

Asylum Hill Congregational Church

Board of Deacons Meeting Minutes, October 14, 2021

Attendance: Marjorie Berger, John Bourdeaux, Tory Chavey, Jim Grigsby, Africka Hinds, Christina Hollister, Chloe Horton, Claudia Lindsey, Debbie Mosebach, Glenn Olson, Lila Pierce, Brent Robertson, Debhora Sutherland, Jane Torrey, Francis Vincent, Frank Virnelli, Wanda Williams-McCormack

Staff: Tobey Aubert, Helena Carvalho, Rev. Tracy Mehr-Muska, Rhonda Mitchell, Jack Pott, Pastor Jordan Rebholz, Rev. Erica Thompson

Special Guests: Dahlia Rivera, Connie Green

Moderator Tory Chavey opened the meeting at 6:06pm, with Glenn Olson leading the Diaconate in prayer.

Consideration to adopt Consent Agenda

Consideration of Minutes of September 9, 2021 Diaconate Meeting

Jane Torrey motioned to adopt. Paul O'Mara seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

UCC Update (Wanda Williams-McCormack, Dahlia Rivera, Connie Green)

AHCC UCC delegates (Ms. Williams-McCormack, Ms. Rivera, and Ms. Green) spoke about AHCC's relationship with the UCC. AHCC's relationship with the UCC is a two-way street. AHCC can benefit from UCC resources, as well as share with the UCC work that AHCC is doing in the community. The Conference ministry teams plan on a monthly basis. These plans are available on the Southern New England UCC conference website. Our UCC delegates will assist with navigating the website and content as needed.

A suggestion was made that our AHCC UCC delegates might investigate opportunities to help smaller UCC churches that are part of the Conference.

Update on Neighborhood Initiative (Jim Grigsby, Brent Robertson)

Mr. Grigsby provided an update on the AHCC Neighborhood initiative. To date the group has:

1. Engaged in in-depth conversations with members of the congregation. The task force has had conversations with 75 members discussing their spiritual journeys and what brought them to AHCC, including discussing feelings about the neighborhood, work the church has done, and their areas of interest.
2. Conducted a survey of members of the congregation. Learnings will be shared at the 10/17 forum
3. Learned more about what is happening with the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association.

A forum will take place Sunday, 10/17 after church service where learnings from 1 on 1 conversations and the survey will be shared, as well as the strategic work happening with the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association.

The task force will also be:

- Defining volunteer expectations, i.e. project objectives, time required, tasks, etc.
- Bringing Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association members to speak with church about projects
- Bringing forth big ideas that we can engage large numbers of members in the neighborhood

Financial Update (Helena Carvalho, Claudia Lindsey)

Ms. Carvalho and Ms. Lindsey presented the current and projected church financials. Member contributions are steadily going back up to what we have been accustomed to in the past. We expect to see expenses increasing as we move into the program year. AHCC has not taken an endowment draw as early this fiscal year because cash flow we're receiving during what are the traditional slow months is higher than prior year. This is likely because of prior year pledges and recurring gifts.

Flooding and remediation

We have completed remediation on half the basement (the Early Learning Center and CTKids portion). In the other half, the presence of mold was detected. AHCC is currently getting bids for remediation to eliminate the presence of mold, and is also working with consultants on preventative measures to prevent future flooding.

Senior Minister Report (Rev. Erica Thompson)

1. October 24 events. During 10am service, we will have Rev. Tracy Mehr-Muska's installation, followed by celebration. This will be followed by our Sunday community meal, the GHIAA annual assembly, and a Music for Humanity concert at AHCC with the beneficiary being our community meals.
2. We are doing "Advent in a box" again this year. Deacons have been asked to participate by writing for the devotional. Deadline is 10/28 for submission and theme is "Draw Near," drawing near to one another and God during this holy time. We'll ask people to register on-line to receive a box.
3. In November, we will start a once a month mid-week worship service in the evening – "Cozy Church."

AHCC 2024 Roadmap Update (Tory Chavey)

Moderator Chavey provided updates on several items, including:

Sharing we are moving ahead with the website redevelopment. We've selected a vendor, Greenleaf Advancement, and are hoping to have new site completed by end of the year.

There has been increased conversations about the "roadmap." Moderator Chavey encouraged Deacons to continue to have conversations about AHCC 2024 – it is a dynamic plan and we want continued feedback. The November 21 sermon will be dedicated to the "road map."

Rev. Tracy Mehr-Muska closed the meeting in prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Vincent

Asylum Hill Congregational Church
DRAFT Statement of Activities - Cash Basis
For the Two Month Period Ending August 31, 2021

	FY 2021-2022 7/1/21 - 6/30/22 Budget	FY 2021-2022 7/1/21 - 8/31/21 Actual	FY 2020-2021 7/1/20 - 08/31/20 Actual	FY 2021-2022 % of Budget
Ordinary Revenue				
Contributions	\$ 900,000	\$ 121,323	\$ 84,392	13%
Gifts/Donations	-	6,250	4,058	100%
Program/Event Revenue	133,481	140	100	0%
Rental Income & Reimbursement	105,000	30,147	23,065	29%
Other Revenue	-	35	90	100%
Endowment Draw	745,296	-	179,336	0%
Total Revenue	1,883,777	157,895	291,041	8%
Ordinary Expense				
Adult Education	1,937	140	-	7%
Children & Family Ministries	9,114	392	1,392	4%
Circles of Care	404	-	-	0%
Communications	29,545	2,700	2,456	9%
Member Engagement	1,996	-	(257)	0%
Membership	5,501	500	119	9%
Music and Arts	177,998	3,869	3,613	2%
Office	126,000	15,469	17,801	12%
Outreach	146,300	2,279	2,650	2%
Personnel	1,255,115	188,596	198,336	15%
Plant	331,200	44,396	43,968	13%
Capital Depreciation	55,000	-	9,167	0%
UCC Allocation	18,000	-	-	0%
Women's Spirituality & Fellowship	8,390	-	1,493	0%
Worship	6,233	239	40	4%
Youth Education	7,976	1,421	308	18%
Total Expense	2,180,709	260,001	281,086	12%
Net Ordinary Income	\$ (296,932)	\$ (102,106)	\$ 9,956	

Adjustments

Add: FY 2022 Contributions Prepaid in FY 2021	75,570
Add: Off-budget support	83,278
Add: Outreach Support	140,000
Add: Operating Gift	67,428
Adjusted Net Income	\$ (6,226)

\$ 264,170

Public Statement and Expressions Guidelines

Project Name:	Project Criteria:	Task Force Members:	Key Stakeholders:
AHCC External Public Expressions Guidelines	Create guidelines for AHCC to determine what to express publicly and external to the congregation to include banners, signs, and other physical displays.	Earl Exum Francis Vincent Tracey Mehr-Muska Helena Carvalho	Clergy, Lay Leadership, Diaconate, Congregation, Community, Prospective New Members

Project Intent: To create guidelines that are focused on external expressions that include social issues and messages. This would encompass how long public displays would remain and how many should be displayed at one time. The scope of these guidelines will not include internal displays, displays that support administration of the church, social media, or displays that support sermons, liturgy and church programs.

Proposed Guidelines: Outward displays and expressions that include social issues and messages will be brought to the Diaconate for review and approval. All displays must be consistent with the values of AHCC using The AHCC 2024 Roadmap as a guide. In the uncommon circumstance where the senior minister feels sense of timeliness and urgency to authorize a display in advance of Diaconate review and approval, this may be done with the authorization of the Executive Committee and then reviewed at the next scheduled Diaconate meeting to determine if the display will remain posted.

Key considerations:

How long will displays be posted? Displays will be reviewed at least annually, and renewal by the Diaconate is required for displays to be posted for each additional year. No displays that are removed, should be replaced by opposing, conflicting or inconsistent messages within one year of removal.

How many displays at one time? There should be no more than 3 displays/expressions with social messages at one time.

October Environmental Ministry Calendar

9/24/2021 - by: [Vicky A. Guest](#)

Share    

Curated by Victoria Guest for the SNEUCC Environmental Ministry Team

Step up to the Challenge! Wildfires, droughts, flash floods and heat domes are no longer reported as isolated incidents. Public opinion is shifting from skepticism about climate change to broad-based acceptance that the climate emergency is human caused. People of faith can move the conversation and spark action to protect vulnerable communities and preserve a livable world for future generations.



The SNEUCC Environmental Ministries Team has revised and updated the **Green Congregation Challenge** to resource congregations with steps to engage all ages, stages, and interests to become a part of the solution. For more information, [check out the Challenge](#) TODAY!

Check out these great virtual “green” workshops at SNEUCC’s “Super Saturday” on October 2

- *The Path to Net Zero Carbon Emissions* with Mass Interfaith Power and Light leaders. Learn how to reduce emissions and lower the energy impact on your budget.
- *Racial Justice=Environmental Justice=Climate Justice* with Dr. Karim Ahmed, founding member of the Global Center for Science and the Environment.
- *Stewardship Beyond Pledge Drives* with David Cleaver-Bartholomew and Emma Brewer-Wallin, the new Minister of Environmental and Economic Justice.
- *The Pandemic Showed Us: The Possibility of Cleaner Air* with Ruth Cleaver, Lead Writer for Environmental Justice Certificate Program, PATHWAYS Theological Education.
- *What’s the Difference Between Charity, Advocacy and Social Justice: Let’s Talk About What You Are Called to Do* with SNEUCC Legislative Advocate, Michele Mudrick and Kathleen Patron, leader organizer for the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.
- *Reigniting Shared Justice Efforts* with Emma Brewer-Wallin, the new Minister of Environmental and Economic Justice.



[Click this link](#) to register your team.

Weather Reports: A Series of Online Conversations with Terry Tempest Williams, writer in residence at Harvard Divinity School

On Mondays evenings - Now through Nov. 29 from 7- 8:30 PM

Upcoming conversations include:

September 27

The Climate of Sacred Land Protection

Bernadette Demientieff, Gwich'in activist

Learn how her community in Alaska is standing strong to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—Coastal Plain from becoming an oil and gas reserve. [Zoom registration required.](#)



October 4

The Climate of Relationships and Intersectionality

Morgan Curtis, MDiv '24, climate activist and HDS student and **brontë velez**, Black-latinx transdisciplinary artist will discuss the

intersectionality of race, class, gender, and climate collapse, and how seeing the world whole through the lens of relationships creates communities of care rather than conflict. [Zoom registration required.](#)

October 18

The Climate of Compassion for all Beings

Janet Gyatso, Hershey Professor of Buddhist Studies and Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs at Harvard Divinity School notes that we are not the only species that lives and loves and grieves on this planet. How might compassion and an understanding toward animals heighten and mirror reciprocal relationships toward each other? [Zoom registration required.](#)

October 25

The Climate of Grief

Victoria Chang, poet

How do we embrace grief and not look away from all that is breaking our hearts? [Zoom registration required.](#)

For more about each week's program, topics for November, and registrations, visit bit.ly/3AcV6Wu.

Sing for the Planet: Make your Voices Heard at COP26.

Now through October 11

We've marched, we've voted, we've petitioned, now we are going to sing in one large choir, the #HouseOnFireChoir with A Passion for the Planet at the UN Climate Summit. The Climate Emergency means we need to make our voices heard!



Be a part of the finale of the COP26 on-line performance of Geoffrey Hudson's [A Passion for the Planet](#). Record yourself, your friends, your family, or your choir singing the final hymn, "Holy Earth, Ancient Home." Send in your performance, and we'll (literally) bring your voices to Glasgow, Scotland this November! Explore this [website](#) for more details on how to participate. (Thanks to the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, who is helping to organize this!)

Ecological Conversion: Falling in Love with Earth

Saturday, October 2 ~ 9:30 AM - 12 Noon • Zoom (free)

Led by the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas



"Ecological conversion means falling in love with earth as an inherently valuable, living community in which we participate, and bending every effort to be creatively faithful to its well-being, in tune with the living God who brought it into being and cherishes it with unconditional love." – Elizabeth Johnson

As we approach the end of Creation Season and prepare for the feast day of St. Francis on October 4, what is our next step in eco-conversion? How does God want to meet us through the natural world? Our time together will include silence and guided meditation, presentations and small group conversation, and free time for solitary prayer and a contemplative walk outdoors. **Please bring a natural object to this retreat (e.g., a few autumn leaves, a rock, shell, feather, or house plant).** This retreat is sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and is open to the public at no charge. [Registration is now open.](#)

Love, Earth, Justice: A Multifaith Service of Prayer, Celebration, and Resolve

Sunday, October 3, 3:00 p.m. • Old South Church, Boston

Celebrate creation and community, mourn all we have lost, and call each other to faithful action. The service will include prayer, readings, and uplifting music, with an inspiring sermon from [Rev. Traci Blackmon](#), Associate General Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries for The United Church of Christ. Hosted by MA Interfaith Power and Light, with co-sponsors [Boston Catholic Climate Movement](#), [Climate Crisis Task Force of Old South Church](#), [Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts](#), and [Jewish Climate Action Network](#). Visit this [URL](#) for updated info., COVID protocols, directions, and more. Funds from the offering will be given to [GreenRoots](#) and MassIPL's new [Faith in Action Campaign](#).



Monday, Oct. 4, 10:00-11:00 AM

Join the Environmental Justice Table for a **Virtual Briefing for Siting Justice** on **S.2135/H.3336** An Act Relative to Energy Facilities Siting Reform to Address Environmental Justice, Climate, and Public Health. Decisions on where to locate energy facilities play a critical role in managing pollution and safeguarding communities. The Massachusetts Siting Reform Bill will protect vulnerable communities, and ensure that everyone's voice is heard. Register at bit.ly/3hbMXd9 and use **this tool to invite your legislators** bit.ly/3DXcX60.



JOIN US in Washington, D.C. To Demand a Fossil Free Future

From October 11 to 15, thousands of people will take action at the White House, participate in civil disobedience, and demand that President Biden choose a side: People vs. Fossil Fuels. People v. Fossil Fuels will be a multi-faith action, led by indigenous leaders. Fossil fuel projects are a daily health and justice disaster for communities that live near them — especially Indigenous, Black, Brown, and communities of color fighting a long legacy of environmental racism and toxic pollution. Pipelines like Line 3, Line 5, Mountain Valley, and Dakota Access violate Indigenous treaty rights and threaten our land, air, and water. Fossil fuel development is damaging our public lands and sacred Indigenous sites. Fracking continues to contaminate our water and endanger public health. Expansion of oil and gas exports to new markets and major plastics facilities like the proposed Formosa Plastics plant jeopardize the health and safety of communities in the Gulf South and across the country. For more info: [visit this website](#) or contact Emma Brewer-Wallin brewer-walline@sneucc.org.



Save the Date: "Be the Spark" Advocacy Training

Tuesday evenings, October 12, 19, 26, November 2, 7 to 9 PM

For the bold action necessary to address the climate emergency, we need to provide leaders with the most effective organizing tools. Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light will host a dynamic interactive workshop, teaching state-of-the-art organizing skills for religious climate justice activists. Experienced trainers from Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light will present proven organizing techniques taught by Harvard Kennedy School's [Marshall Ganz](#)—the perfect lead-in to MassIPL's new [Faith in Action Campaign](#) to mobilize people of faith to influence our legislators on crucial climate justice priorities. Attendance at all four sessions is highly recommended, but is not required. Recordings of all sessions will be available to registrants. Please register [here](#).



Join Faiths 4 Climate Justice Action, October 17 at 12 noon at **Church of the Covenant** in Boston, organized by Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light. Info. and registration [here](#). The event is part of [GreenFaith's](#) global multi-religious action, taking place October **17 and 18**. Organized by GreenFaith and partner organizations, two weeks before global climate negotiations begin in Scotland at COP26, people of diverse religions will rise to send a message: destroying the planet is against our religions. If you can't make it to Boston, check out this interactive [map](#) for other events, or [organize your own!](#) You can download an action toolkit [here](#).



The Emmy-nominated documentary, **The Story of Plastic**, is available for **free on YouTube** from the Discovery Channel for a limited time. This must-see film tells the hidden story of plastic pollution, from production to incineration—as well as the incredible heroes who are rising up to stop big plastic. It's a must-see! [Watch here](#).



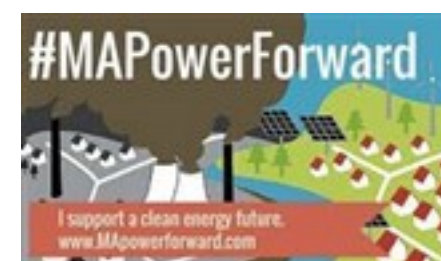
Action Items!

- **Environmental Justice Takes Center Stage in Mass. Legislative Session.** Building on last session's [Next Generation Roadmap](#) bill, four significant pieces of legislation have been introduced this session that relate to environmental justice (EJ), **including OCBC's September Bill of the Month**. Read ClimateXChange's explanation of the four bills and contact your state legislators, asking them to co-sponsor bit.ly/39qVnZO.
- Join [Creation Justice Ministries](#), [Interfaith Power & Light](#), and [Catholic Climate Covenant](#) in asking your Senators and Representative to support the two major priorities of the "build back better" agenda: the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill that has passed the Senate with bipartisan support, and the \$3.5 trillion budget reconciliation bill currently being crafted by lawmakers. The legislation forms the basis of the [revised U.S. pledge](#) under the Paris Agreement on climate change to cut the nation's emissions by 50% to 52% from 2005 levels by 2030. If your elected leaders support the bills, thank them! Avery Davis Lamb, co-executive director of Creation Justice Ministries, said the bills represent a "Kairos moment" that could set up the country's response to climate change for decades. "And let me be clear it's not just a political window of opportunity — it's a moral window of opportunity." Learn more at bit.ly/3tGnPAy.
- Take Action to Support Water Protectors Against the Line 3 Pipeline Expansion. The Line 3 pipeline expansion would bring nearly a million barrels of tar sands per day from Alberta, Canada to Superior, Wisconsin. The pipeline violates the treaty rights of Anishinaabe peoples and nations in its path, and would contribute more to climate change than Minnesota's entire economy. Minnesota police are

using “pain compliance” on Line 3 water protectors. Call and demand an immediate end to use of excessive force on Water Protectors: @keithellison: 651-296-3353 (MN Attorney General), @mnhumanrights: 1-833-454-0148, @LtGovFlanagan: 651-201-3400.

- Stop Black Ram, a project to clear cut old growth forest in Montana. Learn more about the project at bit.ly/39nVA05, and the fight to stop it at yaakvalley.org/stop-blackram/.

If you are looking for ideas of how you can **help de-carbonize your city or town**, the [Mass Power Forward Checklist](#) is a terrific resource. It contains numerous ways you can engage your community in efforts to create a local environmental task force, increase energy efficiency, promote clean energy and transportation infrastructure, and prepare for the effects of climate change. (Thanks to 350 Mass and Rev. Betsy Sowers!)



Want to ensure that your money is funding the clean energy future and not dirty fossil fuels? It's easy to identify the worst offenders – like Chase, BlackRock and Liberty Mutual – but it's much harder to identify companies that have banished fossil fuels from their business. That's why you might want to explore this [new tool from Bank for Good](#), which enables you to quickly and easily find 31 (and counting) financial institutions that have pledged never to finance, insure, underwrite or invest in the fossil fuel industry. To curb the climate crisis, institutional investors need to pull their money from fossil fuel projects – individual banking choices aren't going to stop those projects on their own.



Author



[Vicky A. Guest](#)

The Rev. Victoria Alford Guest is a member of the SNEUCC Environmental Ministries Team and former pastor of the First Congregational Church in Natick, MA.



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September 2nd, 2021

Dear AHCC Family,

We are so blessed to be a part of a community that is constantly seeking to live out our call to love our neighbors. We do this in many ways, including serving the community, seeking out places where the Spirit is inviting us to work for justice, and by protecting those who are vulnerable. Years ago, we as a congregation came together to create a Safe Church policy that would ensure we are doing everything we can to create safe environments for all. Over the past several years, we have periodically updated the policy to provide up to date information and improved processes to keep all of God's children in healthy spaces for them to worship, learn, and serve. We have learned so much about ourselves and the ways in which we connect throughout the past year and half through the navigation of the COVID-19 pandemic. We feel that we must acknowledge the new realities we find ourselves in and so the AHCC Early Life Ministries Team believes that it is time for another update that reflects where we are now.

The following updates to our current Safe Church Policy have been prayed about and thought about for the past year and we believe that by incorporating them and making the necessary updates to the policy we will be in the best possible place to start our new program year. The proposed updates are:

- Safe Church requirements of two adults present whenever there are minors involved will apply to all virtual programming, including zoom meetings and other forms of virtual media
- Include the updated "Photo Release Form" which reflects the use of video in many of our gatherings/programming
- All permission and registration forms will replace "Parent" with "Parent/Guardian"; forms will include gender options beyond just "male" and "female," including "non-binary" and "prefer not to answer"; forms will include space for "Preferred Name" and "Personal Pronouns"
- All volunteers and paid staff who work with minors will receive a copy of the Safe Church Policy and sign that they have read it and agree to follow it
- Going forward, the Early Life Ministries Team, with the Senior Pastor and other appropriate staff/lay leaders, will re-evaluate and make necessary update recommendations on a bi-annual basis before the beginning of the new program year

Once these updates have been approved, we request that the entire document be re-typed and reflect this year's date, and as updates are made in the future, the new document is renamed "(NEW YEAR AHCC) Safe Church Policy."

It is an honor to serve this incredible community and we thank you all for everything you have done and will do to ensure the safety of everyone in our midst.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jordan Rebholz, Minister for Early Life

Tobey Aubert, Interim Director of Children and Family Ministries & Youth Director