

FRS Special Parish Board Meeting – April 7, 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, Lori Clark.** (Note: names in bold are voting members.)

Absent: **Caitlin Creps, Liss Larsen**

Call to Order: Jim Supple called the meeting to order on Zoom at 5pm and confirmed that we are holding this meeting to vote on extending a contract to Rev. Laurel Gray to serve as Assistant Minister for Congregational Life. **Note:** Rev. Rebecca sent Rev. Laurel's CV and notes on the search committee process to Board members in advance of the meeting.

Welcome/Reading/Chalice Lighting: Rev. Rebecca lit the virtual chalice and said that, as we consider bringing in a second minister, we are at a historic moment in this church which reflects and calls for the highest and best aspirations of this congregation. All our ancestors of 300 years of history are gathered with us.

Background: Rev. Rebecca described the process (and the series of miracles) that led us to this point. When we began this search we anticipated a dearth of available candidates. Three candidates were quickly identified and had initial interviews. All were qualified in various ways. Rev. Laurel, who has experience as a solo minister and who was mentored by Rev. Rebecca, was looking for a change of position and was one of the applicants. She came to FRS, met our staff, saw our space, and decided she was excited about our position. Another congregation where she was a candidate asked to use FRS as a neutral pulpit where members of their search team could hear her preach, so those of us who attended that service, including the search committee, have heard her preach.

Rev. Rebecca described Rev. Laurel as a minister of great heart, spirit, and integrity and said that both of them are delighted to have her come to FRS. Vern Ellis described a conversation he had with a board member who described Rev. Laurel as curious, caring, inspiring, and thoughtful. Everyone involved in the search process found her to be exceptional.

Rev. Rebecca told us she had discussed the relationship between two ministers and the importance of trust and of Rev. Laurel being comfortable keeping a focus on the work we have defined for her, at least in her first year with FRS. They both agreed that they are in joyful and trustful agreement regarding their relationship and the understanding of the division of the work of our congregation. Rev. Rebecca reminded the board that we are responsible to help support this division of work.

Jim Supple, Tina Benik, and Rev. Rebecca have drafted a contract for one year, which will start in August, outlining responsibilities and compensation. Some extra benefits will be added in following years.

Action: Extend a contract offer to Rev. Laurel Gray

Motion: Tom Himmel moved that the FRS Board approve moving forward to make an offer to Rev. Laurel Gray which will be followed by a contract which has been drafted and will offer her one year of service as our Assistant Minister for Congregational life. Minnie Flanagan seconded the motion, and it was accepted unanimously.

Next Steps:

- Tina Benik and Jim Supple will complete steps to establish the contract.
- Rev. Laurel will start here on August 13. This will allow her time to say goodbye to her current congregation. We will be ready to welcome her when she arrives.
- Our congregation will be notified via a note from Jim Supple, as Board Chair; Rev. Rebecca; and Rev. Laurel soon (likely later this week).

Closing Words: Rev. Rebecca offered a prayer that this will be the beginning of an ongoing journey helping us to build and sustain our beloved community.

Action: Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Tina Benik moved that the meeting be adjourned, Tom Himmel seconded, and there was unanimous approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Desilets, Clerk