

Moderator's Message December 1, 2025

Our Circles

Thank you, Ilona, for reminding me on Sunday about our mutual ministry pledge; that ours “...is a shared effort – everyone has a part to play whether you are a long-time member or a new friend”; and that “Our mutual ministry consists not only of the tasks we share, but in the spirit of love and care we bring to every moment of our time together.” In our ministry to each other and community our hope, possibility, faithfulness, love and joy can be, as Ilona said, boundless.

With this in mind, I thought I'd remind you of the work our circles do and encourage you to participate in First Church, during and beyond Sunday mornings.

In 2020 our bylaws were re-written to formulate a simple collection of circles that make up the functions of our congregation. All individuals active in the life of the church are encouraged to participate on at least one circle and participation in the following circles does not require membership in the church

The **Worship Circle** partners with the minister, minister of music, and congregation to create meaningful worship and resources and opportunities that deepen faith and enrich lives. The circle arranges for supply pastors and pastoral care and encourages individuals to participate in greeting, ushering, communion service, readers, flowers, decoration, and service preparation.

The **Benevolence/Social Justice Circle** reviews and selects worthy programs or services to support that benefit the local, regional, or global community. The circle selects recipients for scholarships, oversees the 5-for-5 UCC offering programs and explores hands-on ways to build ties with local service agencies.

The **Fellowship Circle** provides opportunities to commune by sharing food and drink, conversation, and news after Sunday service and for receptions and special occasions.

The **Communications Circle** coordinates information flow to the congregation and outside world through our website, eblasts, print advertising, newspaper press releases and social media. The communications group also works with the Administrator to keep the directory and printed materials current.

The **Fair Circle** organizes the annual Summer Fair and Pie sale, two primary vehicles for generating funding for benevolence and mission work. Creative event planning ideas are on the table for discussion.

The **Prayer Circle**, now known as the Care and Prayer Circle, offers daily prayers as needed for members, friends and neighbors. Monthly, the circle meets for a service of meditation and prayer designed to offer silence and space to pray for individuals and the world.

Everyone is encouraged to be a part of one or more of the above circles or to become a periodic team member at Sunday service. Flowers, set-up/take-down, coffee hour, lay reader, usher, and greeter positions are available each week and you can volunteer by clicking the button in the Friday e-blast.

Elected or appointed circles:

The **Trustees Circle** is responsible for the physical property, buildings, furnishings and financial assets of the church. It oversees the annual stewardship campaign and develop the church's budget. Members of the Trustee Circle are elected by the congregation at the annual meeting.

The **Pastoral Relations Circle** provides a confidential setting for sharing and mutual guidance to promote a healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation. The circle performs periodic mutual ministry reviews and makes contract recommendations to the Trustees and Executive Circle. Members of this Circle are mutually chosen by the minister and the Executive Circle.

Finally, two new "ad hoc" circles have been formed in the past two months to help us quickly and efficiently transition to our next interim and eventual settled pastors.

The **Transition Circle** was created at the October Executive Circle meeting and includes members of the Trustees, Pastoral Relations, and Worship circles, as well as the Moderator. The Transition Circle is working hard to maintain weekly organization of First Church activities, provide pulpit and pastoral supply for the indefinite future, and to actively search and call an interim minister.

A **Search Circle** was created at the November Executive Circle meeting and is made up of 7 members of the church. The Search Circle is responsible for identifying who we are as a church (or who we have become), what we want in a settled minister, and then searching and calling (interviewing and hiring) that individual to come to First Church. Members of the Search Circle represent a wide array of backgrounds and church experiences in hopes that they will represent the entire congregation when they choose our next settled minister.

A final note of thanks for all those who have helped so much in the last couple of weeks in our transition to a decidedly more volunteer congregation. Boots are made for jumping into.

Best Wishes- Sam Greene, Moderator

