

Good morning! A warm welcome to you.

I call the 2021 First Community Annual Church Member Meeting to order. In welcoming God's blessing here in this virtual, yet warm-hearted space, we will begin with the Opening Prayer. The Reverend Sarah Kientz, Minister to Camp Akita and Young Adults will lead us in prayer this morning. Sarah.....

Thank you, Sarah.

Members of First Community, thank you for your presence at this Annual Church Member Meeting, our first online business meeting at First Community.

For those of you whom I've not had the pleasure of meeting yet, my name is Jodi Patton and I have had the honor to serve as Chair of the Governing Board this past year. I feel thankful to have received many blessings in this role.

As a first matter of business, I'd like to point out that the manner of conducting today's meeting is authorized by our Constitution and the Ohio Revised Code. I would also like to point out that this manner of conducting our Annual Meeting is lawful at any time, even if we weren't dealing with a pandemic, and I'm sure that everyone here is looking forward to the time when we can all meet in-person for worship and other meetings. The Board and staff have worked diligently to ensure that this meeting is in compliance with Ohio law and that each of our members have an opportunity to participate in this meeting and to have their opinions heard. Thank you staff for your extra efforts.

The purpose of this meeting is to offer various business reports, annual church elections, as well as to reflect on the past year and to look ahead to the next. Before we do this, some additional framework . . .

You should have received a packet with several documents enclosed, including this morning's meeting agenda, the 2020 Annual Meeting minutes, 2020 financial reports, 2021 Budget, the slate of candidates for Governing Board and Board of Deacons.

Regarding the Nominating Committee election: on this ballot, also included in this packet, appears 24 names; you may select up to 12 names. The Nominating Committee poll closes on February 10<sup>th</sup>, after which the ballots will be counted, and the results will be announced. Later in our meeting, Past Chair of the Governing Board, Jamie Greene, will walk us through this election.

For those of you accessing this meeting via web-based Zoom, this packet of information will appear on your screens at various times throughout our time together this morning. When we

get to the voting portion of this meeting, you will be given specific instruction on using the Zoom voting features and telephone voting procedures.

Serving on the Governing Board requires commitment and dedication. Thank you to ALL members of the Governing Board for your commitment, dedication and valuable leadership. Now, I would like to acknowledge and thank the outgoing Governing Board members. Each was elected to this position because of their expertise and years of outstanding service to First Community, and each has served a three-year term.

**(photos of outgoing GB members on the screen: Steve, Elizabeth Becki, Scott)**

The outgoing Board members: Steve Crawford ## Elizabeth Downey ## Becki Harr ## and Scott Walker, have not only given their time to Governing Board work, but have also served as liaison to a council or member of a standing committee, and have remained active in the life of our church. First Community please join me in a heartfelt thank you to Steve, Elizabeth, Becki and Scott for their outstanding service and leadership at First Community.

Another part of our church worthy of acknowledgment and thanks is the Board of Deacons. In cooperation with clergy, the Board of Deacons is responsible for the “ecclesiastical and spiritual life of our church.” Members of our Diaconate offer lay pastoral care in the form of hospital and bereavement calls, they assist in the sacraments of baptism and communion, and help lead worship services. Although the Board of Deacons’ term is 3 years (4 years for the Chair), there is a saying: “Once a Deacon, always a Deacon!”

**(photos of outgoing Diaconate & Jim Long on the screen)**

Our heartfelt gratitude to these outgoing members of the Board of Deacons:

Lorretta Heigle

Bill Hinga

Craig Kauderer (Cod-erer)

Carolyn Leik

Lenny Smith

Tawana Thorn

Pat White

Chair: Andrew Wildman

And Clergy Liaison, the Reverend Jim Long

Our sincere thanks to each of you for your leadership.

I am taking the liberty of speaking on behalf of the Governing Board and our congregation in offering a deep bow of gratitude for every one of our First Community Staff members...all 48 of you! Please know that we are sincerely thankful for the extra effort put forth in 2020 and for the good work you do on a daily basis to help create a First Community where everyone is accepted.

In last year’s Annual Meeting, GB Chair at the time, Jamie Greene, mentioned that Paul Anderson, our Executive Director of Operations, was at the top of the list for a “Life-Time Dedication” award to First Community. This year, I echo Jamie’s sentiment once again. And I

believe it is accurate to say that Paul has experienced yet another very challenging year of credit-worthy accomplishments to add to this Life-Time Dedication award. Of special note, Paul's skillful decision-making in applying early for the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program loan benefitted First Community greatly. Paul, it has truly been a privilege serving alongside you, and thank you for sharing your extensive talent, and for your monumental commitment to First Community.

Over this past year, Dr. Miles reminded us that "Love Isn't Cancelled!" This was one of the early themes our church embraced in this pandemic when so many things in our world had been cancelled or postponed. Being the focused church leader he is, Glen helped us realize that Love – is still here....AND our virtual CHURCH doors remain open wide. Glen skillfully led the charge in coaching our staff, and really all of us, in meeting people where they are. His willingness to share his dexterity in pastoral care, church leadership and common-sense counsel, greatly benefitted our church this past year.

Glen has graciously and amazingly led us in an effort of doing church differently. Note: amazing does not mean easy. In fact, if you ask him, I'm guessing Glen would admit that at times, this work was not just challenging, it was downright hard stuff! He had no manual for this and little guidance from experts as there were no experts to be found in running a church during a pandemic. Glen explored change and innovation and was willing to embrace the vulnerability of the time. His resolve and masterful leadership is testimony that Glen Miles has certainly gone the EXTRA Mile this year. **(photos of Julie and Glen on the screen)** I would also like to recognize Glen's highly esteemed counterpart and beautiful wife, Mrs. Julie Miles. It is quite evident that these two special people are a team and a beautiful example of Christian love, marriage and partnership. Thank you, Julie and Glen, for leading by example. May God bless you!

Here we are . . . transitioned into 2021, the dawn of a new day, likely to be the most welcomed New Year of our lifetimes! If 2020 reminded us of anything it's that "humans plan and God (pause) offers other opportunities!"

At this time last year, little did we know what would be ahead of us. Now on the other side of it, I ask, "What have we learned from 2020?" I've certainly learned that 2020 wreaked havoc on those of us who are planners. It offered us hard-knock lessons in learning to be more flexible, nimble, open-minded, creative and taught us the great art of pivoting at nearly every turn. We learned that the phrase, "this is the way we've always done it" no longer applies. We learned that likely the very best we can do at this time is to begin to PLANT SEEDS in the fertile soil of our First Community garden, hoping and praying they will grow, mature and thrive. And so, this is what we, your Governing Board did this past year....we planted seeds!

Other than seed planting, what else did we accomplish? Let us rejoice at some of the blessings 2020 bestowed upon us:

First Community's online presence had been a long-time vision and goal of our church. The pandemic simply ushered it in a bit more quickly. Our online campus has grown by leaps and bounds this past year. It is vital! At this point, many of us look forward to this ease-of-access to church programming, connection and community.

2020 offered us confirmation of the value our church places on innovation and creativity in ministry. Our program staff is to be commended for their time and genius in creating vibrant ministry offerings, such as inspirational worship services, children's programming, Camp Akita activities, a well-tuned and sweet-sounding music ministry, multiple adult education offerings, senior adult and all-church outreach programs and more.

Pandemic urgency assisted us in being more deliberate with church finances. We had cause to take a closer look at spending, cost reduction and efficiencies and to create sound accounting and reporting processes. With the help of the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program loan, we ended our 2020 year in the black....the first time in many years. This feat is due to a collaborative effort of many: first and foremost, the overwhelmingly generous financial gifts and support from you—members of our congregation, and also due to the expertise of Executive Director of Operations, Paul Anderson, the hard work of the church business office, the help of church Treasurer, Jason Milligan, and the Finance Committee (?and likely others that I am forgetting to mention here...forgive me?). This entire team of folks came together when our church needed us most, and their good work is to be celebrated. On behalf of the Governing Board, I offer our deep gratitude for your valuable contribution to First Community.

Sadly, this pandemic created insecurities for many as there is now greater need for the basics like food, shelter, and clothing,. First Community's ability to be nimble, concise and functional was brought to the forefront as we responded to those in need through our mission's programs – Heart To Heart, Trading Post, and Refugee Taskforce. Thank you staff and volunteers for meeting people where they are and helping to meet need. This good work continues.

Thank you, First Community Foundation for your contributions this past year. The Foundation provided \$250,000 of support toward hard-cost maintenance items like: a tractor, pick-up truck, dining hall roof, new furniture, and internet improvements at Camp Akita; HVAC improvements and parking lot sealing at both North and South; new flooring, playground equipment, and media screens at South; and painting of the modular units at North to name a few. Thank you, First Community Foundation and the Foundation Board for your important support of our church.

We established a Governing Board First News article for the purpose of routinely communicating the business news and reports of the church so that our members might be better informed. Thanks to members of the Executive, Finance and Personnel Committees, and all members of the Governing Board for sharing in this effort.

The Governance Review Committee worked hard once again, in reviewing the proposed Constitution revisions and hosted a virtual presentation for our congregation in November. Thank you to this Committee and members of the Governing Board, for your unified effort in this process. The proposed Constitution amendments will be brought up for a congregational vote later in this meeting.

Like most everything else this past year, the 2020 Strategic Planning effort has been delayed but the good news here is that the Planning Team began initial research work this past Fall. Thanks to this Team as they bring to light the next guiding principles for the future of our church.

Please join me in a bow of gratitude for such God-given abundance this past year. Other potential achievements, as I mentioned, are in the form of tiny seeds that have been planted by the Governing Board. It is our hope these seeds will take root, unfurling with all their promise and potential!!! Not every garden blooms in our set timeframe, despite the greatest of intentions and care. I suppose it is our job to do our best, then step back and let go, passing the care of these seeds onto others. By the grace of God, the cycle of life, love and church governance is perfect, even and especially in its imperfection.

As I conclude my remarks, I look forward, with hope, to a safer world, to in-person gatherings where we love out loud, standing side by side, smiling, and shaking hands with one another.

May this new year be a time to reflect more deeply on the light that is revealed through the darkness. God bless us - First Community!

#### JASON MILLIGAN

As we move forward to the next item on our agenda, I welcome Church Treasurer, Jason Milligan to offer his report on the 2020 Financial Results. Thank you, Jason, for your valuable leadership, serving as First Community's Treasurer since May of 20-19. Jason.....

Thank you, Pam, for this report AND for serving as Chair of the Strategic Planning Team. Many blessings as you continue this good work.

#### ROSE KONRATH

Next up is the presentation of the slates for Governing Board and Board of Deacons. Thank you Rose Konrath, Chair of the Nominating Committee, for your dedicated service in leading this effort this past year. Rose....

#### JAMIE GREENE

Thank you, Jamie.

In light of the fact that he has just completed his grand finale obligation as Past Chair of the Governing Board, I'd like to recognize this outstanding executive member, Jamie Greene.

Jamie began his journey on this Governing Board in 2016. It is highly likely that he has dedicated several hundred hours of his life to Governing Board work over these past five years. Jamie, you been an excellent role model for me and others on the Board. Thank you for sharing many of your best virtues with us; wisdom beyond your young years, careful deliberation, an open-minded, broad-thinking perspective that has been of value in our Governing Board work, and for the completion of your Board duties with dedication, seriousness and grace. AND...you gifted all of this with your occasional teaspoon of fun-loving humor folded in at just the right times.

Jamie, I feel incredibly blessed by the opportunity to come to know you better while serving our church. In working together, I feel fortunate at observing you and your leadership skills from close range at times, and for the opportunity to learn from you and your work. Thank you.

On Thursday, I delivered to Jamie, a gift from the church....your very own commemorative gavel (personalized too) to remember the many times you have likely wanted to knock some sense into people (likely me)! I also delivered a gift from the Governing Board as a token of our deep appreciation. One part of this gift is an OSU Library Spirit Slab which symbolizes “knowledge.” I have come to understand that knowledge and wisdom are important qualities to you. And so Jamie, I will leave you with this thought...

Founding President of Stanford University, David Starr Jordan once said, “Wisdom is knowing what to do next, skill is knowing how to do it and virtue is doing it.” It seems to me Jamie, this statement is aligned with the way you live your life. I’m not sure what will come next for you, but I am guessing it will be great things. You are both wise and virtuous, and we are deeply grateful you chose to share these qualities with First Community.

Jamie, would you care to say a few words . . .

#### CYDNEY PHILBIN

I have the marvelous privilege of introducing to you for the first time, the 2021 Chair of First Community’s Governing Board – Cydney Philbin. Cydney is beginning her fourth year on the Board and has already served as a liaison to the Membership Council, and Chair of both the Personnel and Governance Review Committees. Cydney has been and continues to be an active member of our church serving on councils, committees, and volunteers on missions’ projects.

Cydney, it has been a delight to come to know you, your bubbly personality and the infectious way you have at looking at the world with hope and optimism. It has been a pleasure to work closely with you this past year.

Cyd, I’d like to pass along to you this authentic Chair gavel, with an inscription that reads: “Governing Board Chair First Community.” It has been handed down from one Board Chair to

the next for many years now. AND, it is my sincere honor to pass this gavel into your very competent hands. Ladies and Gentlemen of First Community, I present Cydney Philbin, the 2021 Chair of the Governing Board.