

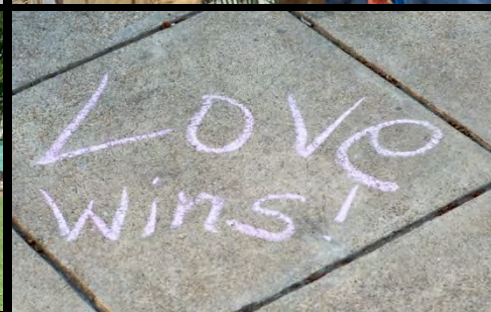
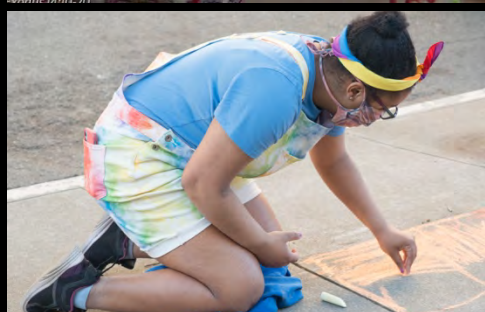


Chat

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Presented at the Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 7, 2021



Mungu ni mwema.
Mungu ni mwema.
Mungu ni mwema,
ni mwema, ni mwema.

Know that God is good.
Know that God is good.
Know that God is good.
God is good, God is good.

First Congregational Church of Berkeley

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Table of Contents

CHURCH OFFICERS	2
MEMBERSHIP.....	5
MINISTRIES	7
ADULT EDUCATION	7
CARE, FELLOWSHIP, & INVITATION	8
FAMILIES, CHILDREN, & YOUTH	9
JUSTICE & SERVICE	10
JUSTICE & SERVICE ACCOUNT SUMMARY	10
<i>Mental Health Ministry Team</i>	12
<i>Green Ministry Team</i>	13
STEWARDSHIP, FINANCE, & ADMINISTRATION	14
WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL LIFE	16
COMMITTEES	17
BLUE FIRE	17
COVENANT & DISCERNMENT	18
INVESTMENT & ENDOWMENT	19
COMMITTEE OF INVOLVEMENT	20
PERSONNEL	20
OFFICERS, MINISTRY, & COMMITTEE MEMBERS and STAFF.....	21
OTHER MINISTRIES	41
AFFORDABLE HOUSING AFICIONADOS	41
AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE	42
MINISTRY PARTNERS	43
BERKELEY PILGRIMAGE FOUNDATION	43
EAST BAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS	44
FINANCIAL REPORTS	45
TREASURER	45
SIX-YEAR STEWARDSHIP REVIEW	46
LEGACY CIRCLE REPORT	47
ENDOWMENT REPORT	47
OPERATING BUDGET	48
STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES	49
FUNDS	50
STATEMENTS	52
A SEEKER’S STATEMENT	52
MISSION STATEMENT	52
OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT	52
WISE CONGREGATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH	53
VISION STATEMENT	53

Church Officers

Moderator

JULIE GREER

Our theme for 2020 was Making Space, a reminder that conflict is normal in any community.



We knew the year would bring many crossroads: striving to live into our Vision Statement, voting on a new building and affordable housing, and facing a national

election unlike any in history. We were urged to remember that trouble “develops passionate patience in us.” My father used to jokingly warn me not to pray for patience, because God would bring me a reason to practice it. While I know God didn’t bring Covid, if there was ever a year custom-designed to develop “passionate patience,” this was it! Who knew that 2020 would bring a global pandemic and a much-needed, much-belated call to racial reckoning? That all of our church functions would have to go virtual? That vital justice and service work would face not only the daunting challenge of ingrained, systemic injustice, but the danger of infection? Or that so many in our church family and our larger community would face economic hardship and deep grief and loss? It is a testament to the talents and perseverance of our staff and congregation that despite all this, we:

- Retired all of the medical debt in Alameda County – along with the support of other churches

- Voted overwhelmingly to approve our new community building and build affordable housing on our campus
- Volunteered for Youth Spirit Artworks’ Tiny House Community for unhoused youth
- Provided food and support for our unhoused neighbors
- Marched in Black Lives Matter protests
- Held a Healthy Congregations workshop
- Retained Public Theologian in Residence Rev. Riana Shaw Robinson, who led us in a Racial Reconciliation workshop (and preached some amazing sermons!)
- Started a Racists Anonymous group
- Held a trans/non-binary Support Circle

And all this while moving our whole church online!

It is difficult to feel a sense of accomplishment in a time of such suffering. But I have never been more grateful for our church family than I have this year, and I have deep gratitude for the love and support of our church staff and council members for guiding us through this time. I look forward with hope nourished by the knowledge that the Holy Spirit has been, and is still, guiding us forward into a bright, new, and very different year.

Moderator Elect

SARA WOODS

As Moderator Elect, I had the privilege of collaborating and learning with Julie



Greer, our esteemed Moderator, over the past year. It has been a gift to have comfort, ease, and trust grow as our church faced many pivots due to the pandemic-driven public health crisis.

This has been an unusual year and

many of the activities and touchstones were recreated in an online format or sacrificed as we faced tests in our daily lives. We have been shown new ways to gather online for worship and Zoom church meetings, which have stretched our learning edges as a community. We have grieved the loss of physical proximity and connectedness as a church community, and the events that cannot happen like shared meals, singing and praying together, and gathering in the comfort and familiarity of our sanctuary. While at the same time, we continued

forward with hope and joy toward visions we hold for our future together as a church community. The congregation voted on a plans to rebuild our campus and imagine possibilities into a brave and new future.

In September, we enrolled 27 church members and leaders to a daylong training conducted by 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. We look forward to integrating skills and tools provided to help our church family promote healthy communication, conflict-resolution, and deepen our spiritual relationships to each other and ourselves. We explored the information in small groups and in Church Council meetings and will continue to do so in 2021.

I look forward to what will be revealed in the new year. This past year was incredibly challenging, yet I am filled with so much gratitude to have spent it with all of you!



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:
At its April

meeting, the Church Council voted to:

- Retire the remaining principal balance on its loan from Berkeley Pilgrimage Foundation, drawing from the insurance settlement proceeds funds.
- Affirm the plan proposed by the Personnel Committee to convene a committee to hire an Acting Associate Minister to cover Rev. Kit's family leave and Molly's sabbatical.
- Apply for a PPP loan and to accept if we are offered it.
- Endorse the Blue Fire Committee recommendations 1) to build a replacement building on the site of Pilgrim Hall and 2) to choose an affordable housing developer and sell or long-term lease land now serving as part of our parking lot. (The third recommendation, to repay the BPF loan, had already been voted on.)

At its May meeting, the Church Council voted to affirm the document prepared by

the Ministry of Stewardship, Finance, and Administration as support for the church's acceptance of the PPP loan.

In May, the congregation voted by mail to approve the Blue Fire recommendations. The Church Council at its August meeting voted to approve members of the Affordable Housing Committee, and at its September meeting voted to approve the charge to that committee. The charge includes:

- Evaluate options for the development of affordable housing on the northwest corner of our campus.
- Be mindful of First Church's mission and vision, the potential for income generation to sustain the church well into the future, and ways that we can help carry out God's vision for our wider community.
- Work with affordable housing developers and other experts and represent the church through the process.
- Check in with the congregation at key touchpoints and present recommendations for approval.

At its November meeting, the Church Council voted to approve the option of electronic ballots for future congregational votes. Members not opting-in to electronic ballots will be sent paper ballots.



Membership

Members Received 2020

Affirmation/

Reaffirmation

Jennifer Armstrong
David Armstrong
Megan Bates
Winnie Boyle
Nancy Campbell
Sol Chang
Joey Gottbrath
Suzanne Harkless
Lee Heuermann
Rev. Dr. Diane Johnson
Zhekun Luo
Solomon Nichols
Chilezie Nnadi
Kenji Oshima
Kenneth Tyler
Katie Wagner

Associate Member

Sara Fread
Sam Kanenwisher
Susan Webb

Friend

Paul C.
Ann N.
Sean Poust

Letter of Transfer

Gail Poust

Reinstatement

Cathie Winks

Child Baptism

Lucille Sarah Huber
Chima Nnadi
Salvatore Ariel Boyer Sepe

Members Lost in 2020

Associate Member or Friend (Moved Out of State or Dropped)

Đào Thái (Dat)

Became Inactive

Phil Atkins-Pattenson
Wendy Atkins-Pattenson
Todd Bertani
Tim Buckwalter
Nicki Choi
David Coates
Margaret Copeland
Janet Huseby
Ken Koretz
Linda Koretz
Thom Lawson
Bill Lynch

Shelly Lynch
Chinh Nguyen
Dina Rasor
Robert Smith
Liz Tuan
Bert Tuan

Requested Inactive Status

Barbara Addicott
Barbara Beck
Amy Charles
Cynthia Lloyd
Elaine Munroe

Transfer of Membership

Aimee Giles
Joan Halperin
Joe Hesse
Susan Russell
Michelle Sepe
Julie Stokstad
Bob Stokstad

Withdrew at Their Own

Request

Jane Arc
Dane Isaac

In Memoriam

Martha Anderson (3/26/2020)
William (Bill) Clemens (11/17/2020)
Phyllis Fleischer (8/19/2020)
Robert Huston (1/4/2020)
Richard Morrish (5/7/2020)
Isabel Pagano (9/30/2020)
Richard Schellhase (2/23/2020)
Susan Stangeland (11/30/2020)
Constance Wilkins (12/13/2020)

Six-Year Membership Report						
GAINS	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
By Baptism/Confession	1	4	1	2	0	0
By Confirmation	3	0	0	7	0	0
By Affirmation/ Reaffirmation of Faith	9	9	10	9	10	16
By Letter of Transfer	7	15	4	9	1	1
By Reinstatement	0	0	0	2	2	1
Assoc. or Friend to Full Membership	1	0	0	1	0	0
Friend	0	2	1	0	0	3
Voted in by CF&I	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	21	30	16	29	13	21
Associate Member Received	1	3	4	1	2	3
Total Gains	22	33	20	31	15	24
LOSSES	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
By Death	-7	-12	-5	-6	-4	-9
By Letter of Transfer	-5	-3	-6	-4	-3	-7
Joined Other Church/Withdrew at Own Request/Requested Inactive Status	-1	-1	-5	-3	-6	-7
Placed on Inactive	-1	-15	-35	-9	-10	-18
Membership Withdrawn	-1	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Member or Friend Dropped	-2	-1	-3	0	-5	-1
Total Losses	-17	-32	-54	-22	-28	-42
Audit Correction	0	-60	0	0	0	0
Net Gain/Loss	5	1	-34	9	-13	-18
Membership at Year End	496	435	401	410	397	379
Average Weekly Attendance by Month	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	241	216	168	205	155	166
February	250	259	176	197	181	163
March	267	302	193	228	170	*154
April	374	180	227	242	338	151
May	185	265	191	191	164	155
June	134	165	195	149	151	152
July	217	167	178	156	157	173
August	174	195	166	144	147	160
September	186	205	185	174	153	161
October	221	256	234	170	145	134
November	269	213	187	184	162	133
December	337	340	333	361	340	224

*Attendance from March through December 2020 shows Sunday morning “live” views on Facebook, YouTube & Vimeo combined. The numbers reflect **single viewers only** and don’t account for multiple viewers per screen, so we believe these numbers to be **lower** than the actual number of viewers.

Ministries

Adult Education Ministry

RON ELSDON, CHAIR

Building on interests expressed by congregation members in a recent survey, the Adult Education Ministry focused on three primary interconnected areas:



- Social justice
 - Theological & spiritual exploration
 - Artistic expression.
- Learning Hour

facilitators included speakers from inside and outside the congregation to draw on breadth of knowledge and experience, and to provide variety and stimulate interest. While the Learning Hours at the beginning of the year were held in person, we moved to Zoom sessions in the second quarter when in-person gathering was no longer possible due to the virus.

Social justice topics included: healthcare justice, exploring the Democratic primary, learning about the needs of the trans community, financial wholeness, environmental issues, the virus and society, medical ethics, an Ethiopian village nonprofit, ballot initiatives, the Poor People's Campaign, and a nonprofit working

with those who are homeless. Theological and spiritual exploration included: the sacrament of communion, transforming communities, dealing with stress, and emotional maturity. Artistic expression included: poetry, learning to see through photography (this led to the formation of an ongoing small group), and thinking about beauty and justice.

Our predecessor chairperson, Judy Huston, was most helpful making the transition easy and providing a strong foundation on which to build. Our ministry appreciates Robin Kempster and the Mental Health Ministry Team for their mental health forums, and Louise Halsey and Ben McKnight for scheduling and publicizing our Zoom sessions. We are grateful for the energy and enthusiasm of ministry members and Learning Hour presenters, and the active participation of congregation members, who made the Learning Hour sessions enjoyable and informative.

Members of the Adult Education Ministry were: Jim Alnas-Benson, Kelly Colwell, Linda Elsdon, Ron Elsdon, Christina Hutchins, Jesse Lofland, Kit Novotny, and Reuben Shank. We welcome Zhekun Luo and Willem VandeKamp in 2021.



Care, Fellowship, & Invitation Ministry

SUSAN GREEF & ALAN MILLER, CO-CHAIRS

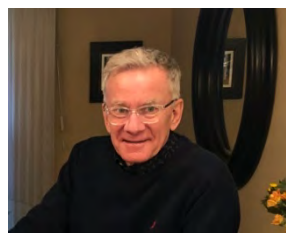
The Ministry of Care, Fellowship, and Invitation (CF&I) provides ministry to promote a welcoming and inviting presence for all who cross the threshold of our church, and to provide acts of hospitality and care for the First Church community and beyond.



In ordinary times, CF&I members staff the Welcome Table in order to provide friendly and appreciative welcome, answers to questions, and materials to enhance spiritual growth. We also coordinate with all ministry leaders to provide greeters who offer welcome before worship to those who enter our sanctuary. Additional CF&I activities include coordinating our dedicated team of After Party Soup Makers and coordinating festive treats at Easter and Christmas.

This year, of course, we could not engage in any of these activities in the same way as usual. We did, however, continue to meet virtually to support one another and develop creative ways to continue to offer

hospitality to our community. We began a Virtual Welcome Table Zoom session every



Sunday before worship and we took on the Meal Train coordination. As well, Helen Walsh began research on how we may provide closed captions for the Sunday Worship service broadcast.

As part of our duties as outlined in the Church Bylaws, we worked with staff to affirm their recommendation to place identified members on inactive status. (This action is taken infrequently and follows numerous attempts to contact members who have not been in contact with the church community for some time.)

The efforts, optimism, and support of our ministry members helped ease the anxiety of this hard year and reinforced our dedication to hospitality, whatever form it takes! Thanks to members Pat Pratt, Helen Walsh, Andy Young, Kate Lucchese and staff members, Louise Halsey and Kathy Helliesen.



Families, Children, & Youth Ministry

JEANNE STRAUSS, CHAIR

The beginning of 2020 promised many engaging events for families, children, and youth at First Church, starting with an



Epiphany Pageant in January and a Mardi Gras event in February. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic and the Shelter-in-Place order that began in March, the Families, Children & Youth

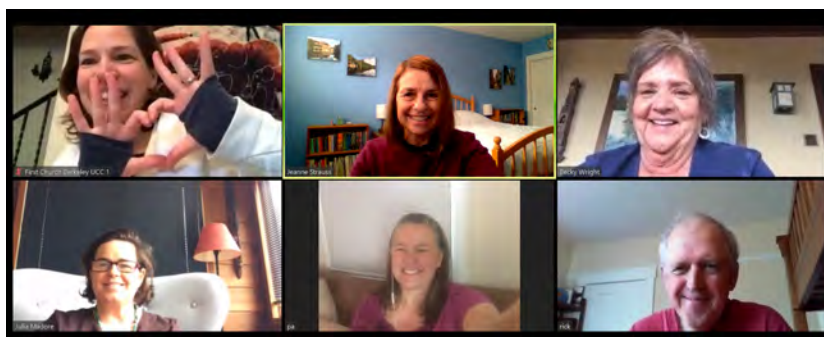
(FamChY) Ministry's plans have been sharply curtailed. Rather than meeting monthly, the ministry has met as a whole (online via Zoom) every 2-3 months, with coordination via email at other times.

We are grateful to Carolyn Ash, Families' and Children's Program Director, for her creative methods in teaching Sunday School remotely, providing Children's Moment videos for worship, and serving our community in many other ways during this challenging era. Sara Fread, Director of Youth Ministries, has likewise kept our youth engaged online in weekly YES and Winthrop gatherings, as well as in a multi-church Confirmation program for high school youth. Together, Carolyn and Sara also wrote, produced, and directed our 2021 Zoom Epiphany Pageant!

We've continued our monthly Parent Circle, a drop-in support group facilitated by licensed therapists, moving it to an online format, and in September, church member Emma S added a Baby and Toddler Parent Group, a monthly online social gathering for parents of children under age 5. FamChY has also supported the Accompaniment Team as it provides for a Honduran immigrant family, and Youth Spirit Artworks in its Tiny House Project for unhoused youth and young adults.

FamChY coordinated an outdoor, in-person event (with masks required) for All Saints' Day, November 1. Dubbed "Some Saints Scavenger Hunt," children and families explored symbols and teachings of historical and modern saints of many faiths, while finding answers to clues at various stations. Children and youth also participated in the Hanging of the Greens for Advent and Christmas, including additional outdoor decorations.

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



Justice & Service Ministry

JOSEPH LIVINGSTON & STEVE SPIELMAN, CO-CHAIRS

The Justice & Service Ministry continued to use the weekly collection plate as our income source to fund worthy nonprofit organizations. The funded organizations were encouraged to provide speakers to speak about the work of their organization during the Invitation to the Offering moment during worship.



Justice & Service continued to support the following Ministry Teams: Green, Diversity,



Kitchen, Sanctuary, and Mental Health Ministry Teams. Steve Spielman was named co-chair. Thank you to Ministry members Alice

Clark, Carolyn Cox, Mary Fujii, Hope Hilton, and Karlene Roberts.

Justice & Service Account Summary

Benevolences in 2020

Special Offerings 2020

March	One Great Hour of Sharing	\$100
	Neighbors in Need (part of Christmas Offering)	
	Total Special Offering 2020	\$100

Collection Plate 2020

<u>Month</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Total</u>
January	Alameda County Food Bank	\$3,023
2/2	Youth Alive!	\$663
2/9	Ministerio Latino	\$1,005
2/16 & 23	Pastoral Emergency Fund	\$2,401
March & 4/5	RIP Medical Debt	\$20,598
April: Easter	Pastoral Emergency Fund	\$5,020
4/19 & 26 and 5/3 & 10	CROP Walk	\$3,341
5/17, 24 & 31	Bethlehem Lutheran - New Orleans	\$3,070
June	Inter Mov for Hum Integ (IM4HI)	\$1,260
	Nueva Esperanza Accompaniment Team	\$5,103
July	BUSD Homeless Families	\$5,634
August	Ethiopian Village Schools	\$3,900

September	BOSS	\$3,538
October	Women's Daytime Drop-In Center	\$3,050
	2020 Wildfire Response	\$50
November	Trinity Center	\$3,715
December	Pastoral Emergency Fund	\$5,643
December: Christmas	Berkeley Food & Housing	\$2,334
	Neighbors in Need	\$2,333
	Water for South Sudan	\$2,333
	Total Collection Plate 2020	\$78,014

Additional Offerings 2020

Feb	Singing Hope	\$3,000
Feb	Bay Association Kelly's ordination	\$364
March	CROP Walk	\$100
March - May	Homeless Encampments	\$120
Oct - Dec	Mindful Self Compassion	\$1,125
Dec	Christmas Eve Totes	\$1,360
all year	Pastoral Emergency Fund	\$451
all year	Accompaniment Team	\$7,575
	Total Additional Offering 2020	\$14,095
Subtotal:	Designated Charitable Gifts 2020	\$92,209

Budgeted Benevolence 2020

	UCC: Our Church's Wider Mission	\$65,695
	Pacific School of Religion	\$3,000
	UCC: New Church Starts	\$1,000
	UCC: Strengthen the Church	\$500
	UCC: Christmas Fund	\$500
	Total Budgeted Benevolence 2020	\$70,695
	Grand Total 2020	\$162,904

(15% increase from 2019)



Mental Health Ministry Team

ROBIN KEMPSTER, PARISH NURSE

The Mental Health Ministry Team began 2020 with enthusiasm and energy. We had two Mental Health/Adult Education Forums (Expressive & Arts Therapy; Journey into Music) and continued with the monthly Mental Health Spiritual Support Group. We



practiced Companionship on Sundays, offering spiritual practices to welcome and engage people at church.

With the social distancing brought on by the pandemic, we took a 6-month hiatus. At that point, realizing that this distancing would continue, we began monthly planning meetings. This has been a time to gather together and brainstorm our next steps. Ideas that are developing/in progress include:

- **Survey:** steps have started to develop a congregational survey to determine programming plans for Mental Health Forums, which will be offered every-other month starting in January 2021.
- **Points of Connection:** a listing of ongoing church activities that are open to everyone. The goal is to make it easy for our community to see the many opportunities being offered at church. Content will include the title and description of each activity, day/time, Zoom link, and contact person.
- **Postcards:** a monthly postcard sent during the time of social distancing. The themes are Faith, Hope, Love, and Beauty, and the image and message reflect these themes.

The Mental Health Ministry Team is grateful for the ongoing support of both our church community and our clergy.



So I say to you, walk with the wind,
siblings, and let the spirit of peace
and the power of everlasting love
be your guide.

John Lewis

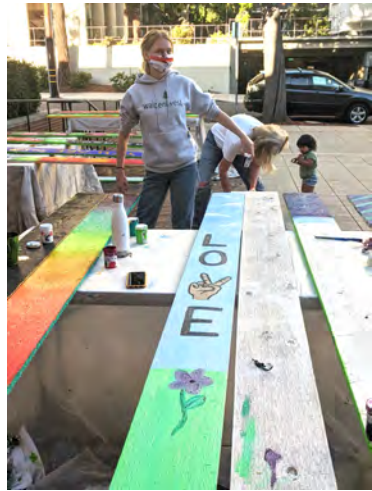
photo by Linda Eldon

Green Ministry Team

EMMA FUJII, CHAIR

Early in the year the Green Ministry Team hosted an informational Green Table at the After Party and encouraged our community to bring their own reusables to help cut our waste from disposables. We also started on greening up our bathrooms

with compost only and landfill specific bins. Since going virtual we held a Zoom-based Learning Hour on climate change and started regularly sharing Green Tips in the *Carillon*, Sunday announcements, and Facebook community group.



Stewardship, Finance, & Administration Ministry

NICK KUKULAN & AMY HIESTAND, CO-CHAIRS

The “Year of COVID 19” has been one like no other, and members of the Stewardship, Finance, & Administration (SF&A) Ministry met regularly throughout the year on Zoom calls to continue the important work of tracking First Church’s finances, and working collaboratively with our Business Manager, Kit Dunbar, and Treasurer Moe Wright. Great thanks go to them and to Rev. Molly for their guidance, communication, and cooperation throughout the year. Also, thanks to Bruce McNaught for his continued maintenance of the church campus during this extended period since shelter-in-place, and to Amare for care of our church campus.



Stewardship

In June, we participated in the 3-part virtual “Last Wishes” workshop series, hosting Rev. Andy DeBraber from the National UCC office to present on planned giving, and we updated the church website with many new resources on stewardship and the church’s Legacy Circle. Learn more about the Legacy Circle in the Endowment section of this annual report!

The Fall Stewardship campaign “Now More than Ever” kicked off in August with a focus on how important our church has become during this unprecedented year, and how sustaining giving enables our church to continue its mission and ministries. Our deep gratitude goes to all the members and friends of this church community who provided financial support in 2020 and all

those who have committed to being sustaining givers in 2021, allowing First



Church to be a dynamic and living force in our world. Like last year, SF&A members faithfully took up the challenge of contacting, encouraging, and

thanking fellow members to join the campaign. We are also humbled and so grateful for the generosity of longtime sustaining members who died this past year and whose passing gives us an opportunity to reflect on our own sustaining giving as an act of faith and support of First Church.

Finance

The “Year of COVID 19” brought financial uncertainties and challenges to which SF&A members attended with church staff, carefully tracking monthly financial statements with the budget, and lending support and encouragement to adjustments that could be considered during the year. Major concerns addressed were the loss of income from room rentals, which represents an important part of church income, and the uncertainty of how COVID would impact members’ sustaining giving for those who lost jobs or suffered from reduced income, and for those who missed in-person church. SF&A members took the lead in recommending to the Congregation that the church pay off the \$1.4 million loan owed to the Berkeley Pilgrimage Foundation (the original 2014 loan funds were used to make major improvements to

the Durant side of the campus). A careful analysis showed that pay-off in 2020 would save \$477K over the remaining term of the loan through 2034. The Congregation approved and the note was paid off in April.

In 2020, we budgeted a deficit of \$63K, and this deficit increased with the income impacts previously stated. A federal government PPP loan was applied for and received, and this helped significantly to support payroll and address the loss of income. Fortunately, with the PPP loan and significant savings on our operating expenses, 2020 ended up with a surplus that will be added to the Council Contingency fund. This surplus will be an important piece in helping to balance the 2021 budget, which again will suffer from a major decline in room use income due to COVID. A budget sub-committee of SF&A worked in the fall with Kit, Molly, and Moe on the 2021 budget. There is a constant effort to carefully evaluate our expenses to make sure they are realistic and economical. SF&A 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 SF&A. We start out the year listing current and prospective projects on the campus; many of these are in process for several years. SF&A members assist with

moving these projects along to completion. This year, notable activities were/are:

- Installed improved lighting to Sanctuary exit stairs and parking lot.
- The First Church entrance sign was installed and operating.
- The Dana Street strip welcomed two large oak trees planted in February by a large group of volunteers prior to the shutdown. In November and December, Bruce and Nick set in two sections of bricks salvaged from the Large Assembly Chimney demolition. The final addition of two benches will be installed by Roger Bash.
- 16 toilet “no hands” foot pedal flush units and toilet seat covers were installed in the Hall of Entrance, EBSB and Durant House by volunteers Charles, Moe, Tim, and Nick.
- Bruce took on the garden maintenance. A campus-wide mulch and soil amendment project was completed to keep the campus looking well-cared for.
- A water bottle filler unit was installed in the Hall of Entrance to replace drinking fountains that are off-limits in COVID time.
- Bruce installed a new linoleum floor in the Hall of Entrance Kitchen.

Members: Pam VandeKamp, Tim Specht, Charles Taylor, Diana Graham, Becky Smith, Felicia Bellows; Treasurer: Moe Wright; Staff: Kit Dunbar and Rev. Molly Baskette.



Worship & Spiritual Life Ministry

STAN BOGHOSIAN, CHAIR

The Worship & Spiritual Life (W&SL) Ministry, also known as the Deacons, seeks to support the spiritual life of our church community.



The after-church chancel communions, a responsibility of the Deacons, went this year to a Zoom format. In her role as

a Deacon, Nancy DeNero both organized communion officiants and hosted the chancel communion Zoom sessions.

“Operation Love Notes” (OLN), another Deacons’ responsibility, has been a quarterly event inviting church members to send love and encouragement to those in our congregation dealing with bereavement or health issues. In the past, we provided note-writing materials at the After Party so that congregation members could write the notes. With the shift to virtual After Parties, we wrote the notes ourselves. In addition, during this year of school closures, we extended the congratulations of our community through written notes to our high school and college graduates.

In non-Covid times, the Deacons have also (1) assisted the ministers at the memorial services of members who

have passed, and (2) organized the “altar-guild” persons who have adorned the altar each Sunday. These functions have ceased during the Covid period.

We also sought to understand the spiritual needs of our community. As an aid for that focus, we used our church Vision Statement and the Church Engagement Survey that Kit Novotny distributed mid-year. As a means of providing some sense of the physical church, we suggested that candles with the a photo of our rose window be given to church members to take home for use during the online services. Thankfully, Kelly Coldwell took up our suggestion and provided the candles plus their means of distribution.

The members of W&SL are Loi Almeron, Stan Boghosian (chair), Emily Carduff, Nancy DeNero, Janet Eadie, Craig Pratt, Carolyn Thiessen, Ken Tyler, Willem VandeKamp. Revs. Kit and Kelly have served as our staff liaison.



Committees

Blue Fire Committee

SCOTT SPORTE, CHAIR

The church's recovery from the 2016 fire saw significant progress in 2020. The Fire Recovery Committee successfully concluded months of negotiation to recover a portion of the church's uninsured fire loss from the roofing company believed to be responsible for the fire. The church received \$522,000 from the roofer's insurer.

The Blue Fire Committee began 2020 with the conclusion that insurance proceeds would be insufficient to rebuild Pilgrim Hall as it used to be, but we worked through the spring to evaluate different scenarios that meet our future needs that fit our budget and help generate income for the church. In May we presented for congregational approval a conceptual design for a somewhat smaller Pilgrim Hall that includes a Large Assembly, office and classroom space, kitchen and beautiful outdoor courtyard. At the same time, Blue Fire recommended that the church pursue

conversion of the northwest corner of its property to affordable housing that will generate income for the church and meet a critical community need.

The committee is working with the architects, cost estimators, and consultants to finalize a plan that will meet both our budget and our needs. We are simultaneously working through the city's permit review process with a hope to have a building permit by the middle of 2021. We continue to be excited about our progress and optimistic that we are closing in on final plans.

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



Artist's rendering of the new Pilgrim Hall

Covenant & Discernment Committee

ROD MACKENZIE, CHAIR

The Covenant & Discernment Committee is under the umbrella of the Ministry of Worship & 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 a First Church 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 Hope Hilton.

First Church also forms and maintains three and four-way covenants with church 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; and Ben Bigney, Spiritual Care Counselor for Hospice of the East Bay.

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

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



Investment & Endowment Committee

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

In the 2020 Year of Covid19, the equities and bond markets rode a roller coaster of downs and ups and great uncertainty. The Federal Reserve set interests rates at close to zero and this meant that bonds with

higher yields had increases in values, but new bonds both short and longer term had very low yields. Bonds did continue to provide stability to portfolios with equities moving in major downs and ups. Likely many investors moved to equities in search of yield without regard to volatility.

The General Endowment had a total return of 11.2% for 2020, and finished the year with a market value of \$3,358,114, which was \$351 thousand above the 12/31/2019 value. There were three gifts from Legacy Circle donors during 2020, summing to \$187 thousand.

The Housing Endowment had a return of 11.3% for 2020 and ended the year with a value of \$639,965, an increase of \$74 thousand from 12/31/2019.

To put the Combined Endowment Funds values in perspective:

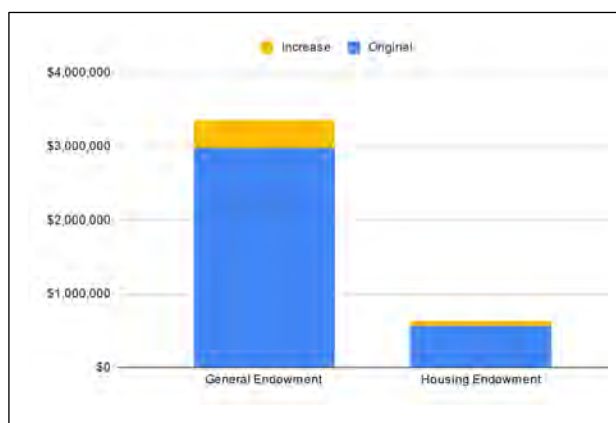
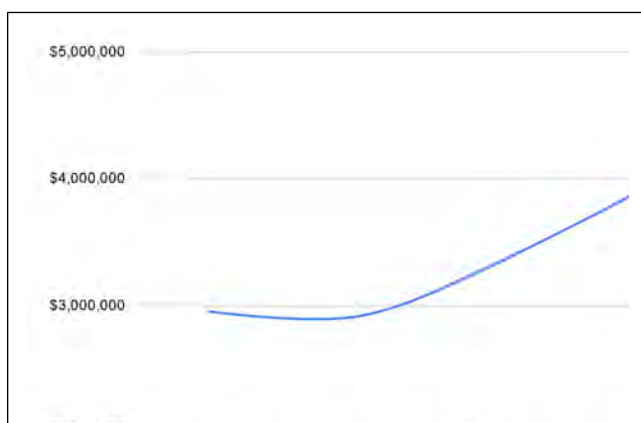
12/31/2020 \$3,998,077

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

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

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

Members of the committee for 2020: Nick Kukulán, Nathan Hood, Bob Helliesen and Moe Wright, Treasurer.



Committee of Involvement

BRIAN HAUCK, 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 2021.

Committee members who participated include Phil Adams, Leonard Ash, Molly Baskette, Kit Dunbar, Amy Hiestand, Judy Huston, Janet McDonald, Alan Miller, Emma S, and Linda Sawyer.



Personnel Committee

RON ELSDON, CHAIR

Members of the Personnel Committee worked well together to address the committee's role of guiding personnel-related policy, supporting staff processes including reviews as appropriate, and being available as a resource should staff need an additional sounding board.

Elizabeth Driver-Bucholtz spearheaded a committee to identify and hire our acting associate minister to cover sabbatical and staff leave in 2020 and 2021. Other committee members addressed staff processes and responsibilities, our senior pastor's annual review, and evolving staffing needs during the pandemic.

We are grateful for the partnership with the Stewardship, Finance, & Administration Ministry, and Kit Dunbar's support, in creating a 2021 personnel budget that incorporates staffing needs and priorities. We appreciate Louise Halsey's scheduling of our Zoom meetings. We look forward to continuing to build a strong foundation of support by the Personnel Committee in the coming year.

Members of the Personnel Committee were: Molly Baskette, Elizabeth Driver-Bucholtz, Mike Casendino, Ron Elsdon, Kara Korbelt-Chinula, and Emma S.

Officers, Ministry, & Committee Members for 2021

OFFICERS	(terms end Jan. 2022)	(terms end Jan. 2023)	Council Rep.
Moderator	Sara Woods		Sara Woods
Moderator Elect	Hope Hilton		Hope Hilton
Clerk	Linda Sawyer		Linda Sawyer
Treasurer	Moe Wright		Moe Wright
Council at Large (no specified term)	Helen Walsh	Jacki Dennis Jeanne Strauss	

MINISTRIES	(terms end Jan. 2022)	(terms end Jan. 2023)	Council Rep.
Care, Fellowship, & Invitation (CFI), <i>Susan Greef & Alan Miller, Co-Chairs</i>			
	Susan Greef	Kenji Oshima	Alan Miller
	Kate Lucchese	Patricia Pratt	
	Alan Miller	Helen Walsh	
		Andy Young	

Adult Education, <i>Ron Elsdon, Chair</i>			
	Jim Alnas-Benson	Linda Elsdon	Ron Elsdon
	Ron Elsdon	Christina Hutchins	
		Zhekun Luo	
		Willem VandeKamp	

Families, Children, & Youth (FamChY), <i>Julia Madore, Chair</i>			
	Rick Ayer	Julia Madore	Julia Madore
	Paula Poremba	Jim Marrone	
		Louise Specht	
		Andrea Trexler	
		Pam VandeKamp	
		Becky Wright	

Justice & Service, <i>Steve Spielman, Chair</i>			
	Hope Hilton	Phil Adams	Steve Spielman
	Karlene Roberts	Kerrie Hein	
	Steve Spielman	Nori Kobayashi	
		Maureen Prochaska	
		Drew Sperling	

Stewardship, Finance, & Administration (SFA)			
Nick Kukulan, Chair	Felicia Bellows	Nancy Campbell	Nick Kukulan
	Diana Graham	Nathan Hood	
	Amy Hiestand	Bob Helliesen	
	Becky Smith	Nick Kukulan	
		Charles Taylor	

Officers, Ministry, & Committee Members for 2021

MINISTRIES	(terms end Jan. 2022)	(terms end Jan. 2023)	Council Rep.
Worship & Spiritual Life (Deacons), <i>Stan Boghosian, Chair</i>			
	Emily Carduff	Loi Almeron	Stan Boghosian
	Janet Eadie	Stan Boghosian	
	Carolyn Thiessen	Nancy DeNero	
	Kenneth Tyler	Julie Greer	
		Craig Pratt	
COMMITTEES*			
Long Range Planning, <i>Kara Korbel-Chinula, Chair</i>		Investment	
Megan Bates		Bob Helliesen	
Sol Chang		Nathan Hood	
Julie Greer		Nick Kukulan	
Hope Hilton		Moe Wright, Treasurer	
Diane Johnson			
Rowan Peterson			
Laura Peticolas			
Sara Woods			
DELEGATES (no specified terms)		COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL*	
Ben Bigney		Personnel	
Richard Brabham		Mike Casendino	
Sara Fread		Elizabeth Driver-Bucholtz	
Hope Hilton		Ron Elsdon, Chair	
Jeanne Strauss		Kara Korbel-Chinula	
		Emma S	
		Endowment	
		Amy Hiestand	
		Charles Taylor	

Staff

Senior Minister

REV. MOLLY BASKETTE

Beloved Church,

How do you sum up what 2020 has meant for us, physically, spiritually, philosophically, and practically?



In the popular parlance: it was a dumpster fire. Here in California, we are growing used to disasters of

epic proportions: living as we do on two fault lines, in wildfire country, in a politically electric region, we are perhaps more awake, aware, and prepared than others for whatever may come (and we have the go-bags to prove it).

But now the rest of the world knows what it feels like when the whole world is burning down, whether that burning is a novel coronavirus pandemic that has so far claimed 330,000 lives in the US alone; violent white supremacy asserting itself everywhere from our city streets to the White House and Congress; or the increasingly obvious effects of global climate chaos, manifest in the worst wildfire season in California's modern history.

Through it all, we have resisted, persisted, adapted, and transformed. We continue to rebuild from ashes, to take care of one another, to create new forms for worship, and to render audible and visible the presence of God in the midst of calamity.

As of this writing, no one in our congregation has died of COVID-19, a great blessing. In a year when many faith communities and their leaders have made specious claims of God's protection from the virus and continued to gather in person with fatal results, our luck and blessing is not due to God's favor, but due to following the best advice of epidemiologists and public health officials in maintaining social distancing, basic hygiene, promoting the wearing of masks, and keeping Sunday morning and other special worship services virtual, starting back in early March. Science is one of the great gifts of God.

Our congregation understands that church is the people and not the building – a catchphrase we started using after the fire in 2016, and a reality we have been living into since. Since our people are our greatest treasure, it depends upon us to continue to love one another by not spreading disease.

We are so grateful that we were ready for this pandemic because of several adaptive changes we had already made over the previous several years: a new AV team led by the amazing Zach Miley brought the worship livestream into our homes with minimal disruption and, all things considered, very few technical challenges. The new website and digital Carillon created by our Communications Specialist Ben McKnight meant that it was easy to keep people informed of happenings, and Ben and others assisted those who were tech-challenged to stay connected to church community via Zoom and web as we

moved into a very long season of stay home orders and deep isolation. Moving primarily to electronic giving meant that we had stable income to keep supporting our staff and programming. The neighborhood potluck groups we started a couple of years ago transformed into mini-communities of mutual aid, offering Zoom happy hours, weekly letters of encouragement and prayerful support from our neighborhood captains, and dropoff points for everything from emergency toilet paper to Palm Sunday palms and consecrated candles. Thank you to ALL of you, staff and lay, who have taken a role in building community during Pandemic Church, and to Louise Halsey in particular, who has been the heart of our “neighborhood captain” operations.

In September 2019, we passed a three-part vision, that included as one element “creating new and liberating worship forms to nourish the current community and reach new seekers,” including digital worship. Nothing has fostered our efforts in this direction like the pandemic! From the Daily Digital Divines we did at the beginning of the pandemic, to Taizé, Resonance, and Sunday morning worship moving online, to the Christmas Eve CityWalk podcast and services, our worship services are both more accessible to all, and more inclusive, drawing on the spirit and joy and skill of more of our church children and youth (Lego videos and Zoom skits!), more of the wisdom and warmth of our elders (children’s sermons and spiritual stories!), and everyone in between. I describe what we do now on Sunday mornings to my secular friends as a “kind of sacred Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood variety show.”

If the social media analytics are to be believed, our worship services are reaching more people than ever. Worship

attendance “live” is up about 50% over in-person church with people watching on 140 screens (assuming 1.5 people per screen), and by the Tuesday following worship we usually have at least 500 views. When pandemic public health orders still allowed, we also did a few outdoor worship services in backyards and on the church lawn that have given us a template for the future. I have enormous gratitude for the entire worship team for their hard work and adaptability this year, especially Derek (taking choir and all of our music offerings digital is a lot of work! Besides the many other ways he steadies our church), Liz (a cheerful, deeply faithful and inspiring presence at the organ), and Amar (all 9 of him in our restorative postludes!).

Another commitment in our vision was to deeper intimacy in the weird and wonderful Body of Christ. The pandemic, political polarization & its chaos monsters, systemic racism and police brutality, wildfires, and all the attendant stresses of this imperfect storm have broken us open. We are more aware than ever of our need for each other, and more willing to share our vulnerability. From tears and emotional support at our Sunday Zoom After Party, to time together in prayer at Pastor’s weekly office hours, to the tenderness of Taizé worship, Monday Night Meditation or the Motley Few Fridays, to our Advent Retreat and Blue Christmas Zooms, we have ample opportunities to continue to deepen relationships with God and with each other. The third and final commitment in our 5-year vision was toward ending homelessness in the East Bay. We made several big moves in this realm, even given the upending nature of the pandemic when we might have gotten off track. We made a personal stake to work to end the

affordable housing crisis when 93% of us voted in June to develop the northwest corner of our property as affordable housing over the next few years. We made a commitment as a congregation to endorse Measure W, a new sales tax to raise over \$150 million annually to end homelessness, and the ballot measure squeaked through with a slim majority thanks in part to phone calls by church members and the herculean efforts of Moe Wright for many years to support this initiative. And back in Lent, we were the lead givers in a campaign to retire \$4.7 million in medical debt, a chief driver of homelessness, in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

Along with our decision to build affordable housing, we also voted to tear down what remains of Pilgrim Hall after the 2016 fire, and build a new, smaller, more efficient, and flexible community building that will have a lovely multi-use fellowship hall, adjacent terrace with labyrinth and shelter from street noise, modern classrooms and offices, and good indoor-outdoor flow. The lower price tag of a smaller building, combined with the money we will get from leasing the land for affordable housing, will put us in a stronger financial position over the long term, as well as committing this precious piece of land we are blessed to steward to its best and highest purposes. We are in the process of budgeting and applying for permits, and hope to do demo and start rebuilding in the last quarter of 2021. I am enormously grateful to the members of the Blue Fire team: Scott Spote, Roger Bash, Lorenzo Llanillo, Moe Wright, Leonard Ash, Kara Korbel-Chinula and Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, who have put hundreds, if not thousands, of hours into the details of this long and complex process.

One gift of 2020 was the resolution of a long process of negotiation and mediation with our insurance companies and other parties regarding the fire. Our efforts resulted in adding several million dollars to the money available for rebuilding as well as to replace loss rental income. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to the whole Fire Recovery team, in particular Milton Fujii & Moe Wright, with lots of support from Julie Greer and Margie Allen, who kept track of countless documents and details and meetings and mediations through another very complex, and contentious process.

A recurrent theme of 2020 was “apocalypse,” as in the climate apocalypse, the political apocalypse of a corrupt and rogue Presidential administration, the apocalypse of collapsing democracy as more and more ordinary citizens believed conspiracy theories over basic science and facts, the apocalypse of civil unrest resulting in militarization of police against peaceful protestors and murder of protestors by counterprotestors. The murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, nine minutes of horror captured by eyewitnesses, became a flashpoint for widescale street protests. It bears remembering that apocalypse literally means “revealing,” and as painful as it was for (progressive white) people to become more awake and aware to just how pernicious and omnipresent racism is in all of our structures, systems and relationships, there was a sense as well that now we could really begin to address racism at its root, with Black Lives Matter protests becoming the largest mass protests the world has ever seen, as people of all colors joined in intersectional, multiracial resistance. Our congregation, long engaged in understanding racism and becoming more antiracist, joined in street protests,

read, listened & preached about racism, supported the formation of moderated safe space “listening circles” for our Black members, and looks toward deeper efforts to root out white supremacy from our own culture and practice in the future.

Our pulpit was visited this year by preachers already dear to us and some new friends: Marvin K. White (now the senior minister of Glide UMC!), Geoffrey Gaskins from our Progressive Bible Study, our own poet/professor Christina Hutchins, Donna Schaper and Quinn Caldwell of the Stillspeaking Writers’ Group, Ben Groth from Bethlehem Lutheran Church in NOLA, actor/activist Aisha Tyler and our fall Public Theologian in Residence Riana Shaw Robinson, who also led two churchwide Racial Reconciliation workshops.

I want to name our phenomenal Moderator, Julie Greer, and Moderator Elect, Sara Woods, who led us with maturity, humor, grounded faith, and wisdom through some big decisions and feelings in our life together. We have had some hard moments and contentious times since I have come to be your senior minister, and, stabilized by the rudder of a series of extremely gifted, committed, and capable Moderators, it feels like we are coming into smoother waters, and ways of communicating through disagreement that are loving, healthy, and just. We are aided in this by the teachings of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center and the Healthy Congregations workshop and coaching they have provided, as well as by the great crop of compassionate communicators that Louise Halsey and Jim Coates have sown in our church through their wise teaching.

We have been blessed beyond belief this year by the hard work, creativity, and

commitment of our truly stellar staff, who I name right now: Kit Dunbar, Louise Halsey, Carolyn Ash, Derek Tam, Kit Novotny, Kelly Colwell, Ben McKnight, Sara Fread, Bruce McNaught, Amare Gebreyesus, Berhane Gebreyesus, Birtukan Beyenssa, Oliver Mexas, Liz Forsyth, Amar Khalsa, and volunteer staff (but no less committed!) Robin Kempster, Kathy Helliesen, and Carmelle Knudsen.

Some of our team were gracious in being furloughed or having their hours reduced when our campus closed, and patiently await its reopening. Others had to work harder or more or differently, and do so with integrity, flexibility, and cheer. Rev. Kit had sabbatical and maternity leave in 2020, and that gave us an opportunity to welcome beloved member Rev. Kelly Colwell onto the team as our Acting Associate. Kelly has been a fantastic helpmeet with her joyful energy, great organizational skills, and lovingkindness through these rocky months, and will remain with us at least through the end of my sabbatical in mid-2021, with an opportunity to keep her on staff beyond if God moves us in that direction and we find the funding!

It is New Year’s Eve as I write this. There is nothing magic about turning the page on the calendar to a new year, but as TS Eliot wrote in Four Quartets, “to make an end is to make a beginning.” We begin 2021 with hope in the form of a COVID vaccine, a new President, our first black, South Asian, and female Vice-President (who grew up in Berkeley and Oakland!), as well as the hope that springs eternal, no matter what is going on, as the fruit of our faith in a God who is good and real and still at work in the world.

Some things I am personally looking forward to in our church life and in my calling in 2021:

- Getting our new building built and no longer having to look at the wreck of Pilgrim Hall!
- God willing, a move back to in person and hybrid worship (we will continue to offer robust virtual worship for those who remain at high risk for COVID or have disabilities that prevent them from attending in person, as well as those not within driving distance of our church)
- SO MANY HUGS. They're coming
- Working with incoming Moderator Sara Woods and incoming Moderator Elect Hope Hilton, along with a sterling group of ministry chairs and other leaders!
- A revamped Long Range Planning committee that will deepen the work of inclusion across race, gender, sexual orientation, and class, as well as renovate our Bylaws
- An Antiracism Steering Committee, to guide our work and witness as a congregation committed to dismantling racism, starting with ourselves (let me know if you want to join!)

- Working on my new book, which has just found a publisher, tentatively titled: *How to Survive Everything: A Spiritual Field Guide to Doomsday Disasters and Everyday Calamities*
- Sabbatical! A chance to have a quiet mind, and rest from the decision fatigue of the last five years of our church's changes and crises. I hope this time will be sweet and restorative for you as well – that we can all have a sense of restorative rest after this long time of pandemic restlessness.

Please forgive me if you have been a significant contributor to making our life together as beautiful, rich, and deep as it is and I didn't name you or your work above! To try to sum up a year, particularly a year like this one, means some accidental omissions. But God sees the good you are doing, and the blessing you are.

Christlove, Molly

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*
TS Eliot, "Little Gidding"



Associate Minister

REV. KIT NOVOTNY

As a faith community whose central defining feature is a large, communal weekly gathering, the COVID pandemic of 2020 forced us to adapt to new realities with creativity, grace, flexibility, and humility. We will never be the same, and I believe that how we “do church” will



also be changed forever. There is so much we miss terribly, and there is also so much to be grateful for. Moving meetings to Zoom and enhancing our livestream worship, our ministries made the leap into the digital realm hardly missing a beat, allowing us to continue to make meaning and serve one another, God, and our community despite the many challenges of this strange year.

In my ministry arenas, it was actually a fun challenge to explore new ways of connecting from a Communications and social media perspective — particularly helping to curate worship highlights and the early “Daily Digital Divine” videos from the congregation and staff which carried and connected us as a community through those novel first three months of quarantine life. Other notable and bright spots in my ministry areas included: a socially distanced but beautiful beach baptism; Young Adult Open Chapel Zoom gatherings and story slams; wrestling with the theology of virtual holy communion with our Worship & Spiritual Life (deacons) ministry — and making the shift to a more interactive Zoom gathering; digital drop-in

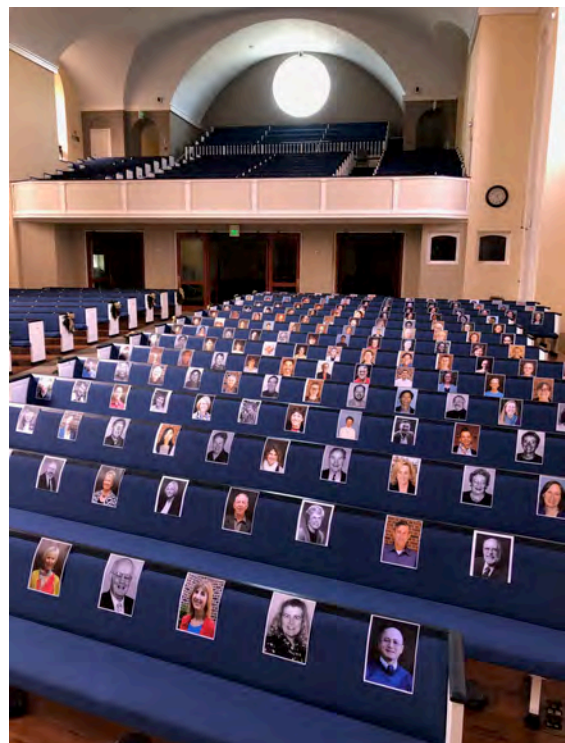
Zoom office hours; recording Easter worship on Alameda beach and Albany Hill; recording Christmas Eve in a spectacularly decorated but empty Sanctuary. It was a blessing to accompany and mentor Emerging Leaders Jane Arc and Emily Carduff through the second half of their service with us — growing in their worship leadership, Prayer Team ministry, and more. (We also discerned that given all the instability of this year, we’d take a hiatus from the Emerging Leaders program for the 2020-2021 program year.)

On a personal note, it was an odd and mixed blessing to be on leave for nearly half of this intense, tumultuous year. It is hard (and sad) to believe, but I only enjoyed one lone in-person Sunday with you all this calendar year (my first Sunday back from Sabbatical, March 8, was also our last in-person worship gathering before shelter-in-place!). I had begun 2020 with the first half of my first ever sabbatical (after five years of consecutive service to our church), which I had been planning to divide in two parts. The timing and nature of that second part shifted as our family prepared to welcome our second child, Gwendolyn, in early September. (Thank you for all your loving support and prayers during this time of family transition!) Highlights from my Jan./Feb. sabbatical included travel and study, classes from Berkeley Rep. Theater, and a week learning about Being & Building Great Teams through “The Circle Way” and “The Art of Hosting” in Carefree, AZ with the UCC Pension Board’s Next Generation Leadership Initiative. It was a joy to participate in the hiring of both Rev. Kelly Colwell and Rev. Riana Shaw Robinson to

pick up this unique virtual ministry relay race as I headed out on maternity leave (extended with the second part of sabbatical) this fall.

I suspect we will be reflecting on the ups and downs and ins and outs of this singular year for a long time to come. As we

anticipate with hope the turning of the calendar to 2021 — vaccines and a return to in person worship! — I trust that God will be with us... as we grieve and imagine, as we let go of what no longer serves us, and continue to blossom into the church community that is truly needed today.



Acting Associate Minister

REV. KELLY COLWELL



I believe that the pandemic is revealing things about our communities that were true before it started. We've seen inequality revealed as the blight it truly is. We've seen health care disparity in stark relief. We've seen the shallowness of some of our connections and the precarity of some of our mental health. We've seen which of our systems are robust and which are actually pretty delicate. We've seen how much we appreciate having enough toilet paper, eggs, milk, flour, and rice. All of these things were true before, but I think we're more aware of them now.

For me, one of the most important things that has been revealed is how deeply ministry is an act of imagination. We're literally imagining our community into being these days. And actually, we always were. We were imagining what belonging meant. We were imagining a world beyond hierarchies and binaries. Now, I imagine your faces as I speak into my cell phone camera on Sunday mornings when I am the live host. Your comments help me believe you're real, of course — both on the livestreams and in the After Party gatherings on Zoom. But we're imagining church together. We know that now more than ever.

When this report appears, I'll have been your Acting Associate Minister for almost exactly half of the pandemic to date--five months out of our ten months apart. I've been covering for Rev. Kit Novotny during her parental leave. I've had the chance to work with the Deacons to help create and distribute First Church candles so we can participate physically at home in online worship. I've supported the Adult Education Ministry in planning for some Graduate Theological Union (GTU) professors and students to lead Learning Hours. I've done Open Chapels on Zoom, Young Adult game nights on Zoom, confirmation classes on Zoom.

And it's been an absolute joy right alongside being absolutely maddening to be getting to know the congregation in this new role during the pandemic, learning traditions and stories through Zoom and through explanations that start "Well, in normal times..."

Nevertheless, my prevailing experience has been deep gratitude for the richness of our distanced work together. I'm grateful to see your faces on Zoom and occasionally, across ten-foot gaps with masks on when numbers are low. And I look forward with all of you, as we wait in hope for vaccines and drop in cases, to the day when we can see each other in the flesh, no masks required. We'll imagine that day together until we can live it together, and God will help us imagine it into reality.

Director of Music

DEREK TAM

In a year of isolation, music served as a lifeline for so many. At First Church, we were so blessed to have a strong staff and volunteer ministry that rose to the weekly challenge of crafting music



that brought resilient hope to our congregation. I am so grateful to Liz Forsyth and Amar Khalsa for not only their quick mastery of recording at home, but for an optimism and creativity that brought relevant and resonant music to each twist and turn of the pandemic.

Many of our volunteer ensembles overcame the hurdle of Zoom to create beautiful oases of community and connection through the year, including the Sanctuary

Choir, the Gospel Choir, Uke-atastrophe (led by Kate Lucchese), Songs of the Soul (led by Linda Crebbin-Coates), as well as three summer small groups. So many people became amateur recording engineers, creating beautiful videos that were woven into many virtual musical pieces!

Finally, I am so grateful for our continued commitment towards using music to reach our wider community. In addition to presenting a 90-voice festival chorus concert in January and our annual joint concert with City of Refuge UCC before the pandemic, we presented four virtual concerts that were lauded in the *San Francisco Chronicle* as a vital part of the Bay Area's musical life. All in all, we raised \$4,800 for various charities through these efforts—a testament to our commitment towards using our music to foster justice and creating God's kin-dom here on Earth.



Director of Youth Ministries

SARA FREAD

2020 has been a year of challenge, creativity, and change. I would have never guessed that the world would be turned upside in the middle of my first year serving as First Church's youth director. But in the face of challenge, we embraced change (or begrudgingly tolerated it some days, if I'm



being honest) and leaned into creativity to find new ways to live, work, learn, worship, celebrate holidays, and support one another in community. This year, our youth have navigated the challenges of online learning, missed milestone events like graduations, school proms, and extracurricular activities, and have been physically separated from friends and support systems at school. Youth ministry has proven to be more important than ever, creating opportunities for support and connection during a time of physical isolation. I'm incredibly grateful for everyone who has continued to make youth ministry possible during the ups and downs of 2020: the fabulous youth mentors (listed below), the Families, Children, and Youth Ministry, the parents of our incredible youth, and Carolyn Ash, who dedicates so much time and creative energy to support the program. Thank you all!

In 2020, our youth:

- Participated in the Epiphany Pageant, written and directed by Kate Lucchese

- Hosted the 2020 Annual Meeting Lunch as a fundraiser for work camp
- Participated in Blue Fire Meetings and discussed their vision for the future of our church buildings
- Switched to completely virtual youth group gatherings within the first week of shelter-in-place
- Celebrated the graduation of six high school seniors and nine eighth-graders
- Experimented with ice cream-making for our End of the Year (At Home) Ice Cream Party
- Added some rainbow cheer to church sidewalks for Pride Month
- Created artwork, animation, photography, and skits for online worship
- Began a virtual confirmation class in collaboration with Congregational Church of San Mateo and Danville Congregational Church
- Discussed identity and racial justice in youth group while exploring *This Book Is Antiracist* by Tiffany Jewell
- Learned about how to effectively advocate to elected officials through a Political Activism for Teens Workshop
- Gathered in community through different virtual events: Campfire Sing-a-long, Halloween Party, Cookies and Carols Christmas Party, as well as game nights and movie nights

- Spent their last few days of 2020 rehearsing and filming the church's first Zoom Epiphany Pageant

2019-2020 Youth Mentor team: Jane Arc, Rebecca Clayton, Emma Fujii, Hope Hilton, Carole Petiet, Drew Sperling, and Bob Stumpf.

2020-2021 Youth Mentor team: David Beausoleil, Rebecca Clayton, Hope Hilton, Carole Petiet, and Drew Sperling.



Families' & Children's Program Director

CAROLYN ASH

2020 began with 2.5 beautifully normal months. Weekly, we held 4 Sunday



school classes with 25 volunteer teachers, youth group with our tremendous Youth Director Sara Fread and 7 volunteer leaders, and "After

Care" with 6 loving adults. We performed Kathryn Lucchese's "The Holy Innocent" on Epiphany. We celebrated Lent Eve with a Mardi Gras pancake feast and dance party, made possible by the Coates-Bash Chosen Family, our pick-up Mardi Gras band, and the Families, Children & Youth Ministry's (chaired by the unflappable Jeanne Strauss!) set-up and clean-up crew.

When 2020 shifted into an uncertain time of uncharted pandemic waters and closures, God immediately worked in new ways and taught me how to make church work for families while we socially distanced indefinitely. Sunday School moved online and I had the whole internet to source ideas, content, and musical "guests"! Children's Moments and Scripture Lessons had to be prerecorded for worship, and God provided the whole Bay Area as a film set, and the opportunity to do activities not possible on the chancel (e.g., going to a parade on Juneteenth, baking 'smares on Summer Camp Sunday, hiking up to Inspiration Point to imagine Ninevah, getting COVID tested to experience Matthew 11:28-30, visiting church grandparents at Lake Park). We fundraised virtually for CROP Walk, decorated the church patio for PRIDE and BLM, received

back-to-school drive-by blessings, remembered our Saints with a multisensory outdoor scavenger hunt, donned the sanctuary and façade for Advent, filmed new members lighting Advent candles, reenacted the Christmas scriptures with Albany Angels, Berkeley Shepherds, and an Alameda Holy Family, and produced a topical Epiphany Zoom play.

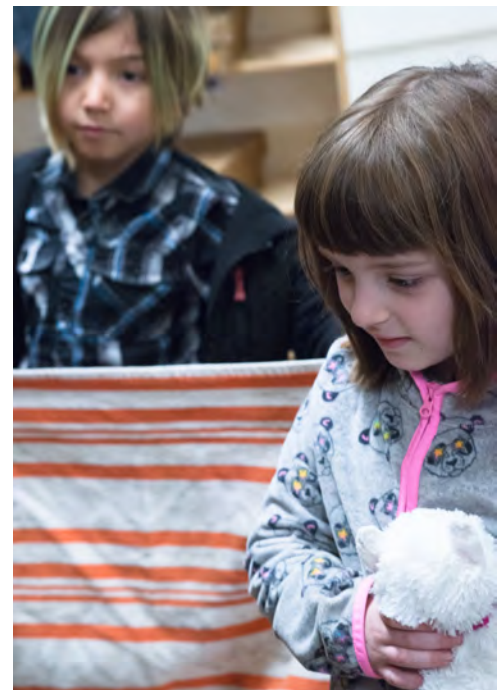
In many ways – especially for shy kids, busy kids, and out-of-state kids – church worked even better than before. Kids who had never attended Sunday school came for Zoom Sunday

school, Saturday Story Time, and Virtual Christmas Caroling, snuggling



blankets, stuffies, and siblings. A solid group of Sunday school regulars formed. Kids confidently and enthusiastically shared their artistic gifts *weekly* in worship, cantering the "Gloria," and depicting scripture with stop motion Lego movies, family skits, drawings, paintings, dance, slideshows, and videos.

I am grateful for the privilege of spending 2020 as your Family Program Director *and* for this year's lighter workload. I had room to grow spiritually by reading more, listening to my daughter more, taking online leadership and parenting classes, "visiting" other churches, and volunteering on our amazing Accompaniment Team, where I focused on teaching a wonderful child how to succeed in fifth grade.



Business Manager

KIT DUNBAR

2020 certainly was “a year like no other!” I returned from vacation in March to



the “shelter in place” order and the realization that for both me and First Church, it would be better to have someone in the Durant House Monday through Friday. I must say,

without my beloved co-workers and the East Bay School for Boys, it was very quiet on campus those first few months.

I am very appreciative of the volunteer help that allowed First Church to keep going.

- Thank you, Moe Wright, for Google Meetings and eventually being able to come into the office to sign checks, assist with the filings for our PPP Loan, review financial data, work countless hours on the budget, and share your ventilation expertise to assure that East Bay School for the Boys could remain on campus as city, county and state ordinances permitted. Your historical knowledge as well as ability to flex into life during a pandemic is a priceless gift to First Church.
- Thank you, Nick Kukulan, for helping oversee the Building and Grounds projects. By working with Bruce McNaught, First Church has been



refreshed with a layer of compost and mulch, refurbished bricks from the Pilgrim Hall chimney have been added to the landscape in front of the Sanctuary and with the assistance of a volunteer work crew (pre-pandemic), planted two trees to beautify the front of the church lawn. Nick is someone who has great ideas and is more than willing to come help make them happen.

- Thank you, Amy Hiestand, for your “behind the scenes work” on our Stewardship Campaign, creating content for the First Church Berkeley website for the multiple giving options including Legacy Gifts and presenting the Budget Information. Amy is gifted at timelines and keeping projects moving forward so that they will be completed in a timely manner.
- Thank you, Diana Graham, for your work on our COVID-19 Site-Specific Protection Plan. Diana graciously volunteers her Emergency Management skills to assure our compliance during this pandemic.

I am humbled to work with the amazing staff here at First Church: Revs. Molly, Kit, and Kelly, Derek, Liz, Louise, Ben, Carolyn, Sara, Bruce, and Amare. Thank you for all you do so graciously.



Congregational Care Program Manager

LOUISE HALSEY

Thumbing through the pages of my 2020 UCC calendar, I'm struck by both the



unpredictable and uncertain aspects of our lives together this past year as well as the assurance and stability of how we continually showed up for each other in beloved community. Virtual

Sunday worship, the After Party, the countless Zoom meetings have all become a lifeline of sorts for me and I'd venture to say for many of us.

In mid-March we (the staff) had to pivot quickly to do the blessed "work" of the church in new ways. It was a time of generative expansiveness, creativity, and collaboration with a pinch of anxiety, denial, urgency, and fear (I'm naming this for myself) during those first weeks of shelter-in-place. My initial frozenness gave way to an overwhelming need to support processes and programs to promote our ongoing connection to one another. We resurrected the neighborhood group idea that Rev. Molly had introduced early in her tenure. Organized by zip code and led by a neighborhood captain or co-captains, these groups provided a way for community members to engage with each other via emails and phone calls – sharing words of wisdom, favorite recipes, jokes, Netflix recommendations, hiking trails, etc., as well as often being distribution sites for toilet paper, palms, and devotionals. Thank you, neighborhood captains, for helping us stay knit together: Mary-Ellis Adams, Rick Ayer and Barbara Grady-Ayer, Felicia Bellows,

Richard Brabham, Carol Chapman, Alice Clark, Kelly Colwell and Sheryl Johnson, Janet Eadie, Ron and Linda Elsdon, Diana Graham and Amy Hiestand, Hanni Hanson, Kathy Helliesen, Bonnie Hester, Hope Hilton and Amy Smith, Sam Kanenwisher, Annis Kukulian, Kate and Robin Lucchese, Barbara Lundquist, Julia Madore, Nancy McKay, Alan Miller, Nicole Naffaa, Craig and Pat Pratt, Rowan Peterson, Charlotte Russell, Emma S., Louise Specht, Kathryn Stambaugh, Jeanne Strauss, Bob Stumpf, Derek Tam, Mary Sypek, Kathryn and Larry Titus, Kenneth Tyler, and Pam and Willem VandeKamp.

Other programs we tried this year during the pandemic were People Pairing (we connected about 14 folks who spoke on the phone/Facetime/Zoom for up to an hour each week for 4 weeks) and People Podding (we invited those living alone in our community to consider creating a safe pod with others who were also living alone). In addition, we created a mental health and community resource list for our church community with recommendations from healthcare professionals, therapists, and social workers in our community.

We offered a 4th season of our Summer Small Group program – in a new virtual format. Six groups were offered. *Socially Conscious Cinema*, led by Kara Korb- Chinula and Kit Dunbar, provided a space to share the questions, discomforts, and inspiration of socially conscious documentaries with one another. Betty Spamer's *Journey into Music* offered participants an opportunity to explore their inner worlds through music and art. Derek

Tam's *Explore Your Inner Musician* supported musicians in developing skills and confidence no matter their skill level. Kate Lucchese's *Dr. K-Z's Latin Over Lunch* covered the basics of Latin with humor and fun. Jim Coates and I used some of the tools and consciousness of Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication* to help folks *Navigate Difficult Conversations using Compassionate Communication*. An *Intergenerational Book Group*, led by Lauren Jewett and Joyce and Scott Hedges, explored Richard Rohr's *Falling Up*, while Pam and Willem VandeKamp's *Summer & Fall Book Group* discussed four compelling works.

To track our people – newbies as well as members – we re-invented our Sunday paper pew pad, and created a digital Sunday Welcome Form, which many of you use to let us know you are worshipping with us and to share prayer concerns or other news. The Pastoral Care team (Rev. Molly, Rev. Kit, Rev. Kelly, Parish Nurse Robin Kempster, myself, and new to the team, Annis Kukulan) continues to track and be present to those who are experiencing

health or other challenges. These connections, which before CoVID, could often happen organically and in person (involving lots of hugs and praying together), now take place over the phone, or on Zoom, or perhaps during a short, physically distanced visit.

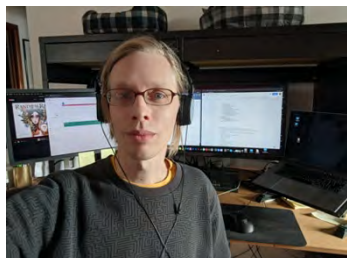
Even as I long for the ease of being physically present with each of you, we are indeed creating opportunities to stay connected in spite of our physical distance. (Plug for Thursday's virtual Gentle Yoga Stretches at 5 pm – see the church's Google event calendar for the Zoom link to join us.) And Zoom, with its capacity to numb us out even after a few hours of meetings, does give us access to one another – often in close up (with longer hair!) and in each other's personal spaces, sometimes with squeals and giggles of a little one, or the bark of a beloved pet, or in sight of a favorite something – photo, painting, book. I'm so grateful to be in community with you and am blessed beyond measure to be part of the staff and part of the body of Christ, which is First Church Berkeley.



Communications Specialist

BEN McKNIGHT

Church Communications: 2020 & Beyond



Wow! Stop the presses because the Order of Worship is now a Google doc. We began

2020 in the process of shifting our communications into the digital realm thanks to the prescience of Rev. Molly & Rev. Kit. A new website had just been launched when our first digital *Carillon* was sent on January 2, 2020, and our first “Special Online Worship Edition” was sent on March 12, 2020 (which turned out to be not so special).

This graciously timed change allowed us to open our digital doors wide as the pandemic closed our physical doors. The talents of the congregation began to flood in as we all scrambled to learn Zoom and

how to create videos of ourselves in order to share heartfelt moments of intimacy through our bittersweet screens.

Now, we’ve become seasoned digital storytellers and masters of the mute button. Our restlessness has been tamed by sweatpants. We’re settling in, but for how long? And what about the parts of the pandemic church life that we actually like?

We’re going to continue to refine and improve our online community by doing more of what works and letting go of what doesn’t. Once we are finally able to gather in person again, we hope to continue to build on our newfound online awareness since we now all know that church can nourish us even if we can’t make it to the building. Let’s begin together now to imagine what future, hybrid services might look, feel, and sound like, and look forward to the day when we can gather, wider than ever, in person and online while meeting God exactly where we are at.



New Member Coordinator

KATHY HELLIESEN (VOLUNTEER)

We joyfully welcomed **23** New Members into the life of First



Congregational Church of Berkeley in 2020, the year like no other!

Our February class met,

celebrated, and joined in person. Then quarantine hit in March, and we offered our June and October Discover First Church classes via Zoom! Several of our new members joined after worshipping with us remotely, having never worshiped with us in our Sanctuary – a big leap of faith in this unprecedented time! Revs. Molly, Kit, and Kelly led the classes via Zoom, and the

joining ceremony was recorded before Joining Sunday. New Member book gifts were delivered to their door steps, masked and socially distanced. We look forward to celebrating with these two Zoom classes in person when we can!

We have continued our almost every-other-month newbie get-togethers via Zoom, with the hope of connecting our newest members with other newbies in beloved community, and helping them find ways to connect with First Church in this time.

I look forward to the time when we can all welcome our New Members in person! Special thanks to Revs. Molly, Kit, and Kelly for leading the classes, and for Louise Halsey for her support.



Other Ministries

Affordable Housing Aficionados

ALICE CLARK, CONVENER

This ministry team met up to the middle of March, until lockdown stopped us from meeting for the duration.

In January, we again (for the second year) finalized our “Welcome Home” baskets project, forming 18 complete sets of needed housewares for people being newly housed, which we delivered to the Berkeley Food and Housing Project (BFHP) to distribute. A follow-up project with the BFHP during the spring was the collection of bags filled with a variety of foods which needed no kitchen except a microwave, meant for vulnerable unhoused people being placed in motels to isolate and be safe from the virus.

The beautiful work of helping build, paint, and furnish tiny houses with Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA) continued very successfully, with the participation of many church members. In July we collected some tents for the Berkeley Free Clinic to distribute to

unhoused folks. In the fall, some of us phone-banked and helped get out the vote for Alameda County’s Measure W, set to raise millions of dollars for homeless services via a sales tax over ten years, which thankfully passed! Other church projects, lending aid and offering love to our unhoused neighbors, have spread the wider spirit of this group, and will continue to do so.

This team maintains the church’s membership in the East Bay Housing Organization (EBHO), which is very active in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. We also sustain a helpful connection with the Multi-Faith Action Coalition (MFAC) Housing and Shelter Taskforce, which works in both east and west Contra Costa County. We look forward to springing into greater focused action on housing in the new and safer year ahead.



Affordable Housing Committee

SCOTT SPORTE & DAN LEAVERTON, CO-CHAIRS

In September the congregation chartered the Affordable Housing Committee to evaluate options for the development of affordable housing on the northwest corner of our church campus. The committee immediately began meeting to learn more about the need for affordable housing in Berkeley and the East Bay (over 7,700 units needed in Berkeley alone) and educating ourselves on the best approaches.

We will be working during the first half of 2021 to develop a document to solicit developers' ideas for our property, seeking proposals that achieve the dual aim of

meeting a critical mission need in our community while also providing income to keep the church strong. The committee will be checking in with the congregation as the process unfolds during the spring and summer months.

Committee members are Molly Baskette, Alice Clark, Sophia DeWitt, Brian Hauck, Lorenzo Llanillo, Dan Leaverton (co-chair) and Scott Sporte (co-chair). The committee expresses its appreciation to Diane Johnson, who initially joined us but stepped away due to work requirements.



Ministry Partners

Berkeley Pilgrimage Foundation

KATHRYN STAMBAUGH, BOARD PRESIDENT

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 updated and re-filed the Foundation's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation to remove dated language and reflect current practices. We focused our grantmaking on COVID relief, helping grantees cover increases in costs and reductions in revenue due to the pandemic. We made 10 grants totaling \$210,000 as follows:

- 1) Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay: \$25,000
- 2) St. Mary's Center: \$25,000
- 3) Everyone Home: \$25,000
- 4) Family Bridges: \$25,000
- 5) JSEI: \$25,000
- 6) City of Berkeley (Meals on Wheels): \$12,500

- 7) East Bay Community Foundation (Berkeley Rental Relief Fund): \$12,500
- 8) Satellite Affordable Housing Associates: \$25,000
- 9) Youth Spirit Artworks: \$25,000
- 10) SCORE: \$10,000

Phil Adams and Reuben Shank joined the BPF Board of Directors in 2020. Other board members include Kathryn Stambaugh (President), Rod MacKenzie (Vice President), Scott Spote (Treasurer), Moe Wright (Secretary), Angela Arnold, Sophia DeWitt, Amy Hiestand, and Janet McDonald. Mary Fujii, Laszlo Bonnyay, and Jane Arc left the board with our sincere thanks for their service.

How to Get Involved

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

2020 has been a year like no other! We finished the 2019-20 school year after transitioning to remote learning in March, graduating 25 8th graders via Zoom and a drive-through parade in the FCCB parking lot, then welcomed back 88 students for the new school year virtually in the fall. We are grateful that, despite the circumstances, our enrollment has held steady and our community of students, families, and staff have stayed largely healthy and safe.

As we've worked, within the parameters of the various local and statewide health orders, to support our students' learning, we are extremely grateful to FCCB for your

flexibility and willingness to share spaces and resources. We have been able to use some of the Church's larger spaces and set up outdoor classrooms to safely bring small, stable cohorts of students back on campus on a limited basis for remote learning support. We are also grateful for the improvements to our ventilation systems and the addition of the touchless water bottle filling station—investments that will benefit all of us long after the pandemic has passed.

We are grateful to continue our partnership with FCCB as we head into what will hopefully be a healthier new year!



Financial Reports

Treasurer

MOE WRIGHT

In all my years as Treasurer, this year has been the most unpredictable yet. We



started the year in a “normal” mode with an operating budget balanced with interest funds from our fire insurance recovery account. The first quarter moved along with the usual

cadence until it took a big turn into the unknown in the middle of March. The effect of an economic shutdown and restrictions on gathering in public places of worship and entertainment was not something we have ever experienced, but our church has been through a depression, two world wars, countless recessions and other economic shocks.

The immediate effect was the drop in rental income mostly from concert events in the sanctuary. We asked ourselves: will we see a drop in sustaining gifts if employment is compromised? Will East Bay School for Boys survive? We have a dedicated staff. What level of their service can we afford?

The Stewardship, Finance & Administration (SF&A) ministry and church leadership looked at the budget and reviewed several scenarios, but predicting an outcome was difficult. Ultimately, the Council authorized participation in the government assistance program that we were eligible for.

In May we sent in our application for a Federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for the amount of \$113,080 and were

granted that amount in expectation that all or most of it would be forgiven.

Now that the year has closed, we can see what the results are. Budgeted income from all sources was \$1,240,909 with a portion of the PPP and some other adjustments the actual income is \$1,131,400, down over \$100,000. Our total contributions are down by just \$9,026 and rental income did not drop as severely as it could have.

Expenses are also down. We had reduced costs in utilities, cleaning, event hosts, child care and program costs. The budget for expenses was \$1,240,909 and actual turned out to be \$1,038,178 resulting in a savings of over \$200,000.

The bottom line is that with the PPP loan/grant we ended up with a 2020 surplus of \$93,222 and that will be added to the 2019 surplus of \$19,750 and carried forward into the 2021 operation budget. As of the date of this report the application for forgiveness of the PPP loan has not become available, but published guidelines indicate that the church will not be required to repay most of the funds borrowed.

In the tables included in this annual report you can see that 2021 will be a good year, financially. Improving economic conditions could make it better. We will apply the \$112,972 surplus to the budget and use the draw from the special endowment to fill in our income. We expect expenses to stay low with a possible rebound in the 4th quarter as the economy starts to open up again.

In closing I would like to thank Business Manager, Kit Dunbar, who came into the

office every day and kept the essential services going. I also want to thank the

SF&A ministry for the thoughtful leadership that they displayed in this challenging year.

Six-Year Stewardship Review

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
A. Pledge Goal	\$650,000	\$738,829	\$833,000	\$830,000	\$711,414	\$677,206
B. Pledge Sunday						
Amount pledged	\$475,071	\$490,969	\$615,623			
# of pledges	135	122	126			
Average	\$3,519	\$4,024	\$4,886			
C. Mid January						
Amount pledged	\$632,176	\$698,829	\$812,457	\$772,000	\$682,039	\$664,071
# of pledges	194	198	203	186	162	166
Average	\$3,259	\$3,529	\$4,002	\$4,151	\$4,210	\$4,000
D. Pledge Actual	\$646,590	\$714,419	\$768,154	\$743,837	\$685,732	\$656,913



Legacy Circle Report

First Church Berkeley's **Legacy Circle** includes individuals in our church community who have named First Church Berkeley in their planned giving through their wills/trusts, retirement funds or life insurance beneficiary designation, or other resources or assets to be distributed after their deaths. These important legacy gifts contribute to our church's long-term financial sustainability for generations to come. Planned gifts are added to First Church Berkeley's endowment and prudently invested and managed by the church's Endowment and Investment Committees. We are extremely grateful for the faith and

generosity of these members of the Legacy Circle. More information on the Legacy Circle, and how to become a member, may be found on the church's website.

2020 Legacy Circle: Molly and Peter Baskette; Mollyanne Brewer (Maremaa); Mike Casendino and Amy Hiestand; Patricia de Jong; Robert and Bonnie Hester; Bob and Kathy Helliesen; Hope Hilton; Carmelle Knudsen; Nancy McKay; Lewis Perry; Phil Porter; Boyard and Ann Rowe; Rebecca Smith; Bruce and Susan Stangeland; Charles Taylor and Alice Clark; John and Helen Wadman; Morris and Rebecca Wright; Anonymous

Endowment Report

	1/1/20	Gifts &	Historic	12/31/20	Income Designation
Church Designated Endowments	Value	Bequests	Value	Value	
Plymouth 1	251,345		not applicable	268,524	University Ministry
General	997,533	186,840	not applicable	1,319,941	45% capital projects; 45% special ministries
Total Church Designated	1,248,878			1,588,465	
Donor Designated Endowments					
McCall Lecture	58,812		13,000	62,832	Special Lectures
Music Endow.: Leitch, Johnson, Moore	77,197		55,526	82,474	Music Program
Nelson General	108,438		51,955	115,849	Operating Budget
Wagner	22,016		10,000	23,521	Ministry to Seniors
Baldo	46,572		31,322	49,754	Classical Music Event
Browne Barr Seminary Intern	180,872		120,710	193,234	Seminary intern
Drobish-Sanchez-Palmerlee-Apra	109,262		62,861	116,730	Evangelism
Plymouth 2	915,026		687,259	977,565	University Ministry
Buildings/Grounds Maintenance	24,666		20,000	26,352	Buildings & Grounds
Total Donor Designated	1,542,861			1,648,311	
Subtotal General Endowment	2,791,739			3,236,776	
Ministerial Housing Enowment	564,914			639,965	
Total FCCB Endowments	3,356,653			3,876,741	

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.

RECEIPTS	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020	Over	2021
Contributions	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Actual	(Under)	Budget
Commitments	714,419	768,154	743,837	685,732	677,206	656,913	(20,293)	620,000
Other Contributions	41,659	40,927	41,989	19,311	18,000	16,581	(1,419)	9,000
Additional Gifts	14,769	14,823	5,202	32,482	15,500	28,186	12,686	9,000
Offering plate	12,689	10,490						
Total contributions	783,536	834,394	791,028	737,525	710,706	701,680	(9,026)	638,000
Facility Use*	424,159	280,100	359,452	361,366	355,055	267,887	(87,168)	267,688
Transfers from FCCB funds								
Distrib-Thrift Shop net profits	3,373	3,600						
Nelson Gen Endow	4,880	4,804	4,794	4,880	5,048	5,048	0	4,787
Endowments to Univ. Min.	52,497	51,678	51,560	52,634	54,306	54,306	0	51,492
Emerging Leaders	10,000	7,500	10,000	8,162	8,421	8,421	0	7,985
Browne Barr Intern								
Gifts to Univ. Min.								
Music Fund	3,415	3,420	3,413	3,483	3,594	3,594	0	3,408
Special Endowment	19,883	20,270	20,223	20,645	20,900	0	(20,900)	24,545
Total transfers	94,048	91,272	89,990	89,804	92,269	71,369	(20,900)	92,217
Other Income								
Utilities Reimbursement		7,443						
Ins. Proceeds Reimbursement		136,397	167,459					
Interest and Fees	52							
Misc. income/Invest. Interest		2,865			63,129	0	(63,129)	
Council Contingency		57,838	(1,273)	20,000	19,750		(19,750)	112,972
Transitional Tasks								15,935
PPP Loan						90,464	90,464	
Total other income	52	204,543	166,186	20,000	82,879	90,464	7,585	128,907
Total receipts	1,301,795	1,410,309	1,406,656	1,208,695	1,240,909	1,131,400	(109,509)	1,126,812
DISBURSEMENTS	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020	Over	2021
Operating Expenses								
Personnel*	819,653	913,465	906,731	751,302	807,116	712,043	(95,073)	772,552
Program*	54,560	74,489	76,930	70,301	75,450	45,637	(29,813)	64,860
Administration*	58,106	64,127	52,692	63,147	57,400	48,941	(8,459)	58,500
Church Plant*	301,610	266,928	287,919	230,622	228,222	160,862	(67,360)	162,400
Total operating expenses	1,233,929	1,319,009	1,324,272	1,115,372	1,168,188	967,483	(200,705)	1,058,312
Denomination and Other Support								
Our Church's Wider Mission	74,000	83,300	74,384	68,573	67,721	65,695	(2,026)	62,000
Pacific School of Religion	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	3,000
BOCA/ Justice & Service 2021	3,000	3,000	3,000					1,500
UCC Strengthen the Church	500	500	500	500	500	500	0	500
UCC Christmas Fund	500	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	82,000	91,300	82,384	73,573	72,721	70,695	(2,026)	68,500
Total operating exp. & benevolences	1,315,929	1,410,309	1,406,656	1,188,945	1,240,909	1,038,178	(202,731)	1,126,812
Excess (deficit)	(14,134)	0	0	19,750	0	93,222	93,222	0

Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balances

December 31, 2020

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	Endow Projects	Endow Funds	Minister Housing	Total All Funds
ASSETS													
Cash, bank and money market													
Accounts at Mechanics Bank & Morgan Stanley/Vanguard	88,116	205,187	19,741	71,608	54,373	21,373	8,972,482	129,247	15,180	133,282	(75,170)	682	9,636,101
Accounts receivable													
Prepaid Expenses													
Fixed income investments													
Loans													
Community Building							304,784						304,784
Equity investments													
Shared appreciation notes													
United Church Funds										3,358,114	639,965		3,998,079
Real Estate Improvements													
Sanctuary Repairs							3,139,443						3,139,443
Pilgrim Hall Stabilization							1,234,297						1,234,297
Total assets	88,116	205,187	19,741	71,608	54,373	21,373	13,651,006	129,247	15,180	133,282	3,282,944	640,647	18,312,704
LIABILITIES													
Payroll and sales taxes payable													
Suspense/Special Projects CTS	(3,648)					20,145							16,497
Construction Loan / Payables													
Deferred income	91,764												91,764
Total liabilities	88,116					20,145							108,261
FUND BALANCES													
Surplus (deficit) from operations													
Real Property Fund							13,651,006						13,651,006
Restricted gifts & funds allocated		205,187	19,741	71,608	54,373	1,228		129,247	15,180	133,282			629,846
Undistributed endowment income											46,168	1,407	47,575
Endowment principal funds											3,236,776	639,240	3,876,016
Total fund balances		205,187	19,741	71,608	54,373	1,228	13,651,006	129,247	15,180	133,282	3,282,944	640,647	18,204,443
Total liabilities and fund balances	88,116	205,187	19,741	71,608	54,373	21,373	13,651,006	129,247	15,180	133,282	3,282,944	640,647	18,312,704

Funds

ACTIVITY FUNDS

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

	Start Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	End Balance
Worship & Spiritual Life				
Cazedero All Church Camp	(151)	20		(131)
Camp Scholarships	0	37	37	0
Advent Group & Retreat	3,150	20	78	3,092
Parish Nurse	1,141			1,141
Advertising	12,905	1,500	8,372	6,033
Memorial Guild Fund	1,446			1,446
Spiritual Training/Direction	1,955			1,955
Social Action	0	2,690	2,690	0
Education				
Winthrop/Youth Fund	600	174	446	328
FamChY Events	1,956			1,956
BeFrienders	58			58
Song of the Soul	1,305			1,305
Sunday School	2,770		1,066	1,704
Winthrop Work Camp	8,490	3,495	3,005	8,980
Adult Ed Group	2,897		100	2,797
God Swag	81			81
Visiting Scholar Fund	1,933	2,040	3,824	149
Care & Fellowship				
Women's Voices & Retreat	(1,229)	1,305	505	(429)
Women's Retreat Scholarship	0	100		100
Healing Services	500			500
Men's Group & Retreat	1,441			1,441
Senior Ministries	2,216			2,216
Stewardship, Finance & Administration				
Transitional Tasks	43,112	4,000	856	46,256
Church Council				
Council Contingency Fund	19,750	112,972	19,750	112,972
Staff Retreat & Review	2,769			2,769
Emergency Preparedness	2,558			2,558
Young Adults	2,060	3,144		5,204
Background Checks	802		96	706
Total Activity Funds	114,515	131,497	40,825	205,187
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

	Start Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	End Balance
Worship & Spiritual Life				
Music Fund	12,722	14,922	9,540	18,104
Flower-Sanctuary Décor	3,610	2,465	1,045	5,030
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	16,561	13,516	14,957	15,120
Senior Minister's Fund	0	1,000		1,000
Seminarian Support	592			592
Church Council				
Celebration Fund	26,712	5,650	600	31,762
Total Donor Designated Funds	60,197	37,553	26,142	71,608

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

NON-BUDGETED BENEVOLENCE FUNDS

These funds represent our outreach activities and benevolences.

	Start Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	End Balance
Justice & Service				
One Great Hour of Sharing	0	100	100	0
Neighbors in Need	0	2,333	2,333	0
Easter Offering	0	5,020	5,020	0
Christmas Offering	10,173	7,170	17,343	0
Justice & Service*	2,613		1,692	921
Collection Plate	540	66,519	67,059	0
Welcome Home Baskets	1,360	1,120	2,480	0
Christmas Eve Stockings	195	1,692	1,710	177
Mental Health Ministry	2,579	1,125	502	3,202
2nd Sunday Sandwiches	258		143	115
CROP Walk	0	100	100	0
Kitchen Table Community Ministry	1,460		114	1,346
Homeless Encampment Assistance	1,200	120	980	340
Green Ministry Team	1,580		84	1,496
Nueva Esperanza Pre-Escolar / Puente	663	0	129	534
Bay Association (Kelly's Ordination)	0	364	364	0
Sanctuary Ministry Team	1,153	12,678	2,221	11,610
Total Non-Budgeted Benevolences	23,774	98,341	102,374	19,741

* 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

	Start Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	End Balance
Buildings & Grounds Fund	46,690	25,900	28,217	44,373
Building Reserve Fund	10,000			10,000
Dana Street Landscaping	0	362	362	0
Total Building & Grounds Funds	56,690	26,262	28,579	54,373

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

Statements

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

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. *February 2019*

Vision Statement

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 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, 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.

September 2019

