



**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 at our 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 an ongoing sustaining 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 sustaining 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 Sustaining 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 sustaining 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



Thank you for prayerfully considering how First Church Berkeley has impacted your life, and for your willingness to make a sustaining gift so that our church may continue to be a place where God is alive and at work in the world.

[Here are the ways that you can become a Sustaining Giver to First Church Berkeley](#)

CONTINUE YOUR SUSTAINED ON-LINE GIVING THROUGH REALM OR BECOME A NEW SUSTAINING GIVER THROUGH REALM:

This year, we hope to continue the trend begun in 2018 towards a “sustained giving” model using our church database, REALM at www.onrealm.org. Out of our current 167 “pledgers,” 101 are already using the REALM system to enable automatic withdrawal from their checking account, credit or debit cards for their pledged amount. **Thank you, REALM users!** The use of REALM allows for better cash flow through the year to help pay our staff and bills, and it may also help you avoid end-of-year “oops” moments playing catchup with your pledge. You can make changes at any time to your giving level: increasing your gift as an act of growing faith, gratitude or excitement, decreasing your giving if you leave the church or if your financial circumstances change. We hope to increase the number of pledgers using REALM by 20%, to continue our church’s transition to this form of regular, sustained giving. The advantage to this method for you is that you can choose to give weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or annually.



- **REALM Instructions are included with this letter, tailored for new users as well as existing users. Even if you are an existing user of REALM for on-line giving, we do ask that you update your information for 2020 as outlined in the instructions.**
- **REALM Trainings will be offered after the worship services on September 22nd and 29th in the Hall of Entrance.** Trainers Louise Halsey, Kit Dunbar, and Amy Hiestand will have laptops available and can help you set up your account or trouble-shoot any issues you might be having with the system. For existing users, please bring your log in credentials (user email and password).

PROVIDE YOUR SUSTAINING GIFT THROUGH REGULAR WORSHIP OFFERING AND/OR THROUGH THE MAIL:

We recognize that REALM may not be for everyone, and we don’t want to discourage you from making a financial commitment to First Church Berkeley. You can make your sustaining gift (whether weekly, monthly, or through an annual or one-time gift) by providing a check through either the weekly offering collection or simply by mailing your check to the church office. Giving envelopes will be available in the pews beginning in September 2019.

Mail Checks (with “Sustaining Gift” noted in the memo line) to:

First Church Berkeley
2345 Channing Way
Berkeley, CA 94704
Attn: Business Manager

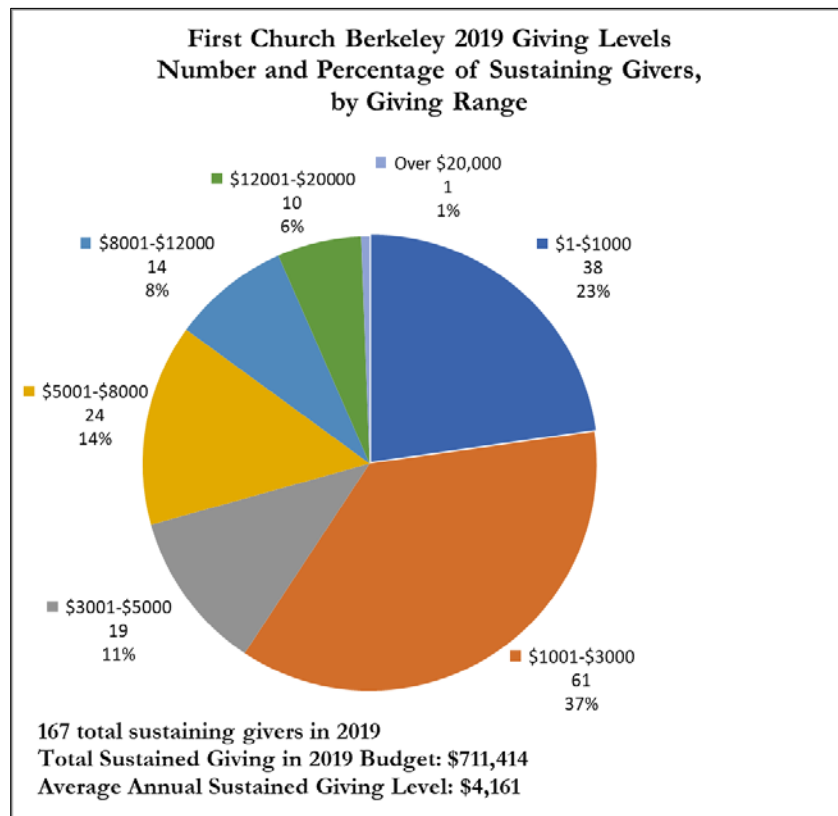
You can also make financial gifts to First Church Berkeley through a gift of stock. Please contact Business Manager Kit Dunbar for more information on this process.

PROVIDE YOUR SUSTAINING GIFT THROUGH PAYPAL:

Another easy way to give to First Church Berkeley is through PayPal. Open your PayPal app on your mobile device or computer at www.paypal.com. Click the “Send” button. Enter giving@fccb.org in the email line. Type “Sustaining Gift” in the note area.

Sustained Giving at First Church Berkeley – By the Numbers:

Sometimes understanding how our sustained giving fits into overall church averages can help in our spiritual giving discernment process! Please know that each and every person’s sustaining gift is an invaluable component of First Church Berkeley’s ability to be a place where God is alive and at work in the world. The chart below shows representative giving level ranges for the 167 sustaining givers who are giving in 2019.



Questions? We're here to help!

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