



First Church Berkeley
United Church of Christ

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

Presented at
Annual Meeting
Sun., February 2, 2020





All-Church Retreat at Cazadero

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Moderator

LEONARD ASH

At the 2019 Annual Meeting, I challenged our congregation to use this year to move “Beyond Our Walls,” those barriers that prevent us from being Christ to others — the neighbors down the pew or in our wider community. I felt that challenge this year, as the church deliberated our near-term priorities and adjusted to the financial reality of our



Leonard Ash

long-term rebuilding prospects. This year our church created, debated, and affirmed a Vision Statement to articulate what we value, who we are to be, and what we are to prioritize in the next 3 to 5 years. Soon after, we learned that we would need to recalibrate our ideas of rebuilding Pilgrim Hall and re-commissioned our Blue Fire team to reimagine how our campus can serve our long-term mission, aligned with our guiding principles. As a congregation, we had several opportunities in 2019 to communicate compassionately, disagree respectfully, and articulate our personal feelings and the deep needs behind those feelings. We tried a new approach by holding several “intentional listening circles” to foster

depolarizing dialogue. Rev. Molly Baskette, Moderator Elect Julie Greer, Conference Minister Rev. Diane Weible, and I attended mediation skills training to help us better facilitate those discussions. I saw miraculous, transformative work take place during those listening circles, and I am encouraged that our congregation will continue to foster greater compassion and connection in our community. In addition to the regular order of business before us, Church Council approved updates to the Emergency Procedures Manual, blessed Rev. Phil Porter into his retirement, oversaw the conclusion of multiple fire-related issues, endorsed the EveryOne Home plan to end homelessness, and contemplated creative ideas for financial stewardship. Since the congregation approved the Vision & Mission statement on September 8, Council has been imagining concrete implementation actions, and I am excited to see how we can live into that vision. I am extremely grateful for the congregation’s support and prayers this past year, for the leadership of Moderator Elect Julie Greer, as well as for each of our Council members, as we transformed our meetings from routine to sacred, a space to “grow in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ.”

Moderator Elect

JULIE GREER

As Moderator Elect, I got to shadow our hard-working, brilliant Moderator Leonard Ash and learn some of what goes into being Moderator. His shoes will be hard to fill!

Over the year we tapped the resources of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, which for nearly 40 years has worked with denominations across the US providing trainings and resources on social justice issues, healthy congregations, and conflict resolution. They helped us through

the process of developing our Vision Statement for the next 3 to 5 years and provided the blueprint for the Listening Circles that have become a gentle and powerful tool to allow us to grow in connection as



Julie wearing her church hat

a church family. I look forward to more Listening Circles!

In June we rode in the Pride Parades wearing the playful (and impressive!) hats created by Becky Wright. Our youth danced the parade route handing out hugs, and I heard from folks deeply touched to see a Christian church professing the truth that ALL of us are beloved children of God.

In the fall I (as well as Leonard, Molly, and others) attended intensive mediation trainings provided by the Lombard Center. In my job as a lawyer, “mediation” has usually meant reaching a compromise that the parties, at best, can hold their noses and live with. The kind of mediation we

learned at the Lombard Center training is entirely different: it is about creating a space to allow God to touch hearts and truly heal and deepen relationships. Beautiful!

I was also privileged to attend our Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ (NCNCUCC) Annual Gathering, where our Mental Health Ministry team led by Robin Kempster presented a resolution, adopted by the Conference, to become a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive & Engaged (WISE) Conference for Mental Health. Deep gratitude to Robin, the Mental Health Ministry Team, and our UCC delegates for making this happen!

Clerk

JANET MCDONALD

The clerk of the church is responsible for keeping the records of church business and taking minutes at Council and Congregational meetings. Here are some highlights of those meetings:

After a 6-month process of congregational involvement, the following vision statement was approved at a Congregational meeting on September 8 to guide us for the next 3 to 5 years.

God calls us to:

- Grow in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ
- Provide a diversity of open but distinctly Christian, creative and liberating worship forms to nourish the spiritual lives of the current community and reach new seekers
- Follow Jesus’s urging to minister to the “least of these” [Matthew 25] by addressing our region’s most visible and urgent human needs: ending homelessness in the East Bay and its intersecting justice issues

Here is the “elaboration” of the statement, which although not voted on, provides additional information:

Grow in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ

First Church fosters extravagant welcome, connection/community, and compassion. We are called

to grow in love with one another, a foundation for living out the teachings of Jesus in the wider world. To do so, we will facilitate small groups, intergenerational engagement, and community spiritual practices that will bond and bind us together.

Provide a diversity of open but distinctly Christian, creative and liberating worship forms to nourish the spiritual lives of the current community and reach new seekers

Less than 3% of Berkeley identifies as main-line Protestant. That leaves many folks unaware of or uninitiated into the richness of our progressive Christian faith. The UCC Constitution affirms “the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship.” We will experiment with new forms of worship to go deeper on our own spiritual journeys, attract newcomers who may have been hurt or excluded by other Christian churches, and pique the interest of those who have never considered Christianity a viable option. The worship experiments may include, but not be limited to:

- worship days and times outside of Sunday morning
- virtual/digital worship and spiritual formation
- lay-led and participatory worship experiences

- outdoor worship
- services geared toward multiple generations/learning styles
- contemplative worship
- cross-cultural worship
- spiritual formation on retreat

Follow Jesus’s urging to minister to the “least of these” (Matthew 25) by addressing our region’s most visible and urgent human needs: ending homelessness in the East Bay and its intersecting justice issues

The suffering of homeless people is evident on our streets every day. Countless more suffer housing insecurity in less visible ways. We are moved

by the teachings of Jesus to respond with love, compassion, and generosity. We will join with the wider community (faith communities, non-profit organizations, and government agencies) to educate, advocate, and take action to prevent homelessness, to reduce the suffering it causes, and to restore individuals and families to safe, permanent, dignified shelter.

At its September 24 meeting, the Church Council approved endorsement of the EveryOne Home Plan to End Homelessness: 2018 Strategic Update. More information about the plan can be found at <http://everyonehome.org/about/the-plan/>.

Christmastime at First Church



Membership Report

Members Received 2019

Associate Member

Rebecca Clayton
Sophia DeWitt

Letter of Transfer

Emily Carduff

Reaffirmation

Eji Atlaw
David Beausoleil
Felicia Bellows
Chelsea Boyle
Jose Estrada
Susan Greef
Dane P. Isaac
Maureen Prochaska
Paul Sterzing
Ryan Walls

Reinstatement

Margie Allen
Sharon Mathews

Child Baptism

Diego Lawrence
S twins

Members Lost 2019

Associate Member Dropped

Stella Sun

Became Inactive

Aimee Giles
Joe Hesse
Alan Jones
Linda Jones
Doug Lawrence
Tanya Mancheno Lawrence
Anna Lund
Isa Philip
Victoria Purcell-Gates
Tim Sweetser

Friend or Associate Member

Dropped

Mark Peterson
Rebecca Suzanne
Caroline Van Zeijts
Mary Woolsey

Joined Another Church

Mary & Perry Hvistendahl

Requested Inactive Status

Alison Beck

Transfer of Membership

Jorge Bautista
Elizabeth Chandler Felts
Lacey Hunter

Withdrew at Their Own Request

Rachel Sing
Adilu Sing-Eisen
Patima Sing-Eisen

In Memoriam

Margie Coates (12/29/2019)
Phyllis Holmes (9/4/2019)
Cordelia Jacobs (2/23/2019)
Kenneth Leitch (11/07/2019)

Six-Year Membership Report

GAINS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
By Baptism/Confession	0	1	4	1	2	0
By Confirmation	0	3	0	0	7	0
By Affirmation/Reaffirmation of Faith	8	9	9	10	9	10
By Letter of Transfer	11	7	15	4	9	1
By Reinstatement	0	0	0	0	2	2
Assoc. or Friend to Full Membership	0	1	0	0	1	0
Friend	0	0	2	1	0	0
Voted in by CF&I	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	19	21	30	16	29	13
Associate Member Received	1	1	3	4	1	2
Total Gains	20	22	33	20	31	15
LOSSES						
By Death	-7	-7	-12	-5	-6	-4
By Letter of Transfer	-5	-5	-3	-6	-4	-3
Joined Other Church/Withdrew at Own Request/Requested Inactive Status	-4	-1	-1	-5	-3	-6
Placed on Inactive	-4	-1	-15	-35	-9	-10
Membership Withdrawn	-3	-1	0	0	0	0
Associate Member or Friend Dropped	0	-2	-1	-3	0	-5
Total Losses	-23	-17	-32	-54	-22	-28
Audit Correction	0	0	-60	0	0	0
Net Gain/Loss	-3	5	1	-34	9	-13
Membership at Year End	491	496	435	401	410	397
Average Weekly Attendance by Month						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
January	207	241	216	168	205	155
February	224	250	259	176	197	181
March	253	267	302	193	228	170
April	342	374	180	227	242	338
May	228	185	265	191	191	164
June	183	134	165	195	149	151
July	165	217	167	178	156	157
August	172	174	195	166	144	147
September	222	186	205	185	174	153
October	242	221	256	234	170	145
November	268	269	213	187	184	162
December	349	337	340	333	361	340

Adult Education Ministry

JUDY HUSTON, CHAIR

In 2019 the Adult Education Ministry (Adult Ed) continued to evolve into being a platform for supporting learning opportunities that arise from within and beyond our community as we collaborate with church ministries, teams, and staff. We began the year with a survey of members preferences for learning-hour ideas. Most programs took place following the After (worship) Party and included a wide variety of topics including: affordable housing, accompanying the dying, racial justice, health care, environmental justice, anxiety, economic inequality, improvisation for everyday life relationships, *The Color of Law* book study, compassionate communication, family mediation, trans immigrant caravan experience, white privilege in progressive churches, gun violence, and

more. Some of these were multi-part programs. A number of learning-hour opportunities were devoted to building church community and visioning for the coming immediate years, including preparing for the rebuilding of Pilgrim Hall. Adult Ed also supported and sponsored program series offered at other times such as Mindful Self-Compassion (Nancy DeNero), Soul of Aging (Stephen Winton-Henry and Judy Huston), and Build Your Own Theology (Christina Hutchins).

Members of the Adult Education Ministry were: Jim Alnas-Benson, Bill Coffin, Linda Elsdon, Judy Huston, Christina Hutchins, and Barbara McHugh. We gratefully welcomed Ron Elsdon, Reuben Shank, and Jesse Lofland.

Care, Fellowship & Invitation Ministry

SARA WOODS, CHAIR

The Ministry of Care, Fellowship, and Invitation (CF&I) provides ministry to promote a welcoming and inviting presence for all who cross the threshold of our church, and to provide acts of hospitality and care for the First Church community and beyond.

Each Sunday, CF&I members staff the Welcome Table. We provide friendly and appreciative welcome, answers to questions, and distribute materials to enhance spiritual growth and belonging at First Church through welcome bags, announcements, Bibles, and seasonal materials. With the help of all Ministry leaders and members, CF&I coordinates, recruits, and supports greeters from the entire church to offer welcome before worship, so that everyone is greeted with joy as they arrive. The vision for greeting at First Church is that all members of our community have the opportunity to represent the hospitality that we are called to as Christians, and would like to thank all the individuals and groups who greeted this year. We invite you to volunteer again

this year, and we invite anyone who has not yet had the opportunity to reach out to CF&I and volunteer. Come Be a We!

CF&I spent a day in a Vision Retreat as a ministry in July, to connect as a team, share our hopes and challenges in our ministry work, and set goals that align with the spiritual pillars of the ministry and the church's greater Vision Statement.

Hospitality and fellowship are a focus of CF&I. During this past year, we coordinated cookies, a chocolate fountain, and a festive mocktail cart for the Easter celebration: ice cream for the Fall Festival, and a reception after each Christmas Eve service that matched the needs and tone of the Family Service, the Outdoor Service, and the Candlelight Service. To assist in the preparation of a grand Cookie Party for the Candlelight Service, CF&I coordinated and hosted a Cookie Baking Party in Durant House where a small and intergenerational group grew in intimacy while using their creativity to lovingly prepare confections for our church family and guests on Christ-

mas Eve. CF&I also hosted the popular and fun-loving summer event for the second year, the Chili Cook-Off and Hootenanny, and maintained this as an annual event.

Every Sunday, CF&I coordinates with a dedicated and generous team of Soup Makers from the church community who provide homemade soup for the After Party so that the congregation has a warm and healthy option available. CF&I

also coordinated meal trains for several members of the church who needed support this past year.

The efforts and dedication of the team members of the ministry made the events and activities this past year both positive and possible. Thanks to members Diana Graham, Bree Elle Gardner, Helen Walsh, Susan Greef, Andrew Young, and Pat Pratt and staff members, Kit Novotny and Kathy Helliesen.

Families, Children & Youth Ministry

JEANNE STRAUSS, CHAIR

This year, the Families, Children, and Youth Ministry (FamChY) continued to focus on three priorities: spiritual formation, sustainable families, and spiritual activism. We are grateful to our wonderful staff liaison, Carolyn Ash, Families' and Children's Program Director, for her warm presence and creative guidance in all areas. We were also blessed by collaboration with Trust Hilton, Director of Youth Ministries, as they continued building the youth mentorship program and included FamChY members at youth mentor meetings. FamChY members and youth participated in the interview process for our new Director of Youth Ministries, Sara Fread, whom we were excited to welcome on board in August.

Along with supporting Sunday School, YES, and Winthrop, our spiritual formation focus was in evidence during first Sunday all-ages worship services and at special events throughout the year, for which we provided assistance in many forms. These included the Epiphany Pageant, Mardi Gras Pancake Dinner, Palm Sunday Parade, Jesus Christ Super Singalong, Easter Eggstravaganza, All Church Retreat at Camp Cazadero, Fall Festival, Blessing of the Animals,

Dia de los Muertos Celebration, Advent Craft Workshop, and Christmas Eve Family Service.

In the area of sustainable families, we've held monthly Parent Circle gatherings, a drop-in support group facilitated by licensed therapists. This is one way of growing in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ, per our First Church Vision Statement. Kids' Night In gives parents an evening off while children build their connections with each other, supervised by familiar adults and youth who have been screened per our Children and Youth Protection Policy.

Among our spiritual activism activities this year were a shoreline cleanup for MLK Jr. Day of Service, assembling hygiene kits for Church World Service, planting trees with Urban Releaf, and participating in the Oakland Women's March, SF Trans March, SF and Oakland Pride Parades, and the CROP Hunger Walk.

Many thanks go to our FamChY ministry members: Rick Ayer, Bruce Chamberlain, Niema Durham, Melinda Glines, Kate Lucchese, Julia Madore, Paula Poremba, Katie Sparks, Jeanne Strauss, and Becky Wright.

Justice & Service Ministry

PHIL ADAMS, CHAIR

The Justice and Service Ministry continued to use the weekly collection plate as our income source to fund worthy organizations. The funded organizations were encouraged to provide speakers who talked during the invitation for offering.

Justice and Service continued to support the following Ministry Teams: Green, Diversity, Kitchen, Sanctuary, and Mental Health Ministry Teams.

Among other activities, Justice and Service also supported the annual Rebuilding Together effort, the Youth Spirit Artworks effort to build modular homes, collected food weekly for the Berkeley Food Pantry, helped provide volunteers for Save the Bay and Urban Releaf, and helped a number of organizations we support present information at the Service and Worship Weekend.

Justice & Service Account Summary

BENEVOLENCES IN 2019

Special Offerings

	Amount
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$1968
Neighbors in Need	\$1682
Total	\$3,650

Grants given in 2019

(funds from 2019 Christmas & 2019 Easter offerings are also listed)

Collection Plate		Amount
January	Water for South Sudan	\$2931
February 3	Twice Loved	\$1225
February 3,10,17	East Bay Sanctuary Covenant	\$1896
March 3,10,17,24	Urban Releaf	\$3183
April 7,14	Save the Bay	\$2681
Easter (April 21)	Rebuilding Together	\$1500
	What If	\$1500
	Ethiopian Village School Fund	\$4395
April 28	Innocence Project	\$1202
May 5, 12	Mental Health Network	\$1114
May 19,26	Campership Fund	\$1206
June 2,9	Pastoral Emergency Fund	\$1901
June 16	Ministerio Latino	\$916
June 23,30	Pacific Center	\$1753
July	YEAH	\$2997
August	BOSS	\$2755
September 1,8,15,22	Berkeley Food and Housing	\$2526
September 29	350.org	\$555
October	Youth Spirit Artworks	\$2492
November 3,17,24	Covenant House	\$2530
December 1,17,24	Common Hope	\$3593
Christmas	Berkeley Food Pantry	\$3391
	Casa Hogar San Jose	\$3391
	Inter Mov for Human Integrity	\$3391
December 29	Pastoral Emergency Fund	\$797
Total		\$55,820

Justice & Service Account Summary (cont.)

BENEVOLENCES IN 2019

Additional Offerings

	Amount
Berkeley Food Pantry (Chili Cookbook sales)	\$305
Bay Association (Phil's Ordination)	\$918
Mindful Self Compassion	\$2575
Puente Backpacks	\$297
Welcome Home Baskets	\$1378
Christmas Eve Stockings	\$195
Homeless Encampments	\$1200
2nd Sunday Sandwiches	\$85
CWS Hygiene Kits	\$774
YSA Tiny House Build	\$641
Total	\$8,368

Budgeted Benevolence 2019

	Amount
UCC: Our Church's Wider Mission	\$68,753
Pacific School of Religion	\$3000
UCC: New Church Starts	\$1000
UCC: Strengthen the Church	\$500
UCC: Christmas Fund	\$500
Total	\$73,573
GRAND TOTAL	\$141,412

All-Church Retreat at Camp Cazadero



Mental Health Ministry

ROBIN KEMPSTER, PARISH NURSE

The Mental Health Ministry has had a busy year in 2019. We built on activities of the past two years to educate and involve the congregation around issues of mental health, culminating in the congregation's vote at the Annual Meeting in February to become a **Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged (WISE) Congregation for Mental Health**.

This was followed by involvement in the UCC Mental Health Network's WISE Conference, co-sponsored by City of Refuge (Oakland), Pacific School of Religion, and First Church Berkeley, which was held in March, spreading the message of WISE to many local churches.

In June, First Church members attended the NCNC Annual Gathering where a proposal to have the NCNC become a "WISE UCC Conference" was presented and voted upon. The NCNC voted unanimously to become a WISE UCC Conference, the second Conference to become WISE.

On the local church level, the Mental Health Ministry provides:

- Companionship Team, fostering connections that are rooted in our natural capacities as human beings to be compassionate and concerned. Companions offer the five basic spiritual practices of hospitality, neighboring, sharing the journey side-by-side, listening, and accompaniment.
- Spiritual Support Group which provides a supportive space to share our personal stories.
- Mental Health Ministry Forums
 - Emotional Support Animals
 - The Spiritual Gift of Anxiety (in two sessions)
 - Two reviews of sermons on mental health
 - Mindful Self-Compassion
 - Compassionate Communication

All the activities and enthusiasm for our Mental Health Ministry would not have been possible without the active engagement of our church community and our clergy.



First Church becomes a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged (WISE) Congregation for Mental Health

Stewardship, Finance & Administration

AMY HIESTAND AND NICK KUKULAN, CO-CHAIRS

Our Ministry group formed an excellent team this year to take on the many activities of SFA. Great thanks go to Kit Dunbar, Moe Wright, and Molly Baskette for all the great cooperation, guidance and communication. Also, thanks to Bruce McNaught for coordination of campus projects and maintenance and to Amare and Berhane Gebreyesus for their constant care of the facility and activities.

Stewardship

The “Come Be a We” campaign kicked off in August with the intention of encouraging and building sustained giving, which provides stability and predictability to the church budget. Thanks go to all members and friends of First Church whose financial support continues the magic of our mission and ministry that is a dynamic and living force in our world.

SFA took up the challenge of contacting, encouraging, and thanking fellow members to join the campaign. SFA will continue to build on this effort on a year-round basis to build sustained giving and growth of our membership.

Finance

SFA members carefully tracked the monthly financial statements with the budget, lending support and encouragement to adjustments that could be considered during the year. For 2019, we budgeted for a modest deficit, but, with thanks to year-end extra gifts, it appears that 2019 will have a modest surplus that will help the 2020 budget outlook.

A sub-committee of SFA also spent several months in the fall working with Kit, Molly and Moe on the 2020 budget. There is a constant effort to carefully evaluate our expenses to make

sure they are realistic and economical. SFA then approves and recommends the budget to Council, and in turn the Congregation reviews and approves the budget in January.

Administration

Buildings and Grounds falls under this category of SFA. We start out the year listing current and prospective projects on the campus, many of these are in process for several years. SFA members assist with moving these projects along to completion. This year, notable activities were/are:

- Decorative panels at the corner of Dana and Channing were installed, helping to brighten up the fire eyesore with a positive message to the wider community.
- The entrance sign to the left of the main entrance went through an extended approval process with the City of Berkeley. This will be an attractive sign to welcome guests, and it will be backlit at night. Expect to see the sign in the coming months.
- The Dana St. strip next to the lawn is moving forward in small steps. The chalkboard sign is up. We anticipate planting two large size trees in the coming months. Later, bricks and benches will follow to complete the project.

In addition to these projects, SFA members worked with church staff to organize service-work days to help with the cleaning, landscaping and maintenance of the campus.

Members: Pam VandeKamp, Michele McGeoy, Tim Specht, Mollyanne Brewer, Joe Vega, Charles Taylor

Treasurer: Moe Wright

Staff: Kit Dunbar and Molly Baskette

Worship & Spiritual Life

ALAN MILLER, CHAIR

The Worship & Spiritual Life (W&SL) ministry, also known as the deacons, assists in maintaining the Church's openness to God's spirit, seeking new ways of seeing and doing things.

A highlight of our monthly meetings is when we go around the circle and share what's going on in our lives and the joys and concerns on our hearts. This intimacy has helped us to become an encouraging and supportive team.

As deacons, we prepare and serve full communion on the first Sunday of every month. We continue to be grateful to Bree Elle Gardner for providing our delicious and very popular bread! And this year, for those who need it, we began providing gluten-free bread instead of rice crackers.

We also prepare chancel communion, which is served after worship every week, except the first Sunday of the month. First Church is blessed to have many ordained UCC ministers who volunteer as officiants for chancel communion. This year we took on the additional responsibility of scheduling the officiants.

"Operation Love Notes" (OLN) is an important and long-standing project we took on this year as well. OLN is a quarterly event that invites members to send out love and encouragement to those in our congregation dealing with life issues. Over the years, OLN has proven to be an important way to maintain that all-important connection we all need, benefiting both the recipient and the sender.

The deacons also assist the ministers at the memorial services of members who have passed. We view this as a solemn and reverent responsibility and are honored to be included.

The members of W&SL are Alan Miller (chair), Loi Almeron, Stan Boghosian, Nancy DeNero, Barbara Grady-Ayer, Craig Pratt, and Steve Spielman. Molly Baskette serves as our staff liaison.



New confirmands

Blue Fire Committee

SCOTT SPORTE, CHAIR

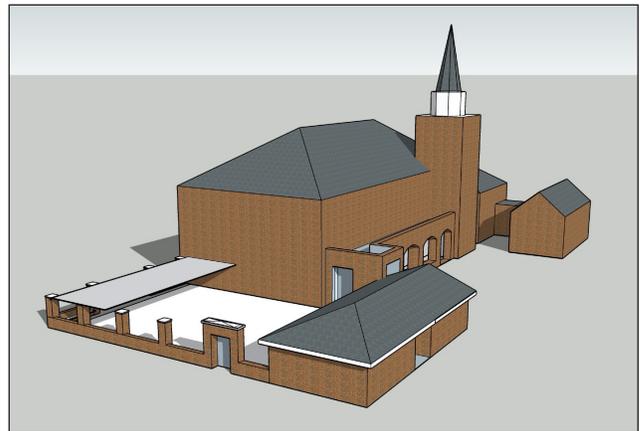
First Church's disputed insurance claim for the fire of September 2016 was finally settled during 2019. In June, an independent Appraisal (arbitration) Panel ruled that our insurers had undervalued our building loss. Altogether, including the initial undisputed insurance payments and the recoveries as a result of the Appraisal process and negotiations afterward, the church has received a total of \$15.5 million from our insurers. Some of this has already been spent on site stabilization and mitigation of Pilgrim Hall, restoration of the Sanctuary, extra expenses necessitated by the fire, and replacement of lost income. The balance, about \$10 million, is the amount currently available for rebuilding.

One more potential source of financial recovery remains. In September the church filed a complaint against the roofers responsible for starting the fire, for payment of losses that were not covered by our insurance proceeds. The roofers have \$1 million of liability insurance coverage, but because other parties are claiming losses against them, the church's potential recovery is likely to be less than a million. Our case remains pending as of this writing.

The Blue Fire Committee worked in parallel with this settlement process, asking our architects to develop drawings for the reconstruction of Pilgrim Hall. Unfortunately, multiple construction cost estimates placed the replacement of Pilgrim

out of our reach, and Blue Fire concluded late in 2019 that we needed to evaluate other options to replace some of the space (such as Large Assembly, offices, and other church uses) in other ways. The committee ended 2019 working on different options and evaluating costs and tradeoffs for each, with the plan to present a final scenario to the congregation in May 2020. Although the conclusion that we cannot afford to rebuild Pilgrim Hall as it used to be was a setback, Blue Fire is excited about options that will position First Church for progressive ministry and community engagement in the 21st century.

The Blue Fire Committee members are: Leonard Ash, Roger Bash, Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Kara Korbel-Chinula, Lorenzo Llanillo, Scott Sporte, Moe Wright, & Molly Baskette



One of several rebuild concepts

Covenant & Discernment Committee

ROD MACKENZIE, CHAIR

The Covenant and Discernment Committee is under the umbrella of the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Life. Our primary task is to support and oversee members who are seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ (UCC). Our members-in-discernment participate in a wide variety of congregational experiences and are given an FCCB member to be their sponsor. We support them during their process of discernment as they seek ordination and their call to ministry.

Our current members-in-discernment are Joe Livingston, Jr., Lauren Jewett, and Trust Hilton.

FCCB also forms and maintains three and four-way covenants with FCCB members who are currently ordained ministers in the UCC and are called to positions other than parish ministries. The partners in a three-way covenant are the ordained person, the local church, and the Bay Association of the UCC. Four-way covenants include a calling body, usually the person's employer.

Judy Huston is in a three-way covenant with us. Those in a four-way covenant are: Robert Russell, Founder/Director of the Center for

Theology and Natural Sciences, now a program of the Graduate Theological Union; Amy Smith, hospice chaplain with VITAS Innovative Hospice; Diane Weible, Conference Minister of the Northern California Nevada Conference of the UCC; and Lacey Hunter, pastor at St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley.

Highlights of the year included Ecclesiastical Councils for both Phil Porter and Kelly Colwell with unanimous support for ordination pending call. We celebrated Phil's ordination in our Sanctuary on April 14 and will celebrate Kelly's ordination in the Sanctuary on Feb. 22, 2020.

Our committee plans to meet with all members in covenant with FCCB at least twice a year and we are currently looking at ways to increase their involvement/connection with the FCCB community and ways we can be more supportive of them in their respective ministries.

Members this year were Rod MacKenzie, Kit Dunbar, Stephen Winton-Henry, and Carmelle Knudsen. Molly Baskette and Kit Novotny both served as ministerial staff representatives. We are currently seeking new members.

Investment & Endowment Committees

NICK KUKULAN, CHAIR

Thanks to the generous gifts of FCCB members over the years, we have endowment funds that provide support for our annual budget, maintenance of our church plant, and support of specific ministries to which endowment funds were specified. Gifts to the endowment are greatly appreciated and welcomed.

Our endowment investments continue with the United Church Funds. Our investment objectives have not changed for the past few years:

- To maintain an asset allocation of 65% in equity funds and 35% in bond funds. This provides diversification and stability through the ups and downs of markets
- To re-balance the funds to maintain this asset allocation on a quarterly basis

- Invest on socially responsible principles established by the United Church Funds

The 2019 equities markets had a very strong year. Bonds were mixed with interest rates cycling up and down.

The General Endowment was up 15.24% with 12/31/2019 value of \$2,821,442. An increase of \$373,061 after the annual 5% draw of \$85,000.

The Housing Endowment was up 20.99% with 12/31/2019 value of \$565,638. An increase of \$98,121. No draw is taken from the Housing Endowment fund.

To put the Combined Endowment Funds values in perspective:

12/31/2019: \$3,387,080

12/31/2018: \$2,915,898

12/31/2017: \$2,952,314

Members of the committee for 2019:
Nathan Hood and Bob Helliesen.

Committee of Involvement

JANET MCDONALD, CHAIR

The Committee of Involvement (COI) has responsibility for nominating the elected officers of the Church, the at-large members of the Council of the Congregation, members of the Governing Boards of our six Ministries, the Long Range Planning Committee, the Investment Committee, and the Pastoral Search Committees.

The COI consists of the Church Clerk, the six immediate past chairpersons of Ministries and the immediate past Moderator, five at-large members,

the Senior Minister, and such other members of the Church staff as the Senior Minister may designate.

As this report is being written, there are still a few positions left to fill for 2020.

Committee members who participated include: Molly Baskette, Mary Fujii, Kara Korbelt-Chinula, Janet McDonald, Kit Novotny, Emma S, and Linda Sawyer.

Long Range Planning

BECKY SMITH, CHAIR

The Long Range Planning Committee focused on one big initiative in 2019: church visioning.

The goal was to engage the church in active discussion about our future so that we could agree on a big, bold goal that would help us live our faith for the next three to five years.

Early in the year, the committee brainstormed about “visioning” and decided Lent was the time to give it life. We worked through a curriculum called The Jeremiah Project that offers churches a structure for visioning and extracted the portion that made the most sense to us.

In January, we recruited small-group leaders. We trained them, with help from a facilitator, on Feb. 24. The small groups met regularly in March and worked their way through a set of questions designed to make us think deeply about our collective soul and discern what we might accomplish if we worked together. In early April, discussion leaders met and shared the work of their small groups.

April 7 was “Super Sunday.” That was the day we shared results of the small-group process with the whole church. A team of vision writers then began the difficult task of converting the church’s expressed longings into a coherent vision statement. By early June, we were ready to convene “Samoan Circles” to discuss the draft vision statement. Those circles continued in July as we slowly reach consensus.

In a vote on September 7, the church approved the vision statement and agreed that we would work together to end homelessness. Now the real work begins to make this aspirational statement into something more than a call to action!

LRP thanks these committee participants: Leonard Ash, Molly Baskette, Julie Greer, Bonnie Hester, Lauren Jewett, Kara Korbel-Chinula, Laura Leaverton, Rod MacKenzie, Kit Novotny, Becky Smith, and Katie Sparks.

Personnel Committee

SCOTT SPORTE, CHAIR

During 2019 the Personnel Committee said goodbye to Rachel Bauman and Phil Porter and wished Kit Novotny the best for her sabbatical, which will continue into 2020. We continued to prioritize salary increases to maintain pace with rising costs of living in the area. The Committee feels that we devoted most of our time to paving the way for the future.

Members: Elizabeth Driver-Bucholtz, Ron Elsdon, Sheryl Johnson, Scott Sporte

Officers, Ministry & Committee Members for 2020

OFFICERS	(terms end in Jan. 2021)	(terms end in Jan. 2022)	Council Rep
Moderator	Julie Greer		Julie Greer
Moderator Elect	Sara Woods		Sara Woods
Clerk	Janet McDonald		Janet McDonald
Treasurer	Moe Wright		Moe Wright
Council at Large (no specified term)	Jesse Lofland	Ryan Walls Helen Walsh	

MINISTRIES	(terms end in Jan. 2021)	(terms end in Jan. 2022)	Council Rep
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Care, Fellowship & Invitation (CF&I)

Bree Elle Gardner	Niema Durham
Patricia Pratt	Susan Greef
Helen Walsh	Kate Lucchese
Andy Young	Alan Miller

Adult Education, *Ron Elsdon, Chair*

Linda Elsdon	Jim Alnas-Benson	Ron Elsdon
Christina Hutchins	Ron Elsdon	
	Jesse Lofland	
	Reuben Shank	

Family, Children & Youth (FamChY), *Jeanne Strauss, Chair*

Bruce Chamberlain	Rick Ayer	Jeanne Strauss
Melinda Glines	Paula Poremba	
Julia Madore		
Katie Sparks		
Jeanne Strauss		
Becky Wright		

Justice & Service (J&S), *Joe Livingston, Chair*

Alice Clark	Eji Atlaw	Joe Livingston
Mary Fujii	Carolyn Cox	
	Trust Hilton	
	Joe Livingston	
	Karlene Roberts	
	Steve Spielman	

Officers, Ministry & Committee Members for 2020

MINISTRIES (cont.) (terms end in Jan. 2021) (terms end in Jan. 2022) Council Rep

Stewardship, Finance & Administration (SF&A), *Amy Hiestand & Nick Kukulan, Co-Chairs*

Nick Kukulan	Felicia Bellows	Amy Hiestand
Tim Specht	Diana Graham	& Nick Kukulan
Charles Taylor	Amy Hiestand	
Pam VandeKamp	Becky Smith	

Worship & Spiritual Life (Deacons), *Stan Boghosian, Chair*

Loi Almeron	Emily Carduff	Stan Boghosian
Stan Boghosian	Janet Eadie	
Nancy DeNero	Carolyn Thiessen	
Craig Pratt	Kenneth Tyler	
	Willem VandeKamp	

COMMITTEES*

Long Range Planning

Laura Leaverton
Rod MacKenzie
Lauren Jewett
Dane Isaac

Investment, *Nick Kukulan, Chair*

Bob Helliesen
Nathan Hood
Nick Kukulan

DELEGATES*

Ben Bigney
Richard Brabham
Sara Fread
Jeanne Strauss
Sara Woods

COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL*

Endowment

Milton Fujii

Personnel, *Ron Elsdon, Chair*

Mike Casendino
Elizabeth Driver-Bucholtz
Ron Elsdon
Kara Korbel-Chinula
Emma S
Scott Sporte

* Terms may vary.

Senior Minister

REV. MOLLY BASKETTE



2019 was another whirling, swirling year of change in our world and in our church. In the world, we watched the continued rise of the alt right and its attendants:

white supremacy, anti-Semitism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and a steady increase in hate crimes and mass shootings. Children were separated from their parents at the border and caged per the President's policies. Impeachment dominated the media as the robust corruption of the current regime was exposed. We reached, and passed, new tipping points on climate chaos *and* climate activism/awareness, led particularly by Greta Thunberg in a reprise of Isaiah's "and a little child shall lead them." And at the dawn of 2020, we narrowly avoided a hot war with Iran (still possible at press time...).

With these and many other morally repugnant and apocalyptic headlines, we crawl toward the end of Donald Trump's term as president. We are all on edge—will he be reelected, or will sense and conscience prevail against the mass psychosis perpetrated by a straw man/strong man and the corrupted leaders who support him?

More pertinent to this annual report: what is the role of the Church at this moment in American and global political & environmental history? I would say, in short: we are called to provide opportunities for collective resistance. To give people pathways to hope, and mechanisms for moral meaning-making. We are called to inoculate against despair and isolation, to be Good News-bearers and practitioners of joy and transcendence no matter what is going on. Here's how we worked and played and prayed our way toward these ends in 2019:

We passed a new vision, wrapped up our insurance dispute, lived through more staff transitions, tightened the budget, and continued to lean into a new model of sustained and sustain-

able giving. We learned new and very effective ways of having important, compassionate, and difficult conversations with each other so we could make bold decisions as a body of Christ. We made leaps forward in our digital communications and branding, moved the post-fire campus design process along, started a new worship service and many new small groups, and dreamed and schemed about other new forms of worship to come in 2020...among other things!

Here's a brief attempt at a time capsule of our year, with (doubtless) unintentional omissions:

Vision for 2020 and Beyond

During Lent 2019, more than 150 people participated in a Visioning Process, talking together about things that matter most in our life together, particularly the question, "What is God calling us to do and be for the next 3-5 years?" What emerged (unsurprisingly) was a broad range of issues of moral concern and spiritual longing. However, there was near-unanimity (surprisingly) about the three top areas of focus:

- Growing in intimacy
- Creating new forms of worship
- Ending homelessness in the East Bay

You can read the full vision statement, with action plan, **later in this report**. We have already started acting on the vision in myriad ways, through our ministry teams, motivated individuals and other instrumentalities. For example: the Church Council voted to endorse the Alameda County-wide Everyone Home plan to end homelessness (everyonehome.org). We did advocacy with Berkeley City Council to clear hurdles for development of new housing, continued our new holiday practices of assembling welcome baskets for families leaving shelter and entering permanent housing, and worked with Youth Spirit Artwork toward developing the nation's first tiny house village for homeless youth ages 18-25. Michele McGeoy started a new evening Taize contemplative worship ser-

vice, and on Sunday mornings we introduced the quarterly Life Meets Art featuring local artists & writers in conversation with our pastors. We plan on doing Service as Worship biannually on Sunday mornings, and to incorporate contemplative worship into Sunday morning as well as more frequently. *Coming in 2020*: “small spiritual stories” each week from members of the congregation to lift up God-sightings in the everyday, and monthly Magic Hour evening outdoor church for all ages starting after Easter. We held our first Jesus Christ Supersingalong on Holy Saturday, complete with flash mob at Downtown Berkeley BART to herald it! And we gathered 9 UCCs on Good Friday for a deeply moving ecumenical service that will lead to future collaborations—there’s even talk of an East Bay Progressive Revival!

As for growing in intimacy, this is happening in myriad ways: through Summer Small Groups, Empathy Training with Louise Halsey and Jim Coates, new cohorts of Mindful Self-Compassion led by Nancy DeNero, the Birthing a Parent group begun by Michelle Sepe and Rev. Kit, Racists Anonymous started by Dane Isaac and Ryan Walls, the Motley Few Friday morning coffee and conversation led by Helen Walsh and Louise Specht, and so much more.

Staff Transitions and the Making of Many Ministers

After Rachel Bauman and Nate Mazur’s departures late in 2018, we ordained the now **Rev. Phil Porter**, a mere 24 years after he became our commissioned minister for art and communication. It was a gorgeous and festive affair, tinged with affection and bittersweetness as we said goodbye to him just two weeks later upon his retirement from First Church.

We welcomed Ben McKnight as our Communications Specialist, and he has accomplished so much in a very short time! Building and maintaining a totally new website, which has already attracted newcomers to our community, helping us make a seamless transition to the all-digital *Carillon* (mailed biweekly to our non-digital members), bringing lots of different communica-

tions into harmony and synchronicity so it is easier to manage in the interest of “working smarter not harder,” and bringing consistency to both our inward- and outward-facing communications. Other projects Ben assisted with: the “Come Be a We” fence panel project featuring beautiful “odd couple” pairings of many of our church people (which has also attracted newcomers to church), the festive banners on Loper Chapel proclaiming some of our core values. God willing, before Easter we will finally, finally get our new backlit name sign up on the Dana Street side of church, to signal that our church is very much alive and active despite the fire aftermath. Ben has also recently taken over the weekly Order of Worship, as we say thank you and blessings to Margaret Copeland, our *Carillon* editor for many years and more recently, bulletin editor. We are grateful for her many years of service, and excellent eye for detail and names!

Sara Fread came on board as our new youth minister this past August! Sara is a first-year student at PSR on ordination track in the UCC, and we are so blessed to have her among us. With her fantastic organizational skills, kindness, wisdom, and fun-loving nature, she has easily won the youth over. Sara has also picked up some admin hours in the church office, which eases the burden on Derek Tam, Kit Dunbar and Louise Halsey—a great blessing! Since Sara will likely take 4 years to complete her degree, we hope she will be with us for a while.

We welcomed Jane Arc and Emily Carduff aboard as our Emerging Leaders for the year. Jane is a first-year seminary student at PSR, and Emily is applying to seminary for matriculation in Fall 2020—both vocations they discerned wholly or in part while nested in our community. Our cottage industry of making new ministers continues! We supported Kelly Colwell at her ecclesiastical council this past fall and will enthusiastically ordain her in February. Three other candidates for ordination are in the pipeline: Lauren Jewett (newly minted program director for Youth Spirit Artworks!), Trust Hilton (in a year-long chaplaincy training program), and Joe Livingston (still studying for his MDiv at PSR,

and newly returned to us from an internship at MCC San Francisco!).

Blue Fire and Fire Recovery Processes

In August, we received our final insurance settlement, and about the same time, the Blue Fire Team received a detailed estimate of what it would cost to replace Pilgrim Hall with code upgrades. Even a minimalist rebuild meant a \$4m delta between what we had to spend and what it would cost to build.

The disappointment among the Blue Fire Team members quickly gave way to creativity and excitement about other ways we might meet our needs for program and staff space with the nearly \$10m available to us. On January 12, we presented some high-concept ideas for new directions, including: taking the Pilgrim Hall shell down, replacing it with a multi-function outdoor space that would be to some degree weather-sheltered and also have adjacent indoor kitchen, bathrooms, storage and potentially thrift store space, and three concepts for how we might replace offices and Sunday school school/meeting spaces. We'll be refining those concepts over the next 3 months and doing detailed financial modeling, so we can narrow the choices to one, which we will present to the congregation in May as our single recommended choice for the rebuild. We will offer a plan that will come in under budget so we don't need to take on long-term debt, and one that provides creative, sustainable, and adaptive solutions for a changing climate and urban landscape while meeting as many of the needs of the current members as possible.

Our congregation owes an enormous debt of gratitude to the Blue Fire Team, which has logged countless hours chasing details in a very labyrinthine rebuild process, and to the Fire Recovery Team as well, which has likewise put in a huge amount of time chasing our insurers to make us whole. Because of the labor of that team, particularly Milton Fujii and Moe Wright, along with Lorenzo Llanillo, Margie Allen, and Julie Greer who participated in the arbitration and litigation processes, we have several million more

dollars to put toward the rebuild than we would otherwise.

E-Team! and More: Moving Beyond our Walls

At last year's Annual Meeting, Moderator Leonard Ash challenged us to move beyond our walls. The 21st century church, particularly in a place as resistant or even hostile to Christianity as the East Bay, can't hope to grow if we stay cloistered on our campus and hope people are attracted to us and wander in. We need to show people who we are, in public spaces.

Our fledgling Evangelism Team (E-Team!), shepherded by Kate Lucchese and led by lots of dynamic extroverts (or those who fake it well), including our exuberant youth, showed up in a big way for three public events: Berkeley Sunday Streets, SF Pride, and Oakland Pride, where we had our very first booth, a collaboration with City of Refuge. We connected with dozens of people who were so glad to know about a church like ours! We plan to do all of these events again and add in Solano Stroll in North Berkeley.

Another ministry that deserves note: Kerrie Hein, as an extension of our mental health ministry, gathered a small group of folks last winter to stop by the cloister every morning early and wake up the unhoused folks who slept there before the boys came to school. She did this with gentleness and dignity and made several structural changes to provide them ease and orientation to homelessness resources available. The ministry did not endure, but it raised awareness and built out our conscience and capacity for the future.

In the same spirit, Alice Clark took the baton from Laura Leaverton for our nascent Affordable Housing Aficionados working group, enacting various ways of living into our call to end homelessness as those who worship a rabbi who slept rough.

Our Sanctuary Accompaniment Team and others answered the call to support immigrant Raul Lopez and his family through Raul's long detention in Richmond and later Aurora, CO after ICE closed their detention center here: writing letters, sending money, lobbying legisla-

tors, packing the court for multiple hearings, and finally, celebrating with the entire family with backyard tacos when Raul finally came home. We feel so blessed to have walked with this family through this valley and into freedom.

We had many opportunities to protest as a community this year: marching with the disability contingent at the Women’s March, for immigrant children at the border, walking to raise money and awareness about hunger in Berkeley’s CROP walk, the Climate Strike, the Impeach and Remove protest, and supporting Kehilla Synagogue against threatened anti-Semitism during high holidays. Our pace of protesting slowed a bit over 2018, and as good as we are getting at getting up a throng, I hope 2020 and beyond will provide fewer appeals to take to the streets because the world is moving toward greater kindness and peace.

Finally, some of the most important happenings in our church can’t be measured or spoken of in concrete terms, but they can be felt. We have been living ever more deeply into the first priority in our vision statement: “growing in intimacy as the weird and wonderful body of Christ.” There is more mixing of ages and stages, longtimers and newcomers in our gatherings. There is a deepening tenderness among us, across all kinds of false binaries. It manifests in how we show up to take care of each other, becoming ministers to one another as the number of ordained staff has diminished (just two examples: baby therapy with Emma S’s twins, and a steady stream of callers as dearly beloved Margie Coates grew frail and died this past Christmas), as the mental health ministry expands and further matures, as we find ourselves and each other in our motley social gatherings (birthday parties and new member dinners!), in the willingness we have to be more vulnerable and imperfect with one another every time we meet.

Even in our challenging moments as a congregation, this intimacy and growth is manifest, as it was in the three Listening Circles we held this past summer as we worked through differences of opinion and some distrust regarding our

draft Vision Statement. We unearthed some old wounds, listened more closely to one another with respect and compassion, and began to shift some patterns. We left those meetings lighter and more loving. This past year Moderator Elect Julie Greer, Moderator Leonard Ash, Conference Minister and FCCB member Diane Weible, and I all attended 5-day Mediation Skills Training Institute led by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. We hope to employ what we’ve learned as we approach what may be difficult conversations and decision-points about the campus rebuild later this year, as we continue evolving into a more diverse congregation.

Beloved, as I look to the year ahead, I want to reveal some vulnerability myself (your reward for making it to the end of this report :). At some points in my nearly 4 years as your senior minister, I have sometimes felt a little out of step in this dance with you. Were we just awkward and shy dance partners? Or were we dancing to different music, destined to step on each others’ toes as long as we were on the floor together?

I believe we are coming into a new moment of ease in our life together—an easier cadence, a more intuitive dance. We have so much strength, so much soul, and so much opportunity. By the end of this year we will no longer have the smoking carcass of Pilgrim Hall to remind us of what we’ve lost—and will be on our way to building something fresh and inviting that will serve Berkeley for decades and let people see our heart. That heart, burning within us, deserves a blessing. Receive this blessing, written by an Episcopal priest for Burning Man, given to us now at this threshold of creating something new and beautiful to share with the world:

The world now is too dangerous
 And too beautiful
 For anything but love.
 Love is a blessing.
 So may your eyes be so blessed that you see
 God in everyone
 Your lips—so you speak nothing but the truth

Your ears — so that you hear the cry of the poor
 May your hands be so blessed that everything you touch becomes a sacrament
 Your feet—so that you run to those who need you
 And may your heart be so opened
 So set on fire
 That your love
 Your love
 Changes everything.

Amen.

Associate Minister

REV. KIT NOVOTNY



I've heard it said that the shortest distance between two people is a story. This was my fifth year as one of your pastors and a year I've felt the gift of relationships deepen and flourish. We know each other's stories now in some rich ways! I often reflect on the profound experience of looking out from the chancel on Sunday mornings and seeing the collage of everyone's life and faith stories telescoping (or is it kaleidoscoping?) out from each of you—hardships endured, relationships shifted, epiphanies harvested, transformations blossoming. It's an honor and a mystical experience to see how the Holy Spirit is moving through each of your lives and through our shared life as a community. One of the blessings of being one of your ministers (and truly we *all* share in this) is serving as a guardian of your stories. And, of course, we get to craft new stories together.

Through this year's visioning process, we explored and got clear together on the story of who we are right now as a congregation and unearthed some core directions God is calling us to. Another story from this year has been some significant staff restructuring—a story that may still be unfolding to some extent. My role has shifted considerably since I arrived in 2015, and this fall we officially updated my job title to

reflect this evolution, from Young Adult Minister to the more expansive Associate Minister (although young adult ministry remains one of my primary arenas).

After celebrating Phil's ministry and retirement, I've enjoyed taking on supervision of our Communications ministry—another form and facet of community storytelling. I led a search for a new part-time Communications Specialist and was delighted to find, hire, and now work closely with the wonderful Ben McKnight, who came to us with a wealth of experience and an open, playful, and faithful spirit. When Ben had to relocate back to the Midwest a few months in, we transitioned smoothly into a model of working remotely, which we plan to continue. This summer, many of us collaborated to design and launch a new website—a huge creative undertaking! Our spiffy new site is updated and visually appealing, nimble and clear, and more effectively reflects our collective story. We're already enjoying the fruits of this strategic shift, with newcomers finding us through our enhanced, accessible online presence. We've also begun updating visual branding, experimenting more with outdoor banners, and we've now said goodbye to the print *Carillon* newsletter format—with deep gratitude to Margaret Copeland—to shift to a weekly digital *Carillon*. I'm excited about more communications updates and experiments on their way,

as we seek to more fully express our particular weird and wonderful body of Christ and our take on the good news—that great, enduring story of God’s radical love.

In stories of personal exploration, I had the opportunity to study Adaptive Leadership as part of the UCC’s Next Generation Leadership Initiative, which also brought me to my first General Synod of the UCC in Milwaukee, along with several enthusiastic Berkeleyans! Other fun, Spirit-led stories of 2019 include that time we asked, “What if we put together a Jesus Christ Super Singalong?” and then went for it—a creative, playful, interactive Holy Saturday experience... along with a Holy Week flash mob down at the Berkeley BART station. It’s been a delight to co-create (but mostly just participate in) our new “Birthing a Mama/Parent” creative spiritual support group, led by Michelle Sepe, connecting new moms to one another in meaningful, invitational and life-giving ways.

The story of our monthly young adult Open Chapel evening services this past year is one of deepened connection and continued evolution, more shared leadership, and fruitful experiments with creative worship forms, one of our Vision goals—from backyard campfires to a powerful story slam. We held our third annual spring Young Adult retreat on-site, exploring the Enneagram personality tool for transformation,

and our YA book group continues to explore all kinds of spiritually grounded texts. A digital/in-person hybrid Queer Bible study experiment came and later decided to conclude but bears seeds for further inquiry and connection. I love working with Rev. Sheryl Johnson, in her second year as Open Chapel Coordinator, OC Musician Thomas Gettys, and our spunky, gifted Emerging Leaders—Bree Elle Gardner and Trust Hilton last spring, and this fall, Emily Carduff and Jane Arc—who each embody curiosity and faithfulness and in whose growth and ministry the Spirit is alive and at work. Other stories from Young Adult-hosted ministries (for all) include a new Co-Working community space, the launching of Racists Anonymous, a Foundations for Financial Wholeness Workshop, and more.

There are so many other stories to share and remember and celebrate! I am continually grateful to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love (as the hymn goes!) with you all. I’d like to give a special gratitude shout out to Carolyn Ash and the team of nursery and after-care providers for caring for Zoe so generously, so that I can be fully present as a pastor and parent on Sundays, especially with a clergy spouse. It takes a village and I (we) feel blessed by this loving village we are for one another.

I can’t wait to see what stories God leads us into together next!

Music Director

DEREK TAM



2019 was a joyous year for the First Church music ministry, as we continue to grow in intimacy with each other and create an assortment of wild and wondrous ways to seek God through music!

First, I want to lift up the names of the staff and lay leaders upon which the success of this ministry is built. Not only are Liz Forsyth and Amar Khalsa wonderful musicians—Liz on organ and piano, and Amar on a multitude of instruments—I am grateful for their warm, open spirits and friendship. I also deeply appreciate the music Thomas Gettys has brought to Open Chapel, our young adult service. And I'm consistently floored by Carolyn Ash's boundless enthusiasm for providing our children and youth with musical opportunities.

I would also like to thank Kate Lucchese, Jim Coates, and Linda Crebbin-Coates, whose adroit leadership of Uke-atastrophe (our ukulele

ensemble!), the bell choir, and Songs of the Soul (our high school choir) respectively make it possible for people of all ages and abilities to participate in the musical life of this community, from presentations in small ensembles to singing in the Sanctuary and Gospel Choirs (and everything in between). In addition, I'm grateful to Michele McGeoy for her stewardship of a new, music-oriented Taizé worship service.

I'd like to add a brief note about our outward-facing music ministry, which helps our wider community glimpse God through music. In its sixth season, our concert series, Resonance, received press acclaim for some superb performances. We were also blessed by our collaborations with other congregations: our sister church, City of Refuge UCC, in our annual joint concert and fundraiser; various churches in the Bay Association for a music-packed Good Friday service that we hosted; and the wider church conference in a November fundraiser for relief efforts for the fall fires in the North Bay.

Director of Youth Ministries

SARA FREAD



In August of 2019, I joined the First Church community as the new Director of Youth Ministries, and I have found so much joy in this new role. This is a particularly interesting time to work in ministry. In

this tumultuous period where our national religious landscape is shifting and church membership around the country is declining, it's easy to let fear of the future of our dear faith tradition take hold. Next time that fear begins to bubble up in you, I would encourage you to spend some time with the youth of First Church. They ask

bold questions, hold deep convictions, and have a vision of a more just future. They are not just the future of the Church, they are the lifeblood of Christianity today.

In 2019, First Church youth:

- Enjoyed good food and even better company at the Youth Mentor's first parent potluck
- Worshipped with their feet in G-d's beautiful creation while hiking at Sibley Park
- Joined in the ongoing work of building tiny houses for homeless youth in our community at Youth Spirit Artworks for the annual Winthrop Work Camp

- Connected with other UCC youth from across the conference at Mid-Winter Camp, February Camp, and summer camp at Caz
- Put their faith in action by spreading G-d's message of love at Oakland Pride and marched for a better future at the San Francisco Climate Strike
- Laughed, sang, swam, played Sardines, and celebrated our "Weird and Wonderful Body of Christ" at the All-Church Caz retreat
- Ran, danced, and played all over the church at the annual YES Lock-In
- Shared their musical gifts with the congregation through performances with Songs of the Soul and Uke-atastrophe
- Showed leadership on Sunday mornings through assisting with childcare regularly and greeting, ushering, and reading announcements (or performing announcement skits!) during All-Ages Worship
- Brought Christmas cheer to residents of Piedmont Gardens and Here-There by

singing carols and delivering hygiene kits and homemade Christmas cards

- Gathered together weekly to play games, explore scripture in new ways, and support each other through the ups and downs of life

In any ministry, it is so easy to get caught up in the things we can quantify: how much money is in the budget, how many people show up to events, how many volunteers there are, etc. The real beauty of youth ministry, however, is rooted in the things that just can't be measured: the laughter, vulnerable conversation, creation and fostering of relationships, and the presence of G-d. I'm grateful for all of the ways the Spirit has shown up in moments of chaos and calm, always nudging our focus back to the nuggets of divinity within the ordinary.

Lastly, I'm so thankful to all those who make our youth ministry possible! The fabulous team of youth mentors (Emma Fujii, Rebecca Clayton, Trust Hilton, Carole Petiet, Jane Arc, and Bob Stumpf), the FamChY committee, the parents of our youth, and Carolyn Ash dedicate so much time and creative energy to allow this program to flourish. Here's to another great year!

Families' & Children's Program Director

CAROLYN ASH

Doxology for the God who made our Children:

Praise God from whom all children flow;

Praise God all ages here below:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God whose image we reflect

Praise God whose vision we perfect

In our church fam when we gather

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!



Well friends, as you can read, I've sung through another year with our children and the loving volunteers who make all our Sunday School classes and special programs

possible. I am elated that so many children flow the love of God through our halls every Sunday and occasional Saturdays!

THANK YOU to all the families who brought their children to church in 2019: through them, we experienced God's joyfulness and creativity. THANK YOU to the Family, Children and Youth (FamChY) Committee members who visioned, planned, orchestrated, and reflected on innumerable events from MLK Service Day's Shoreline Clean-Up to the CROP WALK fundraiser for Church World Service to assembling hygiene kits for refugees to fundraising for migrant children's back-to-school drive: through you, our children experienced being God's healing hands. THANK YOU to our Sunday School teachers who held sacred space



Youth drumming

for our children to learn about the Bible and how it relates to their lives every Sunday: through you, our children experienced God’s love and openness to questioning.

Because our Sunday School teachers work so hard behind the scenes to prepare for class every Sunday, I would like to publically acknowledge each one by name.

Nursery	Godly Play
Birtukan Beyenssa	Becky Smith
Carmen Baskette	Janet McDonald
Dorothy Block	Jeanne Strauss
Niema Durham	John Wadman
Paula Poremba	Kara Korbel-Chinula
Ruby Leaverton	Katharine Sparks
Talyn Llanillo	Kathy Keller
Terry Durham	
Diana Graham	Intro Bible Class
Janet Eadie	Hanni Hanson
Oliver Mexas	James Alnas-Benson
	Jim Marrone
Preschool	Jim Bloom
Carolyn Cox	Sara Woods
Diana Graham	
Janet Eadie	
Oliver Mexas	

Additionally, thank you to Robin Kempster for documenting through photography all our special events this year so professionally and thoroughly! Thanks to Robin’s skill and enthusi-

asm, the emotion of every sacred event is captured forever in beautiful images.

2019’s highlights for me were:

- Collaborating with Derek Tam to offer a myriad of musical experiences, including a monthly all-ages ukulele rehearsal, the “Mother Goose Suite” by Maurice Ravel during our Blessing of the Animals Service, a participatory drumming parade to kick off Lent and bury our Alleluia banner, weekly cantering in worship opportunities, and many others



Making hygiene kits

- Producing an all ages Epiphany pageant with 20+ enthusiastic volunteers, under the direction of pageant writer extraordinaire Kate Lucchese
- Revamping our Children and Youth Protection Policy and training all volunteers for children and youth on the new policy
- Retiring a beloved “Day of the Dead” tradition after collective discernment with the FamChY committee, staff, and parents about the perception and harms of cultural appropriation
- Enjoying our summer Sunday School unit about daily life during Jesus’ Time, which included cooking food Jesus might have enjoyed, building model Jesus houses, learning about occupations in ancient Palestine, meditating to Aramaic music,

learning to write our names in Aramaic with charcoal pencils, and playing games Jesus might have played

- Offering After Care for all children every Sunday afternoon while their parents enjoyed Learning Hours and participation in ministries, and
- Offering worship leadership opportunities to all kids and youth every First Sunday All Ages Worship, including reading scripture, leading prayers, ushering, greeting, delivering announcements, and playing music. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!



Emerging Leader

EMILY CARDUFF



C.S. Lewis once said that, “The next best thing to being wise oneself is to live in a circle of those who are.” Here at First Church, I am surrounded and uplifted by many, many wise people who are so open and

gracious about sharing their insights.

Every Sunday as an Emerging Leader is an opportunity to learn something new, whether it be leading the children’s moment, the prayers of the people, serving communion, or even preaching my first sermon! I can’t say enough how helpful it is to be entrusted to try out these different roles every week. Each week I find myself more and more confident knowing that there is so much grace in the congregation— this “circle” of support, love, mentorship, and honest feedback I’ve received means more than I can say!

In 2019, a few months into the Emerging Leader program, I discerned in my mentorship sessions with Rev. Kit that I have a deep love for community. I am excited to begin in January 2020 organizing weekly young adult dinners and to experience and help facilitate even deeper community, conversation, and fellowship with this small group. The beauty of congregationalism, to me, is how we’re all trying to learn together about God and that we can’t do it individually. I look forward to exploring God’s character together with this group and diving into the big questions of life with each other.

I feel incredibly humbled and privileged to be a part of the Emerging Leader program and have found myself stretching, learning, and growing spiritually in so many ways and am grateful for the opportunity. I can’t wait to see what I continue to learn from you all in the new year!

Emerging Leader

JANE ARC



2019 was a big year for me and for FCCB. I started seminary and left my job, and started my journey as an emerging leader at FCCB. At FCCB, we defined a new vision for the congregation moving forward,

learned more about how the church will be physically defined in the future, and experimented with new ways to worship.

My own interest in my role as an emerging leader has been to explore these new ways of worship and to develop new ways to bring a dialogue about justice forward. I've been really excited by the conversations that have come up from my preaching and the discussions we have at the sermon digestion table. I'm so looking forward to the changes in our congregation as we embrace the core messages of the Gospels and what our worship

will look like in the future as we find new ways to hold services outdoors and incorporate discussions about justice and service into who we are.

It's been such a privilege to pray with the congregation and to be a part of the services we have, whether on Sunday, or over Christmas, or our intimate and queered service on Trans Day of Remembrance last November. My hope is that everyone is looking forward to these new directions we are moving in and that you will share your ideas and feedback with us as we travel into the future together. What things are most important to you in our community? How is the Holy Spirit showing up in your life and at church?

Let's make 2020 a great year together, one that informs where we are going, of fulfilment, and of joy. See you all in the sanctuary, in ministry and committee meetings, and out in the community as we make real this vision of our church.

Business Manager

KIT DUNBAR



2019 was a busy year as we adjusted the Business Manager position from one and half people to just one. This would not have been doable without the support of my beloved co-workers:

Thank you: Revs. Molly and Kit for your patience and perseverance as we worked through meeting the needs of your positions while balancing the multiple other demands on my plate.

Thank you: Derek for graciously sharing your knowledge of musical groups and their expectations and needs as outside non-profit groups who rent our space. Also, for your many reflections on the organ, piano, harpsichords, and the needs of the many First Church choirs.

Thank you: Louise for taking over the phones and the computer systems with our outside com-

puter guru Matt (shout out to Matt's knowledge and help through this transition too). Not only have you taken things off my plate, but you've been such a welcome support in the office and wealth of knowledge for "how things usually happen." So appreciate your NVC presence!

Thank you: Bruce for keeping the internal church events happening smoothly and keeping Amare informed about all the room set ups.

Thank you: Amare for never tiring of doing "one more thing" as well as being an amazing Event Host for all the outside non-profit groups who rent our space. Everyone is so happy to know that you'll be the contact for their event. You've helped me learn the details of the needs of those groups so that we can be better prepared as well as clear with our expectations. The best part of my day is starting with your big smile and welcome hug!

Thank you: Berhane for all you do every Sunday to make First Church so welcoming and “After-Party worthy.” You did an amazing job of filling in for Amare during his summer break.

Thank you: Sara for coming on board in December as our Events Billings Assistant. You have such an amazing balance of humor, stellar work ethic, and the ability to quickly pick up all the facets of the job along with being Youth Director and Administrative Assistant (and, oh yes, being a Seminary student at PSR too). Just love having you in the office!

I also appreciated the support of our Treasurer, Moe Wright, and the SF&A co-chairs, Amy Hiestand and Nick Kukulan.

Thank you: Moe for sharing your vast knowledge of the policies and procedures of First Church. Not only do you remember so many details, you can explain it in a way that has really helped me to see the big picture.

Thank you: Amy for all your attention to detail and calendaring. It was super helpful for keeping me (and SF&A) aware of when things needed to be addressed.

Thank you: Nick for taking on organizing the Building and Grounds Funds maintenance items so as to bring a fuller awareness of what needed to be followed up on as well as potential future items.

I also want to thank Mike Casendino, who worked behind the scenes to help document the flow of Room Requests and use of our building by both internal and external groups. You helped me balance the big picture as well as identify specific tasks to help make everything work smoother.

And I would like to thank Leonard Ash, our 2019 Moderator. I so appreciated your kind and faith-filled spirit at Church Council as well as at all those other church meetings.

Here’s to an amazing 2020 and the We that we are becoming!

Congregational Care Program Manager

LOUISE HALSEY



As I recall yet another rich and full year of being part of and serving our beloved First Church community, I’m continually reminded of the value of living life in community. I’m astounded really by all that takes place here in a calendar year, all that is graciously offered, all that is generously given, repeatedly.

Thank you to the many folks who supported me and the congregation by volunteering their time and energies to help with numerous projects — from stuffing envelopes to proofing the Sunday order of worship — Carol Chapman, Melinda Floyd, Trust Hilton, Mandy Halpin, Dane Isaac, Anne Rowe, Lisa Vega, and Jack Zimmermann. I want to acknowledge and appreciate our Sunday ushering teams for their steadfastness and dedication in offering a welcoming presence on Sunday mornings.

As some of my administrative duties have shifted to others or fallen away, I’m excited to be more fully engaged in coordinating Congregational Care — being part of the Pastoral Care team, supporting our Small Group ministry (summer small groups & small group formation), coordinating our First Friends program, connecting community members to volunteer opportunities within our church, co-leading empathy training and practice groups, and imagining ways to nourish and deepen our connections to one another.

It’s an honor and pleasure to do this “work” with you all, and I look forward with gratitude for the year ahead. And, in honor of the poet Mary Oliver, who died last January, here’s her poem “Hum” from the collection *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver* (Penguin Press, 2017), given to me as a gift by former Business Manager Ken Iha.

Hum

What is this dark hum among the roses?

The bees have gone simple, sipping,
that's all. What did you expect? Sophistication?

They're small creatures and they are
filling their bodies with sweetness, how could they not
moan in happiness? The little
worker bee lives, I have read, about three weeks.

Is that long? Long enough, I suppose, to understand
that life is a blessing. I have found them,—haven't you?—
stopped in the very cups of the flowers, their wings
a little tattered—so much flying about, to the hive,
then out into the world, then back, and perhaps dancing,
should the task be to be a scout-sweet, dancing bee.

I think there isn't anything in this world I don't
admire. If there is, I don't know what it is. I

haven't met it yet. Nor expect to. The bee is small,
and since I wear glasses, so I can see the traffic and
read books, I have to

take them off and bend close to study and
understand what is happening. It's not hard, it's in fact
as instructive as anything I have ever studied. Plus, too,
it's love almost too fierce to endure, the bee
nuzzling like that into the blouse

of the rose. And the fragrance, and the honey, and of course
the sun, the purely pure sun, shining, all the while, over
all of us.

Carillon Editor

MARGARET COPELAND



It's been 11 years since former Senior Minister Patricia de Jong surprised me by asking if I'd like to take over doing the *Carillon* from Karyn Smith, who was changing careers at the time. I don't know how Pat

thought of me, but I'm glad she did! At the same time, she asked Louise Halsey to become the new office administrator. Louise has been an integral part of my experience doing the *Carillon* from the start and I thank her for her thoughtful communication style, for being fun to work with, for her eagle eye, and for the delightful way she makes words flow better. Phil Porter was my supervisor, and he was the best, supervising with a light touch. It's been a treat to have interacted with so many people at First Church through doing the *Carillon*. I especially cherish my communications with the older members — always so kind.

How communications have changed since I started back in 2008. I remember getting handwritten messages in my mailbox in the church office announcing the next meeting of the Bridge Club or telling me the holiday hours of the Cellar Thrift Shop. I wish I had kept some of them! I used to pick up the phone a lot more to clarify a detail of an article. But then, about half way through my tenure, email became the common way to communicate. In the past year or two, texting has become the most expedient way to reach someone! That's progress (I guess).

I love the new website and the email version of the *Carillon* that Ben McKnight has developed so beautifully. They are easy to navigate, are inviting to explore, and feel very fresh.

Dear friends, thank you for letting me be your *Carillon* editor all these years. Best wishes to all of you!

Communications Specialist

BEN MCKNIGHT



2019 was a pivotal year for Communications at First Church Berkeley UCC. Two beloved communicators left their roles after decades of combined service: Phil Porter and Margaret Copeland.

I joined the team in April 2019 just after Phil Porter's ordination and have been delighted to serve this compassionate and vibrant congregation. I brought with me several years of experience as a Communications Specialist at a progressive Methodist church in Minneapolis, MN.

Not long after, I began working on a new website for the church (with a lot of help from Rev. Molly and Rev. Kit) which was launched in the fall. This new website serves as the core of a new, digitally focused communications structure.

At the beginning of the year, we migrated from a bi-weekly printed *Carillon* newsletter to a weekly email version. However, we do continue to send printed copies of the email to those who do not have access to it otherwise.

There are more changes to come. Next, the Order of Worship will be getting a makeover. You can expect more color, imagery, and updated fonts. After that, our Social Media presence will get some attention. Watch for more consistent and engaging postings in the year ahead.

The goal of all of this is to create communications practices that will meet newcomers where they are at and make things easier and more efficient for oldtimers.

You can contact me at communications@fccb.org. This is also where you can send any information that you would like to share with the congregation, comments, or suggestions for our church communications. I look forward to continuing to meet and work with all of you.

New Member Coordinator

KATHY HELLIESEN (VOLUNTEER)

We joyfully welcomed 13 new members into the life of First Congregational Church of Berkeley in 2019. Our new members are busy serving on committees and ministries, baking cookies for Second Sunday sandwiches, attending Camp Caz, attending Open Chapel, and serving as an Emerging Leader. We are grateful for their enthusiasm and commitment.

In January we began holding every-other-month dinner gatherings for our newest members

to foster community and deepen relationships. Each new member is invited to 6 dinners in the year after joining. We're glad to provide this opportunity for connecting, and the dinners have been well-attended and appreciated.

Special thanks to Revs. Molly and Kit for leading the Discover First Church classes and to Louise Halsey for her support. Thanks also to Bruce Stangeland for taking the wonderful new member photos.



First Church New Members 2019

Affordable Housing Aficionados

ALICE CLARK, CHAIR

The Affordable Housing Aficionados began the year by celebrating and handing over the Christmas 2018 offerings of 17 “Welcome Home” baskets for people being new housed to the Berkeley Food and Housing Project. We ended the year by organizing a fresh collection of 18 such baskets, to be handed over in January 2020! This is a richly involving project and furthers our good relationship with the BFHP. End of 2019 also saw our collection of Christmas stockings for the unhoused, which were shared on Christmas Eve.

Earlier in the year members participated in the Tiny House build with Youth Spirit Art-

works. Our support for YSA included attendance at City Council to urge funding for the project and attending the YSA Interfaith Leaders meeting for more ideas about how to provide support. Meetings attended included the East Bay Housing Organization’s annual interfaith brunch and EBHO’s Interfaith Communities United committee, both very important for planning actions and advocacy across the East Bay.

Actions addressing homelessness throughout the year have spanned various groups and ministries and have been listed and quantified on the attached table (created by Charles Taylor).

**FIRST CHURCH BERKELEY
CONTRIBUTIONS BY FIRST CHURCH BERKELEY TO DEVOTED TO ELIMINATING HOUSING AND RELATED SHORTAGES
2019**

In 2019 First Church Berkeley adopted the following value statement among others: “We follow Jesus’s urging to minister to the “least of these” [Matthew 25] by addressing our region’s most visible and urgent human needs: ending homelessness in the East Bay, and its intersecting justice issues.” Building on past years efforts and expanding them we enhanced our efforts to address the crisis of homelessness in the East Bay. The table below represents the efforts that could be quantified for 2019. Our expectation is that we will do more in 2020 and following years.

		Housing			Related								TOTAL	
		YSA Tiny House Build	Rebuilding Together/ Christmas in April	Welcome Home Baskets (Housing Aficionados)	Alameda Food Bank (Deckers & Justice & Service Ministry)	Berkeley Food Pantry	Second Sunday Sandwiches	Kitchen Ministry	Justic and Service - Plate Offering	Winthrop Work Camp	Christmas Eve Stockings	Wake up Ministry		
Categories	Lead Contact	Laura Leaverton	Carolyn Cox	Alice Clark	Kathy Helliesen	Kit Novotny	Richard Brabham	Wilson Hoffman	Phil Adams	Trust Hilton	Molly Baskette/ Willem VandeKamp	Kerry Hein		
1 Time	Number of People	A	20	10	21	15	5	452	19	NA	5	-	5	552
	Average Hours/Person	B	8	6	5	3	3	1	42	-	40	-	-	
	Contributed Hours for Project	C = (A x B)	160	65	105	45	15	339	210	-	200	-	299	1,438
	Wage Rate	D (\$15/hour)	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	\$ 15	
	Contribution	E = (C x D)	\$ 2,400	\$ 968	\$ 1,575	\$ 675	\$ 225	\$ 5,085	\$ 3,150	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 4,485	\$ 21,563
2 Materials (Food, supplies, other in-kind contributions)	Estimated	\$ 430	\$ 50	\$ 6,905	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,091	\$ -	\$ 9,493	\$ 4,000	\$ 750	\$ 250	\$ 22,969	
3 Cash Contributions		applied to materials												
		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80	\$ 1,200	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 750	\$ -	\$ 4,530	
4 Total (Time + Materials + Cash)	Total	\$ 3,830	\$ 2,518	\$ 8,480	\$ 675	\$ 225	\$ 6,256	\$ 4,350	\$ 9,493	\$ 7,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 4,735	\$ 49,062	

E-Team!

KATE LUCCHESI, CHAIR

Early in 2019, in order to better reach out to our community with the good news of First Church as a progressive, inclusive, and loving Christian entity, people were invited to gather with the blessing of the Ministry of Care, Fellowship and Invitation into a task force called the “E-Team!” acknowledging that “Evangelism” is for many a negative word.

Brainstorming sessions produced a series of exciting events, beginning with the Holy Week Flash Mob “Jesus Christ Superstar” sing-along at downtown Berkeley BART and progressing through a booth in Berkeley’s June 2nd “Sunday Streets” on Telegraph with musical groups, bubbles, edibles and giveaways, and a fine showing at the June 28th SF Trans March and June 30 SF Pride Parade, wearing “steeple hats,” and handing out “Mom Hugs” “Dad Hugs” and “Pastor Hugs.”

Fall brought Cal Move-In Day on August 20, with a booth on our own front plaza offering free coffee, water, Luna Bars and Clif Bars, bubbles,

chalk art, free directions and counseling for busy families. We closed out the busy E-Team! year with a lively hugs-and-bubbles booth at Oakland Pride on Sept. 8.

While some great new traditions have been established by a core of hard-working folks, dwindling meeting attendance made it clear that the best way forward organizationally was to fold ourselves back into C, F, and I for 2020, putting the “E!” back into “Invitation.”

Members included: Jane Arc, Carmen Baskette, Molly Baskette, Richard Brabham, Mollyanne Brewer, Alice Clark, Constance Dixon-Sorogane, Kit Dunbar, Terry Durham, Linda Elsdon, Milton Fujii, Bree Elle Gardner, Louise Halsey, Kathy Helliesen, Trust Hilton, David Hytha, Jacy Johnson, Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Lorenzo Llanillo, Kate Lucchese, Kit Novotny, Rebecca Smith, Charles Taylor, Helen Walsh, Sara Woods, Becky Wright, Andrew Young

Green Ministry Team

EMMA FUJII, CHAIR

Early in the year, the Green Team encouraged congregants to utilize the compost bins correctly by incentivizing with cake, with positive results! The other big event was Green Sunday — where folks were invited to BYO flatware for the After Party, experiment with a paper-lite service,

and learn about their transit and energy options, as well as their opportunities for political action! The Green Team also hosted a screening of the film *Paris to Pittsburgh* and supported J&W’s Tree Planting (25+ volunteers and 6 large trees) and CROP Hunger Walk events.

Berkeley Pilgrimage Foundation

KATHRYN STAMBAUGH

The Berkeley Pilgrimage Foundation (BPF) is a private foundation affiliated with First Church that supports housing, healthcare, and related services for seniors and people with disabilities in and around Berkeley. This year we were pleased to welcome five new board members: Jane Arc, Amy Hiestand, Janet McDonald, Rod MacKenzie, and Sophia DeWitt. Other board members include Kathryn Stambaugh (President), Scott Sparte (Treasurer), Mary Fujii (Secretary), Angela Arnold, Laszlo Bonnyay, and Moe Wright. In June 2019, the Foundation made grants to six organizations totaling \$165,000. This year's recipients included: 1) St. Mary's Center: \$65,000 towards a feasibility study to develop 65 units of permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless seniors and people with disabilities; 2) Legal Assistance

for Seniors: \$45,000 towards legal advocacy and education to help vulnerable seniors preserve their housing; 3) Everyone Home: \$15,000 in operating support for this consortium of homeless service providers, homeless persons and community members tasked with addressing and ending homelessness in Alameda County; 4) The Center for Independent Living: \$15,000 towards operating expenses; 5) SCORE: \$10,000 towards operating expenses; and 6) Youth Spirit Artworks: \$15,000 towards operating expenses.

We are always looking for new board and committee members! If you think you might want to volunteer with the Foundation, please reach out to Kathryn Stambaugh (KathrynEStambaugh@gmail.com) or any of the board members listed above. We'd love to hear from you!

East Bay School for Boys

NATHAN AVOTS-SMITH, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & STORYTELLING

The 2019-20 school year ushered in two major milestones for the East Bay School for Boys: our tenth anniversary year, and our first leadership transition, from Founding Head of School Jason Baeten to new Head of School (previously a veteran EBSB administrator) Dana Rosenberg. On September 6, 2019 we commemorated the anniversary of our first-ever day of school, welcoming current and alumni families to form a human "10" on the turf in the Dana Street courtyard.



East Bay School For Boys celebrating their tenth anniversary

After graduating our seventh class of 8th graders in June 2019, we started the new school year in

August with 88 boys. In addition to building their traditional academic skills, our students continue to explore their values and identity and how these can be used as leaders in their communities; how to be good stewards of their world; and how to work for justice and equity. We are especially fortunate to be continuing this work under Dana's leadership, as she has been a champion for our innovative curricular and social-emotional programs for many years in her prior role as Director of Curriculum and Culture and Assistant Head of School.

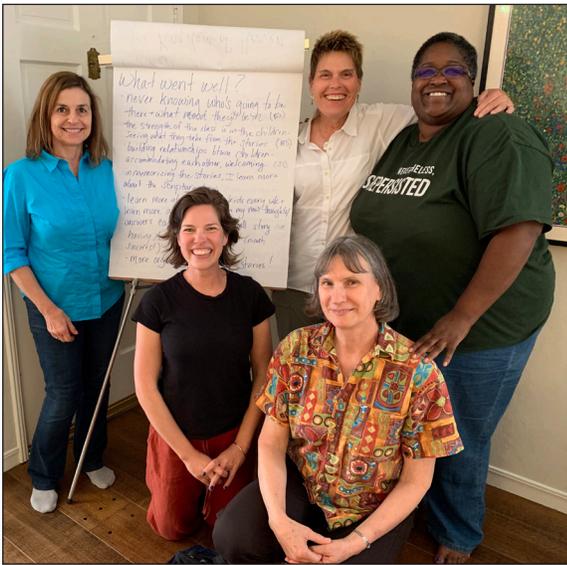
We are grateful to continue our partnership with FCCB as we enter our second decade!

Pacific School of Religion

SCOTT SPORTE, TRUSTEE

The Pacific School of Religion (PSR) took steps to develop new plans for its campus as part of a comprehensive facilities plan that will help position the school for its next 150 years. These steps include beginning the sale of some residential properties, leasing portions of the campus to non-profit organizations, and preparing the school for 21st century ministry. The relationship between PSR and First Church remains strong.

Scott Sporte continues on the board as treasurer and chair of the Finance and Investment Committees, and Moe Wright, Bob Helliesen, and Jim Cottle serve faithfully as non-trustees on real estate and investment committees. Many of our ministerial staff are PSR graduates. Our church is also very active in mentoring seminarians who are in discernment about parish ministry.



FamChY (Families, Children & Youth) planning team



Remembering our ancestors at Dia de Los Muertos



Relaxing on the front lawn



First Church youth at the Oakland Trans March

Treasurer

MOE WRIGHT

My report this year will start with the operation results for the main activities of the church. The numbers referred to in this report can be found in the financial tables included in this annual report. I want to thank and recognize Kit Dunbar as the main author of our financial reporting. This is her first full year as Business Manager, a job that also includes bookkeeping. She is doing a great job.

This year turned out very well. We anticipated a small deficit (\$22,160) and ended up with a small surplus. Our total contribution from sustaining and other contributions was budgeted at \$745,157 and the actual was \$737,525. A small fall off. Overall operating income from all sources was \$1,208,695 exceeding the estimate by \$5,366. Expenses were lower than expected by \$36,544. This resulted in a surplus of \$19,750.

The budget for 2020 anticipates a little less income from sustaining and other contributions (down \$26,819) and expenses are expected to increase by \$51,964 over actual of 2019. The gap will be closed by assigning the 2019 surplus to the income and, if necessary, use interest from the investment of the insurance settlement to balance the budget. The 2020 budget is also assisted by use of the special endowment as well as an abatement of principal payments from our loan from the Berkeley Pilgrimage Foundation.

Another important milestone that occurred this year was a final settlement with our insurance carriers. Our total settlement will be \$15.5 million which we've earned \$.3 million of investment income so far. We spent \$4.5 million on repairs to the sanctuary and stabilization of Pilgrim Hall. Another \$1.3 million was spent on lost income, replacement of equipment, temporary services and legal fees. The remaining \$10 million will be used for replacement of the functions lost as a result of the fire in 2016. There is a continuing legal action involving the insurance policy of the roofer that was responsible for the fire. This is expected to be finalized this year. An undetermined amount will be added to our current funds.

Finally, I would like to highlight that our new practice of dedicating the cash and collection to specific causes every Sunday has exceeded the Thrift Shop contributions that it was intended to replace. The last full year of Thrift Shop funding was in 2015 and the total of those grants and special offerings was \$52,388. This year our total was \$67,839. This brings our total benevolences (including budgeted gifts to OCWM) to \$141,412 or 11% of our total operating income. This is a significant marker of a strong and generous church.

Six-Year Stewardship Review

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
A. Pledge Goal	\$650,000	\$650,000	\$738,829	\$833,000	\$830,000	\$711,414
B. Pledge Sunday						
Amount pledged	\$437,750	\$475,071	\$490,969	\$615,623		
# of pledges	122	135	122	126		
Average	\$3,588	\$3,519	\$4,024	\$4,886		
C. Mid January						
Amount pledged	\$648,435	\$632,176	\$698,829	\$812,457	\$772,000	\$682,039
# of pledges	198	194	198	203	186	162
Average	\$3,275	\$3,259	\$3,524	\$4,002	\$4,151	\$4,210
D. Pledge Actual	\$647,307	\$646,590	\$714,419	\$768,154	\$743,837	\$685,732

Endowment Report

FCCB Endowment Report - 2019	1/1/19 Value	Gifts & Bequests	Historic Value	12/31/19 Value	Income Designation
Church Designated Endowments					
Plymouth 1	217,165		not applicable	251,345	University Ministry
General*	861,878		not applicable	997,533	45% capital projects; 45% special ministries
Total Church Designated	1,079,043			1,248,878	
Donor Designated Endowments					
McCall Lecture	50,815		13,000	58,812	Special Lectures
Music Endow.: Leitch, Johnson, Moore	66,699		55,526	77,197	Music Program
Nelson General	93,691		51,955	108,438	Operating Budget
Wagner	19,023		10,000	22,016	Ministry to Seniors
Baldo	40,238		31,322	46,572	Classical Music Event
Browne Barr Seminary Intern	156,275		120,710	180,872	Seminary intern
Drobish-Sanchez-Palmerlee-Apra	94,404		62,861	109,262	Evangelism
Plymouth 2	790,592		687,259	915,026	University Ministry
Buildings/Grounds Maintenance	21,312		20,000	24,666	Buildings & Grounds
Total Donor Designated	1,333,049			1,542,861	
Subtotal General Endowment	2,412,092			2,791,739	
Ministerial Housing Enowment	466,792			564,914	
Total FCCB Endowments	2,878,884			3,356,653	

Operating Budget

This is the fund which we budget every year. The everyday income and outgo associated with the operation of the church. This sheet shows actual income and expenses in various categories for the past several years, and shows for the past year, actual amounts against budgeted amounts. Also, it shows the budget for the coming year. This fund is zeroed out each year.

	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	Over (Under)	2020 Budget
RECEIPTS								
Contributions								
Commitments	646,590	714,419	768,154	743,837	711,414	685,732	(25,682)	677,206
Other Contributions	24,002	41,659	40,927	41,989	25,000	19,311	(5,689)	18,000
Additional Gifts	9,572	14,769	14,823	5,202	8,743	32,482	23,739	15,500
Offering plate	12,908	12,689	10,490					
Total contributions	693,072	783,536	834,394	791,028	745,157	737,525	(7,632)	710,706
Facility Use*	413,213	424,159	280,100	359,452	348,368	361,366	12,998	355,055
Transfers from FCCB funds								
Distrib-Thrift Shop net profits	3,708	3,373	3,600					
Nelson Gen Endow	4,795	4,880	4,804	4,794	4,880	4,880	0	5,048
Endowments to Univ. Min.	51,578	52,497	51,678	51,560	52,634	52,634	0	54,306
Emerging Leaders		10,000	7,500	10,000	8,162	8,162	0	8,421
Browne Barr Intern	5,000							
Music Fund	3,414	3,415	3,420	3,413	3,483	3,483	0	3,594
Special Endowment	20,845	19,883	20,270	20,223	20,645	20,645	0	20,900
Total transfers	89,340	94,048	91,272	89,990	89,804	89,804	0	92,269
Other Income								
Utilities Reimbursement			7,443					
Ins. Proceeds Reimbursement			136,397	167,459				
Interest and Fees		52						
Misc. income/Invest. Interest	2,182		2,865					63,129
Council Contingency			57,838	(1,273)	20,000	20,000	0	19,750
Total other income	2,182	52	204,543	166,186	20,000	20,000	0	82,879
Total receipts	1,197,807	1,301,795	1,410,309	1,406,656	1,203,329	1,208,695	5,366	1,240,909
DISBURSEMENTS								
Operating Expenses								
Personnel*	715,769	819,653	913,465	906,731	802,701	751,302	(51,399)	807,116
Program*	47,357	54,560	74,489	76,930	72,250	70,301	(1,949)	75,450
Administration*	63,931	58,106	64,127	52,692	65,228	63,147	(2,081)	57,400
Church Plant*	298,859	301,610	266,928	287,919	209,169	230,622	21,453	228,222
Total operating expenses	1,125,916	1,233,929	1,319,009	1,324,272	1,149,348	1,115,372	(33,976)	1,168,188
Denomination and Other Support								
Our Church's Wider Mission	65,000	74,000	83,300	74,384	71,141	68,573	(2,568)	67,721
Pacific School of Religion	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	3,000
BOCA	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000				
UCC Strengthen the Church		500	500	500	500	500	0	500
UCC Christmas Fund		500	500	500	500	500	0	500
UCC New Church Starts	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	0	1,000
Total denom/conference support	72,000	82,000	91,300	82,384	76,141	73,573	(2,568)	72,721
Total operating exp. & benevolences	1,197,916	1,315,929	1,410,309	1,406,656	1,225,489	1,188,945	(36,544)	1,240,909
Excess (deficit)	(109)	(14,134)	0	0	(22,160)	19,750	41,910	0

Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balances

This sheet shows our liquid assets, and the various funds in which they are held as balanced against any outstanding liabilities, including the fund balances. The value of the church plant is only shown for the improvements after the fire. Across the top of the page are the broad categories of the funds, and the finer detail shows up on later sheets.

	Budgeted Operations	Activity Funds	Justice + Service Funds	Designated Gift Funds	Plant Funds	Thrift Shop	Fire Insurance	Rebuilding	Univ Funds	Plymouth House	Endow Projects	Endow Funds	Minister Housing	Total All Funds
ASSETS														
Cash, bank and money market accounts at Mechanics Bank & Morgan Stanley/Vanguard	76,974	114,516	23,774	60,197	56,690	21,373	9,302,109	129,247	15,180		95,566	191,303	681	10,087,010
Accounts receivable														
Prepaid Expenses														
<i>Fixed income investments</i>														
Loans														
Equity investments														
Shared appreciation notes														
United Church Funds														
<i>Total equity investments</i>														
Real Estate Improvements														
Sanctuary							3,139,443							3,139,443
Pilgrim Hall							1,234,297							1,234,297
<i>Total assets</i>	76,974	114,516	23,774	60,197	56,690	21,373	13,675,849	129,247	15,180	0	95,566	3,012,747	566,321	17,848,434
LIABILITIES														
Payroll and sales taxes payable														
Suspense/Special Projects CTS	21,204					20,145								41,349
Construction Loan / Payables										1,396,719				1,396,719
Deferred income	55,770													55,770
<i>Total liabilities</i>	76,974					20,145				1,396,719				1,493,838
FUND BALANCES														
Surplus (deficit) from operations										(1,396,719)				(1,396,719)
Real Property Fund														
Restricted gifts & funds allocated		114,516	23,774	60,197	56,690	1,228	13,675,849	129,247	15,180		95,566	221,008	1,407	13,675,849
Undistributed endowment income														496,598
Endowment principal funds														222,415
<i>Total liabilities and fund balances</i>	76,974	114,516	23,774	60,197	56,690	21,373	13,675,849	129,247	15,180	0	95,566	3,012,747	566,321	3,356,653
														17,848,434



Funds

ACTIVITY FUNDS These funds cover activities not included in the operating budget. Balances are carried year to year.

	<u>Start Balance</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>End Balance</u>
Worship & Spiritual Life				
Cazedero All Church Camp	0	6,280	6,431	(151)
Camp Scholarships	1,274	984	2,258	0
Advent Group & Retreat	2,901	440	191	3,150
Parish Nurse	1,141			1,141
Advertising	10,677	4,965	2,737	12,905
Memorial Guild Fund	1,506		60	1,446
Spiritual Training/Direction	4,030		2,075	1,955
Social Action	0	834	834	0
Education				
Winthrop/Youth Fund	1,480		880	600
FamChY Events	1,633	323		1,956
BeFrienders	58			58
Song of the Soul	1,305			1,305
Sunday School	2,770			2,770
Winthrop Work Camp	8,796	4,577	4,883	8,490
Adult Ed Group	2,897			2,897
God Swag	214	317	450	81
Visiting Scholar Fund	4,333		2,400	1,933
Care & Fellowship				
Women's Voices & Retreat	(3,011)	8,198	6,416	(1,229)
Women's Retreat Scholarship	0	1,912	1,912	0
Healing Services	500			500
Men's Group & Retreat	1,441			1,441
Senior Ministries	2,216			2,216
Stewardship, Finance & Administration				
Transitional Tasks	42,727	6,200	5,815	43,112
Church Council				
Council Contingency Fund	20,000	19,750	20,000	19,750
Staff Retreat & Review	2,413	356		2,769
Emergency Preparedness	0	2,559		2,559
Young Adults	1,039	1,111	90	2,060
Background Checks	1,042		240	802
Total Activity Funds	113,382	58,806	57,672	114,516

Note: Some interfund transfers are reflected in receipts on all charts.

DONOR-DESIGNATED FUNDS When money is received for specific purposes, specific funds are established to accomplish those purposes. The names of those funds indicate the purpose. Balances are carried to the next year.

	<u>Start Balance</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>End Balance</u>
Worship & Spiritual Life				
Music Fund	12,949	15,578	15,805	12,722
Flower-Sanctuary Décor	4,250	6,860	7,500	3,610
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	16,826	3,060	3,325	16,561
Senior Minister's Fund	399		399	0
Seminarian Support	592			592
Care & Fellowship				
Open & Affirming	10		10	0
Church Council				
Celebration Fund	25,342	1,620	250	26,712
Total Donor Designated Funds	60,368	27,118	27,289	60,197

Note: Some interfund transfers are reflected in receipts on all charts.

Funds (cont.)

NON-BUDGETED BENEVOLENCE FUNDS These funds represent our outreach activities and benevolences.

	<u>Start Balance</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>End Balance</u>
Justice & Service				
One Great Hour of Sharing	0	1,968	1,968	0
Neighbors in Need	0	1,682	1,682	0
Easter Offering	0	7,395	7,395	0
Christmas Offering	0	10,173		10,173
Justice & Service*	3,896		1,283	2,613
Collection Plate	0	38,253	37,713	540
Food Pantry	30	305	335	0
Welcome Home Baskets	1,116	1,378	1,134	1,360
Christmas Eve Stockings	0	195		195
Mental Health Ministry	249	2,575	245	2,579
2nd Sunday Sandwiches	363	85	190	258
CROP Walk / CWS Hygiene Kits	0	774	774	0
YSA Tiny House Build	0	641	641	0
Kitchen Table Community Ministry	1,620		160	1,460
Homeless Encampment Assistance	0	1,200		1,200
Green Ministry Team	1,580			1,580
Nueva Esperanza Pre-Escolar / Puente	968	297	602	663
Bay Association (Phil's Ordination)	0	918	918	0
Sanctuary Ministry Team	1,153			1,153
Total Non-Budgeted Benevolences	10,975	67,839	55,040	23,774

* See Justice & Service Report for distribution of funds.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS These funds for the needs of our buildings and ground are funded primarily by congregation approved disbursements from endowment income and also by occasional gifts. Balances are carried to the next year.

	<u>Start Balance</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>End Balance</u>
Buildings & Grounds Fund	59,480	22,850	35,640	46,690
Emergency Preparedness	2,559		2,559	0
Building Reserve Fund	10,000			10,000
Library	1,152		1,152	0
Dana Street Landscaping	17,840	7,396	25,236	0
Chancel Furnishings	1,053		1,053	0
Sanctuary Sound System Upgrade	(12,826)	12,826		0
Computers	3,677		3,677	0
Total Building & Grounds Funds	82,935	43,072	69,317	56,690

Note: Some interfund transfers are reflected in receipts on all charts.

A Seeker's Statement

Finding a home in God's wilderness,
we seek to savor God
and magnify the longings of Jesus.

We dare to be uncertain.

Practicing compassion and awakening
conscience,
we bear hope for a suffering world.

In this Spirit, we honor one another
in beloved community.

*Long Range Planning Committee
Fall 2003*

Mission Statement

To bring ourselves and others to God,
and to develop within us spiritual maturity
so that we may be equipped for ministry
in our lives and for mission in the world.

To celebrate the Good News
of God's inclusive love for all people.

We are called to be a community of faith that
invites spiritual transformation through the
power of love, affirmation and inclusion;

to come to know ourselves as whole and healed;
to embrace our unique gifts;

and to act out of gratitude to help create a world
of love, justice and harmony.

With God's love, following the teachings of
Jesus, we recognize and celebrate the diversity
of paths that will fulfill a vision of love and
justice for all the world.

We are called to be a growing and inspired
community, a beacon in the East Bay,
renewing, reaching out, rejoicing.

January 2002

Open and Affirming Statement

We, as a diverse body of believers seeking to live
in the light and image of God in Christ, do affirm:

- that every person has worth as a special and unique creation made in God's image;
- that in the Spirit of love, openness, and inclusiveness we welcome persons of every sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, nationality, ability and age to participate fully in all aspects of the Church's life and ministry;
- that as agents of reconciliation and wholeness we embrace justice and seek to support all who suffer discrimination or who are disenfranchised from the religious community;
- that in light of the gospel we will continue to comprehend and appreciate more fully our differences and gifts;
- that through grace our love for God and neighbor may flourish.

This ONA statement was originally passed by vote of the Congregation on April 2, 1995. It was amended (April 19, 2015) to include the phrases "gender identity" (referring to one's innermost core concept of self which can include male, female, a blend of both or neither, and many more) and "gender expression" (referring to the ways in which one expresses gender identity to others).

WISE Congregation for Mental Health

February 2019

Affirming our faith in a God who lives and is embodied among all peoples, we *Welcome, Include, Support,* and *Engage* all persons with mental health challenges and their loved ones as full participants in the life, work, and leadership of our Church.

Vision Statement

September 2019

We are a community that values radical inclusion and artful worship, where belonging is more important than belief, and joy is a guiding principle. We are a restorative sanctuary for the suffering and weary, a space for creative and contemplative ritual, and a hub for transformative moral action on the justice issues of our day.

Guided by these values, God calls us to:

- Grow in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ
- Provide a diversity of open but distinctly Christian, creative and liberating worship forms to nourish the spiritual lives of the current community and reach new seekers
- Follow Jesus's urging to minister to the "least of these" [Matthew 25] by addressing our region's most visible and urgent human needs: ending homelessness in the East Bay, and its intersecting justice issues

Vision Elaboration

- **Grow in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ**

First Church fosters extravagant welcome, connection/community and compassion. We are called to grow in love with one another, a foundation for living out the teachings of Jesus in the wider world. To do so, we will facilitate small groups, intergenerational engagement, and community spiritual practices that will bond and bind us together.

- **Provide a diversity of open but distinctly Christian, creative and liberating worship forms to nourish the spiritual lives of the current community and reach new seekers**

Less than 3% of Berkeley identifies as mainline Protestant. That leaves many folks unaware of or uninitiated into the richness

of our progressive Christian faith. The UCC Constitution affirms "the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship." We will experiment with new forms of worship to go deeper on our own spiritual journeys, attract newcomers who may have been hurt or excluded by other Christian churches, and pique the interest of those who have never considered Christianity a viable option. The worship experiments may include, but not be limited to:

- worship days and times outside of Sunday morning
- virtual/digital worship and spiritual formation
- lay-led and participatory worship experiences
- outdoor worship
- services geared toward multiple generations/learning styles
- contemplative worship
- cross-cultural worship, and
- spiritual formation on retreat

- **Follow Jesus's urging to minister to the "least of these" [Matthew 25] by addressing our region's most visible and urgent human needs: ending homelessness in the East Bay, and its intersecting justice issues**

The suffering of homeless people is evident on our streets every day. Countless more suffer housing insecurity in less visible ways. We are moved by the teachings of Jesus to respond with love, compassion and generosity. We will join with the wider community (faith communities, non-profit organizations, and government agencies) to educate, advocate, and take action to prevent homelessness, to reduce the suffering it causes, and to restore individuals and families to safe, permanent, dignified shelter.

