

In the Loop
Summary of the December 2020 English Commission Meeting

Presbytery Report

The Presbytery has been generous in the awarding of emergency grants to member churches hardest hit financially by COVID-19 due to extenuating factors such as the loss of rental income and high levels of unemployment in the congregation. The EWC and PCC are financially sound and thankful that we're able to meet our obligations and continue our ministries without a need for emergency assistance.

Committee Reports

1. Mission and Evangelism
 - a. SRO Children – The EWC achieved its pledge of 100 Christmas gifts with 55 donations coming from the EWC and 45 from Sabrina Shin's friends on social media. The gifts were delivered to CCDC on December 12th.
 - b. Acts of Loving Kindness (Community Action, World Missions, Hunger Ministries) Mid-year contributions were given to support the work of Tsuru for Solidarity, Poor People's Campaign, and Coleman Advocates for Youth & Families. The remaining balance of the 2020 Mission & Evangelism budget will support the following groups:
 - 1) \$500 – Living Waters World Mission to support water system development and a future mission trip
 - 2) \$500 – Interfaith Movement 4 Human Integrity
 - 3) \$500 – Cantonese Worshiping Community
 - 4) \$300 – Safe House for Women
 - 5) \$300 – Asian Women's Shelter
 - 6) \$300 – Pipit Fund
 - 7) \$100 – San Francisco Interfaith Coalition
 - 8) \$500 – Held in reserve for Food Pantry SRO clients
2. Resource
 - a. Volunteer Recognition – After three weeks of giving special recognition to the work of church volunteers, we're awed by the sheer number of helpers, and the range and depth of contributions made over the course of a year at the church.
 - b. Photography – The church pews are now adorned with our photos thanks to Stuart Go's photography and the work of other elves.
 - c. Security System – A new state-of-the-art system has been ordered and will be installed by Fog City this month.
 - d. Landscaping – Susie Wong will be planting new greenery in front of the church.
3. Worship & Nurture
 - a. Use of the Sanctuary – The current plan is to continue streaming worship from the sanctuary with a limit of 4 in attendance (Dave Chan, Nancy Chee, Pastor Don, liturgist). During worship, the windows are kept open, and the worship team wears masks and maintains social distance. If the Department of Public Health should require even stricter standards on gathering indoors and on places of worship, current streaming practices will be modified.
 - b. *Spirituality in Chaotic Times* – Rev. Leslie Veen will be leading a two-day class on January 9 and 10 at 4:00 pm. The class will delve into our understanding of spirituality, the difficulties and joys of maintaining spiritual practices, and sources that can help us to dive ever more deeply into our relationship with God.

- c. Inquirers Class – Begins on Thursday, January 28, 6 pm. All are welcomed to attend.
4. Deacons
 - Cookie Project – Pam Jang and Nancy Chee and a team of bakers gathered last Saturday to assemble and deliver Advent care packages filled with lovingly baked cookies.

Treasurer's Report

1. The monthly report showed a positive variance of \$6,208.62 in November.
2. The year-to-date income to expense report yielded a positive variance of \$17,738.93 and reached the break-even point for the 2020 annual budget with one month remaining.
3. Winchell Quock will combine two annual mailings into one in January 2021 that will include the annual statement of charitable gifts and pledge envelopes. Increased usage of the online giving option this year has reduced the need for printed stewardship materials and increased user access to financial records through the Vanco donation platform. <https://www.eservicepayments.com/>

Pastor's Report

Elder training will be held on January 23rd and Board of Deacons training will be on February 6th. A portion of the training will focus on strategic planning.

Old Business

COVID-19 Response

- a. Dave reported on the current use and recordkeeping of liability waivers by the church.
- b. **To Do:** In addition to the Food Pantry, waiver forms need to be filed by other regular and occasional users of the church building including:
 - 1) Co-pastors
 - 2) Worship team
 - 3) Miscellaneous regular volunteers such as Annie Wong
 - 4) Visitors
- c. **To Do:** The Resource Committee will review the safety guidelines established for churches by the SF Department of Public Health and adapt them for use by the PCC. The guidelines will then be translated into Chinese and presented for review by the Session.
- d. **Action:** The plan presented by Dave Soohoo was approved by unanimous consent.

New Business

1. 2021 Budget
 - a. The 2021 annual budget is projected to be \$204,243.00 compared to \$197,358.08 in 2020, an increase of 3.5%.
 - b. Additional funding was requested by Worship & Nurture to reflect new costs associated with livestreaming worship services and by the Board of Deacons to build a continuous stream of funding for the Compassion Fund, a new ministry of the church.
 - c. **Action:** The Commission approved the 2021 budget by unanimous consent.
2. Matthew 25 Congregation
 - a. Mission & Evangelism met with the coordinators of the West Bay Presbyterian Connections for a discussion on systemic racism and becoming anti-racists. Noe Valley Ministry and Old First Church became Matthew 25 congregations and

have made dismantling structural racism as their congregational priority. Working with the chair of the Tri-Presbytery Self Development of People Committee (PCUSA), Old First and Noe Valley Ministry are currently engaged in conversations around anti-racism to explore their implicit bias towards African Americans and other people of color. A goal is to connect congregations with the experiences of San Francisco's communities of color, and to enjoin our faith with actions of social justice.

- b. **To Do:** The question of whether to become a Matthew 25 congregation will be delegated to M&E for further study to develop a recommendation for the Commission.
3. A Time of Affirmation – The Commission engaged in a time of reflection to express gratitude to Diane Go and the gifts of the Spirit that she has freely shared as a ruling elder in service to God and the Church.

Calendar Dates

- December 28 Pastor Don on vacation through January 3, 2021
- January 1 New Year's Day Holiday
- January 3 Guest Preacher: Rev. Bruce Der McLeod
- January 5 M&E and W&N Committees
- January 9-10 *Spirituality in Chaotic Times* with Rev. Leslie Veen
- January 10 Resource Committee
- January 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
- January 19 English Commission
- January 23 English Commission Training
- January 24 Board of Deacons
- January 28 Inquirer's Class begins
- January 31 English Consistory
- February 2 M&E and W&N Committees
- February 6 Board of Deacons Training
- February 12 Chinese New Year
- February 14 Resource Committee
- February 15 President's Day Holiday
- February 16 English Commission
- February 17 Ash Wednesday, First day of Lent
- February 28 Board of Deacons