

The following is a summary of things for Council to know. As a body, there are no actions sought from council, the points are helpful things to know:

- I. Opening Reflection
- II. 2nd Hour Conversation themes and next steps
- III. Office Manager / Communications next steps
- IV. Calendar and Communications
- V. Holiday Worship

I. Opening Reflection

Psalm 62:1-8 from *Psalms for Praying* by Nan Merrill

For You alone my soul waits in silence;
from the Beloved comes my salvation.
Enfolding me with strength and steadfast love,
my faith shall remain firm.

Yet, how long will fear rule my life,
holding me in its grip like a trembling child, a dark and lonely grave?
Fear keeps me from living fully,
from sharing my gifts; it takes pleasure in imprisoning my soul.
Fear pretends to comfort,
so long has it dwelled within me; truly, it is my enemy.

For You alone my soul waits in silence;
my hope is from the Beloved.
Enfolding me with strength and steadfast love,
my faith shall remain firm.
In the Silence rests my freedom and my guidance;
You are the Heart of my heart, my refuge is in the Silence.
Trust in Love at all times,
O people; pour out your heart to the Beloved;
let Silence be a refuge for you.

And words from p 24-25 *The Cry of the Soul*, by Dan Allender and Tremper Longman.

II. 2nd Hour Next Steps

Around 30 people attended the Second Hour conversation. Special thanks to Charlene, Bruce S., Bruce L, and Bob K. for helping to organize and contributing to the conversation. And to Council, Trustees, Deacons, Outreach, and members of the search team for making helping to rally folk to attend.

Although the individual sticky notes have not been typed up yet, key themes questions include the following:

- Hopes: grow as a community, be open to change, remain loving. Kind and caring through the process
- Questions: how to attract/address needs of families, how long will process take, how to face our greying reality, how do we ensure we are following the priorities of Jesus today?
- Challenges: fewer people, aging congregaton, addressing the spiritual questions/longings of people today, sustaining energy for spiritual nourishment, activism and vision, ensuring direction is embraced enthusiastically
- Opportunities: we get to decide what we want our church to be; opportunity to equip, empower, encourage; new ways to engage/participate outside building, beyond Sunday worship; refocus/become less busy; music, families, staff, worship opportunities to branch out.

The summary of the 2018 surveys and the handout from the second hour have been posted in the Resource section of the 2021 Council page on the website.

Immediate Next Steps:

1. Type up hopes, questions, challenges, and opportunities
2. Organize teams, resources and hold first meetings Restructuring and Vision/Values
3. Hold Conversation regarding Family Ministry (Nov 21)
4. Create communications plan to continually invite engagement and further educate about process, possibilities, examples

III. Office Manager/Communications

The Trustees and Pastor have been in communication to develop a plan to provide office support in the short term.

We have agreed to separate the financial secretary duties from the office management and communications responsibilities.

I am meeting Wednesday with Sam Lyman to work through the short-term plan as well as the preliminary draft description and hiring approach for communications and office support.

Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer will take the lead to further define their support needs and the approach to support the financial functions in the near and long term.

IV. Calendar and Communications

As we move into a very busy season in the life of the church, it will be helpful for all to work together to proactively communicate upcoming activities and share updates with the congregation.

- **Calendar Activities:** As soon as an event or activity is known, cancelled, or changed, please let me know so that we can ensure the calendar on our website and the weekly summary in the worship bulletin reflects these changes. Things to consider... is the meeting online, in-person, or hybrid? If it is in-person, where will the meeting take place? Is it open to all, for a specific group, or closed to committee members only?

Here is why: We live in a hybrid world. With some meetings being on zoom, others in-person and some a mix. To calendar on our website is being used more and more to help coordinate activities and communicate what is happening. Those less familiar with the inner working of the congregation are using the online calendar more and the online calendar is the source for the items shared in the weekly email as well as listed in the bulletin.

- **Weekly email and Worship Bulletin:** provide content by Sunday evening of the week in which you wish to have something listed/published.

Here is why: It helps get these tasks done on Monday and allows time to clarify questions. Of course, exceptions can be made for urgent/emerging items as needed.

- **Share:** Items for Share are due the Monday of the week following the Council meeting, which means the January Share Items will be due December 20th. Likewise the February/March Share items will be due January 17.

Here is why: The January electronic and paper versions of Share will need to be compiled and edited in the week following Christmas to be distributed by the start of the month. In January we also have the need to compile and distribute the items related to the Annual Congregational Meeting. And the February/March Share will be compiled and edited following the congregational meeting. Having items in by the deadline, gives us time to organize, edit and compile the newsletters.

- **Worship Service Order of Worship:** activities being planned or inserted into worship need to be discussed and reviewed at least a few weeks before the worship service, e.g., guest speakers, faith stories, special presentations, etc.

Here is why: The goal is to create worship celebrations that are moving, meaningful and memorable. To do so, we strive to coordinate and integrate the flow of the service. Again, urgent events are the exception.

In addition, please bear in mind that I do, as best as I can try to take Friday as a Sabbath.

V. Holiday Worship

Briefly, we will be celebrating Joy this Advent and Christmas Season. Specifically, bringing Joy and light into these uncertain times and troubled world.

We are working on an evening in late November or early December to sing carols and light the window lights in the sanctuary.

We are planning a reflective service to mark the longest night and make space for those who struggle with grief, loss and depression, amid this season of hope and joy.

And Christmas Eve is planned for 7pm in person. An open question is whether we will plan an alternative/additional service to accommodate families and/or crowds. To do so would require additional organization and alternative musical accompaniment. It is a question for the family conversation on the 21st and if there is interest, then for the musicians in our midst.