

FCC Board Meeting
First Congregational Church of Minnesota, United Church of Christ
Thursday, September 19, 2024, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Meeting on Zoom

Agenda

Attendance: Linda Valerian, Jean Anderson, Carl Dyar, Paul Fate, Xan Lawrence, Jane McBride, Hikaru Peterson

Absence: Mary Byers, Kris Felbeck, Tom von Sternberg

1. Opening – Linda

Paul will open and close for the October meeting.

2. Check in with each other.

3. Approve minutes from August meeting. Paul Fate moved; Jean Anderson seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Joint task force to explore a deeper relationship with UBC – *We are seeking one or two Board members to be part of this conversation.*

In August, Jean Lubke, a long-time UBC member, reached out to Linda, noting that UBC members have been holding strategic discussions, and have been reflecting on their relationship with First Church. Besides the two congregations seeing each other for a few Sundays in July, a few of us have come to know each other through other channels, including knitting and card making groups and Sanctuary meals and Every Meal programs. Jean and Linda agreed it was a good idea to explore other ways to create space for a shared community in a more intentional way. A meeting took place with Jane, Doug Donley, Linda, and Jean. They would like to continue the conversation to develop a collective idea of where we might go within a well-defined scope. They discussed two different approaches: one was to let things happen organically, e.g., inviting UBC to Wild Church gatherings, or alternatively, being more intentional through church leadership.

The Board agreed that exploring how FCC and UBC might create a shared community was an excellent idea. There are likely individuals outside the Board who have cultivated closer connections with UBC members who might be interested in joining the exploration conversations. There may be possible involvement with the Vinery project.

5. Capital Campaign Planning – *We seek the Board's input about hiring a consultant to work with us if we hold a capital campaign.*

Jane would like to hear some updates from the HVAC committee on their specific recommendations to the Board to see if we're ready to bring this to the congregation at the annual meeting, financial aspects of which would entail a capital campaign. While we're not ready to engage consultants currently, the Board believes it wise to investigate our options. The last time we used consultants for a capital campaign, the cost was \$17K, with some of this expense folded into the amount raised through the campaign.

Paul agreed the timing is now to explore different consultants, because it can take a while to identify one, and their availability might be limited. He recalled an individual at the national UCC we consulted with two campaigns ago who was quite good. Paul knows people who work in the non-profit sector, but not directly with churches. We can ask other congregations if they are familiar with consultants.

The campaign will mainly target members of our congregation, but Sacred Places (the group we connected with before we opted for Flourish) talked about community investments in First Church. Jane recalled hearing about the church reaching out to the community for help to rebuild the steeple when it blew down. We will also aim to tap into public funds that are available for this work, e.g., federal funds for geothermal heat pump options.

The Board agreed it is a good idea to bring in a consultant from outside the congregation for their expertise at this point, for example, to conduct a feasibility study to determine how much we can raise for this effort. The Board members were asked to indicate if they were interested in helping Jane and Linda to identify consultants. Jane and Linda will also reach out to members of the congregation who were involved in past campaigns.

6. Budget Planning – *We seek the Board's input about whether to create a narrative budget to help communicate how our budget is aligned with our values as a church. If we choose to do so, what categories do we want to use in the budget that reflect our values? Can this lead to our developing a mission statement? Is it important to have a mission statement for other reasons?* (Watch YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co9UC4u4bt0>. You can skip to the end once it is clear how the participants categorize expenses.)

We have not used a narrative budget but have always asked what our values are and where our money is spent. This practice will help align our values overtly with how we spend our money.

In the video, the church had three categories (Welcome all, Love all, Justice for all), plus a category for administration. Our categories would look different, and we should find ones that fit. Xan offered a model using Gather (building expenses), Listen (ministry and worship), Speak (community engagement), and Act (outreach and justice). This practice will enable us to visualize the relationship between our values and our spending through pie charts.

Paul noted that, given a good share of our expenses are on staffing, an important question to ask is what activities/missions staff are spending their time on, which can be powerful. Unlike the example in the video, the Board agreed we should not have a separate category for administration. Instead, we would try to figure out how much of the building was used for gathering and/or different ministries.

Jane noted that we currently don't have a mission statement. Gather, Listen, ... isn't a description of our mission. So, we may want to take the time to draft a mission statement. She also cautioned us not to spend too much time trying to perfect the categories at this point, but to begin the process and adapt the categories as we become more comfortable with using a narrative budget.

The Board agreed that it would be a worthwhile exercise to translate our budget into our values. It is the role of the Board to bring our values to Finance Committee. The line-item budget will be developed first. Then, Xan expressed their willingness to experiment with the interpretation and bring a draft of their work to the Board.

7. Second Hour Presentation, Q&A with the congregation on the 2024-2025 program goals, October 13 – *How might we structure this session? Who is able to be present?*

Now that we have crafted and shared our goals for 2024-2025, we need to continue connecting with the congregation and encourage them to voice their opinions and ideas about the goals. Jean, Hikaru, Xan, and Paul are available on October 13 for a Second Hour presentation. Linda will reach out with a plan for the Second Hour prior to October 13.

8. Stewardship Campaign Planning – *We are in need of Board members to support the campaign by:*

- *Offering moments in worship on October 20 and 27, Nov 3 and 10. (The moment on the 27th will focus on planned giving – can be someone from the Board or someone who has made a planned gift or worked on that task force recently.)*
- *Making follow-up contacts in late November to regular pledgers we haven't heard from.*
- *Writing thank you notes to everyone who has pledged in November/ December.*

Offering moments should include your personal sense of what it means to financially support First Church, plus the vision for what might be done with your money.

Xan offered to share about planned giving on November 3. Paul is available on November 10. Jean and Linda are willing to share offering moments in October.

Last year, the Board didn't send thank you notes, but we will this year. Xan, Jean, and Carl are willing to write those notes. *Added on 10/17/24 as a correction to the minutes: Mary Byer is also willing to write thank you notes. KAF*

Hikaru is willing to make pledge reminders (email plus follow up calls) along with Linda and Jane.

9. Form Nominating Committee – *One or two Board members are needed in addition to Jane and Linda. See nominating process document (attached and in Dropbox) for more information about what this work entails.*

The attending Board members nominated Kris. Linda will confirm this with Kris.

10. Reports and action – Discuss only as needed:

- Treasurer and Finance Committee
- Building Committee
- Building Use Group/Flourish
- Personnel Committee
- Preservation Projects
- Principal Minister

11. Closing – Linda

Next Board meeting: Thursday, October 17, 2024, 7:00-8:30PM