

Friends Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Special Congregational Meeting
August 18, 2019



1. Opening Prayer
2. Review minutes from June meeting
3. Sanctuary Update
 - a. Overview of Friends and Sanctuary
 - b. Legal Updates
 - c. Building/Safety Issues
 - d. Q&A
4. Adjourn

Friends Congregational Church- United Church of Christ
Annual Congregational Meeting
June 9, 2019
Minutes prepared by Raney Whitwell

- I. The meeting was called to order at 12:23 pm by Dwight Baker.
- II. Prayer was given by Dwight Baker.
- III. A quorum was met.
- IV. The Minutes from the January 6th, 2019 Congregational Meeting were reviewed. Andy Tag motion that we accept them as amended, Judy Baer 2nd. The minutes were approved as amended.
Minutes will be amended in section VII, second bullet to correct the spelling of Ann Wehrly's name.
- V. Climate Change resolution
 - A handout of the resolution was provided for Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019.
 - The Climate Change resolution was introduced to us by Kelly Wellman. Kelly invited three local experts to speak on the subject. They were Raymond Tarpley, Larry Oliver, and Donna Hanna -Calvert.
 - There are currently 18 churches that have signed on to it.
 - If we agree to sign on to it, we would be the first and possible only church from Texas.
 - Linda Coats motioned that we support the Carbon Dividend Act of 2019. Nancy Bertsch 2nd the motion. The motion passed.
- VI. Presentation of update by Sanctuary Committee
 - An update was given by Anne Wehrly.
 - There have been 3 subcommittees formed. They are Communication overseen by Nancy Plankey-Videla, Housing overseen by Susan Fontaine, and Food and Hospitality overseen by Don and Jeanie Machrowicz.
 - The music room would house the person in Sanctuary.
- VII. Review of Annual Report-Question & Answer
An Annual Congregational Meeting report booklet was provided with reports from all the committees.
 - Lisa Welch presented the Congregation with the following nominations that will serve for the next two years on the church council. The nominations are as follow:
 - Moderator- Kelly Wellman
 - Vice Moderator – Cathy Hansen
 - Deputy Moderator of Programs- Angela Jackson
 - Secretary- Ann Wehrly
 - Congregational Representative – Jill Fouch
 - Property Chair – Bardin Nelson
 - Financial Secretary – Loretta Mendez
 - Spiritual Growth- Jodie Robinson
 - Christian Education- Justin Acton & Kamille Kirkendoll

- Pastoral Relations – Oscar Guardiola (Dan), Kenny Wiley (Trent)

Linda Fitzwater motioned that we accept the Church Council nominations, Diane Simpson 2nd. The motion passed and the nominees were installed in their new positions.

VIII. Adjournment

Andy Tag motioned to adjourn the meeting, Justin Acton 2nd. The meeting was adjourned.

Sanctuary (Housing an Immigrant in our church)

Overview

In January, the congregation of Friends Church approved a resolution that declared Friends an “Immigrant Welcoming Congregation.” That resolution states that our efforts and ministries may include but are not limited to:

- Providing physical sanctuary and public advocacy for individuals approved through a predesignated entry process. Selected individuals would be living in the Bryan/College Station community and their deportation would represent a clear and present danger to the essential unity of their family.
- Providing spiritual support through regular prayer and discernment on behalf of our immigrant neighbors
- Hosting educational events for the edification of our fellowship and community related to these issues

This approval was so that an immigrant that met our eligibility requirements could potentially be housed in our church. To be eligible, the person seeking sanctuary must meet the following:

1. Be a current resident of the Brazos Valley
2. Face imminent deportation that threatens family unity or personal safety
3. Have legal representation
4. Their attorney believes that the immigrant has a good chance of a positive resolution
5. Pass a criminal background check done by Friends Church screening for violent crimes

Since January, the committee, with help from many members, has been preparing the church to be able to physically house a person. The person would be living 24/7 in the Music Room (former nursery next to the preschool room). They would be using the gender neutral bathroom (sharing it with the church). Their laundry would be done using the washer and dryer in the janitorial closet. A shower or bathing area would be rigged in one of the regular bathrooms.

Current Situation

A Church meets the definition of a “sensitive location” and as of this date, no law enforcement has entered a sensitive location to forcibly extract someone. Also, to this point, no congregation has been prosecuted for providing sanctuary.

However, times are different right now and it is constantly changing. In the original vote, the sensitive location policy was a consideration in approval. Thus, the committee feels that the congregation deserves the opportunity to evaluate the situation and to allow Church Council to proceed as they feel is appropriate.

Here are current issues to consider:

1. “Fines” have been issued to immigrants in sanctuary who have avoided their deportation orders and statements have been made that immigrants can be fined up to +\$700 per day. One immigrant in the Austin area received a letter stating they owed \$200,000+. The letter implied that the church could also be fined if the immigrant did not pay their fine. The committee doubts that these fines could be collected but we could possibly face legal and financial battles.

2. "Fast Track" deportation has been expanded to give authority to immigration officers to deport migrants without allowing them to appear before immigration judges.
3. Deportation powers have been expanded to allow immigration officers to deport migrants who have been in the country for less than two years no matter where they are located. Previously they could only exercise such powers within 100 miles of the border. This is being referred to as "show me your papers".
4. At the information session held August 4th, there were concerns raised regarding safety of the person in sanctuary as well as safety of members of our congregation. Recent violence in Texas has heightened these concerns.

In light of the current situation, does the congregation still want to commit to allowing an immigrant that meets our eligibility requirements to live in our church? Will the immigrant be safe within our church? Is the congregation committed to providing the needs of the person for a potentially long period of time while their legal case works through the system? This includes providing meals, companionship, bed, etc.

Congregational meeting 8/18/19

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Congregational Meeting
August 18, 2019



Please sign here:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----|--|
| 1. | Sally M. Jantke | 21. | |
| 2. | Fred Williams | 22. | |
| 3. | Cheryl DeLoe | 23. | |
| 4. | Kathy Robbins | 24. | |
| 5. | Bill Robbins | 25. | |
| 6. | Maggie Gartner | 26. | |
| 7. | [Signature] | 27. | |
| 8. | Dwight Baker | 28. | |
| 9. | Jim Waco | 29. | |
| 10. | Doc Ambrose | 30. | |
| 11. | James A. Mott | 31. | |
| 12. | Edna Brewer | 32. | |
| 13. | Jane Nichols | 33. | |
| 14. | Carl Johnson | 34. | |
| 15. | Barbara Heath | 35. | |
| 16. | Cathy Manser | 36. | |
| 17. | Cecilia Hawk | 37. | |
| 18. | Paul R. [Signature] | 38. | |
| 19. | Andy Ambrose | 39. | |
| 20. | Kelly Welman | 40. | |

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Please sign here:

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|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <u>Jim Brown Ferguson</u> | 21. <u>Elizabeth Tag</u> |
| 2. <u>KATRINA STEWART</u> | 22. _____ |
| 3. <u>John Lee</u> | 23. _____ |
| 4. <u>Kate Sheper</u> | 24. _____ |
| 5. <u>Bart Taylor</u> | 25. _____ |
| 6. <u>Carl York</u> | 26. _____ |
| 7. <u>Bob Shul</u> | 27. _____ |
| 8. <u>Jackie Womack</u> | 28. _____ |
| 9. <u>LUCY HARPER</u> | 29. _____ |
| 10. <u>Kathy Langlotz</u> | 30. _____ |
| 11. <u>Maureen</u> | 31. _____ |
| 12. <u>Ben Murray</u> | 32. _____ |
| 13. <u>Jeanne Mackenzie</u> | 33. _____ |
| 14. <u>GLENN HURMAN</u> | 34. _____ |
| 15. <u>Andy Tag</u> | 35. _____ |
| 16. <u>Nancy Fahrenwald</u> | 36. _____ |
| 17. <u>Justin Aton</u> | 37. _____ |
| 18. <u>Phillip Gillen II</u> | 38. _____ |
| 19. <u>Abraham Gillen</u> | 39. _____ |
| 20. <u>April L. Hatfield</u> | 40. _____ |

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Please sign here:

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <u>Kristin Hayer</u> | 21. <u>Susan Forti</u> |
| 2. <u>Ruth Nelson</u> | 22. <u>Sean Duder</u> |
| 3. <u>Oliver Simonich</u> | 23. <u>Tom Vogel</u> |
| 4. <u>Hilary Guillen</u> | 24. <u>Linda Coats</u> |
| 5. <u>Elizabeth Johnston Vasquez</u> | 25. <u>Janis Nelson</u> |
| 6. <u>Linda Fujiwara</u> | 26. <u>[Signature]</u> |
| 7. <u>Tami Duder</u> | 27. _____ |
| 8. <u>May and Larry Napp</u> | 28. _____ |
| 9. <u>Nancy Borkel</u> | 29. _____ |
| 10. <u>Cady Engler</u> | 30. _____ |
| 11. <u>[Signature]</u> | 31. _____ |
| 12. <u>Greg Wade</u> | 32. _____ |
| 13. <u>Fran Duane</u> | 33. _____ |
| 14. <u>Bruce & Duane</u> | 34. _____ |
| 15. <u>Mary Clark Vidre</u> | 35. _____ |
| 16. <u>Bea Gardner</u> | 36. _____ |
| 17. <u>Dore Nelson</u> | 37. _____ |
| 18. <u>[Signature]</u> | 38. _____ |
| 19. <u>[Signature]</u> | 39. _____ |
| 20. <u>Rick Schultz</u> | 40. _____ |