

FCC Board Meeting
First Congregational Church of Minnesota, United Church of Christ
Tuesday, February 11, 8:00 – 9:00 pm

Minutes

Attendance: Mary Byers, Rob Cooper, Kris Felbeck, Jeff Peterson, Jane McBride, Linda Valerian, Paul Snyder, Xan Laurence

1. Opening – Jean Anderson
 “Roots” – a poem by Clint Smith
2. Approve minutes from January meeting (see attached, also in Dropbox).

Mary/Paul/Approved

3. Creating our Mission Statement - Following up on our 1:1 meetings.

Some have started, others not; Rob would like to talk to kids; Allegra had a good meeting with tangible info/suggestions; helpful to give interviewees questions ahead of time.

4. Report from Kris Felbeck regarding the Trust Fund and transfer to the United Church Fund

The United Church Fund is a UCC fund which manages 1150 church portfolios. The investment subcommittee investigated three possible funds and chose UCF. The size of our fund is about average for the funds they manage. There was a favorable comment on impressive rate of return. We have approximately \$550,000 invested in two mutual funds which meet our screening criteria and hold 60% stocks, 40% bonds. Each year when setting the budget 5% of the trust fund is allocated as income for operating expenses based on the balance as of September of the previous year. In the past other amounts have been withdrawn for other purposes, after a congregational vote. At times the percentage figure has also varied. The fund is largely made up of memorial gifts, although gifts may also be spent rather than being deposited.

5. Other Issues: Immigration discussion regarding ways to prepare our staff and congregation for potential encounters with ICE.

Jane is gathering information from various sources. Theoretically ICE is not supposed to enter private spaces without a warrant, but if churches put signs on buildings saying “Private” it sends the wrong message. Some considerations for further discussion:

- If ICE is in the building, what do we do?

How to be a legal witness - Record, report what happens; ask for names, organization, who are you taking; tell them to talk to the person in charge.

- Rob mentioned that his school gives people a script to follow.
- Vulnerable times: play group, Community Kitchen, Sunday service, post-service activities
- At the Second Hour on 2/9, the director of CES observed that “things are changing all the time” – a presumption of innocence is now a presumption of guilt when searching for undocumented immigrants; they are targeting young men; ICE may not even enter a building, just be standing outside waiting; Jane has information from CES about this.
- As a board we need to develop policies – find out what other churches are doing.
- Some churches offering sanctuary are removing any references to sanctuary on social media, websites, etc. – we can be surveilled.
- We should consider whether this will put someone at risk yet be careful about being paranoid – we are Amy Klobuchar’s church.
- We should stay grounded and centered.
- What are the qualities of people who stand up to oppressors? Find examples to emulate.
- How do we protect ourselves as individuals and collectively?
- Consider a spiritual response if ICE is in the building.

6. Reports and action –

Jane forwarded an email from Global Refuge requesting signatures to a letter drafted in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, supporting refugee resettlement. It is to be sent to President Trump, Secretaries Rubio and Noem, and members of Congress. Faith leaders can sign individually, and Jane has done so, but wanted the board to approve First Church’s signing on as a faith organization. Mary so moved, Jean seconded, unanimously approved.

7. Closing – Jean Anderson

“Ode to a Bear Hug” – poem by Clint Smith

Next Board meeting: Thursday, March 20, 2025, 7:00-8:30PM

Recorded by Xan Laurence