

**Inside
this issue:**

Stewardship Ministry **2**

Financial Secretary **2**

Outreach Ministry **3**

Worship Ministry **3**

Fellowship Ministry **4**

NACCC Update **5**

Life & Learning **5**

Outdoor Projects **5**

Contact Info **6**

Message from the Moderator



It's hard to believe that I was not aware of Zoom's existence much before the pandemic began in the US earlier this year. Now it's nearly a daily experience, sometimes for hours on end. Although I probably will forever associate Zoom with the virus (and thus it will have a nasty taint to it) even when (if?) the pandemic is past us, I realize that I have come to love some things about it.

As a person who usually sees the glass half full, I would like to mention some of these things, two of which are most obvious to me. First, I can get away with "attending" each meeting dressed much more casually (sloppily) than I would do if the meeting were in-person. Second, I don't have to drive anywhere, which requires allotting time and buying gas to get the car to and from church. A less obvious good thing about Zoom I guess is that during Zoom meetings I can wander off to my refrigerator or pantry, and then munch or sip things, unless I am supposed to be speaking or taking notes.

Another thing I like about Zoom is that I can look at people's expressions as the meeting progresses. I can figure out exactly who is present by checking the participant list, and for people I don't know well I can see their names displayed on Zoom (if they have given Zoom that information).

Although I of course would never do such a thing, one could also read a book, play video games, or do other side activities and still be "in" a Zoom meeting. I will admit to playing with our dog as part of many FCC Zoom activities, in addition to mandatory shushing trying to keep him from disturbing meetings with his barking.

Why am I extolling Zoom? Mainly it's because we are likely to be "stuck" with it for at least a month, and probably more, as our sole means of meeting, and as usual, I am trying to be enthusiastic about what is inevitable. Even after we begin to worship together in person, I am quite sure that the convenience of using Zoom will mean that

many or maybe most of our non-worship meetings will continue in Zoom.

I would add that for those of you who are not having satisfactory Zoom experiences, due to internet or phone or computer or iPad problems, please keep trying. Even if all your video device possibilities fail, please use your phone to connect to Zoom and be part of services and meetings. Even hearing each other's voices can be a companionable experience in this time of isolation for most of us. Even if we cannot see your face, we want to hear from each of you who are part of our FCC community.

Finally, as I mentioned in an earlier article, the FCC church council is in regular discussion of how and when we should proceed to reduce our reliance on Zoom. If you have thoughts and ideas about this process, please let me know, at a Zoom event, or by sending a message through the church office. Thanks for whatever input you may have.

-Lynn Barber, Moderator



*“Thank you for
your continued
generosity and
support of First
Congregational
Christian
Church”*

Stewardship Ministry

We will continue to meet via Zoom. The next Stewardship meeting is July 14, 2020 at 3:30pm. All are welcome to attend. If there is a matter to bring to the ministry, please contact the office or Sharon Higgins so that it can be added to the agenda.

We are coming down to the wire for our fundraiser. All will be taken to Value Village on July 11th. Donations need to be neatly placed into tall kitchen bags (13 gal.), xl yard bags (33 gal.) or medium boxes. We need to have a count by end of day Thursday, July 9th. If you have questions or need to have your donations picked up, please call or text Sharon Higgins (907-250-5760).

-Sharon Higgins, Chair

Offerings to Church Appreciated

Our church is blessed with the most supportive and giving folks, which has become especially evident during these several months of quarantine, shutdown, self-isolation and social distancing. Whew!

During this challenging time, thank you all for continuing to keep current with pledges and other offerings sent via U.S. mail, in-person church drop off, or through credit card online services. Using the online service is a convenient way of giving (not to mention a way to rack up those air miles!); however, as way of explanation, each donation does come with additional transaction fees charged to the church. To offset these charges, would you consider adding a little extra to your donation? It would be very much appreciated, and your pledge or offering may then more accurately meet the amount intended.

As your Financial Secretary and on behalf of the Stewardship Ministry, we thank you for your continued generosity and support of First Congregational Christian Church.

Blessings and with hope that we meet again soon in person,

-Sue Hanas, Financial Secretary

Outreach Ministry



The Outreach Ministry approved the use of Carrie Mead Hall by the Alaska Mask Makers through the month of July. They needed a space to store material and sew masks for distribution throughout the state of Alaska.

Regular information on how individuals in the congregation can support organizations such as FISH, Children's Lunch Box, and Bean's Café are regularly posted in the daily bulletin.

Our Ministry moved and approved the transfer of \$200 that was originally allocated for the spring Grandfamilies brunch to the Panamerican Institute for the purchase of equipment that would allow more students to access on-line education from their school during Covid-19 closures.

A wooden container for winter clothing will be placed in the upstairs hallway donations of winter clothes. We will also designate a spot for folks to drop off books for Shungnak School.

-Chris Walker, Chair

Worship Ministry

Your Worship ministry continues to try to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation, even if we can't meet for worship in person yet. We are sending out cards to members and friends for both sorrows and joys. If you have a need for a card or call from us, please contact the church office and we will take care of it. And please keep tuning into our virtual church services on Sunday through Zoom. We are trying to address any problems as they arise, and make our services more user friendly. Rev. Jacob and Krystal are doing nearly all of the work to make the service go smoothly, and we thank them very much for that.

Rev. Jacob is taking two Sundays off; we enjoyed a sermon by his good friend Rev. Brett Palmer (pastor of Friedens UCC in Marissa, Illinois) on June 28, and our own member Eric Johnson will speak on July 5. Lori Wasko and Caroline Valentine are also working hard during the summer to provide meaningful music selections for the services.

Our next Worship meeting is Thursday, June 16th at 6:00pm. Please let us know if you have any concerns we can address. We are looking at ways we can continue virtual services as we work toward reopening the church.

-Kathy Means, Chair



Fellowship Ministry

We Are Better Together

If you haven't discovered it yet, I recommend *The Oath* podcast hosted by Chuck Rosenberg. <https://www.msnbc.com/theoath> It's now in Season 3, and every episode is not only a fascinating exploration into the lives of people who have taken "the oath" as they begin public service, it's a far-reaching lesson in the history and culture of this country, indeed of the world. Last week, I listened to Rosenberg's conversation with Dr. Vivek Murthy, the 19th Surgeon General of the United States. He's written a book, *Together*, which I plan on adding to my ebook library.

[Book description excerpt] Humans are social creatures: In this simple and obvious fact lies both the problem and the solution to the current crisis of loneliness...Murthy makes a case for loneliness as a public health concern: a root cause and contributor to many of the epidemics sweeping the world today from alcohol and drug addiction to violence to depression and anxiety...at the center of our loneliness is our innate desire to connect. We have evolved to participate in community, to forge lasting bonds with others, to help one another, and to share life experiences. We are, simply, better together.

In the podcast, Murthy speaks of service as one very powerful way to break the cycle of loneliness and withdrawal. When we increasingly focus on ourselves, that can lead to even more isolation because making connections becomes more difficult and we're less likely to feel that contact will be welcomed. On the other hand, when we're thinking about the welfare of others and working to make their lives safer, healthier, and more satisfying, our time and energy flows outward. Our lives have a purpose beyond survival; we are more likely to feel that we can make a difference, have control over our situation, and look forward to each new day.

Dr. Murthy believes that we as a country need to devote more resources to helping us and those we love create more connected lives. David Brooks, in his latest book, *The Second Mountain*, comes to a similar conclusion – we're better together, and our government needs to spend more money and time on this way of addressing the health, economic, and social crises facing us these days. I appreciate that both men have written their books after traveling around the country and just listening.

The purpose of your Fellowship Ministry has always been to pay attention to the connections between and among members of our faith community. In these days of physical distancing, some of the usual ways we gather information and think about how to strengthen our sense of togetherness are not available. So, we're urging you to talk with one of us in the next few days. If you want to chat and let us know how you're doing, or if you have a specific need/suggestion for how we can support your dealing with your situation, please don't hesitate to pick up your phone or send an email. If you don't have a current *Church Directory*, you can email or phone the church office (OFFICE@fccak.org, 907-272-8363) and ask for that information. We're here to listen.

Fellowship Ministry members: Kate O'Dell, Chair; Sharon Higgins, Vice Chair; Craig Valentine; Elisabeth Kachline

Honorary members: Rev. Jacob Poindexter, Sr. Minister; Lynn Barber, Moderator

*"Our lives
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purpose
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NACCC Update

A virtual meeting was held on June 27, 2020. It was bitter sweet to see and hear old friends but not be able to be together. Delegates voted on the business parts, including a new slate of officers, ratification of actions, and a budget.

Two new churches were introduced and installed; 213 people attended the meeting. The reports and videos can be viewed from the NACCC web site. The meeting was recorded and will be available. The 2021 Spokane Annual meeting host committee presented the video we participated in with beautiful pictures of FCC Anchorage.

There is talk that much of next year's meeting will be available on Zoom. I believe the future holds many new opportunities for hybrid meetings; "best of both worlds".

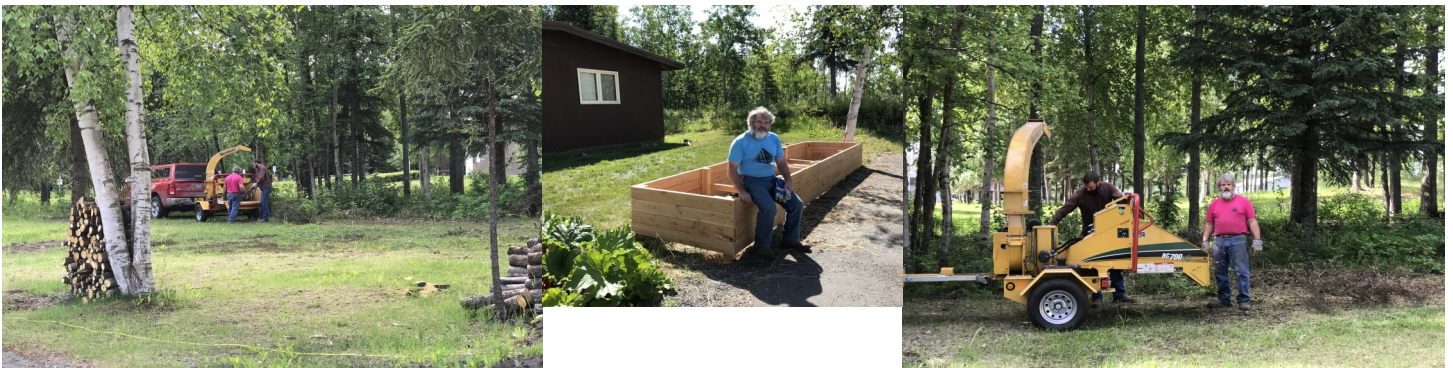
-Sharon Higgins, Delegate

Life & Learning Ministry



PF Youth at University Lake

FCC Outdoor Projects



Jim Walker & Rev. Jacob chipping several spruce trees that were killed by spruce bark beetles, and the new raised bed in front of Hospice. (Not pictured: Amana Mbise also shared his time to chip trees)



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A service that explores other ways to engage our faith and spirituality together.



*Member of the National
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Serving the NACCC

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