First Church
UNITED METHODIST
EVANSTON

2024 Annual Report

RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

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Church Conference Agenda
First United Methodist Church of Evanston
December 8, 2024

2024 CHURCH CONFERENCE AGENDA
OUR YEAR OF GRACE

WELCOME

CALL TO ORDER

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:4-10
but God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.

John 1:14-17
And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

VIDEO MESSAGE from Bishop Dan Schwerin

MESSAGE

HOLY CONFERENCING

- How have you experienced God's grace through the ministries of this congregation/faith community, over the past year?

- Where has your church been "experimenting" with new ways of being the church?
- How is your congregation bringing Christ to people and people to Christ?
- How are you and your congregation growing in intentional discipleship?

BUSINESS

1. Pastor's Report (Including Membership Report)
2. Nominations and Lay Leadership
3. Clergy Compensation
4. Finance (Budget, if available)
5. Recommendations (Lay Servants, Certified Lay Ministers, Ordination)
6. Trustees (Include condition of the building and the parsonage (if one exists). Reports of building and parsonage should not be more than 120 days old.)
7. Additional Business (Repair the Harm, Committee Reports)

CLOSING HYMN

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Staff Reports

Senior Pastor
Grace Imathiu

Preamble

170 years after the founding of First United Methodist Church Evanston, the General Conference of UMC voted to remove 52 years of harmful and discriminatory language. For the past 10 years, as a Reconciling Congregation, First Church has been opposed to the Book of Discipline's harmful language. What a joy to be now aligned with our denomination. However, we know that although the cycle of harm has been intercepted, it will take decades for the theological trauma to heal. For me, our work as a congregation has now evolved from the clear work of resistance to the more complex work of healing. First Church has identified our congregation's tools of healing as priority and attention to Collaboration, Connection and Care.

Each of us has a role. My role is of an Elder. The Book of Discipline identifies the fourfold areas of responsibilities for an ordained elder appointed to the service of Christ's love and justice as:

1. Word
2. Sacrament
3. Order
4. Service

Furthermore, my appointment letter to First Church prioritizes the area of Word. Hence, with particular attention to Word, this short report is both a reflection and offers thanksgiving for some of the key partners in these responsibilities.

Areas of Ministry

1. **Word:** preaching, teaching, discipleship, healing, funerals

   Partners: Brian Schoettler, Adult Christian Ed, Congregational Care, Lay Visitors

   My primary partner in that work is Dr. Brian Schoettler. Unlike other appointments where I was often responsible for preaching as well as choosing the hymns that would support the sermon, Brian is responsible for selecting the hymns that support the lectionary and season, as well as other musical selections. Brian and I meet on Tuesdays at 9:30 am to collaborate and with his training and background, I have grown and continue to grow in my appreciation and utilizing Brian as a most knowledgeable collaborator. Thank you, Brian!

   I am expected to guard First Church pulpit. When I am not the-preacher-of-the-day, I schedule preachers. Rev. Cox preaches once a month at the most. Interns are required to have taken a preaching class before they can be scheduled to preach. Among our guest preachers in my ministry here have been Bishop Sharon Rader, Bishop Cederic Bridgeforth, Bishop Dan Schwerin, Rev. Michael Nabors, Rabbi Rachel Weiss, Rev. Dennis Oglesby, Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, Rev. Ken Mwita, Robin Rue Robins, Jan Lawrence as well as our own Jim Hagedorn, Mark Henry, Colin McDonald and Sam Ely Erickson. Thank you all!

For me, every sermon preparation takes about 40hours of prayer, exegesis, reading, listening, thinking, weekly study with a lectionary group, and conversation with a small group that meets each week.

Sunday mornings include dependable partnership with: Ivy Joe Kuvila our intern in the work of recruiting, training and shepherding acolytes. Ed Webler has taken on coordinating ushers. Ariel Alonso coordinated all things bulletin and its production. Thank you!

Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter require preparing the sanctuary and people I call 'visual theologians' rally around Jackie Crihfield and LaDonna Taylor to make wreaths and lights and angels and poinsettias appear. THANK YOU!

Lay Visitors are persons in the congregation trained and assigned the care of specific members either for long-term or short-term pastoral care.

My proudest success has been using our United Methodist Connection to connect Jean Perry, a faithful member who now lives in California, with a United Methodist pastor who lives in the same town as she does! Rev. Brick visits Jean on a regular basis for communion. I am working on the same for Martha Ann Johnson in Oklahoma and Pat Cooke in Tennessee.

Regarding funerals, I consider this as my final pastoral care ministry to those I have been given charge over as their pastor. Every service is guided by the order of the Service of Death and Resurrection in the Book of Worship but is deeply personal with an effort to use the tool of the order of service to help grieving and devastated families express love, gratitude, and grief. It is a very satisfying ministry. Unfortunately, like the damage of "the secondhand smoke', the 'secondhand grief" is costly. I name Susan Prout and Keith Slater, who are partners in the receptions following the services.

2. **Sacraments:** Administer Baptism, Supper of the Lord.

   Partners: Elaine and Matthew Moy Johnson, Martha Rudy, Phyllis Bird, Ron Anderson. Cate Whitcomb

   I became an elder because of the sacraments. I take communion to those who cannot be with us for various reasons. Partners in this work are:

   1) Clergy in the congregation who administer communion in Tittle Chapel after worship. Coordinators are Rev. Phylis Bird and Rev. Ron Anderson
   2) Elaine and Matt Johnson prepare communion elements and set the table on the first Sunday of the month.
   3) Martha Rudy recruits, organizes, and trains Communion Servers.
   4) Mike Schmidt moves the communion table as needed.

   In addition to baptisms on Sunday morning, we continue to regularly reaffirm the baptism covenant and renew the baptismal vows on regular basis. Baptism took on a weighty meaning when a trans sibling who had never been baptized requested to be baptized with their real name. I vow to keep the promises I made to him.

3. **Order:** Administrative Officer of the Local Church

   Partners: Rev. Britt Cox, SPRC, Ariel Alonso, Stewardship Committee, Nominations Committee. Archives

   Although the Church is not OF this world, the church is IN this world, and we have to take care of the temporal affairs of the world we do ministry in. We are a small business!

   Rev. Britt Cox has been an excellent gift with the exact skill sets I needed for my right-hand Executive Pastor in helping order the church. Her report speaks for itself.

   SPRC, especially the Chair Beth Swanick's background in HR, continues to serve the congregation and staff behind the scenes.

   When Rich Grodsky innocently inquired what was preventing us from beginning our fiscal year in January with a balanced budget, we gasped at the impossible task he was placing before us. The Stewardship Committee co-chaired by Paula Scholl and Dan Owens met the challenge and our 2025 budget will be balanced when we vote on December 8.

   Finally, in ordering the life of the church, our Archives keeps impeccable records such that when we received a letter from a Mother Superior inquiring whether a candidate for order had been baptized in the '80s here at First Church, Cate Whitcomb found the record!

4. **Service:** Participation in community, ecumenical and interreligious concerns.

   On behalf of the congregation, I continue to be an active member of the Evanston Interfaith Clergy and Leaders cohort. Work has included Reparations and training on being an Upstander.

   Jim Hagedorn and I have been working to create an Evanston UMC Cohort and have been able to twice bring together for breakfast the pastors of the four United Methodist churches in Evanston. It is a work in progress.

   I participated in the Story Telling workshop, participates in a Grief Painting Class.

   My other ministries outside First Church this year include serving on the Board of Trustees of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Speaker at the Lakeside Chautauqua (June), Presenter at the Five-Day Academy (April) and Preaching at The Mather (November).

   Grace Note continues to have a high readership.

In summary, it has been a hard year. It has been a year of learning. It has been the best year yet. Thanks be to God!

Rev. Grace Imathiu
Senior Pastor

Executive Pastor
Rev. Britt Cox

As I look back on this year of ministry as Executive Pastor at First Church, I do so with celebration, gratitude, and pride. Below are some memorable moments in my ministry for 2024:

- Security and Technology Updates: I worked to upgrade our technology and security systems to reflect our church's values around connection. We upgraded our phone, security, internet, and computer technologies all within the year. Thank you to the Board of Trustees for your partnership in making this happen!
    - Phone: Our new phone system allows for staff to receive and make calls on their cell phone while using the church's phone lines versus their personal numbers.
    - Internet: Our new fiber internet reliably works! We were having to send staff members to a coffee shop or the library to get a decent signal.
    - Door Security: Our new door security system has provided better access while still providing a reliable level of security to the building.
    - Computers: We did a massive overhaul of upgrading our staff computer. Many staff members were either using personal computers because one wasn't made available to them, they were issued one that was too old to function. Our youngest computer was 5 years old and our oldest was over ten.
    - Realm: I've been working closely with Linda Brennan to increase our church's support and use of Realm. We made some changes in our settings for members to be more connected with each other and we've begun implementing use of Realm for committee communication and organization.
- Building Use: I worked closely with Building Use Coordinator, Krys Juleen to welcome groups such as the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation of Evanston (JRC) and Sherman UMC's Fisk University Benefit Concert. We are grateful for our partnership in community and ministry with these congregations.
- Committee Partnership: I continue to work closely with the Board of Trustees, Finance Committee, Mission and Outreach, Bundled Blessings and Staff Parish Committees. I am also serving on the Governance Subcommittee of the Church Council, Total Child Preschool Board, and Direct Services Committee of Interfaith Action of Evanston.
- Service in the UMC Denomination: I am ending my time on the Board of Ordained Ministry this year. I currently serve on the Annual Conference Shepherding Team as the Justice and Mercy Ministries Representatives for the Annual Conference. I also proudly served on the NIC Delegation at General and Jurisdictional Conference

and was witness to our denomination's change to policies around LGBTQ+ people in the church.

- Worship:
    - I led two different sermon series over eight weeks this summer: "Everyday Prophets," themed around prophetic voices. "I've Been Meaning to Ask" which focused on conversations surrounding difference. I also led the effort to change our format and location for outdoor worship- from a sermon-style format located in the park, to a conversational-style format located onsite and in the Memorial Garden.
- Leadership among our staff team:
    - I've saved my favorite part of this ministry for last, my close work with my incredible colleagues. I am responsible for facilitating our weekly staff meetings and our working flow as a staff team. I am responsible for supervising the Administrative Team, Program Ministry Team, and Building/Custodian Team. I am inspired and convinced of the work of the Holy Spirit because of the ministry of my coworkers and the goals in which they work towards.

My hopes for ministry at First Church in 2025:
That in every way we will continue to grow into the vision of the body of Christ that is described in Ephesians 4. I pray that we examine what is life-giving to our church body and what might not be serving us in health and growth. I hope we live into the virtue of fearlessness through proclaiming the Gospel. I look forward to what God has in store for us as we continue to live into our baptismal covenant together.

"God handed out gifts above and below, filled heaven with holy gifts, filled earth with holy gifts. God handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13

Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
Sydney Harkrider

Youth Ministry
As I look back on the past year in our Youth Ministry, I am filled with gratitude for the countless ways God has been at work in the lives of our youth. It has been a year of growth, transformation, and service—one marked by deepening faith, increased commitment, and a strong sense of community.

Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF)
Throughout the year, our bi-monthly Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) gatherings have remained a consistent and essential part of our ministry. We have played games, had meaningful conversations, sang songs, and even done service projects during these gatherings. At the end, we always conclude with "Christ Candle", which is when we gather in a circle, pass around a prayer candle, and answer John Wesley's prompt of "how is it with your soul". This has led to deep, meaningful moments that wouldn't happen organically anywhere else on a Sunday morning.

Confirmation Sunday
In May, we celebrated the Confirmation of 10 youth after their two-year journey. The Confirmation process included a series of classes that focused on understanding Methodist beliefs, the Bible, figuring out what faith means to each of us, and why they might want to say "yes" to this church. Before service, all the youth during the breakfast celebration spoke on their favorite verse, and this moment is always so special for me because even the shyest of youth have their big moment to tell us about their own faith journey. This is such a milestone day for each of these youth, and the joy it brings me to see them all be Confirmed is immeasurable.

Appalachia Service Project Mission Trip
We had the opportunity to serve others through the Appalachian Service Project (ASP) for our 26th year. The 20 youth worked hard alongside 9 adult leaders to make a tangible difference in the lives of others, learning the value of service and teamwork while putting their faith into action. The ASP trip was an eye-opening experience for many of our youth as about 50% of our group were new to this experience.
I have to give a special shout out to the adult volunteers who served that week. It still brings tears to my eyes because each and every one of them gave it their all, and it wouldn't have been a success without their teamwork and problem solving skills. Thank you will truly never be enough.
No words can fully explain what ASP means to those who attend, but one of our first-year attendees kept telling everyone that ASP was the best week of their life, and I will hold that in my heart for the rest of my days. ASP is a year-long preparation event, but knowing our youth are having these sorts of moments make it all worthwhile.

Looking Ahead
As I reflect on the successes of this past year, I am filled with a deep sense of hope for the future. With the continued support of our young adult leaders, parents, pastors, staff, and the congregation, the growth this ministry has experienced is not just in numbers, but in the hearts and lives of the youth who are learning to embrace faith and to seek justice in the world around them. Each step forward reveals new leaders, new friendships, and a growing commitment to living out the values of compassion, service, and justice. The future of our Youth Ministry is bright, and I trust that God will work through the youth, equipping them to serve others and to challenge injustice however it presents itself.

Young Adult Ministry

The Young Adult Ministry is one that I am so incredibly honored to be part of, and equally proud of how this community has grown over the past year. The heartbeat of this ministry remains rooted in connection, support, and a shared commitment to do everything with a sense of love.

Bi-Monthly Potlucks

Thanks to the Bailey family allowing us to borrow their home, one of the foundational aspects of our ministry has been our potlucks. On average, we have 12 young adults attend each potluck, making for warm, lively discussions and a space to deepen relationships. The shared meals have truly become a place of home, where new faces are welcomed, and old friends are encouraged.

It is also worth noting that some students who have attended in the past are experiencing food insecurity. Having a potluck twice a month like this gives a chance for those who may need a free meal to be able to stop by, eat as much as needed, and even take home leftovers. These potlucks are essential for not just community building, but also making sure those we care about are able to eat.

Monthly Social Events

Each month, we have a social event to help our community connect in a fun, low-pressure environment. These events are varied in nature, ranging from trivia nights, drag bingo, and even heading down to Howl at the Moon to enjoy music together. The goal is to create an atmosphere where our young adults can build friendships that go beyond Sunday mornings and grow together as a community. These events have been consistently well-attended, and we are thrilled to see relationships deepen with each passing month.

Retreat

A highlight of our year was our successful Young Adult Retreat in April. Ten young adults came together for a weekend of reflection, rest, and spiritual renewal. The retreat was a time to step away from the busyness of daily life, engage in games, participate in meaningful worship, and connect deeply with each other. It was a powerful experience for those who attended, and we are already looking forward to next year's retreat as we continue to cultivate an environment of spiritual growth and soul renewal.

Growth and Gratitude

I am deeply thankful for each and every member of this ministry. You all make this community feel like home. Your laughter, support, prayers, and love are the heartbeat of what we do. I'm excited to see how we will continue to grow together in the coming year, and I look forward to the many ways God will use us to bless others and be a light in our community.

Director of Children's Ministry
Colin McDonald

Children's Council / Children's Ministry

Toward the end of last year's annual report, I wrote, on behalf of First Church's Children's Council, that in the year to come we hoped to continue down the road of meeting children and families where they are and together following Christ's lead. I'm gladdened to report that we've succeeded insofar as staying true to our goal of letting go the urge to exhaust ourselves and others in the process of buying or selling the always enticing, ever elusive "next big thing" in children's ministry in favor of letting more moments at hand become "the new [big] thing" God is already doing. So, how did "we" do it? As it — or the Spirit — happens, by taking solace and strength in accord with the same themes that inspired this fall's stewardship campaign of "collaboration, connection and care."

Starting off the year in a spirit of collaboration, we coordinated with the Adult Christian Education Council to take part in churchwide conversations and spiritual practices based on Adam Hamilton's *The Walk*, adapting the text's five essential Christian practices for children of all ages during Messy Church, weekly worship, and Children's Chapel as together we journeyed through Lent and for the second time in recent years helped make "One Church, One Book" a more genuinely inclusive and representative endeavor. We continued to seek out and strengthen extant collaborations among church committees, including Earth Care and Mission and Outreach, whose various entities joined us in Children's Chapel and Connect456 to introduce their area of outreach, its impact in the community, and invite children to participate as agents of change. Our working together led this fall to the formation of a new service and fellowship group for children in grades 1-6, *Children in Action*, which meets monthly for children to build on their learning by doing, supporting a faith-educational praxis of reflection and experience.

Sharing gifts and resources for the third year in a row with First United Methodist Church of Downers Grove for June's Creation Camp at Wesley Woods, we branched out further to welcome and connect with children, youth, and adults from two additional United Methodist churches in the Northern Illinois Conference. And in August we introduced an extended morning version of our original Vacation Bible School program, *Faith in the Wild*, timed to coincide and help bridge the children's care and programming gap between area summer camps and start of the new school year. Adjusting our budget to offset costs of providing lunch and materials at no cost to participants, our good intentions "paid off," not only in terms of increasing participation by an eye-popping 400% but more importantly making connections in and beyond our First Church community with several new families and returning area organizations steeped in environmental stewardship and education. It is our fervent hope to increase our financial and volunteer-based investment in this and other outdoor camp experiences in the coming year in prayerful effort to extend not just the length but socio-economic reach of said experiences that we might ourselves get out

and play, so to speak, learning more about and from the greater Evanston ecosystem in which we've been given to grow.

What is perhaps our most popular and more generally creative program, *Messy Church*, had by year's end prompted us to answer the question of meeting people where they are with a shared assertion of care. *Messy Church* is a monthly, informal and intergenerational retake on traditional Sunday school with myriad choices of art projects, experiments, acts of service, and a celebratory, participative liturgy. The program regularly attracts 50+ children, youth, and adults, including first time visitors, and serves often as a meeting place for otherwise disparate areas and ages of ministry. In offering choice, we hope to let children (and the child in all of us) lead and learn by way of doing, deciding, and making meaning for themselves, though decidedly not *by* themselves. How, we wondered, could we approach children's ministry on the whole with a heart and eye toward such discovery? What would make church feel more like a place one is not only nominally welcome but free to be themselves, free to be more generously known?

With these questions in mind, we stepped into Rally Day on surer footing of our role as caretakers or — to borrow a term from Dr. Alison Gopnik — "gardeners," cultivating space at First Church where good things can grow. We adopted and adapted a new Sunday school curriculum, *All Together Sunday School*, which more closely mirrors the structure and setting of Messy Church; we participated in a research study with the *Sacred Roots Family Faith Formation Initiative* which seeks to help faith leaders better understand and support the needs of Christian parents and caregivers as they raise young children in the faith; and as of this writing we are in the process of expanding and imagining anew our third floor classrooms to offer a dedicated, collaborative makers space.

In all of these efforts, we pray that as children come to experience and see themselves more fully alive as children of God, they may come, in turn, to see and share their gifts. May we as a community of faith extend our hearts and hands in great thanksgiving.

Minister of Music & Organist
Brian Schoettler

Music continues to be an essential part of worship here at First Church and continues to be a vital source of sustenance in the times in which we live. During the program year the Chancel Choir faithfully provides weekly music and our Children's and Handbell Choirs perform every 4-6 weeks. Choral selections and hymnody draw from a wide variety of styles, eras, and cultures to illuminate scripture readings and invite the congregation into prayer, praise, and meditation. Over 75 individuals are regular, volunteer participants in our Music Ministry supported by our section leaders, our Music Assistant Cody Michael Bradley, myself, and other guest musicians.

Our worship services continue to include a diverse repertoire of music that utilizes the various gifts of our choirs and musicians. Especially notable are the number of recent additions to our repertoire that diversify and elevate our musical offerings. They include: Peace I leave with you and Nunc dimittis (Amy Beach), O vos omnes (Pablo Casals), The Savior's Birth (Marques Garrett), O Love (Elaine Hagenberg), May the Lord be with you (Robert A. Harris), Walk together, children (Moses Hogan), Pie Jesu (Mary Lynn Lightfoot), We shall walk through the valley (Undine Smith Moore), O Lord, my God (S.S. Wesley), Earth Mass (Paul Winter), Sing, dance, clap your hands (Harriet Ziegenhals), and organ works by Alberto Ginastera, Adolphus Hailstork, Carl Haywood, Cecilia McDowall, Mark Miller, and André Thomas. Some additional worship highlights were the Children's Choir's performance of a Handel piece with our newly-donated harpsichord, the Tomás Luis de Victoria's *St. John Passion* on Good Friday, Easter brass with my *Festive Intrada* that I composed last fall for the Gaudete Brass, and a volunteer brass quintet on Rally Day. Summer worship featured 2 Sundays with Summer Choir, a flute choir, and our Outdoor Worship Ensemble anchored by 10 instrumentalists from our congregation. On April 7 and October 20 I collaborated with Stephen Alltop and the Millar Chapel Choir as we hosted them as our guest musicians – underscoring our connection to Northwestern.

In addition to Sunday morning worship, our Music Ministry continues to offer three annual concerts which feature sacred, choral masterworks as well as our sanctuary's mighty, Austin pipe organ. These concerts are free and open to the public and allow the larger community to join us in our beautiful sanctuary for larger, sacred works that exceed the scope of a typical worship service. These Music Ministry concerts are always free as a gift to our congregation and community with donations beyond the budget supporting the expenses involved. Our Festival Choir's spring concert featured Paul Winter's *Earth Mass* featuring percussion, saxophone, and recordings of animals along with the choir along with Vierne's *Messe solennelle* which was 3 years in the making as we recorded it virtually when the pandemic made in-person concerts impossible. In November, the Festival Choir presented Part 1 of Handel's *Messiah* featuring our section leaders as soloists and string players from Northwestern University. Noteworthy is the number of singers involved in Festival Choir. In the spring we had 41 singers with 8 of them being volunteers from the community beyond our congregation. In the fall we had 45 singers join us with 18 of them being volunteers from the community beyond our congregation. What a great way to connect with our community and for music to bring us together!

Looking ahead to 2025, save the date for our Organ Day concert on March 21 and Festival Choir Concert on May 16. The organ concert falls on Bach birthday and the all-Bach program will include Bach's monumental *Passacaglia* and the *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor*. The spring Festival Choir concert will feature Parts 2 and 3 of Messiah (Handel) with orchestra. We present this work every 3 years and counterbalance it with other choral masterworks in the other years. Collaborative work also continues with other ministry areas in the church and especially with the Children's Ministry as I teach music monthly during Children's Chapel and weekly in November as we prepare for our pageant.

With the close of 2024, thanks to outgoing musicians Ashley, Elizabeth, Patrick, and Sam for their ministry, welcome to new musicians Alice, Anna, Antoinette, Madeleine, Mary, Matthew, William, and welcome back to Nicolette. Special thanks to Sam Overton for his decades of service in our Chancel Choir, to Nancy Rose for her help with robe repair and the pageant, and to Frank Rose for his last-minute videography assistance at our fall concert. I look forward to the Music Ministry's continued work in 2025 as we continue to sing justice and joy into our weary world – giving voice to the hope Christ brings.

In Christ,

Dr. Brian Schoettler

Administrative Reports

Jessica Chadwick, Chairperson
Church Council

Back in June, Church Council made the decision to take a bit of a pause before creating a new Strategic Plan, really just weeks after General Conference had concluded. Rather than potentially rush to get something drafted and finalized in time for the start of our current programmatic year, we collectively decided to extend the current Strategic Plan for another year so that Council could take some extra time both to reflect on General Conference and to continue to seek input from stakeholders and focus groups throughout First Church. In the interim, we have encouraged committees, fellowship groups, and staff to orient their work around a theme of "Collaboration, Connection, and Care," a theme which builds on goals and objectives represented in the still-current Plan and, of course, in FUMC's Mission Statement.

Pursuant to those goals, Council itself has been collaborating, connecting, and making determined efforts to extend care toward our leadership teams, our staff, and our congregation. Members of Council have collaborated with Linda Brennan to help troubleshoot and promote wider use of Realm in an effort to improve communication within committees and for the benefit of our FUMC staff. Council's July and August meetings were largely devoted to planning our Annual Leadership Retreat, at which some forty members of our leadership team learned about new and pre-existing resources available to help them in their work, all now conveniently housed in one location on FUMC's website, thanks to the efforts of our staff. The retreat also featured both whole-group and breakout-group discussions around FUMC's goals for the current programmatic year and visioning for the future as Council works toward creating FUMC's next strategic plan.

During monthly meetings, Council has welcomed guests representing other FUMC committees such as Finance and SPRC, as well as guests representing "voices from the pews." Outside of full-Council meetings, we have two subcommittees which regularly meet as well: a Strategic Planning Subcommittee, led by Vice-Chair Matt Moy-Johnson, and a Governance Subcommittee, led by Jessica Chadwick. The Strategic Planning Subcommittee is connecting with and soliciting feedback from interviews and focus groups – and in the near future a survey – in an effort to ensure that when we craft our next Strategic Plan it will be one that is truly representative of our Beloved Community. The goals of the Governance Subcommittee – based on feedback Council received from committee chairs last year – include assessing both our current governance model and other models used throughout the denomination, with an eye toward ensuring that our model is one that best serves our staff, our leadership teams, and our congregation.

Beth Swanick, Chairperson
Staff Parish Relations Committee

Per The United Methodist Book of Discipline, ¶258, #2, "…The committee shall assist the pastors and staff in assessing their gifts, maintaining health holistically and work-life balance, and setting priorities for leadership and service." ¶258, #2, g) continues with a long list of no less than 17 duties that the committee is responsible for. They can be divided into the three categories of First Church's focus for this program year:

CONNECTION:

- To promote unity
- Consult with pastors and staff on matters of importance to the mission and ministry of the congregation
- To communicate and interpret to the congregation about the nature and function of United Methodist ministry
- To enlist, interview, evaluate and recommend to the church conference any persons for ordained ministry, lay preachers, or lay missionaries
- To communicate and interpret for the congregation about the nature and function of ministry in the United Methodist Church

COLLABORATION:

- To promote unity
- To confer with and counsel the pastors and staff on matters pertaining to the effectiveness of ministry, an d relationships with the congregation
- To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in collaboration with the senior pastor
- Consult with pastors and staff on matters of continuing education, work-life balance, dimensions of personal health and wellness, and to arrange with the church council the necessary time and financial assistance for attendance of the pastors and/or staff at continuing education, self-care, and spiritual renewal, and to encourage staff to seek professional certifications in their areas of specialization

CARE:

- To promote unity (yes, I've included it with all three categories – it's not a mistake)
- To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support and respect the pastors, staff, and their families
- To recommend to the church council, the professional and other staff positions (whether employee or contract) needed ot carry out the work of the church or charge
- To educate the church community on the value of diversity in selection of clergy and staff
- To encourage, monitor, and support clergy and staff in pursuit of health and wholeness

To be sure, there are others in a very detailed list, not excluding staying abreast of applicable emplacement laws and sound Human Resources practices. Your 2024 SPRC has endeavored to do all of these things, and more.

We began 2024 with a long-postponed agenda item from previous years, that is to complete an updated staff handbook. We conferred with other churches, with the conference, and with our District Superintendent, and have had a working draft for the bulk of the year. We intend to complete that before the end of the first quarter of 2025, and roll that out.

SPRC has also interviewed and recommended to the midyear church conference several candidates for ministry. Our then-District Superintendent has commented to Pastor Grace and to the Bishop's Cabinet that First Church is very successful in identifying and recommending candidates for Ordained Ministry. And while these candidates are now under the nurture and care of the Lake North District and our new DS, Pastor Vic Melad, First Church still offers them love and emotional support as they continue on their journey and discernment toward ordained ministry.

In the summer, SPRC determined that the staff, both clergy and lay staff, seemed to be working in silos, and we decided to explore options to help them collaborate more closely. After several meetings with staff, our pastors, and with our District Superintendent, we decided to contract with a consultant to assist in reshaping the collaboration between our lay staff, our pastors, and SPRC. Thanks to a grant from First Church Council, SPRC was able to contract with this consultant to enhance team-building and collaboration. This work is ongoing, and we anticipate that this work will bring enhanced, even exceptional, collaboration in the programing of the ministries of First Church. The contract with the consultant will end in January.

Fall has brought staffing challenges as two of our lay staff have moved on to other opportunities, and our Director of Membership and Communication was granted a renewal leave. And recently, our AV Director has resigned. SPRC has worked diligently to ensure that we are using the financial resources of the church wisely, and are presenting a budget today that reduces our fulltime headcount, and refocuses the Director of Membership on those responsibilities only, in light of changing forces within our society and all Protestant denominations.
2025 offers the opportunity to roll out the new handbook, a review of benefits and compensation costs, and the fruitful results of the consultant/team building process. We also have a new class of Candidates for Ordained Ministry that we will be introducing at our mid-year church conference, in May or June.

Rich Grodsky, Chairperson
Finance Committee

The Finance Committee began the new fiscal year with various new objectives in order to do the following,

1) Shorten the budgeting process to have the budget approved in December for a January 1st implementation. Compressing the process caused some challenges but the task was completed.
2) Training staff and church leaders in budgeting and involving more people in the process had a positive impact on the budget, and that most budget numbers were generated by those responsible for their areas of expertise. While the process was not always smooth, the committee will evaluate and adjust as required.
3) Thanks to cooperation by and between various church committees there was better communication and expressed expectations for the goals of the FY2025 budget. This is an area that needs further examination. With the new strategic plan being developed, the committee hopes that measurable goals and direction will aid in determining a culture of accountability in programs and services.
4) Church Treasurer continued work developing straight forward policies and procedures in concert with the Book of Discipline. Also resumed sending Church Leaders monthly financial statements for their review.
5) 501 Accountants was given notice that the Church would only use them if required. Athina Sato, accounting contractor, will handle accounting transactions with additional help in training and church leaders familiar with transactions. This will begin January 1, 2025.
6) A meeting with Bundled Blessings will be scheduled for January 2025 to help develop ways to help them improve the program and become even more viable.
7) In March 2025, Finance will look for a new auditing firm for 2025 audit to commence May 2026., , discussing taking advantage of the successes and correcting deficiencies in FY 2025..

The Finance Committee thanks the entire congregation, leaders, staff, both Pastors Grace and Britt for their support to keep First United Methodist Church Evanston a great place for worship, families and service to the community, while remaining financially secure.

Program Committees & Councils

Dennis Barbour, Chairperson, Jan Womack, Vice Chairperson
Adult Christian Education Council

The mission of the Adult Christian Education Council is to provide opportunities to learn, reflect, and explore in a supportive community so that we grow in our relationship with God and each other, and live our faith in the world. Adult Christian Education Council oversees programming that involves both short-term, single-topic classes meeting on Sunday mornings before worship or during the week for 1-6 sessions and small groups that meet regularly throughout the church year. Our goal is to offer formats and topics that appeal to a variety of demographics.

Our committee has offered adult Christian education opportunities every Sunday morning during the Sunday School hour in 2024 (outside of holidays), in hopes of re-establishing a regular opportunity (habit) for relational discipleship during that time, providing space for parents to connect while their children/youth attend Sunday School, and helping to increase attendance at church.

Adult Christian Education Council continues to practice collaboration with the following groups in planning adult offerings: Faith Formation, Social Justice, Mission and Outreach, Youth, Children's Council, Earth Care Task Force, and the Reconciling Ministries Taskforce. We believe that continued and improved collaboration and communication between committees can help create rich experiences for adult Christian growth, opportunities for intergenerational connection, and faith in action.

Concerning how Adult Education impacts people's lives, we have programmed our classes to offer information about issues in our community and world at large, and how our faith guides us in responding to them. A summary of these 2024 classes follows.

In 2024, ACE sponsored a class on Homelessness in Evanston co-led by Ann Weatherhead and Melissa Appelt. This class provided information on this serious and growing problem in our community and offered practical advice on ways to help the homeless. Guest speakers attended and participation for classes ran up to 30 people per meeting. A single class follow-up class entitled Revisiting Homelessness was led by Ann Weatherhead in May. During the Lenten season, ACE distributed copies of Adam Hamilton's *The Walk* as a spiritual guide for observing the season. Multiple classes were offered, both remote and in person, during each week, both during the day and in the evening. Approximately 100 people participated in class meetings. Also in the spring, ACE offered a class on the Israel-Hamas conflict featuring guest speakers representing both sides in the conflict as well as an overview of the conflict and discussions for promoting a peaceful solution. In April, a four-week Earth Care class was offered. In May, May, Social Justice hosted Dr. Bruce Rigdon to lead a discussion of The Invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the Impact on the Role of the Orthodox Church in both countries.

In June, ACE leadership changed as Allison Greer and Henry Carrigan ended their terms of service. Dennis Barbour and Jan Womack assumed duties as Chair and Vice Chair.

During the summer, ACE worked to expand adult Sunday School class offerings. Weighing offers to teach from Jim Hagedorn, Matt Rader/Kristi Hubbard, and Joe Agne, the committee discussed possible topics of interest and identified four educational tracks. These tracks fell under the following labels: Methodism 101 (Jim,), Social Justice (Joe), The Christian Experiment (Matt and Kristi), and Living the Faith (Barbara Sittler). Discussions with the committee and with potential teachers continued through the summer. Rooms, AV equipment, and other logistical arrangements were made through the Church Office. To further the coming year's theme of connectedness, an all-church Celebration Sunday was scheduled for each first Sunday of the month, starting on September 8th. In order not to disrupt the adult classes, it was agreed to limit the time period to 9:15-9:30. On Sunday, October 27th, Dr, Bruce Rigdon returned to lead a discussion of Christian Nationalism.

On September 8th, the first Celebration Sunday lasted for one hour as each teacher presented an overview of their class. To accompany the presentations, Linda Brennan prepared a colorful brochure which was distributed at the meeting to promote the classes. The goal was to encourage attendance and to let members choose which class to visit and/or attend regularly. The reaction to the teachers' enthusiasm for their classes was to quickly populate the classes on September 15th. The only class which did not attract an audience was Living the Faith which was designed to help people deal with life's difficulties, such as loneliness, aging and elder care, grief and loss. Dennis and Barbara Sittler discussed promoting the class to a remote audience and offer it again in the winter/spring. Through November, the three active classes have averaged about ten attendees per class.

During September, a church-wide initiative to encourage us to use Realm took place. Linda Brennan served as trainer to anyone needing to learn Realm. Concerning ACE, Linda met with the committee and gave it an orientation. The goal of this effort is to enhance publicity for our programs, communicate with established classes, record attendance, and work with the Church Office on logistical matters, such as room assignments and AV equipment set-up.
The main challenges we face in our program are availability of rooms and availability, and functionality of AV equipment.

ACE is pleased with the response we have received to our expanded offerings this fall. As far as our main hope, we want to see the strong response from the congregation to our class offerings in 2025 with continued healthy attendance. In that respect, we are discussing continuation of our existing classes for 2025. We believe that these offerings further our church's goal of Collaboration, Connection, and Care.

Cate Whitcomb and Patty Baker, Co-Chairpersons
Archives Committee

It seems appropriate to begin this year's report with the introduction from last year: *The year has been one of on-going projects of getting various materials organized. There are more projects than can be easily managed and we anticipate many more years of reporting "we continue to get organized."*

The most interesting event for the archives was the three visits from people affiliated with the Aoyama Gakuin University in Japan. The reason these people came was they were looking for information about Dora Schoonmaker who was commissioned as a missionary to Japan in 1874 from the Methodist Episcopal church in Evanston. She went to Japan and was one of the founders of the Aoyama Gakuin University. She founded a primary school which later became the University. They are celebrating the Gakuin's Sesquicentennial this year and are looking for all the information about Dora they could find. They already know a lot about her. She was not a member of our congregation from any records we have, and they know she came from Morris, Illinois. However, when I searched the ***Evanston Index*** in the Evanston library we found a long story about a meeting held in our church (the old brick one that was torn down) on September 26, 1874 where Dora and 2 other young women spoke, who were going into the mission field.

The article begins:
The missionary meeting at the First Methodist Church Sunday evening was a splendid affair. Every part of the house was crowded with hearers. It was, doubtless, the finest audience that ever assembled together in a place of worship in Evanston. we noticed many of the influential members of sister churches who were attracted by the announcement that young ladies on their way to foreign missionary fields would address the assembly …

Mr. Makoto Kawami at Aoyama Gakuin University in Japan was the initial contact and he brought visitors on 3 separate dates during the summer. He is a law professor and spent this year at Notre Dame and hosted all the visitors. Mr. and Mrs. Yasuhiko Ito came 2 times. They live in Naperville. They came the first time in April and again in July. He was described as the director of alumni. They said there about a dozen alumni of Aoyama Gakuin University in the Chicago area. Rev. Keiko Tanamura was the former lecturer of Aoyama Gakuin Women's Junior College and the former professor at Tokyo Women's Christian University. And she is the author of the biography of Dora E. Schoonmaker who pioneered the History of Aoyama Gakuin, beginning the girls' elementary school in 1874. Also Mr. Satoru Itoh. Satoru is the head chaplain of Aoyama Gakuin School Cooperation visited at the end of July.

Other than those visits our work continues are before, researching and recording information about baptisms, weddings and funerals and memorial services. We have subscribed to the website, Find A Grave, and entered Nicholas Perry as our first member. We are

investigating how to upload all the information on all of those interred in the memorial garden.

Andy Shotwell, Chairperson
Communications Committee

In 2024 the Communications Committee (Comm Comm) focused on

- Learning On Realm in order to be advocates for the tools and capabilities
- Refreshed faithatfirst.org photos and verbiage to reflect current members and leadership

In 2025 Comm Comm will be focused in the following areas:

- Tweaking the faithatfirst.org website menu structure for usability
- Re-hosting faithatfirst.org to a new hosting provider
- Updating faithatfirst.org to pull detailed analytics to better understand viewer's needs
- Advocate for Realm and its capabilities
- Refining our audit of existing communications and using the findings of the audit to improve and focus the church's reach

Our 2025 challenge is to determine the best platforms and methods to reach all members where they are. First Church is diverse community; we must learn how to appeal to and communicate with everyone where they are. To support this, we are further developing our audit of all platforms and channels so that we can identify opportunities for rightsizing our communications.

As part of understanding our community we will be expanding upon our search engine optimization capabilities on faithatfirst.org. Analytics will help focus our attention on key areas for improvement and guide our strategy to attract and engage our audience more effectively.

2023-24 Committee members:

Bruce Baumberger, Wendy Istvanick, Joe Bare, Andy Shotwell, Frank Montagna, Matt Diener, Liesl Hoeldtke, Beverly Olson

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Susan Prout, Chairperson
Congregational Care Committee

The Congregational Care Committee has continued to minister to and support our congregation in a variety of ways.

We are again planning to host an Advent luncheon on December 11th. Brian Schoettler will provide festive music, which will be followed by lunch. Last year we served approximately 59 seniors, church staff and volunteers, and we hope to serve even more this year! We will use the church's dishes, silverware and cloth tablecloths to reduce paper waste.
We are putting together 10 Christmas gift bags on December 8 filled with items purchased and donated by committee members which will be delivered to people with lay visitors and others.

Other ministries to our members continue. Our greeting card ministry reaches members with birthday wishes and other greetings. The Lay Visitor ministry continues, and we continue to host receptions after memorial services at the Church. The meal ministry has recently been coordinated through the church office, but if anyone is interested in leading that please let me know.

We have a coordinated a tea to be hosted by The Merion on February 13 for residents there with Pastor Grace.

If there are other areas the congregation believes our committee could help out with, please contact me. We welcome all ideas and offers of assistance.

Faith Formation Council
Tom Scott, Lee Rader, Co-Chairpersons

We are grateful for the dedicated work of the Faith Formation Council in 2024. We have assurance in our hearts and based on kind feedback from participants that our work did indeed make a difference! Through offerings of Compline night prayer; covenant groups such as the MLK Birmingham Volunteer Pledge group, St. Francis Peace Prayer groups & the Covenant Hike group; Learning the Prayer of Examen; Faith Around the Table Groups; the Advent Daily Devotional booklet; and an Advent prayer group, we trust that participants were helped to grow in their relationship with God and to connect with one another. We believe that through deepening spiritual practices, participants are better equipped to love and act in the example of Jesus, who himself was deeply grounded in these practices.

We find a growing edge in encouraging congregants to try spiritual practices which may stretch them beyond more familiar avenues of spiritual growth.

Having a full council as of July (until then we had not experienced the gift of a fully slated council), we hope to offer new opportunities emanating from the gifts and ideas of our newest council members. We also hope to repeat and grow offerings which have had a broad appeal.

Lynelle Diener, Chairperson
Membership Committee

The work and focus during 2024 continued from our work in 2023 which included outreach to the various segments of our church population: those considering joining the church including regular visitors, existing members, and those who we think have moved away, moved on, or passed away. The intention was to introduce ourselves as people who can help connect them to activities/other members and to foster engagement depending on needs and interests.

The insights we gained from these outreach efforts inspired us to take a step back and pause. Although we learned so much, we don't feel we have a clear understanding of the behavior of our current church community. We are not blind to the fact that the past five years have impacted how people "church" and that many members and visitors engage with church differently than in the past. We are compelled to learn how to meet them where they are and nurture engagement accordingly. This next year we, in partnership with staff, clergy, and Church Council, we will be analyzing each phase of the Membership Journey from visitor to Inquirer, Inquirer to new member, active members and non-active members with the intention of identifying opportunities to inspire and cultivate engagement at each phase.

The Membership Committee continues to sponsor and engage in a variety of events that help to connect visitors and members with the church and its community: Fuel Your Faith Activity Fair (twice a year to help connect with activities and church groups), Visitor Coffee and First Church Ministry Tour (for visitors/potential new members to learn about the various ministry areas throughout the church), Inquirer's Reunion (new this year to reconnect Inquirer's cohorts, strengthen connection and identify engagement needs/opportunities), and Bagel Sunday (to help connect visitors to engagement opportunities outside of worship). Attendance at these events has been significant and encouraging. The "Ask Me" program continues to be a focus. We ask members, who are comfortable doing so, to wear a yellow "Ask Me" button/sticker to reflect our collective responsibility to demonstrate hospitality and warm welcome to those who visit First Church.

Looking to this next year and beyond, our hope is to gain a clearer understanding of our existing church community and those who seek to be a part of it. This will help us to build programs and support efforts that inspire connection to First Church and its mission, build engagement among all communities, and ignite a collective purpose of service and fellowship that binds us in active Christian love and community.

Beth Tipton, Chairperson
Mission and Outreach

Mission and Outreach at First Church encompasses a wide range of activities of many

subcommittees, programs, and partnerships. The Mission and Outreach Committee (M&O) is charged with the oversight of these activities with a goal of caring for people in need and supporting the congregation as we live our faith in the world through experiences, education, and support.

The committee includes Beth Tipton (chair), Dave Koester (soup kitchen lead), Rich Hobson (sack lunch ministry lead), Ann Weatherhead (Interfaith delegate), Sharon Campbell, Karin Dillon, and Steve Betzner. Pastor Britt Cox served as the Staff Liaisons this year.

Ministries include:

Soup Kitchen: Dave Koester

The number of diners visiting our soup kitchen has steadily risen since fall 2023, and there has been a dramatic step-change increase in fall 2024. The number of diners is now in the 80-95 range, which is nearly double the 2023 average of 50 diners. The seating capacity of our dining room is 74 people – the soup kitchen is now constrained by seating capacity. Similar increases are being experienced by other community meal programs.

There has been slight but insufficient improvement in the recruitment of volunteers for dining room teams. Over half of new volunteers leave the program within a few months. Only one in four new volunteers turns out to be a reliable full-time participant in the program. The net result is that the number of dining room team members has only increased by three people over the last two years.

Upon reopening in late 2022 after the pandemic closure, two of our external cooking partner organizations did not return to soup kitchen service, resulting in a loss of the food procurement and cooking team for nine Thursdays. Another reduction resulted in six additional meal losses.

There are currently five external faith organization cooking partners continuing to reliably prepare and serve the dinner for a total of 33 Thursdays. Four new community organizations provided a total of five dinners in 2024; one has already committed to continue in 2025. It is anticipated that the 2025 schedule of cooking commitments will have about nine open dates, most in the summer months.

At a higher level, significant structural and cultural changes are critical to the survival of the soup kitchen. There must be ownership of the soup kitchen by the church lay administration and the congregation. The soup kitchen, which serves a full dinner to nearly 95 people every week, needs much greater attention from the church administrative leadership. The soup kitchen sorely needs a dedicated hands-

on, 'do the work' multi-person leadership team to actively recruit cooking teams, secure sufficient dining host team members, prepare and operate the dining room, and perform the many unseen yet necessary kitchen readiness tasks to host an event of this magnitude every week. The soup kitchen will not survive if it continues to be considered as an orphan program that will grow and operate automatically with very little attention from the church as a whole.

Sack Lunch Ministry: Rich Hobson

In the Fall season of 2023 we restarted the Sack Lunch Ministry that had paused during the pandemic. This ministry provides 60 sandwiches and lunch sides to the Good News Partners in Rogers Park, Chicago, which helps homeless families. We began by making lunches most weeks on Sunday after worship service and got help from many youth and adults during Fellowship Hour. Recently we have changed the schedule to make sack lunches before Sunday services, getting help from the Messy Church families and Confirmation Class. These cover the first two weeks of the month. If we can get more volunteers via our Realm sign-up, we may add more weeks during the month.

Overnight Shelter

FUMC hosted three weeks of the overnight shelter organized by Interfaith Action of Evanston. The three weeks we host begin around Christmas Eve and extend through the first half of January. As in previous years, Interfaith provided paid staff to spend the night at the shelter. A dedicated group of First Church volunteers helped open, host, and close the shelter. The shelter held 30 in 2023-24.

Walk for Warmth: Ann Weatherhead

The 5th annual Walk for Warmth took place on January 15th, 2024 to raise awareness and provide support for people in our community who are experiencing homelessness and food insecurity. FUMC joined Interfaith Action and several other organizations. This year, because of the unusually cold weather, the walk was very short and more time was spent together in FUMC's sanctuary, singing and honoring this day of service together.

SnapGap: Melissa Appelt

First United Methodist Church's annual coordination of SNAPGap engages youth, families, and the entire congregation in this Interfaith Action program. The SNAP-Gap program collects personal hygiene and household items and distributes them to people in need at the monthly Produce Mobile at Robert Crown Community Center. Named for all the necessities that cannot be purchased with the federal SNAP card, SNAPGap is coordinated by various faith communities throughout Evanston. In February/March, 2024, FUMC served as the delivery site for more than 1,000 bars of soap and 300 bottles of shampoo. Stored in the basement and unpacked and sorted by FUMC families and youth, these items were given out on March 12, gratefully received by people representing approximately 275 households.
During the month of collecting and sorting items, Church member and Interfaith Action Board President, Melissa Appelt, spoke with FUMC's children during Children's Chapel to explain the program, the people served, and why it's important. "You should do this in Chicago, too," piped up one perceptive young man, immediately recognizing the need everywhere. Others echoed with "You should do it across the country!" Perhaps someday, one of these young enthusiasts will take on the challenge.

Star Tree: Bev Otey and Linda MacCracken

In a decades long tradition of sponsoring gifts for YOU you, First Church again brought gifts for 100 children. The youth decorated stars, under Coln's leadership, the congregation picked stars of anonymous children and the Star Tree Committee, led by Bev Otey, did a terrific job of organizing and labeling stars, collecting and packing for YOU team pick up. This ongoing partnership with YOU and FUMC is crucial to YOU being able to distribute gifts made up of parental and child wishes for essential clothes, toys and books. Many additional congregation members made crucial donations that became gifts to families whose needs include holiday meal support. Bev's 5 year leadership was based on training the team to pass the baton, so the holiday of 2024 is focused on filling her very big shoes!. Committee members include Mari Leonard, Laura Mills, Debbie Zimmerman, Josh Will and Linda MacCracken, along with Bev. .

Stars: 100

Families: 69

School: 11

On-line donations: $190.00

As a nearby youth pastor compliments First Church, “Everyone in FUMC knows this is a community commitment - it’s not passing support” Our tradition represents youth commitment, well stated as ‘Greenhouses of Hope”, by Margaret Crain, where she highlighted First Church’s youth commitment success.

Change for Change: Alli Henry and Beth Tipton

In 2024, the Youth and Children’s Ministries took over leadership of Change-for-Change. As needed, the Youth identify three organizations that we could fundraise for, and then present these to the children, who vote to select one. The children are then encouraged to place coins in “Chompy”, a dinosaur shaped piggy bank. In 2024 they have been fundraising for RefugeeOne, with hopes of presenting a check before the end of the year.

Bundled Blessings: Sue Hagedorn and Nancy Brown, co-chairs

Committee: Dexter Bailey, John Bausch, Lynne Carlton, David D’Arcy, Krys Juleen,

Tina Kalil, Pam Kendall, Shanah Slade, Caroline Wagner

2024 was another big year for Bundled Blessings Diaper Bank (BBDB). We are currently distributing 47,000 diapers to over 900 children through 20 partner agencies each month, which is a 27% increase over this time last year. This includes three new partner agencies, with 3 on our wait list.

Along with the increase in diapers distributed each month, we have also implemented a donor management software, Little Green Light, switched over to Constant Contact mailing services and created our own Web Site, Bundledblessingsdiaperbank.org.

For the first time, two of our members joined other diaper banks for Lobby day in Springfield. A great opportunity to advocate for new legislation, such as a monthly diaper allowance for each child ages 3 and under.

In June we rolled out a new initiative to replace “Pack the truck”. “Diaper Days”, an on-line/in person community diaper drive and open house designed to collect diapers and increase awareness of BBDB in the community. Our goal was 50,000 diapers, which we received in dollars and diapers. We hope to continue this in 2025.

During Diaper Need Awareness Week September 23-20, we were able to get proclamations from both the Mayors of Evanston and Skokie, as well as the Niles Township Board recognizing diaper need in our communities.

We will also have our annual benefit, Bottoms Up, at Double Clutch Brewery in Evanston on Sunday Nov 17. We hope to exceed the money raised in 2023 through sponsors, generous donors and in kind donations so that we may continue to provide diapers to our current partner agencies as well as bringing in new partners from our wait list.

We continue to reach out into the greater community for support in monthly diaper bundling bringing in many new groups, as well as old, this past year. We also continue to grow our relationship with sponsors in the community such as Northwestern University. We have had the cheer squad with Willie the Wildcat, a fraternity and a group participating in the Kellogg day of service all in to bundle diapers.

We order our diapers in bulk through a program of the National Diaper Bank Network and in collaboration with Cradles to Crayons (also a member of the NDBN) who provides a much needed loading dock for us to receive these large shipments twice a year (over 360,000 diapers total!) We rent U-Haul trucks and with a large volunteer crew, pick them up and load them into our large annex in the church basement.

Thank you for the ongoing generosity of our church both financially and in service. We are so grateful to be able to make a difference in the lives of many of these families through the provision of bundles of diapers each month. Having a supply of clean diapers for your baby is essential to their health and well being.

Social Justice
Bonny Roth, Coordinator

Area of Responsibility: Since the September 2024 restructuring of the Social Justice Collaborative—the ongoing committees of Earth Care, chaired by Judith Campbell; Reconciling Ministries, chaired by B. J. Birkhahn-Rommelfanger; and Race and Ethnicity, chaired by Tom Butler—have been meeting monthly to coordinate our work on behalf of First Church. We have added to these committees the Adult Education's Social Justice Intersections liaison, Joe Agne, as well as a Church Council liaison, Mary Cauble.

In our monthly meetings since September, the Social Justice Collaborative has begun to share each committee's work in the recent past, present, and near future. We focus on collaborative planning, information exchange, and problem solving as we hold in the forefront of our work the intersections of justice issues.

Following this report are reports from the three committees that comprise Social Justice.

- **What impact did our committee make in people's lives?**

  On a fundamental level this committee collaborative has served as a significant support for committee chairpersons and liaisons in their personal and congregational work for social justice. They are experiencing camaraderie beyond the silos of their respective committees, while nurturing relationships among the group. Moreover, their collaboration has enhanced points of entry for new members to our congregation.

  On a broader level, this collaboration is making an impact on our congregation's life, our families' lives, and our Evanston community as we seek to address injustices. The monthly education classes in areas of social justice concerns promise to keep these issues in focus and foster deeper commitment over time.

  An example from each committee:
  Earth Care: Experiences, such as the November 17 adult education offering from Earth Care "Living a Sustainable Life Style," drew an unusually large gathering, including some infrequent participants in Sunday morning classes, and sparked commitment to follow-up actions of care for our earth. Monthly Styrofoam collection, a service not otherwise readily available in Evanston, has attracted participation beyond our church's doors and is an important step toward community-wide awareness of First Church as a church that cares for the earth.

  Race and Ethnicity: The two ongoing covenant groups with Sherman United Methodist Church are a model of building relationships and understanding that lead to personal transformation and strengthen community bonds.

  Reconciling Ministries: This committee continues to make public witness to our inclusiveness and advocacy for our LGBTQ+ siblings, while fostering relationships among our congregants.

- **Where do we find a growing edge or challenge in our specific ministry?**

  Given the current and anticipated needs of our Evanston community, we recognize the importance of expanding our reach beyond our church doors not only through our current Social Justice committees, but also through new committees that would address other injustices, such as Economic/Housing Justice and Immigration/Refugee Justice. Adding these committees may support work already undertaken by

members serving on Interfaith Action and other groups and, again, foster new awareness among our congregation at large while offering new points of entry for new members to build relationships as they serve beyond our doors.

- **Name one hope you have for the coming year (2025) that builds off of the ministry of this past year (2024).**

  As we experience the benefits of intersection as an education approach, we hope to build on that ministry in 2025 by planning quarterly "big events" that invite and extend participation within and beyond our church. The first of these events, scheduled for February 15 and 16, 2025, will celebrate the 11th anniversary of First Church becoming a Reconciling Church. The goal of these all-church events is to undergird social justice commitment and action among our members, nurture new and existing relationships among members, and expand our church's reach into and beyond our Evanston community.

Racial Justice- Tom Butler

In this year's change of structure and names, the committee that I am chair of is the Race and Ethnicity. Our focus has been in two areas, furthering partnerships with Sherman UMC in two covenant groups and our support in the Fisk University Concert held at FUMC and a Men's Retreat, led by Dr. Rod Smith as well as three educational presentations by Dr. Bruce Rigdon in collaboration with the Adult Education Council. I am grateful for the support of committee members, Robert Harris and Mary Cauble.

Reconciling Ministries /Gender Justice Task Force
B.J. Birkhahn-Rommelfanger

The Reconciling Ministries Task Force has the mission of celebrating First Church as a fully inclusive congregation with regard to gender and sexual orientation and to hold the church accountable for living up to that inclusivity. We continue to support financially the Reconciling Ministries Network.

We celebrated our 10th Anniversary with Bishop Cedric Bridgeforth in February 2024 with a special service and luncheon. During Pride Month in June we joined the Welcoming Churches of Chicago area and had participation in the Chicago Pride Parade. We also joined the Evanston Pride and had a table and joined with the Interfaith Community for a Pride Festival Day. FUMC Pride T-Shirts were made available by the Rainbow Connection.

We celebrate the action of our UM General Conference, and had members present in Charlotte, NC to witness the REMOVAL OF HARMFUL POLICIES against our clergy and church folx who identify as LGBTQIA+ or engage in marriage ceremonies.

The prohibitions to ordination and marriage finally were lifted. We appreciate Pastor Grace and Pastor Britt for their witness and preaching, and for the Church for it constant work and witness as a Reconciling Congregation to bring us to this new day of hope!

We also recognize there is much more work to be done, especially for our trans siblings in church and society. We also recognize not all of our churches are yet welcoming.

Therefore, our challenge is to hold an all day event on February 15 and an all church 11th Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, February 16, 2025 as a Reconciling Church committed to gender justice. We will invite our Northern IL Conference, Lake North District and Evanston to focus on both celebration, collaboration, community building and "where do we go from here." The theme is "Rainbows, Resistance and Reconciliation: A Celebration of our Intersectional Pride". We are seeking both national and local speakers and we seek the support of the whole congregation for this event. Our challenge post UM General Conference and post Presidential election is major! Many thanks to all.

Earth Care- Judith Campbell

The Earth Care Committee believes that we are called to "protect and repair our earth" as stated in our Strategic Plan, Value #4. Because we care passionately for our earth we have focused the following.

2024 Focus…

Earth Sunday was celebrated with our guest speaker Rev. Emily Carroll from Louisiana. She is the Northern Director for Green The Church and attended COP28. She spoke at our adult education hour (on Greening the Church from a faith-based perspective focusing on amplifying Green Liberation Theology, promoting sustainable practices and building power for political and economic changes). In addition we were blessed by her sermon during worship.

Adult Education: A four week book study was offered in April. The book was Grounded, Finding God in the Natural World by Diana Butler Bass. Judith Campbell taught the class.

Styrofoam Collection and Recycling: Each month, on the third Saturday, members of the committee stand on the steps of our Church Street Entrance to collect Styrofoam #6. We do this because locally there is no way to recycle Styrofoam, and we know that in the landfill it never disintegrates. This is a very popular event, many people from the community and some from our congregation drive up and drop off

their styrofoam with gratitude. Repeatedly we hear, "thank you for doing this". Because our collections are successful we are now in need of additional drivers to transport the styrofoam to one of two or three collection sites.

In the Evanston community we are known as "the church who helps to recycle styrofoam". In neighborhood conversations and on social media we have been referred to as the church that collects styrofoam, *"There is a church that collects styrofoam to be recycled"*

Earth Care Library: We offer a small, curated collection of books that will encourage and direct any of us to care for our earth. The books are chosen because of their hopeful and helpful messages. There are books for children, young adults and adults. The library is open once a month, on the third Sunday of the month.

Waste Audit: We conducted a waste audit by meeting with various leaders and chairs in our church to learn more about the waste that we produce as a church. We want to know where we stand and what we could change. Following the audit, we decided to start with single-use plastic waste during our social gatherings. Our hope is to become a community that produces minimal waste, after recycling, composting, etc. To accomplish this goal, we need to communicate, educate what can be recycled or composted, and use the dishwasher.

Communication Efforts: Monthly messages or articles have appeared in the weekly E-News. In addition we had a webpage during Earth Month of resources and events.

2025 Hopes. . .

1. Continue adult education with a twist, instead of one offering over a period of 3 or 4 weeks, each month a class is offered on an Earth Care topic. In collaboration with Rev. Joe Agne and the Adult Education Committee we have been doing this since October on the 3rd Sunday.
2. A Celebration of Earth Sunday in April 2025.
3. Reduce our waste and single-usage plastic by 80% during our all social gatherings.
4. Continue with our efforts with Styrofoam collecting.
5. Continue reaching out through books that inform, inspire and educate.
6. Build our communication to be a helpful resource to our constituents and community. To do this, a sub-committee for communication is being formed.

May we be known as a church that cares for God's Creation, through our actions and choices.

Paula Scholl and Dan Owens, Co-Chairpersons
Stewardship Committee

Guided by our theme of Collaboration, Connection and Care, this year's stewardship campaign celebrated the transformative impact we have achieved together and cast a bold vision for what will be possible in 2025. Our dedicated committee embraced the challenge (or as we viewed it, opportunity!) presented by scheduling this year's church conference in December, two months earlier than in previous years. We invited our beloved community to pledge early and pledge generously to support planning our budget in 2025. Throughout October, we heard witnesses to the impact made possible through fulfilling our apportionments as well as investing in our staff, our building, and educational ministries. We are so grateful for the remarkable response to this year's campaign! As of writing, we have received 194 pledges out of the 218 we are anticipating. We are continuing to follow up with households that we have not heard from yet.

We thank the members of the Stewardship Committee: Catherine Cerra, Marion Clemens, Phil Crihfield, Ivy Joe Kuruvila, Linda MacCracken, Steve Prout, Tom Scott, Beth Swanick, Ed Webler, and Cate Whitcomb, for their hard work, great ideas, and being an all-around great team.

And we thank everyone in our church community for your expression of faith in FUMC's mission and vision for 2025.

With gratitude,
Paula Scholl and Dan Owens
Stewardship Committee Co-Chairs

Jackie Owens, Chairperson
Total Child Preschool, Childcare, and Kindergarten

It has been a year of growth for Total Child (TC). Enrollment increased by more than 20% over last year, which puts us on track for better financial sustainability after a few years of operating at a deficit since the pandemic. We also began a kindergarten program which has added to our enrollment and met an important need for families in the community.

Our director has entered her second school year with a strong focus on building staff community in order to continue to make TC a place that embraces kindness, compassion, and

inclusion. While this leadership is important in shaping the culture of the school, it was also important that we make personnel adjustments to support its daily functioning. As such, we hired an additional floating teacher to increase staff support, making us more nimble in staffing as we approach the upcoming winter cold and flu season.

Community connection has also been prioritized. Through efforts made by our director, family coordinator, and families, we have increased interest and name recognition of our school. Partnering with Northwestern's theater and engineering departments has provided new opportunities for our children. They thoroughly enjoyed co-writing a play with the Northwestern theater students and performing for their families at the end-of-school-year celebration. We have many budding engineers in our building who enjoy using the ball runs created by NU's engineering students.

While the use of our building remains a wonderful gift and asset for TC, I wonder how we, as First Church, can do more to offset the expenses of the program in order to lessen the burden of childcare costs on Evanston households, increase our scholarship giving for families in need and thereby diversify the socioeconomic profile of the school, and provide increased payment and benefits to staff.

The economics of childcare and the issues surrounding care, who affords it, and who provides it remain of utmost concern.

- Childcare for 2 children costs more than rent in most cities. The annual cost for families at TC who have a 4-year-old and 2-year-old is roughly $41,000 per year. Infant care, which we do not offer, often costs much more.

- Childcare workers and early childhood educators are often undervalued and receive less competitive wages than other fields, including elementary and secondary teachers. This contributes to issues with staff retention which directly impact the families we serve. We work hard to provide competitive salaries and benefits to our staff, but we need to continue to invest in these areas in order to retain strong staff and meet the needs of our children.

As I look to the future of Total Child, as well as the future of my own children at this school, I wonder:

- What can we do to retain the fantastic staff we have?
- What additional support do we need to provide in order to ensure our school can serve children of all needs and abilities?
- What barriers are in place that prohibit TC from resembling the rich diversity of Evanston?

- How can we increase awareness and affordability so that TC becomes the best option for First Church families?

Thank you for your continued support of this ministry.

Appendices

Appendix I
First United Methodist Church of Evanston Strategic Plan
2021- 2024

Mission: First United Methodist Church is a community of Christians inviting all people to grow in their relationship with God and to live their faith in the world.

Values:
We value meaningful worship, preaching, and music that inspires people of all ages to love God and one another.
We value being a welcoming community that offers hospitality, congregational care, and fellowship for all.
We embrace individuals and families of all gender identities, sexual orientations, ethnicities, races, and economic backgrounds.
We value good works to bring justice and comfort to our beloved community, and to mend and protect our earth.
We value Christian faith formation through lifelong learning.
We value our historic building as a beacon in the community that helps make our worship and ministries possible.

Vision: "We are a community of faith seeking the transformation of the world by living out Jesus' courageous love."

We are a Community of Faith… Who we are matters!

The history of First Church that we have inherited provokes each of us to prayerfully and actively learn about the difficult and complex issues that face humanity…trusting in God as our guide. As a community, we will care for each other and grow our faith through our lifetimes. Further, we will challenge each other to question and think deeply through our worship, music, Bible study, Christian education, spiritual formation, fellowship, mission, and work for social, racial, and environmental justice.

…seeking the Transformation of the World… What we do matters!

Rooted in our faith, we will commit to changing the world in a positive, loving way, especially for those with limited power and voice. Strengthened by conviction and driven by compassion, we are called to come to the aid of all people seeking help or hope, embracing each person's unique faith, appearance, identity, and background. We will embrace those seeking shelter on our steps, with us in Sunday Worship, down the street in

Evanston, living in Appalachia, and around the world. We are committed to eliminating social and racial injustice. As the earth supports our mission, we will work to protect and repair it.

...by Living Out Jesus' Courageous Love. How we act matters!

Jesus Christ did not stand idly by during his time on earth. His behavior was considered radical because he met human beings where they were: at the well, on the road, in locked rooms, and at wedding feasts. He loved and accepted all people as God's beloved. Still, in his humanity, he could demonstrate real anger when the powerful took advantage of the powerless. At First Church, we will be brave and act with humanity and let Jesus' example be our daily guide.

Strategic Objectives

1. The Beloved Community - Cultivate a congregation that loves and acts in the example of Jesus.
2. Relational Discipleship - Design and enhance in-person and virtual ministries that foster connectedness, engagement, and growth.
3. Dismantling the Sin of Racism - Engage as a community of faith actively, critically, and courageously dismantling the sin of racism.
4. Action for Justice - Integrate action for racial, social, LGBTQIA+ and environmental justice into congregational life.
5. Financial Stewardship as Spiritual Discipline - Steward financial gifts and a balanced budget as a spiritual discipline and a tool for transformation.
6. Collaborative Leadership - Promote leadership that fosters collaboration in order to educate and empower congregational discipleship and ministry formation.
7. Building and Technologies as Fellow Disciples - Develop and maintain an efficient facility and effective technological resources as tools for sharing the Gospel.

Scope

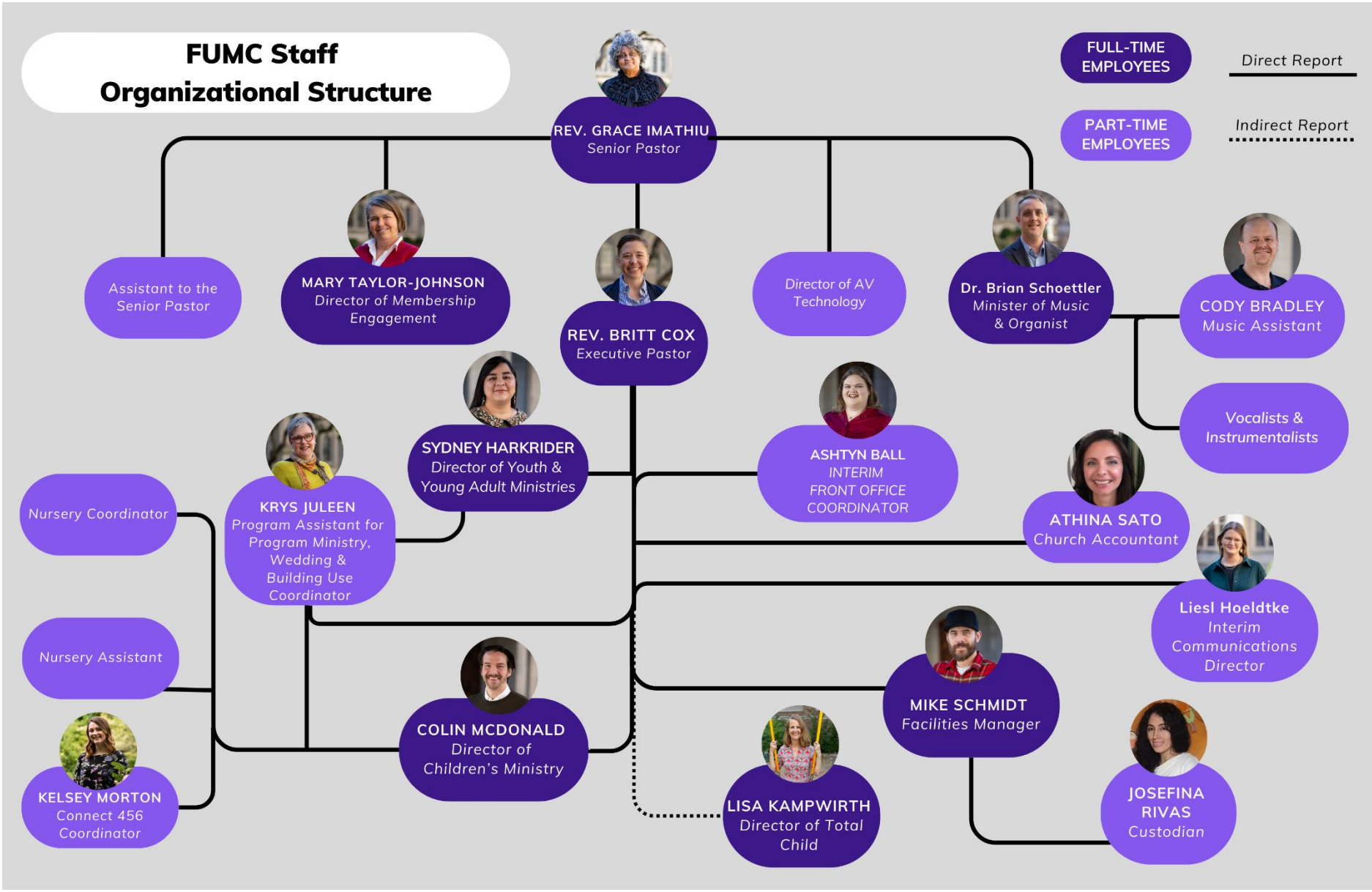
Offerings
Ministry, Worship, Education, Fellowship, Mission, Buildings and Grounds

Geographic Location
Evanston, the surrounding area, and beyond via virtual connection

Integration
Committee and staff interconnectedness and Church Council synthesis

Advantage: Ultimately, we seek to engage followers of Jesus Christ who wish to have the courage to act as He did for the benefit of others. Membership is inclusive, not exclusive, and differences of opinion on matters of faith are encouraged, not discouraged.

Appendix II


FUMC Staff
Organizational Structure
FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES
PART-TIME EMPLOYEES
Direct Report
Indirect Report
REV. GRACE IMATHIU
Senior Pastor
Assistant to the Senior Pastor
MARY TAYLOR-JOHNSON
Director of Membership Engagement
REV. BRITT COX
Executive Pastor
Director of AV Technology
Dr. Brian Schoettler
Minister of Music & Organist
CODY BRADLEY
Music Assistant
Vocalists & Instrumentalists
SYDNEY HARKRIDER
Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries
ASHTYN BALL
INTERIM FRONT OFFICE COORDINATOR
ATHINA SATO
Church Accountant
Nursery Coordinator
KRYS JULEEN
Program Assistant for Program Ministry, Wedding & Building Use Coordinator
Liesl Hoeldtke
Interim Communications Director
Nursery Assistant
COLIN MCDONALD
Director of Children's Ministry
MIKE SCHMIDT
Facilities Manager
KELSEY MORTON
Connect 456 Coordinator
LISA KAMPWIRTH
Director of Total Child
JOSEFINA RIVAS
Custodian

Appendix III
First UMC of Evanston Leadership
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025
Report from the Nominations & Leadership Development Committee

Asterisk (*) *indicates new to the committee or role*

CHURCH GOVERNANCE

CHURCH COUNCIL

Chair: Jessica Chadwick*
Vice Chair: Matt Johnson*
Senior Pastor: Rev. Grace Imathiu
LMAC Rep: Jim Hagedorn

Class of 2027: George Asante*, Mary Cauble*, Obi Nnebedum*
Class of 2026: Jessica Chadwick, Sam Erickson-Ely, Matt Johnson
Class of 2025: Todd Bowen, Linda Federer, Matt Peters

BOOK OF DISCIPLINE COMMITTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair: Martha Rudy*
Executive Pastor: Rev. Britt Cox
Liaison to Finance: Martha Rudy

Class of 2027: Grant Bailey*, Don Baker*, Carol Barnett*
Class of 2026: Kris Kallembach, Rob Meyer, Joe Womack
Class of 2025: Catherine Cerra, Martha Rudy, Cardelle Spangler

The BoT serves as the steward of the church's building and investments. Trustees liaise with community around neighborhood development and special events (i.e. Evanston Garden Walk, Open House Chicago). Near-term major projects include roof, leaded windows.

Trustee Subcommittees

Investment Subcommittee
Chair: Carol Barnett*
Class of 2027: Eric Alonso, Carol Barnett*, Geoff Renk
Class of 2026: Bob Hetzel, Andrew Baker
Class of 2025: Phil Crihfield, Karen Young

Planned Giving
Pending, pending

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair: Rich Grodsky*
Executive Pastor: Rev. Britt Cox
Church Treasurer: Nancy Pendergrass (interim until Dec. 31)
Church Financial Secretary: Melissa Appelt*
Liaison from SPRC: TBD
Liaison from Board of Trustees: TBD
Liaison from Church Council: TBD
Lay Member to Annual Conference: Phil Crihfield

Finance Committee Members at Large:
Class of 2027: Tom Clemens*, John Cheney Egan*, *pending*
Class of 2026: Rich Grodsky, Shirley Keene-Gefvert, Katy Clusen*
Class of 2025: Melissa Appelt, Diane Baker, *pending*

NOMINATIONS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Rev. Grace Imathiu, Senior Pastor
Vice Chair: Mike Bergmann*
Staff Liaison: Mary Taylor-Johnson

Class of 2027: Jon Fox*, Evelyn McGowan*, Sydney Harkrider*
Class of 2026: Nancy Pendergrass, Mike Bergmann, Liz Blackwell, Emily McClintock
Class of 2025: Cherie Asante, Julia Jackson

The committee works to (1) identify and nurture the gifts and passions of the congregation; (2) on the basis of those gifts and passions, identify and recruit persons for various First Church leadership and other ministry roles; and (3) provide intentional leadership development opportunities for adults and youth.

STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Beth Swanick
Senior Pastor: Rev Grace Imathiu
Executive Pastor: Rev. Britt Cox
Lay Member to Annual Conference: Henry Pleas

Class of 2027: Jeff Carlton*, *pending*
Class of 2026: Craig Chambers, Paul Kalil, Abby Neal
Class of 2025: Katie Brick, Abbey Ogunbola, Beth Swanick, Marion Clemens

The work of SPRC includes: budgeting (negotiating with Finance and Stewardship committees, get alignment and agreement), hiring and firing (writing job descriptions, posting jobs, interviewing, offer letters, termination letters); conflict resolution staff-to-staff and congregant-to-staff; responding to e-mails and other feedback from congregation; soliciting feedback from the congregation; update handbook; review benefits; prepare for church conference; create staff plans/goals/strategies that support the church's strategic vision; support and encourage the staff; advocate for the staff; meet with staff and listen; annual plans and feedback for the staff.

PROGRAMMATIC COMMITTEES AND INTEREST GROUPS

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COUNCIL

Chair: Dennis Barbour
Vice Chair: Jan Womack
Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class of 2027: Joe Agne*, Ron Anderson*, Dexter Bailey*
Class of 2026: Dennis Barbour, Jan Womack, Linda Brennan*
Class of 2025: Elizabeth Cummings, Greg Pool, Allison Greer

The mission of the Adult Council is to provide opportunities to learn, reflect, and explore in a supportive community so that we can grow in our relationship with God and each other, and learn how to live out our faith in the world. Our goal is to offer a variety of formats and topics throughout the program year that support the strategic plan.

ARCHIVES

Co-Chairs: Patty Baker & Cate Whitcomb
Senior Pastor: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Members: Marge Bradford, Marcia Epting, Janet Lutz, Barb Miller, Joann Rea, John Rea, Jennie Schumann*

The Archives exist to organize and retain documents, media and memorabilia that tell the history of the church's membership, worship committee activities and mission outreach.

CHILDREN'S COUNCIL

Chair: Jessica Radcliffe
Staff Liaison: Colin McDonald

Class of 2027: Eli Hetland*, Zoe Dillon* (youth); Griffin O'Connor* (youth)
Class of 2026: Laura Curry, Mary Hetzel, Phil Thrush, Stephanie Peters*
Class of 2025: Will Borders, Matlidah Dondo, Jessica Radcliffe

Children's Council acts as both a work committee and an advisory board to the Director of Children's Ministry. The Children's Council focuses on formulating and supporting the vision of our various children's ministries. We consult with the Director of Children's Ministries to plan the yearlong calendar. Under the umbrella of Children's Ministries are the following programs: Sunday School, Chapel, Connect 56, Nursery, Summer Camps (Creation Camp, VBS, Family Camp), Fellowship Groups (Jump and Club 123), Pageant, and holiday celebrations (e.g, Advent, Lent, Easter).

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Andrew Shotwell
Staff Liaison: Mary Taylor-Johnson

Class of 2027: Beverly Olson*, Matt Diener*,
Class of 2026: Andrew Shotwell, Bruce Baumberger, Joe Bare*
Class of 2025: Wendy Istvanick, Frank Montagna*

To improve the tools and messages used to connect our congregation and the community to the First Church mission.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE

Chair: Susan Prout
Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class of 2027: Brooke Cline*, Jim Erickson*, Teresa Grodsky*
Class of 2026: Karen Bailey, Connie Gilman, Genevieve Costello, Keith Slater
Class of 2025: John Kerastas, Susan Prout, Barbara Sittler

Congregational Care Subcommittees:

Greeting Card Ministry: Glynis Doyle
Lay Visitor (Leaders): Janet Lutz
Meals Ministry: Brooke Cline*

Memorial Receptions: Susan Prout & Keith Slater*
Advent Luncheon: Stephanie Clemson

The Congregational Care committee is made up of chairs of the subcommittees (Greeting Card ministries, Lay Visitor leaders, Meals Ministry, etc.) and members-at-large. Their mission is to support the work of these various ministries.

FAITH FORMATION COUNCIL

Co-Chairs: Lee Rader and Tom Scott
Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class of 2027: Glynis Doyle*, Virginia Lee*, Mari Leonard*
Class of 2026: Marlyse Wiebenga, Andrew Schumacher, Marge Bradford*
Class of 2025: Jim Johnson, Lee Rader, Tom Scott

The Faith Formation Council offers groups, classes and other resources that help participants to grow in their relationship with God and to connect with one another through prayer, reflection, and sharing of their faith journeys. We believe that through deepening spiritual practices, participants will be better equipped to love and act in the example of Jesus, who himself was deeply grounded in these practices.

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Cherie Asante
Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class of 2027: Deborah Hays*, Kelsey Morton*
Class of 2026: Matt Peters*
Class of 2025: Cherie Asante, Krys Juleen, Leah Holzwarth

The Fellowship Committee coordinates after-worship community hour and leads all-church special events including Rally Day and the Chili Cookoff. The committee loosely oversees ongoing fellowship groups.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Lynelle Diener*
Staff Liaison: Mary Taylor-Johnson

Class of 2027: Lynelle Diener*, Liz Raymond*
Class of 2026: Julie Womack, Debbie Zimmerman
Class of 2025: Jean Clipperton*, Matt Rader*, David Smith*

The Membership Committee works to think strategically about and develop strategies for inviting and welcoming visitors into the church; connecting and engaging both visitor and members to opportunities for "growing in our relationships with God and living our faith in the world"; encouraging discernment and participation in the Inquirers membership process, and strategies for promoting member retention.

MISSION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Chair: Beth Tipton
Clergy: Rev. Britt Cox

Class of 2027: Karin Dillon*, *pending, pending*
Class of 2026: Sharon Campbell, Dave Koester, Beth Tipton
Class of 2025: Ann Weatherhead, Steve Betzner*, Rich Hobson

M & O ministry area leaders

Bundled Blessings Diaper Bank
Nancy Brown & Sue Hagedorn (co-chairs), Dexter Bailey, John Bausch*, Lynne Carlton*, David D'Arcy, Tina Kalil, Pam Kendall, Krys Juleen, Shanah Slade, Caroline Wagner

Emergency Overnight Shelter TBD

First Friday Lunches
Rebecca Beiter (lead), Kathryn Calkins, Willi and Marcia Epting, Bob and Susan Henderson, Mary Hetzel, Pam Johnson, Barb Miller, Diana Mawhinney

Sunday Lunches (twice/month) TBD
Change for Change Beth Tipton
SNAPGap (Interfaith Action) Melissa Appelt
Soup Kitchen Dave Koester and Ann Weatherhead
Star Tree Linda MacCracken
Walk for Warmth (Interfaith Action) Melissa Appelt, Ann Weatherhead

SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

Coordinator: Bonny Roth*
The Social Justice Coordinator facilitates coordination between the three groups in the Social Justice area with the goal of (1) identifying collaborative opportunities within the SJ area; and (2) providing opportunities for the congregation to engage in hands-on justice and activism work. The Social Justice Coordinator's role at First Church is analogous to the Board of Church and Society's role in the United Methodist Church.

Race and Ethnicity
Chair: Tom Butler

Staff: Rev. Grace Imathiu
Tom Butler, Mary Cauble, Robert Harris, Lisa Jacob*

Earth Care Committee
Chair: Judith Campbell*
Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class 2027: Scott Fosdick*, Marianne Griebler*
Class of 2026: Phyllis Bird, Judith Campbell, Jason Lewis*, Roxann Specht*
Class of 2025: Kathryn Calkins, Alex Chadwick*, Eileen Chambers, Paula Scholl

Reconciling Congregation Task Force
Chair: B.J. Birkhahn-Rommelfanger
Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu
B.J. Birkhahn-Rommelfanger, Kathy Cheney-Egan, Antoinette Senjanovich*

To celebrate First Church as a fully inclusive congregation and to hold the church accountable for living up to that inclusivity. Priority for this coming year: What is the role of this group now? (What is RMN focusing on now?)

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
Co-Chairs: Paula Scholl and Dan Owens*
Senior Pastor: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Catherine Cerra
Marion Clemens
Ivy Joe Kuruvila
Linda MacCracken
Steve Prout
Beth Swanick
Tom Scott
Ed Webler
Cate Whitcomb

YOUTH COUNCIL - *in progress*

Chair:
Staff Liaison: Sydney Harkrider

Class of 2027:
Class of 2026:
Class of 2025: Jackie Owens, Devon Thrush

Youth Council members serve as creative planners, vision keepers and advisors to the Youth Ministry of First Church including learning (classes), serving (mission trips and local service work) and connecting in community (engaging kids in this community).

OTHER LEADERSHIP ROLES

LAY MEMBERS TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Representing this congregation (July 2024-July 2028)

Phil Crihfield (LMAC rep to Finance)
Jim Hagedorn* (LMAC rep to Church Council)
Leah Holzwarth*
Henry Pleas* (LMAC rep to SPRC)
Colin McDonald

Alternates: Grant Bailey, Katie Brick

NORTHERN ILLINOIS CONFERENCE, LAKE NORTH DISTRICT, AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP
(pending June 18 NIC Annual Conference and beginning July 2024)

Jurisdictional Conference Delegate: Nancy Pendergrass (lay)
Jurisdictional Conference Reserve Delegate: Rev. Britt Cox (clergy)
NIC Annual Conference Committee: Martha Rudy
NIC Annual Conference Shepherding Team: Rev. Britt Cox
(Justice and Mercy Ministries Designate)
NIC Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries: Ilsup Ahn (Co-Chair), Katie Brick
NIC Board of Ordained Ministry: Rev. Britt Cox
NIC Board of Pensions: Beth Swanick
NIC Board of Trustees: Grant Bailey
NIC Council on Finance and Administration: Rebecca Smith
NIC Council on Young People's Ministries: Jim Hagedorn
NIC Committee on Personnel: Jim Hagedorn
NIC Commission on Archives & History: Cate Whitcomb
NIC Credentials Committee - Nancy Pendergrass
NIC Assistant Secretary for Standing Rules: Nancy Pendergrass

Lake North District Committee on Church Building and Location: Martha Rudy
Lake North District Youth Lay Member to Annual Conference: Laura Thrush

Church Conference Recording Secretary
Cheryl Haack

Interfaith Action of Evanston
Ann Weatherhead, delegate
Rev. Britt Cox, delegate
Melissa Appelt, Board President

University Christian Ministry Board
Katie Brick

TOTAL CHILD BOARD

Chair: Lisa Kampwirth, Total Child Director
Board Chair: Jackie Owens* (church member, TC parent)
Treasurer: Jeff Wolfe* (church member)
Executive Pastor and Staff Liaison: Rev. Britt Cox

Members at Large:
Nasim Alexander (TC parent)
Nancy Ansorge (former TC teacher)
Lorraine Murphy (TC parent)
Miles Shultz (church member, TC parent)

Advisory board for Total Child Preschool

Appendix IV

Annual Report- Rev. Jane Cheema
Director of Spiritual Programs-Appalachia Service Project

My role as the Director of Spiritual Programs at the Appalachia Service Project (ASP) is a place where I continue to live into my vocational identity as a UMC Deacon ordained to a ministry of word, service, compassion, and justice.

The Appalachia Service Project is a 55-year-old non-profit organization whose vision is to help eradicate substandard housing in Central Appalachia and to bring about transformation to each person who comes in contact with our ministry. Our work includes home repair, home replacement and disaster recovery that operates in a 5-state region within Central Appalachia.

In my current role, I empower and train servant leaders, share the word of God through writing, teaching, preaching and witness, guide young adults as they listen for God and pursue their vocational journeys; and advocate for justice in the region of Central Appalachia for all people to have access to safe, warm and dry housing.

Connecting the gifts of the church with the needs of the world is a daily practice at ASP as we welcome people from a wide variety of church traditions to join our ministry serving people in need of housing that is warm, safe and dry. This need has been amplified after Hurricane Helene came through East Tennessee and Western North Carolina and Southwest Virginia causing damage to life, livelihood, and homes across a large area. As this event is in our "backyard" we are responding with ASP's Rapid Rebuild model and currently have 3 homes built, 4 underway and 7 more foundations going in the ground all of this before Christmas- these are all for families whose homes were destroyed by Hurricane Helene. This event has shaped much of our work this fall and has focused my work on Spiritual and Emotional care for our staff, the families we serve and beyond.

My Role and what is developing this year:

In my role as the Director of Spiritual Programs, I am the primary spiritual caregiver/chaplain for the organization and help employees with any life concerns or challenges. I am also connected to a Long-Term Recovery Group in Washington County (where ASP is located) and will serve with community members to help guide the Emotional and Spiritual care in our community after Helene.

Each year, I establish a theme for our spiritual curriculum and write all the materials that we publish for volunteers. Along with this, I lead training for our summer staff to help them feel prepared to lead our spiritual programming and utilize our curriculum.

During our summer season, a team of 4-5 Chaplains serve with me and I provide training and supervision for them, as they provide spiritual care to staff, homeowners and volunteers.

There are two additional programs that I lead for ASP: a Fellowship program for young adult who come to serve with us for an intentional year of discernment, living in Christian community and serving in our ministry. I have designed a curriculum for our Fellows which includes reading, journaling, and monthly meetings. We also hold 2 workshops each year for our Fellows to connect them to ongoing development and growth, most recently we worked with the Enneagram assessment and Stress and Mental Health First Aid.
The other program is our Youth Leadership Summit which draws high school students from across the country to a weekend retreat that is focused on discipleship, leadership, and advocacy for our mission. We have had 55 students nominated for the February 2025 event. The Youth Leadership Summit also has a 2.0 version which I developed and will lead again in the fall of 2025 to Washington DC. We will meet with members of Congress, visit the UMC Board of Church and Society and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Continuing Education:
After becoming a Qualified Administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory in 2023, I attended 2 additional training courses on using the IDI. I am implementing this resource to help our organization work toward our DEI goals.
Completed the Mental Health First Aid Training for Youth and Adults.
Completed the United Methodist Saving Grace class on Financial Health and hope to offer this to our staff.

Deacon Involvement in Local Church
In Johnson City, I attend Munsey Memorial UMC, where I am active as a Deacon serving in worship, assisting with teaching Confirmation and serving with their outreach ministry to people experiencing homelessness.

My personal spiritual formation includes attending a multi-generational women's study group at Munsey UMC, Spiritual Direction with a wonderful Spiritual Director, and a weekly prayer group with co-workers.
It was wonderful to connect with First Church this year and serve in worship on All Saints Sunday and also for the celebration of life for Nicholas Perry.
Respectfully submitted,
With great appreciation for the ministry of FUMC Evanston and my ongoing relationship with you.

Peace,
Jane Cheema

CERTIFIED LAY SERVANT
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CHARGE CONFERENCE
Initial Application or Request for Renewal

Report for year ending 2024

SECTION I: DATA ON THE LAY SERVANT

Name (Mrs. __ Ms. __ Mr. __) Dr James Hagedorn
Address 4140 Emerson Street City/State/Zip Skokie, IL 60067
Telephone 8476776811 E-mail jehdvm@gmail.com
Name of District Lake North
Name of Church Evanston First United Methodist Church
Church Address 516 Church Street City/State/Zip Evanston, IL 60201
Church Telephone 8478646181

SECTION II: STATUS OF THE LAY SERVANT

__ **For initial application** as a Certified Lay Servant

1. What year did you complete your Basic Course?
2. What year did you complete your Advanced Course?
3. What was the title of your Advanced Course?

☑ **For renewal** as a Certified Lay Servant

1. What year did you complete your last Advanced Course? 2024 (I taught this course at Fall Lay Academy)
2. What was the title of your last Advanced Course? Sacraments: Means of Grace

SECTION III: REQUEST OF THE LAY SERVANT

I request recommendation of my pastor and my church council/charge conference to begin/renew as a Certified Lay Servant for the ensuing year.

Date 11/14/2024 Lay Servant James E Hagedorn

SECTION IV: RECOMMENDATION OF THE PASTOR

I recommend concurrence with the request of this person to begin/renew as a Certified Lay Servant for the ensuing year.

Date 11/23/2024 Pastor Rev. Grace Imathiu

SECTION V: RECOMMENDATION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL/CHARGE CONFERENCE

The church council/charge conference of _____ (church/charge) recommends the above person begin/renew as a Certified Lay Servant for the ensuing year.

Date _____ Church Council Chair or District Superintendent _____

(To be completed by those requesting renewal as a Certified Lay Servant)

SECTION VI: MINISTRIES BY THE LAY SERVANT

During the past year, I have participated in ***caring ministries*** as follows:

- ☐ served as a volunteer in a care-giving institution
- ☐ provided one-on-one caring
- ☐ at a hospital, nursing home, or to a shut-in
- ☐ in membership/evangelism visitation
- ☑ served in caring/outreach projects (food pantry, prison ministry, etc)
- ☐ other caring activities (Please list) _____

During the past year, I have participated in ***leading ministries*** as follows:

- ☑ served as member of committee, board, commission, council, task force, etc.
- ☑ as a volunteer at a community agency
- ☐ at my local church
- ☐ beyond my local church
- ☑ on my District ☑ Conference ☐ Jurisdiction ☐ General Church level
- ☐ other leading activities (Please list) _____

During the past year, I have participated in ***communicating ministries*** as follows:

- ☐ brought message in _____ worship services
- ☐ served as worship leader in _____ services
- ☐ delivered _____ devotional messages
- ☑ taught 3 classes
- ☐ shared my faith story _____
- ☐ other speaking activities (Please list) _____

During the past year I have participated in additional opportunities for ministry as follows *(Additional writing space below):*
see attached form

SECTION VII: PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH BY THE LAY SERVANT

In what activities have you engaged and/or what books have you read or used during the past year to help you develop your devotional life; improve your understanding of the Bible; improve your understanding of The United Methodist Church; and to improve your skills in caring, leading, communicating and speaking?
completion of Basic Graduate Theological Studies (Deacon Studies) at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary

SECTION VIII: FEEDBACK BY THE LAY SERVANT

1. Do you feel called to be in service in any area of ministry, either in the church or outside the church, in which you are not currently involved? ☐ Yes ☑ No (If yes, please list those areas below.)

2. What additional training or support do you need or would suggest to further your ministry:
I continue to take courses to continue to learn

3. Give any recommendations you have for improving Lay Servant Ministries in your District or Conference:
None

(Note: District Directors are encouraged to respond to any comments within this section.)

NOTICE: *After this form is completed and signed by those listed above, the Recording Secretary of the Church Council or Charge Conference is requested to reproduce THREE copies: (1)Lay Servant, (2)District Director of Lay Servant Ministries, (3)District Superintendent. The Recording Secretary of the Church Council or Charge Conference keeps the ORIGINAL.* **(Revised April 2014)**

Additional Writing Space

(Please be sure to indicate which question you are answering.)

Certified Lay Servant Annual Report 2024 Jim Hagedorn

1. Led four Appalachian Service Project training modules
2. Completed final year on Board of Trustee…served as liaison to both parsonages and developed protocol and contact list for each of the properties
3. Graduated from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary with Basic Theological Studies Certificate (final class this spring was Worship)
4. Served on the Fall Lay Academy committee planning the 2024 Academy
5. Taught 10 hours on Sacraments: Means of Grace at the Fall Academy
6. Organized the final worship service…preached the sermon at this event
7. Serving on Church Council
8. Serving as Lay Delegate to Annual Conference
9. Serving on the Northern Illinois Conference Committee on Personnel
10. Teaching Methodist 101 a weekly adult education class at FUMC
11. Along with Pastor Grace, working on a new endeavor of connecting the pastors of the four United Methodist Churches in Evanston
12. Completed the on-line course "Laying a Biblical Foundation for Young Adult Ministry" through the Richard and Julia Wilke Institute for Discipleship…3 Continuing Education units
13. Serving as coordinator of the Men's Fellowship group
14. Serving as volunteer with Bundled Blessings Diaper Pantry assisting with database management and bulk diaper pick-up and delivery to the church multiple time a year.

2024 Membership Report

First United Methodist Church of Evanston
Submitted by Mary Taylor-Johnson, Director of Membership

Membership Totals

608 total professing members
423 households

In 2024:
42 member additions
39 member subtractions

Also participating in our worshipping congregation in 2024:
2 affiliate members
18 ordained clergy
15 constituents
40 prospective members (estimate)

Member Additions

Reinstated (0)

New Members (42)

Joined by profession of faith: 5 adults, 10 confirmands
Joined by affirmation of faith: 2 adults
Transferred from another UMC: 9 adults
Transferred from other denomination: 16 adults

Winter Inquirers (19)
Liz Barbour
Joe Bare
Rachel Daum
Andrew and Karin Dillon
Susan Dittmer
Scott Fosdick
Obi and Jon Fox-Nnebedum
Dave and Marianne Griebler
Eli Hetland
Ivy Joe Kuruvila
Kelsey Morton
Antoinette Sejanovich
David Smith

George Smith
Bessie and Siegfried Wuensch

Spring Inquirers (13)

Michele Bergman
Jeff and Lynne Carlton
Paul Farrand and Valerie Papillon
Vivian Green
Sydney Harkrider
Zach Long
Beverly Olson
Jennie Schumann and Tom Weaver
Joyce Senjanovich
Sam Stanes

Youth Confirmands (10)

Evie Alonso
Jack Brick
Maggie Brick
Brody Brown
Andrew Cline
Dorothy Jennett
Cullen Ketzback
Paige Ketzback
Griffin O'Connor
Laura Thrush

Clergy

Katie Fahey
Richard Mosley, Jr.

Note that clergy are not included in the calculation as they are considered members of an annual conference rather than of a local church.

Member Subtractions (39)

Transferred membership (7)

Laura and Mick Budreau –transferred to St. Luke's Lutheran (ELCA) in Park Ridge.
Kaitlin Daly – converting to Judaism
Rachel Fowler – transferred to Williamsburg UMC in Virginia
Alexandra Rea - transferring to Grace UMC in Chicago
Jordan Simmons – transferred to First UMC, Lubbock TX
Amy Wells – transferred to Disciples of Christ Church in NC

Withdrawn (17)

Janet Bice and David Crain
Sue Callison
Marcella Cerra – Lives out of state
Rachel Clemens – Lives abroad
Chelsea Elward
Paul Farrand and Valerie Papillon
Jonathan Kendall – Lives out of state
Mike McGuire
Christine Ogunbola
Eric and Laura Pryzby – Laura has been involved in programs at Central UMC but is not considering membership there at this time.
Andrew Vance
Jennifer Veys
Chris and Jan Winslow

Deaths (8)

Helen Carlock
Sadako Clarke
Nancy Hagstrom
Betsy Ingle
Bette Mitchell (deceased 12/25/23; not included in 2023 report)
Nicholas Perry
Larry TerMolen
JoAnn Wilkin

Removed by Charge Conference Action early in 2024 (7)

Cynthia Beth, Aaron Clarke, Liam Mintier, Rose Policarpio, Christopher Vergara, Stephanie Young, Dave Zino.

<u>Candidates for possible removal via charge conference action</u>

For removal now (5):

Amy and Andrew Funk, Sean McGuire, Jaimee McMullen, Susie Zeiser.

<u>Process note:</u> Each member listed as a candidate for possible removal now was identified early in 2023 as "inactive" with no recorded participation in church activities

or giving to church operations for the time parameters we set. These persons were contacted by the Membership Director at least twice in 2023, and if no response, contacted two or more times between late July and early October 2024. As a rule of thumb I use multiple forms of contact when possible (email, snail mail, phone, text).

For removal in one year (23):

Brian Armstrong, Davey Burkhart, Haley Carrigan, Alex Cerra, Paul Clarke, Ashley Coleman, Linda Coleman, David and Jane Doyle, Sam Doyle, Angela and Ross McLean, John and Linda Mintier, Gay and Ron Neal, Dylan Powell, Gary Price, Bridget and Sergio Reyes, John Vance, David and Kari van de Walle.

<u>Process note:</u> Each member listed as a candidate for possible removal in one year has been identified "inactive" with no recorded participation in church activities or giving to church operations for the past two years. These persons have been contacted by the Membership Director at least twice (in more than that in many cases) since late July, again, using multiple forms of contact when possible (email, snail mail, phone, text). The names that appear under "possible removal in one year" have not yet responded.

Approximately 30 additional persons who were originally identified as inactive have responded to communication and opted to either "retain membership and reconnect" or withdraw and "be released from their membership vows."

1/23/2025

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT—DECEMBER, 2024

The Board of Trustees is entrusted with managing church property, equipment, and investments to support the vision and mission of First Church. The Trustees meet the first Thursday of the month.

One of the Trustee responsibilities is to receive and administer all bequests made to the congregation and to make sure that all of the endowment funds of the congregation are invested properly. While no bequests were received by First Church in 2024, the funds entrusted to us by the Saints that have gone before us have performed well. The endowment stands at $7,452,451.40 as of September 30, 2024. The endowment funds are invested with Wespath, formerly known as the General Board of Pensions of The United Methodist Church, headquartered in Glenview. These are gifts that have been left to the church in the wills and trusts of deceased persons, as well as some bequests that have been made while the donor is alive. These gifts usually were given with a specific purpose in mind, i.e. "for the repair and care of the organ," or "to support the Field Education students assigned to First Church by Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary," or "for the care and maintenance of the stained glass," as some examples. Typically, the corpus—the original gift—cannot be used; however, interest earned on the original gift can be reinvested to earn additional interest or the earned interest may be spent on a project or expense that fits the criteria of the bequest. There is a fund that is a general building fund within the endowment, and interest from that fund is used to fund general maintenance and utilities for our 3 properties throughout the year. Currently the Board of Trustees uses a draw formula of 2.5% of a rolling 3-year look back average of the general building endowment fund to pay for general maintenance and utilities for the church properties. It is only through the generosity of those Saints that have gone before us—many of whom are interred in our Memorial Garden—that proper care and maintenance of our lovely church building and two parsonages are possible. Please consider a bequest to First Church in your will or trust.

The Trustees maintain adequate property and liability insurance coverage on all church property, carry workers' compensation insurance, and develop appropriate risk-management strategies. First Church does have adequate insurance as mentioned above. Current property and liability insurance renews this coming spring, and Trustees are planning a review and re-bid process beginning January 1.

It is the Board of Trustees' responsibility to oversee, maintain, and supervise all of First Church's property (church building at 516 Church Street, 1141 Asbury parsonage, and 828 Ingleside parsonage, all in Evanston). Many projects have been completed in 2024. Highlights of our work include: installation of a new emergency response management and entry security system; replacement by hand of the stone retaining wall at the west end of the memorial garden; repaired crumbling back steps; installed updated phone system, network, & updated computers; installed upgraded sound system in the sanctuary; completed quite a bit of exterior repair work to stop water infiltration (seemingly never-ending); conducted a massive basement & closet clean out throughout the church during the summer; purchased new dining room chairs; and rebuilt the sewer line from the Ingleside parsonage to the street. A BIG thank-you goes to Bill Brown who shares his expertise and consults with the Trustees on pricing, vendors, and project management. Projects in process include: crafting and installing balcony rail in the chapel and custom handrails at the chancel steps in the sanctuary; replacement of flooring in 3 classrooms & the bathroom hall in the Total Child Center on the 2nd floor (cost shared with TTCC); cleaning & repair of stonework in the chapel; installing motion sensors to lighting in most rooms to save energy; replacement of Glenna Hall drapes; replacement of stove at Ingleside & washer/dryer at Asbury parsonages; ongoing general maintenance, painting, & repair projects. Trustees are looking long-term into potential solar energy & other clean efficient energy sources for utilities in compliance with the City of Evanston environmental goals.

This report respectfully submitted by Martha Rudy, chair, Board of Trustees, on behalf of the entire Board.

Statement of Activities-First United Methodist Church of Evanston
2025 Asking Budget

Accounts	Budget Jan 01, 2025 - Dec 31, 2025	Annual Budget Jan 01, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	Budget % Change	Budget $ Change
Revenues				
Pledged Giving				
4000 Current Member Pledged Giving	$1,132,047.00	$1,132,047.25	0	$0.25
4001 Prior Yr PrePay Pledge Amort	$41,800.00	$41,800.75	0	$0.75
Total Pledged Giving	$1,173,847.00	$1,173,848.00	0	$1.00
Non-Pledged Giving				
4002 Non-pledged Giving	$80,000.00	$100,000.00	25	$20,000.00
4003 Loose Plate	$15,000.00	$25,000.00	66.67	$10,000.00
Total Non-Pledged Giving	$95,000.00	$125,000.00	31.58	$30,000.00
Shared Cost Program				
4008 JRC	$9,500.00	$9,500.00	0	$0.00
4010 Other Continuing Use Pgms	$0.00	$4,000.00	0	$4,000.00
4011 Weddings	$5,000.00	$5,000.00	0	$0.00
4012 Occasional Rentals	$5,500.00	$10,000.00	81.82	$4,500.00
Total Shared Cost Program	$20,000.00	$28,500.00	42.5	$8,500.00
Transfers from Other Funds				
4013 Trf from Endow Rstr	$72,518.00	$72,518.00	0	$0.00
Total Transfers from Other Funds	$72,518.00	$72,518.00	0	$0.00
Other Income				
4005 Interest & Dividend Income	$17,000.00	$17,000.00	0	$0.00
4340 Misc. Income	$10,000.00	$10,386.23	3.86	$386.23
Total Other Income	$27,000.00	$27,386.23	1.43	$386.23
Total Revenues	$1,388,365.00	$1,427,252.23	2.8	$38,887.23

Expenses				
Total Apportionments	$169,368.00	$169,440.00	0.04	$72.00
Total Senior Pastor Grace	$155,168.55	$156,660.63	0.96	$1,492.08
Total Executive Pastor	$92,011.81	$102,119.82	10.99	$10,108.01
Full & Part Time Staff and other Staff E	$549,304.87	$552,467.09	-8.79	($6,166.00)
Total Staff-Parish Relations	$796,485.23	$811,247.54	1.85	$14,762.31
Property Operations: 516 Church				
Total 516 Church Utilities	$59,000.00	$59,000.00	0	$0.00
Total 516 Church Maint with Staff	$7,905.00	$6,950.00	-12.08	($955.00)
Total 516 Church Maint with Vendors	$18,850.00	$24,220.00	28.49	$5,370.00
Total 516 Church Insurance	$82,796.00	$69,000.00	-16.66	($13,796.00)
Total 516 Church Lawn & Snow	$12,000.00	$12,200.00	1.67	$200.00
Total Property Operations: 516 Church	$180,551.00	$171,370.00	-5.08	($9,181.00)
Total Property Operations: 1141 Asbury	$5,510.00	$5,510.00	0	$0.00
Total Property Operations: 828 Ingleside	$5,100.00	$5,100.00	0	$0.00
Total 516 Church Maint & Repair	$55,018.00	$55,018.00	0	$0.00
Total 1141 Asbury Repair & Improv	$5,500.00	$5,500.00	0	$0.00
Total 828 Ingleside Repair & Improv	$12,000.00	$12,000.00	0	$0.00
Total Property Maint Repair & Improv	$72,518.00	$72,518.00	0	$0.00
Total General & Administrative	$62,470.00	$63,239.00	1.23	$769.00
Total Interest Groups	$108,984.20	$128,827.69	18.21	$19,843.49
Total Expenses	$1,400,986.43	$1,427,252.23	1.87	$26,265.80
Net Total	($12,621.43)	$0.00	0.93	$12,621.43

Accounts	Budget Jan 01, 2025 - Dec 31, 2025	Budget Jan 01, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	Budget % Change	Budget $ Change
Revenues				
Pledged Giving				
4000 Current Member Pledged Giving	$1,132,047.00	$1,132,047.25	0	$0.25
4001 Prior Yr PrePay Pledge Amort	$41,800.00	$41,800.75	0	$0.75
Total Pledged Giving	$1,173,847.00	$1,173,848.00	0	$1.00
Non-Pledged Giving				
4002 Non-pledged Giving	$80,000.00	$100,000.00	25	$20,000.00
4003 Loose Plate	$15,000.00	$25,000.00	66.67	$10,000.00
Total Non-Pledged Giving	$95,000.00	$125,000.00	31.58	$30,000.00
Shared Cost Program				
4008 JRC	$9,500.00	$9,500.00	0	$0.00
4010 Other Continuing Use Pgms	$0.00	$4,000.00	0	$4,000.00
4011 Weddings	$5,000.00	$5,000.00	0	$0.00
4012 Occasional Rentals	$5,500.00	$10,000.00	81.82	$4,500.00
Total Shared Cost Program	$20,000.00	$28,500.00	42.5	$8,500.00
Transfers from Other Funds				
4013 Trf from Endow Rstr	$72,518.00	$72,518.00	0	$0.00
Total Transfers from Other Funds	$72,518.00	$72,518.00	0	$0.00
Other Income				
4005 Interest & Dividend Income	$17,000.00	$17,000.00	0	$0.00
4340 Misc. Income	$10,000.00	$10,386.23	3.86	$386.23
Total Other Income	$27,000.00	$27,386.23	1.43	$386.23
Total Revenues	$1,388,365.00	$1,427,252.23	2.8	$38,887.23

Expenses				
Apportionments				
5001 Apportioned General Conf Funds	$138,072.00	$129,156.00	-6.46	($8,916.00)
5811 Non-Apportioned General Conf Fu	$31,296.00	$40,284.00	28.72	$8,988.00
Total Apportionments	$169,368.00	$169,440.00	0.04	$72.00
Staff-Parish Relations				
Senior Pastor Grace				
5801 Sr Pastor Salary - Grace	$106,296.45	$103,200.44	-2.91	($3,096.01)
5802 Sr Pastor H&L Ins. - Grace	$22,200.00	$27,820.10	25.32	$5,620.10
5803 Sr Pastor Pension - Grace	$21,672.10	$20,640.09	-4.76	($1,032.01)
5804 Sr Pastor Bus. Exp. - Grace	$5,000.00	$5,000.00	0	$0.00
Total Senior Pastor Grace	$155,168.55	$156,660.63	0.96	$1,492.08
Executive Pastor				
5901 Executive Pastor	$63,654.00	$61,800.00	-2.91	($1,854.00)
5902 Executive Pastor H&L Ins.	$12,480.00	$24,960.00	100	$12,480.00
5903 Executive Pastor Pension	$10,877.81	$10,359.82	-4.76	($517.99)
5904 Executive Pastor Bus. Exp	$5,000.00	$5,000.00	0	$0.00
Total Executive Pastor	$92,011.81	$102,119.82	10.99	$10,108.01
Total Other Full & Part-Time Staff	$498,727.20	$513,821.69	26.55	$23,615.00
Other Staff Expenses				
5718 Church Payroll Taxes	$33,752.67	$32,145.40	-4.76	($1,607.27)
5719 Payroll Service Exp	$2,625.00	$2,500.00	-4.76	($125.00)
5720 Workers Comp Insur	$4,200.00	$4,000.00	-4.76	($200.00)
5723 Renewal Leave	$5,000.00	$0.00	-100	($5,000.00)
5725 Staff Development	$5,000.00	$0.00	-100	($5,000.00)
Total Other Staff Expenses	$50,577.67	$38,645.40	-23.59	($11,932.27)
Total Staff-Parish Relations	$796,485.23	$811,247.54	1.85	$14,762.31

Property Operations: 516 Church				
516 Church Utilities				
5105 Gas - 516 Church	$26,000.00	$26,000.00	0	$0.00
5106 Water/Sewer - 516 Church	$6,000.00	$6,000.00	0	$0.00
5258 Electric 516 Church	$27,000.00	$27,000.00	0	$0.00
Total 516 Church Utilities	$59,000.00	$59,000.00	0	$0.00
516 Church Maint with Staff				
5107 Cleaning Supplies	$3,400.00	$1,800.00	-47.06	($1,600.00)
5108 Hardware & Materials	$255.00	$150.00	-41.18	($105.00)
5109 Boiler Maintenance	$4,250.00	$5,000.00	17.65	$750.00
Total 516 Church Maint with Staff	$7,905.00	$6,950.00	-12.08	($955.00)
516 Church Maint with Vendors				
5110 Appraisals and Inspections	$4,800.00	$4,100.00	-14.58	($700.00)
5111 Alarm Systems	$3,000.00	$9,450.00	215	$6,450.00
5112 Elev Maint & Repair	$6,600.00	$6,600.00	0	$0.00
5113 Pest Control	$900.00	$920.00	2.22	$20.00
5114 Scavenger Service	$3,200.00	$2,800.00	-12.5	($400.00)
5115 Carpet & Mat Cleaning	$350.00	$350.00	0	$0.00
Total 516 Church Maint with Vendors	$18,850.00	$24,220.00	28.49	$5,370.00
516 Church Insurance				
5118 Insurance	$82,796.00	$69,000.00	-16.66	($13,796.00)
Total 516 Church Insurance	$82,796.00	$69,000.00	-16.66	($13,796.00)
516 Church Lawn & Snow				
5119 Lawn / Exterior Care	$12,000.00	$12,200.00	1.67	$200.00
Total 516 Church Lawn & Snow	$12,000.00	$12,200.00	1.67	$200.00
Total Property Operations: 516 Church	$180,551.00	$171,370.00	-5.08	($9,181.00)

Property Operations: 1141 Asbury				
5100 Electric - 1141 Asbury	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	0	$0.00
5255 Gas 1141 Asbury	$1,400.00	$1,400.00	0	$0.00
5256 Water/Sewer-1141 Asbury	$410.00	$410.00	0	$0.00
5257 Telephone-1141 Asbury	$2,200.00	$2,200.00	0	$0.00
Total Property Operations: 1141 Asbury	$5,510.00	$5,510.00	0	$0.00
Property Operations: 828 Ingleside				
5120 Electric - 828 Ingleside	$1,600.00	$1,600.00	0	$0.00
5121 Gas/Fuel - 828 Ingleside	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	0	$0.00
5122 Water/Sewer - 828 Ingleside	$1,200.00	$1,200.00	0	$0.00
5123 Telephone - 828 Ingleside	$800.00	$800.00	0	$0.00
Total Property Operations: 828 Ingleside	$5,100.00	$5,100.00	0	$0.00
Property Maint Repair & Improv				
516 Church Maint & Repair				
5092 Gen Maint - 516 Church	$5,100.00	$5,100.00	0	$0.00
5093 Heating Repair - 516 Church	$5,000.00	$5,000.00	0	$0.00
5094 Plumbing Repair - 516 Church	$9,400.00	$9,400.00	0	$0.00
5095 Electric Repair - 516 Church	$2,018.00	$2,018.00	0	$0.00
5096 Exterior Repair - 516 Church	$15,000.00	$15,000.00	0	$0.00
5097 Interior Maint - 516 Church	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	0	$0.00
5098 Decorating - 516 Church	$12,000.00	$12,000.00	0	$0.00
5099 Cap Improv - 516 Church	$5,000.00	$5,000.00	0	$0.00
Total 516 Church Maint & Repair	$55,018.00	$55,018.00	0	$0.00
1141 Asbury Repair & Improv				
5088 Maint-1141 Asbury	$5,500.00	$5,500.00	0	$0.00
Total 1141 Asbury Repair & Improv	$5,500.00	$5,500.00	0	$0.00
828 Ingleside Repair & Improv				
5090 Maint - 828 Ingleside	$12,000.00	$12,000.00	0	$0.00
Total 828 Ingleside Repair & Improv	$12,000.00	$12,000.00	0	$0.00
Total Property Maint Repair & Improv	$72,518.00	$72,518.00	0	$0.00

General & Administrative				
Office Supplies				
5003 Office Supplies	$5,000.00	$9,400.00	88	$4,400.00
Total Office Supplies	$5,000.00	$9,400.00	88	$4,400.00
Telephone & Internet				
5004 Telephone and Internet	$12,000.00	$5,400.00	-55	($6,600.00)
Total Telephone & Internet	$12,000.00	$5,400.00	-55	($6,600.00)
Postage & Shipping				
5005 Postage and Shipping	$2,000.00	$1,900.00	-5	($100.00)
Total Postage & Shipping	$2,000.00	$1,900.00	-5	($100.00)
Printing				
5006 Printing	$2,000.00	$2,800.00	40	$800.00
Total Printing	$2,000.00	$2,800.00	40	$800.00
Computer Operations				
5008 Computer and Printers	$2,500.00	$700.00	-72	($1,800.00)
5009 Software, Consulting & Realm	$11,520.00	$8,089.00	-29.78	($3,431.00)
Total Computer Operations	$14,020.00	$8,789.00	-37.31	($5,231.00)
Office Equipment				
5012 Equipment Leases	$6,000.00	$13,200.00	120	$7,200.00
Total Office Equipment	$6,000.00	$13,200.00	120	$7,200.00
Outside Services				
5013 Audit	$10,200.00	$10,200.00	0	$0.00
Total Outside Services	$10,200.00	$10,200.00	0	$0.00

Miscellaneous G&A				
5014 Misc. Office Expenses	$1,500.00	$1,800.00	20	$300.00
5015 Credit card and bank fees	$9,200.00	$9,200.00	0	$0.00
5018 Stock Transfer Fees	$550.00	$550.00	0	$0.00
Total Miscellaneous G&A	$11,250.00	$11,550.00	2.67	$300.00
Total General & Administrative	$62,470.00	$63,239.00	1.23	$769.00
Interest Groups				
Adult Programs				
5019 Adult Curriculum	$170.00	$200.00	17.65	$30.00
5022 Workshops & Study Groups	$340.00	$400.00	17.65	$60.00
5023 Young Adult Ministry	$300.00	$300.00	0	$0.00
5024 Adult Ed. Publicity	$510.00	$600.00	17.65	$90.00
5026 Adult Ed. Speakers	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
5027 Spiritual Formation	$85.00	$100.00	17.65	$15.00
5028 One Church, One Book	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
Total Adult Programs	$2,255.00	$2,600.00	15.3	$345.00
Youth Council				
5029 Youth Programming	$8,500.00	$9,000.00	5.88	$500.00
5030 Youth Curriculum	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
5031 Confirmation Class	$1,700.00	$750.00	-55.88	($950.00)
5032 Youth Mission Trips	$6,375.00	$7,500.00	17.65	$1,125.00
5033 Youth Scholarships	$850.00	$2,000.00	135.29	$1,150.00
5034 Youth Workers	$0.00	$250.00	0	$250.00
5035 Youth Retreat Support	$0.00	$750.00	0	$750.00
5820 Safe Gathering Training - YC	$212.50	$500.00	135.29	$287.50
Total Youth Council	$18,062.50	$21,250.00	17.65	$3,187.50

Children's Council				
5036 Children's Curriculum	$1,275.00	$2,000.00	56.86	$725.00
5037 Sunday School Supplies	$1,700.00	$1,500.00	-11.76	($200.00)
5038 Nursery Supplies	$255.00	$300.00	17.65	$45.00
5039 Children's Chapel	$340.00	$250.00	-26.47	($90.00)
5040 Vacation Bible School	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
5041 Teacher Appreciation	$170.00	$200.00	17.65	$30.00
5042 Christmas Pageant	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
5043 Creation Camp Support	$2,550.00	$2,500.00	-1.96	($50.00)
5044 Bible Sunday	$255.00	$500.00	96.08	$245.00
5045 Rally Day	$425.00	$400.00	-5.88	($25.00)
5048 Seasonal Programs	$850.00	$1,000.00	17.65	$150.00
5049 Safe Gathering Training CC	$425.00	$800.00	88.24	$375.00
5208 Children CCL Milestone Mailing	$212.50	$250.00	17.65	$37.50
5209 Connect 56 Supplies	$170.00	$300.00	76.47	$130.00
5211 Family Camp	$255.00	$300.00	17.65	$45.00
5212 Children's Fellowship Group	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
Total Children's Council	$10,157.50	$11,800.00	16.17	$1,642.50
Mission & Outreach				
5050 Mission and Outreach	$4,250.00	$5,000.00	17.65	$750.00
5051 Missionary Support	$2,125.00	$2,500.00	17.65	$375.00
5053 Social Justice	$0.00	$1,000.00	0	$1,000.00
5055 Bundled Blessing Admin	$4,250.00	$5,000.00	17.65	$750.00
5057 Sack Lunch Ministry	$5,100.00	$6,000.00	17.65	$900.00
5213 UCM/Northwestern	$850.00	$1,000.00	17.65	$150.00
5214 Refugee Support	$1,700.00	$2,000.00	17.65	$300.00
5215 Social Justice Workshops	$0.00	$500.00	0	$500.00
Total Mission & Outreach	$18,275.00	$23,000.00	25.85	$4,725.00

Congregational Care				
5058 General Congregational Care	$400.00	$100.00	-75	($300.00)
5059 Fellowship-Senior Luncheon	$1,100.00	$200.00	-81.82	($900.00)
5060 Prayer and Card Ministry	$0.00	$50.00	0	$50.00
5061 Memorial Receptions	$0.00	$100.00	0	$100.00
Total Congregational Care	$1,500.00	$450.00	-70	($1,050.00)
Fellowship				
5062 Fellowship Hour Supplies	$595.00	$700.00	17.65	$105.00
5063 Other Fellowship Expense	$595.00	$700.00	17.65	$105.00
5064 Fellowship Activities	$510.00	$600.00	17.65	$90.00
Total Fellowship	$1,700.00	$2,000.00	17.65	$300.00
Membership Growth & Dev				
5066 New Member Class Materials	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
5067 New Member Hospitality	$765.00	$900.00	17.65	$135.00
5068 Membership Engagements	$1,147.50	$1,300.00	13.29	$152.50
5069 Visitor Packets	$765.00	$900.00	17.65	$135.00
5210 Membership Growth Volunteer T	$170.00	$250.00	47.06	$80.00
Total Membership Growth & Dev	$3,272.50	$3,850.00	17.65	$577.50
Worship				
5070 General Worship Expenses	$898.45	$1,057.28	17.68	$158.83
5071 Christmas/Advent Worship	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
5072 Lent	$102.00	$120.00	17.65	$18.00
5216 Virtual Service Operations	$850.00	$1,000.00	17.65	$150.00
Total Worship	$2,275.45	$2,677.28	17.66	$401.83

Music				
5073 Music Program	$2,550.00	$3,000.00	17.65	$450.00
5074 Paid Vocalists	$30,493.75	$35,000.00	14.78	$4,506.25
5075 Instrumentalists	$2,805.00	$3,000.00	6.95	$195.00
5077 Musical Instrument Maint.	$1,487.50	$1,750.00	17.65	$262.50
5078 Gospel Choir	$0.00	$500.00	0	$500.00
5079 Children's Choirs	$425.00	$500.00	17.65	$75.00
Total Music	$37,761.25	$43,750.00	15.86	$5,988.75
Communications				
5081 Advertising and Promotion	$1,900.00	$1,900.00	0	$0.00
5082 Web Site Support	$4,000.00	$7,000.00	75	$3,000.00
5083 Color Newsletter Printing	$600.00	$600.00	0	$0.00
Total Communications	$6,500.00	$9,500.00	46.15	$3,000.00
Other Interest Groups				
5086 Archives	$85.00	$100.41	18.13	$15.41
5087 Annual Conference Expenses	$0.00	$950.00	0	$950.00
5217 Nominations Committee	$595.00	$700.00	17.65	$105.00
5218 Earth Care Committee	$595.00	$700.00	17.65	$105.00
5219 Reconciling Ministry	$5,950.00	$5,500.00	-7.56	($450.00)
Total Other Interest Groups	$7,225.00	$7,950.41	10.04	$725.41
Total Interest Groups	$108,984.20	$128,827.69	18.21	$19,843.49
Total Expenses	$1,400,986.43	$1,427,252.23	1.87	$26,265.80
Net Total	($12,621.43)	$0.00	0.93	$12,621.43