

Annual Reports



April 17, 2016

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First Congregational Church
Fall Semi-annual FCC Congregational Meeting
Sunday, November 22, 2015

A quorum was established and the meeting was convened at 11:40 am by Moderator Claudia Kniefel immediately after the worship service. Rev. George Blair gave the opening prayer.

It was announced that Jim Walker would serve as parliamentarian for the meeting.

Agenda: Louise Smith moved to approve the agenda; Judie Wolfe seconded. The **motion** passed.

Minutes: Barb Ross moved to approve the minutes of November 23, 2014; Judie Wolfe seconded. The **motion** passed. Sandy Skaggs moved to approve the minutes of the emergency meeting of November 2, 2015; Judie Wolfe seconded. The **motion** passed.

Budget: Fermen Dillon moved to approve the 2015 working budget. He thanked the membership and explained the budget and that the budget was not balanced by about \$35,000 in unfunded proposed expenses. The need for fundraisers was discussed. Claudia Kniefel discussed the Council theme for the year and a proposed motivational speaker (Ms. Rambo), which is being pursued.

Jim Walker moved that the budget be amended to include a special account to pay off the loan debt (approximately \$13,000); second by Deb Stauffer. The **motion to amend the budget passed.**

The motion to approve the budget as amended passed.

Bylaws: Kate O'Dell presented the motion to ratify the proposed FCC Bylaws amendments to take effect at the Spring Semi-annual FCC Congregational meeting on Sunday, April 17, 2016. Discussion of this motion included discussion of the proposed name changes of the boards, the need to widen our horizons that came out of the retreat, whether the music board should be combined with the deacons, the value of having the capability of members to be involved in short-term projects rather than just on 3-year board terms, the increased efficiency that the revised bylaws allow.

Jim Walker moved to amend the Stewardship Ministry section of the proposed bylaws at Section 3. A. MEMBERSHIP AND TERM to add “, who shall serve as Trustees to the church” after “The Stewardship Ministry shall consist of nine (9) active members”. The motion was seconded by Jim Munter. The **motion passed.**

A paper ballot was held on the motion to amend the bylaws. The **motion passed** (48 yes, 5 no, 1 abstain).

Nominating Committee: Jim Munter reported the following vacancies: deacons (1); membership (2), trustees (2). Verona Gentry volunteered to be on the deacons, seconded by Sharon Higgins. **Motion passed.**

Defibrillator: Jim Walker presented the trustees' proposal for the church to buy a defibrillator (AED), including the need to provide training so the church would not have liability (the volunteers are immune from federal liability). The cost is \$1440-1950, plus \$90/person for the training. A show of hands indicated sufficient people willing to be trained. Elisabeth Kachline moved that the trustees look into it and report back; second by George Blair. The **motion passed.**

Old Business: Sharon Higgins requested pledge cards to be turned in.

The Spring Semi-annual FCC Congregational Meeting will be on Sunday, April 17.

Rev. Blair gave the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 pm.

Minutes by Lynn Barber, Clerk

A Message from Rev. George

Reviewing the last five years has been a joy and a sorrow, because we have shared so much together. We have welcomed many new members, and lost quite a few more, to death, moving away, or personal issues. The congregation is, however, stronger than when I came here. That was a time of fraction, faction, and doubt, as well as hope that my ministry might begin a revitalizing period in the church.

We have performed two Christmas plays, and an original play which most participants didn't quite understand, for which I take full responsibility. AJ Languuth's book was harder to stage than I thought it would be. I thank everyone from set builders, to directors and stage manager, and of course the actors and audience for this outreach ministry.

We have a new roof, have hired a sexton, and embraced the challenges and expenses this lovely building causes us. We have also had massive outreach to grandfamilies, Interfaith Council, Bean's Café, and Kid's Kitchen. We have helped AWAIC and other community services.

I leave you in capable hands. In my nearly twenty-six years of ministry, these five have given me the most growth, learning and support. I hope that I have given that to you.

George

Annual Report

Lynn Barber, FCC Clerk

| | |
|--|-----|
| Weddings: | 2 |
| Baptisms: | 1 |
| Funerals/Memorial Services: | 1 |
| New Members: | 0 |
| Members dropped through request, follow-up and death: | 7 |
| Members as of 4/16/16: | 138 |
| Quorum for the April 17, 2016 meeting: (20% of resident members) | 28 |

Annual Report

Claudia Kniefel, Moderator

Every ending is a new beginning. And so we are on the brink of another new beginning. Last year we began to work on the goals we had come up with at our revitalization workshop led by Rev. Patti Haaheim. We have made some progress with those goals. We have updated our Bylaws with a few changes to be finalized next November, which allowed us to do a few other things. We've made our worship service more gender neutral and welcoming to all. In accordance with the Bylaws we have consolidated our boards, making them smaller with the idea that they would utilize ad hoc committees of the congregation for short term projects. Lynn Barber undertook to put together the "Getting to Know You" project where she created a directory of sorts with information on the members who participated so that we can all get to get to know each other better. We are also looking at ways to reach out to the University. Though this is not going as fast as we might like, we do have a few ideas in the works.

We have a way to go, but we are still on our way with our goals, and we don't intend to stop while the search is under way.

And speaking of the search...the Search Committee has been nominated, voted in by the congregation, and has begun work. A subcommittee is at work finding a strong interim to see us through until we find our next leader. We hope to have someone in place this summer. In the meantime, our new Worship Ministry is actively working to provide us with strong programs for each Sunday. Please let them know if you have an idea for them to consider. And the Search Committee as a whole is laying the groundwork for finding just the right person to fill our pulpit.

So far we've decided the person needs to be able to walk on water. That may prove problematic.

The work of the Search Committee must, of necessity, be strictly confidential, but as much as possible the congregation will be kept in the loop as to the progress.

For the coming year, we need to pull together and support one another. If you have an idea, please share it and help with its execution; we need some fresh thinking and continued enthusiasm.

Thank you all for you do for the church. May we continue to seek God's will in our lives and the lives of those around us.

Shalom

Life and Learning Ministry

Shellie Smith, Chair

The Sunday School has been functioning with one less teacher this year. A PF activity has been scheduled for each month and the youth are enjoying them. The activities have included movies, swimming as well as a haunted house and roller skating. This past week included a hike in Girdwood. Service projects have included Cropwalk, Cans for Elgin Jones' Kids' Kitchen, as well as the Christmas Pageant and Youth Sunday. At present the youth are actively engaged in two major projects: AKEELA House collection for April and the youth service on May 15th.

Outreach Ministry

Kathy Means, Chair

The Community and World Service Board (CAWS) was changed to Outreach Ministry at the November 2015 Semi-annual Congregational Meeting. The functions remain unchanged: 1) apportion the church's dedicated budget funds to worthy organizations or individuals; 2) be responsible for the designation of benevolence offerings and fund raising projects of the church; and 3) conduct volunteer projects for worthy projects within and outside the community. The current board members are Kathy Broome, Susan Faith, Mary Mitchell, Vivian Pike, and Kathy Means. As of this semi-annual meeting, our members will drop to four, in accordance with the revised bylaws for the Outreach Ministry.

Our Holiday special offering went to F.I.S.H. Our Easter special offering went to Beans' Café, to help with the loss of donated food due to a health incident.

Unexpended funds at the end of the year went to the Mabel T. Caverly Senior Center, to assist with their needs due to loss of funding.

The Outreach Ministry provided monetary support to the Pan-American Institute to help school a needy student, and to Elgin Jones' Kids' Kitchen. We also have an ongoing food collection for donations of canned goods to F.I.S.H.

Members of FCC sat at the Hospice of Anchorage Remembrance Tree table on Saturday, Dec. 5 at the 5th Avenue Mall to take donations and hang ornaments. It is a familiar and comforting sight to remind us that friends and family who have passed are still in our hearts. This holiday season Hospice, our neighbors in the parsonage, also asked the Church to consider sponsoring a family who is going through the loss of a loved one. It involved buying three small presents for the five children in the family. Hospice has provided a list of the ages and wish list of the children. Our church responded very generously. Santa and Mrs. Claus delivered the presents to the family riding atop a fire truck.

After a brief hiatus, the Interfaith Council revived the annual CROP Walk, which begins and ends at our church. Many FCC members participated in the walk and raised money for local and world relief. We thank you and intend to continue with this tradition.

Each month the board has provided opportunities for the congregation to engage in community service of one sort or another. During the summer, we made lunches twice for the Habitat for Humanity Global Village teams and delivered them to the job site. We also provided a "welcome dinner" for a team staying in the church. In the fall, we held a sock drive for the Brother Francis Shelter. In September and December, we hosted the Volunteers of America (VOA) brunch for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, providing a delicious meal and making crafts with the children. In January, we made "chemo caps" and scarves for cancer patients getting treatment at the local cancer centers, and made memorial baby blankets for the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at Providence Hospital. In February we coordinated with the youth group to collect and donate #10 cans of fruits and vegetables for Kids' Kitchen. In March, we held a "bean-a-fit" for Bean's Café, the local soup kitchen, selling their trademark bags of beans and collecting donations. On April 16, we are again hosting the VOA Grandfamilies brunch, and as of this writing, we are needing lots of volunteers to bring brunch foods, help set up and clean up, visit with the grandparents, and do crafts with the children. Many thanks to those who have already volunteered. During the summer we will prepare lunches for this year's Habitat for Humanity Global Village Team and deliver it to their work site.

We appreciate your participation in our church service projects and welcome your suggestions and input as to how we can help our community and world a better place. We rely on your support and participation and thank you so much for your gifts.

Worship Ministry

Jeanette Dillon, Chair

During this time of ministerial transition it falls on the Worship Ministry to step forward and make sure that our worship experience keeps its flavor! In the near term we have several exciting speakers as pulpit fills, and volunteers have stepped forward to pick of part of the load by acting as liturgists. If any of our members or friends have a story to tell or know of an excellent speaker, share that with Jeanette Dillon or Kate. The Worship Ministry is dedicated to keep our worship experience rewarding until we have a full time interim minister in place.

In addition, it falls partly on the Worship Ministry to make sure that our sick or home bound friends are not forgotten. This is a task for us all, in the absence of a minister.

The April Aires Program is developing nicely. We should have beautiful arts and crafts and a delightfully diverse program, with music and readings on April 24 at 1:30 PM. Edible crafts will be available for your enjoyment after the performance. Our church music program is moving toward an exciting climax before the Choir hangs up their robes for the summer. Nevertheless, we will still have excellent music presentations during the summer. If you have special music suggestions, please talk to Caroline Valentine or Lori Wasko. This fall, Caroline will be teaching an OLE course in beginning bell ringing, which will introduce more new people to our lovely church.

Thank you for all of the volunteers that have stepped forward over the years to help make our Worship and Music programs exciting.

Membership Board

The Membership Board has been undergoing a year of transition. We were impacted by resignations, people moving away, and people switching from one board to another, leaving us with only two members. We recognize the importance of our board to the church, however, and we look forward to planning activities that will be fun and fulfilling while hopefully helping to increase our membership. When the proposed amendments to the *FCC Bylaws* are approved, the Membership Board will merge with the Fellowship Ministry. -Carolyn Rinehart

Stewardship Ministry

Fermen Dillon, Vice Chair

Many will remember that at the end of November last year our debt was down to \$13,000. Thanks to the generosity of our church family, it will be down below \$4000 at the end of April, and it looks like we will be debt-free in the third quarter

of 2016. Thank you for your diligence in helping us achieve this important milestone.

Another task of the Stewardship Ministry has to identify a list of possible future capital projects, like painting walls and treating the woodwork in our Meeting House, and replacing floor and lights in Cary Meade Hall. We will share the list with the Church this fall with a goal of selecting priorities. The good news is that we do not have any urgent crises related to our building and grounds at this time, except for raking out and re-seeding our south lawn!

More sobering is that we are operating this year on an unbalanced budget. The budget presented in November 2015 has us using as much as \$35,000 from savings in 2016. However, due to the acceleration of our debt retirement, and possible savings in minister salary in the next few months, we may end the year using considerably less out of savings. The church has formed an ad hoc committee to look for ways that we can create a budget this fall that will balance.

Thank you all for helping us keep our building and grounds safe and beautiful, and thank you for those that have been willing to serve in the exciting work of the Stewardship Ministry!

**First Congregational Church Draft Officiary for 2016-2018
As of April 15, 2016**

Church Staff, Officers, and Chairs

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Senior Minister | Vacant | Life and Learning |
| Moderator | Claudia Kniefel | Mission and Outreach |
| Vice Moderator | Miguel DeMarzo | Worship |
| Clerk | Lynn Barber | Fellowship |
| | | Stewardship |
| NACCC Delegate | Sharon Higgins | |

Ministries

| | Term End 2018 | Term End 2017 | Youth Rep. (opt.) |
|--|---|--|-------------------|
| Life and Learning 1 st Sunday 11:45 | Julie McClure Erin Binek vacant | John Lime Marcie Errico | Ron White |
| Mission and Outreach 2 nd Sunday 12:00 | Carolyn Rinehart Kathy Broome | Mary Mitchell Kathy Means | |
| Worship 1 st Sunday 12:00 | Cathy White Sandra Skaggs Barbara Bowerman Louise Smith vacant | Susan Faith Chris Roe Darleen Lime vacant vacant | NA |
| Fellowship | Jeanette Dillon Antoinette Childress | Lynn Barber Kathy Means | |
| Stewardship 2 nd Tuesday 5:30 | Jim Walton Deb Stauffer Dennis Stauffer | Judie Wolfe Eric Johnson Jim Walker Steve McKean | NA |
| Financial Sec. Treasurer | | Sharon Higgins Fermen Dillon | |

Church Staff

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Senior Minister | Vacant | Administrative Assistant | Kate O'Dell |
| Choir Director | Lori Wasko | Sexton | Scott McClure |
| Handbell Director | Caroline Valentine | Wedding Coordinator | Barb Widtfeldt |
| Organist | Caroline Valentine | Nursery | June Skinner |
| Director of Christian Education | (Interim: Randy Tomson) | | |