



ASYLUM HILL
Congregational Church

Annual Meeting
May 22, 2022

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Agenda — 2022 Annual Meeting

1. Call to Order/Prayer
2. Approve Order of Meeting
3. Approve Minutes of 2021 Annual Meeting
4. Vote on Nominated Officers, Deacons, Committee and Subcommittee Chairs and Members
5. Remarks from Moderator Earl Exum and Vice Moderator Africka Hinds
6. Remarks from Senior Minister Erica Thompson
7. Questions/Comments from Members
8. Closing Prayer/Adjournment

Meeting Minutes — 2021 Annual Meeting

AHCC Annual Meeting Minutes June 6, 2021

Welcome and Call to Order

Moderator Tory Chavey convened the meeting at 12:12pm. Helena Carvalho confirmed a quorum.

Prayer of Invocation

Senior Minister Rev. Erica Thompson

Approval of Order of Meeting

Moderator Chavey opened by sharing the order and instruction for the meeting, noting that, as in 2020, the meeting is being held virtually via Zoom due to Covid-19, and that voting will be conducted on-line. A motion to approve the order of the meeting was made by Tim Hollister and seconded by Earl Exum. The electronic voting supported the motion, which passed.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Earl Exum to approve the minutes from the August 30, 2020 Annual Meeting, and seconded by Rev. Erica Thompson. The electronic voting supported the motion, which passed.

Approval of Proposed Changes to the By-Laws

Two proposed amendments were made to Section IV of By-Laws.

- The first proposed change concerns membership. A motion was made by Earl Exum, and was seconded by Tim Hollister to approve the proposed changes to Section IV of the By-Laws. The electronic voting supported the motion, which passed.
- The second proposed change concerns the terms of the moderator and vice moderator. A motion was made by Rev. Erica Thompson and was seconded by Christina Hollister to approve the proposed changes to Section V.C and V.E of the By-Laws. The electronic voting supported the motion, which passed.

Moderator Report by Tory Chavey

- A. State of Financials –
 - a. We are on track for a balanced budget. Our financial health was significantly supported by a Paycheck Projection Program (PPP) loan in the amount of \$237,000, and by reduced spending in a number of areas mostly due to the pandemic. We saw lower than budgeted revenues in member giving and program/event generated funds. Specifically, \$1.1M was budgeted for member contributions, but less than \$900,000 actual contributions are projected for the end of the fiscal year.
 - b. The Stewardship campaign for the coming fiscal year is showing early strength at about 70% of the \$1.1M stewardship goal.
- B. Planning and Priorities for next three years – AHCC 2024
 - a. AHCC 2024 is a roadmap that will help support and inspire members and friends to make “a big, bold, positive impact on the world.” This roadmap will guide us toward three primary “destinations:”
 - i. the engagement and nurturing of our church community here and around the world,
 - ii. the pursuit of justice in our local area, and
 - iii. the expansion of our impact as a force of light, love, and justice in the world.
- C. Recognition and observation – We held a moment of silence for church members who have died since the previous Annual Meeting; a list of the names is included in the Annual Meeting materials.
- D. Word of Gratitude – We thank the members of AHCC for all that they do and contribute to this community, for the dedicated staff, for our inspiring clergy team, and all the lay leaders who work so thoughtfully to help support all that the church does and the communities we serve.

Vice Moderator Report by Earl Exum

Mr. Exum expressed full confidence in the talented and spiritually guided clergy and staff at AHCC. He is inspired “in measurable and immeasurable ways.”

Senior Minister Rev. Erica Thompson Remarks

Rev. Thompson stated that this has been a year like no other, unprecedented. She lifted the staff in prayer “for all that you do and bring to our community of faith,” to Moderator Tory Chavey and Vice Moderator Earl Exum “for stepping in and stepping up,” and to Deacons, Committee Members, and the Congregation for thanks in “such a time as this.” She acknowledged that it has been a difficult year, but an amazing and awesome year as well.

- **Rev. Dr. Tracy Mehr-Muska** reiterated that she is grateful for the competence and commitment of the staff. Justice programs such as housing, prison reform, and racial justice remain a focus, as well as virtual and wellness retreats.

- **Pastor Jordan Rebolz** remarked on the 1000th community meal that's been served by AHCC since the program began in July 2020, making it clear that the need is there. She asked what can AHCC do to be a more equitable community? Early Life Ministries programs are continuing strong with Zoom meetings; and the high school youth group serving food, and helping with Thrift Store Pop-Up and community meals.

Approval of Slate of Officers, Chairs, and Committee Members

A motion to approve the slate of candidates for officers, deacons, committee chairs and committee members, subcommittee chairs and members was made by Tim Hollister, and was seconded by Rev. Erica Thompson. The electronic voting supported the motion, which passed.

Rev. Tracy Mehr-Muska closed the meeting in prayer. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Hollister, Assistant Secretary

Report from the Moderator

As I look back on my second and final year as Moderator of this wonderful church, I am pleased to report on four areas of focus for our lay leadership over the past year.

First and foremost, we implemented the AHCC Roadmap 2024 as a means of highlighting and confirming our plans and intentions for the next few years. The Roadmap's three primary areas of focus – nurturing and engaging our congregation, pursuing justice in our community, and expanding our impact – have taken shape in many different ways this year, as outlined in the recent Roadmap Update, which is available online [here](#) or in hard copy at the church. If you have not done so already, I encourage you all to take a look at this update and let us know your thoughts and ideas.

Second, we put in place a process for reviewing our church's operations – assessing how we use our resources including staff and volunteers, and considering whether there might be adjustments we could make to help support our work, as outlined in the Roadmap. As many of you have observed, our staff has been stretched especially thin during the pandemic, and we have asked all of them to do more and more. We aim to look at where we can better prioritize and coordinate our work, with a goal of ensuring our church's operations are best aligned with the church's priorities.

Third, we have made some changes to the way we engage with each other in the area of giving to the church and church finances. We have distributed more regular information about the church's financial status, including presenting a program in the fall on the Endowment. We also hosted a three-part series this winter on how generosity can be part of our overall relationship to the church. And we are working to update the way we conduct our stewardship campaign to make it more consistent year to year and to focus it on our relationships with each other rather than being a once-a-year event.

And, finally, we acknowledged the challenges and opportunities of building relationships with each other during the pandemic. In some ways, the ability to hold virtual meetings was a blessing, as attendance and participation at Diaconate and other committee meetings were very strong, as people could "Zoom" in to the meetings from wherever they were. On the other hand, there is nothing like seeing a fellow church member in person, giving or receiving a hug, and sharing a moment together during worship service or at a church program. So, we sought to create in-person

opportunities for fellowship, even while worship services were virtual. Whether it was a "patio chat," a casual backyard gathering of church members who live in the same neighborhood, small groups of Deacons having lunch together outdoors, one of hundreds of member-to-member phone calls to check in with one another – we made tremendous efforts to connect and support each other. I have no doubt that these efforts will continue in various forms, as we continue to see that strong relationships with our church community make for a stronger congregation overall.

I will conclude my report with a special thanks to the dedicated and talented staff and clergy at AHCC. They make this wonderful church community hum with inspiring and creative programs that are far too numerous to list; they continue to enhance the beauty and functioning of our historic church building; they delight our children in Faith Lab; they are always quick with a kind word of support and fellowship, and they are there for us when we need them most in moments of grief or crisis; they lead worship services on Sundays, holidays, and even Wednesdays for "Cozy Church" with beautiful and thought-provoking prayers and sermons; they fill our hearts with amazing music both traditional and non-traditional; they keep our budget balanced, as well as our livestream or other critical systems working; and they rolled out a tremendous new website that makes it easier to find critical information and better represents who we are as a church community.

I thank you all for the privilege of serving as your Moderator these past two years, and I wish everyone, including Earl Exum and all the new lay leaders, the best in the year ahead!

Best regards,

Tory Chavey

Report from the Senior Minister

To say that the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult, is the understatement of the century. However, the pandemic has been especially disruptive to religious institutions in America. Already reeling from decades of decline in membership, attendance, and giving (“butts in the pews and bucks in the plate”), churches across the nation had to change (literally overnight) the way we were doing ministry and living in sacred community for millennia. And quite honestly, many churches did not or will not make it; the current pressures and challenges simply cannot be overcome. As a people of faith, we lament and grieve these losses.

But at AHCC, we are blessed that our story is different. Last spring, as we entered the second year of the pandemic, AHCC’s clergy, staff, and lay leaders presented to the congregation a dynamic new vision for our future, captured in the **AHCC Roadmap 2024**. We chose to use this moment of seismic change to leverage what we were learning so that we could more fully nurture and engage our members, deepen our commitment to the work of justice, and increase our impact in the world.

I hope that you were able to sit with and reflect upon the communication you received in April (either electronically or through the mail) which was a *Year One Review* of our roadmap accomplishments – a look back on the miles we have journeyed together thus far.

One of the destinations we set our sights on last spring is about **nurturing and engaging our members and friends**.

- ✓ Remember the Doves of Hope exhibit that hung in our sanctuary throughout the fall? A testament to the hopes and dreams of members and friends alike.
- ✓ We completely redesigned our elementary and middle school Sunday morning program, introducing Faith Lab for Holy Troublemakers, which uses an intentionally anti-racist curriculum.
- ✓ We formed and trained a Congregational Care Team that helps members connect with and minister to other members.
- ✓ There were all sorts of adult education programs on topics like dementia, racial justice, generosity, TV and Faith, and a monthly Bible study based on our annual theme, Making All Things New.
- ✓ We greatly expanded young adult gatherings, formed new small groups for retirees and artists, and created a monthly, mid-week worship experience, Cozy Church.

Another destination we focused on is the **pursuit of justice** – promoting and engaging with our neighbors in the work of justice and collaborative community development.

- ✓ The Neighborhood Vision Task Force, formed in the spring of 2021, finished their phenomenal work, and presented a report that will help us focus and direct our energy moving forward.
- ✓ Our Community Meals program provided more than 8,000 meals, while Music for Humanity concerts raised over \$5,000 for local non-profit organizations.
- ✓ Our Outreach Grants awarded more than \$180,000 to two dozen organizations doing amazing work in the world.
- ✓ In conjunction with the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA), AHCC hosted 12 “house meetings” where we addressed the question “What keeps you up at night?” All the information collected is helping to create GHIAA’s next issues campaign.

And as if this wasn’t enough, we continued to **expand our impact** – to engage with and serve the world as a source and force of light, love, and justice.

- ✓ We launched a fabulous new website, which for many is a first entrée into our faith community. We also updated systems: the database, our Wi-Fi, and hybrid meeting technology. We greatly boosted our social media presence and our YouTube offerings.

- ✓ The Rev. Darrell Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister for the Southern New England Conference of the UCC, preached and led us in worship in February.
- ✓ I continue my work as Chaplain with the CT House of Representatives and Rev. Tracy is teaching at Hartford International University.
- ✓ We hired an operational consultant and a development consultant who will help us move into the future with intentionality and strength.

Friends, what is even more powerful is that this review is a condensed version of an extensive collection of notes and documentation of everything we have been able to accomplish since we rolled out our Roadmap in the spring of 2021. In my humble opinion, this is close to miraculous, especially given that all this was accomplished while living through and navigating a devastating pandemic.

I am grateful to our lay leaders, Moderator Tory Chavey and Vice Moderator Earl Exum, for their wisdom, focus, care, and compassion over the last two years – it has made all the difference. I am grateful to our Deacons and those who have faithfully served on committees, their commitment and passion has been a great motivator. I am eternally grateful to AHCC's staff – their herculean efforts have kept us alive. And I am grateful to my clergy colleagues, without whom none of this would have been possible.

I am proud to be Asylum Hill Congregational Church's senior minister and I look forward to the future. Remember, God, our God, is indeed Making All Things New.

Always,

Rev. Erica Thompson

Necrology

Sally Carrier		June 27, 2021
Jim Slimmon, Jr.		August 10, 2021
John Hinks		August 21, 2021
John Reaves, Jr.		September 21, 2021
Fred Sergeant		November 22, 2021
Gwen Spencer	No Image	December 5, 2021
Susan Porta		January 27, 2022

Rosemary Conard		February 15, 2022
Charles Beebe		April 14, 2022
Jean Konon	No Image	April 20, 2022

Slate of Nominees

Member	Title	Term End	Term
Board of Deacons			
Earl Exum	Moderator	2023	1
Africka Hinds	Vice Moderator	2023	1
Dan Hansen	Secretary	2024	1
Lesley Skenderian	Asst. Secretary	2024	1
Jim Bannister	Chair AFC/Treasurer	2024	1
Jeremy Claflin	Asst. Treasurer	2024	1
Dayl Walker	Co-Chair, Outreach	2024	2
Jane Torrey	Chair, Adult Education	2024	2
Andrea Williams	Co-Chair, Engagement	2024	1
Lara Poulos	Co-Chair, Engagement	2024	1
Candy Lammers	Chair, MAC	2024	1
Marjorie Berger	Co-Chair, Membership	2023	1
Amrita John	Co-Chair, Membership	2023	1
Glenn Olson	Chair, Stewardship	2024	2
Debby Sutherland	Chair, WSF	2024	2
Francis Vincent	Chair, Youth, YA, CFM	2024	1
Frank Virnelli	MAL	2024	2
Brent Robertson	MAL	2024	2
Mike Stockman	MAL	2024	2
Jim Grigsby	MAL	2024	2
Administration & Finance Committee			
Jim Bannister	Chair/Treasurer	2024	1
Jeremy Claflin	Asst. Treasurer	2024	1
Jim Carter		2024	2
Laura Harker		2024	1
Legacy Sub-Committee			
Barnaby Horton	Chair	2024	2
Doug Thomas		2024	2
House Sub-Committee			
Bev Duncan	Chair	2023	2
Judy Roberts		2023	2
Carol Barry		2023	2
Kathleen Burr		2023	2
Shirley Fulton		2023	2

Member	Title	Term End	Term
Investment Sub-Committee			
David Stevenson	Chair	2024	2
Alan Mattamana		2024	2
Ted Reed		2024	2
Bill Stahl		2024	1
Adult Christian Education			
Jane Torrey	Chair	2024	2
Lynn Wadhams		2024	2
Marion Carling		2024	2
Marie Dalton-Meyer		2024	2
Leslie Desmangles		2024	2
Nancy Kirchmyer		2024	2
Charley Kurz, II		2024	2
Pieter Werner		2024	1
Membership			
Marjorie Berger	Co-Chair	2023	2
Amrita John	Co-Chair	2023	2
Sara Pierce		2023	2
David McMullen		2023	2
Hillary Hammer		2023	2
Missy Aiello		2023	2
Nancy Ford		2023	2
Abby Charamut		2023	2
Member Engagement			
Andrea Williams	Co-Chair	2024	1
Laura Poulos	Co-Chair	2024	1
Bev Cyr		2023	2
Cathie Benner		2023	2
Arlene LaPenta		2023	2
Debbie Loomis		2023	2
Music/Arts Committee			
Candy Lammers	Chair	2024	1
Kay Carver		2023	2
Carol Pinkston		2023	1
Ellie Tener		2023	2
Mike Smith		2024	1
Bobby Rebholz		2024	1

Member	Title	Term End	Term
Outreach			
Dayl Walker	Co-Chair	2024	2
Betsy Hopkins	Co-Chair	2024	1
Mally Cox-Chapman		2023	2
Melissa Morriss-Olson		2023	2
Hannah Granfield		2024	1
Katie Nixon		2024	1
Stewardship			
Glenn Olson	Chair	2024	2
Katie Nixon		2024	1
Women's Spirituality & Fellowship			
Debbora Sutherland	Chair	2024	2
Wendy Benson		2024	2
Nancy Sinsteden		2024	2
Hildegard DeMallie		2024	2
Deb Lord		2024	1
Mary DeManbey		2024	1
Sara Billings		2024	1
Candace Low		2023	2
Diane Nattrass		2023	2
Carol Pinkston		2023	1
Marcie Sener		2023	2
Kay Carver		2023	2
Janet Kennedy		2023	2
UCC Delegates			
Wanda Williams-McCormack			
Connie Green			
Youth/ YA/ CFM			
Francis Vincent	Chair	2024	1
Patti Beckett		2023	2
Emily Safino		2023	2
Amber Berry		2023	2
Kristen Moyer		2024	2
Julie Booth		2023	2
Martin Magnusson		2023	2

Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Forecast

	FY 2021-2022	FY 2021-2022
	7/1/21 - 6/30/22	7/1/21 - 6/30/22
	Budget	Forecast
Ordinary Revenue		
Contributions	\$ 900,000	\$ 835,363
Gifts/Donations	-	39,483
Program/Event Revenue	133,481	15,000
Rental Income & Reimbursement	105,000	105,000
Other Revenue	-	-
Endowment Draw	745,296	746,598
Total Revenue	1,883,777	1,741,444
Ordinary Expense		
Adult Education	2,341	2,341
Children & Family Ministries	9,114	9,114
Communications	29,545	17,500
Member Engagement	1,996	3,732
Membership	5,501	5,501
Music and Arts	177,998	112,998
Office	126,000	126,000
Outreach	146,300	151,500
Personnel	1,255,115	1,255,115
Plant	331,200	306,200
Capital Depreciation	55,000	55,000
UCC Allocation	18,000	18,000
Women's Spirituality & Fellowship	8,390	8,390
Worship	6,233	6,233
Youth Education	7,976	7,976
Total Expense	2,180,709	2,085,600
Net Ordinary Income	\$ (296,932)	\$ (344,156)
Adjustments		
Add: FY 2022 Contributions Prepaid in FY 2021		\$ 100,282
Add: Off-budget support	83,278	\$ 66,032
Add: Outreach Support	140,000	\$ 140,000
Add: Operating Gift	67,428	\$ 67,428
Adjusted Net Income	\$ (6,226)	\$ 29,586

Note: This is a forecasted financial statement for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 based on actuals through March 31, 2022.

Revenue:

The stewardship campaign for this fiscal year resulted in commitments of just over \$852,000. Of those commitments, \$100,282 were prepaid in the last fiscal year. Based on this year's activity and previous years' experience, we are forecasting contributions of \$935,645 this year (\$100,282 in prepayments and \$835,363 in current year contributions) against a budget of \$900,000. Contributions are comprised of stewardship campaign commitments, prepayments, recurring contributions and contributions from those who did not make commitments.

Gifts/Donations primarily reflects Boar's Head ticket income that was redesignated to donations after the show was cancelled due to Covid-19. Program income is reduced due to the cancellation of Boar's Head and not holding as many in-person events because of pandemic restrictions. Rental Income reflects the parking lot lease, the city of Hartford/Early Learning Center daycare lease, and facility rentals. The endowment draw is 5% of the past 20 quarterly averages.

Expense:

Expenses were budgeted at a reduced rate. This was consistent with the previous fiscal year budget and reflected an expectation of another year of programming within pandemic restrictions. The capital depreciation line item was budgeted at a reduced rate of \$55,000 (previously budgeted at \$85,000). Music and Arts reflects savings that resulted from the Boar's Head cancellation. Plant reflects savings from the postponement of initiating a security contract. Staff continues to successfully manage their budgets while providing engaging programming.