



**Hillsdale Community Church**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Annual Report**

2017



Hillsdale Community Church  
United Church of Christ

## **Annual Report 2017**

### **CONTENTS**

#### **Reports**

2017 Statistics . . . . .	4
Consistory . . . . .	5
HCC Foundation . . . . .	6
Music . . . . .	8
Worship God Joyfully . . . . .	8
Share Christ's Word . . . . .	9
Adult Education . . . . .	9
Fellowship Committee. . . . .	.10
Make a Difference. . . . .	.11
Prayer Chain . . . . .	.15
Pastoral Search Committee. . . . .	.15
Capital Campaign. . . . .	.17
Hoyt Street Meals . . . . .	.18
Stephen Ministry . . . . .	.18
Prayer Shawl Ministry . . . . .	.19
Back to Eden . . . . .	.19
Adopt-a-Patch . . . . .	.20
Women's Retreat . . . . .	.21
Flower Ministry . . . . .	.21
Hillsdale Hikers . . . . .	.21

#### **Minutes of Congregational Meetings**

Annual Meeting, January 29, 2017. . . . .	.22
Special Meeting, December 3, 2017 . . . . .	.27



## 2017 Statistics

Active Members as of 12/31/16	104
New Members	2
Deceased Members	4
Other Losses	26*
<b>Active Members as of 12/31/17</b>	<b>76</b>

\*Based on a review of the membership rolls in 2017, several members were moved to inactive status by action of the Consistory.



## Consistory ■ Cathy Thomas, President

This was not a typical year at HCC—if there is such a thing. And I think it's fair to say it was a challenging year.

There was anxiety—about the results of our national election—so some of us marched with 100,000 others to support women and some marched to support science.

And, yes, we were impatient when it seemed as if our search for a new pastor was taking too long. But it's one of those things that requires patience and takes as long as it takes. And by the end of the year, we had identified the Rev. Jennifer Campbell as the one we wanted to call as our pastor—and she said “yes.”

Our interim pastor, Rev. Chris Hyde, left in May, a few months earlier than originally scheduled. We were fortunate to have the Revs. (Gene/Pat) Ross tag-team as “interim-interims” from June to October. After that, we filled the pulpit with two of our own—Elizabeth Pigg and Carol Doyle—and the Rev. Michael Carlson, who preached on 11 Sundays.

Our attendance dipped and once again, we were faced with challenging budget questions.

Nonetheless, we carried on. We never failed to open our doors for worship and fellowship on Sunday (well, there was Christmas Eve, but that was because of snow).

This was the year we learned about our Muslim neighbors in a seven-week “Understanding Islam” series, we learned about refugees and immigrants in another series, and we delved into “Unpacking White Privilege.”

Twice a month from March through June, we met with Rev. Deborah Brown to help identify what our church is like and to take measure of where we are against the “seven marks of a healthy church”:

1. Are we energized by our faith?
2. Do we have an outward or an inward focus?
3. Are we seeking to discover what God wants?
4. Are we willing to face the costs of change or growth (or the costs of not changing)?
5. Are we operating as a community?
6. Do we make room for everyone?
7. Do we do a few things well?

This definitely challenged our thinking and our assumptions about ourselves as a congregation. Hopefully everyone who participated took away something useful. We learned about not “going down the rabbit hole” (a metaphor for getting off the subject and taking the conversation in an unknown direction) and not “beating a dead horse,” a metaphor for continuing to bring up something that is already done and over with and there is no point in still talking about it. We learned about “mutual invitation,” a way to conduct meetings so that everyone who wants to gets a chance to talk.



In an effort to make a difference in our community, we collected electric fans, we collected tarps and blankets, we collected crockpots. We filled the food barrel in the lobby numerous times. We hosted Kendálin, an eclectic folk-fusion ensemble, for a benefit concert for SW Hope Community Food Drive. We sold Sisters of the Road coupons. Once a month, we provided hot meals for 90 men living in a homeless shelter. And at Christmas, our giving tree was aimed at helping kids and animals.

There was sadness at the loss of Dave Nielsen, Patty Harding, Ernilie Storrs, Edythe Connolly, and Helen Jenkinson, and there was joy as we brought two new members, Andrew Larson and Donna Bestwick, into our family.

And there was music and there was fun. Alexis Hamilton's concert "Pure Imagination: Songs of Long Ago and Far Away" and auction benefited the ministries of HCC. We showed that we have more talent than not at our annual "Talent/No Talent Show" in October. Our much-loved annual Christmas Dessert Concert, produced by music director Tim Ditch and the Chancel Choir, featured music from "here and there" and lip-smacking dessert.

Will 2018 be challenging? No doubt it will. Right now, we may be small in numbers, but we are mighty. Our new pastor is sure to bring new ideas and, I expect, challenges.

With 99 years behind us—2018 is our centennial year—we have much to celebrate as we continue this spiritual journey together.

I'd like to thank the members of the Consistory (Cindy Van Loo, Bob Brandon, Carol Weber, Rebecca Holt, Dave Soderquist, and Carl Wamser) and our director of music and church administrator, Tim Ditch, for their dedication to Hillsdale Community Church.

And I'd especially like to thank the entire congregation for their support and love.

Blessings to you all!

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## **Foundation** ■ Paula McCall, President

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The Foundation was established in 1995 to promote Hillsdale Community Church UCC's long-term financial health and security, and to help implement the mission of the church. It is the responsibility of the Foundation to establish broad guidelines for investment of endowment assets, to determine asset allocation parameters, to select and monitor investment managers, and to establish an endowment spending policy. The goal is to achieve growth of endowment principal over time in order to support the disbursement policy. Management of the endowment will seek a reasonable balance of rate of return, adequate liquidity for distribution policy, and perpetual preservation of principal.

This year, the Board of Directors of the Foundation consisted of Paula McCall, president; Clyde Saylor, treasurer; Patti Brandon, secretary; Robin Williams,



special projects; and Mike Van Loo, special projects. Clyde Saylor's term on the board ends with the annual meeting and he will be running for re-election. Patti Brandon's term on the board ends with the annual meeting. A new director will be elected at the same meeting.

In 2017 the Foundation's funds were managed by Jim Frank with Raymond James. These funds were managed using a moderate risk tolerance strategy and include accounts with Raymond James as well as American Funds with the goal of a balanced diversification. At the beginning of 2017, the Foundation funds had a total balance of \$251,897. As of December 31, 2017, we had \$266,898. This includes \$10,222 in Designated Funds (\$5,145 grounds and \$5,077 Healing Ministry). Currently we have one Certificate of Deposit with Raymond James that matures on March 15, 2018, worth \$19,978.00.

The Foundation sets a goal of developing a budget based on the funds' average value for the previous 20 quarters. The maximum dispersion is 5 percent of the average value of non-designated funds. Requests for funds may be submitted by various church committees, the Consistory, or the pastor. Any request should be for a specific project to further HCCUCC's work. Distributions in 2017 were as follows:

**Designated Funds**

Tree removal on north side of church	\$ 720
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**Non-Designated Funds**

Capital Campaign	<u>\$11,500</u>
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<b>Total 2017 Distributions</b>	<b>\$12,220</b>
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In 2017, the Foundation received \$270 in donations and memorial gifts. We have committed non-designated funds of \$14,500 for the Capital Campaign to be paid over the next two years.

Your support makes a huge difference. In 2016, we added two new giving options through the charitable giving campaigns of Fred Meyer (Rewards) and Amazon (Amazon Smiles). By registering your Fred Meyer Rewards card naming HCCUCC as your nonprofit of choice and scanning your card at check-out, Freddie's will donate half of a percent of all your purchases to the church with no impact on any reward you normally earn. Similarly, by signing up with Amazon Smiles and purchasing through Smiles, Amazon donates a similar percentage on all eligible purchases you make. And with continued financial support from the congregation through individual gifts, wills, and trusts, the Foundation will grow stronger in their ability to fund missions of the church. Members and friends are encouraged to explore planned-giving opportunities with their financial advisors. If you're 70½ or older and eligible for IRA charitable rollovers, please consider giving this non-taxable gift to HCCUCC.

Memorial gifts are also important to us. Remembering loved ones this way plays a role in the Foundation's ability to provide resources to the church's mission.

This is an extraordinary time to be part of HCCUCC. I offer thanks to all who supported the Foundation and helped make a difference in our community.



## **Music** ■ Tim Ditch, Director of Music

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The Chancel Choir continues to provide musical leadership in the regular worship services. The dedicated members of the choir give their time, talent, and energy to help make our worship experiences meaningful to all.

A highlight of the year was our thirteenth annual Christmas Dessert Concert, *Christmas: Here and There*, on December 10. With our usual mix of sacred and secular, from silly to sublime, the evening had something for everyone. The music took full advantage of our fabulous Steinway grand, awesome pipe organ, and sumptuous acoustics in the Sanctuary. We then moved to Fellowship Hall for delectable desserts and our traditional closing number, *Peace, Peace*.

We were looking forward to closing the year with our Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols, but snow and ice necessitated cancelling the service.

In addition to the music provided by the choir, we appreciate the special music provided by Jon von Behren, Paul Gonzales, Mary Ann Schacher, Margy Kleger, Theresa Wechsler, Alexis Hamilton, Nancy Biskey, Gerry Craig, and Alecia Weber Deroo.

## **Worship God Joyfully** ■ Cathy Thomas

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The purpose of the team is to guide the worship life of the congregation. Ongoing tasks supporting the worship ministry of our church include scheduling liturgists, greeters, ushers, communion preparers and servers, and maintaining the banners and candles.

We assisted in securing pulpit supply (fill-in pastors) for 14 Sundays after our interim-interim pastors Pat and Gene Ross concluded their time with us and before Rev. Jennifer Campbell started in January 2018.

In addition, we:

- prepared communion for 12 first Sundays of the month
- coordinated preparing the Sanctuary for the Easter season
- coordinated greening (and “ungreening”) of the Sanctuary at Christmas.

Team members in 2017 were Margy Kleger, Pat Stenaros, Ruthanne Rusnak, Marteena Sander, and Cathy Thomas (chair), as well as Pastor Chris Hyde and Music Director Tim Ditch, ex-officio.





## Share Christ's Word ■ Alexis Hamilton

Sunday School has undergone a number of changes in 2016 and 2017. First is a formatting change. After the Community Conversations, a suggestion was made to switch-up the Sunday School format. Some people felt that the curriculum was a little intimidating and thought that if we had a different format organized more like Vacation Bible School, where each Sunday had a theme, we might be able to attract both more teachers and more kids.

It was worth a shot to get us started again, so we changed it up, and some dedicated souls stepped in to teach Sunday School. Unfortunately, the new format didn't really attract new participants, and many of us missed seeing the children in worship—even if briefly. We gave the experiment about a year before deciding to revert back to our *Seasons of the Spirit* multi-age curriculum, which we are currently using.

Sunday School has also been taking a more active role with the Make a Difference Team, taking on two projects this school year thus far: collecting crock pots for Neighborhood House to help those in need to prepare healthy, satisfying, home-cooked meals, and our annual Giving Tree project to benefit animals and people. The kids blessed the crockpots and delivered them, and are on track to finish up gathering the Giving Tree gifts and delivering them this month.

We are looking forward to new projects in 2018, including participating in The Soul Box Project to raise awareness about gun violence and the unnecessary deaths in the United States due to firearms.

In addition to these changes, Rebecca Holt, our very long-time committee organizer, has stepped back from her leadership role (though not her teaching role!) after eight years of faithful service. Alexis Hamilton has stepped in to Rebecca's very large shoes.

We hope that you will continue to support and celebrate the children and youth of Hillsdale in 2018 and beyond!

## Adult Education ■ Dennis Frengle

The Sunday morning study group began the year continuing discussions on ways to revitalize the church, using the book *Real Good Church* by Molly Whinney Baskette as a guide. This study continued well into spring.

After completion of the book—and motivated in large measure by the take-aways from the Rev. Deborah Brown-led Series “Seven Marks of a Healthy Church”—it was felt by those in the study group that we, as a church, could benefit from working on improving our ways of communicating.



Going forward, we wanted to develop skills that might better defuse the ever-present potential for group differences and misunderstandings to develop either into open conflict or to people just quietly disappearing.

We chose the book *Talk Matters* by Mary V. Gelinis. A fair amount of discussion took place about ways to change our annual meeting.

We turned our attention in a different direction: faith, in a tradition that recognizes faith as a process, a voyage, and that declares that all are welcome, wherever we are on this voyage. We chose *Living Faith While Holding Doubt* by Martin C. Coperhaver.

We recently began an examination of progressive Christianity using a video format instead of a book. The series, *Living the Questions*, features 30-minute interview clips with a number of scholars and church leaders on many topics. This allows plenty of time for good discussion on the weekly topic.

We meet at 9 o'clock on Sunday mornings; all are welcome to join us.

In addition to the study group, we had two adult education offerings on Wednesday evenings that were open to HCC members, friends, and the public.

*Understanding Islam:* This eight-week series dealt with Islam's roots in Christianity and Judaism, and various topics within the religion (basic tenets, the role of women, sharia, radicalism, growing up Muslim in America, etc.). Speakers from the Muslim Educational Trust led six of the series.

*Refugees and Immigrants:* This four-week series dealt with how our system works for dealing with refugees and immigrants, and what are the problems. Guest speakers led this series.

## **Fellowship** ■ Bob Brandon

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It has often been said: the folks at Hillsdale Community Church “do food well!” I believe that to be true individually and collectively.

As a member of the Consistory, I volunteered to be the liaison to the Fellowship Team and report regularly on the activities of the team. As it turned out, our “team” didn't take the time to gather, plan, and, most importantly, select a team leader. Being unable to follow the excellent example of team leadership by Paul Gonzales in 2016, I attempted to loosely organize several food-based events.

They fell into four categories: (1) Meetings: to encourage attendance and improve morale we had finger-food based items at the Annual Meeting and any additional Congregational Meetings; (2) The Seven Marks of a Successful Church led by the Rev. Dr. Deborah Brown in the spring; (3) Easter and Thanksgiving Feasts; and (4) Meet-and-Greet and Celebratory events associated with the arrival of new Pastor Jennifer Campbell.



They turned out to be wonderful, due to the continual participation by so many members of the church. I hesitate to name specific people for fear of forgetting someone, but I'll do this much: Patti Brandon, Mary Tindall, Mike Van Loo, and Howard Pigg were often involved in setting up or taking down the tables and chairs. When we had table decorations they were often because of the creative talents of Becky Meier and Trudi Frengle. Working with Patti and me in the kitchen were often Anita Moss, Marianne Gorman, Becky Meier, Nayan Fleenor, Elizabeth and Howard Pigg, Cindy Van Loo, and Nancie Wamser. I should also say, those who contributed food to the events almost always asked how they could help out in the kitchen, too!

## **Make a Difference** ■ Nayan Fleenor/Nancie Wamser

This was a year of change and flexibility for the Make a Difference Team: Nancie Wamser joined Nayan Fleenor as co-chair, and, with a greatly reduced budget for 2017, Make a Difference shifted its primary focus from global missions to local outreach.

We started the year with an open planning meeting for the congregation. Those who attended shared their ideas for Make a Difference activities and signed up to receive ongoing information about the team's efforts.

Because Make a Difference has acted through its leadership and in ad hoc groups rather than as an actual "team," we did not hold any other meetings. But during the year a variety of people of all ages—from both HCC and the wider community—participated in Make a Difference activities.

This report is a long one because so many activities fall under the umbrella of Make a Difference. Here are the highlights of the year for the Make a Difference Team:

### **Global Missions**

- Efforts were made to help inform the congregation about a few of the UCC/ Global Ministries projects around the world through postings on bulletin boards and articles in *Tidings*.
- We hosted guest speakers Kim and Erik Free in April. They had been serving in Mozambique with the Global Ministries partner for several years. Violence in the area has made it too dangerous to carry on the work of helping establish a demonstration farm to help educate local farmers about new techniques. The local partner denomination hopes eventually to carry on the work.
- People were encouraged to contribute to hurricane relief to help those both nationally and internationally who had to recover from so many hurricanes in 2017. Information was made available about where to contribute toward immediate relief or to support UCC Disaster Relief, which focuses more on helping with long-term recovery than with immediate crisis response.



## Local Outreach

**January**—*Red Cross Blood Drive*: Once again, Margy Kleger spearheaded our periodic blood drives. Under her leadership, HCC hosted the Red Cross mobile donation center in January, June, and September. Each drive collected about 18 units of blood. *Women's March*: Our community sign-making session in Fellowship Hall drew children and adults from HCC and from the surrounding neighborhood. Both HCCers and neighbors also attended our prayer send-off. We carried our handmade signs and the church banner (“Jesus Didn’t Reject People; Neither Do We”) in the Portland Women’s March, where we walked in solidarity with crowds estimated at 70,000-100,000 to support human rights and environmental protection.

**February/March/April**—*Interfaith Kickoff for SW Hope Feed the Hungry*: We organized and hosted the first-ever interfaith service to begin the annual campaign to collect food and cash for the Neighborhood House Food Pantry. Rabbi Gary Rutenberg of Gesher, Harris Zafar of Portland Rizwan Mosque, and Rev. Brett Webb-Mitchell of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, led the February 26 service and blessed the food barrels. Food Pantry Director Elizabeth LaPlante and Nina Clippard of SW Hope also addressed the audience, which included church members, neighbors, and members of other faith communities. We partnered with Neighborhood House to have HCC serve as a community donation site for the duration of the two-month campaign.

**April**—*March for Science*: Once again, our open sign-making session drew participants from both our church and the wider community. The next day, some from HCC joined in the march, while others attended “Transforming Pain into Power: Equipping a community to address the impacts of gun violence,” a community forum held at our sister church, Highland Christian Center.

**June**—*Radical Welcome, Transformative Faith: Whole-Hearted Church Life and Leadership*: We sent representatives to this equity informed leadership conference sponsored by the UCC Central Pacific Conference, and reported back to HCC about the event. *Befriending the Brain: Practical Ways to Improve Relationships and Communication*: This evening presentation was free and open to the public, and drew both HCCers and participants from across Portland. Presented by Nancie Potter, JD, LMFT, it grew out of the Sunday morning Adult Education group’s discussions of Mary Gelin’s book, *Talk Matters! Exploring Sanctuary*: Partnering with the Adult Education program, we presented a slide show and distributed handouts about the New Sanctuary Movement at the final session of the community forum series on immigrants and refugees.

**July/August**—*Grauer Back to School Project*: HCC has a long history of supporting the Grauer Project, and once again we participated in this annual drive to help children in need get ready to start school. HCC volunteers delivered our cash donations and school supplies and helped pack the backpacks delivered to the children.

**September**—*Unpacking White Privilege*: Dr. Dalton Miller-Jones, professor emeritus and former director of the Black Studies Department at Portland State



University, led the evening presentation and moderated a panel discussion and Q&A session with lawyer Stella Shiroma Nakama, former head of Affirmative Action for the Oregon State Bar, and educators and diversity/equity specialists Julie Palmer and Jody Rutherford. We were pleased that so many members of the wider community attended this important event. *Crockpot Connection*: During September, we collected crockpots for the Neighborhood House Food Pantry. Our Sunday School children added one of their handmade “kindness rocks” to each crockpot, along with a handmade card and several recipes for simple and nutritious meals. In October, the children blessed the crockpots during a Sunday worship service, then went with us to deliver them to Neighborhood House, where they were gratefully received. Thanks to the generosity of HCC, Neighborhood House was able to give 26 hungry families crockpots to make it easier to cook nutritious meals. We also delivered 100 pounds of food and a stack of cookbooks to the Food Pantry with the crockpots.

**November**—*Tarps and Blankets for Central City Concern*: Through early December, we collected 23 rain-resistant tarps, 15 warm blankets, and cash (as well as 30 pairs of socks) for Central City Concern, a Portland social service agency that provides essential services to the homeless.

**December**—*Advent Small Faith-Sharing Groups*: Fifteen people participated in three small groups that met weekly during Advent to explore their faith more deeply using materials prepared and provided by the Make a Difference Team. The information they provided in their written evaluations will be provided to Pastor Jen. *Giving Tree for Animal Aid and Community Transitional School*: Make a Difference partnered with the Sunday School to identify and connect with a new recipient for the “people” portion of the children’s annual Giving Tree. Community Transitional School provides a stable educational home for homeless and transient children in Portland, as well as opportunities to participate in sports and other enrichment activities often unavailable to children who move frequently and lack family resources.

### Other Activities

- Throughout the year, Becky Meier and Jack Morby and their faithful volunteer teams prepared and delivered a monthly dinner to Transition Projects’ Hoyt Street Men’s Shelter. In addition, Becky coordinated the collection of toiletries for delivery to Hoyt Street on an ongoing basis.
- Anita Moss, Marianne Gorman, and Elizabeth Pigg continued to serve at Meals on Wheels, while Margy Kleger worked at the Neighborhood House Food Pantry.
- Beginning in March, we provided weekly “Make a Difference Tips” in the Sunday bulletin. Among other topics, “MAD Tips” included contact information for our congressional delegation; links to volunteer opportunities and interfaith community activities; calls to action for social justice; inspirational messages about saints among us and heroes in our community; information about HCC’s Stephen Ministry and Adult Education programs and UCC online resources; and suggestions for ways to increase self-compassion and care for our neighbors.



- Each Sunday, we sold Sisters of the Road coupons after church for congregants to give to our hungry and homeless sisters and brothers. Each \$2 coupon provides a nourishing meal at the Sisters of the Road Café in Oldtown/Chinatown.
- We regularly informed the congregation about interfaith events and social justice activities through the church's weekly e-blast. To promote ecumenism and foster peace and justice, we frequently advertised and coordinated attendance at events at our neighboring faith community, Congregation Neveh Shalom, and at the Muslim Educational Trust in Beaverton.
- We stocked, updated, and staffed a handout table after Sunday worship each week, providing materials such as contact information for aid organizations after natural disasters, and contact information for local winter shelters; white privilege reading and resource list; gun violence resource list; reprints of relevant newspaper articles; community resource guides; and tips on self-compassion.
- Throughout the year, we collected food for the Neighborhood House Food Pantry and delivered it to the agency. During the early part of the year our dear sister in Christ, Pat Harding, emptied the food barrel and made the deliveries. Pat died in June, and we were not able to confirm the total weight of her deliveries. We do know that HCC collected 144 pounds of food and personal hygiene items for Neighborhood House during the SW Hope—Feed the Hungry campaign from late February to late April, and that it delivered just under another 300 pounds of food and hygiene items between June and December.
- Make a Difference brought in \$45 in cash donations at the Women's March sign-making session and the white privilege community forum.

Looking forward to 2018, we are excited to once again have pastoral guidance and support for our work. We hope that the church will be able to fund global and local missions on a more meaningful level. Nayan intends to focus on increasing awareness of UCC/Global Ministries partnerships in other parts of the world. There are partners in about 45 countries. Those of you who would like to increase international understanding of how God is at work in many places are encouraged to join Nayan in her efforts.

One of Nancie's key goals is to identify and engage people who will become more actively involved with the work of local outreach. In particular, we need others to join in choosing, planning, and carrying out specific Make a Difference activities. Reaching out to the congregation in this way will be her early priority in 2018.

At the same time, we know that all HCCers make a difference in their world every day. We highlighted some of these good deeds in one of the weekly Make a Difference Tips, but we know that so many others go unremarked. In a very real sense, everyone who worships with us at HCC is a member of the Make a Difference Team. We have been honored to serve as co-chairs of this important ministry for 2017.



## Prayer Chain ■ Linda Waltmire and Paula McCall

*The secret of life is not about knowing what to say or do. It's not about doing love or loss right. Life cannot be handled. The secret is simply to show up. It's about witnessing it all, even the pain, and letting it touch you and make you not harder, but more tender. Showing up, feeling it all—this is my new kind of prayer. I call it praying attention, and it's how, for me, everything turns holy. —Glennon Doyle*

The Prayer Chain Ministry at Hillsdale Community Church is a group of prayer warriors who actively help with the needs of our community. The prayer team consists of about 20 people who believe in the importance and power of prayer. Each person who joins the team agrees to pray regularly, confidentially, and individually for the people and concerns that are submitted to the team. Each pray-er is part of a chain of people who are praying during the same time frame for the same requests. It is through this chain that God's healing love flows.

Now, we find ourselves in ever more turbulent times with needs that range from lack of basic civility to horrific natural disasters. Our prayer requests have included health concerns for individuals, comfort needs for family and friends, wisdom and strength for first responders, and individual life situation needs, as well as wider community/world needs. And, sometimes, the prayers are simple invitations to give thanks to God.

Requests come mainly from church members and friends. If a request is for an individual, we ask that you talk to them and they agree to have us pray for them. Requests are sent out as soon as possible via emails or phone calls, resulting in a chain of prayers sent to God soon after the request is received and continuing in the days that follow.

Both new team members and new prayer requests are always welcome. New requests can be submitted by email ([prayerchain@hillsdaleucc.org](mailto:prayerchain@hillsdaleucc.org)), to the Prayer Chain coordinators (Linda Waltmire and Paula McCall), to Pastor Jen, or by filling out a pew contact card. We encourage you to join the team if you feel inspired to be part of this prayer ministry. To do so, please contact Paula at 503-244-5607 or [paula@fuzzy.com](mailto:paula@fuzzy.com).

*My secret is simple. I pray. —Mother Teresa*

## Pastoral Search Committee ■ Alexis Hamilton

The year 2017 was a grand culmination of all of the work that Hillsdale UCC began in 2016 to pave the way to a new pastor and renewed vigor for our beloved community! We are so pleased and proud to have been able to call Pastor Jen Campbell as our new settled pastor—appropriately enough during our Advent season, a time of preparation for a new relationship with God through Jesus, and now, a revitalized sense of community and purpose for Hillsdale with Pastor Jen walking beside us.



During 2017, we capitalized on all we had learned during 2016 through the Community Conversations and two surveys that we sent out to get feedback from the congregation. Armed with all of this information and strengthened by the conversations we had during our exploration of the Seven Marks of a Healthy Church, the Pastoral Search Committee finished putting together the Hillsdale Church Profile in anticipation of receiving pastoral profiles in return. A great deal of time, effort, and honest self-reflection went into producing our church profile, and as the chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, I am extraordinarily proud of the effort, wisdom, and compassion displayed by each member of the committee during this process.

With the church profile completed, we were able to go live with our search, and were extremely gratified to receive a lot of interest from a substantial number of candidates—so substantial that we had to turn off the spigot of resumes while we reviewed the ones we had! It was thrilling to have the opportunity to imagine and re-imagine Hillsdale under the leadership of the various pastors who had submitted themselves to our review, and it was humbling to read and hear the stories and experiences of the Godly men and women in our pool of candidates.

Ultimately, we brought two candidates out to Portland to interview in person with us. Of the two—both excellent—one shone the brightest for all of us, Pastor Jen Campbell. Her experience serving congregations in various stages of their development, her ability to create safe and welcoming spaces for youth, and her deep commitment to faith in action were all compelling reasons to call Jen, but more compelling still was our mutual feeling that God was drawing us together and that the Holy Spirit was breathing life into this new pastoral relationship.

We brought Pastor Jen to Hillsdale for a joyful candidating weekend and a blessed affirmation of our faithful choice for Hillsdale. We are humbled by the trust placed in us by the congregation of Hillsdale and look forward to 100 more years of worship and service for our church!

We would be remiss if we did not thank the people who helped financially to bring this search to its successful close. As you know, the Pastoral Search Committee had originally been budgeted for \$10,000. That was cut back to \$3,000. Without the heroic contributions of several members of our church family, it would have been impossible to bring our candidates to Portland. In the interests of transparency, the actual costs of the search follow. Because of the way the financial documents work, it will appear in the annual budget as if the cost of the search were \$3,000. That was not the case. The actual costs were as follows:

**Cash totals (not including “in-kind” donations)**

\$3,000 budgeted

\$5,809 additional cash donations

\$8,809 total funds available

\$7,836 expenses

\$973 for final moving expenses for Amy’s trip and any other moving expenses Pastor Jen and Amy may have.





The budget will show that we spent only \$2,027 in 2017 and \$973 in 2018. But in fact, a total of \$8,809 will actually be spent.

### **In-kind donations are estimated as follows**

\$223 (groceries, and VISA card for Jen and Amy)

Estimated \$800 for housing, plus estimated \$400 for car (combined candidating weekend/house-hunting visit)

Estimated \$200 for car (interview weekend)

In addition, members of the church donated air miles for an approximate value of \$3,000 (six round-trip tickets total for the search).

It is reasonable to expect that future searches should be budgeted at least \$13,000.

Again, we thank those who were able to contribute to our search and made it possible for us to find and call Pastor Jen.

It is with deep gratitude and humility that the Pastoral Search Committee fulfills its obligation to Hillsdale Community Church, United Church of Christ. The committee: Alexis Hamilton (chair), Carol Doyle, Trudi Frengle, Dennis Frengle, Cathy Thomas, Mike Van Loo, Nancie Wamser.

## **Capital Campaign** ■ Bob Brandon

We began our Capital Campaign, “Raising Our Welcome,” in October 2014.

We have reached the end of the three-year campaign to raise funds. I’m pleased to provide a summary of our efforts as of December 31, 2017. As you may recall, in October 2014 we received letters from congregational members indicating their intention to contribute a total of \$440,410 to the campaign. Several other members and friends of the church made donations without actually submitting a letter of intent. Together, these two groups, totaling 76 “giving units,” accounted for an anticipated \$453,024.

I’m proud to report that we now have collected \$458,419 from 68 giving units. Even more remarkable is that 17 generous members substantially exceeded their intended contribution amount!

Anticipating that the construction would be completed long before all the funds were received, the congregation approved the recommendation of the Consistory to borrow money secured by a deed of trust on the church property. We have been making monthly payments on that loan and the balance as of December 31, 2017, is \$42,252.64. More good news: several contributions received on December 31 help our balance sheet at year-end show a balance of \$33,904.96 in the Capital Campaign Fund. Once those funds are transferred in January, the balance owed will be reduced to \$8,347.68. We expect we’ll easily be able to pay off the loan from contributions made by the remaining eight giving units.



It has been my pleasure to be part of the Capital Campaign executive committee these last three years. On behalf of the committee and everyone at Hillsdale Community Church UCC, I sincerely thank each of you for your contributions and support of the campaign.

If you need more information, I invite you to call me at 503-246-5354 or email me at [rfbgodux@gmail.com](mailto:rfbgodux@gmail.com).

## **Hoyt Street Meals** ■ Becky Meier

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One of our mission projects is serving monthly meals at Doreen's Place, a homeless shelter for 90 men located on Hoyt Street and run by Transition Projects, a city agency. The men get an evening meal and a bed for the night. Meals are prepared with the thought that the men would enjoy a good and nutritious meal.

Hillsdale Community Church UCC prepares the meals in our church kitchen and then transports and serves the meal for the men staying at the shelter. During the past year, the following members and friends of our congregation helped to prepare the meals sometime during the year: Julie Bishop, Cheryl Carbone, Carol Doyle, Sue Hufford, Becky Meier, Anita Moss, Marty Murray, Barbara VanAmerongen, Cindy Van Loo, Marteena Sander, and Liz Joyce. Jack Morby coordinates the delivery and serving of the meals. The following participated: Leigh MacAarlane, Theresa and MeiLan Wechsler, Marteena Sander, Ruth Rusnak, Trudi and Dennis Frengle, Sophie and Oliver Frengle, John Biskey, and Rev. Gene Ross. Thank you to all the volunteers!

Meals are prepared by a team of three or four people and include a hearty casserole, fresh salad, rolls, fruit, dessert, and milk. Meals cost approximately \$150 for supplies (or about \$1,800 for the year). Funding comes from the proceeds of the Boomer's Auction and the church's mission budget. Members also donate supplies including turkey, ground beef, cake mixes, etc., which helps reduce the monthly cost.

If you would like to help prepare or serve the meals for the shelter during the coming year (September 2018 through August 2019) on the second Monday of the month, please contact the church office or Becky Meier.

## **Stephen Ministry** ■ Mike Van Loo

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Stephen Ministers and Leaders continue to provide ongoing support for care receivers. Our meeting schedule has changed over the course of time, but we still try to meet a minimum of once a month.

Some of our Stephen Ministers from the first two training classes have "retired" as their personal situations have changed and/or their prior care receiver situations have changed. We periodically discuss the idea of conducting a new training class



for those who may be interested in becoming Stephen Ministers. We will continue to evaluate the interest of potential candidates and the timing for starting a class.

As Stephen Ministers, we believe this program is a vital ministry for our members and friends and are committed to supporting it as part of the Hillsdale UCC mission.

If you would like a Stephen Minister, or you know of a member or friend of Hillsdale UCC who would like a Stephen Minister, please contact Carol Doyle.

## **Prayer Shawl Ministry** ■ Anita Moss

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Prayer shawls are given out to those who are going through difficult times—health issues, hospitalizations, grief—as well as in celebration such as a birth of a child or new members joining the church. Especially in hospitals where it's cold and drafty, shawls work well where people are hooked up to IVs and unable to wear sweaters. They serve as lap covering as well as modesty coverings for walks in the hall.

Shawls are given as a physical reminder of God's love and the love of members of Hillsdale Community Church for those who receive them

A wooden rack in the back of the Sanctuary displays completed shawls. Each shawl has an attached card with the name of the person who created it.

Additional knitters, crocheters, sewers, or quilters would be very much appreciated. Contact Anita Moss at 503-246-6874 if you are interested in helping.

Six shawls were created by Pat Stenaros, Jane Saylor, and Anita Moss in 2017 and were distributed to two new members, two members with health issues, and a friend of the congregation.

## **Back to Eden** ■ Patti Brandon

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The HCC Back to Eden team has continued our work on transition to a native habitat on the church grounds. Since 2011, the efforts of the group have consistently added native beauty to our church grounds. For those who love the outdoors and a feeling of wonder and awe with the world we live in, this group is one you need to be in!

The Back to Eden group is working hard to maintain and promote the flora and fauna of our specific area of the Willamette Valley and Southwest Portland. Cultivating habitat for birds, bees, and butterflies brings beauty to our neighborhood and natural pest control to our grounds as well as surrounding properties.

As a refresher: Back to Eden/Backyard Habitat promotes choosing a varied plantscape that lessens pest and disease risk, and creates a year-round habitat for



insects, birds, and other wildlife that control pests. Flower variety, especially of native plants, provides nectar to beneficial bugs that pollinate plants, fight pests, and feed birds.

In 2017, the Back to Eden group planted more red-flowering currant, bright-yellow Oregon grape, and delicate white-and-purple trillium. Summer flowering plants include purple penstemon, white yarrow, and pink Douglas spirea. Our fall-to-winter color includes Douglas asters, red-twig dogwood, and vine maple. Wander around the grounds and you will see the bounty of our work for all of you and our neighbors to benefit. Don't be dissuaded by the non-native weeds and other invasive plants. They are constantly on our radar.

Several years ago, our HCC Backyard Habitat program was included in a grant awarded by the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District Financial Incentives for continuing our efforts.

There are two ideal planting times for “natives”: late fall and early spring. In October 2017, on a typical cold, rainy fall day, the team once again purchased and planted what felt like a “bazillion” plants, thanks to the final financial reward received as support for the Portland Community Garden program.

Although it looks as if the HCC grounds are dormant, we do have a number of native plants that thrive in our winter weather. We will continue to purchase “natives.”

There will be plenty of advertising to let you know the anticipated date for grounds cleanup and planting. The first couple of years it is crucial to help plants thrive by planting at the right time of year and WATERING! Summer is always a struggle getting help to water our new plants. We will be sending out requests for help in the summer.

Back to Eden is a very exciting part of our gift to God and Hillsdale Community Church UCC. We would love to have everyone join us!

If you love the outdoors but are unable to join in the work parties, you have the option of a directed donation to the Back to Eden fund managed by the HCC Foundation.

## **Adopt-a-Patch/Yard Maintenance** ■ Becky Meier

As you know, we have a lot of yard to maintain. Much of the yard needs attention more than twice a year at all-church work days. About a dozen people have volunteered to take a “patch” to weed and cover with bark dust so it looks nice for all to enjoy.

Mike Van Loo mows the lawn, prunes the hedge, and handles other miscellaneous tasks. Pat Stenaros, Patti Brandon, and Jim Ruyle take on the major job of the lower-lot plants and watering needed to get the new plants established. With time, we hope that the plants will be self-sustaining. The upper patches are handled by



Paula McCall, Linda Waltmire, Cathy Thomas, Nayan Fleenor, Jack Morby, and Becky Meier. Some one-time major projects have been done by Carl and Nancie Wamser, and Pat Stenaros had several dead trees removed. Margy Kleger and other members and friends have helped out as well. Thank you to all!

## **Women's Retreat** ■ Anita Moss/Cindy Van Loo

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After four successful annual retreats, we expected smooth sailing in our planning for the spring 2017 Women's Retreat. But between the relentless ice storms of winter, our focus on the pastoral search and twice monthly "7 Marks of a Healthy Church" sessions in the spring, and the absence of several key members of our earlier planning committees, the task grew more and more challenging. In the end, there were too many scheduling conflicts to allow us to gather a good-sized group on any of the dates our venue was available. So we reluctantly cancelled the 2017 retreat.

We have already committed to a retreat in 2018, however, and have scheduled it for May 4-6 at the Scappoose Creek Inn. We hope that those who have attended past retreats will be joined by interested newcomers to plan, present, and attend an even bigger and better retreat in the coming year. We encourage all women of HCC to share in this fun and always restorative weekend.

## **Flower Ministry** ■ Becky Meier

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We are weekly blessed with lovely floral arrangements in the Sanctuary. A big thank you to the following people who provided flowers at some time during the last year: the Brandons, the Wamsers, Robin Williams, Ruth Rusnak, Trudi Frengle, Paula McCall and Linda Waltmire, Marianne Gorman, Jackie Collins, Marteena Sander, Pat Stenaros, Alice Butler, Becky Meier, and Diane Nelson.

## **Thursday Walking Group** ■ Cindy Van Loo

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Hillsdale Hikers power through rain, wind, snow, heat, and other weather conditions (everything but ice) every Thursday morning. We meet at 9 o'clock in the upper parking lot. We walk at a leisurely pace, which most people can manage, and tailor our walks to meet any needs of the participants.

The hour spent walking is always full of interesting discussions, as well as catching up with one another's life events, as we navigate through the neighborhoods with our dogs leading the way. Come join us. No experience necessary. Don't forget to bring your dog as well. The more the merrier!



## Minutes ■ Annual Congregational Meeting

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**Sunday, January 29, 2017**

### **Welcome and Opening Prayer**

*Pastor Chris Hyde*

Pastor Chris opened the meeting with prayer and also read the first two parts of the Covenant that we adopted last year.

Cathy Thomas took over the meeting since Rebecca Holt was unable to be present.

Attendance was at least 49 members, constituting a quorum.

### **Approval of Minutes**

*Cathy Thomas*

The minutes of all congregational meetings in 2016, as published in the 2016 Annual Report, were approved by the congregation with no changes.

### **Voting for 2017 Foundation Board**

*Cathy Thomas*

*Continuing members:*

President - Paula McCall (2 more years)

Secretary - Patti Brandon (1 more year)

Treasurer - Clyde Saylor (1 more year)

*Two open positions (proposed candidates below):*

At-large - Mike Van Loo (3-year term)

At-large - Robin Williams (2-year term, replacing Dave Soderquist)

Nominations from the floor were requested for each position, but none were submitted. Both proposed candidates were approved by the congregation.

### **Voting for 2017 Consistory**

*Cathy Thomas*

*Continuing members:*

President - Cathy Thomas (2 more years)

Past President - Rebecca Holt (1 more year)

At-large - Bob Brandon (1 more year)

At-large - Carol Weber (1 more year)

*Three open positions (proposed candidates below)*

Vice president - Cindy Van Loo (3-year term)

Treasurer - David Soderquist (3-year term)

At-large - Carl Wamser (2-year term)

Nominations from the floor were requested for each position, but none were submitted. Cindy Van Loo was approved as vice president by a vote of 46 to 3. David Soderquist was approved unanimously as treasurer. Carl Wamser was approved unanimously as an at-large member.

### **Pastor's update**

*Chris Hyde*

Pastor Chris announced that he will have foot surgery in mid-February and will require two weeks of recuperation, during which time he will be unavailable. He welcomed prayers for the success of the surgery and recuperation. He has arranged for pulpit substitutes for the two Sundays he will be absent.



Pastor Chris announced that his husband Malcolm has accepted a new job and moved to Bellingham, Washington, as of mid-January. Pastor Chris will join him whenever he arranges to get a job there. He has applied for the opening at Bellingham UCC and other positions. He has consulted with Conference Pastor Walter John Boris about this transition. Although he hopes to stay to lead the congregation through our transition to a new called pastor, he may be leaving as soon as May.

### **Pastoral search update**

*Alexis Hamilton*

Alexis summarized the committee's work as it was published in the 2016 Annual Report. Community conversations were held and the results published earlier. Now that a budget will be available, the committee will get back to work right away. She introduced the committee members and reminded everyone to communicate with the committee. A box is still available in the lobby to leave written comments, which have all been gratefully received and responded to so far.

### **Introduction of Rev. Deborah Brown**

*Carl Wamser*

Carl indicated that the Consistory had contracted with Rev. Deborah Brown to work with the Consistory and the congregation to help us better become a "healthy church." The first meeting will be with the Consistory on Monday, Feb. 6, followed by meetings with the full congregation soon after.

Rev. Brown described her role as a facilitator and consultant, helping us identify what our church is like now and taking measure of where we are against seven marks of a healthy church.

1. Are we energized by our faith?
2. Do we have an outward or an inward focus?
3. Are we seeking to discover what God wants?
4. Are we willing to face the costs of change or growth (or the costs of not changing)?
5. Are we operating as a community?
6. Do we make room for everyone?
7. Do we do a few things well?

She promises to tell us the truth and hold us accountable as we move through these discussions together.

### **Presentation of 2017 proposed budget**

*Drake Mitchell*

Copies of the latest budget proposal were handed out. These had been modified from the last Consistory budget by conversations between Tim Ditch, Cathy Thomas, and Rebecca Holt to change Tim's 10% reduction in both roles to a 20% reduction in administrative duties and no change in music director duties.

### **Income**

Jon von Behren asked how we ended with a small 2016 surplus after expecting a deficit for so long. Drake pointed out that there was unusually large giving in December, plus we intentionally did not fully expend several categories, most notably \$4,250 in missions giving and the pastor's full expense allowance.

Theresa Wechsler pointed out that the music program was what drew her into



HCC. She believes it most important that we take care of our own staff/members and proposed restoring the staff salaries in full (requiring about \$10,000) by cutting the Pastoral Search Committee budget by \$7,000, Our Church's Wider Mission by \$2,500, and other missions by \$500. She believed that special offerings would be able to support these functions.

In response to a question from Jon, Drake pointed out that the unpledged giving was up significantly this year. Carl read off data from the last four years (2013-2016): \$29,036 / \$24,367 / \$23,256 / \$36,433. Drake took 80% of the average of these numbers to come up with an estimate for 2017 of \$22,618.

The income line of \$3,000 from fundraising was clarified to be an estimate of receipts from a rummage sale and a recital in May to be held by Alexis Hamilton.

In response to a question from Nancie Wamser, wedding income was identified as part of the building use fees line.

Tim pointed out that building use fees are increasing beyond the projected line in the budget. For example, January fees received were about \$400. An estimate for 2017 of about \$5,000 would be appropriate, rather than the \$2,750 in the proposed budget.

Julianne Bishop pointed out that the rental to the pre-school in previous years did not bring in sufficient income to be worthwhile, especially for the inconveniences it caused in terms of space being unavailable for church functions. Tim suggested that any future deals would be very different from what was arranged in the past. He is particularly trying to arrange rental activity, both regularly scheduled and one-off events, that are low impact.

Patti Brandon asked whether our rental activities would affect our nonprofit tax status. Becky Meier suggested that such activities are standard for churches. We are already renting out the Frutiger House.

Nayan Fleenor pointed out that the cuts to missions (\$4,250 unspent last year and significantly decreased budgets for missions next year) were only partly compensated by the special offering taken in December. The special offering raised \$2,700 specifically to go to four charities that were agreed upon but several other charities we usually support got nothing.

Pat Stenaros pointed out that the projected offerings income depends upon keeping up our membership, which has been regularly decreasing over the last several years.

Julianne asked about the capital campaign funding. Bob Brandon pointed out that the Raising Our Welcome capital campaign is a completely separate funding account, unrelated to the annual budget. The campaign runs three years, which would end in October 2017. Many pledges have been completed, but there are still about 20 to finish up, and nearly all of those are on track to fulfill their complete pledge amounts. Nevertheless, the total expenses exceeded the total pledges by about \$25,000, an amount that will have to be raised eventually. We have a bridge loan of \$200,000 so that we have fully paid all expenses (except ongoing interest on the loan).





## Expenses

Drake described the various lines under personnel expenses. He noted that there is no line for a called pastor this year. The interim pastor's fringe benefits and expense allowance are contractual amounts.

Nayan asked about the decrease in the child care line item. Chris pointed out that we will no longer be providing child care starting as early as 9 a.m., so we expect fewer total hours.

Chris suggested that a church our size can't necessarily justify, nor can we likely afford, a full-time pastor. He suggested 3/4 time would be more appropriate.

Kathy Schneller acknowledged that the Pastoral Search Committee is very important for the future of our church. But she felt that the need to take care of our own staff/members was also very important.

Margy Kleger said that the church has always risen to the occasion as needed. If necessary, we could take a special offering to help pay for the pastoral search process.

Chris pointed out that since he will be leaving some time in 2017, some part of his salary will be available to help out in other parts of the budget.

Becky Meier pointed out that administrative duties could be augmented by volunteers, a subject discussed by the Sunday morning adult ed group.

Mary Tindell expressed support for maintaining our current staffing.

Nayan asked about the worker's compensation line, which was reduced significantly compared to 2016. Nancy Biskey pointed out that the fractional amount taken for worker's compensation depends on the category of the various workers employed. Neither Drake nor Tim could explain the difference. This will be investigated and corrected if necessary.

Nayan asked about the lowered amount for custodial supplies; we have a substantial stockpile of supplies on hand. She also asked about the lowered amount for per capita dues to UCC. This is based on a recent recount of our membership, which is now below 100 members.

Pam and David Soderquist suggested that it would be appropriate, and usually done, to ask the staff to leave the room while their salaries were being discussed, in order to avoid any awkwardness or inhibition of conversation. After some discussion, the vote was 17 to 16 to allow the staff to stay.

Jon asked about our decreased donation to Our Church's Wider Mission. At the beginning of our capital campaign we promised to try to increase our commitment, but at this point, the requirements of that promise have expired.

Margy asked for clarification about the family assistance fund. Although \$1,000 was budgeted, only \$500 was spent; next year \$1,000 is budgeted again.

Nancie asked about the security expense from 2016. That was paid to a service that provided security checks until we had our custodian/sexton on board.

Ernilie Storrs asked for clarification about apparent discrepancies between the custodian salary and Frutiger House rental. Those were part-year expenses in 2016; the rates in 2017 remain the same per month (\$800 rental and \$1,040 salary).

Carl asked the staff to describe what it would look like if the proposed 10% budget



cuts were implemented. Chris said it would make very little difference in what he did. Tim pointed out that administrative duties already usually take over 20 hours per week, and he would simply make sure the necessary work would get done.

A summary motion was presented by Nancy Biskey, seconded by Theresa Wechsler, to accept the proposed budget with the following amendments:

- increase the income for building use fees to \$5,000,
- restore all staff salaries to 100% of 2016 rates,
- decrease the Pastoral Search Committee budget to \$3,000.

The motion was passed unanimously (with some abstentions).

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Carl Wamser



## **Minutes** ■ Special Congregational Meeting

**Sunday, December 3, 2017**

The meeting was called to order by Consistory President Cathy Thomas at 11:50 a.m.

The number of members present was counted as 52, constituting a quorum (total membership is 77).

Bob Brandon offered an opening prayer.

A motion was presented from the Pastoral Search Committee, seconded by the Consistory, that Hillsdale Community Church, United Church of Christ, extend a call to Rev. Jennifer L. Campbell to become our settled pastor.

Alexis Hamilton, chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, reviewed the search process and the strong recommendation from the committee in favor of extending the call to Pastor Jen.

Pam Shelton asked about the process, which Cathy explained would be a secret ballot. There were no other questions.

Ballots were distributed to members by Nayan Fleenor and Pat Stenaros. After allowing a minute or so for marking “accept” or “decline,” they collected the ballots and, along with Cathy Thomas, took them to the lobby to count them.

The result of the vote was 46 for “accept,” 3 for “decline” and 2 returned unmarked. This was taken as a near unanimous affirmation of the recommendation from the search committee.

Cathy asked Pastor Jen whether she would accept our call, and she enthusiastically responded in the affirmative.

The congregation sang “Great Is Thy Faithfulness,” which Pastor Jen indicated was her favorite hymn.

The meeting was adjourned to a celebratory potluck luncheon in Fellowship Hall.

The call agreement that had been negotiated between HCC and Pastor Jen was signed (five copies) by Pastor Jen, Cathy Thomas, and Carl Wamser (as secretary and treasurer).





**Hillsdale Community Church**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
6948 SW Capitol Hwy • Portland • 503-246-5474