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December 17, 2021

Esteemed Search Committee,

It's a great honor for me to write a letter on behalf of Rev. Dr. Beth Johnson. For 16 years, as a rabbi, I directed the Interfaith Center for Worker Justice and during my final 3 years, Beth was the Chairperson of the highly effective organization. Subsequent to my leaving ICWJ, she took the organization through a dynamic strategic planning process through which the board of directors chose to merge with an extraordinary social advocacy organization that was in urgent need of a progressive faith voice and organizing arm. Beth has remained a leader and board member of Alliance San Diego.

Through our work together, over more than a decade, I witnessed Beth's ministry in her congregation, in others' congregations whether UU, Christian, Jewish or Muslim, in the chambers of government in San Diego, Sacramento and Washington D.C., in the offices of CEOs, on dozens of picket lines, and during her courageous acts of planned civil disobedience. Rev. Beth, as she is known far and wide in San Diego, ministers to the people whether they are exploited service workers, migrants at the border, exhausted union organizers, members of faith communities, and most important to her, the members of her congregation.

She is an energetic, engaging, articulate, prepared preacher and has the gift of preaching with rather than preaching to. She sees the members of her congregation and meets them where they are. Rev. Beth's congregation is active, organized, and empowered. They are busy with tikkun olam and the themes they take on are pursued through multi-media, music, action, prophetic word, and activism in the public arena. In short, no matter what your age, there is something to connect every person to the values and principles of Unitarian Universalism as it lives today in our world. Though a prophet, she is more powerfully compassionate and empathetic and understands the hurts and fears of those who trust her to minister to them in times of joys and sorrows. Even when a member of the congregation faces losing a beloved pet, Rev. Beth is called to accompany the family in that difficult task and time of grieving.

In Jewish tradition there is a legend that 36 righteous people roam the earth at any one time. I truly believe that Rev. Beth Johnson is one of them right now. San Diego will surely despair from losing Beth's prophetic voice and caring ministries, but a new congregation will become enlivened by her radiant energies and loving pastoring.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to do so. I can be reached via my cell, 858.231.9933 or email, LaurieCoskey@icloud.com,

Blessings,

Laurie Coskey

Rabbi Laurie Coskey, Ed.D.