FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

June 5, 2024

Dear Councilmembers,

On behalf of First Congregational United Church of Christ, a joyful and justice-seeking congregation at the corner of 10th & G (Ward 2) since 1866, I urge you to prioritize racial equity in the FY25 budget in the following ways:

- Provide a seat at the Gallery Place decision-making table for a representative of churches within a half mile radius of Chinatown, such as Rev. William Lamar of Metropolitan AME or Rev. Mahogany Thomas of Calvary Baptist.
- Invest in affordable housing, including the preservation of Museum Square Apartments.
- Preserve Chinatown small, minority-owned businesses, funding technical assistance and access to capital.
- Fund unhoused community support, including clean, functional shelters, day service centers, public restrooms, and end encampment evictions.
- Restore the Housing Production Trust Fund, emergency rental assistance, housing counseling services, and strengthen the SNAP program.

The proposed FY25 budget, with its drastic cuts to affordable housing and the social safety net programs, is not in keeping with Chinatown's vision for our neighborhood. As the pastor of a congregation that houses a Pathways to Housing office and partners closely with Sasha Bruce Youthwork, we are deeply mindful of the investment and support required to serve our neighbors who are unhoused. As a community of faith answering God's call to be an antiracist congregation, we know that gentrification and development disproportionately harms neighbors of color, and affordable housing is the only way forward. What we do here in the heart of the nation's capital can influence cities across the country who are facing similar challenges. Please be in touch to let me know how you will vote to ensure a just FY25 budget that promotes affordable housing and social safety net programs.

In Peace,

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss
Senior Minister