

Ministry Update Report August 2023

The following is an update regarding items within the Ministry Areas and Communications. In addition to this report, please see the July 18, 2023 detailed notes from the Creative Worship Team.

This is primarily informational in nature.

Action items for the Governing Board are as follows:

1. Approving the recommendation of the Music Director Search to extend an offer to Gretchen D'Andrea (see details in B.1.b Music Director Search)
2. Approve Proposed 2024 Ministry Plan/Budget process and timeline (see D.1)
3. Scheduling Governing Board Members for offering messages in September and October.

A. Upcoming Activities and Dates

August	9am worship	Kevin preaching Aug 12, 20, & 27; Sue due back Sept 3
Aug 13 - 16		Virtual Worship Design Studio Retreat (email Pastor Kevin for access)
Aug 25-Sept 4		Pastor on Vacation cancelled will reschedule for Fall
Aug 15		Senior Ministry
Aug 15		Deadline to apply to participate in SNEUCC's Trans-inclusive congregations' program
Aug 17	7:30p	FAI Meeting
Aug 22	2-3p	PRC Webinar Older Adults and Caregivers Ministry and Outreach
Aug 24	2-3p	PRC Webinar Experimenting Alongside Kids in Worship
Aug 30	6:30p	PRC Webinar Making Stewardship a Joy
Sept 5	7p	Deacons Meeting
Sept 10	10a	Homecoming and Communion
Sept 12	7p	Creative Worship Monthly Meeting
Sept 15	10a	Interment service Dee Freeburn, Paxton Ma (mother of online attendee)
Sept ??		Beliefs conclusion and Vision Kickoff (Oct 1?)
Sept 24	10a	Juniper Webster Baptism
Sept 27	7:30p	UCC Webinar 5 Ways to Make an Impact : Understanding the Hopes of Our Donors to Create Change
Sept 30	9:30a-4p	Music that Makes Community (New Bedford, \$75)
Oct 1	10a	World Communion Sunday; possible intergenerational worship
Oct 3	2p	PRC Webinar Dementia Friendly Congregations
Oct 5	2p	PRC Webinar Making the Best of our third 30
Oct 7	10a	Pet Blessing
Oct 7	10a – 5p	Justice Summit (in person/online)
Oct 8	10a	SNEUCC ACM Rev. Carol Steinbrecher preaching
Oct 18	6p	Rev. Steinbrecher / GB dinner and conversation
Oct 21/22	7p	Possible concert (LGBT Inclusion) sponsored by FIA
Oct 25	7:30p	UCC Webinar Donors Who don't come: Engaging Donors outside Sunday Morning
Oct 29	10a	All Saint's Day
tbd		Team's and Ministry meeting

B. Ministry Update

1. Worship

Creative Worship (Please see 20230718 Creative Design Team Meeting notes document for greater details regarding the many activities and explanations regarding a) the Worship Design Studio retreat and b) Worship Design Studio website, c) Music that Makes Community, d) Creative Worship Google Group, etc.

All, whether part of the Creative Worship Team or not, can review the series overviews, see the detailed Orders of Worship for each service, and make suggestions by either entering comments and suggestions into the Order of Worship (including song ideas), contacting the pastor, or emailing the Creative Worship Team CreativeWorship@FirstChurchWoodstock.org.

a) Themes

The series themes as well as the scriptures and focus for each Sunday worship through Nov 26 have been identified. Orders of Worship are being created for each worship service. The children's ministry will use resources related to these series as well.

The series for the fall include "Come to the Table" Sept 10 – Oct 8 and "Because of You..." Oct 15 – Nov 26." The first is based on a series from the Worship Design Studio. The second is based on the UCC's 2023 Stewardship Campaign resources.

Using these resources and moving in the direction of Worship series, requires a higher degree of collaboration, coordination, and planning than has been the norm at FCCW. It is, however, consistent with the structure called for by the reorganization.

The Creative Worship team is open to anyone who wishes to participate on an ongoing basis in planning and/or facilitating meaningful worship.

Instructions for using the Order of Worship can be found in the series overview documents for our Fall series "Come To the Table" and "Because of You," as well as the draft Worship Ministry community framework.

b) Music Director Search

The Search Team includes Donna Dufresne, Holly Ware, Leilani Nixon, Leslie Sweetnam, Rick LaMarre, and Pastor Kevin. We met at the end of July to evaluate the candidate pool at that time and factor in questions and concerns of the three team members who were out of the country in early August.

To date, six people have applied for the Music Director Position: Five through Indeed and one from within the community.

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Four of the candidates were eliminated through the prescreening process based on their interest, skills, and/or location.

Two candidates were invited to meet with the team for an interview.

Based on the gifts of the candidates and the interviews, the team unanimously agreed to recommend to the Governing Board that we offer the position to Gretchen D'Andrea.

2. Care

The deacons continue to work toward a vision of creating a network of care that will provide a) periodic visits to congregants who are unable to make it to church regularly and/or going through a challenging season; b) continue sending cards of encouragement to congregants; c) nurture the prayer team; d) organize volunteers and share care needs for things such as rides, food, and other practical things; and e) ensure pastor and deacons are aware of those experiencing difficult challenges who could benefit from a conversation, visit, etc.

3. Learning/Spirituality

Children and Family Ministry.

- VBS in partnership with East Woodstock has been a success with an average of 12 children attending. Remaining sessions include launched this evening in partnership with East Woodstock. July 12, 26, and Aug 9 will be at First, July 18, Aug 9, and 23 will be at East.
- Themes and activities are planned through Nov 26th for Sunday School
- Family activities are being planning for mid-October and late-November/Early December to build community among Families and connect with others
- We are currently creating a roster of volunteers for the Sundays September through December
- December 24 will be the Children's Pageant

Other activities on hiatus during the summer.

- Bible Study and Finding Meaning in the Message to resume in September
 - There are resources related to the upcoming worship series, including journals and bible studies that can be used by bible Studies and small groups
 - The leaders Guide for the first part of the Exploring the Bible Study is back ordered. Once available, we will advertise this in the fall, the first part is "What is the Bible"

Labyrinth.

- To date Leslie and Buce Lyman have indicated interest in the conversation regarding the Labyrinth
- When Leslie returns we will work on scheduling a date for the conversation and then advertise this more broadly to the congregation

4. Faith In Action

We created a GoogleGroup FaithInAction@FirstChurchWoodstock.org. This is a distribution list to email the Core Team.

We are exploring SNEUCC's program to help congregations become trans-inclusive. The application includes 1) a form explaining who we are and why we want to become Trans-inclusive. 2) commitment from the congregation to send 8 people, including at least one clergy person to the justice Summit Oct 7, 3) participation by at least two people from the congregation (one lay and one clergy) on a monthly affinity group call with other congregations who are becoming trans-inclusive, and 4) conversations and education in the congregation.

We will meet on August 17 to finalize the groups related to issues/interest areas, work on Fall events, and clarify the grant process; explore a possible concert Oct 21 or Sunday Oct 22 by out musician Bobby Jo Valentine; and encourage/promote the SNEUCC Justice Summit, Oct 7.

C. Communications

1. Rev Kev's Appointment Calendar

Near the end of July, we created a "bookable" appointment calendar for Rev Kev. The link appears in our weekly email and in the email signature of the pastor.

https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/appointments/schedules/AcZssZ2fleARRntYDkf7CLKu1iN3TbbYkJsDngxckPcuijc7VYZvH9MQTEW4oyK2QIPZ_8CqhSnxxsaO

We plan to add a link to the website, once we have more experience regarding how it works.

The bookable calendar is a new feature from Google Workspace, which means anybody with an @firstchurchwoodstock.org account could create a bookable calendar. (Note: this functionality could be used to schedule room usage in the future, if scheduling ever becomes a challenge, we could create calendars for each room and a bookable appointment calendar to automate room scheduling.)

2. Newsletter Schedule

We will publish a Fall and a Winter Newsletter. The Fall Newsletter is scheduled to be sent the Wednesday before Labor Day and the Winter Newsletter the last week in October.

Content is due no later than August 21 at 8am for the Autumn Newsletter and October 23 at 8am for the Winter Newsletter.

Lisa is currently gathering information for both newsletters.

D. Other items

1. 2024 Ministry Planning/Budgeting Time Table

I propose the following timetable for the 2024 Ministry Planning and Budgeting:

September	Ask teams to reflect on what is working, what might we do differently – and bring ideas to October meeting (Focus on Ministry Purpose and How to further vision/mission of Congregation)	Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Integrated Plan • 2023 Budget to Actuals by ministry • Values & Competing Priorities • 2024 Ministry Team Template (hard copy and Google Form) 	Pastor Finance Pastor Pastor / teams
October	Gather ideas from team before/during meeting Facilitate conversations inviting congregation to explore and share ideas: Worship, Care, Spiritual Growth, Faith in Action	Create/update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrated plans by ministry area • draft ministry budget 	Pastor Pastor w/ Finance
Early November	Integrate Ministry budget into total budget Prioritize and adjust as needed		Finance Finance & Pastor
December	Refine and finalize budget		Finance & Pastor
January	Present Ministry Plan / Narrative budget to congregation for approval		Finance

2. Events Calendar

A few notes regarding the FCCW Events Calendar:

- a. Please add meetings and events to the calendar
- b. Please note that we can now add rooms to the calendar, this is helpful as multiple events can be happening in the church and it is good to know that the Library or Kitchen or Harrison Hall is or is not being used.

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- c. Please set up separate events for setup and prep, e.g., CoTH Food Prep, Concert Rehearsal, Craft Fair Set up; and a separate event for the public event, e.g., Craft Fair, Christmas on the Hill, etc. Here is why: 1) it helps us know what spaces (if any) are available for meetings, etc. during the prep time for big events, and it helps the public know when the actual event is. (Because the FCCW Events Calendar is the calendar that is posted on our website).

3. My schedule

Worship Design Retreat (online) August 13 – August 16: I will be spending a significant amount of time participating in the online planning retreat facilitated by the Worship Design Studio. Sessions run from August 13 (8p) through August 16 (noon). (Please see the Creative Worship Team notes for a more detailed schedule).

Regarding vacation, I took a week in early May and another the fourth of July. I cancelled my planned time off Friday August 25 through Labor Day, because we were unable to find someone to preach and East wanted an ordained clergy person to lead service.