

Church Conference
First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto
Sunday, December 8, 2019

Presiding: Rev. Roger Morimoto
Recording Secretary: Tom Fingar

Welcome: Rev. Dr. Debra Murray welcomed and thanked all who attended and introduced Rev. Roger Morimoto.

Opening Prayer: Rev. Morimoto's opening prayer thanked members of First Church for their service and for making time to attend the meeting, thanked God for this community, and asked for guidance.

Election of Recording Secretary: Tom Fingar was selected by acclamation.

Remarks by Rev. Morimoto speaking for District Superintendent: Rev. Morimoto acknowledged that First Church occupies a special place in the District and other churches care about and pray for what we do.

Membership Report: Membership Secretary Patty Bellardo Began her remarks by noting that the total of professing and baptized members was essentially unchanged from one year ago (increasing from 319 to 320), in contrast to a slight but steady decline in each of several prior years. Most of her report focused on efforts to contact persons on the Church rolls who had not been seen for some time. This outreach discovered that some were unreachable, some wished to remain on the rolls, and a few had transferred or withdrawn. The full report is attached to these minutes as Attachment A. Patty also noted that 55 members are between the ages of 80 and 100, and that 82 others are between 61 and 79. She thanked Nancy Olson and Janet and Bill Nicholls for their efforts to contact and track members of our congregation.

Rev. Morimoto noted the significance of maintaining steady membership numbers in a period when many churches are finding it difficult to do so. He also commended efforts to reach out to members of our church community.

The Membership Report was approved by voice vote.

Minutes from Previous Church Conference: Rev. Morimoto called attention to the minutes from last year and invited people to read them before asking if there were any corrections or proposed changes. Janet Nichols asked about the fate of the visioning team noted in the minutes. Debra explained that it had morphed into other activities, including the small groups initiative. The discussion did not require changes to the minutes. The minutes from last year are appended as Attachment B.

The minutes from last year were approved by voice vote.

Approval of 2020 Compensation Package: Rev. Morimoto called attention to the Pastor's Compensation Report (Attachment C) and asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a voice vote.

The compensation package was approved by voice vote.

SPRC Chair Sandra Florstedt then summarized the rationale and funding source for a one-time end of year bonus of \$10,000 for Pastor Debra Murray. The reason is to acknowledge her extraordinary efforts to maintain the many activities of First Church despite the fact that we went from two to only one pastor. The funds had been allocated to SPRC for a director of children and youth and were unspent because it took more than six months to recruit someone for that position. Pastor Debra assumed responsibility for all duties previously assigned to the assistant pastor. Sandra reported that the bonus had been approved by the Staff Parish Relations Committee, the Trustees, and the District Superintendent.

The bonus was approved by voice vote.

Retired Pastor's Report: Retired pastor Karen Paulsen submitted a written report on her affiliation with First Church (Attachment D). Rev. Murray noted that Rev. Paulson had delivered the message recently and that she had agreed to provide pastoral care for members of the congregation while Rev. Murray was on vacation.

First School Report: The First School Director (Fung Wah Chan) and Board of Directors submitted a report summarizing staffing, enrollment, and other matters during the past year (Attachment E). Rev. Murray thanked (and named) members of the Board of Directors for their diligence and hard work on behalf of First School.

Remarks by Rev. Murray: Rev. Murray requested and received permission to address the conference. She thanked everyone for love, patience, and understanding during the past year of transition from two to one pastor, and for stepping up and stepping in to handle matters that otherwise might have fallen between the cracks. She said, "I love you and am grateful to be able to be in ministry with you."

Other Business: Rev. Morimoto asked if there was any other business to be brought before the conference. There was no additional business.

Closing Remarks and Prayer: Rev. Morimoto thanked people for attending, noted again that others in the District pay attention to the things that First Church does, and closed the meeting with a prayer.