

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation
The Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago
February 12, 2023**

The 153rd Annual Meeting of the Congregation of the Fourth Presbyterian Church was convened by the Moderator, the Rev. Shannon Kershner, at 11:15 a.m. on Sunday, February 12, 2023, in the sanctuary of the Fourth Presbyterian Church. Rev. Kershner opened the meeting with prayer.

Clerk of Session

Jared Light and Allison Youngblood, Co-Clerks of Session, offered remarks and reflection. Co-Clerk Light stated that 2022 was an exciting and invigorating, yet challenging, year in our life as Fourth Church as well as our community around us. The day-to-day work of the church had to continue, despite the now-normal staffing shortages and funding questions and it needed to happen with energy. Adult Education classes were organized, Michigan Avenue Forums planned and executed, mission trips taken, and grants given from World Mission and Social Justice to engage locally. Members marched for social justice, we worked to engage inquirers and new members, Children and Families Ministry had their first Christmas pageant in three years, and youth led worship. Worship inspired us with wonderful music, including a new gospel choir, as well as sermons that inspire and challenge on a weekly basis. Thousands of meals were served, and a new website was unveiled. It is simply staggering the amount of time, energy, and passion that goes into the normal work of this church, which could not be done without the combined efforts of Fourth Church pastors, staff and volunteers.

Co-Clerk Light stated that, even as this work continued, it was a time to look forward to imagine the Church in a post-Covid world. While there is no good time for a senior pastor to take a sabbatical, Rev. Kershner's summer sabbatical was quite fortuitous, providing her time to reflect on her ministry and this time of transition. On returning, Rev. Kershner challenged the Session to begin the work of discerning what this faith community looks like in the future. As a church, we do believe that this work is happening with inspiration from the Holy Spirit, guiding us in our call to build God's kingdom on earth. Rev. Kershner told the Session that this is a story of opportunity in this unique time in our history. We have a chance to discern what it means to be a Light In The City in a new and very different world from the one we were in five years ago.

Co-Clerk Youngblood discussed the engagement with God in our church home by welcoming each other and our neighbors, discovering information about our activities and volunteering on the revamped church website, responding to the Church Census, show that we are all together on this group project of church and sending in a pledge, and embrace this difficult stage of discernment so that we move forward together. Co-Clerk Youngblood paraphrased Hebrews 10:24-25, "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together but encouraging one another." We can encourage one another to work through this transition and remain open to the disruptive faithfulness of God by being family in our church home at Fourth Presbyterian Church. God is not done with us and is calling us, so let's come together and embark on this journey with each other and with God.

Approval of the Minutes

Co-Clerk Allison Youngblood determined that a quorum was present. Co-Clerk Youngblood announced that the minutes of the 152nd Annual Meeting of the Congregation, held on February 13, 2022, were available for review on the website or by calling the Pastor's Office. A motion was made, seconded, and **adopted** to approve the minutes of the 152nd Annual Congregational Meeting of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago.

Report of the Pastor

Rev. Shannon Kershner stated that at the 4:00 pm jazz service, the prayer of confession is titled, “We tell the truth about ourselves,” which is not intended to imply that any of us are regularly lying about who we are, rather that the language is intended to open up space for us to be fully honest and authentic about who we are and how we are in the process of living out our baptism and that no one attains 100% commitment to Jesus. Rev. Kershner stated that we tell the truth about ourselves because we know that God continues to claim us, forgive us, and love us. God never asks us if we have arrived. God simply asks us if we are headed in the right direction – in God’s direction of goodness, of justice, of mercy so that theological conviction of assurance allows us to be our full selves.

Rev. Kershner stated that in our congregational life, we are doing what we can to put this into practice in our Board meetings and our staff meetings. Examples included Program Staff discussing the challenges we are currently facing as we emerge from Covid – the decline of onsite worship attendance; the number of people and families who have moved; the decline in the number of volunteers; the impact of the pandemic on the morale of staff; the real issue of people feeling more disconnected from each other and from those in leadership; the decreasing financial support of our operating budget, etc. Rev. Kershner stated that the truth is that we have been changed over these past few years and we are choosing to move into this new future with confidence that God, who called us into being 152 years ago today, is still calling us forward.

Rev. Kershner stated that the budgetary pressure is real, which is in the combination of flat to declining annual giving and rising inflation has increased our dependence on large one-time gifts that are unpredictable. The Joint Finance Council, Board of Trustees and Session is committed to reversing that trend and enable us to make long-term plans and commit to initiatives with confidence. We are also committed to controlling expenses without sacrificing our core mission by thinking creatively about how we can do the same mission and ministry at less cost.

Rev. Kershner asked the congregation to help by making a stewardship pledge to the church as we continue to have about 30% of the church members make a pledge and if our giving increased, if the number of people who contributed to the church increased, this work of aligning our annual revenue with operational expenses might become a lighter load.

Rev. Kershner stated that while we are being honest with these challenges, we are addressing this new day in the life of Fourth Church by appointing a Long-Range Planning Task Force to shepherd the process that will end with the Boards setting a vision for the next 3-5 years and to set priorities for the capital campaign that is in the active planning stage. Rev. Kershner stated that we are moving forward with a Census Project and reaching out to every member of the congregation to see how we can facilitate making deeper connections or reconnect people to the ministry and mission of this faith community. This will also allow us to know how many people continue to feel called to Fourth Church as their spiritual home. Rev. Kershner stated that we are currently engaged in a large information systems/technology project to get an understanding and roadmap of how we can best stay connected with you and collaborate with each other in more intentional ways.

Rev. Kershner stated that all this work is happening because the Elders, Deacons, Trustees and Staff of Fourth Presbyterian Church are fully committed to preserving our mission as Fourth Church and to being a light in this city and are fully committed to being a place of spiritual nourishment; a place where we practice a thinking faith; a place where people can be fed—literally and figuratively; a place where everyone who comes is treated with kindness, compassion, dignity, and love. We are fully committed to

thriving in this new era of our life together because God is not done with us yet. God still claims us, calls us, forgives us, and loves us. That is the ultimate truth we can claim and speak about ourselves.

Nominating Committee Report

Elder Jeannine Forrest reviewed the process for the Nominating Committee to select individuals for election of lay leaders as officers. Elder Forrest introduced the members of the Nominating Committee and reviewed the guidelines for officers.

On behalf of the Committee, she then moved the following candidates for election as Elders:

Class of 2026

*Lisa Dagher
Margaret Douglas
Nikki Drake
Rhonda Faulkner
Jill Fenstermaker
Gary Graham
Janet Love
Kash Morgan*

*Mark Schaetzlein
Gretchen Wahl
David Wilson
Christine Zrinsky*

Serving a one-year term:
*Gavin Daniels/Youth Elder
Cate Cupps/Youth Elder*

Elder Forrest moved the election of the following candidates to the Board of Deacons:

Class of 2026

*Anne Canfield
Jeff Gallenbeck
Roberta (Bobbi) Harper
Lyndsi Hay
Margaret Izzo
Larry Kerley
Jim Lacy
Joan Leech
Val Lober
Cheri Lundin
Nancy Curtiss Morel
Hilary Richardson
Mary Zeltman*

Serving a one-year term:
*Ruby Fairman/Youth Deacon
Will Kozlowski/Youth Deacon*

Filling a two-year vacancy:
Daniel Park

Offering a one-year extension:
*Anita Balodis
Joanne Gaines*

Elder Forrest moved the election of the following candidates to represent the congregation as members-at-large of the 2023 Nominating Committee:

*Dennis Canfield
Elizabeth Foster
Michelle Hayes*

*Maggie McGuire
Larry Nicholson
Emma Richardson*

The Moderator asked for nominations from the floor Elder, Deacon or Nominating Committee. There being none, the motion to close the nominations and elect the candidates as Elders, Deacons, and Members at-large of the 2023 Nominating Committee was **adopted**.

Rev. Kershner welcomed all candidates elected to their offices for the coming term and thanked Elder Forrest and the members of the Nominating Committee for their work.

Recognition of the Chicago Lights Board

Rev. Shannon Kershner welcomed Mr. Nicholas VanDerSchie, President of the Chicago Lights Board to offer remarks. President VanDerSchie thanked Fourth Presbyterian Church for being a part of this compassionate and supportive community and was thankful for the commitment and dedication to Chicago Lights and the youth, adults, and families that Chicago Lights partners with to build brighter futures.

President VanDerSchie was excited to announce that the Tutoring program has returned in-person for its 58th year! While everyone has worked hard to get through the pandemic, this year Chicago Lights learned that volunteer routines have also changed and recruitment for volunteers has been particularly challenging. The Urban Farm continues to be a bright, beautiful oasis in the city with 6000 pounds of produce grown and given to low-income families and where 45 teens learned about urban agriculture, the food system and transferable life skills. The Chicago Housing Authority will only renew the lease for the Urban Farm through year-end 2024 and we will need to relocate to a property in another neighborhood. The Chicago Lights Strategy Committee is assessing and promising to make a fruitful recommendation.

Last year, the Chicago Lights board made the difficult decision to sunset the Chicago Lights Dance Academy. President VanDerSchie thanked the hard work of the artist, teachers, parents, and thousands of Chicago-area students who participate in Dance Academy class over the years. The students benefited from deeper engagement in school, increased confidence, and a greater appreciation for the arts. It was important work; however, Chicago Lights board believes that by focusing our portfolio of programs, we are able to drive even more impact to the city while doubling down in areas where we offer unique value to the community.

The housing crisis, compounded by mental illness, addiction and lack of support, has meant that the Social Service Center staff is working with some of the city's most vulnerable citizens. The compassion, support, and generosity from this community to aid in the efforts of the Elam Davies Social Service Center in these efforts has been incredible.

President VanDerSchie thanked the Chicago Lights staff, especially Executive Director Stacy Jackson, and the fellow Chicago Lights board members. Special thanks is given to Kathi Bates and John Marr, whose terms, along with mine, end in May. President VanDerSchie stated that the work to serve the City of Chicago continues as we creatively endeavor to make bright futures.

Report of the Personnel Council

Rev. Shannon Kershner welcomed Mr. Jim Kulich, Co-Chair of the Personnel Council, to present the Personnel Council report.

Mr. Kulich offered gratitude for the clergy and staff and their dedication, adaptability, and creativity through the world of COVID. This past year was even more of a challenge as we began to find our way forward coming out of the core of the pandemic.

Mr. Kulich reviewed the highlights in the past year. The congregation approved the call of Rev. Nancy Benson-Nicol as Associate Pastor for Caring Ministries and Spiritual Formation. Rev. Shannon Kershner was able to go on sabbatical to refresh personally and spiritually. We are grateful to Senior Associate Pastor Rev. Dr. Lucy Forster-Smith for her exceptional service as Interim Head of Staff and to Executive Director of Operational Ministries, Rev. Andrea Denney for their exceptional service and leadership while Rev. Kershner was on sabbatical.

Mr. Kulich stated that we all experience the power of Rev. Kershner's preaching, but there are many ministries and programs at Fourth Church, including Rev. Matt Helms, Associate Pastor for Children and Family Ministry, completed a full two-year 400-page Sunday school curriculum. 18 podcasts were completed by Rev. Helms and Rev. Rocky Supinger, Associate Pastor for Youth Ministry, to teach in a new way. Rev. Joe Morrow, Associate Pastor for Evangelism and Community Engagement, brought together seven organizations working on issues of housing, to offer an adult education series. Rev. Nanette Sawyer, Associate Pastor for Discipleship and Small Group Ministry, restarted our Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, bringing together people representing many faith traditions from Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago Sinai Congregation, LaSalle Street Church and the Niagara Foundation.

Mr. Kulich reviewed the work of staff, including Ms. Katy Frey Bever, Senior Director of Development and Ms. Stacy Jackson, Executive Director of Chicago Lights, who reorganized our development activities to optimally support all aspects of our ministry and outreach. Rev. Andrea Denney, Executive Director of Operational Ministry fundamentally restructured our human resources department and worked with the Property Committee to develop a long-term plan for capital maintenance. These are only a few examples as there are many more ways members of our staff impact the lives of you, our members, and the wider community we serve each day.

Mr. Kulich thanked Rev. Shannon Kershner, who continues to provide strong, steady and empowering leadership as her commitment to leading our church's efforts to become a more diverse and inclusive community are unwavering.

Mr. Kulich reviewed the milestone anniversaries of the staff.

The Moderator, Rev. Shannon Kershner stated that, when we gather for these annual meetings, we are meeting as both a congregation and as a corporation. It is time to enter the corporate portion of our agenda, and Rev. Kershner asked for a motion to recess the meeting of the congregation and to convene a meeting of the corporation. It was moved, seconded, and **adopted**.

The Moderator introduced Mr. Mark Hurley, President of the Board of Trustees.

Meeting of the Corporation

Mr. Mark Hurley, President the Board of Trustees, convened the meeting of the Corporation. President Hurley recognized that the minutes of the 152nd annual meeting of the corporation held on February 13, 2022, were previously approved.

President Hurley called upon Church Treasurer, Mr. Robert Doak, to make a brief report.

Treasurer Robert Doak reviewed the 2022 financial report and the 2023 financial budget as approved by the Boards of Fourth Presbyterian Church, which were distributed to the congregation. Mr. Doak thanked

the congregation for their support of the Fourth Presbyterian Church. President Hurley thanked Mr. Doak for his work as Treasurer over the past year.

President Hurley introduced Elder Jeannine Forrest, Chair of the Nominating Committee.

Elder Forrest was invited to report on behalf of the Nominating Committee and placed in nomination the following persons for the Board of Trustees:

Class of 2026

Vern Broders
Carolyn Brougham
Patsy Habicht

Annie Person
Stacey Shonkwiler
Ken Walker
Toni Yang

Elder Forrest asked for nominations from the floor. There being none, a motion to close the nominations and elect the present slate was **approved**.

With no further business, Trustee President Hurley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Corporation and the meeting of the Congregation. There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and **adopted** to adjourn the corporate and congregational meetings at 12:10 p.m. with the singing of “The Church’s One Foundation” and with prayer by Rev. Kershner.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon J. Kershner, Moderator