

Friends Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Congregational Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2023



1. Moderator Cathy Hansen opened the meeting at 12:22 pm. She invited Rev. Dr. Dan DeLeon to lead us in prayer.
2. Pastor Dan invited someone from the congregation to volunteer to pray. Dwight Baker came forward and offered the prayer.

Pastor Dan then gave some opening remarks. He spoke to the Reproductive Freedom vote which would take place. He shared a brief story and photo from a church in Austin with a sign about what it meant to them to be a reproductive freedom church which was posted outside of their church. He said that there are three things we would hear about today:

- a. Finances - Stewardship and Investments
- b. Safety - What we will be doing
- c. Taking a vote on becoming a Reproductive Freedom Church.

He referred to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s manner of peaceful protests. They were meant to make a statement and let the world know of all injustices everywhere.

3. Cathy thanked Kelly Wellman and the AV corner for monitoring the zoom communications. She asked that the congregation present review the minutes from the last Congregational meeting on December 4, 2022. Anne Wehrly motioned to accept the minutes. Jennie Adams seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
4. Cathy then asked Rev. Trent Williams to come forward with some information about the Church's mortgage. Pastor Trent happily announced that the Friends Church mortgage is officially paid off, there is no longer a lien on the church. The news was joyfully received by those present.
5. The Moderator then asked Cecilia Hawkins to come forward and present information about becoming a Reproductive Freedom Church (RFC). She first thanked Martha Newsome for bringing the idea to her. Cecilia also thanked Laura Wimberly and Katy Stewart for their help. She showed the sign that Pastor Dan had referred to earlier. The sign said, "We will::
 - a. Trust and respect women
 - b. Be free from judgment
 - c. Fight for comprehensive reproductive health for all and affordable care."Cecilia said that passing this would allow us to engage in conversations about reproductive freedom and how it would look at Friends.

Nancy Bertsch made a motion to approve Friends Congregational Church becoming a Reproductive Freedom congregation, a designation recognized by Just Texas. Linda Fitzwater seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously by voice vote.

6. Pastor Trent gave an update on the Safety and Security Team's report. The team has completed a very comprehensive report about safety protocols for many different dangerous scenarios. These included, but are not limited to, fire, tornado, and medical emergencies. The report is currently being reviewed by Council and will be given back to the team for adjustments. Once it's complete, it will be available to the congregation.
7. He also gave us an update on the Realm Transition. Realm is the new database software that will be used for things like online giving, church directory, and bookkeeping. Pastor Trent said that we are still in process with this transition. He told the congregation to watch for emails about how to change profile and online giving information.
8. Pastor Trent reported on Stewardship and Investments. He said that they began looking at the future of Friends for the long-term. They set up an endowment fund. There are two accounts for these funds: Endowment and Ministerial. As these have been reviewed it was decided that some of the investments should be kept closer to home. He then introduced the representatives from Fries Financial Services, Denise Fries and Travis Vollmering. They handed out a flier explaining the services they offer and told the congregation that they would be arranging meetings to explain more about what they will be doing.
He also presented a report on the Stewardship Consultant Company (GSB) which was approved by Council on December 18, 2022. The program is Stewardship for All Seasons (SAS). The consultant is Rev. Dr. Nathan Swenson-Reinhold.
9. Cathy Hansen adjourned the meeting at 1:00 pm Andy Tag made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Katy Stewart seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Ambrus
Council Secretary