



Central St. Matthew United Church of Christ



Bringing New Orleans Together

*By Loving God,
Embracing Diversity,
Creating Community.*

Table of Contents

Agenda.....Page 2

Invocation.....Page 3

Congregational Meeting Minutes.....Page 3

President’s Report.....Page 7

Governing Council Report.....Page 7

Pastor’s Report.....Page 8

Board of Trustees Report.....Page 10

Diaconate Report.....Page 12

Christian Education Committee Report.....Page 13

Community Service and Missions Committee Report.....Page 14

Communications and Outreach Ministry Report.....Page 15

Justice and Mercy Initiatives Report.....Page 15

Nomination Committee Report.....Page 15

Membership Record.....Page 17

Online Optimism Report and Case Study.....Appendix A

Financial Reports.....Appendix B



Central St. Matthew United Church of Christ



2021 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

AGENDA January 31, 2021

Call to Order

- Opening Prayer
- Verification of Quorum
- Invocation
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Congregational Meeting Minutes
 - a. January 19, 2020 - Annual Congregational Meeting minutes
 - b. Motion to Receive the 2020 Annual Reports
- President's Message and Governing Council Report
- Pastor's Report
- Board Reports
 - (a) Board of Trustees – Michael Boucree
 - (b) Diaconate – Dale Bonds
- Committee Reports (2 minutes)
 - (a) Christian Education Committee – Arlean Fermanis
 - (b) Community Service and Missions – Margaret Rota
 - (c) Communication and Outreach – No report for 2020
- Justice and Mercy Initiatives – Willard Hill – No written report for 2020
- Nominations Committee – Milton Cheramie
- Financial Report – Michele D'Aquin
 - (a) Approval of Financial Report for 2020
 - (b) Approval of the 2021 Church Budget
- Unfinished Business
 - (a) Status of Church Repairs – Curry Miller
- New Business
 - (a) Re-opening Committee
 - (b) Future Thoughts
- IN MEMORIUM
- Adjournment
- Closing Prayer

INVOCATION

2021 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 31, 2021

What this world needs now is much more tolerance – religious tolerance, racial tolerance, tolerance from the old and the young and the rich and the poor, and tolerance for the people coming into our church and the ones leaving our church. We cannot live a day without granting it or any day without needing it. Our Lord wants us to be especially tolerant of children, to get involved in their lives, be it in school, or in church, down the street or across the seas. It is our duty as Christians to be there for those less fortunate than we are. Bless this Congregation as we come together to share our hopes and dreams for a brighter future for CSM, UCC Church.

Central St Matthew UCC Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, January 19, 2020

Three documents were distributed to each person in attendance:

- Annual Report Packet including agenda
- 1-page budget
- Financial Packet

Wilson Boveland called meeting to order at 11:37am and asked for a moment of silent prayer.

Verified Quorum present

The congregation took a brief moment to review the packet and 2019 Minutes:

- Motion to approve agenda – C. Hadley, C. Miller – Motion carried.
- Motion to accept congregational meeting minutes from January 2019 and dispense with reading, J. Etter, P. Ricks – Motion carried
- Motion to accept congregational meeting minutes from July 2019 and dispense with reading, C. Etter, C. Hadley – Motion carried

Wilson asked for Governing Council members to stand and be recognized.

Pastor's Report: Included in bulletin: 2019 – We lost two pillars of the congregation Marie Weatherspoon and John Pecoul. Sale was completed of the Bienville Property. Financial resources have been reprieved, but people resources need to be addressed. We do not have sufficient human resources to sustain and grow ministry with an average of 70 members per week. We should be twice that for sustainability and need to push and pray for people and welcome them to fulfill our mission of Loving God, Embracing Diversity, Creating Community. 2020 needs to be year of bold action.

Pastor is suggesting that a task force be formed for 2020, to take one year and be charged with growing the church. They should have a specific goal of 20% growth in worship attendance – that is 13 people. Numbers make some nervous, but the church is not in the numbers business, we are in the people business. Ideas include - A jolt to annual budget for outreach from \$1,500 to \$25,000. Internet presence has been main avenue for source of new members/attendees. Investing in online presence may be costly and could take months to see results but could be a good investment. We have lost connection with immediate neighbors and need to invest money in regaining that connection. **Personal invitations are important** and creating opportunities at church, i.e., “Big Sundays” to give people reasons to invite others is a smart idea.

Pastor will have been at CSM for 5 years and is entitled to three-month sabbatical which he will discuss with the Council about taking this summer.

Pastor thanked everyone including the Council, staff, and members. Pastor expressed his love for all and honor to serve.

Motion to create Task Force as described by Pastor. Charles Hadley, second by Willard Hill – motion carried.

Board of Trustees Michael Boucree – Report in Packet – Report accepted. Wilson had BOT members stand and be recognized.

Deacons - Dale Bonds – Report in Packet – Report accepted.

Christian Ed – Arlean Fermanis – Report in Packet - more Sunday school helpers are needed – Report accepted.

Community Service & Missions: Margaret Rota – gave a diving board analogy as if climbing to the top of a diving board ready to jump off and make a big splash. The committee is primed and ready for take-off.

Communication & Outreach - Rachel Ricks– this is a job of all members, not one committee – social media has been very important and thanks to Curry Miller for Facebook posts. Rachel will be stepping down for 2020.

Justice & Mercy Initiatives: – Willard Hill – asked to review tasks completed this year, which are in the bulletin, and continue ideas for new events.

Motion to receive all annual reports presented and reports that are in the packet.

A. Eickelmann M. Minor – reports approved.

Nomination Committee Report: Milton Cheramie. Nomination Committee members appointed were: Milton Cheramie, Wilson Boveland, Vicki Weeks, Willard Hill, Rev. Brockett. Met to consider candidates for Boards and Committees as listed in the packet.

Motion was made to accept James Bonds for a second term, Milton Cheramie for a first term, and Kathleen Turner for a first term. Motion to accept nominations to Governing Council W. Hill, M. Minor. beginning 2020. There were no nominations from the floor. Motion carried.

Motion was made that recommendations to all other nominations be accepted - J. Etter, K. Turner, Pastor noted that, under Diaconate, there is a misprint – nominees for Diaconate #8-11 should be listed on right side as recommendations. Motion carried.

Community Service & Mission and Communication & Outreach Committees – Recommendations were TBA. Tracey Webster, nominated by Margene Minor who accepted. Al Eickelmann nominated Norman Robinson pending his acceptance. Carol Moved to accept Tracey Webster as chair of C&O. Al asked to amend motion to include Norman’s nomination to be finalized by Council. Point of order was made by Pastor that committee members are not elected, but committees form themselves and elect their own chairs. Motion amended to have Council address these nominations and committees. Motion carried.

Financial Report: Carol Etter - 810K net proceeds are in savings at Fidelity and are now recorded in Balance Sheet Equity account called “Undesignated Proceeds.” There will be discussions around how to allocate funds.

Accounting is being brought back in house after trial-outsourcing. Payroll will continue to be done by outside vendor.

Carol pointed out the profit/loss statement and pass-through accounts as well as Balance Sheet as of year-end. J. Etter commented on balance sheet that our total assets are over one million, and this gives us opportunity to do all sorts of good things. Al Eickelmann asked about investment. Carol clarified that 250K is in UCC investment funds. Proceeds from Bienville are in savings as previously mentioned but Trustees will recommend/decide allocation, noting that there was no real urgency since interest rates for other investment options were currently poor. Michael stated there will be an investment committee appointed by the Board of Trustees at their meeting this coming Tuesday, and they will work on this. Trustees will look at various firms for diversification of investments and those firms will be properly vetted for consideration.

K. Turner moved and M. Minor seconded acceptance of the Financial Report. A. Eickelmann suggested a friendly amendment to add commendations to Carol Etter for her hard work as Treasurer. Amendment accepted. Motion to accept 2019 Financial Report with commendation to Carol - carried.

Proposed Budget: Carol drew attention to the single sheet. Changes are in account #5160 with increase from \$1500 to \$25K for outreach. Recommendation to fund nursery attendant at \$30/week - new line 5310. Additional coverage for pulpit supply during Pastor’s sabbatical. Three percent increase in salary being recommended.

Beth asked about Piano status. 15K paid, 21K paid additionally, donations have been received, and intention is to bring back refurbished piano and formally dedicate it. Carol will also make effort for funding drive. Philip mentioned piano should return by Jazz Fest.

Curry moved acceptance and Kathleen Seconded to approve 2020 Church Budget. Motion carried.

President:

Wilson expressed that it is a distinct pleasure to be president of this congregation and that he appreciates help from all committees and the congregation. Even though there were some dark clouds, because of what we all were able to accomplish working together, the clouds have been lifted.

Wilson also wanted to take opportunities to recognize people who have stepped out:

- Tracey Webster for organization of Black History Month
- Kathleen Turner for work in our Best Easter Ever
- Stephanie Osborne for donation of time and services for guided Meditation on Sunday
- Apologies to anyone left out, but hand goes out to all

There is still much unfinished business and 2020 is a good year to start working on this.

Old Business:

Curry came forward with repair status: Willow St. entrance has been painted and refurbished. Carpet will be installed and extended to nursery pending new paint. Discussions w/ exterior of Willow St. side pressure washed, sanded, primed, and painted. 2K is estimated cost. Reaching out to contractors for interior sanctuary paint & repair/ 30-40K anticipated cost. Tracey asked if there was a schedule for completion of repairs. This year. Margene asked about washroom renovation – that will be part of sanctuary renovation. Cushions were new this year.

Wilson reported that the lease with the Church of Scientology renewed. Lycee lease was termed but long-term lease with Noble Minds was entered. Al Eickelmann inquired if there had been any discussion about the theology with scientologists being in conflict with our beliefs. Michael stated BOT looked at the lease simply as a transaction. Rachel reported that the question had arisen in a Council meeting and after brief discussion it was agreed that this was as Michael reported, simply a business transaction. Al said he would defer to that trust.

New Business:

Al Eickelmann came forward and stated that the church body, as a whole, should get word out to community by inviting and doing people a favor by letting other folks know about us.

Next week, the University of Southern Mississippi is bringing film crew and after church Norman Robinson is leading focus group on the Gift of Homosexuality.... Gathering group to serve as focus group. Academic paper is resource to be read in advance... this could be major vehicle for outreach. Cuts from one hour of film may be used as smaller segments on website and in social media. The idea is to promote not just tolerance but celebration of same sex relationships.

Pastor came forward and asked that we take a moment to remember in silence, members who were lost: John Pecoul, Marie Weatherspoon, and Cara Chapkovich.

Motion for adjournment / Meeting adjourned: 12:50pm

Respectfully Submitted:
Rachel Ricks

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

2021 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 31, 2021

I am immensely proud to have served this past year as the President of the Congregation of Central St. Matthew UCC. As in past years, there were many challenges which we faced in 2020, and in each instance, this congregation rose to meet those challenges. You can thank your elected leaders for the manner in which those challenges were conquered. I cannot say enough of how pleased I am with the cooperation and support that I have received from the members of this congregation, as well as those elected to work with me. I can honestly say that you are the best of the best, but most of all, I am blessed with the outpouring of love and support that I have received from the congregation.

We began 2020 as the beginning of a new decade – one filled with the hopes and prayers for a brighter future. That vision soon turned bleak and we found ourselves engulfed in a dark tunnel with no light at the end. As we forged our way through that tunnel, we were met with many obstacles along the way. We encountered others that were just as confused and depressed as we were, yet we were able to reach out to others and help them along. I love the work that I do for Central St. Matthew. We constantly walked towards the LIGHT that our faith led us. We lost many family, friends and loved ones along the way, but we know that they went to that place that had been prepared for them. Our faith still leads us towards the light. We now know that the LIGHT at the end of the tunnel is near and we will emerge into a brighter future for ourselves, our families, and for Central St. Matthew UCC.

May the Lord continue to guide us as we travel this road together, united as one body and one mind in Christ.

Wilson C. Boveland, President, Governing Council
Central St. Matthew, UCC



Governing Council Annual Report for 2020
Central St. Matthew United Church of Christ
1333 South Carrolton Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

January 31, 2021

The Governing Council for Central St. Matthew UCC for 2020 was composed of the following members:

Wilson C. Boveland, President
Norman Robinson, Vice-President
Curry Miller, Secretary
James Bonds, Member
Kathleen Turner, Member
Willard Hill, Member
Milton Cheramie, Member
Curry Miller, Member
Michael Boucree, Trustee Board
Nancy Marks, Christian Education

Some of the issues considered and approved during 2020 included:

- Approval of 2020 Budget
- Contracted with an on-line streaming service to monitor our on-line weekly worship service.
- Hosted a series of Black History events organized by Mrs. Tracey Braden Webster
- Applied for and received a PPP Disaster Loan from the Federal Government which did not have to be repaid.
- Voted to discontinue in-person worship services in March due to the COVID-19 Restrictions.
- Voted to make several large donations to relief organizations to aid in the humanitarian efforts for victims of the Pandemic close-down of businesses.
- Continued the Justice and Mercy Initiative which led to discussions/ “Conversation on White Privilege”.
- Conducts weekly Guided Meditations with Mrs. Stephanie Osborne
- Resurfaced the floor area in the Choir space, hallway, and the back offices.
- Conducted a successful Thanksgiving Basket Giveaway in spite of the quarantine lock-down.
- Ended the fiscal year of 2020 with a surplus and a balanced budget.
- Developed a plan to resume in-person worship service for the final months of 2020.
- Developed an investment strategy for the funds from the sale of the Bienville property.

Continuing Issues for 2021 include:

- Complete Repairs/Renovations to our sanctuary
- Resumption of in-person worship services
- Continue to explore ways to invest the Church’s funds.
- Continue to explore options for the use of the Carrollton Campus.
- Possible sale/disposition of other properties in St. Tammany Parish
- Long term goals of developing an investment strategy for the funds received from the sale of the Bienville property
- Approval of 2021 balanced Budget
- Expand our Community Service and Mission outreach programs
- Develop plans for the continued growth and development of the Church

Wilson C. Boveland, President
Governing Council of CSM



2020 Annual Report Rev. Philip K. Brockett

2020 was an unusual year! After starting the year strong and having a terrific celebration of Black History Month, we moved into Lent. Our Lenten Emphasis was “Caring for God’s Creation,” but then COVID 19 struck. On March 15th we moved to live-streaming, at first from here at church, then with the stay-at-home order from my home, then with a lot of hard work we moved to a pre-produced format which continued until October 25th. From that time, we continued with both in-person and live-stream until the end of the year, moving back to live-stream **only** on January 3, 2021 because of the increase of COVID cases.

Throughout the pandemic God has blessed us in a number of ways.

1. Only a few members of our church family have been infected with the virus and none have died, although several members of our church have had family members who have succumbed.
2. Online worship attendance has been strong, and our outreach has increased as we have participants from across the lake and across the country!
3. We have been able to remain connected and to function as a church via Zoom.
4. Our congregation's commitment has remained high as exhibited by live-stream participation and financial support.
5. Our Christian Ed Committee has faithfully stayed in touch with our children, mailing out activity packets every week.
6. We received financial support through the PPP in the form of a loan which has now been forgiven.
7. Our online presence has been strong with the help of Online Optimism, the firm we hired to conduct a social media campaign, our online presence has been strong. Included as an appendix in this report book is the final report from their work. I hope you will take a moment to look at it. Just to highlight one figure, April through December, we had 1,630,439 Facebook impressions with 38,877 engagements. Those numbers are impressive, unfortunately, because of the pandemic, we have no way of knowing how many of those contacts would have resulted in people actually visiting our church. We are endeavoring to continue that level of social media presence and look forward to finding out what the results will be in terms of people visiting our church when the pandemic fears have been lifted. One thing we do know is that over the course of this past pandemic year, we have averaged 303 weekly engagement/views of our worship service. Average in person attendance in 2019 was approximately 70 people. In theory, our participation has quadrupled plus! The challenge of course, is how to engage, serve, and include online worshipers into the life of the church. This is a whole new field of endeavor for all congregations with an online presence.
8. Melissa Aguilar, our office administrator has stepped up to undertake many additional tasks to keep our church functioning.
9. Church members and friends of our church have shared their musical talents during online worship.
10. We have established four weekly groups (please feel free to join one or all of them), our Wednesday morning prayer team, Tuesday evening Social Awareness group, Thursday evening bible study, and Sunday morning Virtual Coffee Hour; and, we have continued our monthly book club on Zoom. Truly, there are many reasons to be grateful.

And yet these days weigh heavily upon all of us. The change of routine, the restrictions we all face, the political divide that exists within our country, the uncertainty of the future, all work to frustrate and depress us. We need to be kind to ourselves and to each other. We need to reach out to each other as best we can. We need to believe the Good News that the Kingdom of God is at hand and that good things will come.

I was disappointed as I reviewed my Annual Report from last year. It was filled with big plans for growing our congregation and improving our facility which were not accomplished. We did however make some improvements on our facility, including painting of the nursery and the creation of a wall mural and the floors in the offices, meeting area next to the offices, and the choir loft were sanded and polyurathaned. We have added and continue to add equipment to our live-streaming operation. Special thanks to Philip Ricks for his vision for this ministry even before the pandemic was upon us and thank you Jack Caulder for joining the team to operate the equipment on Sunday mornings. If you are interested in being part of this effort, drop me a line!

I think that all of us can agree that our lives will be forever changed as a result of the pandemic, and I would argue that the same can be said of our church life. God is doing a new thing and the extent of that new thing is not clear but churches who can embrace and utilize this “new knowhow,” are going to see their ministries expand. Speaking of expanding, I have a personal vision for the planting of a UCC church on the North Shore. Our online presence has put me in touch with a few regular attenders from the North Shore who would very much like to have a church such as ours on the North Shore. I invite your prayers and support in seeking God’s guidance on how to make that happen.

This year has brought additional participation in our New Orleans Association and in our South Central Conference. I now serve as chair of the New Orleans Association Committee on Ministry and I also serve on the South Central Conference Church planting committee and I am happy to do so.

I am deeply indebted to the leadership of the church, especially Wilson Boveland, our President and Vice President Norman Robinson, Treasurer Michele D’Aquin, and Assistant Treasurer Dale Bonds. I am particularly grateful to the Governing Council, Trustees, the Diaconate, CE Board members, and their Chairs; Michael Arlean, and Dale, who have been faithful and diligent leaders.

This year Willard Hill and Norman Robinson are leaving the Governing Council and Philip Ricks and Michael Boucree are completing their terms as Trustees. Thank you to each of you for your service!

Thanks also to our staff of Melissa, Michael, and Steven. We have a great church staff. Melissa is in the office from 8-1 Monday through Friday. Give her a call whenever you need some help. I am also grateful to the regular members of my Wednesday Prayer Team. All are Welcome – come join us.

I want you to know that I am so blessed to be your pastor! This is a wonderful church, not because it is perfect but because we are a community of imperfect people working together. Thank you for the grace you grant me in my faults. Thank you for your commitment to Christ and your desire to be a community. I love CSM, I love New Orleans, and I love you! My door is always open to each of you!

Let me close with the same verses that I used in my annual report last year, they are familiar words from Jeremiah 29:11. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.”

Although 2020 may have seemed like an interruption in God’s plans for us, I know that they were not, and that God is at work, in us and through us for the building of the Kingdom.

Yours in the Fellowship of Christ,

Rev. Philip K. Brockett



**CENTRAL ST. MATTHEW (CSM) UCC
BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BOT) ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

The CSM Board of Trustees (BOT) held six regular meetings, and three Joint Meetings with the Governing Council, most via Zoom due to the Coronavirus (COVID) pandemic. A summary of the principal items/issues the BOT addressed at its meetings in the 2020 calendar and fiscal year include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Elections of BOT Officers – Boucree (Chair), Hadley (Vice-Chair), Etter (Secretary)
- Affirmation of bank signatories (Milton Cheramie, Philip Ricks, Dale Bonds)
- Discontinued services with Simplify Church accounting services
- Enhanced pay structure and duties for Office Administrative Assistant to include bookkeeping as part of job description and duties
- Appointed Investment Committee (subcommittee of BOT) members to advise on investment strategy, investment manager, and adopt investment policy
- Approved the Investment Committee’s solicitation of proposals for firms to become our investment firm of choice (in addition to United Church Funds investments)
- Authorized refurbishment, renovation and improvement of choir sanctuary, office space, pastor’s office, Willow Street entrance, windows in Willow Street foyer, painting of meeting space, and power-wash of the church exterior
- Established a solicitation of bids and selection of a vendor to move the bell from the Bienville property and its erection on the Carrollton property
- Approved application for receipt of CARES Grant funding (Payment Protection Program) from federal government
- Oversaw the refurbishment and return of the Central Congregational Steinway piano into sanctuary
- Established a \$5000 COVID Help Fund for the pastor to use at his discretion for church members who may be facing hardship due to COVID
- Approved recommendation of Investment Committee to select Raymond James Investment firm (Todd Francis, investment Manager) to invest \$500,000 currently held in savings account at Fidelity (portion of funds received from sale of Bienville property)
- Adopted a Raymond James Investment Policy
- Advised adoption of a similar policy for United Church Funds investments
- Recommended a 2021 Budget to Governing Council and congregation for approval (which includes development of a separate job description for enhancement of worship services via video production; clarification on Pastor’s housing allowance and salary, cost of living increases for staff; budget for Black History and Cultural Consciousness Committee activities; allocation for a jazz service with Michael White – though not restricted to this person or group)

The BOT acknowledges the time, commitment, work, and collective thoughts of its members: Michael Boucree, John Etter, Charles Hadley, Austin Penny, Philip Ricks, Glenda Saunders, Austin Penny. The BOT extends its appreciation to Dale Bonds (Assistant Treasurer), Michele D’Aquin (Treasurer), and Melissa Aguilar (Church Administrative Assistant and Bookkeeper) for their work ensuring appropriate bookkeeping, accounting, finance, and budget modeling and to Curry Miller for his procurement of contractors for, and his supervision of the church renovations. The BOT also acknowledges the time, commitment, work and collective thoughts regarding the recruitment, selection and approval of an investment policy of the Investment Committee members: Charles Hadley, Alvertha Penny, Kathleen Turner, Michael Boucree, Dale Bonds (Assistant Treasurer), Michele D’Aquin (Treasurer).

This report is submitted with the above items being highlights of activities and discussions of the BOT held during its meetings and in Joint Meetings with the Governing Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Boucree, Chair

Diaconate 2020 Annual Report

How many times have you heard the word “unprecedented” in the past 10 or so months? Well, here it comes again. This year has been totally unexpected in its events, and yet the first few months, the Deacons were able to do some new things.

At the first meeting, we elected officers and passed the torch to a new set of Deacons except for the Chair.

Deacons developed and implemented a new offering that would help to replenish the **pastor’s benevolence fund**. This fund is not a budget item. It is used to help those in need, to include members of our own congregation. One of our new deacons created a special circular container into which we drop coins and dollars that we donate once a month to the benevolence fund.

We spent some time discussing Rev. Brockett’s sabbatical. Our assignment was to assist in determining who could fill the pulpit for the time Pastor Phil is away.

February brought a memorial service for Dennis Raymond. We participated by attending, acting as ushers and servers, and assisting the family in anyway necessary.

March brought COVID-19 and closing of the physical church. We are thankful that we were already “livestreaming” our service, however the service took on a different form and everything had to be recorded.

Our assignment was to continue to check on and pray for members of the congregation. While we were not perfect in performing this task, most of us did touch base with members periodically to make sure they were doing okay.

Our Thanksgiving basket ministry took on a different form this year. We collected money for \$50 grocery store gift cards. Our members are always so generous. We collected enough money for 21 gift cards. These cards were distributed to members, parents of our Noble Minds family and some neighbors.

You, our members, continued your generosity by donating to the staff for Christmas. We appreciate your donations, and we appreciate our staff – some of whom had to quickly learn new skills because of the virus.

Deacons are still in the process of trying to connect with the congregation. Should you need prayer, or you have family concerns, please do not hesitate to contact one of us for assistance.

Continue to pray for each other and for CSM.
Respectfully submitted,

The CSM Diaconate:

Dale Bonds, Chair
Jack Caulder, Vice-Chair
Lorna Edwards, Vice-Chair
Lori Hume, Secretary
Helen Smith Green, Margene Minor, Andree Reese,
Donald Reese, Dave Rota, James Tingley, Vicki Weeks

Committee Reports

Christian Education Committee 2020 Annual Report

The year 2020 has been a rough one for so many and we have had to suspend many of the Christian Education events that we have had in past years. It has been disappointing, but we have done our best to keep in touch and to continue with the education of our Sunday School students. We began the year by continuing our study of the Old Testament through the month of January and then in February we focused on Black History month, highlighting notable African Americans in fields that were celebrated each Sunday. The beginning of March we continued our Old Testament Study, but as in-person worship services were suspended our classes also ended. At the beginning of April, Nancy Marks and Arlean Fermanis began sending Sunday School lessons to the children in our congregation. We decided to follow the lectionary rather than continue with the Old Testament. Each week we have been sending them a written lesson as well as activity sheets and sometimes have included directions for a craft the students can do at home. We have received positive feedback from the parents, and we plan on continuing to send the lessons until the time comes when we can resume our in-person classes.

Our Adult Education opportunities have continued as we deal with social distancing through Zoom and occasional in-person classes. Tracey Braden continued to offer a study using the book “Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren. As participants explore the different gifts God has for us, they learn more about the work God desires for them in the Body of Christ (Central St. Matthew) and in the world. During the months of March and April the class was conducted via conference call and in May the class began using Zoom. When in-person worship resumed the class returned to its 9 am Sunday morning time slot as a hybrid class being both in-person and on Zoom. Another adult education opportunity was offered by Pastor Brockett. He began leading a Thursday evening Zoom Bible study which started with the book of James. That was followed by a study on prayer, and in November a lectionary discussion began, which is continuing into the New Year. In April, an Anti-racism discussion group was created to educate and continue the conversations started by the White Privilege class, as well as responding to the outrage of the death of George Floyd. The Zoom discussions take place on Tuesday evenings. The first book chosen to discuss was “White Fragility” by Robin DiAngelo. It was facilitated by Earl Williams and lasted 6 weeks. The second reading chosen was the New York Times Magazine “1619 Project.” This study focuses on “reframing this country’s history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of our national narrative.” Eighteen essays were read and discussed. This group will be meeting in January 2021 to choose the next vehicle of discussion to continue the education and conversation on racism.

The Christian Education Committee was pleased to assist the Black History Month Committee in providing an exciting Black History month celebration. Each week we celebrated the legacy of some of the members and leaders of our congregation as well as welcoming special guests from the community. On the first Sunday we recognized two members of Central Congregational Church who made significant contributions to the city of New Orleans in the field of health and healthcare, Dr. Henry English Braden III, and Emile J. LaBranch, Jr., as well as recognizing the institution Flint-Goodridge Hospital. Our special guest was Dr. Emmett Chapital, a member of the clinical faculty at Tulane Medical School. The second Sunday we celebrated B-Sharp Music Club as well as three notable African Americans who made significant contributions to the city of New Orleans in the field of music, Gladys Jones Hill, Ellis Louis Marsalis, Jr., and Rev. Barbara L. Murray. Our special guest was Don Vappie, a world renown jazz musician and presenter from New Orleans. The third week we recognized the contributions of three notable African American who made significant contributions in civic leadership in the city of New Orleans promoting justice for all its citizens, Cecil Winston Carter, Jr., Stephanie Harrell-Williams, and

James Singleton. Our special speaker was Honorable Kern A. Reese, Judge for the Orleans Parish Civil District Court (Division L) in New Orleans. This service was followed by a soul food lunch and a History Bowl Quiz in which those who attended were asked to compete in doing a crossword puzzle that drew from the informational inserts that were given in the preceding weeks. The fourth week of our Black History Month we celebrated two of our Central St. Matthew legacy congregation members who made contributions in the field of education, Helen Levister Smith, and Peter “Pete” George Saunders. We also recognized McDonough 35, the first four-year high school for African American in the city of New Orleans. Our guest speaker was Gloria Barley Moultrie, Former Chief Administrative Officer for Community Outreach, Alumni Affairs and Public Relations at Southern University of New Orleans.

The CE committee continued to sponsor a daytime book club in 2020 which met the third Thursday of the month at the home of Arlean Fermanis for the months of January and February. Meetings were suspended because of the pandemic but in August the group began to meet via Zoom for more book discussions. Books which were read through the year include: The Black Unicorn, Born a Crime, Barracoon, Round House, Passing Strange, Tiny Righteous Acts by our own Nettie Parker Bauman, and Caste. We will continue the daytime book club in 2021 in the Zoom format until a time we can meet in person again. A bonus to meeting on Zoom has been that many of our group who are not physically here in New Orleans during the summer and fall months have been able to join us from across the miles.

Due to the pandemic the committee was unable to sponsor events throughout the year as we have in the past. We certainly missed the Pentecost celebration as well as our usual September/Fall welcome back activities and we all missed the living nativity and advent celebrations. We are hopeful that before we see another summer we will be together again even if we need to continue mask wearing for a time. When you do get back to our church building, please check out the beautiful mural that has been painted in our nursery. It was done in March and is waiting for children to enjoy its joyful depiction of nature.

Respectively submitted,
Noel Braning, Tracey Webster, Arlean Fermanis (Chair), Helen Smith Green, and Nancy Marks (Council Representative)



Community Service and Missions 2020 Annual Report

CSM 2020 Second Harvest Donations

During January, February, and early March, the CSM family brought in Pasta and sauce, Milk products and Whole grain crackers for distribution through Second Harvest. Then came the pandemic! Suddenly everything changed. The non-perishable foods sat for a couple of months in a little room behind the sanctuary. Then, two angels stopped in at church, loaded up all the food and delivered it to Second Harvest. Those angels were Nancy Marks and Peter Bryant, and to them we give thanks.

Second Harvest was added to the list of online giving, and it appears each week in “What’s Happening at CSM.” During 2020, members donated \$560 online. In addition, the Governing Council voted to donate \$2000 from CSM to Second Harvest.

Please remember Second Harvest when you do your online giving. Also, one can drop off non-perishable goods at 700 Edwards Avenue M-F 7:30-4:00.

Margaret Rota, Second Harvest Coordinator

CSM Communications and Outreach Ministry Year-End Report 2020

Due to the pandemic, there is no report for 2020.



JUSTICE AND MERCY INITIATIVES 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Due to the pandemic, there is no report for 2020.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The Nomination Committee met in December 2020 to consider candidates for the terms of Governing Council members, Board of Trustees members, Diaconate, Communications and Outreach Committee, Christian Education, Community Service and Mission Committee, Treasurers, and the representatives for various Committees and Boards to the Governing Council, whose terms expired or were vacated in 2020.

Committee Recommendation

- | | |
|--|--|
| (a) <u>Governing Council</u> | |
| (1) Willard Hill | Tracey Webster (1 st Term) |
| (2) Norman Robinson | Michael Boucree (1 st Term) |
| (3) Kathleen Turner | Kathleen Turner (1 st Term) |
| (b) <u>Board of Trustees</u> | |
| (1) Michael Boucree | Vicki Weeks (1 st Term) |
| (2) Philip Ricks | Jim Tingley (1 st Term) |
| (c) <u>Communications and Outreach</u> | TBA |
| (d) <u>Christian Education</u> | Nancy Marks |
| (e) <u>Community Service and Mission</u> | TBA |
| (f) Justice and Mercy Initiatives (Ad Hoc) | TBA |
| (g) <u>Treasurer</u> | |
| Michele D'Aquin | Michele D'Aquin |
| (h) Financial Secretary | |
| Dale Bonds | Dale Bonds |

- (i) Diaconate
 - (1) Dale Bonds
 - (2) Helen Green
 - (3) Margene Minor
 - (4) David Rota
 - (5) Margaret Rota
 - (6) Lori Hume
 - (7) Lorna Edwards
 - (8) Jack Caulder
 - (9) Princella Graham
 - (10) Michele D'Aquin

(j) Conference Delegate

Dale Bonds

(k) New Orleans Association Delegate

John Etter

YOURS IN CHRIST:

Members of the 2021 Nomination Committee:

Milton Cheramie, Chair; Wilson C. Boveland, Nancy Marks, Norman Robinson, and Rev. Philip Brockett



Our New Members 2020

No new members were added in 2020

Deceased Members 2020

Dennis Raymond