

## **Dear Fellow Church Members and Friends:**

This has been a week of firsts for The First Congregational Church of Portland. On Tuesday, we held our first ever congregational meeting remotely, thanks to Zoom Videoconferencing technology. **On Wednesday and Thursday, we held our first ever congregational vote via email, with 62 members casting votes, unanimously approving the expenditure of \$15,548 to replace the fellowship hall roof during the summer of 2020.** Thank you to all those who participated by voting on this important matter, and **special thanks to JOE ARESCO** who secured the quote and will oversee the project on behalf of the church.

**WHAT IS THE PLAN TO RE-OPEN THE CHURCH??? WHEN WILL WE BEGIN TO WORSHIP TOGETHER IN PERSON??? WHAT CHANGES WILL BE MADE TO OUR LIFE AS A CONGREGATION??? WHEN WILL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES BE ABLE TO HOLD MEETINGS IN PERSON???** These questions and many others will be addressed by the special task force that will develop a plan for our church life as we continue to move through the coming months of the COVID pandemic. The task force is comprised of church officers (president, vice president Joe Aresco, treasurer Jenn Renk, assistant treasurer Jan Poet, clerk Marcie Clark), Diaconate chairperson Mike Enright, Music Board co-chair Lindsey MacDonald, Sandie Lavoy representing the Christian Education Board, a representative from the Facilities Management Board, Diane Burgess representing the Nursery School, as well as Jane Hawken, Ann Labby, and Kasha Breau. This group will consider the conference recommendations to local churches, public health guidance, and any other information pertinent to the discussion. Congregational input is important, so please respond to this email if you have thoughts or suggestions for the task force to consider.

**DO YOU NEED ANOTHER MASK?** The Congregation extends heartfelt gratitude to **CONNIE WACHE AND KAREN FAASS** who have organized the sewing and distribution of masks, and to all those who have supported this amazing project. Please see the message below from Connie.

*To our wonderful church family, When we began making fabric face masks over two months ago, we were very short of supplies and were using whatever was available in our own sewing stocks. The masks that were distributed early on may have had loops made of ribbon, bias tape or even shoe laces. Elastic was almost impossible to find, but since then backorders from distributors have been filled. If anyone would like additional masks or a different type of ear loop, size or style please contact Connie Wache [cbwportland@comcast.net](mailto:cbwportland@comcast.net) or 860-342-0124. If anyone that is sewing is in need of*

*elastic or pipecleaners, we have plenty to share. Thank you to all that are contributing to keep our loved ones healthy. You are amazing! Blessings to all, Connie Wache*

I will close with the thought that although our church building has been closed for almost three months, our “church” is open ... open to new ideas, new ways of worshipping, new ways to be the church in the community, new ways to connect one with another. While this period of time has been challenging and disorienting in many ways, it has given us new opportunities to “be the church” when we can’t “go to church”.

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