

Worship and Music Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: June 5, 2025

Present: Pastor Julie Morris, Carol Browning (Music Director/Office Manager), Carol Broderick (Altar Guild Chair), Vicky Edell (Volunteer Coordinator), Becky Riley (Committee Chair), Joe Zimmerly (CYFM).

On Zoom: Deacon Dr. Cecelia Travick-Jackson (Senior Adult Ministry).

Pastor Julie began the meeting at 2:03 p.m. with an Opening Prayer. Since our last meeting in early April, we had participated in Three Congregations Holy Week and our own Easter worship. Feedback from the committee was very positive. Everyone appreciated the joint services, especially the combined choirs and prayerful connections with CUMC and St. Columba's. Some felt that our Good Friday service, particularly the music, was the most meaningful. We also would like to host Maundy Thursday in the future; both CUMC and St. Columba's have a Good Friday tone to their Thursday services. Concerns were also expressed about the inadequacy of St. Columba's sound and technology capabilities. Our own Easter service was wonderful, however Pastor Julie and Joe heard from a few members that they missed the Alleluia being "buried" just before Ash Wednesday and "unearthed" on Easter Sunday so we'll bring that back next year. The Easter season has gone very well and Confirmation was particularly great with a really strong group of confirmands sharing their God Stories, and terrific music. Joe also mentioned that at the Community Time the night before this meeting, Nick Zook-Brimer had done a great job in sharing some worship songs as a devotion. Pastor Julie applauded lifting up the musical gifts of our lay leaders.

As a follow-up to our request for an Endowment grant for Guest Musicians, Becky reported that the Endowment Committee did not approve our request but feels that monies should be requested from the Frantz gift. She shared that some on the committee feel that we should just use volunteers for our songleaders and other instrumentalists. Pastor Julie commented that hiring professional singers/instrumentalists supplements and elevates the good program we have and also holds elements of the previous contemporary service which paid some of their musicians. Carol Browning mentioned that we have added Holly Barber to our rotation of songleaders and soloists and her level of musicianship and talent is exceptional, equivalent to Jessica Helms. The Worship and Music committee reviewed and approved the plan for guest musicians through the remainder of the year that was submitted to Endowment and will bring to Council a request that \$1600 (based on the spreadsheet of estimated expenses) be allocated from the Frantz gift to pay for Guest Musicians for the rest of the year (Carol Broderick moved, Vicky seconded; all in favor).

Going around the circle, Carol Browning presented information about purchasing brass candle followers for the altar candles. The current glass ones are chipped and subject to further breakage. The cost is \$350 apiece, plus any shipping and handling. Becky moved and Vicky seconded that we request approval from Council for this expenditure from the Sanctuary Items account (35585). Carol also reported that the handbells are off for the month of June due to lots of travel from the ringers and that July will include some tutorial rehearsals for a new sub ringer. The choir will sing on June 15 and is working ahead on anthems for the fall and even Christmas.

In response to a question from Becky about Afternoon Chapel, Deacon Cecelia reported that the attendance has increased slightly and is fairly stable. A new program that Senior Adult Ministry has is once-a-month worship at Alma Via, which began in May with 5-6 residents present for the service. Although not something for Worship and Music to take on, Becky raised the possibility of inviting our two partner churches to join us in singing at the retirement homes in the future. Some thought and organization and a person agreeing to be in charge would be required; it could be something for Pathfinders to talk about with the other churches.

Joe repeated that Confirmation had gone very well and thanked Carol Broderick for making beautiful bouquets for the confirmands. He stated that August 10 will be VBS Sunday with a special Children's Message and Song, and that it would be nice to have VBS participants involved as worship assistants (not a full Family Serving Sunday but some visibility).

Carol Broderick said that things are going well with Altar Guild and we won't do any additional training until next spring. Vicky mentioned that she will be away June 22 – July 1, and said that Scott Fajnor wants to do an announcement on June 15 to ask for additional ushers to sign up. A lot of church members are traveling this month so it's a bit challenging to fill some Worship Assistant positions, especially Acolyte, Tech Assistant, and Hospitality, but that people have been responding when she sends out emails detailing what is needed for a particular week. There are also some upcoming empty Sundays for Altar Flowers but she is now able to see the dedications that people input, which is helpful.

There was some discussion about the lack of a Welcoming Committee and Vicky mentioned that she makes it a point to approach new people and introduce herself / welcome them. Becky suggested it might be a good idea to develop some more intentional expectations for new member sponsors and provide, if not actual training, at least a written list of suggestions of activities for sponsors to do with their newly sponsored members. Joe also suggested that the newly revived Fellowship Committee could take on welcoming as part of their duties. We all expressed our appreciation for Vicky's work in being welcoming and recruiting all the volunteers.

Pastor Julie reported on possibilities being explored for tech assistance for Bennett Anderson while Bill Dawson is on medical leave. She also stated that Deacon Cecelia held a training for Lay Eucharistic Home Visitors and we now have five people who are trained in this capacity. Devan Jackson will be coordinating this new program as of July 1. Looking ahead, with Joe's leaving, in the interim, Meredith Smith and Amanda Burns will be giving some of the Children's Messages when Julie is away.

Deacon Cecelia informed us that Bishop Brenda Bos will be here on Sunday, July 13, to commission the new Lay Eucharistic Home Visitors, and although things have been difficult for the bishop personally because of the loss of her home in the Eaton fire, she really likes being around people, especially children. Cecelia suggested that the bishop could lead the Children's Message on the 13th, explaining the symbols on her crozier and the back of her cross, and agreed to ask her about doing so. We will gift the bishop and her wife prayer shawls when they are here. It was suggested that we could have a potluck after worship so the congregation has a chance to engage with the bishop. (Note: After the meeting, we discovered that this date was originally scheduled as a Church Work Day; we will coordinate with Property Committee to see if the Work Day can be rescheduled.) Although we didn't do so when the bishop was here last year, we will request a guest preacher stipend for her this time.

We neglected to schedule the next meeting but will do so via email.

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m. with a closing prayer from Deacon Cecelia.

Notes respectfully submitted by Becky Riley, Chair.

Worship and Music Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: April 3, 2025

Present: Pastor Julie Morris, Deacon Dr. Cecelia Travick-Jackson (Senior Ministry), Carol Browning (Music Director/Office Manager), Carol Broderick (Altar Guild Chair), Becky Riley (Chair), Joe Zimmerly (CYFM).

Absent: Vicky Edell (Volunteer Coordinator)

Becky Riley was welcomed by the committee as our new Chair. Pastor Julie began the meeting at 2:05 p.m. with an Opening Prayer, and informed Becky of our usual process of reviewing special worship events since we last met and doing a check-in with each member. We discussed our Ash Wednesday worship at St. Columba's and noted that there were issues with the sound and that they did not provide adequate seating for the combined choir. Our Lenten Holden Evening Prayer services with faith stories from various members have been very well received and were a hit with the Confirmation students who will be sharing their own faith stories when they are confirmed. Following Elliott Ripley's message, a livestream viewer donated \$1,000 to Mount Cross with the memo: "Elliott was great." For the season of Lent, we've had a variety of music for Sunday worship. Communion around the rail has been a bit messy but some people like receiving in that manner. Taizé prayer has a small but appreciative group of attendees mainly from Mount Cross and St. Columba's. It was also mentioned that Randy Churchill's funeral was wonderful and a fitting tribute to such a great man. Pastor Julie expressed her gratitude to Padre Serra for hosting us and to all those at Mount Cross who helped with the liturgy, reception, and care for the family.

Going around the circle, Carol Browning said that music ministry is very busy preparing for the Holy Week special services. Julie brought up a concern of having an adequate budget for guest musicians (professional singers like Holly Barber and Carina McVeigh, additional instrumentalists on violin, trumpet, etc., and substitute rehearsal pianists) and suggested that Worship & Music request additional funds from the Endowment Committee. It was moved and seconded that Becky will submit the request, working with Pastor Julie and Carol Browning on the details, for at least \$1,500, prior to the May 2 deadline.

Joe is busy with plans for the Easter Breakfast and Egg Hunt, as well as recruiting worship assistants for the next Family Serving Sunday on May 4. Beginning in Advent, the Children's Message was moved up to an earlier time in the service, which has been helpful for the teachers to have more time in Children's Church. After June, this will be evaluated to see if any other change, such as starting the children in the classroom, would be beneficial.

Carol Broderick reported that the Altar Guild training went well and things are doing fine. Altar Guild hosted one of the Lenten Soup Suppers and that also went well. There was some discussion about Communion and having a common cup and intinction cup. As of Easter Sunday, we'll revert back to having the bread, an intinction cup, and grape juice, but no common cup. There was also discussion about changing to glass communion cups and purchasing a tabletop dishwasher instead of using disposable plastic, although we're not sure we have enough volunteers to be able to take on this task. Jan Gerk has been taking care of the linens but may be stepping down. If so, Carol will write up a bulletin / newsletter blurb to look for a replacement. After Randy's funeral, some people said they liked the Catholic wafers better than ours. We just restocked our supply but may want to try that option when we need to reorder. For the upcoming Work Day, Carol will do an inventory of our linens; we may need to purchase additional ones. She's in contact with Trader Joe's regarding the purchase of our calla lilies and hopes to arrange for pickup of the order (48 lilies) on April 17, 18, or 19; Becky offered to help in picking up the plants; the church van is available to use for transport.

Deacon Cecelia reported that Afternoon Chapel is going well. They will offer a service on Maundy Thursday, April 17, at 2:00 p.m. She will be participating in all of our Holy Week worship.

We discussed the liturgical environment for Holy Week. Palms for the procession have been ordered and will be arriving soon. Carol Broderick will decorate the church and the processional cross with palms from the yard and will drape the large wall cross with red cloth. For Easter, Carol Browning will ask Todd Ebright to hang the Alleluia banners on either side of the large cross; Carol Broderick will drape a long white cloth through the loft rungs as additional décor. Becky will check with the Prossers to see if they are willing to coordinate the outside Easter cross (people are asked to bring a flower or two to add to it).

Our next meeting will be Thursday, June 5, at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m. with a closing prayer from Pastor Julie.

Notes respectfully submitted by Becky Riley, Chair.

Worship and Music Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: February 6, 2025

Present: Pastor Julie Morris, Deacon Dr. Cecelia Travick-Jackson (Senior Ministry), Carol Browning (Music Director/Office Manager), Carol Broderick (Altar Guild Chair), Bill Stoll (Acting Chair/Council Liaison), Joe Zimmerly (CYFM), Vicky Edell (Volunteer Coordinator).

Absent: None.

Pastor Julie began the meeting at 2:07 p.m. with an Opening Prayer. She asked for a review of special services since our last meeting, specifically the Blue Christmas service and our Christmas Eve worship. Deacon Cecelia commented that she thought the Blue Christmas service and the refreshments afterwards all went very well but there wasn't much interest in the CareNotes that were available. Pastor Julie heard lots of positive feedback about the prayer opportunities – individually with the pastors, lighting candles, and the trees of life.

Our 4:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service was a full house. The worship time seemed to be good and having extra seating helped. A few members miss having a later evening service and perhaps next year we can collaborate with one of our Three Congregations partners in offering something later. The consensus was that we don't need to do two services on our own unless/until we aren't able to accommodate those who come into one service, and that there were lots of familiar faces here so the time didn't seem to be an issue.

Julie also asked for feedback on Sunday's "Senior Serving Sunday." The responses were very positive, especially to the faith stories shared. Some people liked sitting the whole time, others didn't, and the congregation didn't sing out very much being seated.

Julie asked about our Three Congregations Taizé services. Carol said there's nothing new, that we're regularly getting 15-20 people, and those who come really appreciate the prayer.

From last meeting's notes, we had talked about doing training videos for the worship assistant roles but Julie doesn't have the time to do them right now. She wondered if we might be able to take clips from our worship recordings. Bill Stoll offered to help, and Carina and Rick Gardner were also suggested as people who could put videos together. It will be a goal for this year to get these videos done.

For Lent and Holy Week, Julie met with Fr. Michael and Pastor Elbert to review plans for our Three Congregations worship. On Ash Wednesday, March 5, the three churches will collaborate on two services at St. Columba's – Noon and 7:00 p.m., and Pastor Julie will be preaching. Maundy Thursday, April 17, will be at Camarillo United Methodist at 7:00 p.m. and Fr. Michael will preach. For Good Friday, April 18, there will be a Noon Stations of the Cross, connected to current events, at St. Columba's, the cross walk from CUMC to Mount Cross at 5:00 p.m., followed by a 7:00 p.m. liturgy here at Mount Cross. The Easter Vigil, April 19, will be at 7:00 p.m. at St. Columba's. Each church will have its own Easter Sunday schedule. We'll plan on only one 9:30 a.m. service here (last year, we had more people for Christmas Eve than for Easter Sunday).

For our Lenten Holden Evening Prayer messages, Julie will ask people to share their faith stories. She has already asked Joe Zimmerly, Claire Johnson, and Judy Winters. Other suggestions made were Evonne Kuchera, Dan Nelson, Bill Greason, the Henrys, Becky Riley, the Ripleys, and Simon Mere-Mere.

Checking in around the room, Carol Browning said the choir is doing great and the bell choir had an exhausting but wonderful workshop day at Camarillo United Methodist. She will be out on Wednesday next week, but

because of a few people being sick, injured, or away, the bell choir will not be rehearsing. Jessica Helms will lead the choir rehearsal in Carol's absence.

Joe mentioned that Family Faith Formation wants to have another Family Serving Sunday on May 4 and asked Vicky to block out the SignUps for that day, including Hospitality. On Sunday, March 30, Family Faith will have a planning meeting after worship. This coming Sunday, February 9, for the Children's Message, he and Julie will be presenting Bibles to the children who have been attending Scott Fajnor's Intro to Bible class (for 3rd-8th graders). He and Julie will be doing Acolyte training for the Confirmation students, communicating the expectation that they will participate in worship. Vicky asked for help in getting the acolytes signed up online. On another note, Family Faith has purchased some soft toys for the Prayground area, and Bill Rowley is in the process of making a custom dollhouse for the area. They will be looking for someone to create felt things to put inside the dollhouse.

Moving on to Bill Stoll, Bill said that Ken Riley is likely to be elected Council President at Saturday's meeting so his time as liaison/acting chair is coming to a close. Julie thanked Bill for his service and for being a bridge to the Council.

Bill also brought up the issue of purchasing a second camera for our livestreaming, to replace Bill's that we've been using. He said the Council agrees that having a second camera is good. Bill Dawson would like us to purchase another PTZ camera rather than an inexpensive webcam like his (a cost of about \$2500 vs. \$120), and the Technology Committee folks feel we should do it right. Bill mentioned a phone conversation he had with a long-time member who watches online, who really appreciates that we offer this, and is supportive with donations to Mount Cross. Others mentioned hearing similar stories of gratitude. It was moved (Bill) and seconded (Carol Broderick) that the Worship & Music Committee recommend that the Church Council authorize the allocation of money (approximately \$2,500) for the purchase of a second PTZ camera for our livestreaming services.

Vicky expressed her thanks for all the great volunteers we have in the church. She had a good response with a manual sign-up sheet on Sunday. She mentioned that there was confusion about the Annual Meeting potluck which caused her and some of the volunteers a lot of stress and she asked that for future Annual Meeting potluck, that we use just a SignUp and let her coordinate it.

She also asked about the usher responsibilities we had discussed last time of having the ushers be sure that the kiosk, parking sign, food bins, etc. are put away after worship. Bill Stoll had intended to talk with Scott Fajnor about this but forgot. Vicky mentioned that it's a problem for her if she needs to leave right away after worship but it was agreed that the usher doesn't have to be the one who takes care of this responsibility if they can't stay, just that they be sure someone else agrees to do so.

Carol Broderick mentioned the upcoming Altar Guild training on March 1. She plans to have tea and scones and hopes to have 2-3 new recruits. She continues to update the instructions as needed. She tries to have six months of Altar Guild sign-ups set. Lately, we've been using a lot of grape juice and less wine. Julie thanked Carol for her work in organizing the sacristy on the recent Work Day, that it looks wonderful to have things cleaned up. Thanks to Emily Zimmerly for making all the labels. Carol Broderick also said that Maria McDonnell has done cross-stitch crosses on new purificators and will do some more.

Carol Browning added that palms have been ordered for Palm Sunday and that we'll need to think about ordering calla lilies soon. Last year, we ordered 48 from Trader Joe's and the consensus was to do so again this year. (On a side note, next year, we should cut down our Christmas poinsettia order from 68 to 48; many were not purchased this year.)

Deacon Cecelia shared that the Senior Adult Ministry Committee will meet tomorrow and talked about Afternoon Chapel and encouraging more midweek attendance. Their attendance is pretty steady at 15-20 people each month but with a different format from Sunday. Some people attend both Sunday and Afternoon Chapel. Hospitality is an important part of their ministry. She also mentioned that she often takes hospitality items from Sunday fellowship to her home visits after church.

Julie added that the Sunday bulletins will be changing slightly. For Senior Serving Sunday, we added a special welcome for seniors. The general welcome statement and welcomes for specific groups will be rotating in terms of the front cover beginning this Sunday.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, April 3, at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. with a closing prayer from Joe Zimmerly.

Notes respectfully submitted by Pastor Julie.

Worship and Music Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: August 19, 2025

Present: Pastor Julie Morris, Carol Browning (Music Director/Office Manager), Carol Broderick (Altar Guild Chair), Becky Riley (Committee Chair), Deacon Dr. Cecelia Travick-Jackson (Senior Adult Ministry).

Absent: Vicky Edell (Volunteer Coordinator),

There was some initial discussion about providing an immediate report for the night's Council Meeting, based on a request from the treasurer, which Becky did after the meeting.

Pastor Julie began the meeting at 2:15 p.m. with an Opening Prayer. Going around the table, Deacon Cecelia said that last month's BBQ and Bingo was an intergenerational activity with about 30 people attending. In September, the Senior Adult Ministry will host a live band (The No Fret Band) on a "Savvy Saturday" afternoon.

Carol Browning mentioned that it had been great to attend the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians conference but it was also good to be home. Looking ahead to programs resuming in September, staffing our bell choir may be a challenge since the Ripleys have a new baby and we're not sure the extent to which Elliott will be able to participate, but we had good tutorial sessions in July and August for new and newer ringers, with wonderful help from three of our seasoned ringers. The choir is singing this Sunday for Health and Healing Sunday and will begin their regular schedule in September. We have one member who has resigned and some of our members are traveling, but we are hopeful for some new singers who are interested in joining. Our Taizé service is attracting people not only from Mount Cross, but one St. Columba's member brought 5 people with her to last week's service. The organ repair of the trompette pipes has been completed and the organ sounds much better. For an upcoming Sunday, September 14, the liturgical calendar calls for red paraments (the scarlet-orangey ones with the cross at the pulpit, not the Pentecost ones).

Carol Broderick expressed praise for the new brass followers on the candles but said she's concerned about the weight of them if they get knocked off, especially with any children who come up around the altar. After a bit of discussion, the Worship & Music Committee would like to encourage the Family Faith Formation Committee to inform the parents about their concerns for the instability of altar rails, candle holders, and the Advent wreath, and to ask the parents to monitor their children to keep them safe. Carol will be training a new attender, Geri Tomlinson, as a member of the Altar Guild, and said that the online signups are working well. She suggested that for Communion, we might try using fewer grape juice cups on the side where there are fewer children.

Pastor Julie shared a concern that came from one member via the Pathways 2026 Forums about wanting 2 services for Christmas and Easter but the consensus was that it's better to have one very full service rather than a fairly full one and one with very little attendance. We may want to see about joining St. Columba's for a 2nd later service on Christmas Eve. (Carol Browning didn't have the attendance numbers available during the meeting but they are: Christmas Eve 2024 – 228 + 7 outside = 235; Easter 2025 – 220 + 9 outside = 229). We'll revisit the Christmas Eve service time at our next meeting, but it seemed that one 4:30 p.m. service worked well for most people, including older people who don't want to drive at night.

We celebrated Vacation Bible School the first week of August and it all went very well, thanks to lots of help from so many people. We were fortunate that Jeffrey Saner and Miera Stouch did an outstanding job leading the music all week!

Pastor Julie also mentioned her continuing goals of not using plastic for Communion and improving our recruitment and training of worship assistants. Regarding that second goal, she has asked Marni Engh (who used to coordinate and train the lectors at St. Mary Magdalen, along with her husband, Steve) to be our “head lector,” to provide a training class sometime mid-November. We will look for a lector workbook for the *Revised Common Lectionary* to be able to give to the lectors.

As far as the calendar, this Sunday, August 24, will be our Health and Healing Sunday and at both the Sunday service and this week’s Afternoon Chapel, individual healing prayers and anointing will be offered. September 7 is our annual Picnic, with worship as usual in the sanctuary and the Picnic and a Chili Cook-off afterwards. October 5 will be Tent Worship under the pavilion, following Make Bake Celebrate, with our Blessing of the Animals, and October 26 will be Reformation Sunday. In November, the 2nd will be All Saints Sunday with a potential baptism, receiving new members, and remembering our beloved dead, while the 26th will be our Thanksgiving Eve Holden Evening Prayer and Pie Social.

Pastor Julie also mentioned that she had negative feedback this past Sunday from one parishioner about the intercession praying for those in fear of deportation. We on the committee recognize that not everyone sees things in the same way and that the topic of immigration issues is a challenging one for many people right now. We are working to be respectful of people who are trying to make a better life.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, November 4, at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m. with a closing prayer from Deacon Cecelia.

Notes respectfully submitted by Becky Riley, Chair.

Worship and Music Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: November 4, 2025

Present: Pastor Julie Morris, Carol Browning (Music Director/Office Manager), Carol Broderick (Altar Guild Chair), Vicky Edell (Volunteer Coordinator), Pastor Marc Mohr (CYFM Director), Becky Riley (Committee Chair), Deacon Dr. Cecelia Travick-Jackson (Senior Adult Ministry).

Pastor Julie began the meeting at 2:05 p.m. with an Opening Prayer. Going around the room, each person gave a brief report. Carol Broderick said that the Altar Guild is covered through the rest of this year but they're always recruiting new members; Gerri Tomlinson is interested in joining the Guild. Carol related a concern from a couple of weeks ago that the new communion wafers from the Catholic source are not staying fresh; the consensus was that we should go back to the previous supplier for our next order. She also mentioned that the gold/white altar cloth has a stain that the cleaners are unable to get out because it's too old and somewhat fragile, however, Pastor Julie related that the Sanctuary Redesign Committee is looking into options for the sanctuary which might include decreasing the size of the altar so we should hold off on the purchase of any new paraments. Other items discussed were the fact that the stand with the tray of juice/wine was knocked over again on Sunday, the second time in the past month. It was suggested that perhaps the stands/trays could be placed inside the altar rails.

Looking ahead to Advent and Christmas, the Advent wreath will need to be out for November 30, and Carol will check the Advent candles to see if we need to replace them. We will need to announce poinsettia donations soon, and she will check with Trader Joe's about purchasing them again this year, working with Pastor Julie and Carol Browning on the number needed. We also should think about replacing the wise men in our nativity set since one of them is missing and another was broken and repaired. Becky offered to donate a new set and will check at Costco. Pastor Julie will also look for options.

Vicky is grateful that so many people help fill the worship assistant positions, although we don't have enough people who will usher. We also discussed whether young children should be serving Communion on their own and the issue of parents who serve with their children being distracted; there have been some complaints from other members. We established that young people should be confirmed before they serve by themselves and Pastor Julie will address individual cases. Children from 3rd to 4th grade on up can acolyte before Confirmation. Vicky inquired whether a SignUp is needed for the Thanksgiving Eve pie social (there was some confusion last year). Henry Moraga is taking care of everything so it's not needed this year.

Vicky also wondered if the ushers might help in bringing in the children after Sunday School since she has heard complaints about the noise level of the young people in worship (this past Sunday we had so many kids because of the baptisms). Pastor Marc said that the Faith Formation Committee is working on this issue. He passed out copies of a draft document, "Mount Cross' Covenant for Intergenerational Worship," and requested feedback. Several people offered comments, that it's a step in the right direction. It was suggested that instead of only the "Church Community" promising certain things, all who are involved need to "promise" or "commit" to the behaviors and attitudes. The perspective should be that we all need to "be mindful and respectful of the needs of others of all ages." Pastor Marc will email the Google document to the committee members so that they can comment further.

Continuing the discussion of our Worship Assistant needs, Pastor Julie mentioned that Marni Engh will be our "head lector" and will take on training in the new year. She'd like to find someone to be a leader for the Communion Assistants and Acolytes. She proposed that we have a Ministry Training Fair on Sunday, January, 11, after worship, including a potluck.

Deacon Cecelia related that the Senior Adult Ministry hosted their Mocktail Lounge for about 30 people last month. Next month, they'll have a Christmas Carol Sing and Holiday Crafts. They are meeting this Friday (and Pastor Marc was asked to join them by Zoom to discuss the draft Covenant). For their December meeting, they will probably meet in a restaurant and will look at next year's planned activities, including possibly booking the Don't Fret Band (who had to cancel due to COVID). Deacon Cecelia also gave us an overview of the Alma Via worship she coordinates once a month on the 4th Tuesday of each month. She and other Mount Cross volunteers (usually Evonne Kuchera and Allison Johnson) offer a brief service for people who are mobile, including our own Diana Hagen, with familiar songs, scripture, prayer, and blessings. They also offer brief worship to those in the memory care unit. She is working with Alma Via to have them restart their bus service to bring residents to Afternoon Chapel and other senior activities. (Pastor Julie mentioned that Dr. Bill Garlington, from Camarillo United Methodist, is now the chaplain at Alma Via.) Deacon Cecelia is continuing to do home visits once a month.

Carol Browning reported that Music Ministry is keeping busy preparing for the upcoming Advent / Christmas concert, along with leading music for Sunday worship. A few members have had significant health issues or have been traveling, but we are fortunate to have singers like Holly Barber, Carina McVeigh, Sorin Ficklin, and Brian Stouch to augment our choir. Katie Robinson will be taking Marni Engh's place in the bell choir and we're looking forward to having her join us. It's a busy time!

Pastor Julie expressed her joy at our Tent Worship and Blessing of the Animals, our celebration of the Reformation with a visit from Martin Luther (Pastor Marc), and beautiful choir offerings. She is grateful for the baptisms and new members we welcomed on Sunday and thanked Vicky for managing our volunteers. The recent symposium at Camarillo United Methodist was another joy, and included some Taizé elements, potentially introducing our Taizé prayer to the wider congregations. Looking ahead to Christmas Eve, she's a little nervous about only offering one service (2024 attendance was 228 in the church, plus 7 in the pavilion with a monitor, total of 235), and wants to be sure we advertise St. Columba's 11:00 p.m. Eve and 10:30 a.m. Day services (which she's talking with Fr. Michael about possibly assisting with). Pastor Julie, Pastor Marc, and the Faith Formation Committee are looking at options for a Children's pageant. Sunday, December 28, will be a Lessons & Carols format with Communion, as we've done in past years.

Additionally, Pastor Julie reported on a meeting with the Sanctuary Redesign Committee and a liturgical environment consultant (via FaceTime), the Rev. Cindy Voorhees. Although Rev. Voorhees doesn't have the time to take on our project, she offered various suggestions. She recommends that our first priority be to address our seating concerns. The pews are not in good shape and are limiting for people trying to get in and out of them. Having chairs and a flexible arrangement is welcoming, especially to people who haven't grown up in church, and there are options for "cathedral" chairs (similar to the ones we have) or wire-framed ones. As a first step, she recommends taking out the first row of pews and moving a row of chairs from the last row by the narthex to take their places, which would make the narthex more open and welcoming. She also recommends we address our flooring. Other options would be to make changes to the chancel/altar area by doing away with the altar rails, moving the altar area back, changing the design to only one step, and shortening the altar itself. It will probably be necessary to have a capital campaign to fundraise for this project. Pastor Julie will also contact a local liturgical design person to get additional input.

She added that she is working on getting additional "leaders" for each of the worship ministry areas (Scott Fajnor, Ushers and Marni Engh, Lectors are in place), with the goal of having them settled and participating in the January 11 Ministry Training Fair. She is still interested in creating demonstration videos as previously discussed but that hasn't been possible due to other pressing time constraints.

Pastor Julie and Pastor Marc pointed out that the Faith Formation Committee is working on “graduating” the children from the PrayGround area. It was originally intended for infants and toddlers. Some of the older children have begun sitting in the seats with their parents. FFF is exploring options such as booster seats.

Chair Becky Riley had nothing else to report, but we set our next meeting for Wednesday, January 7, at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m. with a closing prayer from Pastor Marc.

Notes respectfully submitted by Becky Riley, Chair.