

# 190th ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 28, 2024



United Church of Christ

## MISSION STATEMENT

“Welcoming all, we spread Christ’s radical message of  
love and justice.”

**First Congregational UCC Naperville**  
25 East Benton Avenue, Naperville, IL 60540  
630-355-1024 / [www.loveandjustice.org](http://www.loveandjustice.org)

**CHURCH STAFF**

Rev. David Voll  
Interim Pastor

Christopher Lorimer  
Director of Music Ministry

Sue Flaatten, Organist

Denise Majewski  
Christian Education Coordinator

Barbara Bailey  
Church Secretary

Amy Ervin  
Bookkeeper

**CHURCH OFFICERS**

Theresa Hus, Moderator  
Diana Lorenz, Secretary  
Tim Nelson, Treasurer

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# AGENDA

190th ANNUAL MEETING  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS  
JANUARY 28, 2024

Declaration of a Quorum & Call to Order	Theresa Hus
Invocation	Rev. David Voll
Reports	
Pastor	Rev. David Voll
Moderator	Theresa Hus
Treasurer	Tim Nelson
Presentation of Budget for 2024 (Presentation, discussion, motions, vote)	Jerry Stonewater
Officers and Ministry Positions	
Nominating Committee recommendations, discussions, virtual vote	Theresa Hus
Commissioning of Church Officers	Rev. David Voll
Closing Words	Theresa Hus
Benediction	Rev. David Voll
Adjournment	Theresa Hus

**189th ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**of First Congregational UCC Naperville**  
*(approved at the March 21, 2023 Council of Ministries meeting)*

Moderator Dan Zeman called the 189th annual meeting to order at 11:17 a.m. on January 29, 2023. A quorum was established with 62 members present.

Rev. Mark Winters led the invocation.

### **Reports**

Rev. Mark Winters presented the Pastoral Report.

- He encouraged us to read the written annual report.
- He noted that the Council took a break from its normal meeting format at the beginning of the year to talk about how we do what we do. Getting people to agree to fill leadership roles is often difficult. How can we redefine these roles to make them accessible to different types of people? He urged us to continue this conversation.
- He thanked the COVID team for their work in guiding us through the pandemic, including former team members Laura Zeman and Bev George, as well as current members Tim and Sandra Banas, Gene Wollaston, and Barb O'Meara.
- He thanked the congregation for allowing him to work towards his doctorate. He completed four more courses this year.
- He thanked outgoing Council members Susan McNeal-Bulak, Carol Patterson, Barb Kling, Tom Southwood, Chris Farthing, and Dan Zeman. He also praised the continuing Council members, the staff, and the stewardship of all of us.

Dan Zeman gave the Moderator's Report.

- Dan thanked:
  - The incoming Council members—they will have financial challenges to deal with, but Dan is confident they will be able to work through these challenges.
  - Rev. Mark, for his contributions over the past 13+ years.
  - The Interim Minister Search Committee, who worked so diligently to identify an Interim Minister.
  - Those who guided us through the uncharted waters of COVID.
  - Theresa Hus, who will be succeeding him as Moderator.
- Dan noted that the biggest news of the year has been Rev. Mark's upcoming departure. There are unknowns ahead, but these are charted waters, and there is a well-defined process that has been successfully followed by many other church communities. The same spirit that has kept us going for 190 years will keep us going for another 190.

Tim Nelson presented the highlights of the Treasurer's report.

- Our planned deficit for 2022 was \$21,690. While we did end the year with a deficit, it was not quite as large as predicted and actually came in at \$17,163.
- Revenue was up by almost \$18K over what was budgeted, due to the congregation giving more than \$14K more than they pledged, and also because of a contribution that was pledged for 2021 but actually made in 2022, and therefore entered into the books in 2022.
- However, expenses were also higher than budgeted for the year by \$13,471, mostly due to higher-than-expected "Caring for the Worship Home" costs (particularly HVAC and utilities cost).

- Further detail is available in the written report.

Jerry Stonewater presented the 2023 budget. This budget projects revenues of \$385,503 and expenses of \$422,122, resulting in a deficit of \$36,619.

- Tim Nelson noted that pledges are actually higher than they were at this time last year, but the fact that people contributed more than they pledged last year erroneously makes it look otherwise.
- Dale Bryson asked how much longer we can continue to operate under deficit budgets. Tim replied that we actually had a surplus in 2021; 2022 was the first year that we had an actual deficit. But Tim agreed that running a deficit is not a sustainable mode of operation; we will have to look at this more closely this year. The Finance Committee of the Trustees will be meeting soon to discuss ways of doing business differently that will allow us to reduce our deficits.
- Susan Greenwood reminded us that we've been here before; we actually had deficit budgets back when we hired Rev. Mark and we recovered from those.
- Lori Shepard asked us to spread the word and bring our friends to church.
- Laura Zeman expressed her concern that we need more people in our pews.
- Drew Walker stated that the Stewardship campaign results show that we have a committed core group of pledgers but we had a lot of people leave the church in the past year due to a variety of reasons and we did not have a comparable number of people joining us. We had the smallest number of pledging units in a long time.
- Lewie Mitchell said that our focus should be on our mission; if we lead with our mission, the rest will follow. Jerry pointed out that our budget for the interim has some cushion built into it; it is likely that our expenses for the interim will not be as high as budgeted.

Bob Vonderohe made a motion to approve the budget. Dale Bryson seconded the motion. The motion carried by a show of hands vote.

Barb Stonewater gave a report on the status of the search for an Interim Minister.

- Barb thanked the search committee, which, along with her, consisted of Dale Bryson, Becky Klein-Collins, Susan McNeal-Bulak, Lisa Mitchell, and Sara Walker. It was a time-intensive effort, and she was grateful for their hard work.
- Barb also acknowledged the support of Rev. Dr. Stephanie Perdew, the Associate Conference Minister from the Illinois Conference with responsibilities for pastoral transitions.
- The committee received several profiles from ministers interested in the position. These profiles were evaluated based on six criteria: experience with congregational transition, worship leadership, theology, management skills, alignment/fit, and overall strength of candidacy.
- Three candidates were selected from those who sent profiles and were interviewed over Zoom.
- They decided to hold a second in-person interview with one candidate. This was held last Sunday and included a tour of the church. The committee very much enjoyed their time with the candidate.
- The committee recommended to Council that this candidate be hired as our Interim Minister.
- Council held a special meeting last Tuesday night and voted to accept the committee's recommendation.
- Lewie Mitchell, as chair of Trustees, is working with the candidate on details of the Interim Minister call agreement. There are still a couple of details to work out.
- Once an agreement is reached, an announcement/bio will be sent to the congregation.
- They are working to get the minister here in time for the February 12 service, but it may not happen until February 19. We will have one or two weeks with a guest preacher.

Rev. Perdew, who was present at the meeting, concurred that the process was very efficiently conducted, especially since part of it was done over the holidays. Rev. Perdew will be leaving her position at the end of March and will be moving to take a position with the Wisconsin and Minnesota Conferences. She may contract to continue her current work part-time until her successor is on-board. In any case, she will work to ensure a smooth transition. She also noted that a lot of UCC congregations are facing the same budget pressures that we are facing this year, and she is glad that our priorities are such that we are still able to offer a fair compensation package to our interim.

Steve Kilar also concurred that the search process was very efficiently conducted and said it compared favorably to other searches he'd seen conducted in other churches he's been a member at.

The nominated slate of church leaders was presented. These leaders include:

- Moderator: Theresa Hus
- Secretary: Diana Lorenz
- Treasurer: Tim Nelson
- Treasurer-Elect: Steve Kilar
- Chair of Trustees: Lewie Mitchell

Theresa, Diana, and Tim would be the Church Officers. Theresa, Tim, and Lewie would be Directors of the Corporation. Theresa, Tim, Steve, and Lewie would be Authorized Agents.

Barb Stonewater moved to elect this slate of church leaders. Lori Shepard seconded the motion. The motion carried by a show of hands vote.

Theresa took over leadership of the meeting. She thanked her fellow leaders and thanked Rev. Mark and his family for their service to our church community. She has been a member of our church for 25 years and was here throughout Mark's tenure. We are a strong congregation, and she has faith in our future. And she is looking forward to seeing Mark return to celebrate with us at our 200th anniversary in 2033.

Dale Bryson led a standing ovation for Rev. Mark.

Rev. Mark recounted his feeling that our congregation would be all right when he counted 27 church members at the summer meeting of the Naperville City Council for the discussion on the proposed assault weapons ban. He also noted his appreciation for the enthusiasm and the stepping up that he's seen since he announced his departure in November.

Rev. Mark then led us in a benediction.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,  
Diana Lorenz  
Secretary of the Council of Ministries

## INTERIM PASTOR'S REPORT

2023

The year 2023 was certainly a journey down unforeseen paths! You started your year saying farewell to a long-time settled pastor and shortly thereafter saying hello to an interim pastor, only to have the latter leave First Congregational Church nearly four months later for a settled call elsewhere. I started my year as Interim Pastor at a UCC church in NW Ohio, not imagining the course of events to come. When that congregation was preparing to call a new settled pastor, I began the search for my next interim position. Then our paths ended up converging this past summer. Who would have thought that you'd end up with an interim pastor from Ohio and that Janise and I would move back to the Chicago area (after 44 years away!) where we were born and raised. But such is the way of God sometimes – blessings and surprises await those who are open to the leading of the Spirit! We've experienced this over and over again during my years in ministry. And you certainly proved this with the way you continued to function as a faith family – and so well! – during the past year of transitions.

My call to FCC followed Zoom and in-person interviews with the Interim Pastor Search Committee, who then recommended me to the Council, and they approved. I began my ministry at FCC on August 1 and my first Sunday in the pulpit was August 6.

So as I write this, I have been on board for just over five months. During that time I have gotten to know lots of names, learned many traditions while getting my feet wet in a progressive Congregational church for the first time, and made more than a few mistakes! But through it all I have sensed God's presence among us. I'm grateful to those of you who have extended a warm welcome to Janise and me, and for those who have expressed kind words and acts of support in response to my ministry thus far. And I appreciate those who have asked questions as to why I do this or that in a way that's different than they've experienced. We've been journeying together on a path that has involved changes and some growing pains; and certainly I have a different style than pastors you've had in the recent past. Such is the nature of interim ministry. But I have always endeavored to make my time among you as Interim Pastor Spirit-led, Christ-centered, and God-inspired....and will continue to do so.

Practically speaking, during these five months I have been involved in worship planning and leadership, including six Communion services; visited shut-ins and served home Communion in the fall and before Christmas; made hospital, rehab, and in-home visits; contacted several FCC members who had been non-participatory for a time; met with all of the Ministries at least once and had other meetings; and attended a few organized gatherings and meals of other groups – all in the midst of getting settled in a different office space and learning to navigate new administrative routines and processes.

2024 will be an exciting year. For however long I serve this church family during your search for a new settled pastor, I view my role as being one who will walk with you as you experience transition; strive to maintain the stability and confidence of the congregation; focus on pastoral tasks in order to help church leaders be free to focus on seeking a new pastor and/or on their administrative function; be caring, approachable, and organized; nurture your faith in your walk with God while striving to create excitement and enthusiasm for church and faith; encourage you to view this transition as an opportunity to be willing to experience change; strengthen your commitment to Christ, the church, its mission, and each other; and be a resource in reflecting on the needs of the congregation.

In closing, special thanks to staff members Barbara, Amy, Chris, Sue, and Denise, Moderator Theresa Hus and all the members of Exec and Council, the Pastoral Relations Committee, and others who have helped me in my ministry here by being a sounding board and answering a myriad of questions.

I thank God for you and for the rich history of First Congregational United Church of Christ and for your many and varied ministries, missions, and programs, all striving to embody Christ's radical call to love and



justice. May we be blessed, corporately and individually, with God's gifts and graces wherever our paths take us in 2024 and beyond.

Rev. Dave Voll  
Interim Pastor

## MODERATOR'S REPORT 2023

2023 was a whirlwind! With the departure of our long-time pastor, Mark Winters, and the subsequent departure of our first interim pastor, Benjamin Reynolds, we faced a period of uncertainty and challenge. I believe that with the grace of God and the collective efforts of our congregation, we have navigated these challenges with resilience and faith. In August, we welcomed Pastor Dave Voll as our new interim pastor, and his warmth, wisdom, and dedication quickly made an indelible impact on our church community. We are blessed to have Pastor Dave and his wife, Janise, as active participants in our church life!

Some of the hardest-working members of our congregation this year have been the search committees that made these transitions possible. We express our heartfelt gratitude to Dale Bryson, Becky Klein-Collins, Susan McNeal-Bulak, Lisa Mitchell, Sara Walker, and Barb Stonewater for their work on our two interim pastor search committees and to Sandra Banas, John Klein-Collins, Bev Parker, Lori Shepard, Anne Swanson, and Gene Wollaston for their ongoing work on our Settled Pastor Search Committee. Your commitment to prayerful discernment and careful consideration in finding the next leaders of First Congregational has never wavered, and we are so appreciative.

The position of pastor was not the only one undergoing a change this year. We welcomed a wonderful new bookkeeper, Amy Ervin, in April. That same month, we said goodbye to our long-time custodian, Gabe Salgado, and welcomed Brady Services and the ever-efficient Remy Brady to our team. The changes were positive, but they also made us appreciate our long-term staff even more: Barbara Bailey celebrated 25 years of being our church secretary in May, Chris Lorimer has been our Director of Music since 2011, Sue Flaatten our organist since 2010, and Denise Majewski our Director of Christian Education since 2016. Each of our staff members dealt with significant changes and challenges this year yet continued to go above and beyond. Please thank each of them if you have a chance!

I also want to extend my thanks to the other members of the executive team—Pastor Dave, Tim Nelson, and Diana Lorenz—for their help and collaboration. In a difficult personal year, your kindness, support, and generosity of time and spirit have been invaluable. Our ministry chairs have also played a pivotal role in sustaining and advancing the mission of our church this year - how lucky I was to have this council in my first year as moderator! I encourage the entire congregation to read their reports and celebrate the good work we have accomplished together. I especially want to thank the departing ministry chairs: Drew Walker (Stewardship), Barb Stonewater (Community Life), and Katie Mineck (Worship). You will all be missed!

I'm excited to report that in 2024, with the encouragement of Pastor Dave, we will have our first full complement of delegates to the Fox Valley Association and the Illinois Conference in many years. We look forward to deepening our connection with the UCC and re-embracing their mission: "United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all."

Amidst pastoral transitions and the ebb and flow of leadership, it's essential to acknowledge that the heart of our church is not any individual pastor or lay leader but the people of the church and the congregation itself. The enduring strength of our church lies in the collective spirit, love, faith, and commitment of our members. We have continued to grow and shine in the past year in so many ways:

- New and ongoing initiatives to help our community and our world: collections/recycling of pill bottles, styrofoam, socks, and food; candidate forums; Feed My Starving Children; North Central College outreach; and the amazing Angola trip (thank you to the entire Missions and Social Action team and so many others!)
- A record number of Pick-a-Parties (thank you to Lori Shepard and all her Pick-a-Party hosts)
- Comprehensive bylaws revisions (thank you to Diana Lorenz and Bev Parker)
- Work on updating the Safe Church Policy and the FCC Personnel Manual (thank you to Sara Walker and Lewie Mitchell)
- A new prayer team (thank you to Lee Ann Huang and her prayer warriors)
- Two New Member Sundays and updates to the New Member packets (thank you to Pastor Dave, Laura Nelson, and Michelle Powers)
- Weekly Coffee Hours, several potlucks, receptions for community events, the Meet, Great, and Eat dinners, book club, Women's Spiritual Group, women's and Men's Lunch groups, and a new monthly Lunch Bunch! (thank you to Vicki Keller, Barb Stonewater, Carol Patterson, Steve Jones, Barbara Bailey, Dave and Veronica Wise, and Diana Lorenz).
- Pastor's office renovations and library reorganization (thank you to Doreen Schweitzer, Carol Patterson, and Claudia Hackney)

I am filled with gratitude for each member of our congregation. Together, we have proven that even in times of change, we stand firm, united in our faith, and confident in the bright future that lies ahead.

In faith and fellowship,  
Theresa Hus  
Moderator

## TREASURER'S REPORT 2023

### **2023 Financial Results**

2023 presented our church with a number of challenges both operationally and financially. Starting the year with a pastoral and bookkeeper transition, coupled with an approved deficit budget of (\$32,118), we've had our fair share of mountains to climb. However, we were fortunate to find an incredibly skilled bookkeeper in Amy Ervin, who started in April and has fit in very well at our church. We are very fortunate to have her! Additionally, enduring two pastoral transitions was not in our crystal ball, but in the end we were incredibly blessed to have Pastor Dave accept our call and he has been a wonderful presence of stability and leadership for our church.

Financially, one of the unintended byproducts of our (multiple) pastoral transitions was that our expenses were greatly reduced during our gap in pastoral leadership. This was the main driver in the reduction of our overall expenses in 2023. Reduced pastoral salary and benefits expense came in about \$45,000 under budget.

On the income side, we saw some tremendous giving this year (particularly in Q4) from both pledging and non-pledging members, which aided in exceeding our income targets by about \$41,000 (or 10.5%)! These

combined favorable outcomes significantly changed the financial course this year, turning a budgeted deficit of (\$32,118) to a surplus of \$55,056 for the year!

Please note that the 2023 surplus has been added to previous year surpluses along with unspent PPP funds totaling \$103,200 on our balance sheet. These funds are not rolled into our endowment at this time. The intent has been that as long as we are planning future budgeted deficits (summarized in the next section), the church should keep these financial resources in reserve to cover planned budget deficits.

We continue to have a strong balance sheet with over \$229,000 in cash and other short-term liquid assets, along with approximately \$156,000 in our Endowment fund. Against those assets, we have approximately \$143,000 in liabilities that have been set aside for missions, designated funds, and memorial funds.

### **2024 Outlook**

In spite of the favorable results in 2023, we are still planning a deficit budget for 2024. Like many congregations, we continue to face the reality of declining number of members and pledging units. As noted in the Stewardship annual report, recurring giving units are increasing pledges in 2024, but giving units are down 7 from last year to 86, which net out to essentially a flat income projection compared with 2023's budgeted income. Even though we benefited from giving beyond pledged expectations in 2023, we still need to be prudent in our planning and budget only for commitments that have been made for 2024.

On the expense side, we are planning for traditional inflationary impacts, but no significant new or unique expenditures are planned for 2024, and we will not be planning for a gap in pastoral leadership that aided 2023's surplus. As a result, Council has approved a planned deficit for 2024 of (\$44,031), which is similar to the budget that passed last year. As noted in the previous section, we have \$103,200 of previous year surpluses in savings to cover this planned deficit.

In spite of a proposed 2024 deficit budget, we have so much for which to be grateful. With a strong finish to 2023, and with stability in our staff and leadership, combined with an energetic group of leadership, there is much to look forward to in the future at First UCC in Naperville!

## 2023 Operating Income and Expenses

	<u>2023 Budget</u>	<u>2023 Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u> <u>+ (-)</u>
<b>Revenue</b>			
Pledged Income	361,388	379,292	17,904
Non Pledged	7,639	26,569	18,930
Plate	2,273	2,174	(99)
Interest Income	10,136	5,611	(4,525)
Building Usage	5,956	6,250	294
Other Period Pledge	-	4,806	4,806
Miscellaneous	-	2,932	2,932
Endowment	2,611	3,563	952
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 390,003</b>	<b>\$ 431,196</b>	<b>\$ 41,193</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Missions	16,709	19,269	(2,561)
Worship Staff	41,866	42,406	(540)
Worship Ministry	7,050	6,285	765
Christian Ed	23,867	23,602	265
Community Life	700	290	410
Other Ministries	400	(110)	510
Pastor Compensation	93,461	72,346	21,115
Pastor Benefits	58,706	34,754	23,951
Search Committee	5,000	3,282	1,718
Caring for Worship Home	99,896	96,009	3,887
Keep the Wheels Turning	74,467	78,005	(3,538)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 422,121</b>	<b>\$ 376,140</b>	<b>\$ 45,981</b>
<b>Net Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ (32,118)</b>	<b>\$ 55,056</b>	<b>\$ 87,175</b>

## 2023 Year Ending Balance Sheet

	<u>12/31/2022</u>	<u>12/31/2023</u>
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash & Equivalents	136,120	106,306
Short Term Investments	39,059	122,744
Endowment Investments	138,272	156,085
Prepaid & Misc. Assets	8,474	17,278
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 321,924</b>	<b>\$ 402,413</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable and S/T Liabilities	3,070	(325)
Endowment	138,772	156,085
Missions Liabilities	11,408	20,263
Designated Funds	93,350	77,760
Memorial Funds	42,580	45,430
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 289,181</b>	<b>\$ 299,213</b>
Previous Surpluses, Excess PPP Funds	32,743	103,200
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	<b>\$ 321,924</b>	<b>\$ 402,413</b>

## TRUSTEES MINISTRY

2023

The Trustees Ministry is charged with being on top of and responsible for the church budget, the church finances, the endowment fund, buildings and grounds (including all the mechanicals, electrical, and HVAC systems, etc.), getting the roof repaired when needed, arranging for the next tuck pointing projects, personnel matters, and generally keeping our church home in good working order. This way, our church family has a solid base of operations from which we, as a congregation, can help spread Christ's radical message of love and justice throughout the world!

Trustees are also involved in ensuring that the church is in good standing with city, state, and federal jurisdictions, as well as with our financial institutions/banking partners, our insurance partners, and making sure everything in all of those areas is properly documented and recorded.

In order to keep things humming along smoothly, we have an incredibly talented and dedicated group of Trustees and Trustees-related team members. The First Congregational Church Trustees for 2023 were Steve Bradley, Becky Klein-Collins, Jerry Stonewater, Bob Vonderohe, Marc Finnegan, Amanda Scipione, Gene Wollaston, Sharon Josefson, and Lewie Mitchell. And our Trustees-related team members include Pete Fales (who takes care of our IT needs, monitoring and programming the operation of the HVAC systems, the sound system, the card key access system, and a lot of other less publicly surfaced things as well), Steve Jones (our resident lighting expert), and, over the years folks like John Healey, Gary Lichlyter, Ben Mitchell, Don Zaininger, and Stan Woolley have all regularly chipped in to help (I deeply apologize if I missed anyone!).

In addition to our typical work specifically mentioned or alluded to in the above paragraphs, some atypical projects Trustees Ministry undertook in 2023 included:

- Duct cleaning after a small HVAC fire caused by a wandering rodent;
- Ensuring building access control continuity by adding card key access to the rear parsonage stairwell and rekeying all exterior doors;
- Replacement of the seven thermostats located throughout our buildings that had reached their end of life with more sophisticated/capable IoT thermostats;
- Upgrading/replacing well-worn/well-used furniture in the Pastor's office;
- Finance Committee implementation of an investment strategy for excess cash on hand; and,
- Sealing off bat access points (yes, 2023 was the year small mammals made their presence felt).

Of course, the Trustees Ministry must also be sensitive to the longer term needs of the church related to all the areas listed in the above paragraphs. In keeping with that thought, I wanted to let everyone know that in 2023 Trustees continued fleshing out projects that could potentially represent significant capital spending. Those projects include: upgrading the interior/ vestibule area and stairs (up and down) outside the sanctuary's north entrance, remodeling / refurbishing the Sunday school restrooms area under the Community Room (formerly used by PADS), major masonry and roofing repairs, upgrading the sound and video capture systems in the sanctuary, and the eventual replacement of our air conditioning systems.

In addition to managing all the areas listed above and the major projects, the Trustees Ministry must also be sensitive to smaller maintenance items. Therefore, in 2022 we adopted an 'if you see something, say something' approach to general maintenance so any items seen in and around the church needing attention could be properly addressed. Barbara Bailey, church secretary, graciously agreed to centrally capture and catalog those maintenance requests. That program has been working very well thanks to the congregation keeping a watchful eye!

There is one last item that I feel needs to be mentioned once again. Over the years, our church family has accumulated a lot of items/things. Some of those items may have already served their purposes and others are no longer needed. Unfortunately, many of those items can still be found in our various closets and storage

areas around our church home. In 2022, Trustees Ministry felt that it was time (once again) to do a thorough culling of the items that are past their 'useful life' and/or are no longer needed. That project continued through 2023 and, thanks to the help of several volunteers (particularly Susan Greenwood, Pete Fales, Vicki Keller, Barb Kling, and Carol Patterson) additional areas were cleared out, recaptured and/or repurposed. The work will continue into 2024, because our church home has a very large number of storage areas. Thanks again to everyone for their willingness to help on this very important project!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lewie Mitchell, Chair  
Trustees Ministry

## WORSHIP MINISTRY

2023

In prior years, our predecessor Chris Farthing has referred to working toward a "new normal" following the pandemic. 2023 has continued to be a year on that path as we have changed several things related to worship. This year has been a true reflection of the resilience of the Worship Committee and the general First Congregational Church of Naperville community.

We began the year with the announcement that our long-time pastor, Mark Winters, was seeking a new call. Quickly, we were introduced to Rev Benjamin Reynolds. Benjamin brought a new vibrant energy to our space which provided reassurance that our journey for a new pastor would be a rewarding one. We were not the only congregation that recognized Rev. Reynold's gifts and he was called earlier than expected. Over the summer, we had over ten weeks of guest preachers. Each brought their own voice to the scripture and reminded us of God's good news.

Thankfully, we called our current interim, Rev. David Voll, to our congregation in early fall. Since having a stable interim, we have been able to explore new ways of organizing our worship. As intended, Rev. Voll has helped generate meaningful conversation around our order of worship and why we do the things that we do (or don't). Worshiping with Rev. Voll came at a great time for the Worship Committee as we could focus on Spirit Fest and lead into Advent.

The musical programs in 2023 led by Christopher Lorimer, have been outstanding. Here a brief summary from Chris:

The Music Ministry has had another busy year of providing music for weekly worship. The wonderful leadership of the Chancel Band by Vicki and Ron Keller, the Spirit Band by Deb Zellman and the Bell Choir by Jax Downs-Martinez enhanced worship and offered a variety of musical styles, sounds and textures throughout the year. We are so blessed to have these wonderful volunteer leaders. Eliseo Martinez and Cheryl Newman continued to lead youngest musicians who are always a delight to hear. The Chancel Choir welcomed several new members and enjoyed sharing their talents with the congregation. One of the highlights was offering "Schubert Mass in G" for the Lenten Music Program, involving the choir, string quartet, wonderful professional soloists and other singers to help buttress the already wonderful sound of the choir. The Christmas Eve prelude music offered beautiful music by the Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, Chime Ringing by Chris and Tom Farthing, a solo by Hannah Lorimer and the always gorgeous playing of "Silent Night" by Valerie Lorimer. Music With a Mission (formerly First at Two) offered three outstanding and varied concerts during the year and raised over \$2000 for three different service agencies in the area. The Epiphantine Party was a wonderful success. An additional blessing this past year has been the arrangements and original compositions that were written for our Bell Choir by Jax Downs-Martinez and for the Chancel Choir by Valerie Lorimer. We are so lucky to have such talented and giving musicians in our midst. Speaking of talented musicians, this summer once again brought out the individual talents of many of our congregation who offered solo and small ensemble

music for worship through the summer months. Our worship services are made ever more special by the wonderful Sue Flaatten on organ and piano. Take a moment to consider all the music she provides effortlessly, seamlessly, and beautifully during worship. It is amazing what she does. The volunteer musicians in the congregation who offer their time and talents are amazing, spirited and so very generous. Thank you to all of them for providing and maintaining the rich musical traditions of our church. Remember, anyone who would like to join any of our ensembles is more than welcome. Make a joyful noise!!!!

It is difficult to summarize all of the efforts of each committee member as everyone has contributed a great deal to ensuring the worship services run smoothly. We have also been very fortunate that the congregation is readily available to help; Liturgists, scripture readers, ushers, all of our tech volunteers and everyone that has chosen to attend worship.

Thank you for all of the committee members hard work this year and we are looking forward to what 2024 will bring.

Katie Mineck and Penny Schaschwary Co-Chairs  
Community Life Ministry

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY 2023**

The 2023 Christian Education Ministry members included: Denise Majewski (Christian Education Coordinator), Laura Nelson, Eva Kilar, Tom Southwood, and Andy Day.

We would like to recognize the staff and volunteers that share their time and talents with our youth! This year we have 11 Sunday school teachers and 2 Joyful Sound leaders. There are also numerous church members that contribute to Children's Time. CE staff includes Mary Dolak, who provides Nursery Care during service for our youngest children. Thank you for everything you do!

Denise Majewski, our other staff member, is an integral part of the CE Ministry team. She consistently provides ideas and insights to help further improve CE. She is responsible for securing needed supplies and age-appropriate curriculum in a budget conscious manner. She guides efforts across Sunday School, Children's Time, Youth Groups, and other youth activities so the programs run smoothly. It is Denise's personable and caring approach that makes her so effective and valuable. She builds relationships with parents, church members, and staff, keeping them informed and gaining their input. She also connects with new families to make them feel welcomed at the church. Her communication with volunteers provides them with the information they need to be successful and helps retain their involvement. Most importantly, Denise personally engages with all the children in the church. She goes above and beyond by willingly filling in as a Sunday School teacher or for Children's Time when needed.

Youth Group for middle and high school is being supported by parents and Deb Zelman. They have done a great job of providing a safe space and fun activities for our young people to come together. The kids led a fantastic and humorous service during Youth Sunday this fall! Gratitude to the children and all the volunteers that helped it be such a resounding success!

Of course, the Christmas season would not be complete without our wonderful Christmas Pageant directed by the talented Cheryl Newman. The small, yet mighty cast of children did an incredible job. Thanks to Cheryl and everyone involved that invested time in preparing the show! Additionally, special thanks to Jeffrey and Catherine Ross for volunteering to take portraits of the cast again this year!

Respectfully submitted,  
Andy Day, Chair  
Christian Education Ministry

## **MISSIONS AND SOCIAL ACTION MINISTRY 2023**

This year was one of opportunities and challenges for this church, and the Missions and Social Action Ministry was no exception. Through some trials and tribulations, we made it through and were able to persevere due to the care and efforts of a fantastic ministry team. Thank you!

Missions continued its focus on actions, activities, and donations, using the 4.5% our ministry receives of the church's offerings to donate to non-profit organizations as well as our denomination. This year we provided \$16,709 on behalf of you/this congregation, to more than a dozen organizations – local ones like PADS, Night Ministry and West Suburban Community Pantry as well as national and international concerns such as Southern Poverty Law Center, the UCC Missions Relief for Gaza, and World Central Kitchen. We also provided support for Ellis Billington, a congregation member who is in his final year of seminary. In addition, we supported our denomination and local synod with \$6,500.

We do more than donate money. Every other month volunteers wear their church t-shirts when collecting Styrofoam and then return it to Dart Industries where it is manufactured. The shirts were also worn this November when we were one of several sites doing a Harvest collection for West Suburban Community Pantry. We not only collected 588 pounds of food, but 184 pounds of books!

Actions continued throughout the year as we hosted two candidate forums in March and were one of the locations for the Naper Pride Health & Wellness fair on March 18. We had a fun "Buy a Suitcase" fundraiser for the folks at our church headed to Angola and because of the congregation's generosity, and we were able to support two of our own so they could make the trip to Angola in August. And once again, we participated in the Crop Walk, collecting over \$2800!

Several 'pop-up' collections happened this year, and we hope to continue them next year. Some of these pop-ups were suggested by ministry members, some by other church members. Examples are Soles 4 Souls – 100 pairs of shoes were donated; bread tags for SCARCE and pop-tops for Ronald McDonald House (both ongoing), medicine bottles for a Matthew 25 effort that uses the bottles to get medicine to those in need, and our latest collection of gently used socks which will be recycled by Terracycle. This one was suggested by Helen Banas with the support of her mom!

Actions, activities, and donations continued to be the heart and core focus of the Missions and Social Action Ministry. Making it all possible were ministry members Susan McNeal Bulak, Lisa Mitchell, Todra Oken, Mark Servis, Barbara Stonewater, Pat Swindle, and Gene Wollaston.

We look forward to offering even more in the year to come!

Respectfully submitted,  
Claudia Hackney and Susan Greenwood  
Missions and Social Action Co-Chairs



## STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

2023

### STEWARDSHIP 2023 - Because of YOU our Church Changes Lives



When Stewardship met for the first time in 2023, as is customary, our first mission was to discuss a theme. As we reflected on the 2022 campaign, it became clear that we, again, truly valued the advantages of purchasing a packet of themed materials that are available online from several like-minded organizations. We learned in 2020, 2021 and 2022 that this saved considerable effort in developing graphics and creating outlines for follow up letters and source material.

We learned in past years that if we selected our theme too soon that the UCC Website had not yet established their theme materials for the year. So, maybe a little bit lucky due to busy schedules, and also in order to have access to the 2023 materials from the UCC, we delayed nailing down a theme until a bit later this year. It worked out as we really connected with the theme of “Because of YOU our Church Changes Lives.” Given the transitions we faced in 2023 and considerably more time for our congregation to get out into the community and re-engage in activities like the Angola trip, we felt it was a great opportunity to be grateful to the individuals that make up our congregation and the impact that one person has at a time.

We kept our momentum in 2023 of the typical things we do as a Stewardship Ministry to connect in-person. We were again able to execute on multiple in-person testimonials. We had amazing help from our Community Life Ministry (AGAIN) to have a potluck at the end of October to line up with our campaign. We also got back to hosting Coffee Hour in-person during the campaign and were able to give an in-person presentation on Kick-Off Sunday. I was especially proud of our presentation this year. We workshopped the tone of our “ask” at a Council meeting. The consensus was that our congregation gets the ask and being super forward with another % demand that we simply lean into gratitude for the congregation, and we will get what people can give. We tried hard to make our presentation personal and provide gratitude for all those who helped us along the way.

In hindsight, I think one of the most meaningful impacts to the work we did in the campaign was our targeted follow-up. Instead of providing written letters pre-prepared, we divided up the families who needed follow-up and reached out to them individually with an email or phone call. This yielded a lot of additional pledges beyond Consecration Sunday.

At the end of the day, technically, the pledges were consecrated October 29, but more pledges came in through the end of the year. My general observation is that we still had increases in pledging from a lot of our families despite the fact we have asked for that for many years! That combined with very few decreases and those that did decrease had very slight impact. The big impact, though, is that despite these positive trends, we had quite a bit fewer total pledging units this year compared to historical data. We’ve discussed this at Council and given the significant impact of COVID immediately followed by a major transition in church leadership that we are still going through – and based on this, as a Ministry, we feel very positive about our ability to stabilize pledges and continue to see such generosity from our church family.

A special thank you to everyone who contributed to this year:

- A thank you to Diana Lorenz for again helping print and automate pledge cards!
- Lewie Mitchell, Jerry Stonewater and Tim Nelson for their partnership on the budget targets;
- Barbara Bailey and Amy Ervin for providing outstanding administrative support. All the spreadsheets and statistics above are only possible with Amy's support in tracking the pledges. There is also no way we'd manage to get all the envelopes and pledge cards out in a timely manner without the prep work from Barbara!;
- Vicki Keller for outstanding support with the Stewardship Potluck and Coffee Hours in collaboration with the campaign, and;
- Laura Kemner and Lori Shepard for their inspiring Stewardship testimonies

Also, a big thank you to the team that makes up the Stewardship Ministry – Frank Breithaupt and Sherry Healey. This was a small but mighty group committed to doing our part to help out.

Drew Walker, Chair  
Stewardship Ministry

## COMMUNITY LIFE MINISTRY 2023

The Community Life Ministry had a very busy year, with some annual events and some special or new events and efforts. The highlights of our annual efforts include:

- Sponsoring Spirit Fest, which this year was held on September 10, as Community United Methodist had reserved Central Park for all Sundays in August. The meal after was held at church.
- Supporting, along with other ministries, Coffee Hour after church. In addition to doing our two months of hosting, Community Life helped a couple of other ministries - who were short handed - with their Coffee Hours.
- Gift Mart at Christmas – though this was a new charity, it was similar to other efforts to get toys to disadvantaged children. Church members were asked to bring unwrapped toys, and parents in Districts 203 and 204 who qualified could shop for their children for a cost of \$2.
- Palm Sunday Potluck – always a congregational favorite.
- Continued to support the Caring Ministry and Bev Parker's leadership.
- Supported the Empty/No Nesters dinner group, which has a name change to Meet, Greet and Eat dinner group.

Some new or slightly different or expanded efforts included:

- New member orientation, which we have always supported, will be somewhat expanded at the suggestion of Pastor Dave, who felt that forty-five minutes was not enough. Laura Nelson and Michele Powers agreed, and it will be expanded going forward.
- With the support of Pastor Dave, our ministry is making ongoing efforts to help bring back members who have not been attending for a while, and make special efforts to welcome anyone who is new or is visiting on a Sunday morning.
- Provided a special send-off Coffee Hour for the members who went to Angola to visit our sister church.
- Held a special celebration for Don Zaininger's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Assisted the Stewardship ministry with a potluck to start off the Stewardship campaign.
- We had planned a "Crocktober" soup and salad luncheon, with a program focused on the Native American and Native American beadwork, but cancelled it because of too many other activities.
- Added greeters for the months of April through July - the first time since COVID!
- 

Vicki Keller and Barb Stonewater, Co-Chairs  
Community Life Ministry

**CLERK REGISTRAR'S REPORT**

**2023**

Active Members as of December 31, 2022 256

New Members Received

Confession or Reaffirmation of Faith 6

Confirmation 3

Active Members Removed

Deaths 1

Inactive 4

Transfer 3

Active Members as of December 31, 2021 257

During 2023, there were 2 children baptized, 1 memorial service, and no wedding ceremonies.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Swanson

Registrar

**2024 COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES ROSTER**  
**Officers and Ministry Nominees / Elected Lay Leadership of the Congregation**

The FCC Council of Ministries consists of the Pastor, Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Member-at-Large, and chairs of each ministry. The following positions are elected at the annual meeting:

**Moderator:** Theresa Hus \* ^ +  
**Moderator-Elect:** John Klein-Collins \* +  
**Secretary:** Diana Lorenz \*  
**Treasurer:** Steve Kilar \* ^ +  
**Chair of Trustees:** Lewie Mitchell ^ +

**Member-at-Large:** Marty Shepard  
**Registrar:** Jennifer Trezona  
**Fox Valley Association Delegates:**  
Bob Vonderohe, Pat Weichle  
**Illinois Conference Delegate:** Jim Fancher

Notes:

\* Designates an officer. Church officers carry out the day-to-day business of running the church within the scope of their roles. The Executive Committee is comprised of the pastor and the church officers.

^ Designates a Director of the Corporation. Directors of the Corporation are responsible for high-level strategic planning, budgeting, personnel and policy management, and property maintenance

+ Designates authorized agents. Authorized agents conduct the church's financial matters, with three authorized agents on each financial account held by the church.

Ministry chairs and members are approved by the Council and presented at the Annual Meeting.

**Christian Education**

**Andy Day, Chair**

Eva Kilar  
Denise Majewski  
Laura Nelson  
Tom Southwood

Pat Swindle  
Gene Wollaston

**Stewardship**

**Jeanie Guenther, Chair**

Scott Anderson  
Frank Breithaupt  
Marscha Chenoweth  
Sherry Healey

**Community Life**

**Vicki Keller and Carol Patterson, Co-Chairs**

Judy Bryson  
Lee Ann Huang  
Barb Kling  
Jean Kosiara  
Bev Parker  
Michelle Powers  
Cindy Servis  
Barb Stonewater  
Pat Weichle

**Trustees**

**Lewie Mitchell, Chair**

Tom Farthing  
Marc Finnegan  
Sharon Josefson  
Ben Mitchell  
Bob Vonderohe  
Gene Wollaston  
Stan Woolley

**Missions and Social Action**

**Susan Greenwood and Claudia Hackney,  
Co-Chairs**

Ching Frenette  
Susan McNeal-Bulak  
Lisa Mitchell  
Todra Oken  
Sharon Robson  
Mark Servis  
Barb Stonewater

**Worship**

**Laura Kemner and Penny Schaschwary, Co-Chairs**

David Blood  
Peggy Bradley  
Rhonda Carpenter  
Hannah Graver  
Christopher Lorimer  
Rich Trezona

**First Congregational UCC Naperville**  
**2024 Proposed Budget**

	<u>2023 Actual</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>		
Pledged Income	\$379,292	\$362,000
less non-pd 0.5%		-\$1,810
Non-Pledged	\$26,569	\$8,000
Plate	\$2,174	\$1,800
Interest Income Schwab	\$1,779	\$2,100
Bldg Usage	\$6,250	\$3,600
Other Period Pledge	\$4,806	\$0
Miscellaneous	\$2,932	\$0
Endowment	\$3,563	\$4,000
Treasury Bill Income	\$3,832	\$4,350
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 431,197</b>	<b>\$ 384,040</b>

**Expenses**

<b>Mission Expense</b>	<b>\$19,269</b>	<b>\$16,731</b>
<b>Worship Support</b>		
Director of Music	\$21,030	\$21,639
Organist	\$18,376	\$18,908
Guest Minister	\$2,500	\$1,500
Guest Organist	\$500	\$1,000
<b>Total Worship Support</b>	<b>\$ 42,406</b>	<b>\$ 43,047</b>

**Worship Ministry**

General Music	\$935	\$600
Maintenance Music	\$1,530	\$1,200
Arts in Worship	\$20	\$200
Worship Supplies	\$929	\$2,400
Instruments & Soloists	\$2,775	\$2,860

Remote Operations	\$97	\$500
<b>Total Worship Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 6,286</b>	<b>\$ 7,760</b>

**Christian Ed**

Child Care Staff	\$2,812	\$2,855
Ministry Activities CED	\$482	\$807
CE Coord. Salary	\$20,308	\$20,897
<b>Total Christian Ed</b>	<b>\$ 23,602</b>	<b>\$ 24,559</b>

**Community Life**

Comm. Life Activities and Support	\$290	\$1,000
<b>Total Community Life</b>	<b>\$ 290</b>	<b>\$ 1,000</b>

**Other Ministries**

Stewardship	-\$110	\$200
UCC Delegate	\$0	\$200
<b>Total Other Ministry Accts</b>	<b>\$ (110)</b>	<b>\$ 400</b>

**Total Ministry Expenses**

<b>\$ 91,743</b>	<b>\$ 93,497</b>
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**Interim Comp and Benefits**

Interim Pastor Salary	\$36,699	\$52,847
Interim Housing Allowance	\$23,458	INCL ABOVE
Interim FICA (SS + Med)	\$4,602	\$4,043
Interim Insurance Life/Med/Dentl	\$14,721	\$12,003
Interim Annuity	\$7,985	\$7,399
Interim Bus Exp/Car allowance	\$721	\$2,625
<b>Total Interim Comp and Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 88,186</b>	<b>\$ 78,917</b>

**Pastor Salary/Benefits**

Pastor Salary	\$7,574	\$37,193
Pastor Housing	\$4,616	INCL ABOVE
Pastor Benefit (SS/Med)	\$932	\$2,845
Pastor Benefit (Life + Disability)	\$115	\$558
Pastor Benefit (Annuity)	\$1,074	\$5,207
Pastor Benefit (Exp/Milg)	\$197	\$1,875
Pastor Contin Ed/Sabbatical	\$425	\$1,250
Pastor Benefit (Medical)	\$3,214	\$14,602

Pastor Benefit (Dental)	\$143	\$515
Pastor Vision		\$274
Pastor Salary - FSA	\$625	\$0
Search Committee	\$3,281	\$5,000
<b>Total Pastor Salary/Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 22,196</b>	<b>\$ 69,319</b>

#### **Caring for Worship Home**

Utilities (Elec/Water)	\$7,652	\$8,000
Utilities (Gas)	\$9,551	\$13,000
Insurance (Bldg/WC)	\$24,763	\$26,283
Maint (Trustees)	\$12,465	\$12,000
Maint (Svc Contracts)	\$6,416	\$6,584
Maint (Supp/Clean/Snow)	\$5,738	\$10,400
Maint (Cleaning Contract)	\$26,425	\$25,200
Capital Reserve Contrib.	\$3,000	\$3,000
<b>Total Caring for Worship Home</b>	<b>\$ 96,010</b>	<b>\$ 104,467</b>

#### **Keep the Wheels Turning**

Secretary	\$41,225	\$42,361
Bookkeeper	\$12,626	\$14,140
Office Supplies	\$2,331	\$2,500
Postage	\$6	\$700
Telephone and Internet	\$2,692	\$2,900
Office Support Contracts	\$4,736	\$5,000
Computer Maint	\$16	\$100
Misc Exp	\$859	\$250
Staff Appreciation	\$600	\$800
Dental Insur	\$559	\$860
SS/FICA	\$7,925	\$7,458
Medicare	\$1,853	\$1,752
Banking Fees	\$561	\$700
CC/ACH Fees	\$2,298	\$2,500
Cover the Cost	-\$281	-\$150
<b>Total Keep the Wheels Turning</b>	<b>\$ 78,006</b>	<b>\$ 81,870</b>

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 376,141</b>	<b>\$ 428,071</b>
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<b>Net Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ 55,056</b>	<b>\$ (44,031)</b>
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