

January 14, 2012

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

Annual Report 2011

One of the Committee's functions is to recommend to the Session each year the annual allocation of funds from First Church's benevolence endowment. This year the Committee recommended to the Session, and the Session approved. We are currently compiling a three-year summary of 2009, 2010, 2011 funding recipients, grants and a trending analysis, which will be used to help guide our work in the coming year to best ensure alignment with the Church's broader mission.

In addition, a major milestone for the Committee was achieved regarding funding as the Committee, Trustees and Session validated the process for disbursing funds by combining the Madison Fund and Benevolence in a single funding source. It is against this annual source of funds that the Committee recommends and Session affirms the organizations, which we will support financially through the Committee. This was a very large commitment of time and the Committee greatly appreciates the support of the Trustees and Session for this effort.

An important emphasis this year was to oversee the next steps of our Benevolence Process and 'grant review' by using online surveys to assess each grant with a prioritization vote by committee members based on 5 Categories of Review: Need, Population Served, Mission Alignment, Relationship-Fostering and Budget Availability. This process allows us to continue to align around common goals for the Committee and to disburse more funds earlier in the year to needy organizations.

Another important focus continues to be the Annual Mission Fair. This year, we hosted more groups than ever before and had a terrific attendance by the Congregation. Focusing on both local (to the New York area) and organizations which work in all corners of our global community, we included Multi-media presentations of some of the key concepts of community building and service that were highlighted in last years' Church-wide survey. We hope to build on this work in 2012 with even more opportunities for service for our congregation and community.

The Church and Society committee continues its support of "First Serves", which held First Serves Volunteer Day on March 5, 2011. First Serves is a hallmark of Church & Society's mission, creating intergenerational volunteer opportunities for the entire congregation and linking individuals with organizations and causes to which the church has longstanding commitments.

1. Immigration and New Sanctuary Task Force. Operating under the leadership of Rita Rochford, this Task Force sponsored forums relating to social justice, awareness and the New Sanctuary Movement. The Task Force continues to host engaging speakers, stay involved and informed about issues and provide valuable opportunities for the congregation to learn and be involved in this important issue area.

2. Homeless Shelter Committee. This Committee coordinates the Homeless Shelter activities in close collaboration with various support groups. The Shelter is located in the Parlor

of First Church, and operates under the leadership of, among others, Diana Pardue, Logan Kennedy, Scott Ramsdell, and Scott Caudill (who keeps a record of assignments of volunteers). Each evening of each day (except Saturdays), starting in October (this year) and ending at the end of April, First Church becomes a home to up to 10 homeless men, who are fed a light supper, provided beds and linen, and served a morning breakfast. A volunteer “coordinator” helps to set up the Homeless Shelter and two “overnight volunteers” spend the night with the men.

3. 60+ Circle Committee. Under the leadership and support of Dick and Georgia Pease and Michael Clay, this Committee sponsored a new set of activities in 2011, centering around gatherings, lunches and lectures hosted at the Church. Topics of interest were presented to people within our church congregation as well as the community at large. The Committee is continuing to work with the leaders of this group to help plan for and consider programming of this nature in the future.

4. Mission Service Committee. This Committee, under the leadership of Richard Korchak, sponsored a number of mission service trips in 2011, including Cuba and our continuing support of colleagues and communities in need around the world.

The Church and Society Committee gives special thanks to Rev. Sarah Segal McCaslin, whose support and advice has been invaluable during 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Maddox, Chair

Committee members:

Erin Blanton

Neville Carmical

Lisa Wolfe

Mark Fontaine

Logan Kennedy

Rich Korchak

Diana Pardue

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