

Spring Congregational Meeting 2022

Senior Pastor's Report

Dear Saints,

It has been a delight to start sharing in-person worship once again. The Covid-19 pandemic is in its third year, and we continue to work through all that it has brought us. There have been many changes since our Fall Congregational Meeting in 2021, some exciting, some sad. There have been some challenges, and there have been some victories. I want to thank publicly the Creative Worship Team and all the in-house crew that have been so faithful to share their gifts of ministry to keep our worship going online as well as in-person.

As you know, we lost a vital member of our congregation and staff in November, Camille Araullo. What you may or may not know is how involved Camille was in our ministries. She was a vital part of our music program and leader of our Media Team. She was also developing our new app and working part-time in our administrative office. Since her death, we have had several folks step up to carry on her legacy.

Other changes that have happened include the resignation of our long-time Music Director, Jane Syftestad, and the resignations of two faithful Board of Directors members: David Crocker and Tony Martinez. The Board appointed Gef Aviles to David Crocker's position, but we have not filled the open position for Tony Martinez. Our own Rev. Alejandro has been elected as an Elder in our denomination, and he has represented our church in multiple local, national, and international platforms. Our online membership and attendance continue to grow. I look forward to honoring these wonderful people properly and in-person in the near future.

Even with all the changes, there have been several continuous ministries. Our Food Net is still operating on a weekly basis, with volunteers coming each Friday and Saturday morning to make sure people in our community are fed. Our Tuesday Evening Vespers, Wednesday Night Bible Study (English and Spanish), and Thursday Night Bilingual Rosary continue. Peter Kirkpatrick and Bill Farnum are keeping our music program alive, and of course, our in-house crew (ushers, worship participants) make sure worship happens each week. Rev. Steve Swafford taught another Membership Inquirer's Class, and we have at least one new member joining the church.

I am thrilled that we are able to come back together in-person once again. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our Board of Directors has done our best to follow the safety recommendations set by Los Angeles County. With the decline in cases, we have made a commitment to continue evaluating these protocols so that we can enhance our worship with as little barriers as possible. We have celebrations that we look forward to sharing together now that we are meeting in-person again. In addition, many of our private groups, such as AA, have come back to in-person meetings.

One of the things this pandemic has taught us is how many people are worshipping online, even when given the opportunity to come back to the building. It is not a local nor an MCC

phenomenon; it is happening to houses of worship all over the world. This leaves us with some major questions about the future of our ministry, such as, “What does our physical plant need to look like?” “What ministries are important to us now?” To what are we willing to commit at this point in time to be the ‘hands, feet, and heart of Christ’?” We have a new Discovery Team that is already at work to help you answer these questions. As we DO answer them, I ask you to be honest with yourself and with us so that we can make the best plans for ministry for our present and future.

As we look to the future, I want you to know that, as your pastor, I am so proud to be a part of THIS congregation. I still say and believe that Founders MCC is the best church in the whole world, and the Spirit is still in charge of our future. I pray that we will ALL be revived and ready for what God has for us next. Are you up for the adventure? I am!

Rev. Keith Mozingo

La Iglesia Fundadora de la Comunidad Metropolitana Los Angeles Spring Congregational Report 2022

As the Associate Pastor of Founders Metropolitan Community Church (FMCC) and the Pastor of La Iglesia Fundadora de la Comunidad Metropolitana (ICMF), it is a blessing to share with you our achievements and obstacles once again as a community of faith since our last Congregational Meeting, in the Fall of 2021:

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Christmas Services, The Black Christ of Esquipulas

- The holidays were an extremely difficult time for many in our Community of Faith, their families, friends, and loved ones. Our Community of Faith as a whole, supported each other through prayer and reaching out to one another.
- We held another spectacular event in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, on Sunday, December 12, 2021, with Mariachi ArcoIris, who after the mass, played in front of the church steps to the joy of members of our congregation and neighbors. The altar for this very special celebration was placed upon the back altar.
- Christmas Eve was celebrated with a hybrid Spanish Mass, the first in many years, with pre-recorded Christmas music provided by Voces de Alabanza and other collaborating sister churches in Latin America.
- The Celebratory Mass in honor of The Black Christ of Esquipulas on January 16, 2022, which always includes the participation of the Marimba Maya Migrantes de Los Angeles, was cancelled due to an increase in Covid cases. A blessed replacement was made with the rebroadcast of the previous year.

Lent and Holy Week

- As of this report, we are almost at the end of our Lenten journey, which focused on facing the wild of our spiritual deserts.
- ICM Fundadora is working on a special presentation for Passion/Palm Sunday entitled, "Through the Eyes of Jesus."
- ICM Fundadora is organizing once again, after a two-year hiatus, a bilingual Sunrise Service in Griffith Park as well as our regular Easter programming for 2022.

The Creative Worship Team

- The Creative Worship Team, comprised of Larry Rodriguez, Lucia Chappelle, Norm Cox, Peter Kirkpatrick, Rev. Keith Mazingo, and me, is largely responsible for collaborating and developing wonderful Sunday content for both the 10am and 1:30pm services. They also assist with the editing of and preparation of previously recorded videos and Sunday's worship elements.
- I, along with members of the Creative Worship Team and other volunteers, continue to listen to the bimonthly County of Los Angeles Health Department's Best Practices for Houses of Worship. As a result, we continue to enforce the confirmation of vaccines and booster to members and friends who desire to attend our on-site Services and events.

Volunteers

- I continue to supervise and assist Corena Montoya as she empowers a group of incredibly talented and dedicated volunteers who offer of their time, talent, and treasures for the 1:30pm service and special events. These volunteers are:
 - Corena Montoya, volunteer extraordinaire (handles certain administrative projects for both the 10am and the 1:30pm service as well as the church in general; she assists in the creation and development of the bulletins for the 10am and 1:30pm services, sets-up for the 1:30pm, breaks down and assures everything is closed in the sanctuary after the 1:30pm Sunday service, and so much more...
 - Erika Partida (cameras and transmission of Sunday services),
 - Cesar Holguin (cameras and transmission of Sunday services),
 - Andy Larios (house sound),
 - Cesar Maldonado (reader and decorations),
 - Benigno DeMattaa (reader and decorations),
 - Antonio Martinez (Board of Directors, recently stepped down),
 - Maria Antonietta Luna (assists with the compilation of the PowerPoint for the 1:30pm service).
- Peter Kirkpatrick, director of "**Voces de Alabanza**" ("**Voices of Praise**" Spanish speaking choir), continues to provide excellent worship music for the Spanish speaking 1:30pm Sunday Mass. In addition to this, he organized and rotated the members of **Voces de Alabanza** so each one could contribute to the variety and diversity of the Weekly Spanish Sunday Service. The members of **Voces de Alabanza** are dedicated to the mission, vision, and purpose of FMCC-ICMF. These members are:
 - Edgar Cruz
 - Jose Gonzalez
 - Maria Antonieta Luna
 - Lulu Madrid
 - Corena Montoya
 - David Solis
 - Ramiro Vasquez
 - Peter Kirkpatrick, Director, **Voces de Alabanza**

Weekly Programming

- We continue to hold our virtual Spanish Speaking Bible Study via Facebook Chat in part due to Corena Sills Montoya and Louie Jimenez, who co-facilitate alongside me.
- I continue to pray the Holy Rosary, bilingually, 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.

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 is a joy working with Peter and seeing his spiritual creative side express itself.

Gratitude to **Corena Montoya** whose love for our church motivates her to empower others to volunteer in a variety of capacities.

Gratitude to the core group of volunteers who have shown up and continue to do so faithfully every Sunday so that the 1:30 pm Mass could broadcast with minimal interruptions. And when we re-opened, volunteers received members and friends and screened them for in-person worship.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Alejandro

Spring Congregational Meeting 2022 Clerk's Report

At our Fall 2021 Congregational Meeting, our reported membership was 146. The next reconciliation and purge of the membership roll is underway and will be completed in advance of the Spring 2022 Congregational Meeting.

As of the writing of this report, we anticipate one new member will be joining the church following the membership class held prior to the Spring Congregational Meeting. This report will be verbally updated with the accurate number of members during our congregational meeting on April 24th.

Fall 2021 Congregational Meeting Membership Report/Quorum Data

Membership: 146

Members present at Call to Order 37

Twenty percent Quorum (30) verified by physical, phone and Zoom check-in

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Doneche, Clerk, Founders

Spring Congregational Meeting 2022 Governance Report

I believe our Lenten Season worship theme of *Into the Wild* could have been our church theme for the entire last year, but I would venture to say *Into the Wild and Back Again*. What a ride we have all been on, coming back to in-person worship last July, then back to Zoom and now as of March, back to offering in person and on-line worship so no matter where you are you share worship with us.

The Board of Directors has been keeping on top of the County and City guidelines, especially as they relate to Worship gatherings. While it may seem that we are taking a different approach than other large gatherings, we are thinking of each of you and the safest way to share worship for all. For those of you who remain as on-line worshippers, we feel your Spirit with us even if you are not here in person.

Many of our support groups have come back to in person meetings here on campus, and we are getting inquiries for space rental as the restrictions ease up. We are looking at current and future staffing needs as we prepare for what feels like a changing worship model and experience.

In good news / bad news, we were grateful that our long-time Stewardship Chair Tony Martinez was able to find full-time employment. However, we were sad to accept his resignation from the Board due to long hours and a longer commute. We are also so very grateful Gef Aviles came forward to be appointed to fill the vacancy from Dave Crocker's resignation also due to a new job with a more demanding schedule.

On a personal note, my three-year term as a Board member is ending. After many hours of prayer and reflection, I have made the decision not to stand for re-election to a second term. I have been blessed to serve the congregation as both the Clerk and Vice Moderator during this term. I am grateful for the opportunities of spiritual and emotional growth the past three years have provided and I welcome your prayers as I wait to see where into the wild, I will be led.

May we all be blessed by the Spirit that sustains us.

Jenni Nichols,
Vice Moderator

Spring Congregational Meeting 2022 Creative Team Ministry Update

Members: Rev. Keith Mozingo, Rev. Alex Escoto, Lucia Chappelle, Peter Kirkpatrick, 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.

Major Accomplishments in The Past 6 Months:

In the past six months, the Creative Team lost someone who was not only an incredibly gifted member of the team, but also a dearly beloved member of our family, Camille Araullo. It was a difficult time to both deal with the grief of the loss family, but also the loss of a great talent. The loss was particularly difficult for Camille's life partner, Jane Syftestad.

Thanks to the hard work of a dynamic group of women from across the denomination, the loving and generous support of the Bayanihan community, and the hard work of both the Media and Creative Team, this church honored Camille's life with a Celebration of Life in December 2021, that filled the church with tears of sorrow, and of joy.

The Creative Team presented the Advent / Christmas series "Home," which explored both the joy and the fear of "home." We also celebrated the first onsite Christmas Eve service in two years, pushing the envelope of safety protocols by singing "Silent Night" outdoors on the steps of the church at the end of the candlelight service.

Currently, we are in the midst of the Lenten Series "Into the Wild," exploring the many ways God has led the people into uncharted territories in the past, to better understand where God might be taking us in our future. The series will culminate in the Palm Sunday - Holy Week - Easter Sunday services.

And, thanks to the continued downward trend of infections, we can now sing onsite during worship, although still with a mask.

None of the work the Creative Team does would be possible were it not for the good work of the Media Team. The Media Team has proven to be one of the most important teams that has allow congregants to maintain connection during this pandemic.

In order to facilitate the work of the two teams, the Creative Team and Media Team held their first joint team meeting virtually in February 2022. The sharing of ideas and concerns was valuable. It was the first, but not the last, joint meeting planned.

Major Goals for The Next 6 Months:

As we approach the culmination of the Lenten Series “Into the Wild,” we begin plans for the Easter Season, Pentecost, and Pride Month.

Because of the fluid nature of the pandemic, plans will need to include possibilities for a return to more pre-pandemic activities, or a return to more stringent safety protocols. We will plan for both possibilities.

Needs and Challenges:

The biggest challenge the Creative Team faces is the shift in worship habits of congregants during the pandemic. Safety protocols put in place at the beginning of the pandemic prohibited onsite worship, so we shifted to completely online worship services. Those protocols were relaxed in summer, 2021, and we resumed onsite worship, but we were very limited in what congregants could do – no singing or responsive reading, no handouts, no passing the offering plate, no hands-on serving of communion, no onsite hospitality. The team worked hard to figure out ways to engage people both online and onsite without risking anyone’s health. It was a difficult task. Then, at the beginning of 2022, we had to revert to online only worship because of the winter surge.

Now that we are back to onsite / online worship, not knowing where the pandemic road leads next is a challenge for any long-range planning. Everything needs a Plan A, a Plan B, and sometimes a Plan Z.

Further, we are not sure what our congregant’s appetite is for onsite worship. What we observe is that slowly, more people are willing to return to onsite worship, but, at the same time, they have become accustomed to the convenience of worshipping online.

This shift in Sunday worship habits is something that has been going on for years, but the pandemic has accelerated the shift. This shift in habits is not just a Founders MCC phenomenon, but it is a shift seen in all faith communities.

As we plan for the future, it becomes apparent that we must plan worship keeping both the onsite and the online worshippers in mind, and we need to continue to explore how to engage both groups to bring worship alive.

Finally, regular ASL interpreter, Lola Shahdadi, has been going through some physical challenges over the past several months, and has been scrambling to find substitutes. The pandemic has created a shortage of available interpreters, but thanks to Lola’s faithful diligence, our Deaf Ministry has continued without interruption.

Spring Congregational Meeting 2022 Lay Delegate Report

Several months ago, Pamela Fairbanks and I made an announcement at the 10:00 a.m. service introducing ourselves and laying out our vision for the church and brief summary of our job as Lay Delegates.

One of the jobs of the Lay Delegates is to continue in the ministries that Pamela and I have been doing. Pamela oversees the hospitality ministry which sends out the birthday cards, get well cards and cards of sympathy. She also handles prayer requests. I am involved mainly in the 1:30PM Service and I help Rev. Alejandro set up and take down the service, like what Don Mueller does for the ten am service. I also handle a majority of the church admin for both services and pastors.

Pamela and I are in the process of registering for the upcoming MCC Global Conference taking place online July of 2022. She and I will be doing one announcement during the congregational meeting as well as one announcement in each of the next three months as the global conference draws near. Pamela and I are thinking of some creative ways to get the congregation involved in the global conference as it is happening. We are considering doing something for the whole congregation, there will be more details to come regarding our plans, so stay tuned!!

Pamela and I are in communication continually regarding all lay delegate and church matters.

With regards to the admin side of things I have been including all the information regarding the MCC Denomination in the E-newsletter which goes out every Friday, as well as the church bulletin.

It is my hope that this report gives an overview of the activities of Pamela Fairbanks and myself as lay delegates of Founders MCC. We want to thank the Board, the pastors and the congregation for the honor and opportunity to serve this great church.

With Love,

Pamela Fairbanks – Lay Delegate for Founders MCC
Corena Montoya – Lay Delegate for Founders MCC