

Spring Congregational Meeting Notes (May 18, 2025)

Welcome and Moderator's Report – Dwan Reece (15 Min)

- Approval of Minutes from January's Annual Meeting
 - **Motion to approve**
 - **Second**
 - **28 approve – motion passes**
- Approval of changes to Membership Roll
 - Removed from Active Status
 - Oladoyo Moses Alabi
 - Cara Bidwell
 - Amy Dugan
 - Joe Mills
 - Bent/Henry family change of status("members" to "friends")
 - **Motion to approve**
 - **Second**
 - **Voice Vote Passes**
- Approval of Ulung Tanoto, Director of Music Ministry
 - **Motion to approve**
 - **Second**
 - **Voice Vote passes**
- Moderator's Report
 - A member who has applied for status in discernment – affirmed and in process of committee on ministry (Nick Benton)
 - Sustainability task force
 - Carryover from discussion in January on how we sustain ourselves as a church. How to be good stewards of our funds and marry the mission to the community.
 - System for communication
 - Signal – opt-in communications
 - Not everyone needs to be on the system.
 - Individual channels
 - Free app
 - Just need moderators – will communicate about this in the weeks to come
 - Commemorative Artwork
 - Dwan showed one of the panels.
 - We are looking at installation date in late June, early July,
 - Target date for service is September 14th (when Rev. Amanda has returned)
 - This is an opportunity to make First Church a public space. We can position ourselves as a place where these ideas are discussed. We are looking to hold a public program in the fall. Dwan would like to continue a community dialogue.

- Fall Retreat
 - Scheduled for Oct. 3-5 at Camp Bennett in Brookeville, Maryland.
 - Multiuse facility
 - About a 30 minute drive
 - Dorm style cabinets
 - Est. Cost per person – we have signed a contract with an estimate of 50 people signing up. We think the cost will be \$124-148.
 - Two focus topics
 - Sustainability
 - SAAC/Social Justice Work
 - Questions/Concerns?
 - Meg Maguire
 - Lauren has received a major award from the AFL-CIO. Would love for there to be a mechanism for sharing these and other important personal information.

Associate Minister's Report (Rev. Sam McFerran) (5 min)

- Jamey Moore will receive the Seabury celebration of service award. Applause for Jamey.
- CE is going to continue community building
 - Park
 - Gathering at Capitol Hill
 - Movie gathering.
 - Escape Room
 - West Virginia Youth Service Trip
- How can we listen to the nudges?
 - We are hoping to value during this summer.
- Baseball Game
 - July 20th vs. Padres

Senior Minister's Report (Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss) (10 min)

- Overview of Spring
 - Maundy-Thursdays Service – 50 people showed
 - Changes for Easter (beginning)
 - Six new members
 - Energy from music ministry
 - Artwork
- Thanks to Staff
 - We are grateful to have Inez back.
 - We are grateful to Whitney
 - We are grateful to Byron
 - We are grateful for Rev. Sam – especially for pastoral care. Please reach out to Rev. Sam for pastoral care. When he is out, “pinch hitters” will be available for pastoral care.
 - Ulung – has done a wonderful job – both musical talent and “soft skills.” Please give feedback.
- Sabbatical

- We are creating a culture of collective care.
- Our model is that we are all human beings – we don't need folks to be “martyrs.”
- 5-years – sabbatical.
- A lot has happened in the last 5 years. Rev. Amanda is looking forward to taking a step back and listening to God.
- We have created a sabbatical guidelines document. Details how Rev. Amanda's duties are being delegated. Rev. Amanda will be working through Friday.
- Sabbatical is “No-Contact”
 - We will not hear from Rev. Amanda, and the congregation should not expect to contact her. Rev. Sam and Dwan can be in touch with Rev. Amanda in case of emergency.
- Quote From Trisha Hershey (Nap Ministry creator) “Rest is Resistance”

Treasurer's Report – John Smeltzer (5 min)

- Report has been prepared by Lucille. Also shoutout to Polly Gordon who writes our checks.
- Pledge income is above target, especially unpledged income. Pledges are the one thing that we have control over ourselves.
- Building Income
 - Congressional Chorus – we are lowering the estimate because of the way they expect to use the building. However, the facilities commission and Byron have supplemented building income with occasional use and revenues from parking spaces (lines 26-27).
- Expense items
 - Most items are close to target with the exception of our gas bill (line 91). We don't pay much for gas til the Fall, so we aren't too worried about this.
 - Conference and meeting expenses (line 140) is over because of the retreat, but this will be defrayed by people paying for their spots at the retreat.
- Net Income
 - Our net income is a deficit of \$82,000. This is deliberate as we use a bequest we received. After 2024 we had about 230,000 left from that bequest. This is a deliberate effort that Andrew will talk more about.
- Investments
 - Investment commission put out a report last year presented at the annual meeting recommending using some of the endowment to supplement the bridge fund. Despite the downturn in the market, the market has bounced back. We are pretty much where we expected to be.

Sustainability Task Force Report – Andrew Hamilton (15 min)

- Mission is to examine the structural deficit – approximately \$100,000 per year.
- Our expenses are pretty fixed – especially given church mission and staff capacity.
- The path to a sustainable budget is growth. The good news is that we are already doing that. This is a growing and flourishing congregation.
- Most of the endowment is a result of the deal that the church put together to build this church building, which included selling the “air rights” above the building.
- We are not in crisis, we have resources.

- Our primary recommendation is to think about how we communicate who we are to the local area/DC community. There are ways in which we may “hide our light under a bushel.” We rent a lot of space to different groups. It is very easy for someone to attend an event in our building and not know (1) that we are a church, and (2) what kind of church we are. We hope to change these things – outreach and membership is thinking along similar lines.
- Outreach and Membership have hired a communications consultant for the church to help with both internal and external messaging.
- We will vote on the sustainability plan in the Fall retreat – namely the proposed draw from the endowment for the bridge funds.
- This is like “tending a garden.”
- Rev. Amanda Comment
 - Research shows that the #1 way that someone finds a church is through another person. There is an epidemic of loneliness. Rev. Amanda encourages folks to invite other people to attend church.
- Nan. Comment
 - Thanks to Andrew

A Musical Blessing for a Summer of Reflection and Renewal (5 min)

- Rolling Waters

Closing Prayer – Rev. Amanda (5 min)