

## Letter from President Paul Hobbs



Dear Fellow Members of First Congregational Church,

I started on this journey, in a leadership position of our community, in May of 2020, 2 Years and 8 Months ago. And what a transformational 32 months they have been. Have truer words ever been spoken? It was March of 2020, 2 Years and 10 Months ago when the Governor and Mayor started to act, the dominos started to fall, and our world began to close.

What has not changed in the past 32 months? In 2023 the world is reset and we no longer even compare how it's done now, to how it was done then. In hindsight, I feel like if I was going to be an FCC leader, it probably should be during a shutdown. As an engineer, I'm an organizer and problem solver, and not so much a party planner and out-reacher. And, I don't mind a Zoom meeting all that much! I wanted to get to know the congregation, the staff and our pastor and I've done that. I've made many new friends and a little work along the way was well worth the effort.

Looking forward, this really is a year of excitement and new activity. Please welcome Susan Ellwood as your new president. She has been a consistent and strong leader for a long time, including leading the search team that brought us Elissa.

Challenging and exciting work will continue in our visioning working groups, and by this time next year we will be moving in a unified direction, developing a new and dynamic mission for First Congregational Church. This new mission will need action from us, action that responds well to needs in our community and that we can get behind and find fulfillment in. There will be active, hands-on roles and on-going planning and managing roles in which to engage us. Personally, I'm looking forward to finding my place as a do-er after my time as a manager.

I was honored to sign the 'transformational' closing documents for the sale of the Ronald McDonald House on my front porch, wearing a mask, with COVID! This was not the photo-op celebration we would have liked, but as with everything over the past 32 months, we just keep moving forward. The money is 'parked', as directed by the congregation, and waiting for the completion of our study phase and selection of a path in which to invest our energy and resources. Thank you one more time Amy Mellencamp, for your consistent work and leadership of the important task of leading the Parsonage Study Group. (And personally, thank you for jumping in as the new Principal at Burlington High School!!!! My heart sank for the kids when I learned that the BHS principal was leaving, but leapt when I heard you were filling the void.)

Lastly, I would like to welcome all of this year's new members to First Congregational Church! FCC's continued focus on hospitality brings energy and light into our community. I hope that in 2023 we will keep this focus, and guess what my Star Word was!???

We do not walk alone, Peace.

*Paul*

Paul Hobbs  
Church President

