



January 17, 2024
A Note from Marilyn Hoeflinger

Dear Friends,

Welcome to 2024! January received its name from the Roman god, Janus, which has its root meaning in new beginnings and transitions! No wonder so many people use this time to make New Year's resolutions in hopes of eating better, gossiping less, or any myriad of other habits we want to make or break.

The church uses this time to constitute new leadership teams and involve its constituents and members in the life of the church.

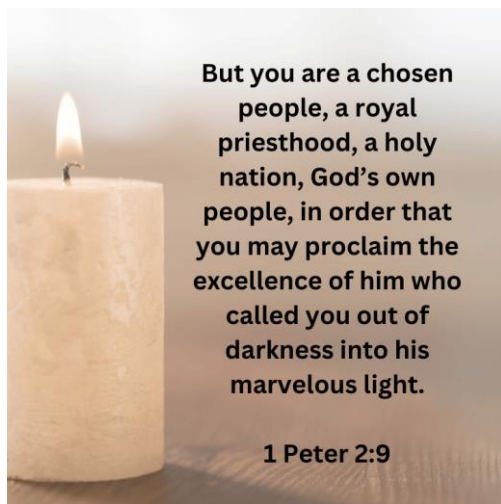


For those who may be new to the church, there are various teams or committees within the church, each with its own goals and purpose, working in concert for the successful functioning of the church. These include the Church Council, Finance Team, Nominations, Trustees (buildings and grounds), and Staff Parish Relations (SPRC, personnel). Most teams have a three-year tenure.

For the past three years I have had the honor of serving on the SPRC team, first with Aimee Lotz as chairperson (during our Covid wilderness). When Aimee took her dream job out of state, I was asked to be chairperson. I wasn't reluctant to take the role, but my hope has been for the younger members of our church to be in leadership, with more "mature" members serving with them. I accepted with the caveat that I would serve as chair until the year was out, then someone else would take leadership and I would become a team member for my final year.

When last December came and I was due to roll off as chair, I found out my true servant's heart had arisen while leading SPRC. One of our newest members, Nancy Hoffman, had accepted the chairperson's role, as Pastor April was keeping to our agreed timeline. As it turned out, Nancy was new to our church and didn't know anyone, so we decided to co-

chair for her first year and my last year, especially since she and her husband winter in Spain.



It is interesting how a good thing is made even better by working with others and mentoring them with encouragement, wisdom from time spent in the congregation over many years, and preparing the team spiritually for the upcoming work to be done through great discernment.

All church teams function as a small group. As we have heard from Jesus, none of the work on earth can be done alone. Just listen to the weekly messages and the theme of the priesthood of all believers.

The responsibilities of the SPRC team include multiple threads, and it takes a village to accomplish

the goals. The team writes the job descriptions and hours needed as well as the salary for all staff members.

When a position comes open, we post the job and reach out to those who apply, using email and phone interviews. During the interview process, one of the most important questions is the candidate's vision for the position and how they will live into being part of a Reconciling Congregation and live out our "God loves you no matter what" life. (<https://hilliardumc.org/reconciling-congregation/>)

HUMC's SPRC does more than just hire. We encourage our staff, meet with them regularly, and sit in on their evaluations with their supervisor (a pastor). We do this to make sure our staff and pastors are treated fairly in the evaluation process. It is a great way for the members of SPRC to learn the intricacies of each staff person's role and support them in any way possible. SPRC is an encouraging team that strives to help each staff member do their job to the best of their ability.



In my three years on SPRC, we have hired the following staff (for a complete list of staff and committee members, look here: <https://hilliardumc.org/welcome-2/church-leadership/>):

- Jody Hepp, Director of Traditional Music
- David Crone, Tech Director
- Amanda Nofzinger, Farm Market Manager
- Lisa Haney, Financial Secretary
- Jenn Halsaver, Financial Administrator
- Jeff Rone, Director of Contemporary Music
- Tony Hagood, Accompanist

- Katie Williams, the new Preschool Director (starting later this year when Robin Ozbolt retires)

Each year a primary responsibility of SPRC is to evaluate the pastors. We meet with each pastor, going over their self-evaluation with them and reconciling any issues that arise based upon the evaluation of each SPRC member, where the congregation is represented. We are fortunate to have open and honest discussions about all that is wonderful concerning pastoral leadership, and to look at any areas that can be improved, something each of us should do on a regular basis as part of our inner self-check.

As I transition off SPRC, it is bittersweet, because the individuals I have served with over the past three years have enriched my understanding of servant leadership and deepened my spiritual understandings by doing meaningful and hard work with a group of disciples that all have the same goal: living the mission and vision of HUMC that God loves us no matter what and how that looks in our community.

In 2024 the team will add a new member, but the remainder of the team stays intact, which helps with consistency. The team will be led by Nancy Hoffman and Will Nixon, and the team is in excellent hands.

Thank you for allowing me to be a small part of what makes HUMC a bright spot for worship for everyone and a well-known part of our community.

If you find yourself being called into serving the church in any way, speak with a pastor or a staff member to help you find your place in spreading the Good News of love for all.

We only have one life, so love as large as you can!

Happy New Year!

Marilyn



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