

Ministry Update Report October 2023

The following is an update regarding items within the Ministry Areas and Communications.

This is primarily informational in nature.

Actions for the Governing Board:

1. Approve the proposed policies related to the Communications Guidelines, i.e., section II of the [Communications Guidelines](#) (draft v 0.7 reflects all suggestions to date) this includes communications policies relate to Privacy, Personal Information, document/information Storage, honoring Copyright, and a style guide.
2. October 29 Call for the offering volunteer

A. Upcoming Activities and Dates

Oct 18	6p	Rev. Steinbrecher / GB dinner and conversation
Oct 21	tbd	Family Fall Festival
Oct 22	11:15	Pledge Campaign kickoff, Because of You Our Church Changes Lives
Oct 22	10:45	Congregational Meeting
Oct 29	10a	All Saint's Day PASTOR WILL BE OUT
Nov 5	10a	Pledges Due
Nov 19	10a	Adam Smedberg, Community Engagement Specialist from Church World Services, in worship and 2 nd hour conversation
tbd		Teams and Ministry meeting

B. Webinars and Training

Oct 16	6:30	FIA	Cross-Pollination Gathering: Environmental Ministries
Oct 19	12 – 1p	Prop	SNEUCC Taxes and Tables: Best Practices for Church Building Rentals
Oct 23	6:30	FIA	Cross-Pollination Gathering Racial Justice
Oct 25	7:30p	Stew	UCC Webinar Donors Who don't come: Engaging Donors outside Sunday Morning
Nov 2	12 – 1p	Care FIA	Becoming WISE: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness in our Churches and Communities
Nov 16	12 – 1P	Care GB	Shepherding Congregations into and through Generative Conflict

C. Self-Care

I will be out the last week in October and will not be in worship on October 29. Leslie may offer a message that Sunday as part of the Because OF You series.

I am also participating in an online series of group spiritual direction and coaching through Austin Seminary, called “The Art of Well Being.” “This course is designed for leaders who wish to optimize personal

wellbeing so that positive energy and creativity are supported and sustained, even in times of disruption and turbulence. Wellbeing is about a flourishing life. The course we will share together is an invitation to flourish in all of life.

The course consists of six 90-minute group coaching sessions (every other Thursday) and two 50-minute one on one sessions. Faithful leaders in ministry participate in facilitated peer conversations around significant themes related to holistic wellbeing, i.e., spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, and relational health.”

D. Ministry Update

1. Care

We are seeking a leader to coordinate the Care Ministry and various volunteers. Although we recognize that a great deal of community care happens organically, it is our belief that being more intentional about offering support, training, and community among those who participate in the Care ministry will be a good thing. We also want to ensure that people do not “Fall Through the Cracks.”

2. Faith Formation

We are prayerful that the Fall Festival on October 21 will help deepen the connections among current FCCW families as well as others in the community. As our Family and Children’s ministry continues to struggle post-Covid, we are exploring alternative activities and models as part of the planning process.

We continue the conversation around confirmation and are exploring curriculum. There are several referenced on the SNEUCC website, most take a more traditional approach and were developed for other denominations. There is one that we found that I have asked Debby Kirk about as it was not on the SNEUCC comparison list, but has a UCC-specific version and, as the title suggests, takes a more open way of exploring faith questions. There is also an adult version of the curriculum as well.

Adult Tuesday bible study continues, thanks to Sam Lyman’s leadership.

3. Faith In Action

Faith In Action team are working on allocating the grant monies.

We will work with Stewardship to create part of the Because of You display board and to launch during this Because of You series/campaign.

And we will be launching three Google Groups to foster collaboration in conjunction with the series:

- GreenTeam @FristChurchWoodstoc.org (eco-justice/climate action);
- DoJustice@FirstChurchWoodstock.org (to address racial discrimination, inequality, LGBTQ exclusion, and others who feel marginalized);

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- LoveOurNeighbors@FirstChurchWoodstock.org (to focus on addressing the practical needs in the Quiet Corner, e.g. Hunger, Housing, Poverty, Refugee resettlement, etc).

4. Worship

Creative Worship Meets 2nd Tuesday at 7pm
Music/Choir will meet on select Thursdays.

Although there is potential in our ministry given the many talented musicians and singers, we have many challenges as well. As the Vision team identified as part of the Value process, the congregation has a cultural aversion to engaging in conversations to work through questions and differences. The worship team is representative of the congregation and this competing priority continues to challenge attempts to create a collaborative, team-based ministry.

- Themes Identified through Easter

Because of You Our Church Changes Lives Oct 15 – Nov 26

The Gift of Being Present Dec 3 – Jan 7

Flourish Jan 14 – Feb 14

Busy: reconnecting with the Unhurried Heart Feb 14 – Mar 28 (Ash Wednesday – Maundy Thursday)

Easter March 31

- Series overviews have been created through Jan 7
- Scriptures identified through Nov 26
- Orders of Worship created through Nov 26
- Leilani will be out Dec 31 – Jan 21.

E. 2024 Ministry Planning and Budgeting

Ministry Planning and Budgeting template has been distributed to the Ministry Teams, Leaders and staff. The template is in the Ministry Planning folder on the Communications shared Google drive.

Team members, leaders and staff have been asked to either, complete the template and send it to the pastor by Oct 16 or enter their ideas directly in the integrated ministry planning document, which is in the Ministry Planning folder and accessible by entering tinyurl.com/2024FCCWPlan. In addition, everybody who receives our electronic newsletter has been invited to share their ideas regarding what we are doing well, as well as what we should do more, stop doing and consider doing by going to tinyurl.com/2024FCCWideas.

All ideas and suggestions will be consolidated into the integrated planning document. This will be used to create the plans, priorities, and budgets for Care, Communication, Faith Formation/Lifelong Learning, Faith In Action, Technology, and Worship. Suggestions that relate to other areas, e.g., facilities, Governing Board, staffing, etc. will be shared with the respective leaders and/or teams.

F. Communications

1. Draft 0.7 Communications Guidelines

All comments and suggestions to date have been integrated into an updated draft version of the Communications Guidelines. With the board's approval of the policies (section II of the document), the draft will be sent to all teams, leaders and staff; and reviewed in meetings in the coming month to ensure awareness and seek further comments and/or clarification.

We continue to update the communication guidelines as needed, e.g., refining the newsletter due dates and content, documenting office procedures, and listing items to encourage self-review of content by content creators, including the Communications Coordinator.

2. Newsletters

Holiday Newsletter CONTENT DUE 3rd Tuesday on October, publication around October 25. Please add content to the Holiday Newsletter template (or email Lisa).

PLEASE add to the Google document or send by email editable copy, i.e., text, email, word. PDFs and pictures of article text/copy is difficult to work with and makes it hard to format the overall paper and electronic newsletter.

In addition, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE keep articles brief. If you have a lot of text, we should create a web page that we can point people to, or should send a separate focused email. There are the reasons for this, for paper newsletters our goal is 10 printed pages or less to avoid extra postage, for the online newsletter google/Gmail has started clipping (truncating) really long emails, and for both newsletters people tend to scan through the articles and pull out read what seems appealing – and too much text is more likely to turn people off.

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| <p><i>Holiday 3rd Tues of Oct</i></p> | <p><i>Around Oct 25</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Governing Board Update</i> • <i>Events and Activities Oct 25 – Jan 1</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Stewardship Campaign</i> ○ <i>*All Saints Day</i> ○ <i>Christmas on the Hill</i> ○ <i>Giving Tree</i> ○ <i>Christmas Caroling</i> ○ <i>Christmas Pageant</i> ○ <i>Christmas Eve</i> ○ <i>Advent Devotional</i> ○ <i>Advent Study</i> • <i>Newcomers Brunch</i> • <i>Other Ministry highlights recent activities</i> • <i>Poinsettia Orders</i> • <i>Board Nominations</i> |
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G. Other

1. Labyrinth

In conversation with Leslie, we have agreed to form a community task force to reimagine a safe design for the Labyrinth. The intent is to meet through the winter and rebuild the Labyrinth in the Spring in time for World Labyrinth Day in May.

2. Membership Roll Review

To date I have been contacted by three families who received letters. All shared that they thought the letter was nicely written and understood the need to clarify where their relationship with the church.

Two of the families indicated that they transferred their membership elsewhere “several” years ago, though they would like to still be considered “friends” of the church. A detailed list of transfers and changes in status will be shared with the clerk after October 15 (the deadline for letter recipients to contact FCCW).