

COMMITTEE NEWS

Church Council

Leadership Retreat on February 6

As we prepare to welcome our new minister in the new year, Council is mindful of the need to get our house in order. One of the things we are focused on is the need to improve how Council, the various standing and adhoc committees, and lay ministries communicate with each other so that we can all work together better.

We also have identified a need for better understanding of each group's role in the life of the church and how we can enhance our mission by being more aware of the connections between us. In light of this we are planning a Leadership Retreat on Saturday, February 6, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. for all Council members, Committee and Lay Ministry chairpersons or representatives to attend. We look forward to this time for getting to know each other better, sharing ideas and information, some "basic training" for church leadership, discussion, and reflection.

Volunteer Opportunities

One of the best ways to get to know your new minister is to be an active committee member or church leader. We want to greet him or her with strong and fully functioning committees ready to work together, and our intent is to present a full slate of officers and committees (with no vacancies) for the congregation's approval at our annual meeting on January 24. We need your help to meet this goal.

If you have not already volunteered to serve on a committee in 2016, I have good news for you. It's not too late! Actually, it is possible to be on two committees (and many of us do) so even if you're already signed up for one, you could consider adding one more.

Maybe YOU would be the perfect person to volunteer for one of these opportunities:

- Property and Finance (1)
- Endowment (1)
- Hospitality Committee (2)
- Nominating Committee (1)
- Outreach Committee (2)
- Stewardship (1)
- Spiritual Formation Committee (2)

continued

And of course, we are still looking for a new Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer. **The treasurer does not necessarily need to handle bookkeeping tasks.** First and foremost, the Treasurer is an officer and member of Council and Property & Finance. We are actively seeking someone to serve in this vital role. Please consider it.

If you are interested in any of the openings please contact me or Patricia Serota of the Nominating Committee. We look forward to hearing from you and answering your questions.

Margie Mitchell, Moderator

Treasurer Report

Through the end of November the church's income is over budget and expenses are under budget. This is an enviable position to be in at this point of the year. Any excess cash available at year end will go to further pay down the church's loan from the Endowment Fund as previously directed by the congregation. It is hoped a substantial amount of the remaining \$12,105 of this loan can be covered.

Income actual	\$226,388
Income budgeted	<u>\$215,846</u>
Income over budget	\$10,542
Expenses actual	\$209,523
Expenses budgeted	<u>\$212,020</u>
Expenses under budget	\$2,497

Financial statements are on file in the church office for your inspection. Electronic versions are available on request. Let me know if you would like to receive these via email.

--Candi Horton

Outreach

Thanks to all of you for making our Alternative Gift Fair successful! The organizations we support reported brisk sales and offered many thanks!

FISH
Seeds of Learning
Sonoma Overnight Shelter
Nuestra Voz
Teen Center Sonoma
What If? Foundation

-- Janice Mattison

Worship Committee

At our December meeting Elizabeth Palmer and Janet Volkman were welcomed to the Committee, while retiring members, Nancy Denkin and Gene Campagna, were bid a fond farewell.

The following committee assignments were filled for the coming year:

Tim Boeve - Chairperson;
Joan Howarth - Secretary;
Elizabeth Palmer - Liturgists;
Janet Volkman - Flowers;
Bev Pearson - Ushers

Eight new members into our congregation will be welcomed on Sunday, January 10. We will also be welcoming our Northern California-Nevada Conference Minister, Diane Weible, who will be our guest preacher on January 17.

--Tim Boeve

Hospitality

Food For Thought...

It's been an adventuresome two years for the five of us who are leaving Hospitality at the end of this year. We have tried many approaches to include "healthy" food: food grown locally, organically and sustainably. We've done this because we care about the health of our fellow congregants, and we value our local food providers.

A wonderful partnership was formed when Earth Care agreed to provide food one Sunday a month. In the future, we're hoping that other committees and groups might partner every other month to bring food to coffee hour. It's easy to collaborate, will increase communication among committees, and people will know who the food providers are well in advance. This collaboration will be especially helpful next year if we only have four persons on Hospitality: Kathleen Gray, Patricia Henley, Diane Lumiere, and Kim Pack.

As always, thank you to the many people who have graciously provided refreshments for the past two years.

For Nancy Ladd, Karen Boon, Adele Snipes, Kim Garcia --

--Jan Edwards "signing off"

West Spain Thrift Shop

The West Spain Thrift Shop closed for the holidays on Saturday, December 12, 2015, with a highly successful "Fill a Bag" sale. Shoppers filled a brown paper grocery bag with any items they wanted for \$2 a bag. In the three hours we were open that day, we sold close to 125 bags - which works out to a bag every minute and a half!

Volunteers then got busy emptying, cleaning, and restocking the store, which will reopen at 10 a.m. on Thursday, January 14, 2016. We will be accepting donations starting Monday, January 4, 2016.

A volunteer meeting is set for after church on Sunday, January 10, 2016. We hope all our volunteers and anyone interested in volunteering will be able to attend the January 10 meeting.

The 2015 numbers for the Thrift Shop (last year's total income and total distributions to nonprofit groups) are not available in time for the January Grapevine deadline, but we will publish them in the February Grapevine.

Our thanks to everyone who supports the West Spain Thrift Shop with their donations, purchases, time, and energy. Happy New Year!

-- Patricia Henley

Hospitality Committee Needs Help

Our Hospitality Committee is responsible for coordinating our coffee hours on Sunday after worship, potlucks, and occasionally other events during the year. They purchase the coffee, tea, and other supplies, coordinate volunteers to set up, clean up and bring food, wash tablecloths, keep the closet organized, and much more. It is easy to take for granted that coffee, tea, and goodies will await us on Sunday morning after worship, and to have a welcoming time for fellowship and to greet new folks, but without our hospitality committee members making sure it happens each week, it would all but disappear. I don't want to see that happen and I doubt you do either.

We have just four people so far who have agreed to serve on Hospitality in 2016. We really need two more folks to join them so that this hard-working committee can function. Would you be able to help? Please contact me or Patricia Serota if you are interested.

--Margie Mitchell

Pastoral Search Committee

We hope everyone interested has had the opportunity to read the *FCC Sonoma Church Profile* written by your Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) and posted on the "Members Only" section of our FCC Sonoma website. And, we hope you will keep your eye on the Camino de Sonoma poster in the Community Room for updates on how we are traveling down the path of our yearlong search process. The PSC will continue to apprise you of our progress in each issue of the *Grapevine* and in regular church service announcements. Please continue to query Committee members as you have questions, comments, and suggestions for us. Our goal is to make this search as open as possible to the congregation while still protecting the confidentiality of applicants.

We want you to know that your input has been enormously valuable as the PSC drafted the *FCC Sonoma Church Profile* and as we are now moving on toward evaluating the first set of applications we have received. During the late summer and fall, the Committee benefitted from the many opportunities in which you told us what characteristics, skills, and experience you wanted in our new minister. Starting with the All-Church Planning Retreat last August, continuing with the meetings the PSC had with each church committee, and including the responses to the all-church survey, we were able to evaluate the convergence in the characteristics that we as a congregation wish to see in our new minister.

We began our *Church Profile* with a welcome statement which includes this descriptive paragraph:

Our small-church congregation connects with our broader community in significant ways. We also connect with one another with mutual respect and appreciation for our progressive congregation that is characterized by deep caring, openness to learning, compassion for others, respect for the wisdom of other faith traditions, frequent laughter, active relationship with the environment, joy in fellowship, and genuine appreciation for the gifts that each of us contributes.

If you were seeking a pastoral position, would you want to seek out this opportunity? We continue to ask for your prayers, thoughts, and suggestions as we seek the person who best fits our Beloved Community at FCC Sonoma.

--Elizabeth Griego

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SOMETIME MUSICIANS AT FCC SONOMA Begins Tuesday, January 5

From time to time in the past, we have had gatherings to make music together at FCC. With Alan now as our interim pastor there has been added interest in giving music (relevant music) a boost in our congregation. To ride this wave of interest, Alan and I propose a first meeting of church members and friends who would like to combine their talents to make music - no goals of performance - just for the fun of it!

Tuesday afternoons have been determined as the best time on the church calendar. On Tuesday, January 5, at 4:00 p.m. the first get-together will take place in the Community Room. If you have a copy of the song book *Rise Up Singing* or any other songs you would like to sing, please bring them with you. If you are a vocalist or have a talent for percussion, you are welcome here.

At the first meeting we will determine how often we want to meet. If you can't attend this first gathering but are interested please let Alan or me know.

In the meantime, stay tuned and play well with others.

-- Todd Evans

SPIRITUAL INQUIRY

Continues in 2016 as "Practicing Presence"

The spiritual inquiry group will continue in 2016 with the first meeting on January 3 led by Taras Lumiere (in Tim Boeve's absence), and then will continue to meet every other week thereafter, from 9:00 a.m. to approximately 9:45 a.m. in the Community Room. The "class" is also taking on a new title to more accurately describe what we seek to do when we come together: "Practicing Presence." It has become a very enriching experience for the participants to just simply be together and practice being fully present with one another in silence, with probing questions about the Spirit's movement in our lives, and in sharing aloud what this means for each of us in our own individual experience. Visitors are always welcome.

--Tim Boeve

	Liturgist	Deacon	Ushers	Flowers	Coffee Hour
January 3	Renee Serota	Bev Pearson	David McFarland and Mary Evelyn Arnold		Mary Evelyn Arnold
January 10	Bob Rowntree	Elizabeth Palmer	Vic and Kit Conforti		Earth Care
January 17	Veda Lewis		Bob and Elizabeth Griego		
January 24	Dick Ridenour		Florence Porter		Church potluck
January 31	Karen Boon				

Happy January Birthday!

- 1 - Kaila Seyms
- 2 - Cozette Shenks
- 5 - Cathy Webber
- 10 - George Webber
- 12 - Susan Heffelfinger
- 14 - Tom Mitchell
- 14 - Gwen Schafer
- 21 - Jeanne Campbell
- 26 - Bev Pearson
- 29 - Rudy Doorman
- 30 - Ben Garcia
- 31 - Eric Webber
- 31 - Janice Mattison



First Congregational Church of Sonoma
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(707) 996-1328

contact@sonomaucc.org

Office Hours: Wednesday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Worship Service and Sunday School - 10:30 a.m., Sunday

We are an Open and Affirming Earth Care Church

Interim Minister: Alan Claassen, alan@sonomaucc.org

Music Director: Terry Lezama-Jensen

Pianist: Sondra Cooper

Sunday School Teacher: Emily Webber

Childcare Providers: Anna DeSmet & Natalie Baker

Office & Event Manager: Angela Ljung

Facilities Manager: Steve Cook

Pastor Emeritus: David McCracken

West Spain Thrift Shop

Store Hours:

Thursday and Saturday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Donation drop-off hours:

Regular store hours, and Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 9 a.m.-11 a.m.



JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 8:00 am CR Meditation	2
3 F.I.S.H. Sunday 9:00 am CR Practicing Presence 10:30 am Worship and Communion	4 4:00 pm CR Poetry Group	5 4:00 pm CR Sometime Musicians 7:00 pm S Choir	6	7 3:30/4:15 pm CR Bells 7:00 pm CR Church Council	8 8:00 am CR Meditation	9 9:00 am BH Congregation Shir Shalom Service
10 10:30 am Worship and the welcoming of new members	11 4:00 pm CR Poetry Group	12 11:30 am CR Women's Fellowship 5:00 pm CR Earth Care Committee 7:00 pm S Choir	13 12:30 pm CR Caring Friends 3:00 pm S Outreach 7:30 pm CR Pastoral Search Committee	14 Thrift Shop reopens 3:30/4:15 pm CR Bells 7:00 pm CR Worship Committee	15 8:00 am CR Meditation	16
17 9:00 am CR Practicing Presence 10:30 am Worship Diane Weible preaching	18 10:00 am S P & F 4:00 pm CR Poetry Group 7:00 pm CR Seekers	19 4:00 pm CR Sometime Musicians 7:00 pm S Choir	20 7:00 pm CR Pastoral Search Committee	21 3:30/4:15 pm CR Bells	22 8:00 am CR Meditation 5:00 pm BH Congregation Shir Shalom Service	23 10:00 am CR Congregation Shir Shalom Torah Study
24 10:30 am Worship followed by Annual Meeting BH ----- 31 9:00 am CR Practicing Presence 10:30 am Worship	25	26 7:00 pm S Choir	27	28 3:30/4:15 pm CR Bells	29 8:00 am CR Meditation	30