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Christian Church Foundation

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General Board Report on 2020

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epic of belief, it was the epic of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” Thus runs the famous opening passage from Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities*. He might have been writing about 2020. It was a year like no other—a global pandemic, financial upheaval, a crazy political circus, and far too many shootings.

2020 demanded all of us get comfortable with widespread ambiguity and chaos. Last year, there were more questions than answers and the only constant was change. There was no well-worn path, no playbook for managing the events of last year. 2020 was a good reminder of just how great a responsibility we bear toward the future, and also how inadequate our knowledge is about the future. I suppose we all want to feel that we are on a powerwalk into the future, when in fact we are always tapping our canes on the pavement in the fog. Total control of life is merely an illusion. We are always living with radical uncertainty. 2020 just put that fact in our faces.

2020 tested the Foundation’s crisis planning—as well as our ability to respond to challenges for which we had no plan. We didn’t anticipate a pandemic. Nevertheless, the year demonstrated the depths of our staff’s talent, flexibility, and commitment to this ministry. From a financial perspective, the Foundation was prepared. Years of careful

budget management and forward-looking, prudent policies allowed us to stay calm and mission-focused, even as we considered worst case scenarios.

Both our response-ability and our financial results proved even better than expected. While we had not practiced for a day when everyone would move to remote work, we had built a service-oriented, whatever-it-takes culture. The value of having talented employees that care about each other and the ministry we share was evident from Day One. Indianapolis staff moved to working from home with little warning and continued to provide a high level of service to our donors and ministry partners. To ensure that questions continued to get answered timely, we flattened our communication chains so that more staff see and hear donor and partner requests and our responses to those requests.

Perhaps the greatest irony of 2020 was the disconnect between the stock market and the real economy. Between February 19 and March 23, the S&P 500 Index lost a third of its value. Investors dumped stocks as news of COVID-19 grew grimmer. Surprisingly, the gut-wrenching sell off was followed by a remarkable rally. Even as unemployment soared and company earnings tanked, the stock market quickly reversed direction and ended the year higher. The Foundation's investment funds all achieved positive returns for the year. As of December 31, 2020, one-year returns were 10.80% for the Common Balanced Fund, 11.51% for the Beasley Growth Fund, 8.99% for the Campbell Multi-Strategy Fund, 13.86% for the Bostick Select Fund, and 10.46% for the Brown Income Fund.

After serving as the Foundation Vice President for the Mountain West Zone since 2011, Jerry Lang retired on December 31, 2020. Jerry's keen intellect, unwavering integrity, and kind spirit graced the Foundation for nine years, and the church for over 40 years. Jerry's deep love for the church has been clear throughout his entire career. Monica Myers Greenberg joined the Foundation staff on January 1, 2021, as the new Vice President for the Mountain West Zone. Originally from Ohio, Monica has served congregations in the Northern Lights Region for the past 21 years. She is a graduate of Bethany College and Brite Divinity School. Since 2002, Monica has been Senior Minister of Northwest Christian Church, Seattle, Washington, and an active leader in the Regional and General Church. The Mountain West Zone includes the Northern Lights, Central Rocky Mountain, Oregon/Southwest Idaho, and Northern California/Nevada Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Recently, while thumbing through a magazine, I saw an advertisement: "Stop mask breath!" The ad caught my attention because it perfectly illustrated how rapidly and profoundly our lives have changed in 2020. The ad also demonstrated the ability of an organization, like mouthwash maker TheraBreath, to adapt and pivot. When the unprecedented and tragic events of 2020 started to unfold, I said that we at the Foundation would not only get through this, but we would become better because of it. I am even more confident of that today. Our clarity of purpose, the resilience of our staff, and the Foundation's financial strength have carried us through a most turbulent year.

More importantly, God is still God and we are still God's church. We are in excellent hands!

Board of Directors (date indicates end of term)

Todd Reed (Chair), Kentucky, CPA/Investment Professional, 2020
Ted Waggoner (Vice Chair), Indiana, Attorney, 2021
Marvin Anderson, Mid-America, Investment Professional, 2022
Marty Askins, Oklahoma, Business Professional, 2022
Dean Buffington, Oregon/Southwest Idaho, Investment Professional, 2020
Gita Gardner, Georgia, Architect, 2019
Heather Simpson, Pennsylvania, Minister, 2022
Joanne VerBurg, North Carolina, Retired Minister, 2022
Christal Williams, Tennessee, Regional Minister, 2022
Linda Hull, Florida, Retired Fundraising Executive, 2020
Samuel Robles, Jr., Florida, Minister, 2020
Tanya Tyler, Southwest, Minister, 2020
Sharon Worley, Central Rocky Mountain, CPA, 2020
Jeff King, Southwest, Investment Professional, 2020
Dana Lee, Virginia, Retired Social Services Professional, 2020
Dwayne Bell, Sr., Tennessee, Business Professional, 2021
Reginald Chapman, Sr., Central Rocky Mountain, Minister, 2021
Deborah Jennison, Northern Lights, Retired Business Professional, 2021
Robert Bock, Pacific Southwest, Minister, 2021
Angela McDonald-Fisher, Indiana, Attorney, 2021
David Yonker, Upper Midwest, Minister, 2021