

GABRIEL'S HORN

First Congregational United Church of Christ

February 2020



Moving Forward in 2020

Our Annual Meeting brought us much good news, including a budget that continues to be sufficient for all our needs and many of our desires; a pledge report full of both the promise of new pledges and the consistency of continued ones; a nominations report listing many opportunities to serve and the plethora of people who have taken on those tasks; and a designated minister selection committee report that brings hope of new leadership as we reach for the future. I would commend to all of you the many written reports contained in the Annual Report, but I especially wanted to lift up this section of the Director of Music's report:

"As a Director of Music, I am charged to 'look to the future' and project ahead. Regardless of whether I am still here when next steps are actually taken, someone will be. Though I have no plans to leave anytime in the near future, the time is ripe to begin an active dialogue about the role which music can play in the growth of the congregation and community. The ground is fertile for planting seed and what is needed now is to begin planning and explore direction. I know that 'future planning' should be done with diverse congregational involvement. I am ready to have these discussions and work with others to ascertain the 'what's next' question. Let's begin thinking, dreaming and talking about it."

Amen! The responsibility to look to the future and think about ways to grow our congregation and it's reach into the wider community lies with all of us. John is right when he says that the ground is fertile and the time is now to begin thinking, dreaming and talking about the future. In the next few months, we will be blessed with the arrival of our new Designated Senior Minister, and each one of us will have the opportunity to embrace their ministry to us and find ways to walk together to live into our covenant promises.

This time of waiting can also be seen as a time of preparation. Each of the commissions, task forces, and special groups we participate in should spend time thinking and talking about ways that they can work on the Designated Ministry goals. These goals do not belong to the minister alone; they belong to all of us.

1. The primary goal for this designated ministry is **to continue walking on the path to becoming a multiracial and multicultural church** where all people feel welcomed, included, and nurtured. We hear clearly the calling to function in a multiracial and multicultural paradigm because it seems both obvious and inevitable that this is what our world needs and it reflects our foundational values.
2. The second ministry goal is to **strengthen our church community**. We need to strengthen (and sometimes heal) our relationships with each other. We need to know each other better through both serious and fun events, build trust, and learn to disagree without being disagreeable.

(continued on page 2)

3. Many social justice issues confront First Church, a small church with many dreams. We need a leader to help us **develop consensus about which social justice issues we have the will and resources to address**. The demographics of Washington, DC and the dynamics of race, poverty, privilege, and power provide a special calling for our church. God calls us to meet the needs in our neighborhood and in our community as a whole, but also to engage national and international issues.

I look forward to continue traveling the path laid before us with each of you.

Kim Darling, Moderator

Church Council

Council Capsule for January 2020

At the Church Council meeting on January 7, 2020, and throughout January, Council has been completing an impressive list of projects carried out in 2019, and preparing project reports and motions for decision for the annual congregational meeting on January 26, 2020.

Associate Minister Sam McFerran reported he is planning worship through February in anticipation of a new Designated Minister. He expressed thanks for all the help with Advent events, and reported that enthusiastic visitors attended worship on January 5. Seven First Church middle schoolers with chaperones Sam McFerran, Laura Johnson, and Troy Bent will visit service programs in Baltimore January 17-19.

Treasurer Nora Marsh reported that at the end of 2019 income was 98.78% of the 2019 budget, 96.35% of pledges were received, and expenses were 96.17% of budgeted. Council reviewed the 2020 asking budget and made recommendations for presentation to the congregation for approval and in the annual report. On January 8 Council approved by email the 2020 asking budget revised by Kim Darling for the January 12 Budget Hearing.

David Greer reported that on January 12 the Designated Minister Selection Committee will interview the third (of three) finalist candidates and hear a sermon preached at a neutral pulpit. The selected candidate may be announced by the end of January. Lucille Dickenson, David Greer, and the committee will prepare a draft compensation package for Council.

John Smeltzer shared a new executive summary for the Financial Sustainability Taskforce report. Council advised: lift up the good news (e.g., higher number of pledgers in 2020) but also communicate the fact of the structural imbalance. After the meeting Council approved by email the revised report as circulated by John Smeltzer on January 9.

Kim Darling shared a draft of 2020 nominations for church officers, representatives, and commission members prepared by the Nominating Committee for approval by the congregation at the annual meeting. Moderator Nan McConnell reported the contract with Rev. Karen Byrne has been extended through the end of January 2020.

Lucille Dickenson shared three options (high, medium and low) for personnel benefit increases prepared by the Personnel Committee at the direction of the congregation at the 2018 annual meeting. Council decided that revised benefits should be retroactive to June 2019, and approved option 2, the medium level of benefit and cost to the church.

Looking forward to the Annual Meeting on January 26, Council drafted a tentative agenda as follows.

- Approve Personnel Benefit recommendations
- Approve Membership changes
 - Motion from Outreach and Membership to remove people from the roll
 - Robert Mann-Thompson request to return to active status
- Review Financial Sustainability report
- Approve minutes of Fall Congregational Meeting
- Approve 2020 Budget
- Approve Nominating Committee slate
- Designated Minister Selection Committee Update

Reported by Gail Sonnemann, Clerk

Care of Parish Commission



2020 Potluck Luncheons

Care of Parish has arranged eight potluck luncheons for this year. We hope you were able to enjoy the first of the year during the Annual Meeting. The next two will be: **March 1** (all foods welcome) and **April 12**, our Easter Pancake Breakfast.

Care of Parish will keep you posted as further dates are confirmed by Council.

Coffee Hour Sign-Up for 2020

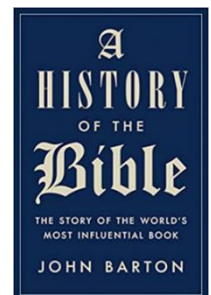
A representative from Care of Parish will be circulating the 2020 Coffee Hour sign-up list during the coming weeks. Please sign up to host. It's a great way to get to know folks and be a part of First Church's extravagant welcome!

You can also sign up online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0848a5ad2ea2fa7-first>

Christian Education Commission

Theology Reading Group February 6, 2020, at 6:00 PM

The Theology Reading Group will next meet on Thursday, February 6, at 6:00 pm. We will be taking up the first part of John Barton (Oxford), *A History of the Bible*, a well-written account for the general reader critically presenting contemporary scholarship about what the Bible is and how it has been understood over time. We plan to spend four meetings with the book, beginning with discussion of the Introduction and the section on the Hebrew Bible, pages 1 – 141. All are welcome. Contact Peter Byrne with any questions at byrne@law.georgetown.edu.



Outreach & Membership Commission



Outreach & Membership Inquirers' Gathering
Sunday, February 23 at 9:20 AM in the Community Hall

Getting to Know You... Getting to Know Us...

Please join us for a wonderful time of fellowship where you can learn more about the First Church community and the United Church of Christ. Whether it is your first Sunday or you have been with us for a while, we welcome you for conversation, sharing, and fun. Please contact Ann Bushmiller at abushmiller@yahoo.com or Rev. Sam McFerran at mcferran.sam@gmail.com with any questions.

Church Directory Update

In preparation for the new Designated Minister, we are updating the church directory. If you are new to the congregation, please be sure we have your contact information. We'd love a picture, too! If you're not new but have moved in the past few months or your contact information has changed, please send us your updated information. We want to be sure everyone is included! **Deadline is February 14.**



Worship Commission

February worship theme: *Listening for Prophetic Voices When Everything Seems Haywire*

Does that sound appropriate?

February 2: First Church youth will share stories about their recent weekend in Baltimore, learning about the urban ministry of The Center.

February 9: M. Lewellen, director of The Center, in a follow-up to the February 2 worship, will preach about "Hope in the Midst of Trauma." She will speak about the role of church in Baltimore, a city that faces the challenges of poverty, gun violence, and a racial, social and economic divide.

February 16: Rev. Karen Byrne

February 23: Sandy Sorenson

Given the theme of today's prophets, we will feature different social action voices from First Church. For example, in the Call to Worship on February 9, Meg Maguire will reflect on the Shaw Community Ministries, and on February 23 we will hear Amy Driver talk about the Drop-In Center. If you have suggestions of voices you would like to hear, please let us know.

February 26: Ash Wednesday Worship Service at 7:00 PM.

Planning a theme and observances of Lent are in the works!

Rev. Sam McFerran and Rev. Karen Byrne

The Musical Month in Review December 2019-January 2020

December 1, 2019 ADVENT I

Anthems: "The Day of the Lord Is at Hand" John Shepherd

Hymns: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" Glory to God 88
"We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom" Glory to God 378
"Keep Your Lamps Trimmed" Glory to God 350

December 8, 2019 ADVENT II

Anthems: Christmas Pageant

Hymns: "Once in Royal David's City" NCH 145
"My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout" (Canticle of the Turning) Glory to God 100

December 15, 2019 ADVENT III

Cantata: "Kneeling in Bethlehem" arr. by Michael Burkhardt

Hymns included in the cantata:

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"
"Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"
"Angels We Have Heard on High"
"Gentle Mary Laid her Child"

December 22, 2019 ADVENT IV

Anthems: "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" Johnny Marks
"And He Shall Feed His Flock" & "Come Unto Him" Handel
"Twas in the Moon of Wintertime" arr. by Burkhardt

Hymns: "Now Bless the God of Israel" NCH 110
"In the Bleak Midwinter" NCH 128
"Joy to the World" NCH 132

December 24, 2019 Christmas Eve

Anthems: "Hallelu" Paulus
"The Shepherd's Carol" arr. by Burkhardt

Hymns: "O Come, All Ye Faithful"
"Bethlehem, the House of Bread"
"Rise Up, Shepherds and Follow"
"The First Noel"
"Silent Night"

December 29, 2019

Anthems: "Is It Very far to Bethlehem?" McGlohon

Hymns: "O Word of God Incarnate" NCH 315
"Now Bless the God of Israel" NCH 110
"Good Christian Friends Rejoice!" NCH 129

January 5, 2020

Anthem: "How Foolish They Were"
"How Sweet It Is" Paget

Hymns: "Hark! The Herald Angel Sing" NCH 160
"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent" NCH 345
"Go, My Children with My Blessing" NCH 82

January 12, 2020

Anthem: "He Shall Feed His Flock" John Ness Beck

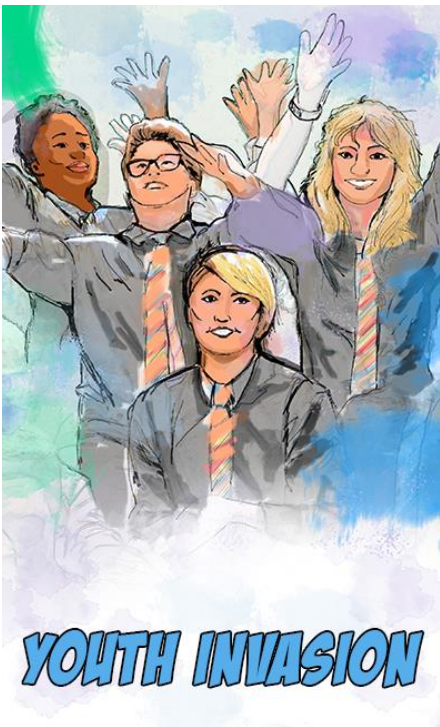
Hymns: "God Is Here" NCH 70
"Take Me to the Water" Glory to God 480
"O Sing a Song of Bethlehem" NCH 51

January 19, 2020

Anthem: "Hand in Hand" Rollo Dilworth
Hymns: "God, Who Called Us by the Prophets"
"Hush! Hush, Somebody's Callin' my Name" NCH 604
"I, the Lord of Sea and Sky" Glory to God 69

January 26, 2020

Anthem: "Fill-a-Me Up" Pepper Choplin
Hymns: "Called As Partners in Christ's Service" NCH 495
"We Shall Overcome" NCH 570
"What Gifts Shall We Bring?" NCH 370



The GenOUT Chorus

Saturday, February 22, 2020 at 3:00pm

The GenOUT Chorus's third *Youth Invasion* concert will feature songs that inspire and celebrate LGBTQ pride. Soloists and small ensembles will be interspersed with songs performed by the entire GenOUT Chorus in a concert featuring hit songs from Broadway and film, and pop favorites. Now in its sixth season, the GenOUT Chorus is made up of 25 singers from 17 schools around the DC metropolitan area. Songs include "We Can Be Kind," "I Was Here," "We Are One," "Rise," and "You Will Be Found" from *Dear Evan Hansen*. Come join the young people of GenOUT as they sing out and proud.

One performance only!

Live! at 10th and G

945 G Street NW

Tickets: Call 202-293-1548

ASL Tickets or groups of 10 or more: Call 202-293-1548

With special guests the Children's Chorus of Washington

Join GenOUT onstage for *Youth Invasion* will be two ensembles from the Children's Chorus of Washington - the **Young Men's Ensemble** and the **Concert Chorus**. The Young Men's Ensemble is an ensemble of boys with voices that have changed, and the Concert Chorus is an advanced level ensemble from the Children's Chorus of Washington. Both ensembles have traveled and performed internationally.

<https://www.gmcw.org/season-shows/youth-invasion/>



February's Commission Spotlight: *Care of Parish*

Over the next few months, we will highlight a different church Commission. This month, we are featuring COP, Care of Parish!

Care of Parish is the ❤️ of the congregation. They are charged with helping us create community and care for one another. They organize the weekly Sunday coffee hour and the monthly potluck lunch. They also help organize the food and drinks for special events, such as memorial service receptions, the church retreat, and even potlucks at congregant's homes.

Care of Parish is also the caring hands and feet of the church. They often assist with pastoral care by sending cards or flowers to those facing difficult times, or even visiting those who are not able to make it to church.

There are several ways that you can support Care of Parish -

- Sign up to host Coffee Hour – [Coffee Sign Up link](#)
- Host a community building activity or event (playgrounds, museums, or a movie)
- Offer to write a card, send flowers, or visit a church member in need.

Please contact Rev. Sam if you would like to learn more about Care of Parish.



Second Sunday Offering on February 9: ThriveDC

ThriveDC works to prevent and end homelessness by providing vulnerable individuals a comprehensive range of services -- meals, showers, laundry, and more -- to help stabilize their lives. Originally founded and housed at First Church from 1979 to 2009 (when it was known as the Dinner Program for Homeless Women), ThriveDC is comprehensive, professionally staffed, and bilingual, now located at 1525 Newton Street NW. It is unique in providing the last available safety net for people facing economic crisis and housing instability while also providing the first step toward independence for people experiencing extended periods of homelessness.

In 2018, Thrive DC served 153,898 meals, served 2,000 clients and invited 2,149 volunteers to share their energy and commitment. Their website at www.thrivedc.org suggests calling 311 or the Hypothermia Hotline at (202) 399-7093 if you would like to help a community member experiencing homelessness during this frigid season.

Report on First Church's Olive Oil Sale

First Churchers and our visitors purchased a little over \$1,700 worth of olive oil and related products during the Advent sales! We passed all of these funds to the ecumenical Olive Oil Ministry, which works to build peace between Palestinians and Israelis, raise awareness about realities in the Holy Land, and support Palestinians in their struggle for justice.

Sincere thanks to our many enthusiastic buyers, SAAC for sponsoring this effort, the Drop-In Center for vacating the SAAC cart for the month, Rev. Sam for inventory pick up and deliveries, Treasurer Nora Marsh for handling the money, and the volunteers who set up, sold, and served as cashiers.



Rev. Karen Byrne

Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth

The Drop-In Center program for homeless youth started 2020 off strong! The center is now open two nights a week, Mondays and Wednesdays. It's a blessing to see new faces as well as to have more opportunity to connect through welcoming, nourishing, and gathering with our friends who visit regularly on Mondays, including volunteers and the professionals who make it happen. We're also excited that the Table Church has joined this ministry, and have enjoyed getting to know them better. There will be a new round of training coming up in the next month if you want to join us on Monday or Wednesday evenings. There are other ways to pitch in: baking cookies, collecting supplies, helping with volunteer coordination, etc. Please contact Janneke Ratcliffe janneke1018@gmail.com (919-618-1018) if you would like to get more involved.



Documentary Screening: Warrior Women

Sunday, February 9 at 12 pm
Community Hall

Come See a Powerful Documentary and Support
Our Summer Youth Trip.
(Cookies, Popcorn and Lemonade will be provided)

This event will raise funds to help our youth return to the
Cheyenne River Reservation, where we will partner with
Simply Smiles to help run a summer camp and build homes.

Last Summer we met Madonna Thunderhawk and her daughter, Mercy.
We heard their story of survival, courage, and activism.
This documentary tells Madonna's life story.

For more information, go to warriorwomenfilm.com, simplysmiles.org, or
email Rev. Sam at mcferran.sam@gmail.com

February Calendar

Sunday, February 2

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Youth leading worship
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*

Monday, February 3

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth
- 6:30 pm Sanctuary Task Force, *Comm. Hall*

Tuesday, February 4

- 6:30 pm Church Council, *Comm. Hall*

Wednesday, February 5

- 12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*
- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Thursday, February 6

- 6:30 pm Theology Reading Group,
Living Room
- 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*

Sunday, February 9

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
M. Lewellen preaching
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*
- 12:00 pm Care of Parish Comm., *Chapel*
- 12:00 pm Adult Nurture: Warrior Women,
Comm. Hall

Monday, February 10

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Wednesday, February 12

- 12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*
- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Thursday, February 13

- 5:30 pm Worship Comm., *Pastor's Office*
- 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*

Sunday, February 16

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Rev. Karen Byrne preaching
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*
- 12:00 pm Question & Answer Session

Monday, February 17

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Tuesday, February 18

- Church Office Closed

Wednesday, February 19

- 12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*
- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Thursday, February 20

- 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*

Sunday, February 23

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Sandy Sorensen preaching
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*
- 12:00 pm Special Congregational Meeting,
Sanctuary

Monday, February 24

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Wednesday, February 26

- 12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*
- 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service,
Sanctuary

Thursday, February 27

- 5:30 pm Finance Comm., *Chapel*
- 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*



This Year's First Church Council and Commissions

Moderator	Kim Darling
Assistant Moderator	Garnell Yarbrough
Treasurer	David Greer
Clerk	Gail Sonnemann
At Large Member	Alyx Cheng Dwight Davis
Assistant Treasurers	Karen Pence, Nora Marsh, Susan Anderson, Lucille Dickinson
Care of Parish	Nora Marsh, Carol Malone, Kristy Goodfellow Mills, Mike Zawada, Melissa Ho Volunteers: Ann Saudek, Peter Tracey, Andrew Hamilton
Christian Ed.	Mark Jensen, Joey Meyer, Elise Villemez, Alisa Tanaka-Dodge, Anna Kiss
Facilities	Anisa Heming, John Marsh, Carolyn Marsh, Moira Jones, Tony Saudek
Finance	Andy Raver, Susan Anderson, Polly Gordon
Investment	Ann Bushmiller, Peter Tracey, Karen Pence
Outreach & Membership	Priscilla Waters, Marian Drake, Meg Maguire, Patrick Darling-LaGamma Ann Bushmiller Volunteers: Dale Ostrander, Matthew LaGamma
Social Action	Lucille Dickinson, James Moore, John Smeltzer, Sharlene Castle
Worship	Peter Byrne, Nick McConnell, Sophie Jones, Laura Johnson, Diane Brenneman, Abigail Cipparone

If you are interested in volunteering for any one of these commissions, please contact the church office at churchoffice@firstuccdc.org or Kim Darling, Moderator, at kdarling@gmail.com.



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church

Associate Minister – Rev. Sam McFerran

Minister – Rev. Karen Byrne

Director of Music – Mr. John Horman

Building Manager – Mr. Byron Adams

Administrative Assistant – Ms. Cindy Dobbs

Sexton – Ms. Ines Marquez

Members in Discernment – Dwight Davis, Lynaya Morris

Nursery & Childcare Staff – Timur Murillo, Ziyah Holman, Jordann Edwards, Patrick LaGamma

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