

DRAFT Minutes

February 8, 2026, Congregational Meeting

Galen gaveled in the meeting at 12:33. Vanessa spoke first, of holding hard conversations with love and respect. Galen noted the agenda: to determine how the congregation wants to handle banners and the statement of public concern, then closing words and adjournment.

Rev. Shennum read the congregational covenant as opening words. Also Forum guidelines. She also reminded us of the “ouch, oops, and whoa” tools and pointed out Liz Strand and Mari Magaloni Ramos, who were there as both congregants and part of the Healthy Congregations Team.

Galen opened the banner discussion, which quickly became quite lively. Vanessa called for calm.

One proposal was to take down the “Ceasefire” banner, as it’s been up for some time. Many members, and some not-yet members, spoke passionately about the issue. A not-yet member and a new Young Adult member both noted that it was the ceasefire banner that had first brought them into the church. Vanessa reminded us that taking the banner down doesn’t mean we don’t care.

It was noted that we stop seeing what’s always there, so it may be time for a new banner, whether the subject is the same or not. A straw vote affirmed that we should move banners around for fresh viewing, and that any we put up should reflect our UU values.

A suggestion to limit the time a banner is displayed was discussed, and a straw vote affirmed discussion about removal/renewal at one year.

Galen moved the meeting to the draft Statement of Public Witness. Marty Vanderlaan moved to adopt it, Keith Hollon seconded. Galen opened the floor to discussion.

Anne Rovere moved to add “Israel” (to what is the second bullet in the final document), Julia Wald seconded. Discussion ensued and when a vote was called, the motion failed. Jeff Pekrul offered an amendment to recast the first two bullets into one and add another (third bullet in final doc); Dolores seconded. The amendment was discussed and then adopted. After more passionate discussion, a revised [statement of public concern](#) was voted on and adopted.

Mari read closing words and Galen adjourned the meeting.

The proposed motion for the public statement of our concerns is:

The Members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, a faith community that values pluralism, upholds the worth and dignity of each person, and believes we are all interconnected, affirm our 2025 commitment to being an Apartheid-Free Congregation. We the members:

- Believe that all forms of religious and racial oppression and violence, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, apartheid, and genocide, are immoral and cannot be tolerated.
- Believe that the violence against Palestinians living in Gaza and Israel is immoral, ongoing, and cannot be tolerated.
- Believe that standing up against the immoral acts of the current Israeli government should not be taken as a criticism of the Jewish people, but rather as a criticism of the Israeli government.