



**First Church
Berkeley UCC**

Come Be a We



September 3, 2019

Dear First Church Community:

These are exciting times for our church community, and there is so much for which we can be grateful! Following a robust visioning process in the spring followed by several dynamic Samoan Circle conversations this summer, in the coming weeks our congregation will have an opportunity to vote on a vision statement that reflects both the church we are today and that we hope to grow into during the next 3-5 years.

Now that the church has obtained a settlement for its fire-related insurance claim, the Blue Fire Committee and architects are moving forward with developing plans for the rebuilding of Pilgrim Hall which they hope to share with the congregation in early fall.

In the meantime, the everyday work and play of the church continues, undaunted by the fire and its aftermath. We have continued to build deeper connections with each other and live out our faith in myriad ways. Here's a quick look back at our year so far:

- ❖ Worshiping and praying together – on Sunday mornings, at our Summer Taizé Services, or through Young Adult Open Chapel
- ❖ Raising between \$3-\$4k each month via the offering plate for our local and global justice partners
- ❖ Enjoying delicious home-made soups and communing at our post-worship “after parties”
- ❖ Adding outdoor “core values” banners and our “Come Be a We” installation so that people outside the church can see who we are—and see themselves among us
- ❖ Parading and being huggers at SF Pride and the Trans March
- ❖ Welcoming and feeding our neighbors at Berkeley Sunday Streets, on Cal Move-In Day, and monthly through the Second Sunday Sandwiches
- ❖ Resisting oppression through public advocacy and action on social justice issues like affordable housing and homelessness, immigration justice, food security, and climate change
- ❖ Practicing mindful self-compassion and learning nonviolent communication
- ❖ Making music together – whether through the church choir, singing on Sundays, playing handbells, and strumming ukes!
- ❖ Delving deep into scripture through weekly Progressive Christian Bible Study and Monday night Queer Bible Study
- ❖ Getting to know one another better through one of the many Summer Small Groups
- ❖ Serving on one of the church's ministries, or joining a ministry team such as the Sanctuary Team, Green Team or Mental Health Ministry
- ❖ Voting to become a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged (WISE) Congregation for Mental Health

- ❖ Celebrating the seasons of the Christian year – donning a sheep or shepherd costume for the Christmas Eve pageant, eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras, waving palms on Palm Sunday
- ❖ Getting ready to relax and take in the beautiful stars for our gazillionth All-Church Retreat in Cazadero!

In small ways and life-altering ways, our church makes our lives better and richer – and seeks to make the world a better place through our moral action and generosity.

How has First Church changed – or saved – your life? How is it still providing you with the people, the purpose, the means to make life better for yourself, your family and others?

We (the Stewardship Subcommittee of the Ministry of Stewardship, Finance and Administration) invite you to prayerfully consider how First Church Berkeley has impacted your life, and to make a ongoing sustained gift to First Church Berkeley so that our church may continue to be a place where God is alive and at work in the world.

You are invited to fill out the enclosed card and bring it to worship on Fall Festival Sunday, September 22, as a mark of your willingness to be counted, and be counted upon, in this community.

If you have been a sustained giver to First Church Berkeley, we want to say THANK YOU for your generosity and commitment in keeping our church vital and vibrant. If you have not given previously, we hope that you will consider a regular commitment to First Church Berkeley *in any amount* to express the importance of this faith community in your life.

There are 3 primary ways you can give, detailed on the enclosed sheet: 1) via our church database REALM (preferred); 2) through checks/stock donations; and 3) newest option: via PayPal. See “Ways to Become a Sustained Giver” enclosure with this letter.

With great gratitude for you and holy love for the “We” we are,

Amy Hiestand, Pam VandeKamp, Carmelle Knudsen, and Rev. Molly Baskette
Members of the SF&A Stewardship Subcommittee

P.S. If you have any questions whatsoever about First Church’s stewardship and sustained giving program and goals, or would like to have a confidential, non-judgmental conversation about money and giving, do not hesitate to contact Reverend Molly Baskette at reverendmolly@gmail.com or (617) 462-7475 or Business Manager Kit Dunbar at kdunbar@fccb.org or (510) 225-6814.

Enclosures:

- ❖ Commitment Card
- ❖ Ways to Become a Sustaining Giver to First Church Berkeley
- ❖ REALM Instructions