

Hi -

I'm Paul Hobbs, and soon to be the new President of the Board of Trustees. And boy does that sound like a big deal! Thus far as a member of First Congregational Church I've ushered a few times, made some pancakes and played my trumpet (annually), while remaining behind the scenes for the most part.



As a Pastor's Kid I spent my time front and center and was perfectly happy to remain out of view. However, after a few years of devoting my community time to Center City Little League as a coach and board member, I was looking for another opportunity to contribute to the larger community. And so, when Caroline, and then Elissa, asked me to consider not just joining the board, but jumping right to the front of the line as the 2021 president ... it seemed a little foolish on their part, but in fact it was perfectly timed. I had been feeling a need to connect more deeply with this community and so what better way than to dive into the deep end.

Sadly, Caroline has gotten the short end of the stick. As you know, she is an incredibly social and engaging person who has served as president during a time of disconnection and struggle. I on the other hand am more reserved, preferring smaller groups, and will hopefully be serving during a time of joy and reconnection. If that's irony, then it's sad irony. In any case, please consider spending just a little more time on Zoom this weekend for our Annual Meeting as we thank Rob and Caroline for their service as recent presidents; as we thank our church staff through a special resolution recognizing their dedication, service and creative endeavors; and as we work (it's hard!) to look forward through the visioning process that will guide our future contributions to, and involvement in, our society.

... Great! Now that you've decided to join us for Sunday's worship service and Annual Meeting - here's some homework!

Please review the [attached resolutions](#) that will be put forth on Sunday and let me present the following bit of background as context for first resolution:

Last year there was significant discussion about how the proceeds from the sale of the parsonage should be used. As I recall, there were strong feeling on the subject and decisions were put off until further thought and discussion could be had. To this end, the decision was made to call a Visioning Team composed of a broad group from our congregation. This group was selected based on their ability to represent our community, not based on their expertise in imagining and defining our mission here at First Church. To support this team, and to begin the work, this fall we hired a consultant with these skills.

Led by the consultant, the team's purpose is to develop a Vision Statement for First Church that will guide our shared ministry and our mission in the coming years. It is this mission that will be supported in part by the funds received from the sale of the parsonage. Rest assured this work will not remain 'behind the scenes' as it has thus far. As their work continues, and as we reopen our doors, the Vision Team and consultant will engage the larger church community in this process in various ways. We on the First Church Board of Trustees are excited about this process and its expected outcomes.

Although the team and consultant have started their work; to continue the process together they need us to approved this allocation. The board believes the use of money from the sale is appropriate, necessary and within the guidelines agreed upon last year. We feel it is perhaps even directed by the discussions from last year. We expect and welcome a lively discussion of the resolution, the progress of the Visioning Team and their experiences thus far with the consultant. I hope this background provides us a common understanding of what's transpired since our last congregational meeting.

I hope to see you online this weekend - and in person this year - as we continue to build our community and work on our mission together.

In faith,

*Paul*

[Paul Hobbs](#), President-Elect