



**Foothills Congregational Meeting
2021 Budget Approval
Minutes
November 15, 2020**

Affirmed on 12/17/2020

1. Board President, Sue Sullivan, called to order at 9:55am the second Annual Fall Budget Review and Approval.
2. A quorum of 131 members were recorded as present.
3. **Sue Sullivan called for the standing rules to be approved and seeing no objections, declared them approved.**
4. Sue Sullivan then read the Covenant of Right Relations.
5. **Sue Sullivan called for the agenda to be approved and seeing no objections, declared it approved.**
6. A video was played with instructions on how to use the “raise hand” function and the “yes and no” function in Zoom.
7. Foothills member, Sue Ferguson, provided a video chalice lighting.
8. Senior Minister Rev. Gretchen Haley played a video of the Foothills Annual Remembrances and Celebrations commemorating members who died this year and celebrating the births of babies this year into the congregational community.
9. Sue Sullivan provided an update from the Board of Trustees on the work of Restoring Wholeness, a two year long effort by lay leaders in the wake of the disclosures. This work represented the efforts of four successive boards of trustees and was meant to assist the congregation in processing these misconduct events and to restore a sense of safety and trust in the congregation going forward. The effort focused on new board policies defining what constituted credible reports of misconduct, when to disclose these reports to the congregation and setting clear expectations for ministerial self-care and accountability. These policies are expected to be finalized and approved by January, 2021. The task force also produced an archive of primary source documents, including a timeline of ministerial misconduct that occurred during this time, and three narratives each with varying levels of detail. She noted the purpose of these narratives was to help congregants understand what occurred, to offer a model of how to speak openly with

each other and with newcomers to Foothills and to help future lay leaders understand how these episodes of misconduct shaped our past and how they are likely to affect the congregation going forward. Sue placed a note in the zoom chat giving details on how to access this work noting pastoral care would be available to those congregants who wished to engage in these narratives and needed support. She also noted access to this work along with pastoral care could be obtained by emailing theboard@foothillsuu.org.

10. Rev. Gretchen provided a Ministry update that began by acknowledging the success in providing a meaningful experience together during this pandemic. She noted that online attendance was high from March through May and attributed this increase to the early days of the pandemic when people were at home and needed connection. Since that time, she noted, attendance had remained steady. Rev. Gretchen said the 9:00am Zoom service was better attended than the 11:00 Facebook service however people were also watching on YouTube with high attendance for both services. She said that so far in 2020, there had been over 5,000 viewers. Overall, she felt this consistency in online attendance meant that Ministry was creating a reliable community where people could turn to for support and trust. In 2020, she reported \$43,000 was shared with our community partners. Through sharing our space with Family Housing Network, Ministry had been able to provide safe housing for 15 families who otherwise would not have had a stable place to live. Our Food Bank distributed food to over 140 families each month and became a “drive through” during inclement weather. Foothills became a fiscal sponsor for the new BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) Alliance in 2020 and to date, 50 people have participated in shared racial justice learning including book study groups on “The New Jim Crow” and “White Fragility”. In partnership with ISAAC, Ministry worked to procure and distribute grants to over 530 immigrant households in our community directly impacted by the pandemic totaling over \$230,000. Rev. Gretchen specifically thanked Rev. Kristen Psaki who spent many hours writing grants and Ticie Rhodes who continued this effort after Rev. Psaki left Foothills. In 2020, Sanctuary Everywhere villages helped asylum seekers in our community and Foothills distributed over 350 “We Believe Black Lives Matter” signs across Northern Colorado spreading the message of love and inclusiveness. Rev. Gretchen recognized Mary Klecan, Sara Steen and many other congregants who donated to help cover the costs of those signs.
11. Rev. Gretchen also thanked 15 parish visitors who provided 480 acts of care over this year including meal trains, caring cards and personal outreach through the pandemic. Sixty-one circle leaders demonstrated an enormous amount of commitment in caring for those in their community circles. She acknowledged the many voices providing chalice lightings and those who shared personal stories each Sunday morning making it possible for 1,171 people to actively participate with Foothills this year. Rev. Gretchen noted that Foothills welcomed 322 newcomers this year and 4 people officially joined the church. This was done through the help of Amy Gage, who assisted in both getting them the Member book to sign and welcoming them into the congregation. She added that Amy also tracked church membership data.

12. Rev. Gretchen expressed gratitude to the Family Ministry team for all they had done to help and support families and for also engaging in the question of how to have the most impact going forward. The challenge of serving families, she noted, had been divided into three goals:
- Goal 1: Help families (adults and their children) ground, orient and have clarity and agency in the prolonged stress of the pandemic and beyond.
 - Goal 2: Help families (adults and their children) bring the values of Unitarian Universalism into daily life to integrate the tools and practices of our faith as antidotes to stress and fear.
 - Goal 3: Help families (adults and their children) experience deep belonging to feel connected to something greater through nourishing relationships both within their family system and within the Foothills' community.
13. Rev. Gretchen noted these goals required Family Ministry to ask 3 questions:
- How could Family Ministry show up in the daily lives of families in ways that felt helpful and supportive?
 - What kinds of supports felt "right sized" ?
 - What was the pandemic teaching us about how to more impactfully engage with families now and into the future?
14. Assistant Minister Rev. Sean Neil-Barron provided an update on the Courageous Love Here and Now Design Process. He reported Ministry had partnered with a non-profit design firm, Agncy, out of Boston to create a process in which Foothills could leverage and structure itself as a community that fostered spiritual grounding and resilience, deepened belonging and acted as agents of courageous love. Rev. Sean connected with the congregation and the community to allow their insights to drive this process. Agncy created a process where 7 teams with 34 members of the congregation worked for 7 weeks moving through a human-centered design process. This time was spent learning about the congregation, gathering and analyzing data and with this analysis, moving into a design phase where the groups created different ideas that they worked through each week. Rev. Sean reported that 75 hours of interviews were analyzed that resulted in a 22 page summary. This summary highlighted the some of the barriers to belonging and also the experience of being a part of a community where people could access hope, feel oriented and grounded. In the end, the groups came up with amazing ideas of how the structure might look for elders to connect, how justice and outreach could be done in a really grounded and holistic way and how we could hear each other's stories. The core team took this information and came up with five fundamental insights:
- Hearing people's stories was foundational and structures were needed to actively hear and seek out each other's stories.
 - As a congregation, we needed to work to make our social systems more visible and accessible. The team found that many groups and individuals felt the church was somewhat obscure. Ideas were generated on how gifts could be leveraged and how we could collaborate to learn what was going on within the church community.

-A strong desire surfaced for us to be in this together which meant breaking down traditional places where conversations happened in the church to allow a more creative and more emergent process.

-Embracing emergence was identified as a way to train ourselves to follow new ideas, to create feedback systems that would keep us accountable and on mission and equip us to deal with the complexities of not only our congregational system but also the world.

-Companioning newcomers to the church, companioning new leaders and also companioning people going through significant life stages was critical and new structures were needed to make this possible.

15. Rev. Sean indicated the next step was for the core team to decide on a plan for how community circles could continue in places they were working and elements that were not working could be eliminated. He indicated teams would be formed around each of these five insights and in January, 2021, these teams would experiment to learn how to implement these insights throughout the congregation. Rev. Sean expressed gratitude for the congregation's spirit of learning and for those groups of 34 congregational members who dedicated hours of their time over 7 to 8 weeks and produced foundational work that he felt would set Foothills up for some amazing moments to come.

16. Rev. Gretchen provided a quick review of the financial health of the church. She noted that 2020 had been very strong, both operationally and in the Capital Campaign and had been a time of great change, both internally and externally. She said that very soon, the congregation would be receiving the new Communicator either by mail or on the website and within the Communicator would be a chart of staff members showing who to go to for any needs during this time. She highlighted a new phone system which would transfer incoming office calls directly to the staff member's cell phones and Amy would also be checking the regular office phone. With Jeffrey's departure, she and Katie Watkins, Director of Finance and Operations, had done a full financial and system's audit which resulted in a clearer picture of the church's financial position. She noted that especially in human resources, policies, procedures and processes were "cleaned-up"; work that had not been done in quite some time. Rev. Gretchen thanked Katie for helping with this project. She noted the financial audit had brought forth the realization that pledges would need to be increased by the year 2022, if the church was going to sustain this current budget. She explained that savings had helped us over the past couple of years including the "Wake Now our Vision" funds however this savings would not be sustainable. She noted that in order to finish 2020 strong, everyone needed to fulfill their pledges for Ministry to continue to create the amazing programs that were positively impacting our community. Rev. Gretchen mentioned that in 2020, Foothills made a very strong commitment to share all of the church's online worship materials with other Unitarian Universalists churches acknowledging that the church had resources many other UU churches didn't have. We also established partnerships with other UU churches, the steadiest being the UU Church of Ogden with whom we also partnered with our Family Ministry work.

17. Katie Watkins provided the 2021 budget proposal. She noted that 2020 was not a typical year and that the 2021 budget was built with an attitude of abundance which would allow us to boldly pursue our mission. She pointed out one of the key differences in 2021 would be monitoring the budget on a more “rolling” basis due to not knowing when and if we would actually be back in the building. Following the UUA guidelines of a possible return to the building in May, 2021, there was a small amount of summer activities that had been planned, while hoping to more fully inhabit the building in September. During 2020, she noted the church invested heavily in staff and in software as mobile offices had to be set up with the ability to access the hardware available at the church. She pointed out these expenditures would not be repeated in 2021 but would set the foundation for Foothills to have a digital ministry presence. She explained that in September, she and Rev. Gretchen along with an outside evaluator reviewed prior years’ expenses and income and worked with Ministry to identify expectations and needs for 2021. In October, Ministry brought the 2021 budget to the Board to review and affirm and it is now being presented to the congregation for a vote. She described the budget as 1) a means to accomplish the vision statements that were set by the Board with input from the congregation and encouraged the congregation to carefully review these vision statements and 2) a way of caring for the operational management of the church. Katie reviewed both income and expenses for 2020 and projected income and expenses for 2021 commenting that these figures were conservative estimates and that Ministry felt very comfortable in making these predictions for 2021. She complimented Kay Williams and the other congregants who helped with this year’s auction in which \$15,000 was raised that would stay with Foothills and another \$5,000 that would be given to La Cocina for children’s tutoring. She also noted that \$106,000 from the Payroll Protection loan was noted in this year’s budget and work had begun to complete the necessary paperwork so that this loan could be “forgiven”. Katie emphasized that the budget was based on “people, programs and tools” and that much work this year had gone into making sure staff were paid according to UUA guidelines. She mentioned that most staff had received salary increases in 2020 with the exception of Rev. Gretchen who had not had an increase since 2016. When the budget was presented to the Board, they mandated that Rev. Gretchen receive a salary increase in 2021. Katie mentioned that Rev. Gretchen’s salary needed to reflect the level of her expertise and if, for any reason, she were to leave Foothills, Ministry would be able to offer a level of compensation that could attract someone of her caliber. Katie reiterated that Foothills has taken a stance of moving forward instead of waiting to see what changes the pandemic will bring and programs will continue to reflect this forward thinking. She noted that Ministry would continue to invest in the tools needed to bring everything together and expressed her excitement for the future.

18. Board Treasurer, Brendan Mahoney moved to approve the 2021 fiscal budget. Motion passed.

19. Katie then recognized the members of both the Building Expansion Team and the Building Finance Team. The members of the Building Expansion Team are Chris Bettlach, Jerry Hanley, Margaret Cottam and Peg MacMorris. The members on the Building Finance Team are Erik Martinson, Julie Pass, Peg MacMorris and Scott Denning.
20. Peg MacMorris provided a video update on the building expansion project reporting the two teams began working again in late summer, 2020, after being put on hold when the pandemic struck. Agreeing that a new sanctuary was the highest priority, the Building Expansion Team proposed a phased construction plan beginning with building the sanctuary over a full basement as phase one, leaving most of the remodeling for later phases. The revised phase one project was estimated at a cost of \$8.6M. The congregation approved \$8.2M at the March, 2020 Congregational meeting. At that time, campaign pledges of \$6M were to be augmented with loans of approximately \$1.2M leaving a \$1M gap for additional funds to be raised. Although the pandemic halted this building plan, Peg expressed excitement with the continuation of the building project and that the budget was being re-evaluated and needs were being prioritized. The Building Finance Team worked diligently to verify that about \$6M in donations was still expected and that sources of loans had been checked along with the potential for loan repayment in this new era. She noted that the team had used a model to predict cash flow into the future and was now moving toward a total budget of \$7.3M to cover construction and associated costs. At the same time, the Building Expansion Team had been working hard to assess priorities to see what could be built within the budgetary constraints. Currently the teams are working with the architect and construction firm to include the recommended new features including better air handling. Unfortunately, she reported that their attempts to continue eliminating lower priority features to reduce construction costs had “hit a wall”. She explained that the teams were now looking for design revisions that might lower the costs even further and will continue to work with the architect and builder on this goal. She added that new or extended pledges to cover the \$1M gap would be appreciated and provided Katie’s contact information should new pledges wish to be initiated. She expressed the team’s hope that the architect’s design process could be reactivated in early 2021 for a building completion by late fall, 2022. Finally, she reiterated that Foothills remained committed to the vision of a beautiful campus that would meet the needs of the congregation, not just today but into our post-pandemic future.
21. Board President, Sue Sullivan expressed her gratitude for the work of the congregation, staff and Ministry to not only pivot in this time of crisis but to make a creative, expansive, courageous, connective revisioning of who we are together and what it means to live out our mission of unleashing courageous love in Northern Colorado and beyond. On behalf of the board of trustees, Sue thanked everyone for their participation.
22. The meeting was adjourned at 11:14am.

Minutes written by

Debbie Gentry
Board Secretary