



First Congregational Church
Different Paths. Same Journey.

Annual Report
for
Annual Meeting of 2018

January 27, 2019

11:00 a.m.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
168th ANNUAL MEETING - January 27, 2019

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Maria Talin

Loa Fergot

Carol Williams

Members lost by death

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
January 28, 2018

The 167th Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church was held in the Sanctuary at the close of the morning worship service. Moderator Dave Romond called the meeting to order. Clerk Susan Coghill confirmed the presence of a quorum. The minutes of the 166th Annual Meeting (January 15, 2017) were approved as printed.

Review of Annual Reports: Moderator Romond commented on the Wisdom and Compassion he has observed in the ministry of the church over the past year. Referring to the printed agenda and booklet of reports, he named the many offices and groups which provided reports on their work in the year 2017. Treasurer Jeff Puhlmann-Becker presented a detailed verbal report on the church's finances.

Treasurer's Report: The printed report shows budget figures for 2017 and 2018.

Overview of 2018 Annual Budget *			
	2017 Annual Budget	Year End 2017 (Preliminary)	2018 Adopted Budget *
Income:			
Pledged income	\$ 247,602	\$ 235,163	\$ 236,194
Other income	27,200	27,184	29,250
Total income	\$ 274,802	\$ 262,347	\$ 265,444
Expenses:			
Personnel	\$ 218,000	\$ 213,619	\$ 220,465
Building	52,369	47,282	49,000
Benevolence	30,552	30,493	29,183
MinGrp/other expenses	34,031	31,935	27,478
Total expenses	\$ 334,952	\$ 323,329	\$ 326,126
Balance:	(60,150)	(60,982)	(60,682)
Transfer OACF-	25,000	25,000	25,000
operating	7,000	7,000	7,000
Transfer from Triss Fund	\$ (28,150)	\$ (28,982)	\$ (28,682)
Balance:			
* Approved by Ministry Council, December 2017			

Also included in the printed report the following summary of investment funds:

Investments, Designated, Restricted and General Fund		
Checking - US Bank	\$ 57,137	
Cash Total	\$ 57,137	
Vanguard Funds	\$ 645,264	55%
Oshkosh Area Community Foundation	\$ 517,718	45%
Investment Total	\$1,162,982	100%
Donor Restricted Funds	\$ 120,864	10%
Designated Funds	\$ 155,079	13%
Earmarked Funds	\$ 125,000	11%
General Fund Balance	\$ 762,039	66%
Investment Total	\$1,162,982	100%
January 1, 2018		

Jeff commented on several aspects of the church's financial situation:

Our 2016 stewardship initiative encouraging an increase in pledges by 6% over a 6-year period has yielded a modest increase in amounts pledged. Overall the increase in pledging is less than 6%.

Many have increased their pledges by 6%. However, some families no longer pledge due to moving, death, etc. Other families who pledged previously did not pledge for 2018. There are families who joined recently and pledged for the first time in 2018.

We have been careful about expenses, so that it will be hard to close the budget gap by cutting expenses.

Our investments at the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation (OACF) are performing better, given change in fund management at OACF.

We can safely draw \$25,000 each year from investment interest. Drawing the additional \$28,000 each year to meet the budget will cut into our principal.

Motion made by Thatcher Peterson to accept the Annual Reports, including the Financial Report, as presented. Motion seconded and carried.

Capital Campaign Status Report: In the absence of Mary Beth Bossert, Moderator Romond gave this report of the Capital Campaign funds, to date:

\$ 845,000	Total pledged
254,000	Pledges collected
50,000	Loan from FCC funds at OACF for early expenses
65,000	Expenses: Campaign expenses + 1 st payment to Pilgrim Center
\$ 239,000	Funds available now for projects

Capital Campaign Task Force - Report and Recommendation:

Jeff Puhlmann-Becker presented the report from this task force which was appointed by the Ministry Council. Other members are Sarah Dempsey, Sarah Jaschob, Gina Lippold-Ruby, Burk Tower, and Art Wille.

The campaign held in Spring 2017 was successful, receiving pledges totaling \$845,000. As the report states: "Since we did not meet the highest 'challenge' goal in the campaign, decisions would need to be made regarding what we could afford to do - and when." The task force was created to help the congregation make those decisions.

The task force met with every group involved in projects proposed in the campaign, seeking details, such as best timing, possible outside contractors and cost estimates. Program development projects were considered in the same way as building projects.

Based on this research, a timeline for projects was developed, covering the years 2017 - 2022. (See report in Annual Report booklet.)

Some projects will be funded at an amount less than projected in campaign literature:

- Camps will receive 10% of amount pledged, so not full amount of \$125,000

- Solar panels cost is lower than expected and grants received for some of work

- The Endowment and Music funds will not be fully funded.

Projects already underway or planned for immediate future:

- Stained glass restoration

- Christian Education consultant

- Solar panels

- Camps - 1st payment has already been made

Jeff explained that the proposal of the Capital Campaign Task Force (CCTF) has been accepted by the Ministry Council and is being presented to the congregation for its approval, the process indicated in the campaign brochure. Therefore, the motion is made to proceed with the projects as listed in the CCTF report.

Discussion centered around the importance of providing a Handicap Accessible Entrance to the building sooner than 2022, given the difficulties with our present system, and the frequent use of our facilities by those needing an accessible entrance.

Motion made by Anne Ruby to amend the motion by revising the timeline to show:

- 2020: Handicap entrance

- 2021: Update organ console

- 2022: Expand/remodel lounge

Motion seconded and carried, by a show of hands.

Moderator Romond called for a vote on the amended motion to adopt the report and revised timeline for the capital campaign projects. Motion carried, by a show of hands.

Pastoral Compensation Recommendation and Approval:

Ann Marshall, chair of Personnel Ministry Group, presented information on Rev. Nancy Taylor's compensation (salary and housing). Clergy compensation is guided by recommendations from the United Church of Christ (UCC) and, therefore, the salary (for 2017) negotiated with Rev. Taylor when she was called was based on figures received from the UCC. However, we learned – too late – that the figures given to us were out of date and that the compensation we budgeted is about \$10,000 below the recommended amount.

In consultation with Franz Rigert, UCC Conference Minister, Nancy Taylor, and the Personnel MG, in order to make right this situation, it was agreed that the church will raise the housing allowance to the recommended amount starting in 2018 and will increase the salary to the recommended amount by increases of \$2370 per year for three years starting in 2018.

On behalf of the Personnel Ministry Group, Ann Marshall made a motion to approve 2018 Compensation of \$58,658 (Salary and Housing) for Rev. Nancy Taylor. Motion carried.

Nominations Report:

Mike Ford, Moderator-Elect and Nominations chair, presented the nominations for 2018 Officers and Ministry Group members (as shown on printed handout). One name inadvertently left off the printout – Kristin Burgess for the Church School Ministry Group – was added to the list. Mike pointed out that the Fellowship Ministry Group is being re-activated. Additional members for the Church School and Youth Ministry Groups are needed.

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, Mike Ford made a motion to elect Officers and Ministry Group members as nominated. Motion carried.

See below for full list of officers and ministry groups.

Dave Romond expressed thanks to the many people serving on our Ministry Groups for their faithful work through the last year. Dave also thanked retiring officer Sue Coghill for her work as Church Clerk.

Nancy Taylor offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned.

Susan Coghill
Church Clerk

Following the meeting, the congregation gathered in Fellowship Hall for a potluck meal.

First Congregational Church Leadership - 2018

Elected January 28, 2018

Moderator: Dave Romond

Moderator-Elect: Mike Ford

Clerk: Vanessa Frank

Treasurer: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker

Ministry Group members:

(names in italics are new members)

Adult Education: Nate Bettger, Paula Veard, Shelly Maxwell, *Emily Laue, Toby Vanden Heuvel*

Benevolence: Vicki Drabandt, Linda Geiger, Eric Kropp, John Nichols, Cheryl Pagel, Anne Ruby

Buildings & Grounds: Eric Kropp, Lynnel Arndt, Dick Oelschlager, Pat Nichols, Jack Talin, Lori Mackey, John Oman, Jr., David Geiger

Church School: Kristin Burgess, *Corinne Saidla*

Fellowship: *Tom Hallquist, Sarah Jaschob, Karen Bowen*

Finance: Mike Duffy, Pat Dwyer-Hallquist, Len Herricks, Joe McCreery, Glenn Nelson, Jeff Puhlmann-Becker (Treasurer), Anne Romond, *Mary Beth Bossert*

Music: Darcy Duffy, Steve Hazell, Ken Inch, Patrick Meyer, Molly Schlaak, Dellora Vogt, Cathy Wille

New Member Development: Carolyn Blassingame, Lee Fenandael, Becky Gratz, Cheryl Hentz, Sally Josephson, Cynthia Thorpe

Personnel: Lurton Blassingame, Jennifer Burgess, Sue Coghill, Dennis Kavanaugh, Gina Lippold-Ruby, Ann Marshall

Social Justice: Paula Allen, Mary Beth Bossert (non-voting), Greg Bossert, Jody Harrell, Ron Harrell, Dave Jones, Jaci Mueller, Kathy Schultz, Amy Smith, Anne Wesenberg, Terry Wesenberg, Val Williams

Youth: Rod Greene, Mary Herricks, *Corinne Saidla*

MINISTRY COUNCIL - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

2018 was an eventful year at FCC.

As result of the generosity of our members and friends in the capital campaign, we continue to renovate the church building. Solar panels have been installed on the roof and may save as much as 30% of FCC's electricity costs. The original Tiffany stained glass windows, which are more than 100 years old, have been restored, and await only replacement of the exterior plate glass window coverings this spring. Fellowship Hall is in the process of extensive renovation. Rev. Nancy's office, which suffered from extensive water and mold damage, has been completely renovated. Technology upgrades to the church's audio system are scheduled for early 2019.

This past year FCC also implemented a new accounting system called Realm. This is much more efficient and has much greater capabilities than the old system.

FCC's ministry activities continue to flourish.

SAGE (Senior Ministry for Profoundly Wise People) was recognized as a new ministry at FCC. This group, which was started by Art and Cathy Wille, offers and organizes interesting activities and fellowship opportunities for our older members and friends. You are invited even if you don't think you are "old enough".

Children and Youth Ministries is in the process of reimagining how in the 21st century we can best engage younger people and pass on the message of Christ to the next generation. FCC's leaders and members are working closely with Ministry Architects, a consulting firm, on this 18 month project.

In 2019 FCC will be also be working with Ministry Architects on a new initiative, which involves visioning, planning, and supporting an effective leadership structure for the future, based on a deep understanding of "who we are."

Thank you to all our members for helping FCC continue to develop as a community committed to spiritual growth and engagement with the world as an expression of that spirituality.

Henri J. M. Nouwen, the professor, pastor and great spiritual teacher may have said it best. "Community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another."

~Dave Romond, Moderator

REPORT OF THE CHURCH CLERK

The past year has been filled with welcoming new babies, confirmation youth, and families to our church. We have had to say good-bye to some old friends as well. It has been my first year as the church clerk ...a definite work in progress! This active church has been a wonderful challenge with which to try to keep up. As your clerk, I have been working with Pastor Nancy and Sue Coghill to ensure our church records truly reflect our congregation. In November of 2018, letters were sent to those who met the criteria of being inactive. We have gotten many responses which reflect the wishes of those letter recipients. Please look for specifics regarding membership numbers in upcoming Ministry Council notes. I look forward to another year of learning and meeting the needs and challenges of our congregation and church.

Respectfully submitted,
Vanessa Frank, Clerk

TREASURER'S REPORT

Finance Ministry Group and Treasurer's Report
January 2019

Here's a quick summary of the last year's finances. *We're moving in the right direction!*

For many years – decades – our church budget was supported by a generation that took tithing seriously. Their generosity helped build the church and set a strong foundation for the ministry in this place today.

As this generation has been slowly dying, the impact on our budget has been noticeable, especially over the last 6 or 7 years. In 2016 we committed to an effort to raise our pledged income 6% per year for 6 years (an overall increase of about 40% over 6 years) to make our income match our expenses. Many members and friends have been able to increase their giving significantly in the first four years (2016-2019) of this six year effort. It has made a difference. Our deficit is slowing getting smaller.

There are several reasons for this reduction in the deficit:

- Members and friends have been increasing their pledges to give more to support our ministry.
- Members and friends are pledging – and paying! Of the budgeted member donations in 2018 more than 99% of the pledge money was collected. People pledged (formally or informally) and paid their pledge. Income was just about where we budgeted it to be.
- Expenses were lower than expected in 2018, largely in personnel and building. The personnel savings were related to some staff changes and more careful watch on hourly staff expenses, and the building & grounds savings were due to the fact the B&G ministry group was very busy with projects related to the capital campaign.

The net result: we budgeted to lose \$28,682 and, due to careful spending and generous giving, the deficit was only \$7,175. That sounds bad, but remember it was only a few years ago we were losing ~\$40,000. The six-year-six-percent effort (paragraph 2) has significantly decreased the deficit.

In 2019 the deficit is budgeted to be \$19,536. This is still moving in the right direction from the budgeted deficit of \$28,682 in 2018 (the largest inordinate savings in 2018 were probably one-time savings). In the coming years we look forward to wiping out the deficit entirely as members and friends continue to prayerfully consider increasing their pledge 6% annually.

We have included several related reports in this packet; an investment and fund balance summary and a copy of the 2018 budget, 2018 preliminary end of year, and the approved 2019 budget.

Perhaps the biggest accomplishment this year in the finance area is the transition to the new accounting, giving, and church management software. Logos, our former software package, was many years old and showing its age. The vendor announced the product would be discontinued in 2018 which prompted us to look at other options.

Molly Engedal, our Administrative Assistant, Office Manager, Bookkeeper, and all-around great person took the lead on this and worked with a small task force to consider the options and make decisions. We settled on Realm (www.onrealm.com) which has proven to be a great

move. Members can make online contributions, schedule weekly donations, look at their donations-to-date, communicate with other members, and more in the Realm platform. You can now “put money in the plate” electronically right from your pew with your phone!

Thanks to Molly and Mary Beth Bossert (incoming treasurer) for their diligent work verifying then moving all of the records from Logos to Realm, including a laborious task of cleaning up the fund balances. The fruits of their labor means we can pull up-to-the-minute accurate finance reports anytime with great confidence.

The ministry group has also benefited from the wisdom and insights of Glenn Nelson, a financial planner in Oshkosh and ad-hoc member of the Finance Ministry Group. For more than a year Glenn has met with our group to provide quarterly reports for all of our investments along with market observations and suggestions. Glenn’s access to huge amounts of data and his expertise are a gift to our group and to the congregation.

Thank you for your commitment – your time and treasures – to support the work of our congregation in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and beyond.

With Appreciation,

Jeff Puhlmann-Becker, Treasurer
Mary Beth Bossert, Treasurer Elect
Mike Duffy
Pat Hallquist
Len Herricks
Joe McCreery
Anne Romond
Rev Nancy Taylor
Glenn Nelson, Ex-Officio

First Congregational Church Oshkosh
2018 and 2019 Budget Summary Report

	1 ↓	2 ↓	3 ↓	4 ↓
	2018 Annual Budget	Preliminary 12/31/2018	2019 Approved Budget	2018 Budget vs Actual
1 Contributions (pledged)	236,194	231,316	233,200	(4,878)
2 Other Contributions (generally unpledged)	21,500	24,741	21,500	3,241
3 Plate Income (Sunday morning cash in plate)	5,000	6,089	5,500	1,089
4 Interest and Dividends	-	-	-	-
5 Rent	2,500	2,501	2,000	1
6 Miscellaneous	250	-	-	(250)
7 TOTAL INCOME	265,444	264,646	262,200	(798)
8 Personnel Compensation	220,465	214,779	209,561	5,686
9 Admin and Office Expenses	12,000	8,100	9,675	3,900
10 Building Operations and Utilities	39,000	39,630	38,697	(630)
11 Fellowship Ministry Group	707	541	707	166
12 Finance Ministry Group	100	195	100	(95)
13 Buildings and Grounds Maintenance	10,000	5,443	10,000	4,557
14 Personnel Ministry Group	1,500	-	-	1,500
15 Church School Ministry Group	1,290	1,750	3,600	(460)
16 Youth Ministry Group	1,000	948	1,000	52
17 Adult Ministry Group	486	472	486	14
18 Benevolence	29,183	29,182	28,824	1
19 Music Ministry Group	645	889	7,561	(244)
20 Angel Choir	130	-	-	130
21 Handbell Choir	-	-	-	-
22 General Music Expenses	5,641	-	-	5,641
23 Worship Ministry Group	1,625	965	1,175	660
24 Ministry Council	354	20	350	334
25 New Member Ministry Group	1,500	497	1,500	1,003
26 Social Justice Ministry Group	400	310	400	90
27 Stephen Ministry	100	100	100	(0)
28 TOTAL EXPENSE	326,126	303,821	313,736	22,305
29 BALANCE	(60,682)	(39,175)	(51,536)	
30 TRANSFER FROM OACF - OPERATING	25,000	25,000	25,000	-
31 TRANSFER FROM TRISS FUND	7,000	7,000	7,000	-
32 BALANCE	(28,682)	(7,175)	(19,536)	

Benevolence (line 18) is 12% of pledged income (line 1) and Triss Fund Income (line 31)

First Congregational Church in Oshkosh
Investment and Cash Asset Overview
January 15, 2019

Our congregation has been blessed by the generosity of members and friends, past and present. We've all heard about members who anonymously stopped by the church at the end of the year and wrote a check to balance the budget. This was a blessing – but it effectively shielded us from understanding what it actually costs to operate this church and ministry. These people are gone now, and we're learning (1) what it actually costs and (2) just how generous these people were.

We also have members – mostly members who are no longer with us – who left some of their assets to the church. These gifts – along with the current balances in our checking accounts – make up the total monetary assets of the organization. A small portion is held in a general checking account at the US Bank for current year operating expenses. The remainder of our assets are in two investments – the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation (OACF) (41%) and a handful of Vanguard funds (59%). The investment income from OACF and Vanguard contribute \$25,000 annually to our operations budget. When we run deficit annual budgets the shortfall is also taken from our investment accounts.

Besides cash (in the US Banks) which is used for annual operating expenses, our funds are generally divided into four categories:

- **Restricted** funds we accepted from the donor with restrictions attached regarding how and when the money can be used. The Triss Fund is a good example of a restricted fund.
- **Designated** funds have been designated by the church (generally the Ministry Council, but not always the Ministry Council) for a specific purpose and held for that purpose. The sabbatical fund is a good example of a designated fund.
- **Earmarked** funds are not restricted by the donor nor were they formally designated for a purpose by the church, but they have a pending decision, expense, or allocation. For example, we have “earmarked” money to cover annual operating deficits over the next 5 years as we strengthen our stewardship and giving to the annual budget.
- Last is the **general fund** balance - money that equates to your personal savings account - set aside to earn investment income and, in an emergency, provides a cushion. It also allows us to do things that we might not otherwise be able to do. For example, we raised most of the money for the kitchen project, but the remaining expenses were covered by the general fund.

Investment income is allocated back to the fund. For instance, there is a *designated* music fund. Investment income earned on the balance of this fund is allocated back to the music fund, thereby raising the fund balance. Investment income from the general fund is allocated back to the general fund – and this is where we draw the \$25,000 to support the annual operating budget. In good years this is a conservative number as we earn more investment income than we spend, in rough market years we still draw the same \$25,000. Over a multi-year period the balance on our investments grow even though we take the same \$25,000 from our investments in bad market years.

There are two distinct “pots of money” that do not fit in the above description of the church’s cash and investments. The money received for the Next Step Together Campaign are in a separate checking account at US Bank. We did this so there is no intermingling of the donations given for the capital campaign with the annual operations or other assets of the church. Second, the “Women’s Fellowship of the First Congregational Church of Oshkosh, Wisconsin” is a separate legal entity registered in the state of Wisconsin. The Women’s Fellowship funds are completely separate from any church funds.

Respectfully Submitted
 Jeff Puhlmann-Becker, Treasurer

First Congregational Church in Oshkosh
 Investments, Designated, Restricted, and General Fund
 January 15, 2019

Checking - US Bank	\$	50,029	
Cash Total	\$	50,029	
Vanguard Funds	\$	676,538	59%
Oshkosh Area Community Foudation	\$	475,182	41%
Investment Total	\$	1,151,720	100%
TOTAL CASH AND INVESTMENT ASSETS	\$	1,201,749	
Donor Restricted Funds	\$	159,537	13%
Designated Funds	\$	80,442	7%
Earmarked Funds	\$	100,000	8%
General Fund (undesignated) Balance	\$	861,771	72%
Funds Total	\$	1,201,749	100%

NEXT STEP TOGETHER CAMPAIGN REPORT – FCC ANNUAL MEETING – 01/27/19

FCC’s five year capital campaign is doing well. \$851,585 has been pledged to date. \$406,890 or 48% of the pledged amount has been received as of 12/31/18.

In addition to the pledges which have been received, \$50,000 was transferred from FCC’s investment account early in the campaign to assure adequate cash flow for expenses. This money will be returned to the investment account.

Thus far, \$223,305 has been spent on capital projects, leaving \$233,585 (including the \$50,000) currently available to spend.

In chart form:

\$851,074	pledged to the Next Step Together Campaign
\$406,890	received as of 12/31/18 (48% of pledged amount)
\$406,890	collected
+ \$50,000	transferred from investment fund
<u>- \$223,305</u>	<u>spent</u>
\$223,585	available to spend

The \$223,305 spent thus far has been allocated as follows:

\$56,312	capital campaign consultant
\$37,385	Fellowship Hall renovation
\$35,544	stained glass window restoration
\$34,500	solar panels
\$21,870	Faith Formation
\$20,000	UCC camps
<u>\$17,693</u>	<u>pastor’s office renovation</u>
\$223,305	total

For 2019 the capital projects and approximate total budgeted costs of \$176,000 are as follows:

\$65,000	completion of stained glass windows restoration
\$38,000	Faith Formation
\$31,000	renovation of main office, first floor hall, remaining three offices, and front stairwell ceiling
\$20,000	audio technology upgrades
\$12,000	completion of Fellowship Hall renovation
\$10,000	repair of tuck pointing at building entrance

In addition, a portion of the funds (\$50,000) borrowed from FCC’s investment account will be repaid.

The members and friends of FCC have been extremely generous and very timely in submitting their donations to the capital campaign. The total pledged amount of \$851,074 has been completely allocated over the five year timeline of the campaign. Your continued generosity will help to assure that FCC's ministry will continue and grow.

Thank you

~ Dave Romond

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Many thanks to all of you, FCC members and friends, who continue to make the ministries of this congregation possible!!

Our stewardship theme in 2018 was "What Shall We Bring?" During October, we heard the reflections of Cameron Hoskins, Paul Stellpflug, Sue Elbing, and Gretchen Herrmann on their answers to that question and on the importance of FCC in their lives. Thank you, Cameron, Paul, Sue, and Gretchen!

As a congregation, we continue to work toward eliminating our annual operating budget deficit, both through increased giving and through reducing our expenses where we can. Once again, so many of you have "stepped up" by increasing your pledge and by making new pledges – thank you!

For those of you who are fond of numbers, here are some of the details –

For FCC's ministries in 2019, we had received 109 pledges as of January 15 (it's still not too late to add your commitment for the new year!), for a total of \$232,032.24. From 2018, we "lost" 14 pledges, representing \$23,386, due to death, as well as changes in life and financial circumstances.

The current total of \$232,032.24 for 2019 is a slight decrease from 2018's pledges (less than 2.4%), which is a bit of a disappointment. At the same time, though, those 109 pledges include **12 new pledges** (from families and individuals who didn't make a pledge for 2018) and **57 increased pledges** (from families and individuals who did pledge for 2018). What grace and generosity!

As a result of that grace and generosity, as well as the efforts of FCC staff and lay leaders to use our income wisely and faithfully, the **2019 budget** is projecting a **deficit of \$19,536**. (The **2018 budget** had projected a **deficit of \$28,628**. For more information about FCC's finances in 2018, please see the Treasurer's Report.)

Your 2018 Stewardship Committee gives thanks for the Holy Spirit's work among us, calling us to live with joy, generosity, hope, and love!

-- Sue Elbing, Joe McCreery, Dave Romond, Art Wille, and Rev. Nancy

WORSHIP AREA

WORSHIP MINISTRY GROUP - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The purpose of the Worship MG is to support Rev. Nancy as she endeavors to facilitate worship experiences for FCC members and friends that are rich with meaning, which will cultivate peace and justice and which will stir the spirit within individuals and within our faith community. The members of this ministry group act as both a sounding board for ideas, questions, and hopes, as well as individuals who may be called upon to assist in worship experiences for baptisms and special focus Sundays.

During Rev. Nancy's second year at FCC, she and this ministry group identified five areas/activities for its focus. Each activity was addressed this last year in the following manner:

- Giving Cards were designed and made available in the pews so that members and friends who give electronically may still participate in the offering ritual during Sunday morning worship.
- Worship MG member, Kelley Greene, in consultation with Rev. Nancy creates a visual display on the chancel that reflects the worship series and/or church season. Kelley coordinates with other members or friends to decorate during special seasons, such as Advent / Christmas and Harvest Sunday.
- A Reader's Workshop was held to give pointers to individuals (including some children and teenagers) who wished to participate in worship as scripture readers.
- In our focus to be more environmentally responsible, the use of locally grown flowers and real trees were used whenever possible during worship.

The Worship MG members also worked with other members and friends to coordinate traditional events such as Harvest Sunday, Hanging of the Greens and the Children's Christmas pageant. This year, members of Rebel Alliance Theatre partnered with us to write, produce and present an original play for the children's Christmas pageant.

As the members of the Worship Ministry Group look forward to its work for 2019, we will continue to collaborate with Rev. Nancy as she explores ways to deepen the worship experiences for members, friends, and visitors at FCC. Exploration of worship resources from the Worship Design Studio will assist in this endeavor. Continuing to organize worship series/seasons - much like the Sacred Earth, Sacred Work series this past year - will be a method by which Rev. Nancy will lead us in our faith journey together. Worship MG will also help facilitate focus group again to keep the conversation alive regarding the worship life of this congregation.

~ Lorie Yaste-Zajicek

MUSIC MINISTRY - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The purpose of the Music Ministry Group is to enrich the music ministry of the church by supporting our music staff and thinking creatively about how music can be part of the life of the church. This work includes recruitment of volunteers for the various music groups, keeping up with musical instrument updates, maintenance and acquisitions and expressing appreciation to the many volunteers that make up the music groups. In addition, we provide constructive feedback, help manage the music budget, help sponsor and provide support for musical events and help fill music staff vacancies when needed.

We have several requests to hold concerts and recital performances in our sanctuary from community musicians. We have wonderful instruments and space to provide for these opportunities. Thank you for the support from the congregation to help bring wonderful music to Oshkosh and the surrounding communities.

Thank you to the volunteers in the Chancel Choir and Angel Choir. A special thanks to the parents of the children in the Angel Choir. Their support for their children does not go unnoticed and it is appreciated. A special thanks to Dave Ruby who is the adult presence for the Angel Choir. The members of the Chancel Choir are dedicated to the church and the music that they provide for the congregation. What a gift of talent and hours from them for which we are very appreciative.

We are pleased to have such a talented musician in Joanne Peterson. As part of the congregation we are so honored to have her celebrate her 50th year as our organist! No words of gratitude can be enough to thank her for her commitment and dedication over these many years.

We are pleased to welcome Braden Cooper who has been serving as our Angel Choir Director since October. He is a talented young man and has connected well with our young people. We are sincerely grateful to our Pastor Nancy for her direction and support for our music program. She is a gift to us as she has been to the congregation.

Finally, I would like to thank the Music Ministry Group (Darcy Duffy, James Grine, Ken Inch, Patrick Meyer, Molly Schlaak, Dellora Vogt, Steve Hazell, Joanne Peterson and Braden Cooper) for their commitment and concern for this ministry. With their knowledge and guidance, I believe we have a wonderful music program and we look forward to how it will grow in the future.

Proudly submitted,
Cathleen Starck Wille
Music Ministry Facilitator

MISSION AND OUTREACH

2018 REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENCE MINISTRY GROUP

Members: John Nichols, Facilitator; Eric Kropp, Financials; Vicki Drabandt, Linda Geiger, Kristin Janssen, Cheryl Pagel, Anne Ruby.

Benevolence: an inclination to do good; kindness; a kindly, charitable act or gift

The Benevolence Ministry Group of First Congregational Church determines which local groups would benefit from giving by our congregation. 12% of pledged income is allocated to benevolence. In 2018 that figure was \$29,183. This was divided as follows:

- United Church of Christ (UCC) support\$18,969.13 (65%)
 - Our Churches Wider Mission (UCC)\$16,939
 - Northeast Wisconsin Association (UCC) Dues\$2,030
- Local/Area Organizations providing services to those in need\$10,214.15 (35%)

*Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) provides essential ministries that resource, strengthen and sustain all local UCC churches with clergy support and care, transitional guidance, programs such as Lay Academy, Outdoor Ministries, Communities of Practice, coaching support, and mentoring relationships.

The remaining 35% or \$10,214.15 of the Benevolence budget was disbursed to the following local/area community organizations and activities:

- ABC Scarf Project (FCC Member Project)\$250
- Back to School Fair c/o Osh United Way.....\$500
- Community Bike Program.....\$500
- Covey.....\$500
- Day by Day Warming Shelter\$1000
- FIT Oshkosh\$200
- Growing Oshkosh.....\$500
- Humane Society.....\$500
- NACCC Contribution.....\$100
- Samaritan Counseling.....\$1000
- Take 5 Club\$500
- Teacher's Closet\$300
- Tri-County Dental\$1000
- UCC Synod 2019 (Milwaukee)\$364
- Winnebago Literacy Council.....\$1000
- World Relief of the Fox Valley\$1000

Another responsibility of the Benevolence Ministry Group is to determine the recipients of each year's Special Offerings. In 2018 they went to:

Easter - One Great Hour of Sharing (\$1626) UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. OGHs also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

Thanksgiving – Salvation Army (\$135 + \$1000 from BMG funds). Emphasis on food and meal programs.

Christmas 2018 (\$1269.00) – The Day by Day Warming Shelter to at least match the \$1000 provided by Benevolence. The Shelter, which First Congregational has provided initial and ongoing support to, serves our homeless community with shelter and meals during the winter months. They also provide access to other needed services through referrals.

Other Donations that are collected ongoing and which are also disbursed by BMG:

- Pew envelope plate offerings to benefit Oshkosh Area Food Pantry \$1850
- Habitat House for Habitat for Humanity \$139

The Benevolence Ministry Group works diligently to select agencies where FCC members are involved in their work and where these funds will have a direct benefit to our community. This year BMG collaborated with Adult Education to provide speakers from agencies we were considering for a donation: Take 5 Club; Samaritan Counseling; and Winnebago Literacy Council.

Benevolence also worked on three continuing Projects this year:

We developed, discussed and reached consensus on an implementation strategy for the BMG Partner Fund from the Capital Campaign. That was reviewed and discussed by Ministry Council and approved unanimously for implementation. NO capital campaign funds yet been allocated to this fund.

We also completed a review and discussion of the appropriateness of expenses for UCC support, dues and Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) coming from Benevolence funds. Our findings were presented to Ministry Council. Ministry Council encouraged BMG to further pursue these issues in 2019 and come back to Ministry Council with options and a recommendation(s) for change.

We have also revised the pew donation envelopes which will soon include the following choices for donations: Oshkosh Area Food Pantry, Habitat for Humanity, Oshkosh Area Humane Society.

When we receive thank you notes, they will be posted on the bulletin board near the main office for FCC members and guests to view.

The attached disbursements sheet details the amounts of the donations to date.

In 2019 we will continue to welcome input from FCC members about their knowledge of community needs and we also want to explore collaborative efforts with Social Justice Ministry group.

Submitted by John Nichols, Facilitator 12/16/2018

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY GROUP - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Members of the group were Paula Allen, Ron and Jody Harrell, Kathy Schultz, Anne and Terry Wesenberg, Val Williams, Jaci Mueller, Dave Jones, Mary Beth and Greg Bossert, and Amy Smith.

Social Justice Ministry Group emphasizes faith in action by raising awareness of and providing hands-on opportunities for bringing justice to our community and beyond.

Our Provocative Proposal developed this year was: *Social Justice Ministry Group is fully committed to learning and educating our group and the congregation about social justice issues. We provide avenues for making change and volunteering in the community.*

Most meetings began with a speaker (on a social justice issue), a discussion of activities the group could undertake, and a to-do list for the next month. Ideas for speakers came from group members. Topics covered were:

April	Kathryn Noll-Arias- Case Manager for Forward Services Corporation
May	Greg Bossert-Saudi Travels Report and pictures
September	Dean Smith-Questions answered – Oshkosh Chief of Police Human Cargo by Carolyn Moorehead -Book read and discussion
November	Enrique’s Journey - Sonia Nazario-Book read and discussion
December	Tina Haffemann-Leaven

2018 was a very active year for Social Justice Ministry Group. Educational activities were provided, and action followed.

In January and February, we brainstormed the following list of resolutions:

2018 SOCIAL JUSTICE NEW AND ONGOING RESOLUTIONS BRAINSTORMING

We shall continue

- To replenish medical supplies for the Day by Day Warming Shelter’s medical supply cart. (Greg & Mary Beth Bossert)
- To work with World Relief, perhaps by opening space at the church and serving as teachers for citizenship classes (Kathy Schultz)
- To pursue feasibility of becoming a Sanctuary Church
- To implement Book Read of Human Cargo and Enrique’ Journey (Kathy Schultz)
- To enhance racial relationships in the city through our contact with FIT Oshkosh and Pastor Harris
- To enhance interfaith relationships especially through our relationship with the Amadeyah Muslim community
- To educate ourselves about prison reform, NAMI, sex trafficking, voter rights and registration
- To support the Boys and Girls Club
- To support the food pantry by making our community garden grow, this year emphasizing composting worm culture

- To assist church members in their efforts to contact politicians regarding areas of concern
- To support the anti-bullying campaign in the schools serving as a drop-off and storage area for scarves and yarn and delivering completed scarves as needed

In the same time period we had a campaign to gather medical supplies to refill the medical cart at the Day by Day Warming shelter. Max Bossert's Eagle Scout project was establishing the cart. In March the supplies were delivered. We also discussed and worked with composting ideas for being more green such as how we deal with refuse at church, using real flowers and composting them, and possible composting community garden waste.

In April we represented First Congregational Church with a booth at UWO LBGTQ Rally and helped with the church's displaying of the Color Brave Photo Exhibit. Kathryn Noll-Arias shared her continuing vision to provide services for refugees and immigrants in Oshkosh.

Greg Bossert shared what it was like to be in Saudi Arabia representing Oshkosh For the Defense.

May through October, Bosserts, Harrell's, Val Williams, Dave Jones, and others tended our FCC Community Gardens where we raised over 1,000 pounds of produce for the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry.

In June we were updated on Deb Martin and others' efforts to increase the awareness of Sex Trafficking during E.A.A., Country USA and other big events. Billboards were put up on Highway 41 and picketers set up signs.

During the year we gathered questions about Oshkosh Police procedures and policies. In September, to clarify our concerns and hear what is taking place, we invited Oshkosh Police Department Chief Dean Smith. Hearing his answers, we felt that that the city was in good hands. Especially encouraging was the information that our police department is the only one in the state to be accredited by both the state and federal government. Working from a list of questions presented by committee members, Smith addressed such issues as racial diversity, body cams, school safety, bullying, rape complaints, local crime statistics, the policing of large community events, the bracelet program available for local dementia patients, and the relationship between the OPD, the sheriff's department, and UWO campus police.

In September and October, we found ourselves wanting to know more about the reality of refugee and immigration issues. Kathy Schultz organized two books to educate us on these issues: **Human Cargo** by Carolyn Moorehead and **Enrique's Journey**- Sonia Nazario. We decided we needed to pitch in and help where we could. World Relief had an immersion experience available at that time and FCC helped provide \$900 worth of bedding for 36 World Relief refugees who came into the area last minute in November.

We explored during the year what it entails to be a sanctuary church. The remaining Social Justice funds of \$90 were donated to support work being done in the "Shared Sanctuary" program being carried out by the Fox Cities Universalist Unitarian Fellowship and Quakers. We also donated 10 family sized "You Matter Bags" for this effort.

In support of the Anti-Bullying Campaign program, 700+ hand knitted colorful scarves were delivered to Oshkosh Public school fifth graders. Social Justice gathered the scarves, bundled them, coordinated with teachers and resupplied yarn throughout the year for those who helped by knitting the scarves.

To better understand services needed and provided by agencies in the valley we invited Tina Haffemann to share information about the needs in our community and how Leaven is addressing those needs in areas north of Oshkosh. Tina volunteers at Leaven.

~ Jody Harrell

NEW MEMBER DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY GROUP - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The photo directory project that the group undertook in 2017 continued into 2018. When the directories were finished in February, the group made arrangements for people to get their directories (and pictures, if they'd ordered any). Extra copies of the directories were made available for people who didn't get one, and placed in the pews for people to look at during worship service or other events held in the Sanctuary.

This past Fall the church started using REALM software. This software was first researched and brought to the attention of church staff and ministry groups by New Member Development in the early part of 2018. We are proud to have found this multi-faceted software and hope the church will take the steps necessary to help members understand the full scope of it, so that everyone – groups and members alike – can more closely connect and/or network with it, bringing everyone closer together and better informing the congregation at large of things happening at FCC.

Our next big undertaking will be Readiness 360. We have been asked to work on this project. For those who haven't heard of Readiness 360, here is a website you may want to visit - <https://readiness360.org>.

In a nutshell, the program's mission is: "To help churches multiply their kingdom impact with their mission field. To elevate the expectation that all churches can multiply their ministry and impact. (and) To provide tools which improve the sustainability and success rate of new churches, campuses and faith communities." The New Member group will be visiting with someone on behalf of Readiness 360 at its January meeting so it can begin work on how best to make this program work at FCC.

On other smaller, yet important topics, we are delighted that more people and groups are utilizing the sandwich board sign the group purchased a couple of years ago to help promote events, including Sunday morning worship. Thanks to Lee Fenendael for his continued assistance with this sign. Lee uses his God-given talent to make new "signs" to slip into the sandwich board to promote different events. To date, the Animal Ministries group and different wedding parties have used the sign to promote their events. If you or your group wants to utilize the sign for a special event, check with the church office.

New Membership is also looking into a new sign to attach to the pole at the NW side of the parking lot. Watch for it coming soon!

The group continued to tweak its greeter schedules, and recruited new greeters in the process. Of course, greeters are always needed. If interested, sign up on the sheet in the Narthex or contact Becky Gratz. Her number is in the directory or can be gotten by calling the church office.

Our group places articles in the Oshkosh Northwestern's Community Newsroom which highlight New Member classes or other special events happening at FCC. These articles cost us nothing and help spread our message and bring people to FCC, helping increase our membership in the process.

New Member classes were held throughout the year for those wanting to learn more about FCC and possibly join. As a result, we had 11 new members join FCC during 2018. Four of these were confirmands while seven were brand new members to FCC. We warmly welcome you all into the FCC family!

In 2018 the group started talking about a name change. The current name is often confusing to people and doesn't necessarily speak to what the group does. This is something we'll continue

to discuss in 2019.

We will also be revisiting this year, the concept of aromatherapy and whether smells like fresh bread, freshly baked bookies, etc., can be a nice welcoming for people coming into church, especially those visiting for the first time.

Finally, as we take on new and exciting projects, the New Member group is always on the lookout for new people to join us. The more fresh ideas we can get, the better. If interested, contact Cynthia Thorpe. Her number is in the directory or can be gotten from the church office.

Respectfully submitted,

The New Member Development Ministry Group

ANIMAL MINISTRIES GROUP - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

During 2018 the FCC Animal Ministries Group held two major events and participated in some other events for pets and the people who love them, as well as all members of God's animal kingdom.

- On Saturday, June 23, we held our fourth annual Pet Remembrance Service for people who had lost pets anytime—whether in the last year, or some earlier time—and wanted to pay tribute to them. Pastor Nancy offered some comforting thoughts for those attending about the important role pets play in our lives and why it's hard when they pass, but equally important to celebrate their lives and allow ourselves to mourn our loss. A fellowship time was offered afterward allowing folks to share with each other stories of their pets, etc.
- In September the group unveiled its Fill the Bowl Giving Tree, for the second year in a row. The tree was decorated with ornaments of mice, dog bones, etc., each which contained the name of something the Oshkosh Area Humane Society had on its wish list. Once again, FCC members were generous in donating so many items and the shelter expressed its deep gratitude for the donations. The Giving Tree donation period ended with the Blessing of the Animals service on Oct. 7 (see below) and the items were picked up by the shelter the following week.
- On Saturday Oct. 7 a Blessing of the Animals Service was held for people to have their own companion animals blessed. Clergy from other UCC churches joined Rev. Nancy in providing blessings to the animals in attendance.
- Some of our members regularly volunteer at the Oshkosh Area Humane Society, the Humane Society of the United States, or with other animal rescue groups. Some also own pet therapy dogs who visit people in nursing homes and other places where they provide comfort to others.
- Finally, a handful of members and an FCC teen who wants to become a veterinarian, went to Keshena on a Saturday in April to volunteer with a small rescue group on the Menominee Indian Reservation as it held its low/no-cost clinic. It was, as always, a moving experience to see so many animals being served by veterinarians and others who freely give up their Saturday to help benefit animals in so many different ways.
- Because of the desire to get more people involved in the group and attending our events, it has been suggested by marketing people outside the church that some people may be turned off by the fact that this is a church-led group. A suggestion was made that perhaps the group would be better served by changing its name to something not-church related and meeting off-site from a church. The group understands there may be some merit to these suggestions and has begun kicking this idea around and exploring different options. But the group is also trying to understand why people in its own midst are not attending or becoming involved. FCC has many pet owners and animal lovers in its midst. You are all encouraged to come see what we're all about.
- That being said, in February, the group is kicking off a 7-part video series in eating justly and mercifully. An invitation has gone out to the church membership, with a special invitation having been made to the Social Justice Ministry Group

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Hentz

Facilitator, FCC Animal Ministries Group

CHURCH OPERATIONS

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Building and Grounds spent most of the year working on capital campaign projects. The projects included Fellowship Hall, the pastor's office, the stained glass windows restoration and the solar panels.

The Fellowship Hall project was started in the spring. The ceiling and lighting were replaced. Ceiling tiles can now be easily replaced if they are stained or damaged. It also allows easy access to the utilities above the ceiling. This was not possible with the old ceiling. The lighting is now dimmable LED. The project stalled due to water flooding the area on two occasions after heavy rain. This type of flooding had not occurred in recent years. We were fortunate that it occurred before new flooring and other improvements were installed. To fix the flooding, new drain tiles were installed along the east and west walls. In order to do this, the existing asbestos flooring and adhesive were removed. Both projects were completed in late 2018. The remaining work in Fellowship Hall is scheduled to be completed in 2019.

The lower Tiffany windows were removed, restored (cleaned and resealed) and reinstalled during the year. These windows were noticeably improved visually and structurally. Fortunately, there were no surprises that required significant extra cost. The three large windows will be restored in 2019. This will include refurbishing the wood tracery and installing a new covering.

The pastor's office project was given high priority after mold was discovered. The wood that supported the window panel had rotted over time and was allowing water in under the existing flooring. The room was gutted. The window panel was replaced and new flooring, walls, ceiling and lighting were installed. The project cost exceeded the capital plan. This discovery identified the source of mysterious water leaks in Fellowship Hall and the high school class room. Two restored and relit Tiffany windows were exposed and integrated into the new office.

Solar panels were installed on the flat roof of the education building. These started to produce electricity in late June. Approximately 12,000 kw-hrs (\$1200) of electricity were generated in 2018. The solar panels directly reduce our electric bill and, therefore, reduce our yearly operating costs.

An unplanned project that will be addressed in 2019 is the restoration of the sanctuary chandeliers. The wiring needs to be replaced. It involves removing, rewiring and reinstalling the chandeliers. Switching these to LED's would increase the project costs because the dimming control system must be replaced to accommodate LED's. We are continuing to explore our options in getting this repaired.

The heating and cooling system is working well. A project will be completed in early 2019 to replace the drainage pans in the sanctuary heat exchangers. This will extend their life. Our goal is for people to be comfortable in church and in the building. Let us know if you need warmer temperatures – the room temperatures can be temporarily adjusted.

The Building and Grounds ministry group worked at church on a number of mornings and evenings. Many small projects and maintenance items were completed. Thank you to Dave Elbing and Jean Bord-Pire for maintaining and enhancing our building and grounds.

If you need anything done or have suggestions for the building, please let Dave, Jean or anyone on Building and Grounds know.

~ Eric Kropp

PERSONNEL MINISTRY GROUP – 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The Personnel Ministry Group is in the process of writing an Employee Handbook. Although the staff at FCC is small in number, the Personnel MG believes that a handbook given to each staff member will provide guidelines and summary information about the church's personnel policies, procedures, benefits and rules of conduct. It is planned that the handbook will be completed in 2019.

Sandie Miller-Schreiter decided to retire from her position as Teaching and Learning Ministry Coordinator. She held the position for 15 years. She gave much to our children and youth helping them learn God's teachings about grace, faith, love for one another, and generosity through bible stories, Jesus' teachings, present day experiences and more. A thank you and bless you celebration was held for Sandie in December. Our prayers best wishes go with her on her new journey.

The church will continue its work with Ministry Architects throughout the coming year to ensure an effective and faithful Children and Youth program. Welcome Liz Kaprelian as interim director. We urge members of the congregation to offer their assistance to her.

In this next year we hope to add a part-time Coordinator for Congregational Life to our staff. This person will focus on helping members and friends of the congregation develop meaningful relationships with one another and providing opportunities for them to offer their gifts and talents within the church and throughout its ministry.

Joanne Peterson celebrated her 50th anniversary as an employee at FCC in 2018. She continues to provide outstanding service as our organist and choir director. Most of you have gotten to know Molly Engedal, our Office Administrator. She is welcoming and helpful to committee members, to all parishioners, visitors, etc. She has excellent job skills even installing and working with our new Realm Online Church Software program. Jean Bord-Pire, our custodian continues to do a fine and thorough job even with all the Fellowship Hall renovation dust.

Our other employees are more behind the scenes and all continue to make things run smoothly. They are our child care providers, Sunday morning coordinators, media ministry coordinator, angel choir director and building supervisor. When you see any one of our employees please take time to thank them. We are so fortunate to have them all.

Personnel MG members: Lurton Blassingame, Jennifer Burgess, Sue Coghill, Dennis Kavenaugh, Gina Lippold-Ruby and Ann Marshall

~ Ann Marshall

BUILDING USE - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

First Congregational Church is a vibrant and active community! During 2018, activities at the church included everything from concerts and recitals to play rehearsals to birthday parties and weddings to civic events...

January - February - March

- Rebel Alliance Theater
- Community of Practice - Faith Formation
- Acapella Groups from UWM & UWEC
- FVUUF
- First Tuesdays at FCC
- Yoga
- Soup Extravaganza
- Piano Studio Recital
- Oshkosh Community Players
- Maundy Thursday Service
- Ministry Architects Listening Sessions and Report

April - May - June

- Music at FCC
- Birthday Party
- Green Lake Festival of Music
- Fit Oshkosh Exhibit
- Potluck
- Piano Recital
- Wedding
- Vocal Recital
- reTh!nk training
- Green Lake Festival of Music
- Pet Memorial Service
- League of Women Voters

July - August - September

- Oshkosh Community Players
- League of Women Voters
- Baptism
- Joanne Peterson Reception
- Harvest Sunday
- Adult Education - White Privilege
- Ministry Council Retreat
- Scandanavian Organ Music Recital

October - November - December

- First Tuesdays at FCC
- PEO
- Pet Blessing
- Organist Nicholas Schmelter
- Oshkosh Chamber Singers
- Meal Team for Warming Shelter
- Barbershop Rehearsal
- Hanging of the Greens
- Sacks and Snacks
- Christine Ann Center Christmas Event

In addition, Covey used classrooms and the kitchen through out the year.

~ Molly Goodhart Engedal, Office Administrator

TEACHING AND LEARNING AREA

ADULT EDUCATION MINISTRY GROUP - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Members: Paula Veard, Shelly Maxwell, Toby Vanden Heuvel, Emily Laue

Facilitators: Shelly Maxwell

Ministry Council Representative: Paula Veard

Staff Liaison: Rev Nancy Taylor

The Adult Education Ministry Group met approximately 6 times this year: January 14th, March 18th, July 30th, September 9th, November 4th and December 2nd. Nate Bettger left to help with the Youth Renovation Team. Toby VandenHeuvel and Emily Laue joined the group. Rev Nancy Taylor became the group's staff liaison.

Adult Ed identified three goals for 2018 in an effort to increase attendance and participation in the Adult Education hour. Goal 1: Create a survey to gain a better understanding from the FCC community about their faith formation needs and expectations from FCC. Goal 2: Collaborate with other church committees, such as the Benevolence Ministry Group. Goal 3: Provide an educational series that people could participate more deeply in over a span of time.

The group developed and implemented a survey in early Fall. Approximately 40 FCC members completed the survey either online or on paper. The results validated the committee's observations and concerns. The group will wait to explore implementing suggestions from the survey after the larger church conversations in 2019.

Collaboration with the Benevolence Ministry Group (BMG) met the needs of both groups. FCC members had the opportunity to interact with community agencies and hear how the Benevolence monies could be used to support their mission. BMG hosted six speakers during the Adult Ed hour in 2018. Adult Ed also collaborated with the White Privilege committee to host the 8 week series, Let's Talk.

The efforts to bring in an educational series exceeded our expectations. Our first attempt was providing the Let's Talk curriculum to explore the interconnections between white privilege and spirituality. The participants responded positively to the series and numerous FCC members followed with the readings and videos even though they were unable to attend discussion. There is a desire in the congregation to continue discussions about white privilege and race disparities in our community and church. Plans were made to implement two series in Spring 2019 starting with a 4 week Epiphany series and then using the Animate program, Faith, during February and into Lent.

Adult Ed began to reexamine our budget needs and explored funds available to purchase curriculum such as Animate. There were several other programs that will be a great resource in the future. The group will explore using programs like Animate Bible and Setting the Table

for Civility. The group made the decision to continue the Journal Sentinel subscription during the school year and to put a hold on deliveries during the summers. The Capital Campaign also informed the group that funds are available within the next 5 years to host a larger educational event or series. This opportunity will be explored in 2019.

We are grateful for Rev Nancy's participation and involvement with Adult Ed this year. Her insights and desire to help facilitate the series' curriculum has been crucial to increasing our scope as a ministry group.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Maxwell
Adult Education Ministry Group member

CHURCH LIBRARY - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

2018 was a big year for the library. The library was split into different rooms. The kid's books are still in the lounge, along with our small books and the VeggieTale videos. The rest of the collection is in our own room down the hall. With our new room, we may be increasing our selections. There are plenty of chairs for curling up and reading. Perfect if have to wait for someone.

The books are still in the same order that they were in before, starting along the left wall the non-fiction books are arranged by the Dewey Decimal System. (If you have to brush up on that, check out the poster.) After that are the Middle Reader books. (Don't worry if you're an adult and still want to read kid's books, we won't tell.) After that are our family videos, CD's and other media and our Chicken Soup collection.

In the free standing bookcase, we have our oversized books, our year-long daily devotionals (these can checked out for a whole year) and our Teen section, both fiction and non-fiction. On the other side, we have our adult biographies and fiction.

All of our books can still be looked up on LibraryThing. We will be posting the password in the library. We are adding many new books every week. Please check out and return plenty of books.

~ Joyce Frohn

STEPHEN MINISTRY PROGRAM - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Stephen Ministry is a program of loving care and support within our congregation. It is based on the idea that all Christians are ministers, and Stephen Ministry is a way people with special gifts for caring ministry can use those gifts to reach out to those who would benefit from the support of a Stephen Minister. Stephen Ministers offer a listening ear, a steady hand and a reminder of God's presence in our lives.

We are now in the 10th year of Stephen Ministry at 1st Congregational Church. Our trained Stephen Ministers meet regularly with their respective care receivers in a one-to-one private setting – that's why it's called a "quiet ministry" – the sharing between care receiver and minister is held in confidence. Presently we have four active Stephen Ministers matched with a Care Receiver.

To ensure the best possible care for our care receivers, Stephen Ministers meet monthly for "Supportivision," a time for peer support and continuing education. The sessions are facilitated by Stephen Leaders Sue Coghill and Cynthia Thorpe. Nancy Taylor also attends and offers her insight and encouragement.

~ Sue Coghill and Cynthia Thorpe, Stephen Leaders

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Members: Dixie Lehn, Ann Marshall, and Nancy Norgord

Friends and family members sometimes give a monetary gift to the church in memory of a loved one who has died. These gifts are put into a memorial fund account and the money is used to meet needs of the church that fall outside of the operations budget. If possible, the family is consulted when use of their relative's memorial is being considered. Usually memorial monies go toward projects that will pay a lasting tribute.

In 2018 a good friend of Alan (Mick) McCain who had known him for many years sent the church \$1,500 in his memory. Because of Alan's love of music and his having grown up in this church, his friend asked that the money be set aside for maintenance of our magnificent Casavant organ.

Another project that has been selected for memorial money use is the refurbishing of our new library/meeting room. That move was not anticipated when the capital campaign was established so no funds are available to make it a more useful and comfortable space. Right now it is a fairly large room with bookshelves lining the walls with a table and chairs in the middle. Tom Drummond's daughter believed that her father would be honored to have the money given his memory be used for this purpose. In addition, the son of Seraph and Pat Kaprelian, both of whom were in the education field, felt that using their memorial monies for the library/meeting room was a very good way of honoring them.

Also, as many of you know, with her husband's blessing, memorial donations for Maria Talin have been used to purchase a defibrillator and other equipment that will be available at the church should it be needed in a medical emergency situation.

Currently there is \$11,275 remaining in the Memorial Fund account. If any of you have suggestions for use of memorial monies please contact any member of the committee and your proposal will receive prompt consideration.

~Ann Marshall

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Women's Fellowship is open to and includes all women of the church. However, there is a governing board that usually meets once a month to decide what projects, fund raisers, and concerns should be addressed. This also includes election of officers and distribution of any money. Anyone is welcome to come to these meetings, they simply may not vote (the same as our ministry council).

This year our treasurer and dear member Maria Talin died. It was very hard on our members as well as the church family. Maria helped us stay calm and focused in her quiet manner. Mary Beth Bossert was kind enough to step into the treasurer's role. Jack Talin asked us to decide what to do with the memorial money and it was decided to purchase a defibrillator.

Every year our group has taken care of sending flowers to members in the Oshkosh hospitals. It has become increasingly hard to do so, since there are strict privacy laws and less allowable time spent in the hospital. In the past year six bouquets were sent out. In addition, altar flowers were given twice in memory of Adeline Choate; the benefactor of our benevolence fund. Another area of encouragement from our church comes through cards. We have been blessed to have Jody Harrell send out cards from our group. Not only does she know what to say in each card, but she decorates them with her gift of creativity. In all Jody sent out 185 cards this year!

The board hosted fellowship hour twice this year. It is a great time for people to chat with others from the congregation and get to know each other better. We also, with the help of the church choir, hosted and financed Joanne Peterson's 50 year celebration with the church! This year's Women's Retreat was cancelled due to a snow storm in April. We had already donated money towards a scholarship for 2018. It was decided to leave the money in the Retreat fund to provide an even bigger scholarship for 2019. Not forgetting our youth, money was also given to the Mission Trip. Money was also allocated towards the purchase of new tables and chairs for the fellowship hall when the time comes. The selling of Rada products helps us achieve some of these goals.

To honor our Staff at Christmas, money was given in their name to help a family in need from our church. This family was very appreciative. The board donated to concerns outside of our church. In 2018 money was given to The Day by Day Warming Shelter, The Anti- Bullying Campaign and the Emmaus Church. The Emmaus Church collected money to buy bus fare for students traveling to and from school when the weather was bad. Many children simply would not go to school without the bus ride.

Lastly, our new project for the year 2018 was THE REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR. In 2018 we picked five charities —The Warming Shelter, Humane Society, Christine Ann Center, The Food Pantry, and The Teacher's Closet to receive gifts from our congregation. Pillowcases, made by the Homemakers Community were passed out during the church service. Money was donated to a scholarship fund for the homemakers group for making the pillowcases. Every day each church family put something in the pillowcase from a list of needed items and returned the sack on December 9. After the service families came down to the fellowship hall and enjoyed snacks and helped sort the items. (Monetary gifts were evenly distributed to the organizations.) The confirmation class delivered the items. It was a great success and will be done again in 2019.

~ Karen Zentner LaBorde

Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ

2018 Annual Report



Franz Rigert, Conference Minister

Life in the Wisconsin Conference is full of energy and inspiration! In the coming months we will be completing our preparations for *Hosting General Synod 32* (June 21-25, 2019) in Milwaukee. We are securing leaders, planning events, raising money, and intending to recruit over 250 volunteers this winter.

Essential to our Conference Ministry is our ongoing *Care for Congregations and Clergy*. Over the past year your Conference Staff has guided more than 30 pastoral searches, launched several new "shared" ministries, and offered support in times of grief, challenge and change. Our "field staff" continues to cultivate relationships of integrity and trust throughout the Conference. Cohort learning opportunities abound, connecting clergy through mentoring, coaching, and Communities of Practice.

Church and Ministry teams faithfully carry out the ecclesiastical work of the Church, and guide Members in Discernment (MID's). This fall we launched a new formative track toward authorized ministry. The *Damascus Project* is a shared initiative with the Minnesota Conference, offering coursework particularly geared toward those who sense a call to ministry but for whom a conventional Seminary Education is not possible.

Our Conference Faith Formation efforts continue with a thriving *Lay Academy* and several *Youth Retreats*. One of our current goals is to better equip local congregations with curriculum resources, spiritual practices and emerging models for children and youth ministries.

Our beautiful Outdoor Ministry settings - *Moon Beach Camp and Pilgrim Center* - provide ideal opportunities for multi-generational faith formation. We are so very blessed to work collaboratively with UCCI Executive Director Glenn Svetnicka and we celebrate newly settled managing directors at both camps!

Our *Conference Catalyst Team* offers grants for new initiatives around church vitality. Many of these ministries are community based, serving a wide network of people, often in partnership with other congregations or non-profits. This collaborative approach expands our reach and allows the Church to be a relevant social agency that helps meet the needs of those beyond our doors.

In 2018 our Board of Directors prioritized the resourcing of ***Justice Ministries***, so we highlighted our many justice "working groups" as a part of our Annual Meeting Share Fair. Table leaders passionately provided contact information and materials, equipping our congregations to engage more fully in the pursuit of our UCC shared mission - a just world for all.

Amidst the groundswell of "social justice movements" God is at work empowering us to demand equality and dignity for those who have been marginalized and oppressed. Many of our congregations are engaging in ***Conversations on Race and Privilege***, making new commitments to actively work to bring racism to an end. Additionally, we are inviting congregations to study and discuss the ***Doctrine of Discovery***, which was the concept by which colonization took place in our land and native people were displaced. We encourage your congregation to join in these conversations!

Finally, our amazing ***Special Mission Gifts*** offer relief and compassion here at home and around the world. In 2017, our Wisconsin UCC congregations contributed: \$151,657 to *One Great Hour of Sharing*, \$45,184 to *Strengthen the Church*, \$74,374 to *Neighbors in Need* and \$82,577 to the *Christmas Fund*. Beyond that, our congregations gave a total of \$1,613,442 toward *Our Church's Wider Mission* (OCWM). These gifts allow all of this Gospel work to take place - vital ministry among us and transformational ministry beyond us. Thank you!

With deep gratitude and great hope,

Rev. Franz Rigert
Conference Minister

FCC STAFF

2018 PASTOR'S REPORT

As I wrote in my January 2019 *Tidings* article, I'm starting this year feeling much more settled in as FCC's pastor and as an Oshkosh resident. While 2017 seemed like a whirlwind of newness and getting to know one another, this last year we focused more on strengthening the foundation for our current and future ministries.

Within this Annual Report, FCC's Ministry Groups provide a wealth of information about how we responded to the Holy Spirit's movements in our midst in 2018, and I hope you have a chance to take it all in!

I have a few things to highlight --

In February, FCC started working with Ministry Architects to revitalize and re-vision our ministries with children and youth. Over 60 FCC members and friends participated in the Ministry Architects listening sessions last spring and then almost 40 gathered in July for an afternoon of discerning and describing our vision for children's and youth ministry. Throughout much of the year, a "Renovation Team" worked (and continues working!) with Ministry Architects to develop the infrastructure we need to live into our vision. The team members are *Nate Bettger, Rod Greene, Pat Hallquist, Sarah Jaschob, Liz Kaprelian, and Pat Nichols*. To support and bless the "renovators," *Amanda and Jon Zenker, Art Wille, Bill Urbrock, Tracie Schlaak, Kay Sanders, Shelly Maxwell, Dixie Laehn, and Evelyn Bowerman* have been praying for them and for the children and youth of FCC. It does, indeed, take *at least* a village ...!

This past year included some significant staffing changes. *Molly Engedal* started the year as FCC's office administrator, bringing a warm, welcoming presence and an astonishing breadth of skills and gifts. In the second half of 2018, Molly oversaw our transition to new (and much improved!) church management software and also updated our newsletter formats and website. (If you haven't already, I hope you log onto Realm, our new online software, so you can explore its features!) In December, *Sandie Miller-Schreiter* retired, after nearly 15 years of loving and leading FCC's children and youth as our Teaching and Learning Ministries Coordinator. After some training time with Sandie, *Liz Kaprelian* began serving as interim Director of Children and Youth Ministries in December – welcome back, Liz!

It was a blessing to work with all of FCC's staff in 2018. I had the joy and privilege of working, not only with Molly, Sandie, and Liz, but also with *Joanne Peterson, Jean Bord-Pire, Molly Schlaak, Olivia Farrow, Katie Veard, Joe Wiedenmeier, Dave Elbing, Dane Laufer, Spencer Hadel, and Anna Wagner*. FCC is blessed, indeed, with the gifts of this staff!

Thank you, all, for the countless things you do – seen and unseen – that make it possible for FCC to be a community of faith, compassion, beauty, and love! We have been called together by the Holy Spirit to experience and share the love of God, which surpasses human understanding, and to join God in the work of healing, reconciliation, and justice. Thanks be to God!!

Blessings for the year and years ahead,
Rev. Nancy

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES COORDINATOR - 2018 **ANNUAL REPORT**

Thank you to the many people who worked with our children and youth this year. It was a time of transition and growth as we met with Ministry Architects to define our strengths in our children and youth ministries. We also highlighted areas where we needed more specific actions to continue growing our ministry with and to our younger members.

Rev. Nancy and Sandie led the 2018 confirmation class. Four youth participated in this journey to explore their faith through conversation, questions, art, prayer, and of course, food. On March 18, we were privileged to have these youth formally become members of our church.

Sandie Miller-Schreiter took a much-deserved sabbatical from April 1 through July 31 of this year. Liz Kaprelian acted as interim Teaching and Learning Ministries Coordinator for the remainder of the church school year—April and May.

This year the youth mission trip was to Minneapolis to work with Urban Immersion Service Retreats. The participants worked with many organizations served by Urban Immersion in concert with the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches. One of the activities were stocking a food pantry and then participating in the “shopping” event for clients. Other times the youth and chaperones sorted clothes at ARC, cleaned and helped organize the Dress for Success space for their upcoming open house, weeding gardens at the Hallie Q Brown center as well as two other clients’ homes, and working with Mission Outpost in Burnsville to help people in need there. Thank you to our youth, Martha Becker, John Konrad, Dane Laufer, Alice Rioux, and Valerie Seeley as well as chaperones Jeff Rogers and Liz Kaprelian for their work.

Prior to our church school starting in the fall, we held a Leadership Launch for the teachers. The curriculum was introduced and the lesson format was reviewed. We hope to make this an annual event in the fall.

In the fall, church school was kicked off with registration and then a Fall Fun Fest following the worship service. This year we adopted a new curriculum for church school and created 4 classes to better meet the needs of our children and youth. Deep Blue is the program being used by the PreK-Kindergarten and the 1st – 3rd graders. The 4th and 5th graders follow the Submerge curriculum, and the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders are using Re:Form. These curricula use Bible verses, art, stories, and conversation to teach and connect Bible stories to the lives of children today. Our Senior High students are fortunate to have Art and Cathy Wille designing their curriculum based on their interests and questions.

Olivia Farrow and Katie Veard continue to share the job of Child Care Coordinator. Thank you to both of them and to our volunteers in the child care room to provide a safe and nurturing space for our youngest members.

There were many special events throughout the year as we worked to continue our ministry with our youth. In March, Ministry Architects came to our church to meet with various small groups to get an idea of our strengths in youth ministry and uncover areas that need more attention. After compiling all the information, Monica and Mary Beth reported their findings to the staff and then the congregation. This was followed by an action plan and the establishing of a Renovation Team to oversee the various components of this plan.

At the end of October, Ministry Architects came back to our church for a Faith Formation Summit. There was a diverse group in attendance. They were tasked with refining the goals we have for our children and

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES COORDINATOR -
2018 ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

youth: What do we want them to “know, feel, and do”? Through an interactive process we found that the majority of things we want to accomplish fit into at least one of those categories.

In November, Servapalooza was held. There were thirteen different events that were held either out in the community or here at church.

In December, Sandie Miller-Schreiter retired from her position at Teaching and Learning Ministries Coordinator after 15 years of service. We wish both Sandie and Dick all the best as they discover the joys of retirement and spending more time with each other and their family. Liz Kaprelian will be acting as the Interim Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator.

Our Pumpkin Caroling event was well received by the people who got to hear our choirs. Our participants also enjoyed sharing this ministry in the community.

Elizabeth Kaprelian
Interim Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator

CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR/ORGANIST - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The Chancel Choir sings every Sunday from September through May.

Chancel Choir members (and date of joining) were

Douglas Henkle (1972)	Eric Kropp (2007)
Carol Niendorf (1972)	Judy DeBroux (2007)
Vernice Haase (1975)	Patrick Meyer (2008)
George Coghill (1976)	Jaci Mueller (2008)
Thatcher Peterson (1982)	Darcy Duffy (2009)
Edward Schneider (1993)	Douglas Bord-Pire (2011)
Patricia Hallquist (1996)	Paula Allen (2012)
Karen LaBorde (1998)	Dellora Vogt (2014)
Jen Stellflug (2004)	Barbara Ziblut (2014)
Art and Cathy Wille (2005)	Joan Mosling (2016)

Peggy Coniff (2018), Doug Austin (2018) and Vickie Moss (2018) joined the choir. Sadly, the Choir lost Maria Talin (2015), who passed away.

On September 16, 2018, I began my 50th year as organist at First Congregational Church. Patrick Meyer, a member of the Chancel Choir composed an anthem in my honor, Psalm 121 (My Help Cometh from the Lord). I had the pleasure of becoming an audience member while Molly Schlaak, one of my former piano students and middle school choir director in Winneconne, conducted the choir. Noah Bossert, one of our organ scholarship students and asst. music director at McFarland Lutheran Church, accompanied choir and congregation on piano.

I am most appreciative of the reception that Women’s Fellowship held for me after the regular church service. A steady stream of people from the church and the community attended this elegant occasion.

As part of the Easter program, the choir performed “Let the Song Begin,” arr. by D. Malin, with the support of a brass quartet featuring Adam Decker; Molly Grasley; her dad, Patrick Grasley; on trumpets, and Ruby Salbego, on trombone.

At times during the year, the Choir was accompanied by Dr. Katherine Decker, cello; Patricia Hallquist, violin; and Steve Hazell, guitar. The Winnebago Land Barbershop Chorus made a guest appearance. Charolotte, Rowen, violin, and Meredith Stellpflug piano; and Olivia Stellpflug, piano, provided music in December. Bridget Duffy-Ulrich substituted for me in January.

Substituting for me during summer worship were John Penkoske; Sarah Mahler Kraaz; former students Mark Bloedow, Pam Lane; Ruby Salbego; and Olivia Stellpflug. Special summer music was provided by Zoe Bossert, voice, accompanied by Max Zellmer on guitar; Jedediah Larson-Poeschl, voice; and Douglas Bord-Pire, voice.

On December 23rd, the choir presented an anthem composed by Marsha Jean Moore-Charles and Chuck Bell “We Need a Silent Night”. This followed a series of sermons by Rev. Nancy featuring the bicentennial of the composition of Silent Night.

The Christmas Eve Service gathering music featured Cameron Hoskins on violin, Ethan Rutz on saxophone; and Jedediah, Kallum, and Madrona Larson-Poeschl on piano. Jedediah sang the opening stanza from “Once in Royal David’s City.” Molly Schlaak and Tonie Yankowski sang a duet, “Breath of Heaven”. Steve Hazell, led and accompanied with his guitar, *Silent Night*. The Chancel Choir presented “Night of Silence” by D. Kantor.

On the final Sunday of 2018, Erin Kaprelian, viola, provided gathering music. Laurel Sanders returned from her church job in Los Angeles to sing the John Rutter “Wexford Carol.”

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Peterson

ANGEL CHOIR - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The back half of 2018 (October-December) was very productive for the Angel Choir. I as the new director certainly had some big shoes to fill, and it was a very crazy start to my new position, but a fun one at that. We sang *God Made Flowers in October*, *I Prayed in the Tub in November*, and *Away in a Manger* in December. The current members of the Angel Choir are Rowen and Meredith Stellpflug, Grace and JoJo Ruby, and Charlie Ford. Although small, the Angel Choir has a very good sound, and are very powerful singers though there are not many of them. We had a fun Christmas Party with lots of food and laughter to cap off an exciting 2018. We are looking forward to 2019, with 2 exciting new songs already lined up.

~ Braden Cooper