

Notes from
Newman Community Discernment
compiled by Bev Orazen
August 14, 2022

The community gathered at the beautiful welcoming First Unitarian Universalist Church to the beautiful music by our beloved musicians singing Ubi Caritas. At the front of the church was a lovely slide with the words "Welcome Newman Center"

Joe Gentilini opened the meeting with prayer.

Rev Dr. Marian Stewart, Sr Pastor at First UU warmly and graciously welcomed us and noted that Ubi Caritas is also in their hymn book. She introduced several members of First UU who generously agreed to assist us with any needs including recording our meeting & managing audio needs.

Greg Stype introduced some of the community members who had a part in bringing us together. He noted that while the meeting was being recorded, in the interest of respect for individual privacy, we would have personal comments edited out of the final recording.

Greg opened the microphone to ask anyone to share if they've had any response from their attempts to communicate with the Bishop. One person had received a call back from the Communication Director. No one had heard from the Bishop.

Sr Linda Lee Jackson, OP provided a reflection on the discernment process. Reminding us of questions we need to ask ourselves in order to discern our individual spiritual and religious needs, as well as how to think about individual needs while continuing as a community. Her presentation was followed by prayerful Taize music and silence.

Kelly Sollinger referred the community to the handout listing the many many prayer/faith sharing groups & opportunities that remain available. Among them, Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, David Nesmith's series on The Universal Christ beginning in September. Kelly pointed out the long listing of mercy & justice ministries that will continue such as Food for the Homeless, BREAD, & St Vincent dePaul.

This was followed by a long, open discussion of various parishes community members have visited and their thoughts about the experiences. Many community members felt that they were not ready to consider other parishes but valued the community staying intact. Community members had the opportunity to express their anger, grief, & disappointment as well as their hopes for the future, including hopes to remain connected to the Paulists in some way. Many expressed their feelings of not being welcome at any other parish in this diocese because of their LGBTQI+ lifestyle, all the while telling of how the Newman Center had welcomed them & lead them to deeper faith & communion with God. Some in the gathering thanked the community for the part played in their own faith formation at Newman Center. There was much time devoted to allowing members to speak their truths.

The meeting ended with announcements that we will gather next on:
September 11 at the Gateway Theatre for a livestream of the 10am mass from St Paul the Apostle in NYC.

On September 25, we will meet again at 2pm at First UU.

In the meantime, we ask for others to get involved with planning & leading our gatherings. Also, requesting input on programming, timing of meetings etc.

We concluded with prayer offered by community member Michael Dickerson, followed by the entire community standing & singing Amazing Grace lead again by our beloved musicians.