

## **FRS Parish Board Meeting – February 21, 2024**

**Present:** Rev. Rebecca Bryan, **Tina Benik, Jim Supple, Kathy Desilets, Renée Wolf Foster, Annie Maurer, Laurie Evans-Daly, Tom Himmel, Vern Ellis, Minnie Flanagan, Bob Higgins, Liss Larsen, Lori Clark, Doug Latham.** (Note: names in bold are voting members.)

**Absent:** Caitlin Creps

**Call to Order:** Jim Supple called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

**Welcome/Reading/Chalice Lighting:** Rev. Rebecca

Rev. Rebecca shared a reading on instructions for bad days focusing on the fact that there is light in every day and while we all know pain, it will not last forever. We are called to be calm.

**Congregational Insight Team Report:** Rebecca Lobb and Barbara Garnis

Barbara was glad to be able to report on the work of the team which began five months ago. She stressed that the team had worked well together with all sharing in the work. Rebecca reviewed slides and described the process for analysis.

- 12 Workshops held with 125 participants. At that point few if any unique comments were identified.
- Participants included parents of children in young church, young adults, middle school students, and FRS staff.
- The groups had good representation of the congregation by length of involvement.
- Scribes recorded all comments and then Rebecca and her team grouped them into categories.
- Specific themes emerged as priority interest: Parish Hall (highest number of votes), followed by Worship Services, Communication and Planning, and Social Justice/Inclusion. These topics got 52% of votes.
- Adding program features, environmental impact activities, adult and youth program accounted for 82% of votes.
- The most popular topics were chosen by the most individuals and in most of the groups, showing that they were considered important across the congregation.
- Next steps: Share with groups in the congregation, continue to engage the congregation in decision making, and reach out to community leaders.

Board discussion focused on engagement, diversification and updating of programs and worship, inclusion of young people in all aspects of church life, and engaging the unchurched (a new idea). This is a first step which provides a large amount of data to drive planning.

Thanks to Rebecca and Andy Lobb and the whole team for their work.

**Roof Project:** Doug Latham reported for the Facilities Team and presented a written report.

- The roof was last replaced in 1997 and clearly shows wear.
- We have spent \$6,000 in the last 18 months on repairs, and we have ongoing leaks.

- The Facilities Team requested bids to repair the roof from four contractors. In addition to the replacement of the roof, they identified needed structural work. Review of the bids resulted in choosing Olympic to do the work. They worked on our building before, are GAF certified, and are a municipal vendor.
- While the cost of the roof replacement itself is \$66,000, including a contingency fund for any complication, necessary structural work will add cost and can best be done while the roof replacement is ongoing.
- Since we have active leaks now, the Facilities Team believes this work should begin as soon as possible, to avoid further damage.

The Grants Team has submitted a request to the city for a Community Preservation Grant of \$80,000 and we will know in June if our application is accepted. We have received funding from this source in the past. Other grant-seeking is ongoing.

Funds are available through the Bailey Fund to cover the cost of this work now and if efforts to secure grant funding are successful, these grant funds will reimburse the Bailey Fund.

Our bylaws require that any spending over \$7,000 requires approval via a congregational vote. The Executive Committee has set March 10 as a tentative date for a congregational meeting to authorize the spending. Since total expenditures related to structural supports are not yet clear and will only be clear after the roof is stripped, the Board determined that it would be best to make an outside estimate, set at \$90,000, which is expected to be more than what is needed to cover all costs of the project. The Board hopes this will avoid the need for another congregational meeting if unexpected costs arise during the project. Funds will only be expended as needed for the project.

**Action: Request Congregational approval of roof repair**

**Motion:** Tom Himmel moved that we ask the congregation to authorize the Parish Board to enter such contracts and to expend such funds as are necessary for the replacement of the Meetinghouse roof and any ancillary repairs to ensure that the new roof is effectively supported and secured to the building. Total funds shall not exceed \$90,000. The motion was seconded and passed without opposition.

To seek congregational approval, we need to hold a congregational meeting. Because of the amount of funding needed, we need to have a quorum of 20%.

**Action: Convene a meeting of the Congregation of FRS UU to vote on the roof repair**

**Motion:** Tom Himmel moved, and Minnie Flanagan seconded, that we convene a meeting of the FRS congregation on March 10 for the purpose of voting on the roof repair. The motion was approved without opposition.

The board commended the Facilities Team for their extraordinary work on the roof project and on keeping track of the work needed to properly maintain our buildings and grounds.

**Minister's Report:** Rev. Rebecca

- Rev. Rebecca shared the new organizational chart which will allow her to have fewer direct reports. She will continue to be the only staff representative at board meetings. A new Assistant Minister of Congregational Life will take over Cynthia's work with membership and will supervise Mara as well as working on adult programs. Cynthia will continue her work on special events and will work with Donny on facilities issues that Rob managed previously.
- In addition to the Assistant Minister and the Director of Church Music, we will be hiring a part-time Director of Finance. Job descriptions for these positions are available on the website and have been circulated through appropriate channels. Search committees are in place for these positions. In addition, we will hire a part-time communications person who will work with the website and other communication.
- Rev. Rebecca says she has heard very little from the congregation about the staffing changes, which is unusual. She also talked about staff reactions to the changes, which are mostly positive, often very much so with no opposition. Uneasiness is normal in times of change and Rev. Rebecca reminded the Board to offer support to staff members.
- Rev. Rebecca also let us know that we will need extra support during the time of transition with volunteers stepping in as needed. Bob Higgins commented we should let people know in more detail what they can expect from the staff and which groups and committees should expect to take care of themselves.

**Stewardship:** Vern Ellis

The annual campaign is ahead of schedule with the packet out to congregants and 42-44 stewards recruited. The intent is for stewards to encourage personal meetings with the congregants/friends they reach out to during the campaign.

Given the need to increase fundraising and stewardship in general, the Stewardship Team met to discuss what we can do over the summer. We will bring back the "Dinner for 2 Anywhere in the World" raffle. We will start selling tickets in April and draw the winner at the annual meeting. In 2021 this fundraiser raised \$11,000 after expenses. Other ideas are in the formative stages.

There is a plan to shift board roles with Jim Supple leading the Finance Committee, Renée Wolf Foster taking over stewardship, and Vern Ellis chairing the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Group.

The Board thanked Vern for his dedicated work on stewardship and for being willing to take leadership in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century planning process.

**Financial Report:** Renée Wolf Foster (submitted in writing)

Finance reports show no unexpected expenses, revenue is steady, and the Finance Committee is doing well. Nothing alarming has emerged from the reports. The Board thanked Renée for her work with the Finance Committee.

**Consent Agenda**

- Minutes of January Meeting
- Minutes of Special Board Meeting – January 31

**Action: Accept Consent Agenda**

**Motion:** Renée Wolf Foster moved that the Consent Agenda be accepted, Tom Himmel seconded, and the motion passed without objection.

**Closing Words:** Rev. Rebecca closed with a poem she wrote in 2018 which spoke of honoring feminine energy and skill in liminal times and to recognizing that no one can resolve these times alone.

**Adjournment:**

**Action:** Kathy Desilets moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Jim Supple seconded. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned, and the chalice extinguished at 8:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Desilets, Clerk