



2023
2024



ANNUAL REPORT

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



1609 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726
firstcongrmadison.org

Welcome!

Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus.
– Luke 5:18-19

This year's stewardship campaign was not only a great theme for encouraging members and friends to give financially, but it is also a wonderful reflection of the work of the members and friends of First Cong! "We Rise by Lifting Others!" We often reference the importance of community in this Church. We show how we value community by always making the circle wider to include more and more people. Imagine wrapping arms around those standing outside the circle and welcoming them in. This is exactly what happens when the Church supports individuals and organizations in the community, and even by live-streaming our services. We are extending our hand of welcome and lifting others.



In October, we celebrated 30+ years of being Open and Affirming (ONA) and welcomed Dr. Katrina Roseboro-Marsh, Executive Director of the ONA Coalition as guest preacher for Worship. I had the privilege of testifying at the Wisconsin Assembly to protect the rights of trans families. We still have work to do.

As you read each board report in this annual report, you will see the many ways hands of love are extended within and beyond the Church community. Please take time to review the great work done by each board. We have gifted and talented people volunteering their time and talents in a variety of ways, all of which lift others.



ONA Sunday



Advocating at the Capitol

Because of the generosity of the members and friends of the First Cong community, the Church supports a great staff who are lifting others through their creativity and wisdom. The First Cong community serves all generations through Sunday School, youth outings, educational opportunities, fun fellowship events, social and environmental justice opportunities, and thoughtful and meaningful Worship, including many talented musicians. The generosity of members and friends also maintains this beautiful building, not only for our needs but also lifts the community by offering space to non-profit organizations.

First Congregational UCC continues to Rise to the occasion by Lifting others! I give thanks for the generosity of members, friends, and staff for the commitment to love and care for ALL of God's children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eldonna Hazen".

Eldonna Hazen, Senior Minister

In Memory



*"I am the resurrection and the life,"
says the Lord. "Those who believe in
me, even though they die, will live;
and everyone who lives and believes
in me will never die."*

~John 11:25-26

Mark Thomas (12/20/1947 - 10/30/2023)

Linda Newman (5/24/1941 - 12/28/2023)

Thomas Heberlein (5/6/1945 - 1/04/2024)

Judith Whipple (12/02/1937 - 6/1/2024)



Mission

First Congregational United Church of Christ (FCUCC) in Madison, Wisconsin, seeks to be a radically inclusive and welcoming Christian community, nurturing and affirming God's creation and dedicated to serving all!



First Congregational UCC Ministers and Staff



Eldonna Hazen
Senior Minister



Ann Beaty
Associate Minister



Rev. Jerry Hancock
Prison Ministry Project
Director



Jeff Rabe
Children & Youth Ministry
Director



Heather Yonker
Music Ministry Director



Agustin Garcia
Building Maintenance



Jennifer Flaten
Bookkeeper



Julie Sheahan
Communications Coordinator

Hourly Staff

Nursery: Aster Camponeschi, Avery Hagen, Pamina Nemet, Lily Sager, Norah Taft, Mary Tishler
Livestream Techs: Alex Goff, Marland Hanes, Ellie Scheirey, Lukas Weinhold
Music Linda Krueger; organist; Allyson Mills, Zachary Mark, section leaders

Welcome!



Chris Rickman
Facilities Technician

Chris has a variety of experience, including being an independent contractor, and most recently, Program Manager for University Avenue Discovery Center (UADC). Chris enjoys playing guitar, singing, board games, and loves creating with his hands.



Zach Busch
Organist/
Accompanist

Zach holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a Master of Sacred Music from Luther Seminary. Zach is a thoughtful, talented, vocational church musician with twenty years of experience serving worshiping communities. In his free time, Zach likes to teach music lessons (piano, organ, voice), sew, garden, read poetry, and spend time with his nieces.

Best Wishes!



Carl Johnson
Facilities Manager

We are thankful for the time Carl has spent at First Cong, and especially glad he was with us to shepherd the elevator project. We wish Carl well in retirement!

Executive Council



Members:

Levi Hagen, Moderator
Gary Pine, Moderator-Elect
Laura Pine, Clerk
Jane Oman, Treasurer
Paul Karch, Financial Secretary
Barbara Arnold, At-large
Josh Wimmer, At-large
Alyssa Schultz, At-large
Betta Owen, At-large
Kweku Brewoo, Christian Ed
Anne Karch, Community Life
Mary Metz, Deacons
Carol Stephen, Outreach
Diane Brockley-Drinkman, Property
Beth Cannestra, Property
Patrick Cochran, Stewardship

The Executive Council acts on behalf of the Membership between Congregational meetings. The Executive Council meets monthly to oversee the budget throughout the year, coordinate board activities, and take on special projects.

The Environmental Justice Group remains an ad hoc group under the Executive Council, and the Council is very grateful for the wonderful work the committee has done to address the opportunities for the Church and its members to care for the earth.

The 320 Lathrop Committee also remains an ad hoc group. This year, the group prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) for one or all of the current properties: 301 Lathrop (currently a parking lot), 320 Lathrop (currently office space), and 324 Lathrop (currently a parking lot). The deadline for proposals is June 15, 2024, or until acceptable proposals are received.

Throughout the year, the Council spent several meetings discussing ways to ensure First Congregational UCC exists into perpetuity, believing this Church offers a unique view of Christianity.

The Council welcomed Zach Busch as organist/pianist and Christian Rickman as Facilities Technician. The Executive Council is grateful to the staff and the many members serving the Church on the six boards, and those who volunteer in and around the Church.



Congregational Meeting Minutes

First Congregational United Church of Christ – Madison June 25, 2023

11:13 AM via Zoom and In-Person

Moderator Susan Fischer called the meeting to order when a quorum was reached, at 11:13 AM. There were approximately 58 members participating in the Chapel and four participating via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes for June 26, 2022

Cindy Graham/Diane Brockley-Drinkman moved to approve the June 26, 2022 Congregational Meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Budget Report

The 2023-24 budget is balanced and includes a staff pay increase of 3% and paying off the Healing House loan. The biggest difference from the previous year's budget is the \$200,000 of revenue and expenses allocated for the elevator replacement.

The Executive Council moved that the congregation adopt the 2023-2024 FCUCC Budget as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Amendment to the Bylaws

The church needs to amend its bylaws to formalize the Financial Secretary officer position.

The Board of Stewardship moved that the congregation accept the following amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of First Congregational Church:

Constitution:

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS

SECTION 1. The officers of the Church shall consist of:

- A. Moderator
- B. Moderator-Elect
- C. Treasurer
- D. Clerk
- E. Financial Secretary

SECTION 2. The terms of the officers shall be one year.

SECTION 3. The Moderator-Elect, Treasurer, Clerk, and Financial Secretary shall be elected by the Membership. The Moderator-Elect automatically becomes the Moderator the following year.

Bylaws:

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

SECTION 1. Principal Officers. The principal officers of the Church shall be Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Treasurer, Clerk, and Financial Secretary. Other officers and assistant officers as necessary shall be appointed by the Executive Council. No two offices may be held by the same person.

SECTION 5 (Addition): Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary is responsible for the tracking, analysis, reporting, and communication of pledge commitments and payments to the Church, and shall have such duties and exercise such authority as may be delegated or assigned by the Board of Stewardship, the Executive Council, or the Moderator within the scope of the authority of each.

The motion passed unanimously.



continued on page 20

Board of Christian Education

Learn. Grow. Connect.

The Board of Christian Education (CE) supports the Church's mission by nurturing the faith development of people of all ages through educational programming and ministry. The Board supports a variety of programs, events, and activities for all ages. The CE Board, with its liaisons to the Accessibility and Adult Education committees, and in collaboration with the Director of Christian Education for Children and Youth, set the following new objectives for 2023-24:

- Develop programming of relevant topics/concerns that engage youth transitioning to adult life
- Create intergenerational programming to enhance understanding of other faiths

2023-2024 accomplishments and plans for 2024-2025:

Accessibility Committee

- Celebrated completion of the new elevator!
- The year brought the return of PLAT, the Parking Lot Assistance Team
- Continued efforts to become a WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) congregation
- Exploring options for improved acoustics in Hearth Room

Adult Education

- Seven 55 Alive! lunch and learn events
- Planning "Who is Your God?" series for Fall 2024, led by James Taylor
- Continuation of Men's Fellowship, Women's Book Study, and other programming like the COVIDiversary event

Young Adult

- Gathering information on existing faith programming for UW students
- Planning a summer gathering for young adults currently attending Worship as well as young adult members living in the area

Intergenerational

- Assisted Board of Community Life with Fall Harvest Festival and Advent Workshop
- Planning an Interfaith series including a book read, movie/video screening, small group conversations, and worship experiences in collaboration with Deacons.

Members:

Ruth Benedict, Chair
Kweku Brewoo, Young Adult
and Executive Council Rep
Petrovnia Charles
Laurie Dennis, Adult Ed Rep
Elizabeth Falendysz, Recorder
Kristi Mason
Jeanne Tyler, Accessibility Rep



Board of Christian Education

Children and Youth Ministries

Jeff Rabe, Director

It has been a busy program year! Traditional programming like the Christmas Pageant, Newlywed Game, and Easter Egg Hunt were back in full swing. Sunday School found fun and exciting ways to bring the old stories to life and share Christ's teachings. Newer programs like the Family Service Projects and Trunk-or-Treat brought families together. Youth worked on service projects and enjoyed programs designed to build community. The revival of the AMAZING GRACE offered youth an opportunity to meet and socialize with youth from other Madison churches.



High school nursery staff provided safety for our youngest members while building lasting bonds with toddlers and providing respite for parents.



40

hygiene kits assembled for Church World Services (CWS)



A 1st & 2nd grade Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education class provided a safe place for children to ask questions and build bonds with trusted adults.



24

pumpkins carved for the youth Jack-o-Lantern sale



Church youth took Christ's call to 'feed the hungry' to heart and worked several shifts at Second Harvest Food Bank to help those with food insecurity. One shift packaged more than 1,000 lbs. of cheese into 2 lb packages!



5000

containers of green beans inspected, labeled, and packaged by youth at Second Harvest Food Pantry



The children and youth-led Earth Sunday service focused on Creation and Creation care. 40 children and youth shared their many talents. A 'change' offering raised \$370 for the Aldo Leopold Nature Center's mission to educate future environmentalists.



6

Amazing GRace Teams

Board of Community Life (BCL)

Members:

Terry Christopher
Anne Karch
Cathy Noth
Melinda Pine

The Board of Community Life (BCL) works to foster personal and social connections among members and visitors through programs and activities; we encourage people who want to start groups or a new activity, and we work with other Boards in their efforts to develop a sense of community.

Ice Cream Social

In May, after church on Confirmation Sunday, we welcomed our newest members, the high school students confirmed, and our members who have belonged to our congregation 50 years (or more!) with an ice cream social. This has become a favorite event for many.

After-Worship Refreshment! (AWR)

AWR is a beloved “part” of our Sunday services! Congregation members volunteered and provided a light snack following Worship, taking care that there was something sweet, something gluten-free, and something for vegans as well as much for omnivores.

55 Alive!

A popular monthly program for people over 55, but actually, anyone is welcome. Attendees enjoy lunch and conversation before the talk by church or civic leaders about topics of interest. Some of the topics this year included drumming, music, wildlife protection, reflecting on the Palestinian/Israeli history, ministry to college students, and yoga.

Harvest Fest

A completely new fall event, in coordination with Christian Education, the Harvest Fest included a hearty chili and corn-bread lunch, followed by a pie contest where everyone got to taste the wares. A background of fiddle music and fall themed decorations put everyone in a warm and friendly mood.

Advent Workshop

Also working with Christian Education and past BCL members, this beloved favorite Church event followed Worship in early December with a box luncheon and a wide array of Christmas-themed crafts that kids could create as Christmas gifts for family members.



Board of Deacons

Members:

Melissa Baumann
Mary Lawrence-Wehrle
Minda Mauer
Maureen McCoy
Mary Metz
Judith Stephens



In 2023, the Deacons brought back components of Worship that took on a different form during COVID-19. Communion had been offered using individual packets of juice and wafer. We resumed serving communion by intinction and simplified the process. Instead of having regular and gluten-free bread, gluten-free bread is now offered to everyone. And for those who would like communion in the pews, ushers have a special platter with bread and grape juice so people may take it through intinction. Deacons coordinate Communion, but past Deacons and interested congregation members help serve.

The Board continues to decorate for church seasons and help with the visual presentation of the Sanctuary. For Advent, the Deacons resumed the greening of the Sanctuary, asking for help from the congregation. We organized our decorations for a more efficient process.

First Cong was pleased to host the orientation of Christina Schoenwetter on October 22, 2023. Rev. Schoenwetter began her discernment with First Cong.

■ Attended Worship In-person
■ Attended Worship Virtually



11

New Members



3

Baptisms



2

Confirmants

Board of Deacons

Music Ministries

Heather Yonker, Director

"We rise, humbly hearted, rise, won't be divided, rise, with Spirit to guide us, Rise!"

As the song says, 'in hope, in prayer, we find ourselves here, in hope, in prayer, we're right here!', bouncing back strong after the hush of COVID, adjusting and blossoming! A plethora of great music has been lifting the worship messages this year.

The Handbell Choir loyally gathered to make music and nurture community. Their commitment to the congregation and their care for each other is ever-present. This season, though missing a few for health or work issues, they patiently adapted to new arrangements and festive collaborations with the Chancel and Drum Choirs!



The Chancel Choir sang every first and third Sunday. The choir also led hymns and offered special music during Advent and Lent. The group has grown with active members from the community and new section leaders Allyson Mills and Zachary Mark.

For Worship this year, we heard from many guest artists, Rachel Avery on harp for Christmas Eve, Kathy Taylor on violin with the choir, The Perfect Harmony Chorus, The Todd Forsythe Brass Quintet for Easter, Scott Stetson on guitar, and Ruby Kotlarek on flute.



Looking forward, we anticipate continued growth and more musical variety; a budding recorder group is gathering; new development of an "All in the Family" choir that would sing 3-4 times per year; accessible music for parents and children to sing together in Worship; and implementing fresh ideas from the UCCMA music conference!

We'll see what other cool cats come out for music at FCUCC in 2024-25! Cool cats like to tune in to hear our music on livestream too! The choir mics have been an enormous contribution to the sound quality of our live-stream. Thank you so much!



Board of Outreach

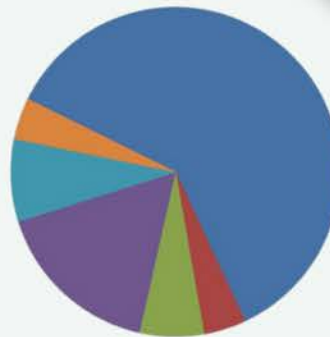
Members:

Bob Abrams
Katrina Dwinell
Justin Hicks
Kristin Kanitz
Carol Stephen
Darcy Syring



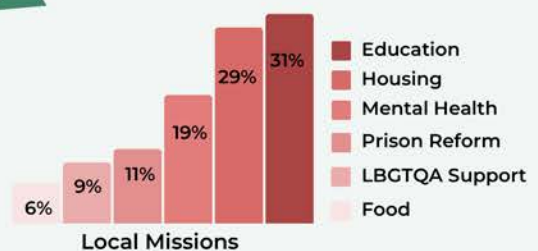
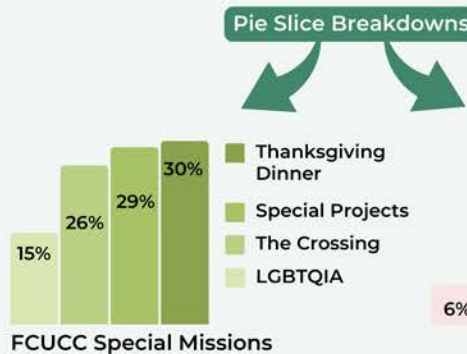
This is a very generous Church! The Outreach Board oversees a budget of \$123,600 to spread around our community. Additionally, our Congregation gave \$7,800 to the four UCC special offerings we support each year.

In the community, we attended Pride Magic Fest, collected blankets (two large bins!) for SVdP's "Recycle the Warmth Blanket" drive, and provided 128 backpacks and school supplies to 12 schools and agencies before school started. Outreach also contributes to other missions. See the pie chart for a breakdown of funds.



- "Our Church's Wider Missions"
- Other UCC-Wide Missions
- First Cong Special Missions
- Local Missions
- Parish Fund
- Prison Ministry Release Fund

Our Thanksgiving Meal – delivery and carry-out – prepared and delivered more than 400 dinners to folks in our community. An estimated 250 volunteers helped prepare and deliver meals.



Board of Outreach

The Prison Ministry Project (PMP)

Rev. Jerry Hancock, Director

It has been a busy and faithful year for the Prison Ministry Project. On behalf of the women and men we serve in prison, and all our volunteers, thank you for the continued support.

Expo Safe House

This year, PMP supported the opening of the EXPO Safe House for five women recently released from prison. PMP contributed \$25,000 from generous bequests from the estate of RW McCoy and the Joe Maassen Justice Fund. After 18 years of Restorative Justice (RJ) inside prison, the Expo House became the site of our first RJ program outside prison walls.



Certified Peer Support Book Clubs

Again this year the PMP partnered with the Madison Public Library Foundation to provide 450 books for 26 sessions of our Certified Peer Support Book Clubs in Wisconsin prisons. The clubs are a critical source of support for the men and women who provide guidance to other prisoners that only someone on the inside can offer.

Prison Ministry Project by the Numbers

- 46 worship services in five prisons (New Lisbon, Columbia, Taycheedah Oak Hill, Racine). In July 365 people attended worship.
- 121 pastoral visits.
- 30 meetings of the Certified Peer Support Book Groups. In August Secretary Carr, Department of Corrections, stopped by the book club at Stanley as they were discussing *The Grapes of Wrath* and shared that it is his favorite book.
- 10 meetings of the Discover Odyssey humanities enrichment program.
- 68 sessions of Restorative Justice.
- 11 advocacy events. The General Synod of the UCC, our national legislative body, adopted a resolution that solitary confinement is torture. The resolution was based on and supported by our solitary confinement cell project.

Safe House Volunteer Reflections

More than a year ago, I sat at my dining room table with Tamra Oman, as she shared with me her dream of providing a safe transitional home to women emerging from prison. Tamra and Deb Mejchar, two dynamic and inspiring formerly incarcerated women... Post-incarceration, Tamra and Deb kept alive the hope that others might be released to a safe space where they could receive support as they navigated the difficult transition to independence and stability on the outside. EXPO SAFE House is the realization of that dream. EXPO SAFE House has become a vibrant, thriving example of community for all concerned!
– Peg Wallace

So far our experience has been wonderful. And it is very different from circles inside prison walls! We even enjoy sharing a meal that everyone has contributed to. The RJ circle works as it usually does with everyone sharing stories and thoughts on the "question" at hand. The conversations have been deep and personal. – Janet Pugh

After participating in just three meetings of the RJ circle at EXPO house, I am humbled and amazed. I am in awe of the courage and resilience of the women who are trying to build a new life for themselves after prison and working hard to overcome challenges I have never had to face. I am grateful to be a part of the first RJ program outside of prison walls.
– Mari McCarty

Board of Property Management

Members:

Pam Cramer
Beth Cannestra
Diane Brockley-
Drinkman
Diane Paoni
Tony Walker

What a Year!

Over the past year, the Property Board has overseen several repairs and upgrades. From an emergency call that water was leaking from the Sanctuary ceiling to hearing about a pair of baby raccoons on the Healing House porch, one of our goals is to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all.

It seems like yesterday that the Congregation voted to replace the temperamental elevator. With incredible support from the Foundation and members, our new elevator was dedicated on November 19, 2023.

The next time you make your way to the 3rd floor, check out the new LED lights and fresh paint. This fall, new flooring and bookcases will welcome our kids back to Sunday School.

You have likely seen the new shed by the Lathrop entrance, the home for our new snow blower - thankfully, we won't need to move snow for several months. Now, all the lawn care items have a secure home.

The Board is grateful to continue to provide working and learning space for the Vocational Transition students from LaFollette during the week. They gift us in helping care for our space.

We hosted several concerts in our beautiful Sanctuary and Chapel including Madison Area Handbells (MACH), Madison Bach Musicians, con vivo!: Music for Life, and Madison Choral Project.

In addition, we give to our community by offering a weekly meeting space for an Alcoholic Anonymous group, and rehearsal space for Stage Q. This year we welcomed back the Agricultural Women's Association and, for the first time, Rotary After Hours for Rally for Hunger events.

Nehemiah led the efforts to rebuild Jerusalem's walls; the 2023-24 Property Board is grateful to our 21st century goldsmiths, merchants and perfume makers for your continued efforts and support.



15

outside groups used the church
for meetings and activities

The Foundation

The Foundation, as the endowment arm of the Church, receives gifts, invests them, and distributes funds to further the mission of the Church. A Board of Directors, consisting of six directly elected members and five who serve ex-officio, governs the Foundation. At the end of the first quarter of 2024, the Foundation's net assets were \$3,777,775. In addition to the usual annual disbursement to the Church, the Foundation gifted \$50,000 to fund the replacement of the elevator and agreed to match any funds donated to the Church for the elevator project. The Foundation also agreed to provide a no-interest loan to the Church to complete the elevator project. Loan repayment will begin in 2024.

Distributions to the Church in 2023

Main Fund: \$34, 777

Varney Fund: \$998

Updike Fund: \$2,182

New Century Funds: \$40,393

Elevator Project Gift: \$50,000

Page Scholarships are available to youth in six area UCC churches. Members of those churches form an advisory committee whose recommendations are reviewed and approved by the Board. The Board approved \$20,300 in Page Scholarships for the year.

The Board also approved a distribution of \$55,500 in Seeds of Hope grants to area non-profits for social justice grants aligned with the mission of the Church.

2024 Seeds of Hope Recipients

Prison Ministry Project

Neighborhood House

Triangle Ministry

Solace Friends

Respect/ARC

Way Forward

Members:

Lance Bentley
Ellsworth Brown
Patrick Cochran
Levi Hagen
Eldonna Hazen
Mari McCarty
Lyn Macgregor
Jan Oman
Gary Pine
Donald Taft
Tricia Wheeler



\$20,300

approved to Page
Scholarship recipients



\$55,500

distributed to area
non-profits through
the Seeds of Hope
grants



"We are partners working together for God."

1 Corinthians 3:9



First Congregational
Church of Madison
FOUNDATION inc.

Board of Stewardship

We Rise by Lifting Others

This year, the Stewardship Board explored how we can “Rise By Lifting Others.” This is evident in the everyday generosity of time, talents, and treasures. It was especially relevant as we raised funds to replace our aging elevator, which was dedicated after Worship on November 19.

Members:

Patrick Cochran
 Scott Hanson
 Megan Senatori
 Faye Whitaker
 Paul Karch, Financial Secretary
 Jane Oman, Treasurer



Elevator Dedication and Blessing

Pledge income remains strong, and we are projected to meet our goal for the fiscal year. While the number of pledges has held relatively steady over the past two years, the average amount pledged towards our Annual Stewardship Campaign has increased year after year.

In-person Scrip sales returned after Worship. Stop by the table to purchase gift cards to help raise additional funds or to learn more about the program.



Pancake Breakfast

The ever-popular Pancake Breakfast returned to the dining room on Sunday, January 21.



The Stewardship Board remains grateful for the generosity of our congregation as we continue to “Rise By Lifting Others.”

Financial Secretary Report

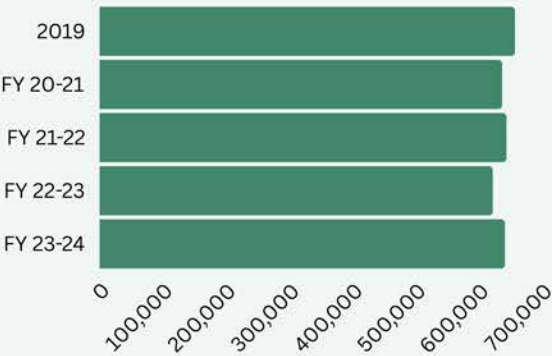
2023-2024

Paul Karch, Financial Secretary

The generosity of our Congregation remained faithful and strong with a continuing trend of increased annual average pledges providing the resources we need for our missions. However . . . there are two concerning trends since 2019, shown on the following charts: 1) The number of pledgers has been declining, and 2) The percentage of pledgers and dollars of pledges made by people over 60 compared to pledgers under 60 has been increasing. It is quite common for the bulk of a Congregation's pledges to come from people over 60, but we would like the percentages to remain about the same.

I welcome any questions, comments or suggestions.
Thank you for allowing me to serve,

\$ Pledged



of Pledges

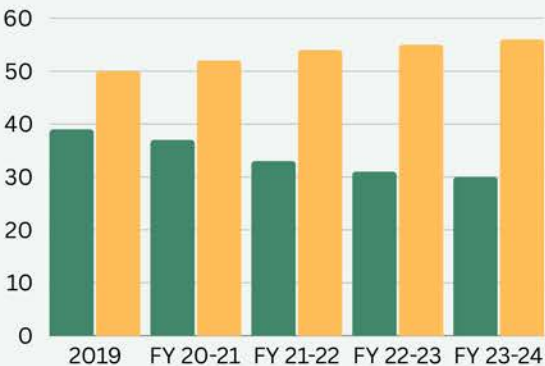


Average Pledge



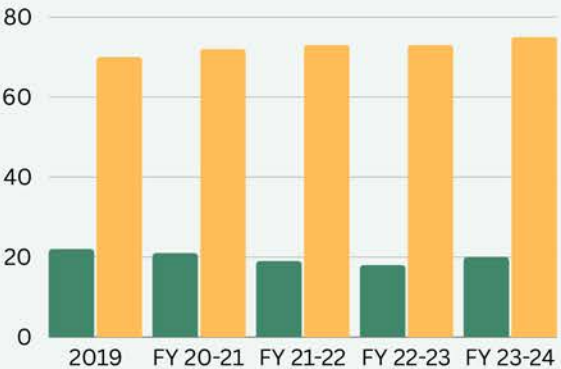
Trend - % of Pledges

Under 60 Over 60



Trend - % of Pledge \$

Under 60 Over 60



2023 Year-In-Review

Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all ... while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Titus 2: 11-13

I greet you in the joyful spirit of Epiphany. The words of Titus remind us that between the grace of God that came to Bethlehem in the birth of Jesus and the full manifestation of God's glory on Earth, we in the United Church of Christ are called to bear witness to the love of Christ every day.



The love of Christ is faithful in every generation. Four years after COVID-19 radically changed our lives, congregations are still adjusting to new realities. Many have faced significant declines and are enduring the anxiety that accompanies concerns about sustainability. Yet most have embraced new technologies, and nearly all congregations can point to bright spots of ministry that have unleashed new energy. COVID affected the wider church as well. In early 2023, we made the painful decision to sell the Trost Center in DeForest and shift the Conference offices to Daycholah Center on Green Lake, enabling a closer partnership with United Church Camps Inc. and providing UCCI with a financial boost.

The love of Christ is courageous in the face of challenges. Our associate conference ministers – the Revs. Jane Anderson, Rachel Bauman and Michael Jones -- continue to guide congregations through the search process at a time when the candidate pool is small, and the number of part-time pastorates is increasing. We consider every creative pastoral option and use the leadership and ministry skills courses of the Damascus Project to train future pastoral leaders. The Rev. Dr. Stephanie Perdew, director of the Damascus Project, secured a \$500,000 Lilly Endowment grant that – over the next five years – will widen our pool of learners through expanded course offerings at very reasonable costs. The Damascus Project is the shared educational ministry of the Minnesota and Wisconsin conferences.

The love of Christ demands justice for the oppressed. The justice working groups and Supportive Ministries Team continue to provide resources for local congregations and a collective voice supporting the poor and marginalized. The Damascus Project introduced an implicit bias course, part of our emphasis on anti-racism training. One of our newer working groups – Older Adult Ministries – has produced significant resources for local churches that seek to cultivate deeper connections with seniors. The Creation Care Team, the Immigration Justice Work Group and the Alliance for Justice, which focuses on honoring indigenous peoples, are empowering local congregations with resources to advance these vital ministries.

The love of Christ brings generosity to the world. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the 210 UCC congregations of the Wisconsin Conference remain remarkably generous. Your support through Our Church's Wider Mission provides three-quarters of the Conference budget and all sorts of resourcing, training, programs and an incredible global mission outreach. We are deeply grateful to all those who have made commitments to the Leadership Forward Campaign. Already, Leadership Forward has received pledges totaling \$1 million. In addition, the Wisconsin Foundation UCC now holds investments of roughly \$17 million on behalf of several congregations and the Conference. The Foundation provides an ideal opportunity for your congregation to achieve excellent financial returns through socially responsible investments.

The love of Christ builds beloved community. In our wider conference life, we are asking this question: "How can we better connect, resource and support each other, as local churches, pastors and lay leaders?" The question has prompted us to rethink church governance structures and to imagine new forms of collaboration. Meanwhile, the staff continues to cultivate care and connection with one another and to build relationships throughout the Conference. At the beginning of 2023 we welcomed ACM Michael Jones and just recently introduced our newest staff member, Carla Myers, who succeeds Susan Taylor as office coordinator. Though Sue is mostly retired, we're happy that she has agreed to work a few hours a week to coordinate the search-and-call process.

Submitted with a grateful heart in the love of Christ,
The Rev. Franz Rigert

Members Serving the Wider Church

Ann Beaty

Fitness Review Team, Southwest Association Representative
Board of Directors, Wisconsin Conference UCC
Nominating Committee, Wisconsin Conference UCC

Roger Brooks

Editor, Shalom Newsletter, Southwest Association

Eldonna Hazen

Co-Chair, Division of Church and Ministry, Southwest Association
Facilitator, Community of Practice
Commission on Ministry, Wisconsin Conference UCC
Leadership Forward Campaign, Wisconsin Conference UCC

Paul Karch

Delegate to General Synod, 2023

Hanns Kuttner

Finance Team, Wisconsin Conference UCC

Janet Pugh

Executive Committee, Southwest Association

Jeff Rabe

Facilitator, Community of Practice

Wayne Shannon

Delegate to General Synod, 2023
Division of Church and Ministry, Southwest Association

Don Taft

Treasurer, Southwest Association

Jessica Taft

Division of Social Concerns, Southwest Association
Catalyst Team, Wisconsin Conference UCC



*First Cong Members at the 2023
WI Conference Annual Meeting*



Congregational Meeting Minutes

First Congregational United Church of Christ – Madison June 25, 2023

continued from page 6

Nominating Report and Election

Casey Newman, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the proposed 2023-24 slate of officers, board members, and other leaders. Newman expressed his appreciation for fellow committee members, existing board members who helped with recruitment, and all who agreed to share their leadership gifts.

The Nominating Committee moved that the slate of candidates presented by the Nominating Committee be approved as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Vacant positions will be filled by the nominating committee and approved by the Executive Council.

Installation of Church Leadership

The 2023-24 leaders were installed in a brief service led by Senior Minister Hazen.

As his first act as Moderator, Levi Hagen thanked outgoing Moderator Susan Fischer for her leadership. Fischer opened a gift from the church, a commissioned artwork by member Linda Hancock.

Adjournment

Minister Hazen offered a closing prayer, and the meeting adjourned.

~Respectfully submitted by Laura Pine, Clerk

First Cong *Fun Facts!*



63

new YouTube subscribers
257 total



8

animals blessed at the annual
Blessing of the Animals



20 years

anniversary celebrated by the
four couples in the Newlywed
Game: Emerald Edition



5

Advent & Lenten
Vesper Services



128

backpacks filled
with supplies for
area children



3

Make Music Madison
performances in the
Sanctuary



13

pies entered in the
Harvest Fest pie contest



4

exhibits in the
Chapel Art Gallery



9

Trunk Hosts for Trunk-or-Treat



30 seconds

time left when a team
finally made it out of
the Escape Room



32

new page likes,
673 total

Time and Talents Shared

WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Acolytes

Eloise Delaney
James Floberg
Mikko Fystrom
Alexa Hackel
Kenna Hairgrove
John Hoffman
Aiden Noth-Hazen
Emmy Schultz
Izzy Schultz
Samuel Senatori
Evelyn Taft
Micah Taft
Will Tishler
Elliott Vandermuss
Stuart Vandermuss
Claire Ward

After-Worship Refreshments

Melissa Baumann
Ruth Benedict
Monique & Diane Brockley-Drinkman
Terry Christopher
Maddie & Aaron Dumas
Robin Craig
Cochran Family
Erika Hagen
Anne Karch
Sarah Kissel
Carol Kreuscher
Maureen McCoy
Terry McLaren
Mary Metz
Cathy Noth
Melinda Pine
Janet Pugh
Kay Rock
Megan Senatori
Tracy Simonson
Carol Stephen
Judith Stephens
Kari Stetson
Jessica Taft
Don Taft
Faye Whitaker

Communion Servers (beyond the Deacons)

Barbara Arnold
Brenda Burke
Robin Craig
Susan Fischer
Bill Stephen
Kathy Taylor

WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Sound Team

Robert Hetzel
Casey Newman
Aiden Noth-Hazen
Thomas Pugh

Sunday Morning Baristas

Jeremy Bliss
Chuck Erickson
Sue Jones
Kay Rock
Bill Taft

Sunday Readers

Barbara Arnold
Melissa Baumann
Ruth Benedict
Kweku Brewoo
Diane Brockley-Drinkman
Brenda Burke
Marlene Duffield
Elizabeth Falendysz
Susan Fischer
Scott Hackel
Julie Kramer
Paul Lorentz
Mari McCarty
Maureen McCoy
Don Metz
Mary Metz
Robert Metz
Nancy Moore
Gary Pine
Janet Pugh
Kathryn Taylor
Faye Whitaker

Ushers

Barbara Arnold
Jeremy Bliss
Katrina Dwinell
Cindy Graham
Maureen McCoy
Bob Metz
Mary Metz
Nancy Moore
Janet Pugh
Bill Stephen
Carol Stephen
Nadine Walsten

CHILDEN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

Lead Teachers

Jessica Flowers
Jenn Hackel
Anne Karch
Liz Michaels
Megan Senatori
Kari Stetson
Jennifer Tishler

Parent Aides

Jean Abrams
Brenda Burke
Laura Chidylo
Peter Chidylo
Emily Cochran
Patrick Cochran
Chris Donaldson
Aaron Dumas
Rachel Gundacker
Betta Owens
Pia Plaggenborg
Jeanne Tyler

Room Helpers

Elia Cochran
Alexa Hackel
Evelyn Taft

OWL Facilitators

Matt Flowers
Erika Hagen

Youth Bible Study

Elizabeth Falendysz
Diana Shaw

Youth Group

Chaperones
Katrina Dwinell
Jane Oman

Musical Productions

Kristin Kanitz
Barb Grajewski

Birthday Cards

Sue Bogen
Joanne Lenburg
Steve Sheski

Worship Totes

Judith Stephens

CHILDEN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

Food

Tracy Simonson
Anne Karch

Bulletin Boards

Diane Brockley-Drinkman
Monique Brockley-Drinkman

Summer Sunday School

Elizabeth Falendysz
Amity Fogel
Jessica Flowers
Linda Hancock
Julie Kramer
Laura Pine
Tracy Simonson

Amazing Grace Hosts

Ruth Benedict & Gary Pine
Aaron Dumas & boys
Barb Grajewski
Jessica Flowers
Sean Hadfield
Anne Karch
Joanne & Bob Lenburg
Janet & Tom Pugh

Trunk-or-Treat Hosts

Terry Christopher
The Cochran Family
Gloria & Mike Green
The Hoffman Family
Joanne & Bob Lenburg
The Taft Family
Cathy Noth
Melinda Pine
Ann Beaty & Carol Kreuscher

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Community Meals

Melissa Baumann
 Cheryl Bentley
 Robin Craig
 Pam Cramer
 Catherine Easter
 Susan Fischer
 Amy Fraser
 Gloria Green
 Karen Gussert
 Marsha Hall
 Jerry Hancock
 Linda Hancock
 Patricia Howarth-Burns
 Jill Larson
 Mary Lawrence-Wehrle
 Joanne Lenburg
 Matthew Lenburg
 Jeanne Marshall
 Kevin McAleese
 Mari McCarty
 Robert Metz
 Sarah Nordberg
 Cathy Noth
 Marcia Olson
 Nancy Payne
 Darby Puglielli
 Dave Puglielli
 Tracy Simonson
 Bill Stephen
 Carol Stephen
 Bob Stephens
 Judith Stephens
 Darcy Syring
 Tom Syring
 Kathryn Taylor
 Robert Taylor
 Jody Varney
 Nadine Walsten
 Mary Weber
 Tricia Wheeler
 Katherine Wiggins

ONA Planning Team

Diane Brockley-Drinkman
 Sue Jones
 Diane Paoni
 Judith Stephens

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Pride Magic Festival Planning Team

Diana Brockley-Drinkman
 Monique Brockley-Drinkman
 Katrina Dwinell
 Cathie Easter
 Susan Fischer
 Levi Hagen
 Marland Hanes
 Terry McLaren
 Petrovnia McIntosh
 Jane Oman

Prison Ministry Project

Elizabeth Armstrong
 Susan Heneman
 Rob Hetzel
 Paul Karch
 Linda Ketcham
 Joanne Lenburg
 Paul Lorentz
 Mari McCarty
 Janet Pugh
 Susan Shands
 Diana Shaw
 Marcia Wirt

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Chancel Choir

Dorothy Brown
 Ellsworth Brown
 Petrovnia Charles
 Wendy Coleman
 Marlene Duffield
 Chuck Erickson
 Gloria Green
 Mike Green
 Paul Hauri
 Rowan Hildebrandt
 Pat Howarth-Burns
 Marli Johnson
 Robert Johnson
 Sue Jones
 Trish Karls
 Carol Kreuscher
 Lyn Macgregor
 Zachary Mark
 Mari McCarty
 Don Metz
 Allyson Mills
 Jacqueline Olen
 Jeri Parrott
 Thomas Pugh
 Ronald Shaw
 Jennifer Tishler
 Faye Whitaker

Handbell Choir

Melissa Baumann
 Ruth Benedict
 Amy Bogen
 Sue Bogen
 Wendy Coleman
 Gloria Green
 Mike Green
 Paul Karch
 Nancy Moore
 Sarah Nordberg
 Judith Stephens

Drums

Elizabeth Armstrong
 Melissa Baumann
 Kweku Brewoo
 Emily Brooks
 Kristin Kanitz
 Liz Michaels
 Marcia Olson
 Jane Oman
 Nancy Payne
 Bret Schuhart

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Instrumentalists

Rachel Avery-Harp
 Aiden Hazen-Trombone
 Ruby Kotlarek-Flute
 Evelyn Taft-violin
 Kathy Taylor-violin
 Scott Stetson-guitar
 Melinda Certain-piano
 Betty Hasselkus-piano

GENERAL MINISTRIES

Accessibility Committee

Robin Craig
Karen Gussert
Kristi Mason
Terry McLaren
Jeanne Tyler

Adult Education Committee

Melissa Baumann
Diane Brockley-Drinkman
Laurie Dennis
Matthew Lenburg
Jim Taylor

Environmental Justice Committee

Scott Hackel
Melissa Baumann
Jessica Flowers
Maureen McCoy
Marty Simonson
Bob Stephens
Judith Stephens
Kathy Wiggins

History Committee

Sue Jones
Janet Pugh
Faye Whitaker

Nominating Committee

Ruth Benedict
Susan Fischer
Cindy Graham
Casey Newman

SCRIP Sales

Lance Bentley
Sue Bogen
Terry Callaghan
Paul Camponeschi
Patrick Cochran
Catherine Easter
Susan Fischer
Matt Flowers
Levi Hagen
Scott Hanson
Anne Karch
Paul Karch
Lyn Macgregor
Jeanne Marshall
Nancy Moore
Casey Newman
Jane Oman
Jessica Taft

BUILDING MINISTRIES

320 Lathrop Planning Committee

Ruth Benedict
Hanns Kuttner
Sarah Kissel
Tom Syring

Chapel Art Curator

Linda Hancock

Garden Helpers

Melissa Bauman
Lance Bentley
Wendy Coleman
Robin Craig
Gloria Green
Anne Karch
Joanne Lenburg
Maureen McCoy
Bob Metz
Nancy Moore

Office Volunteers

Melissa Baumann
Ruth Benedict
Cheryl Bentley
Sue Bogen
Robin Craig
Cindy Graham
Joanne Lenburg
Maureen McCoy
Betta Owens
Nancy Payne
Janet Pugh
Amanda Ready
Carol Stephen
Faye Whitaker
Frederick Wileman

PLAT (Parking Lot Attendant Team)

Kweku Brewoo
Beth Cannestra
Patrick Cochran
Matt Flowers
Levi Hagen
Paul Karch
Marty Simonson
Bob Stephens

Shed Construction

Beth Cannestra
Cindy Graham
Levi Hagen
Gary Pine

Tech Support

Jeanne Marshall

Thank you to all the volunteers and donors who contributed to our Thanksgiving Meal, Advent Workshop, dinner at The Crossing, Magic Pride Festival, and numerous other community events and collections.

Thank you to those who made and donated prayer shawls.

We appreciate all you do!



First Congregational
United Church of Christ

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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firstcongrmadison.org