

CONGREGATIONAL  
ANNUAL MEETING  
Sunday, January 31, 2021

The annual meeting of the congregation of the Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church was held via Zoom on Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 11:15 AM. Meeting materials and the Zoom link were sent out via email. Supporting reports and documents were posted on the church website. Members had the option to watch the meeting in Fellowship Hall following COVID protocols with a facilitator present. The Rev. Paul Lent opened the meeting with prayer.

CALL TO ORDER

The moderator Rev. Paul Lent called the 12th Annual Meeting of the congregation of The Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church to order.

The reports were available on the church website. Our bylaws do not provide for remote meetings and online voting. Thus, votes and motions will be ratified at a future in-person meeting when the way be clear.

More than fifty people joined the meeting via Zoom. Clerk of Session Susan Conrad confirmed that attendance exceeded the quorum of twenty-five people.

CONGREGATIONAL  
NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee presented the following persons as Elders for the Class of 2024 – Betsy Gellatly, Aimee Heinly, Donald Sagliano, Susan Stuebner, Neal Townsend. Fulfilling a vacant one-year term - Dorothy Damore. Youth Elders serving a one-year term are Lindsey Damore and Christopher Palestro.

ELECTION OF ELDERS

There being no nominations from the floor, and the congregation having approved the slate with none opposed, the moderator asked the Clerk to cast one ballot. Rev. Lent recognized the outgoing Elders Arne Christensen, Pauline Edwards-Goodrich, and Howard Ignal, and Youth Elder Aidan Soha and thanked them for their service.

CONGREGATIONAL  
NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee presented the following persons as Deacons for the Class of 2024 – David Birsner, Anne Burrow, Julie Donato, Juliette Menasche, and Sara North. Fulfilling a vacant one-year term - Jennifer Brady. Youth Deacons serving a one-year term are Eric Johnson and Jeffrey Palestro.

ELECTION OF DEACONS

There being no nominations from the floor, and the congregation having approved the slate with none opposed, the moderator asked the Clerk to cast one ballot. Rev. Lent recognized the outgoing Deacons Craig Hoffman, Elaine Ignal, Lois Miller, George Robinson, and Dinah Weiss and Youth Deacon Jack Hoffman and thanked them for their service.

CONGREGATIONAL  
NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The 2020 nominating committee presented the following persons for the 2021 nominating committee – Jennifer Barry, Arne Christensen, and Pauline Edwards-Goodrich.

ELECTION OF 2021  
CONGREGATIONAL  
NOMINATING COMMITTEE

There being no nominations from the floor, and the congregation having approved the slate with none opposed, the moderator asked the Clerk to cast one ballot. Rev. Lent recognized the outgoing nominating committee - Susan Conrad, Petra Sagliano, and Neal Townsend and thanked them for their service.

COMMITTEE TO READ  
MINUTES

Judy Walters and Suzanne Williams were appointed to read the minutes from this Congregational Meeting.

## 2020 YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer Lou Biskup reported on the 2020 budget. He explained how a fund account differs from a budget account. The fund account lasts from year to year. The budget account is the general operating fund. The 2020 projected budget was \$492,652 and the actual budget was \$418,636. Treasurer Lou Biskup noted that the church rode out the storm of the pandemic on sound financial footing. Donald Sagliano asked a question about various fund balances. Rev. Lent suggested that Mr. Sagliano bring the question to the Finance Committee. The short answer is that endowment funds were used to pay our seminarian's salary and to close out the final budget. Rev. Lent thanked Lou Biskup for a job well done.

## 2020 BENEVOLENCE REPORT

Mission Committee Chair Susan Conrad reported on the budgeted benevolences, special offerings and other monetary contributions from the FPUPC community for 2020, which totaled \$59,019.96. Budgeted benevolences to local, regional, and international initiatives exceeded \$29,000. Three missionaries received direct support: *Ryan and Alethia White* working with Syrian Refugees in Germany, *Nadia Ayoub*, a Children's Worker in Greece, and *Kay Day*, an English and Practical Theology Lecturer in Rwanda. The PCUSA Special Offerings and other monetary benevolences from the FPUPC community were outlined. One notable monetary benevolence is the \$16,746.62 raised for *Team Moody* for the Dutchess County Interfaith Council CROP Walk, which was remote this year. The list of non-monetary contributions of time and talent were presented to the congregation and all were encouraged to review the full report on the website. The congregation found so many ways to continue to serve during the pandemic. Rev. Lent thanked the congregation for reaching out to a world in need.

## EARTH STEWARDS

The Earth Stewards led by Ruth Sheets continue to challenge the congregation to be more faithful stewards of the Earth. Through the Earth Steward's programming and initiatives, with support from the FPUPC members and friends, FPUPC far exceeded the requirements to maintain our *Earth Care Congregation* status. Examples of 2020 Earth Stewards initiatives include: more outdoor worship (Blessing of the Animals, Blessing of Backpacks, Communion, Baptism), participating in a modified *Trash Bash* and *Presbyterians for Earth Care* Lenten devotional, and a *Home Composting Zoom* class. Many thanks to Ruth Sheets and the Earth Stewards. The congregation is encouraged to read the full Earth Stewards Report on the church website.

## PASTORS' COMPENSATION REVIEW

Elder Nancy Redkey shared that as part of a pastor's call, the congregation promises to pay pastors fairly and the congregation must support the compensation as well as approve any changes to the call. Rev. Lent and Rev. Finck left the Zoom meeting for this discussion. Session approved two changes: a 1.3% cost of living adjustment for Rev. Finck and all the paid staff; and at Rev. Lent's request, his salary was not increased; instead \$1,000 will be added to his study stipend. Elder Nancy Redkey asked if there is dissent. No questions were raised and no dissent was noted in the chat. Thus, Elder Nancy Redkey asked the Clerk to cast one vote to change the terms of Rev. Lent's call. Rev. Lent and Rev. Finck were invited back into the Zoom meeting. Rev. Lent thanked Elder Nancy Redkey and the Personnel Committee.

## 2021 STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Treasurer Lou Biskup reported that while the number of pledges is down a small amount, the average pledge amount is up. The estimated 2021 total pledge amount is \$317,800.

2021 OPERATING BUDGET  
AND INCOME REVIEW

Treasurer Lou Biskup reported on the 2021 budget. It is assumed that expenses will be similar to 2020 until activity returns to normal, perhaps in September. The office assistant's hours were decreased from 25 hours per week to 20 hours per week. Insurance increased 20 %. Cleaning costs are down, due to less building use. The solar panels are keeping the electric bill down. Several overview presentations with more detail and a several page narrative are available on the website. Those in attendance supported the 2021 budget.

NEW BUSINESS

Rev. Lent reminded the group that there will be an in-person meeting to ratify the votes and motions from this meeting. Amending the bylaws to allow for online/Zoom voting will be on the agenda at this future meeting.

Rev. Lent asked if there were questions. Ryan Travelpiece asked if the church was considering amending the first Payroll Protection Plan loan, now that there is a process to apply for additional funds. Rev. Lent suggested that this discussion continue in the Finance Committee. There are two questions: is the church eligible to apply for additional funds and is it ethical to apply for additional funds.

Rev. Lent encouraged people to contact him or Rev. Finck with additional questions.

ADJOURNED

It was agreed to adjourn the meeting with prayer by Rev. Heather Finck at 12:00 PM.

Rev. Finck shared that God calls us to be the Church, to make decisions to the best of our ability, and to share our light with our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Conrad  
Clerk of Session

Rev. Paul Lent  
Minister

