



CrossWays

The Newsletter of
The Congregational Church of Brookfield
160 Whisconier Road,
Brookfield, CT 06804
(203) 775-1259

April 2020

Being Church in These Times

Before the CoVid-19 pandemic what you would have seen grace the front cover of this month's Crossways would be information about our Annual Meeting brunch which traditionally takes place on a Sunday near the end of April. However, the new guidelines for containing the viral outbreak, and hopefully keeping as many people as safe and healthy as possible, have us ***remaining socially distant and physically apart from one another through at least the end of April.***

We know this can be very difficult. God never intended us to live in isolation—from the very beginning God offered people partners and communities to surround them. However, as the church we are called not only to gather—building both faith and community—but also to care for others and the world. One of the best ways we can do that right now is by following guidelines to prevent further spread of this disease.

We hope during this time that you will stay connected with us and each other, however. We are trying many new things as we strive to offer meaningful opportunities to worship and gather virtually, as well as to stay connected via our “*View From the Earth*” weekly devotional from the pastors (available both via email and U.S. mail), this CrossWays, phone calls, Zoom meetings, and waves through the front door.

We are sending out weekly emails and links to virtual online worship. We are updating our website and Facebook page regularly with information, Church School learning options, and opportunities to participate in special virtual events. ***Please see the article inside about ways that you can stay connected with us in spirit and through the wonder of the internet while we are physically apart from one another.***

Council Notes: March 10, 2020

Moderator's Report: Personnel has completed non-clergy reviews. Personnel asks that members alert the office if they want to request Miss Debbie to staff the nursery for a CCB event or meeting.

Vice Moderator's Report: Update on FY2020-21 Preliminary Budget – Budget is still in the preliminary stage until carryover number is determined. Budget will be voted by the congregation.

FHIG –2 listening sessions were held about the potential fellowship hall project before Council met. FHIG is drafting a proposal re: next steps (poss. hiring a company to do a feasibility study).

Church Treasurer's Report: Pledge income is over budget by almost \$11k and total income is over by just over \$13k. Utilities & insurance expenses are under budget, office is over budget.

Investment Treasurer's Report: As of the quarterly report ending 12/31/19, the market value of endowment funds increased by \$83,155.25. \$2,633.70 was transferred from Building & Grounds for phone system installation; a \$4,708.70 pledge gift of stock was transferred to operating budget; 4% of the General Endowment fund will go to the Operating Budget for FY 20-21 in the amount of \$51,095.66 and 1.5% will go to Building & Grounds in the amount of \$19,160.87.

Committee Reports: CIS –Delivered \$345.00 and 17 bags of food to the food pantry from the Feeding Hungry Hearts food drive; the Souper Bowl of Caring raised over \$1,200, benefiting both Loaves & Fishes and the Brookfield Food Pantry. Dining for Women met to benefit WINGS of Guatemala and raised \$326 (total raised this past year was \$1,493).

Church House –Taken on some updates per Safety Committee's recommendation (putting a push bar on the front door out of Brooks Hall, and the installation of a lock on the door to the school wing). Purchased a TV as requested by CE for the church school wing "Apple Tree" classroom.

Welcome –Posting a Devotion on Facebook every Sunday during Lent. Church Directory photos and information have been merged, targeting a completion date of Memorial Day.

Christian Education – Marriage Course has over 20 couples participating. Confirmation recently visited 2 experiences of different faiths. Heifer program has been a good educational experience.

Worship –Increasing the substitute musician rate from \$175 to \$200. Digital piano in the choir room is in need of repair/replacement (\$3,500) – whichever avenue is chosen, there is money in the music endowment to cover it. Church Safety asked whether Worship would be OK leaving the window lights on during the services on Christmas Eve; neither Worship nor Council objects.

Deacons – There will be a commissioning and re-commissioning of Deacons and Stephen Ministers. "Plan Your Own Memorial Service" class is scheduled to be offered on May 30th.

Stewardship –Sending thank you notes to those who pledged this year. Making follow-up phone calls to members who have yet to pledge. Total pledges are showing an increase over last year.

Safety Committee – Bryn reported that the safety committee, started in 2018, has nearly completed 3 of 4 objectives re: fire safety, medical safety, and lockdown response. The last objective is to update our CE Safe Church Policy, which will be done with staff and CE guidance over the summer. The committee borrowed walkie talkies from Bob Brown to test before purchase. Ushers' locking of doors will be implemented in the fall – if there are any objections, let the pastors know.

New Business: Media Booth Modification Proposal – Request from the Media Booth Team, Worship, and Church House IT is to place a rack on the wall for better air circulation for and protection of equipment in the Media Booth, with the funds (\$2,400) to come from the Book of Remembrance (and to be voted on by the congregation). A motion was made to approve the proposed modification and send it to the annual meeting for approval. The motion passed unanimously. Same company who installed equipment will do work.

Fair Chair(s) needed –Discussed the need for Fair Chairs and several names were suggested.

CG & E requests –Motion for \$1,096.87 out of CG&E for Toni to attend the Conference of Worship and the Arts at St. Olaf College in Minnesota July 27-30, 2020. Passed unanimously.



Staying Connected....

To receive our **weekly Eblast announcements** and the link to our **Virtual Worship**, please be sure that we have your best email address by sending it to Jeannine in the Church Office at office@uccb.org.

You can also email Jeannine and ask to be added to our weekly online Pastors' devotion, the "**View From the Earth**". (If you are not connected to email you can also be asked to be added to the paper mail version of this devotional as well by making sure that the church has your best address.

Our **Monday AM Women's Study, Monday PM Adult Study, Thursday AM Bible Study, and Saturday AM Women's Fellowship** are all meeting online at this time. If you would like to be connected to any of these opportunities please email the pastors (Bryn@uccb.org or Jennifer@uccb.org), and they will be sure that you have the link to the appropriate group meeting(s).

You can find weekly **Virtual Church School** information by visiting our website homepage at www.uccb.org. For other Church School announcements please be sure that Barbara Crandell has your best email address and your are on her **All Church School email list**. You can reach Barbara at Barbara@uccb.org.

We have gone virtual with **Youth Fellowship** groups as well. If you are or have a young person in grades 6-12 who would like to receive links to our Virtual JYF (6th-8th grades) or SYF (9th-12th grades) information please be sure that Pastor Jen has your email connected to our lists. You can reach Pastor Jen at Jennifer@uccb.org.

If you are **on a committee** and are wondering what is happening with monthly meetings, please be in touch with your committee chairperson directly, as some meetings have been moved to email, others to Zoom, and others have been canceled.

Information about Virtual Worship links and other upcoming events is updated regularly on our website and CCB Facebook page as well. There is also a new google form that you can fill out with any **prayer requests** on the homepage of our website as well. This is the virtual version of the prayer request cards that are in the pew racks. Any information will come directly to the pastors and only shared with the folks you authorize in your request.

While the majority of our staff work time is now spent at home, rest assured that your church staff is still working to keep the church going and to provide meaningful worship and programs. **If you need to be in touch with a staff member or the church office** you can call the church at 203-775-1259 and follow the voice prompts to leave a voicemail message. Voicemails are also emailed to our church staff, so staff members can access them from home as well. Or you can email any member of our staff directly.

If you need **contact information for another church member** that you wish to check on or reach, you can be in touch with Jeannine McCullough, Office Administrator, via phone or email (office@uccb.org) to obtain that information.

Our goal is to stay as connected as possible while we are physically distant from one another. As one of our members, Wendy Elsen, recently said,
"We cannot hold each other's hands, but we can hold each other's spirits."

Holy Week Worship & Meditation Opportunities



Palm Sunday, April 5th, 10:30am:

“Journey with Jesus: The Lord Has Need of You”

Wave a colored paper palm or a leafy branch from your home or yard and join us online as we gather for our Palm Sunday processional and worship.

Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia will be preaching on Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and considering the ways that God is calling us to bring our faith into the world in these difficult times. We will be celebrating communion with each other in our own homes, so make sure to have a little something ready (whatever works for you and is convenient) to join us at God’s table of grace.

Maundy Thursday, April 9th, 7:30pm:

This will be a LIVE Zoom service of Communion and Tenebrae as we hear different voices sharing the story of those last moments of Jesus’ life in physical presence with his disciples. An electronic link to join us will be sent out via email, and it will be posted on our website.

Good Friday, April 10th—Self-Guided Walking Meditation:

While we usually take time on Good Friday to join our Ecumenical brothers and sisters for a chance to witness to our faith and also to remember the story of Jesus’ last days and his crucifixion, this year we will be sharing some scripture and reflections for you to do your own self-guided walking meditation. You can do this on your own or invite some friends (perhaps even friends from other churches) to join you via Facetime, Zoom, Skype, or phone. We invite you to find your own place and space to take a walk, make some stops, and meditate on all that is going on in the world and how God calls us to respond as faithful people.



We hope you will join us for our “Virtual” Easter Celebration! Sunday, April 12th

Easter Sunrise at 6am – Pastor Bryn will share a special sunrise meditation as the sun rises in Brookfield. There will be no physical gathering, but a link will be sent along to share in the glory of the Easter morning sunrise and celebration of another day dawning.

Virtual Worship at 10:30am—Rev. Jennifer Whipple preaches *“Journey With Jesus: To New Life”* on the Easter story from Matthew 28:1-10. Especially in this time of isolation and worry, how do we hear the Easter story speaking to us—to our lives, our faith, our situations, and to the world? Where can we see new life winning over death? Where can we see and be glimmers of hope in God’s world?

Note: If you would like to share a brief video answering the question “Where do you see new life and/or hope right now?” please send it to Pastor Jen at Jennifer@uccb.org and copy uccbvideo@hotmail.com.

Congregational Church of Brookfield Annual Meeting Update:

We will not be able to gather in the traditional fashion for our Annual Meeting on Sunday, April 26th as was called for by Council before the pandemic. However, we are working on alternate plans (working with church leadership and trying our best to stay within our Bylaws) to hold a meeting for our congregation to vote on a few important matters like our church budget. More information will be forthcoming about where, when and how this will take place. Please be certain that we have the best email and physical mailing addresses for you in order to communicate about this meeting opportunity the best way possible. *If you have any updates to share about your contact information it is important that you share it as soon as possible with our Church Office. You can do so by calling 203-775-1259 or emailing office@ucgb.org.*

THRIFT SHOP CLOSED

The Thrift Shop extends enormous gratitude for all your donations, shopping, and the support you have shared with us the past several years!

We are currently **closed**, as we follow the guidelines pertaining to curbing the spread of the pandemic. Once we are back up and running, we will clear out winter clothing. At that time we will prayerfully ask for your *spring and summer donations*. We know that people are doing a lot of cleaning as we are isolated, so we will gladly accept your donations, but NOT YET! And please know that we do not have ample space for storage of winter items as well.

When we are able to re-open, you may drop off your gently used clothing at the church office or at the Parsonage on our shop days.

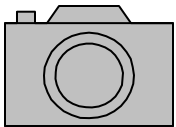


Photo Directory Help Wanted

The Welcome Committee continues to work with our staff to create our own in-house photo directory. Have you heard a name at church, but want to put a face to it? Have you wondered how best to reach out to a church family member about something, but didn't have the information at your fingertips? We are looking to help solve those problems for you by creating our own church photo directory. If you have yet to have your photo taken at a previous church event (i.e. Easter, Christmas Eve, or at the Yankee Fair) by a member of our Welcome Committee, or if you have yet to submit your own family photo to our church office via email (office@ucgb.org), we ask that you do so ASAP. (Note: The best photos are horizontal and close up headshots—or easily cropable.)

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

What a year, what a journey! We began our journey three years ago, when we examined what stewardship means to us as individuals, what it means to our church, how it defines us as a congregation, and metanoia... a spiritual transformative change of heart. Two years ago, we witnessed the impact that our stewardship has on our congregation, our community, and around the globe. **And this year's focus was on the impact that stewardship has on our inner faith journeys.**

Our fall program, *Get Out of the Boat*, based on Matthew 14, urged our congregation to step out of their comfort zones and into a full life of Stewardship. The fall Stewardship Moments focused on the importance of sharing our time, talents and faith journeys with our loved ones, each other, and beyond. Indeed, the opportunities to expand our Stewardship horizons are always available here at CCB.

Our annual pledge campaign, *Giving Changes Everything*, was highlighted by our brave and faithful speakers. Each willingly shared how their lives of stewardship changed them and prompted the prayerful and joyful giving of their time, talents and treasure. A new and meaningful Pledge Dedication service was specifically designed to foster the connection between faith journeys and pledging, including engaging our children in their roles of stewardship with their new Promise Cards.

It is with deep gratitude to the Stewardship committee and the congregation that we close out this successful year. Looking forward, as a community in Christ we continue to live our vision, make a world of difference and change everything through our giving, **including our own hearts, which brings us right back to our first year... *Metanoia!***

A note from your pastors about the Pastors Fund...

We know that this time of separation is a difficult one. There is not much in our lives that has prepared us to feel all that we are feeling, to take in all that we are taking in virtually, and to know what to do with it when we are unable to be with one another. We also realize that this time, and the economic situation that is accompanying it, may find you and your family in increasingly difficult circumstances—whether hours have been reduced, jobs have been lost, or businesses are not doing as well as they once were. To that end, we want to let you know that we are here for you and may be able to help lighten the load a little **bit. While we don't have millions of dollars in the Pastors Fund, we do have some money that might be able to help pay a bill, help with a gift card for groceries or gas. The money that goes into the Pastors Fund comes from our pastors' honoraria for funerals/memorial services and from generous donors who want to help others in meaningful ways and are in a position to do so. *Please don't hesitate to reach out to Pastor Bryn or Pastor Jen if you have a need that we might be able to assist with. We are here to listen and offer care and support in any way we can during this time.***

Fellowship Of Concern



CONTINUING CONCERNS:

Lillian Covill,
Liz DeLambert,
Des & Nancy Desmond,
Stephanie Joy,
Greg & Jan Labas,
Dan Leniart,
Ron Lopp,
Marion Miller,
Millicent Morrison,
Larry & Sherrie Ruschmeyer,
Nick Ruschmeyer,
Lavinia Schmaling,

SYMPATHIES:

We extend our sympathies to these church families who have lost loved ones, especially in this time when they are unable to gather in public worship with family and friends to celebrate these lives. Please hold them in your prayers.

- Our sympathies are extended to Paul Fenick and his daughter Evelyn on the death of her mother, Paul's former wife, Deb D'Angelo on March 14th.
- Our sympathies are extended to Les & Sue Slater and family on the death of Les' mom, Peg, on March 23rd.
- Our sympathies are extended to Wendy Andrews, her children (Jeffrey & Amy) and their extended family on the death of David Andrews on March 25th.
- Our sympathies are extended to Joan Hull and family on the death of Joan's brother.
- Our sympathies are extended to Linae Wutzl and her parents on the death of her father Tom Collopy's sister Nancy, on March 29th.

CrossWays Deadline

The deadline for the May issue of CrossWays is April 15th. You can e-mail articles to Jeannine McCullough at office@uccb.org. Please e-mail or call Jeannine McCullough, Office Administrator, at 203-775-1259 if you have any questions.

Then Jesus met [the women], stopping them in their tracks. "Good morning!" he said.

They fell to their knees, embraced his feet, and worshiped him. Jesus said,

"You're holding on to me for dear life! Don't be frightened like that." (Matthew 28:9-10, [The Message](#))

What interesting times we are living in... I am writing from my porch table in Naugatuck—thinking about the world around us, Holy Week, being separated from family and church family and friends, and about whether or not there is a way to make sense of things. And as I prepare for our Bible Study on the scripture for Easter from Matthew 28 we read twice these words, *"Do not be afraid"* or *"Do not be frightened."*

We are preparing to enter into a week in the life of the church, Holy Week, where things will look pretty good at the beginning—people in a crowd waving palms, laying down cloaks, and shouting "Blessed is He" as Jesus rides into Jerusalem, but before the week is over we will see friends gathered together for a final meal, and walk with Jesus to the cross, while the world as his followers knew it grows dark and downright frightening. So what do they do? They hunker down. They go into hiding. They quarantine themselves from the danger that is out in the world—the hatred and malice that is directed toward them, the real fear of death.

That sounds entirely too familiar...although for very different reasons. We are also going into quarantine and hunkering down—staying at home and trying to remain safe, and keep others safe. And, as those of us who are able to do that remain at home, we also pray fervently for those among our own families, church family, and others in the world for whom that is not a choice. For our essential workers—many of whom do not get paid nearly enough for the work they do. For our healthcare workers and first responders—putting their lives on the line to save the lives of others. For those who are un-housed—who have no roof over their heads—and for victims of domestic violence, where home may not be a safe place. For those who are ill or who have lost dear ones and are far from family members. We realize there is a real fear of real things—illness, financial ruin, even death. How do we look ahead to Easter morning with hope?

My hope in these last few weeks has come from everyday heroes who don't wear capes, but are doing super things. My hope comes from our Deacons who have been checking in on our church members making sure that people are connected; and from our Caring Angels who have been happy to make a run to help a fellow church family member with an essential. My hope comes from the generous souls who have donated to funds like the Pastors Fund and Brookfield Recovers, to food pantries and feeding programs, and from those who are unable to donate money so have found other ways to be generous; and from those who are sewing masks for healthcare workers, first responders, and those who have to get to appointments. My hope comes from teachers who are working their behinds off; and from our children who seem to be so much more flexible and adaptable to this new way of life and school and work. My hope comes from walking the dog and seeing the fervent desire he has to be in the world and the beautiful flowers that are unaware of the crisis around us. My hope comes from technology that allows us to gather as the church even when we can't be in one another's presence; and from the creative ways that people are using their talents to let others know that they are not alone.

We hear the words, *"Do not be frightened,"* and we are reminded that in some of the most challenging and scary times in history, God has shown up—hearing our fears, offering hope and life. As we draw closer to Easter may we keep attuned to God's presence and the ways God is calling us to bear hope and life to others...and may we respond with a resounding "yes" to that call. Stay safe...stay healthy...and be the church in the world, dear ones!

Board of Deacons

Perhaps now more than ever your Deacons are here with a listening ear and to offer care and support. Our Deacons have been checking in with their branches, so hopefully you have heard from your Deacon over the last few weeks. If not, please feel free to reach out to him/her with the contact information below, or to connect with someone on the Board of Deacons that you may know better, if you have a concern or a joy that you would like to share and to have prayed for in these times.

Your Deacon Branch provides a way for you to have a specific member of the Board with whom to relate. If you have requests or concerns that you'd like to share with a lay person, your Deacon is available. Naturally, if you're more comfortable calling one of the other deacons, or one of your pastors, please feel free to do so. Such requests or concerns might include:

- a need for prayer
- a request for help (transport to a doctor's appointment, church function, etc.)
- a sorrow (illness, accident, death)
- a joy (a birth, graduation, upcoming wedding, etc.)
- something that particularly pleases you, or would better meet your needs in the worship service.

Remember, if you don't know your Deacon, ask someone to introduce you. He or she will look forward to meeting you – in church or out!

A-BO	Ruth Allen
BR-CO	Martha Parvis
CR-DY	Sharon Santi
E-GI	Jeanine Hanewicz
GL-JE	Pete Lane
JO-LI	Sue Boughton
LO-McC	Alex DeLucia
Mck-O	Mary Gallagher DeLucia
P-RI	Ed Insull
RO-SI	Marie Immohr
SL-TY	Carol Ryan
UN-Z	John Pondiccio

Youth Deacons:

Catie Coneybear
Stephen Wutzl

Committee Chairmen and Church Council Reps

Moderator: Sue Waschak
Vice Moderator: Jack Brown
Treasurer: Greg Dorrell
Clerk (Asst. Treasurer): Kristi McPadden
Investment Treasurer: Audrey Himebaugh



Committee Chairs

Christian Ed Amy D'Alessandro
Church House John Mangold
Church-in-Society Lyn Lyon
Deacons Marie Immohr
Fellowship Monica Pondiccio
Nominating Tom Young
Stewardship Susan Dodd
Welcome Robin Murphy
Worship Kim Downey

Church Council Representatives

Christian Ed Wendy Elsen
Church House Steve Waschak
Church-in-Society Luke Duval
Deacons John Pondiccio
Fellowship Michele Ostrom
Nominating Sally Markiewicz
Stewardship Tom Brown
Welcome Beth Telesco
Worship Kathy Wandelmaier
Historian Bob Brown

Church Safety Committee: Rodger Wutzl (chair), Tina Crepeau, Walter Ostrom,
Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, Kathy Taylor, Linae Wutzl

Long-Range Planning Committee: Larry Ruschmeyer, Barbara Crandell,
Maurice Downey, Michael Matson, Deseré Edwards, Sian Hunter, Rick Hardin

Pastoral Relations Committee: Wendy Elsen, Dave Goral, Gordon Markiewicz,
Larry Ruschmeyer, Olivia Quinsland.

Personnel Committee: Sue Waschak (chair), Jack Brown, Bryn Smallwood-Garcia,
Jennifer Whipple, Bob Emrich, Monica McInerney, Eileen Koch, Mark Lyon

Senior Pastor	Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia		bryn@uccb.org
Associate Pastor	Rev. Jennifer Whipple		jennifer@uccb.org
Organist/Choir	Toni Sullivan		toni@uccb.org
Church School	Barbara Crandell		barbara@uccb.org
Church Office	Jeannine McCullough	203-775-1259	office@uccb.org
Nursery Care	Debbie Marquardt	203-775-1259	

Supporting CCB Financially During the COVID-19 Crisis

The whole concept of Social Distancing was unknown to us a month or so ago. But it is now literally “the law of the land.” We thank you for mailing in your pledges and offerings so faithfully as we have been worshipping in our separate homes over the internet!

That said, it might be a time when the **Pushpay app** seems more helpful and more appropriate than ever. If you haven’t used it, it might be time to give it a try. It’s quick, easy and secure.

Jim recently visited the PushPay app on his phone and found that giving this way can be very easy. You can easily download the app at the Android Play Store or Apple App Store. **But you don’t even need to download the app to give.**

Go to our website: www.uccb.org

Scroll down the Menu to: **Give**

Scroll down to: **Give Online**, then click on **Pushpay**

You’ll be given a few questions about the amount and type of gift you are making, then you’ll be sent a confirmation code. If you already have an account, you’ll be automatically logged in. If not, you’ll be given prompts to set up an account and provide a source of electronic payment (bank or credit card).

Pushpay may offer an easy way to continue your giving. During this difficult time, your financial support is valued and appreciated more than ever. You can also contact your bank and ask for your pledge to be fulfilled through automatic bill pay.

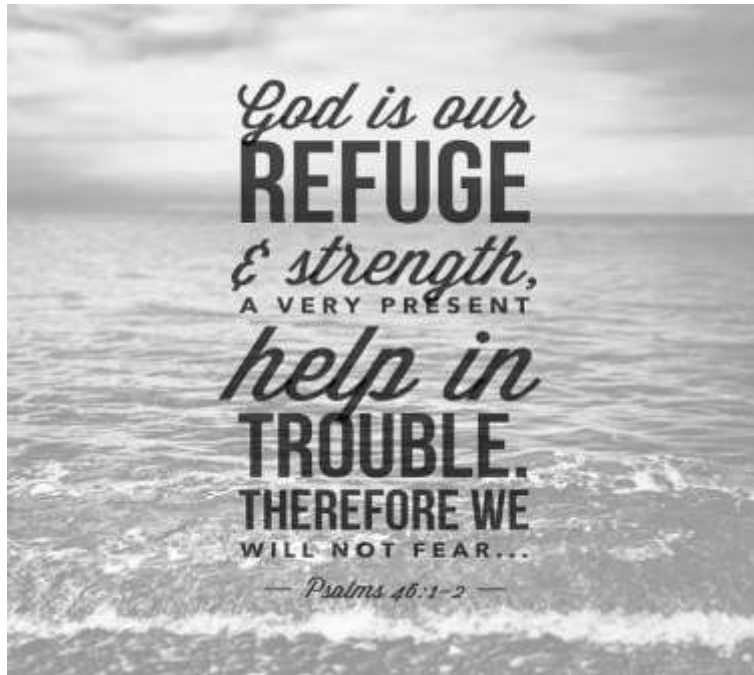
Again, we thank you for continuing your giving during this crisis – our church depends on faithful donors like you to keep our ministries active even as we are temporarily separated from one another.

Your Stewardship Committee
Susan Dodd, Chair
Jim Sugden, Vice Chair

Budget Hearing, Sunday, April 5th at 11:30am

We will hold our budget hearing for fiscal year 2020-2021 on Sunday, April 5th at 11:30am. This will be a virtual meeting with a Zoom link sent out via our All Church Eblast. We hope you will join us for this opportunity to hear about where we are financially as we head into our new church year, to ask questions and offer feedback. *This is an informational hearing only. No vote will be taken at this time.*

Our budget will need to be voted on by the congregation, so more information will be forthcoming about the procedure for doing that in the coming weeks, as we make alternate plans for our Annual Meeting.



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The Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, Senior Pastor
The Rev. Jennifer Whipple, Associate Pastor
The Rev. Des Desmond, Pastor Emeritus