

October 20, 2022

Dan Close
Moderator
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Eugene, Oregon

Dear Dan,

As you know, the Finance Committee has been working to gather information and prepare a 2023 operating budget to recommend to the Board and congregation for approval. While we have much more work to be done, the Committee has directed me to communicate a very important conclusion we have reached that, we believe, requires the Board's immediate attention.

It is now apparent that the hoped-for recovery from the setbacks suffered due to the pandemic has not materialized. The Committee has concluded that we are, and are likely to remain a much smaller congregation than we were pre-pandemic. A smaller active congregation equates to smaller financial resources for the foreseeable future and, while there are remaining reserves to carry us into next year, the current situation is not sustainable.

Facing this reality, the Finance Committee recommends that the Board start to plan and implement a transition process that will move the church from the current two-pastor to a one-pastor staffing model. While other areas for cost-savings are possible, this action is the only one we see that will bring financial stability without greatly harming or eliminating the ministries, programs and services that the congregation identified as of great value in the recent survey.

Time is limited for achieving this transition. Our committee has concluded that the cost-saving that will result from this transition needs to be realized in the first six months of 2023 to avoid completely draining the church's remaining cash reserves and forcing harmful spending curtailments.

Both of our pastors have been involved in the committee's deliberations and are aware that we need to make this recommendation.

As Chair of this committee, I will make myself available for further discussion at any time.

Respectfully,

John Soper
Finance Committee Chair
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Eugene, Oregon