

First Congregational Church of Minnesota - Board Meeting
Thursday, January 15, 2026, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Minutes

This was a hybrid in-person and Zoom meeting. Attending in person: Jean Anderson, Rob Cooper, Joy Gullikson, Allegra Montanari, Jeff Peterson, Linda Valerian (Moderator); attending on Zoom: Kris Felbeck, Paul Snyder; Xan Laurence (Clerk), recording. Absent: Pastor Jane McBride.

6:30PM – 8:00PM:

The meeting began with a potluck, in part organized in response to Board members' expressed desire for more opportunities for social interaction and relationship-building. In light of ongoing concerns about the presence and activities of ICE in Minneapolis and other communities, people shared how they were experiencing the turmoil that has been going on, especially over the last week.

8:00PM – 8:30PM:

1. **Approved minutes from December meeting (in Dropbox).**
2. **Linda - Discussion reflecting on our mission statement** – “Cultivating a community for all to belong, rooted in Jesus’ way of love and justice”:

Recall a moment in your life when you felt you belonged—when you could exhale and just be yourself? What was it about that experience that made it possible, and that made it so meaningful?

What can we learn from these experiences as we seek to embody the mission statement of belonging within the congregation?

Board members shared experiences when they felt they belonged in an environment or situation, such as:

- being invited to participate in a group function when they were new to that group;
 - being asked to use their skills to benefit the community;
 - discovering that their work environment displayed values that they shared, which they did not expect;
 - receiving support in situations where they did not expect it;
 - receiving expressions of trust in group activities;
 - being able to share intimate details about themselves to listeners they trusted to respect their privacy;
 - experiencing religious exclusion and then the open acceptance of the UCC; and
 - knowing that First Church means it when we say that communion is open to all.
3. **1:1 Conversations with the congregation** – *A reminder about 1:1 conversations – what they are, why we do them. What did we learn from our 1:1 conversations with the congregation last year that can inform us about the importance of these connections? How should we focus*

these conversations in 2026? How does the Board envision continuing this process through the year? –

This discussion was tabled until the next Board meeting. The experiences described by Board members will inform our discussion of how we can further our mission of cultivating belonging for all. One suggestion involved exploring how we might learn from the ways UBC does its messaging to its congregation and community.

4. **Safe space for the community** – *Some of our neighbors have expressed interest in having a conversation about whether our church might serve as an emergency safe space. It's not clear what that would entail, but we want the Board to be aware of this request and would appreciate your thoughts as we consider how the church might respond.*

The Board acknowledged that this is a complex situation requiring input from the Security Task Force. Clarification is needed regarding who has the authority to open the church for this purpose and how that decision would be communicated. Due to time constraints and Pastor Jane's absence, further discussion was deferred.

5. **Assign Board members to attend ministry team meetings:**

Worship team	Jeff	February 22
Faith Formation	Paul	February 9
Hospitality & Engagement	Xan	March 12
Congregational Care	Allegra	March 2
Justice	Jean	March 3

Joint Meeting with the Justice League, Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 6:00PM-7:30PM

Next Board meeting: Thursday, February 19, 2026, 7:00-8:30PM