



FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OCTOBER 24, 2021

BOARD AND STAFF REPORTS

ICM FUNDADORA – Prepared by Rev Elder Alejandro Escoto

Peace and blessings be upon you my dear family,

As the Associate Pastor of Founders Metropolitan Community Church and the Pastor of Iglesia Fundadora de la Comunidad Metropolitana:

- We re-opened and although we had our ups and downs, I was and continue to be blessed by my participation with the Creative Worship Team by collaborating and developing wonderful Sunday content for both the 10am and 1:30pm services.
- I continue, along with other members of the Creative Worship Team, listen to the bimonthly County of Los Angeles Health Department's Best Practices for Houses of Worship.
- Lead and empower a group of incredibly dedicated volunteers of which some are Corena Sills Montoya, Erika Partida, Cesar Maldonado, Alvaro Reyes, Antonio Martinez, Maria Antonietta Luna, Voces de Alabanza (Spanish speaking choir), and so many others that have made and continue to make it possible for our Spanish speaking 1:30pm Sunday Mass to continue to be broadcast as well as prepare to receive in-person attendance as of our reopening.
- We held (and continue to have) our virtual Spanish Speaking Bible Study via Facebook Chat largely in part due to Corena Sills Montoya and Louie Jimenez, who co-facilitate alongside me.
- I hold an hour of prayer of the Holy Rosary every Thursday at 7:30pm on Facebook Live. Members and non-members alike from the local area as well as other countries join in and send in their prayers and blessing requests.
- We have also, for the first time, applied for a grant to have a Mobile Covid-19 Unit provide vaccinations onsite. As of this report, details continue to be worked out since the funding of this project is provided by community partners rather than the County of Los Angeles.

As we look to towards to tomorrow, we are planning:

- Another spectacular event in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, on Sunday, December 12, 2021.
- A possible pre-recorded Christmas Service.

- A spectacular celebration in honor of The Black Christ of Esquipulas in mid-January 2022.
- An Ash Wednesday, Lenten, and Holy Week 2022 that will be inspirational and spiritually resounding.
- Passion/Palm Sunday and Easter 2022, ICM Style.

Important Acknowledgments:

Gratitude to **Peter Kirkpatrick** for his faithfulness in maintaining the unity and high morale within the Spanish choir, **Voces de Alabanza**, as he coordinated members of the choir to sing on a rotating basis for the Sunday Mass. It's a joy working with Peter and seeing his spiritual creative side express itself.

Gratitude to **Erika Partida** whose love for our church helped her to learn how to operate the new camera and broadcasting system, then train others so that a team can be available on a rotating basis for our Sunday Mass.

Gratitude to the core group of volunteers who showed up faithfully every Sunday so that the 1:30 pm Mass could be broadcast with minimal interruptions and when we re-opened, volunteers received congregants and screened them for in-person worship. These critical volunteers are: **Corena Montoya, Enrique Hernández, Maria Antonieta Luna, Cesar Maldonado, Alvaro Reyes, Antonio Martiniez, Norm Cox.**

Thank you to everyone who continues to support us. I'm excited to us journey forward in faith, hope, and love.

Rev. Alejandro

Creative Team Ministry Update – Prepared by Larry Rodriguez

Overview

The Creative Team is charged with bringing worship alive, and deepening the worship experience through meaningful, worshipful, spiritually-grounded, multisensory, and transformative ritual actions and activities. In 2020, the Creative Team and Media Team began working much closer together to accomplish this task.

Major Accomplishments In The Past 12 Months:

During the height of the winter pandemic surges, some churches in our area were forced to cease conducting worship services because they could find no way to safely conduct services. Thankfully, through the dedicated work of an onsite worship crew, this church continued it's weekly broadcast of worship services even through the darkest days of the

Creative Ministry Team cont'd

surge. Our Christmas Eve Services were a blessing not only for their quality, but also admirable that they were produced during the time the city was under curfew.

During the early months of 2021, we began to expand the number of people actively involved in worship beyond the core crew of 10 by including remote participation of scripture readers and communion celebrants. We have become more adept in our use of online tools.

Perhaps our most impactful accomplishment was negotiating a safe reopening to onsite worship services. The move to the current hybrid online/onsite worship experience took many long hours of planning on the part of a large group of people. We are most grateful to the Board of Directors, Media Team, Worship Participant Team, and Ushers for making this transition a success.

Major Goals For The Next 12 Months:

Although it is difficult to predict what future path the Covid pandemic will take, I think it can be said with reasonable confidence that Founders MCC will not be returning to pre-pandemic style worship anytime soon. We will continue to follow the best safety practices recommended by the local health officials as we plan worship services. Our Team recognizes that for many people, the online worship experience has shifted from one of necessity, to one of desirability and convenience. Thus, we will continue to explore and expand the possibilities hybrid online/onsite worship offers to participants both onsite and online. Within the next weeks, the Team will finalize plans for our Advent/Christmas Season of Worship, as we look forward to the beginning of the new liturgical year.

Needs and Challenges:

Producing a quality online experience is more complex than producing an onsite-only experience. Producing a quality hybrid of both online and onsite experiences is even more complex. It has become evident that Creative Team needs to expand the “production” portion of what we do. Thus far, we’ve done a remarkable job during this health crisis with the Team as currently constructed. However, research predicts the future growth of churches will shift from onsite to online. The pandemic did not cause the change, it merely speeded up the shift. We will have to develop a larger, dedicated, group of people gifted in the areas of TV production and social media in order to attract and engage those future online participants.

GOVERNANCE REPORT Prepared by Jenni Nichols.

The Spring 2021 Congregational Meeting was our 2nd Virtual Meeting due to the restrictions of Covid-19 gathering guidelines. Participation could be acknowledged by either signing onto the Zoom link or by calling into the Zoom meeting phone number.

By-laws that were passed during that meeting included updates to:

- 1) Article IV – Members and Friends
- 2) Article V – Congregational Meetings
 - a. Time and Place
 - b. Voting Rights
- 3) Article VI – Local Church Administrative Body – Term of Office

The Board reviewed and approved a new 3-year contract for Rev Keith with the inclusion of a 3 % pay increase, along with reimbursement of dental benefits and a \$50/month reimbursement of cell phone expenses. The Pastor was encouraged to be mindful of his workload and to take vacation and personal time.

We also implemented a voluntary 403-B retirement plan for full time employees as an additional employee benefit.

The BOD along with the Creative Worship team developed congregant check-in procedures for safe return to in-house worship.

We extended the part time temporary job position of Camille Auraullo as Office Support to be part time permanent with focus on the Push Pay app.

We regretfully accepted the resignation of Board Member David Crocker who was unable to fulfill his responsibilities due to added travel and time restrictions of new employment. If you have a gift of Administration and a strong accounting/record keeping background and would like to be considered to fill our open BOD position through April and possibly beyond, please reach out to Rev Keith or a current BOD meeting.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT – Prepared by Antonio Martinez

For our 2021 Stewardship Campaign, We Will Build we had 31 pledges totaling \$153,992. For the Building Fund, we had 17 pledges at \$13,264 forecast for the year.

The total amount given in Stewardship Tithes for the third quarter (includes January-September) is \$98,968. This leaves a remaining balance of \$55,023 for the year. That puts us at 64% of our goal.

Stewardship cont'd

The total amount given in Stewardship for the Building Fund for the third quarter (includes January-September) is \$5,239. This leaves a remaining balance of \$8,024 for the year. That puts us at 39% of our goal.

Thank you very much for all that continue to support our Ministry. May God continue to bless you and guide you through your spiritual journey.

Building and Facilities Report presented by Bob Stayton and Dean Coffey

Our church building and campus are returning to use for ministry as we emerge from the pandemic. With the return to worship in person, we also opened our doors to some 17 recovery groups in July. These groups include 11th Step Meditation AA; Big Book AA; Crystal Meth Anonymous; Easier Way AA; Fight Club/Basic Tools AA; Fight Club AA; 7 – Men's Meditation Meetings for each day of the week; Sex Addicts Anonymous; Super Studs AA; We Agnostics AA; and Workaholics Anonymous.

These are members of the Los Feliz/Silver Lake communities doing significant work around addiction and recovery with our support. We also lease space for the Pinwheels Preschool that provides high quality childcare to 29 preschool age children on our campus. These ministries have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of our local neighborhood.

The cost for maintaining our church building remains high. For this reason, the Board of Directors approved an increase in the rental rates for space earlier this year. A significant amount of money is being spent on both routine maintenance as well as significant repairs. These include plumbing and water damage repairs for the preschool and a major tree trimming expense in the rear of the preschool after wind damage to part of the tree.

At the same time, we have installed new broadcast and sound systems in the sanctuary that have significantly enhanced our worship experience. We are grateful for and acknowledge the generosity of the congregation in supporting these improvement projects. Deferred maintenance remains to be done regarding condensation above the sanctuary ceiling resulting in recurring water damage and courtyard restroom remodeling needing to take place.

The church received an one-year extension of our federal Nonprofit Security Grant administered by California Office of Emergency Services to replace doors and windows, cameras and alarms. A significant barrier to implementation has been the reluctance of

local contractors to bid projects that require the contractors to pay prevailing wage rates to their employees. We request the congregation's prayer and help networking to find contractors willing to make bids on these projects.