CONECT chooses a position we don't agree on, how does the team know? Are UU positions enough guidance? They are working on antiracism. There are pieces missing. The team is self-appointed. How is communication back to the congregation handled?

D. Wade spoke for his wife who is a CONECT member with another congregation. House meetings bring members together to discuss their concerns.

T. Vidal said that he is trusting the people in favor of it. He doesn't need a report on every decision made.

S. Forman asked how we would plug in to CONECT with issues?

MOTION by P.J. Deak, to call the question. **SECONDED by G. Feeley;**

FAILED: 53 approved, 58 opposed, 0 abstentions.

M. Tuhus made a point of order. It would be useful to have an additional person counting votes.

M. Lloyd Joiner discussed CONECT's methods. CONECT works with congregations to make decisions. Each congregation does it differently. This can involve house meetings and one on ones. We may use other congregational action as well. We can work to figure out what works best. This is a completely open team. We want as many people as possible to attend meetings to be involved.

F. Proscino commented that racial injustice is not listed on the CONECT web site. Why not?

M. Lloyd Joiner responded to the question. CONECT leaders of color want white members to go back to their congregations to work on racial justice within their congregations. There is a process called "2 books and 2 movies" that is being used

in come congregations. This is not a stated issue but it came out of CONECT gatherings. Many of the issues addressed do relate to racial justice; K. Foscue added that CONECT worked on a school district issue that was related to racial justice.

T. Durham asked how is the \$7000 fee assessed? How will it be used? Are all churches assessed the same?

D. Gelperin replied that it is a percentage of the congregation's budget.

L. deVos added that the budget is negotiated. Money is spent on professional organizers, a web site, printing, and an infrastructure needed to be effective. We don't have a breakdown on the budget.

G. Seaman asked how we pay the dues? What is the frequency?

D. Wade replied that contributions are made at a CONECT meeting.

B. Goward asked what other UU congregations might be considering membership?

M. Lloyd Joiner said that CONECT's membership is mostly in southern CT. The Westport UU congregation rescinded its membership because they hired a social justice coordinator. We don't know of other congregations in CT. Many UU congregations are part of similar organizations which is why UUA created grants to increase membership in such organizations.

D. Stagg is not against the motion but has strong feelings on death with dignity and women's rights. He would prefer that we join a group that supported these areas directly.

C. Elferdink, a new member and retired UU minister, commented that this invites us to engage in a core UU quality – dealing with diversity in our own congregation. It forces congregations to go beyond talking (a strength but also weakness). We should get beyond our differences and find out where we converge and act on it. There are ways to connect with people who agree on certain things but not everything.

L. Barrett is learning from others' questions. She is glad that the discussion could continue.

R. Zelisko supports the motion. He asked what will we learn and experience as a result of checking it out for a year?

B. Eitzer commented that it is a low risk for the coming year. We should give it a shot and discuss it again in a year.

MOTION by G. Feeley, to call the question. **SECONDED by P.J. Deak;**
Passed; nearly unanimous approval, with 1 opposed, 0 abstentions.

D. Gelperin requested the congregation to please be engaged in the process if you have questions about CONECT.

E. McCarthy raised a point of order; Please recognize those who are present but not voting.

MOTION by K. Foscue, USNH will join CONECT for a trial year commencing 2/12/18. The dues of \$7000 will be paid from the following sources:

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The CONECT Core Team and Social Justice Council will conduct an ongoing evaluation during the year and provide a report to the Board of Trustees by year's end. **SECONDED by B. Pace;**

PASSED: 112 approved, 2 opposed, 1 abstention, 2 present but not voting.

D. Gelperin introduced R. Camm, chair of the nominating committee to discuss an opening on the Endowment & Legacies committee created when J. Hill left the committee to join the Management Team.

MOTION by R. Camm, to appoint Greg Seaman to the Endowment & Legacies Committee for a term ending June 2020. **SECONDED by P. Korth;**

PASSED nearly unanimously, with 0 opposed, 1 abstention, 0 present but not voting.

MOTION by G. Feeley, to adjourn the meeting. **SECONDED by L. deVos;**
PASSED unanimously.

The Congregational Meeting adjourned at 12:53 pm.

DRAFT