

First Congregational Church of Palo Alto
United Church of Christ

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

June 5, 2022

Next scheduled Congregational Meeting: September 25, 2022

Call to Order: Anne Campbell

Moderator Anne Campbell called the meeting to order around 11:15PM. Members gathered for the meeting in a hybrid format, in the social hall and remotely on Zoom. Anne encouraged patience in dealing with the format when questions are asked and answered. Anne also pointed out that members attending via Zoom could access the meeting material, including the minutes, by going to the Church website, to the *About Us* tab and then to *History and Governance*. A quorum was established. The meeting was recorded to assist the Church Clerk with writing the minutes. The recording will be removed once the minutes are completed.

Opening prayer: David Howell

Pastor David Howell offered the opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes – Anne Campbell

The minutes from April 24, 2022, were presented. There were no comments or questions.

Action: Cammy Sunde moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Debby Martin. The minutes were unanimously approved. Anne thanked Clerk Clare Warner for her work.

Stewardship Campaign Update – Bing Heckman

Bing reported that the campaign has reached 82% of its \$850k+ goal for pledges for 2022-23. The results to date are in line with the trends of the previous five years, excepting a couple of outliers. One outlier was the first year of the pandemic, when pledges were especially strong. Office manager Ritz Tetzlaff has been very helpful in putting in perspective where we stand. At six weeks out from the initiation of the campaign, we are tracking nicely with where we would expect to be. We expect to be at 90-95% of our goal by the end of August and anticipate ultimately reaching 100%. Bing thanked the Congregation for its support. Anne encouraged those who have not pledged to do so and thanked those who had. She also thanked the Stewardship Committee for their work on the campaign. (PowerPoint slide – Bing Heckman)

Approval of the 2022-23 Budget – Ben Roberts

Ben gave an overview of the Church's financial status and of the FY23 asking budget. He reminded the Congregation that the budget was considered and approved at the previous meeting as the basis for the stewardship campaign. He said that we now need to approve the budget based on staff projections of the final results of the campaign. He added that he felt it would be appropriate to go forward with the current budget. Ben said there will be another opportunity to make adjustments at the Congregational meeting in the fall.

Proposed Resolution: The 2022-23 operating as presented at the April meeting of the Congregation is hereby approved for use starting on July 1. Action: A motion to pass the resolution was made and seconded.

Discussion: A member asked how much is in the Directed Funds account and wondered if the Church would have enough to handle anything that came up. Ben answered that there is a large amount of cash available, sufficient to handle any problems that come up. *The resolution was passed with 52 members in favor (39 in person, 13 online). There was no opposition. No one abstained.* (PowerPoint slides – Ben Roberts)

Approval of Expenditure Not To Exceed \$50,000 for Church's Portion of Senior Minister Home Remodel – Cathy Gauthier

Cathy showed a slide outlining the details of a partial remodel of the Senior Minister's home in Menlo Park. The Church owns 47% of the house, so the Church needs to agree to any remodeling. A previous remodel

occurred approximately 10 years ago. The current remodel includes a list of items for which the estimated cost is approximately \$95,000. The Howells will be responsible for 53% of the expense. The Church's share will be approximately \$50k, roughly 47% of the total. The Board of Trustees is recommending approval of up to \$50k for its share. The funds will come from the Ministerial Housing Fund, which contains approximately \$600k. **Discussion:** A member asked what would happen if the estimate increased. Cathy replied that we are approving up to \$50k, which should cover things. **Proposed resolution:** *The Congregation approve an expenditure of up to \$50,000 from the Ministerial Housing Fund as its share of the partial remodel of the Sr. Minister's home.* **Action:** *A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution. 59 members total voted in favor of the resolution. No one was opposed and no one abstained. The resolution passed by unanimous vote.* Anne thanked the Congregation for voting in favor so that Dave and Kristin can move forward with the work on their home. (PowerPoint slide – Cathy Gauthier)

Discussion and Approval of Proposed Slate for 2022-23 of Church Officers, Boards, and Committees – Anne Campbell

Anne thanked the Nominating Committee for their diligence and hard work on putting together a slate. The committee members included Ariana Erickson, Mary Grundy, Gina Parks, Rob Lenicheck, and Dave Howell. Anne also helped in the effort. She gave special recognition and thanks to Karen Routt, who created a Google Doc that enables the Church to keep track of members' tenures in various positions so that we can meet the term restrictions set forth in the Church bylaws. Anne added that both the Deacons Board and the Worship Board need more members and encouraged the Congregation to think about how they might serve. **Action:** *Elizabeth Wolf moved to approve the slate. Debby Martin seconded the motion. There was a total of 57 votes in favor (44 in person, 13 online). The slate passed unanimously.*

Approval of Land Acknowledgement Statement – Marty Dreher

Marty invited those who had worked on the Land Acknowledgement project to stand with her. Maria Daehler, Steve Ketchpel, and Anne Campbell did so. The goals of the project were to *Learn, Lament and Listen*, and Marty said it had been a great opportunity to do all those things and now it is time to move forward. She presented a slide with the brief and long versions of the Land Acknowledgement Statement. **Action:** *There was a motion to approve the statements. The motion was seconded.* **Discussion:** There was a question about which version, brief or long, would be printed in the Bulletin each week. Marty said it would be up to Dave and Eileen to decide which version to use each Sunday and that the decision could vary. Another member inquired about the extent to which the statement was created in collaboration with the indigenous peoples. Marty replied that it was written and then shared with them for their input. Changes and adaptations were then made with the help of that input. *56 voted in favor (39 in person, 17 online). There was one online vote in opposition. The Land Acknowledgement Statement was approved.* Marty gave special thanks to Nancy Mayo for her work on the incredible display board. Marty said she wants all members of the Congregation to feel included and she welcomes input from everyone as the project continues to develop and move forward.

Senior Minister's Report – David Howell

Referring to a question about the house remodel, Dave added that the amount that was voted on today was so large that it required approval by the Council and the Congregation. Although they are not expected, other smaller expenditures above that amount may be approved without a vote by the Congregation. Dave proceeded to update everyone on the situation with the courtyard trees. A fire blight is killing the trees, so it is time to think about a replacement plan. There is a danger of limbs falling and causing harm to people and property. We have sought the opinions of several arborists and a group has been formed to review those opinions and consider the options. Diane Churchill and Cathy Gauthier are chairing the group, which also includes Jeff Barnett, the Terrys, and the Chows. Dave will be traveling this summer. He will take a month-long sabbatical for travel and learning. His family will join him for the trip to Europe. It is wedding season again, which has been wonderful. The Church has also had number of memorials for people who were very special members of the Congregation. Dave has been at the Church for 25 years and he acknowledged all the connections among and between Church members. They have even connected with the courtyard trees through each season. Dave expressed great joy in walking with the members and celebrating all the connections. There

have been many transformations over the past 25 years. He highlighted several around the social hall and mentioned another recent one: the Safe Parking program to allow vehicle dwellers to park at the Church. Dave offered thanks to everyone for the work we do together.

Moderator's Report – Anne Campbell

Anne thanked everyone for their support. She emphasized that the past two years have been wonderfully illuminating about everything that goes on within and around the Church. She underscored what a challenging time it had been for the Church, given the pandemic. She passed the mic to Rob Lenicheck, the new moderator, who expressed huge appreciation for Anne and for the great job she had done. The Congregation rose in applause. Alan Stivers also raised his hand to express gratitude to the AV staff for their work during the meeting, connecting everyone in person and online.

Closing prayer: Eileen Altman

Pastor Eileen Altman offered a closing prayer.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Clare Warner
Church Clerk*

Next scheduled Congregational Meeting: Sunday, September 25, after worship.