

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

Downtown Kalamazoo



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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FCC Annual Meeting Minutes – 01/29/23

Congregational Meeting 1/29/23

The membership met with the purpose of hearing reports, electing officers, approving the annual budget, and transacting any other pertinent business.

Meeting was announced for 2 prior Sundays as required by by-laws.

Total votes 99; 37 online and 62 paper. (See attached for breakdown)

- I.** Meeting called to order by Howard Teichma at 11am.
- II.** Invocation by Sarah-Schmidt-Lee.
- III.** Confirmation of quorum (at least 27 based on current congregational numbers).
- IV. VOTE TO ACCEPT MINUTES** for the prior 2022 congregational meetings. *Motion by Maggie Bresz, seconded by Heidi Oberlin; Passed.*
- V. VOTE TO ACCEPT BY-LAWS CHANGES** (As first communicated December 27)

#1 Change: Electronic Voting; we have used electronic options to vote since 2020 and we believe it will continue to have value. This formally gives Council the decision to make it an option. *Motion by Derl Oberlin, seconded by Edna Thompson. Passed.*

#2 Change: Expand the trustee group from 3 (Moderators) to 7, adding Treasurer, 2 assistant Treasurers, and Clerk, assuring we don't fall under 3. *Motion by Kristi Droppers, seconded by Warren Cook. Passed.*

#3 Change: At-large members reverted back to 2 from 3, based on revised membership numbers of 270. *Motion by Derl Oberlin, seconded by Edna Thompson. Passed.*

VI. VOTE NOMINATIONS FOR NEW LEADERS AND TRUSTEES

- a. Moderator-Elect.** *Motion by Peggy Johnston to vote to put this position on hold until spring, seconded by Pam Walker. Passed with unanimous hand and Zoom vote.*
- b. Treasurer.** Vote to affirm Carol Dunleavy-Chandler as Treasurer for a 3 year term. *Motion by Gregory Greenman, seconded by John Idema. Passed.*
- c. Clerk.** Vote to affirm Ginny Stapleton as Clerk for a 2 year term. *Motion by Peggy Johnston, seconded by Don Nelson. Passed.*
- d. Assistant Treasurers.** Vote to affirm Phillip Micklin as 1st Asst. Treasurer for a 1-year term, Don Nelson as 2nd Asst. Treasurer for a 2 year term, and Gregory Greenman as 3rd Asst. Treasurer for a 3 year term. *Motion by Linda Powell, seconded by Bill Maxey. Passed.*

VII. VOTE NOMINATIONS FOR OTHER VOTING COUNCIL LEADERS (leaders listed on #9 of ballot) *Motion by Jeannette Maxey, seconded by Coco Cook. Passed.*

VIII. TREASURERS REPORT/VOTE FOR 2023 BUDGET AND ACCEPT AUDIT

- a. **2023 budget** will be a continuation of 2022 budget for up to 4 months. Tom reported a clean audit by Seber Tans for a 3 year period. Council approved the draft audit, and it is now complete. A comment was raised by Peggy Johnston regarding Worship Arts budget for 2023, to be discussed in Council. *Motion to affirm 2023 budget as a continuation of the 2022 budget for up to 4 months by Gregory Greenman, seconded by Don Nelson. Passed.*

IX. VOTE TO RECEIVE ALL REPORTS IN THE ANNUAL REPORT

- a. *Motion to accept all reports in the annual report by Pam Walker, seconded by Don Nelson. Passed.*

X. NEW BUSINESS

#1 KDCCC Maggie Bresz requested being made liaison to Kalamazoo Drop In Childcare Center. *Motion to accept nomination by Don Nelson, seconded by Heidi Oberlin. Passed by hand vote.*

#2 PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE Jody Brylinsky requested more info regarding same. Chris Schram reported multiple interviews with some, and new profiles still being received. There are fewer pastors looking for work than churches looking for pastors! **#3** Gregory Greenman moved to establish a new bylaws charter and committee in the coming year. *Motion by Peggy Johnston to approve, seconded by Kimn Licavoli.*

Passed by hand vote.

- XI. PASSING THE TORCH AND RECOGNITION** Howard Tejchma gave a moving speech, as well as Kristi Droppers in his recognition. He was given a standing ovation by congregants for a job well done.

BENEDICTION BY CAROLINE MEYERS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by John Geisler, seconded by Steve Stapleton

Votes counted by Howard Tejchma, Ginny Stapleton, and Kristi Droppers

Ballot sheet with vote breakdown attached.

FCC Special Congregational Meeting 4/30/23

First Congregational Church of Kalamazoo Special Congregational Meeting 4/30/23

Quorum has been met for current membership of 262.

*Congregational meeting was announced twice
from the pulpit, and twice in the Spire.*

**Carol Chandler, Treasurer,
made a motion to pass the 2023 budget.**

There were two seconds to this motion.

**Ginny Stapleton, Clerk, called for voting members of
First Congregational Church,
Kalamazoo, to pass the 2023 budget.**

Total votes of 82; 79 yes, 2 abstain, 1 no.

4 online votes

Budget passed.

Kristi Droppers and Ginny Stapleton reviewed the vote.

Submitted by Ginny Stapleton, FCC Clerk

FCC Special Congregational Meeting 10/01/23

First Congregational Church of Kalamazoo Special Congregational Meeting 10/1/23

Quorum has been met for current membership of 244.

*Congregational meeting was announced twice from the pulpit,
and twice in the Spire.*

**Ginny Stapleton, clerk,
moved that we the members of First Congregational Church of
Kalamazoo approve Heidi Oberlin
as our Moderator Elect for 2023.**

Motion was seconded.

There were no questions.

Motion was approved with a hand vote.

Submitted by Ginny Stapleton, FCC Clerk

FCC Council and Ministry Teams 2023

Council Voting Members

Church Trustees =+ (7 total)

+Kristi Droppers	Moderator
+Howard Tejchma	Past Moderator
+Heidi Oberlin	Moderator Elect
+Carol Dunleavy-Chandler	Treasurer
+Ginny Stapleton	Clerk (alt Nancy Johnson)
Rick Welch	Human Resources
Tim Hiscock	Property Team
Em Norwood	Worship Arts
Jamie Sue Knight	Faith Formation Team
Jeri Shuler	Parish Care Team
Margie Stinson	Mission & Social Justice Team
Belden Smith	Children's Nature Playscape Team
Howard Tejchma	Communications Team
Edna Thompson	Member at Large
Peggy Johnston	Member at Large

Non-Council Roles

Assistant Treasurers	Philip Micklin, Don Nelson, Greg Greenman II
State Conference Delegates:	Howard Tejchma, Dianne Roberts
Southwest Association Delegates:	Edie Trent, Howard Tejchma
KDCCC Board Rep:	Open

By Laws Revision Committee

Michele Gossman, Bob Morris, Howard Tejchma

Deacons

Betty Buss, John Idema, Peggy Johnston, Russ Kowalisyn, Steve Stapleton,
Rick Welch, Janice Rensch, Pam Moseley, Em Norwood, Mose Moseley

Pastoral Relations Committee – Rev. Mary Austin

Bob Van Dis, Amy Glass, Nancy Trotter, Valerie Hart-Young, Joe Schreck

Pastoral Relations Committee – Rev. Sarah Schmidt-Lee

Julie Noteboom, Joe Lekan, Maggie Lekan, Mose Moseley

2023 Budget Summary

BUDGET SUMMARY REPORT - GENERAL FUND			
AS OF 12/31/23			
INCOME	BUDGET	YTD	% TOTAL
CONGREGATIONAL GIVING: Pledges	355,000	411,449	116%
Other	20,000	18,920	95%
Special Offerings	30,000	16,114	54%
GILMORE FOUNDATION	30,000	30,000	100%
W.E. UPJOHN TRUST	75,000	75,000	100%
MISC. INCOME	12,000	13,449	112%
TOTAL INCOME	522,000	564,931	108%
TRANSFERS:			
GENERAL ENDOWMENT: Property	10,000	10,000	100%
Other	31,000	31,000	100%
VARNEY ENDOWMENT	128,000	128,000	100%
SHORT TERM INVESTMENTS	4,000	4,000	100%
TOTAL TRANSFERS	173,000	173,000	100%
TOTAL INCOME & TRANSFERS	695,000	737,931	106%
EXPENSES	BUDGET	YTD	% TOTAL
PERSONNEL	416,200	417,029	100%
PROPERTY: Bldg. Serv. & Supplies	84,000	84,607	101%
Maintenance & Repair	55,000	58,880	107%
Debt Service	25,000	25,000	100%
MISSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: Outreach	20,000	20,000	100%
Special Offe	30,000	16,114	54%
OFFICE	20,000	19,804	99%
FAITH FORMATION	7,000	7,923	113%
WORSHP ARTS	17,000	24,614	145%
GENERAL	20,000	22,782	114%
PARISH CARE	4,000	3,702	93%
TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES	698,200	700,456	100%
CURRENT YEAR SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(3,200)	37,475	
PREVIOUS YEAR SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(17,935)	(17,935)	
**CUMULATIVE SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(21,135)	19,540	

**To be funded by reserves

FUND BALANCE

BEGINNING 1/1/23	(17,935)
YTD INCOME	737,931
YTD EXPENSES	(700,456)
ENDING 12/31/23	<u>19,540</u>

2023 Accounting Fund Balances

First Congregational Church UCC

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Accounting Fund Balances

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December 2023

Fund	Beginning Balance	Direct Transactions	Income	Expense	Transfer	Ending Balance
01 - GENERAL FUND	51,682.77	0.00	64,337.28	96,479.94	0.00	19,540.11
January 2023 - December 2023	(17,935.20)	0.00	548,817.30	511,341.99	0.00	19,540.11
02 - DESIGNATED FUNDS	144,904.32	0.00	0.00	(1,301.81)	0.00	146,206.13
January 2023 - December 2023	143,707.18	0.00	5,690.22	3,191.27	0.00	146,206.13
10 - CHILD CARE CENTER	123,493.43	0.00	55,986.97	33,187.81	0.00	146,292.59
January 2023 - December 2023	175,315.22	0.00	205,264.06	234,286.69	0.00	146,292.59
15 - SPECIAL OFFERINGS	(323.51)	0.00	3,934.99	1,698.00	0.00	1,913.48
January 2023 - December 2023	1,345.82	0.00	16,714.17	16,146.51	0.00	1,913.48
20 - RESTRICTED FUND	55,727.56	0.00	500.00	650.00	0.00	55,577.56
January 2023 - December 2023	54,172.29	0.00	10,870.00	9,464.73	0.00	55,577.56
30 - ENDOWMENT FUND	857,630.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	857,630.23
January 2023 - December 2023	810,999.66	0.00	70,821.21	24,190.64	0.00	857,630.23
35 - VARNEY ENDOWMENT	2,678,705.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,678,705.01
January 2023 - December 2023	2,618,292.68	0.00	226,272.15	165,859.82	0.00	2,678,705.01
40 - FLEX BENEFIT FUND	(589.34)	0.00	1,171.14	0.00	0.00	581.80
January 2023 - December 2023	324.71	0.00	11,909.48	11,652.39	0.00	581.80
50 - CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	2,708,592.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,708,592.11
January 2023 - December 2023	2,664,364.94	0.00	1,016.25	(43,210.92)	0.00	2,708,592.11
75 - NATURE PLAYSCAPE	1,337,151.67	0.00	2,167.75	9,346.61	0.00	1,329,972.81
January 2023 - December 2023	1,107,588.63	0.00	354,874.94	132,490.76	0.00	1,329,972.81
85 - CCG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
January 2023 - December 2023	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Totals	7,956,974.25	0.00	128,098.13	140,060.55	0.00	7,945,011.83
January 2023 - December 2023	7,558,175.93	0.00	1,452,249.78	1,065,413.88	0.00	7,945,011.83

2024 Annual Meeting Agenda

*First Congregational Church of Kalamazoo
Sunday, January 28th, 2024; 11:00 a.m.*

Herewith is the official notice: The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church will convene on Sunday, January 28, 2024, immediately following the worship service in the sanctuary. The membership will meet for the purpose of hearing reports, electing officers, approving the annual budget, approving the revised bylaws, and transacting any other business that may properly come before the church.

I. Meeting called to order by Moderator Kristi Droppers

II. Invocation- Sarah Schmidt-Lee

III. Confirmation of quorum (27) and voting options

IV. Vote - Accept the minutes for the prior 2023 congregational meetings.

V. Vote - Revised Bylaws – As communicated to congregation end of December 2023

VI. Vote – Nominations for Council Representatives 2024

**Moderator: Heidi Oberlin (2nd yr.)*

**Past Moderator: Kristi Droppers (3rd yr.)*

Clerk: Ginny Stapleton (3rd yr., alt Nancy Johnson)

**Treasurer/Finance: Carol Dunleavy-Chandler (2nd yr.)*

Human Resources Team: Kristi Droppers (Past moderator role)

**Property Team: Tim Hiscock (2nd yr.)*

Worship Arts Team: _____ (new 3-year term)

Faith Formation Team: Jamie Sue Knight - (new 3-year term)

Hospitality: Janice Rensch (new 3-year term)

**Mission & Social Justice Team: Margie Stinson (3rd yr.)*

** Indicates Church Trustee*

VII. Treasurer Report

a. Vote for 2024 Budget

IX. Vote to Receive all Reports in the Annual Report.

X. New Business

XI. Passing the Torch – Kristi Droppers to Heidi Oberlin

XII. Benediction – Mary Austin

XIII. Adjournment

Moderator Report

Like most people in their late 60s, my memory of details from a year ago is not great. However, I'm a big believer in Maya Angelou's quote about how we often forget what is said or forget what we or others have done, but we never forget how we felt. I remember feeling anxious a year ago as I began my Moderator role.

At the start of 2023, we were just starting to figure out where we, as a church, landed after a pandemic as we moved beyond our own church crises. We survived and thrived because of the interim leadership led by Caroline Meyers and Sarah Schmidt-Lee, along with the work of our staff and the steadfast dedication of Howard Tejchma as Moderator.

Through discussions and observation, I focused on four goals.

1. Find additional new members for the HR Team.
2. Change the tenor of Council meetings in support of greater collaboration.
3. Support the new pastor and ensure his/her success.
4. Increase the congregation's understanding of how we govern ourselves and operate.

The HR team lost many members in early 2023, and I committed to finding individuals with in-depth experience in hiring, managing, or running organizations to join the HR team. It took time, but we have successfully created a team of dedicated individuals who bring their experience regarding decision-making, interviewing, consensus building, and process management to the collective.

No one likes meetings. And Council meetings are notoriously long. Despite the long meetings, the Council has accomplished much this year. Including new standardized ministry team charters, we ushered in a new Sr. Pastor, audited our church rolls, documented ministry team budgets, agreed upon church priorities, revised our bylaws, and more.

Just the same, I have been committed to making Council meetings even though they are long, filled with ease, fellowship, and comradery.

The best leadership teams work from a foundation of trust. It is not easy to create and not something that can be mandated. I attempted to encourage discussion and more dialogue beginning with a Leadership Retreat in March and in our monthly Council meetings by changing the agenda and inserting time for reflection. We've made progress, as noted by my own level of anxiety and in the bursts of laughter in our meetings and increased discussion. This has signaled to me that we feel safer as a community.

Whatever anxiety I had the first six months of this year slowly went away after Pastor Mary started in her role as Senior Pastor on June 1, 2023. I was committed to making Mary a success, but it didn't take long to realize that she needed no assistance from me to establish herself as head of staff and Senior Pastor of our congregation. God listened to all our prayers and answered them when he pointed Mary Austin toward us. She has been a partner to me in this role, which has benefited me immensely, and I only hope I have been of some help to her.

The last goal on my list was to leverage my communication skills to help clarify how we, as a church, work and govern ourselves. Therefore, I have been committed (probably oversharing for some congregants) to sharing the “what, why, when, and how” whenever news or announcements need to get out to the congregation. My intention has been to be transparent and informative. I hope I have done that from time to time.

Like past Moderators, I consider the best take-away from being a Moderator is my interaction with other congregants and staff, which might not have happened if I was not in this role. And some of those interactions have become real friendships and a blessing for me.

In my less anxious state, my goal now is to support Heidi Oberlin as moderator. I love this role!

Kristi Droppers

Pastor Mary

Dear FCC Members and Friends –

One of my secret leisure delights is reading mysteries. I love the way everything gets wrapped up in a tidy package at the end, unlike real life. The clues unfold toward a semi-predictable ending, but that doesn't take away the pleasure of reading it.

Coming to serve in this community as a new pastor is like a mystery novel. I've loved learning from the church leaders, members, and staff in the last seven months.

Some of the big joys have been:

- meeting up for worship each week, and thinking and praying about what will make God more plain to all of us. What spiritual sustenance will carry us through the week, and inspire us to love and serve more deeply?
- getting to talk to you at meetings, service projects, dinners, small groups and even in hospitals and care centers, when you have to be there,
- working with the staff to understand and support their work,
- thinking about how to unravel some of the mistrust that still lingers in the congregation,
- starting our FCC happy hours and the Monday book study group, as ways to spend time together,
- meeting the new people who come to worship as guests, and hearing what they see in FCC that led them here.

For 2024, my goals are:

- continue to work with Council and the congregation to listen for where God is inviting us to serve in our community, and to develop more bite-sized ways for people to get involved,
- working to build up our trust in each other, allowing us to think together as a whole congregation, instead of as separate sections, divided up by our passions,
- continue to host events that let us spend time together informally,
- continue to work with the staff, aligning talents, hours, and job descriptions.

I'm grateful to serve here alongside you! As always, I welcome your observations and hopes.

Mary Austin,
Designated Senior Pastor

Pastor Sarah

In 2023, Pastor Sarah:

- Participated with Pastor Caroline and Pastor Mary in responding to pastoral emergencies and leading funerals and memorial services.
- Led the Preaching Team through the conclusion of their service in May.
- Helped with the planning of a Leadership Retreat for Council and Deacons.
- Introduced a Shrove Tuesday supper and Lenten Supper discussion to renew in-person meals at the church.
- Supported Pastor Mary as she came on board at FCC.
- Recruited and organized 15 new volunteers in the church nursery.
- Offered three New Member Classes, four Safe Conduct training events and one Welcome Team training event (after updating the Welcome Desk Manual).
- Concluded six years of service as co-chair of the Faith Alliance at OutFront Kalamazoo.
- Preached monthly and shared worship leadership and planning responsibilities with Pastor Mary.
- Applied for and was accepted to a Princeton Seminary program designed to help churches empower the leadership of young adults; invited Emily Norwood and Maggie Lekan to participate in this collaboration with other Bronson Park Churches.
- Recruited 6 new leaders into youth programs and launched a new Labor Day Youth Retreat.
- Participated in ongoing reading and mutual support with colleagues at Bronson Park churches.
- Supported the introduction of the Kids Corner into the sanctuary.
- Introduced an Advent Garden family event.
- Managed and increased activity on the church's Facebook and Instagram pages.

Rev. Sarah Schmidt-Lee
Pastor of Faith Formation

Dianne Roberts – Director of Parish Care

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Coordination of greeters for all worship and special church services and providing weekly welcome to members and guests.
- Coordination of special events including dinners, breakfasts, new member meetings, memorial services, and fund raisers.
- Regular communication with home or facility-bound members through visits, calls and cards.
- Assisting deacons with communion supplies.
- Coordination of securing and delivery of Easter and Christmas flowers.
- Updating membership directory.

Goals for 2024:

- Hospitality training for greeters.
- Increase in number of church members.
- Maintain accuracy of Breeze information.

Property Team

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Revised Property Team Charter.
- Proposed creation of Century Fund to address long-term deferred maintenance issues.
- Installed railing on pulpit for chancel accessibility.
- Continued upgrade of audio/video booth.
- Replaced vandalized stained-glass window on east wall.
- Installed additional security cameras inside and outside of the building.
- Parking lot resealed and lines painted.
- Had exterior windows cleaned.
- Repairs to Steinway piano.
- Fixed leak in basement.

Goals for 2024:

- Refurbish children's room in basement: paint, carpeting, LED lighting.
- Replace one set of Academy St. doors.
- Replace glazing on the large Chapel window.
- Discuss how to fund the installation of the new HVAC control system.
- Continued discussion for improving chancel accessibility.

Faith Formation Ministry Team

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Six students completing Catechism and six new students beginning Catechism; the Labor Day Weekend Youth Retreat was a great hit with both groups, and a great way to welcome our six new adult leaders to youth programs.
- A growing number of kids in the nursery, with an incredible team of volunteers; we regularly have 6-8 kids, aged kindergarten and younger in the nursery.
- The introduction of the Kids Corner in the sanctuary to help young kids engage with worship in age-appropriate ways.
- New and changing adult programs, including a Lenten dinner and discussion, a new book group, and an adapted Catechism class, which has grown into a Creative Community Time.
- A new young adult leadership collaboration with other Bronson Park churches, funded by an initiative from Princeton Theological Seminary.
- Two youth-led services in May and December.

Goals in 2024:

- Continuing Catechism, Youth Group and Worship Our Way Programs.
- Free Movies in the Chapel in January and February as a way of building community and exercising hospitality.
- Evaluating our range of programs and deciding how to right-size our ministries for our church.
- Engaging volunteers in new ways during Pastor Sarah's sabbatical.

Diaconate

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Planned, set-up and served the elements of the Eucharist during the monthly Communion Service.
- Provided a supporting spiritual contact point for individual FCC members through the Deacon's Ministry program.
- Delivered Easter & Christmas flowers to homebound &/or grieving members.
- Supported special seasonal activities (e.g. Maundy Thursday).
- Participated in various spiritual training opportunities (e.g. Older Adults and Caregivers Ministry and Outreach).
- Supported the annual FCC membership review & confirmation process.

Goals for 2024:

- Continue to:
 - ✓ Support the monthly Communion Service.
 - ✓ Engage with individual FCC members & families through the Deacon's Ministry.
 - ✓ Deliver holiday flowers to homebound &/or grieving members as well as supporting special seasonal activities as appropriate.
 - ✓ Support the annual FCC membership review.
- Planning & participating in various spiritual training activities.
- Recruiting and onboarding new Deacons.

Mission & Social Justice Team

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Evaluated numerous opportunities to optimize effective use of the MSJ 2023 budget.
 - ✓ Provided direct financial support to critical local needs:
 - Cell Phone Project (in collaboration with the First United Methodist Church).
 - Warm Kids Project providing new winter clothing to children in need.
 - Deacons Fund distribution for a variety of everyday needs.
 - ✓ Supported the general financial needs of key Mission Partners:
 - ISAAC (Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community)
 - Open Doors
 - Re-Member
 - United Campus Ministries
 - Our Church's Wider Mission (UCC National)
 - ✓ Provided targeted Social Justice support of multiple Kalamazoo organizations:
 - OutFront
 - Urban Alliance
 - Inner City Youth for Change
 - Northside Ministerial Alliance
 - ✓ Facilitated opportunities for individual FCC members & attendees to personally support various community work projects:
 - Loaves & Fishes food collection and neighborhood distribution pantry support.
 - KUDOS (Kalamazoo United Day Of Service) Spring and Fall Work Days
 - Blue Star Mothers Military Care Packages.
 - Open Doors December Meal & Christmas Party.
 - Holiday Parade Parking Fundraiser.
 - Styrofoam Recycling in conjunction with Hope for Creation.
 - ✓ Initiated planning for the first post-pandemic FCC trip (2024) to support the Oglala Lakota Nation at Pine Ridge in conjunction with Re-Member.

Goals for 2024:

Continue supporting the key projects and organizations as in 2023, including:

- Executing various new initiatives:
 - ✓ Supporting the establishment of an FCC Green Team.
 - ✓ Re-initiation of a formal FCC Community-In-Schools support team.
 - ✓ Develop an FCC Court-Sitting team in conjunction with the Kalamazoo Defender organization.
- Supporting, as appropriate, various FCC member &/or externally initiated projects
 - ✓ Chapel Movie Showings
 - ✓ UCC film "How Are the Children"
 - ✓ UCM Urban Plunge Lock-In at FCC

Hospitality Team

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Friendship Hour set-up and clean-up including special Sundays Friendship Hour:
 - Valentines
 - Pastor Mary's Welcome
 - Send-off for Cindy Hunter
 - Easter Egg Hunt
 - Ice cream social
- Graduate blankets
- Garden Socials (7)
- Family Nature Walk
- Kick-off Picnic
- Thanksgiving Dinner
- Card ministry
 - Christmas card blitz
 - Birthdays 80 and over
- Working with other Ministry Teams:
 - Easter egg hunt
 - Blankets for our Troops
 - Hanging & retiring of the greens
 - Messiah Sing
 - Tree lighting in the park
 - Caroling in the park

GOALS for 2024:

- Continue all the above
- Easter brunch
- New member class reunion
- Women's retreat

Communication Team

Accomplishments in 2023:

- In January we pulled together an FCC Tech Fair after church with the goal of educating members on how to engage with FCC via electronic apps and specifically Breeze.
- Created an Instagram account and Pastor Sarah offered to leverage her creative skills to manage both our Facebook and Instagram social media sites resulting in multiple posts and new online engagement.

Polly Blowers took the lead on most of these projects that included:

- Revamped the emailed e-spire with a new masthead and ease of scrolling.
- Rework of the weekly Worship email that included the bulletin, log-in for online worship and direct link for offering.
- Overhaul of the paper bulletin on a larger paper size that saves paper and dollars.
- Updated the church logo with fresh and more contemporary typeface, boxed sizing making it easier in electronic communication and added rainbow colors in the traditional comma (UCC 's "God is Still Speaking Comma").
- Cut back substantially on mailing information to members, saving us both postage and paper costs.

Looking ahead to 2024:

The Communication Ministry team is changing. We will no longer have representation on the Church Council but will instead function as a support team to the church with Polly Blowers remaining as our staff liaison.

In the coming year we have big plans. Those plans include:

- Revamping our church website making it more appealing to people shopping for churches and an easier resource for our members.
- Advertising via social media about our church events to attract community members to join us.
- Hiring a part time Communications Coordinator that can assist with AV, social media, photography, and graphic design, etc.
- Promotional banners for our permanent outdoor signage boxes.
- Upgrade our AV equipment [Phase 1.]. This initial phase will focus on new cameras and ease of controlling them from the AV stand.
- Educating ministry teams on how to leverage Breeze to complete their work and congregants on how to use Breeze to find information.
- Completing the goal of having 100% of all members' photos accompanying their names in the Breeze directory.

Kristi Droppers, Howard Teichma, Polly Blowers, Fara Cochran

Worship Arts Team

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Weekly anthems/music in worship complimenting overall service themes.
- Special music for Lent, All Saints Sunday, Advent season and Christmas Eve.
- Children/Youth programming through WoW activities/participation in worship.
- Growth of Spoken Word Ministry.
- Collaboration with other ministry teams for special projects and programs including Messiah Sing, Hanging of the Greens, Bronson Park caroling (to name a few).
- Continuity and smooth transition of music programming during hiring process for an interim Music Director, with support from music staff, Section Leaders, and Choral Scholars.

Goals for 2024:

- Support and advocate for all music staff.
- Lend support and assistance in securing a permanent Director of Music.
- Grow the Chancel Choir and expand music repertoire.
- Maintain a strong program of Section Leaders and Choral Scholars
- Plan for the Chancel Choir to perform a major work.
- Begin planning for events for the anniversary of the sanctuary organ.

Human Resources Team

Purpose: To oversee all aspects of the human resource affairs of the Church, serving as a resource and support to the Council, Ministry Teams, Pastoral Relations Committees, and staff, including lay staff and pastors, with respect to personnel, employment, and workplace-related issues. The HRMT works in consultation with FCC leadership, pastor/s, and administrative staff to establish policies and procedures pertaining to all aspects of employment including hiring, termination, compensation & benefits, standards of conduct, and performance reviews.

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Recruited new members to give long-standing members a break after a long tenure.
- Received Council approval on a revised team charter to clarify process and team membership.
- Received Council approval of Safe Conduct Policy with procedures. Thanks to Rick Johnson and Pastor Sarah for their work in making this possible.
- Interim Director of Music - Established a search and hired an interim director Jeff Cachero, who will continue through the rest of the choir season.
- Bell Choir Director – Hired Jamie Sue Knight to direct for the full season.
- Completed staff reviews by spring of the year.
- Received Council approval for Pastor Sarah's sabbatical to commence April-August 2024.
- Onboarded new Senior Pastor Mary Austin, and worked collaboratively with her on HR needs as she assumed the role of Head of Staff.

Goals for 2024:

- Review and update the Employee Personnel Policy book last updated in 2016.
- Run a Safe Conduct Policy training drill so the committee is prepared to respond.
- Hire a permanent Director of Music.
- Work on procedures related to HR responsibility (hiring, reviews, etc.).
- Continue to review roles, their scope and ministry needs, and develop updated job descriptions.

Thanks to the congregation for generously supporting our staff through their giving!

HR Team Members

Rick Welch, Rick Johnson, Carl Ill, Heidi Oberlin, Howard Teichma

Finance Team

The purpose of the Finance Team is to oversee all aspects of the financial affairs of the church. The team is responsible for prudently investing all the church's funds, preparing the annual budget, ensuring that appropriate systems, policies, controls, and procedures are in place to protect and report on the financial condition of the church.

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Tom Powell stepped down as the long-time treasurer of First Congregational Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Carol Dunleavy-Chandler became the new treasurer.
- At the annual meeting, the church membership tabled the proposed budget. A special appeal letter was sent to the members to raise additional pledge support or contributions for the budget. April, the church membership voted to accept the 2023 budget.
- Caroline Meyers, Tad Drabik, and Carol Dunleavy-Chandler conferred with the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation to discuss additional funding from \$30,000.00 to \$35,000.00. The administrator of the Foundation was very encouraging of our request.
- Breakwater, financial advisors to FCC, proposed a sophisticated strategy approach to Climate, Social and Governance investment. Breakwater presented it to the committee in August and the committee in November voted unanimously to accept the proposal effective January 2024. The proposal is in accordance with the investment policy of FCC.
- Mary Austin, senior pastor, and Carol Dunleavy-Chandler attended the Gilmore Foundation Celebration of Grantee's and met members of the Foundation and its staff. Tad Drabik, Tom Powell, and Carol Dunleavy-Chandler worked on the Gilmore grant request in the summer and in November, FCC, received a \$35,000.00 grant. FCC is the only Church to receive such a grant from the Gilmore Foundation.
- The Council voted to reduce staff retirement allocation from 14% to 5%. A committee studied retirement allocations of Bronson Park churches as well as Kalamazoo non-profits. The committee was comprised of Derl Oberlin, Carol Dunleavy-Chandler, Kristi Droppers and Howard Teichma.
- A sub-committee of Finance, the Century Fund, began the work to update the legacy giving program for FCC. The committee consists of Alice Gordon, Tom Powell, Carol Dunleavy-Chandler, Derl Oberlin, Chris Schram and Dick Hudson (who passed in September 2023). The goal of the Century Fund is to promote a Building reserve for the church.
- Kristi Droppers, moderator, Mary Austin, senior pastor, and Carol Dunleavy-Chandler, treasurer, began to work on the Stewardship campaign for 2024. For four Sundays, various committees presented to the congregation their work for 2023 and goals for 2024. As of December 11, 2023, pledges totaled \$380,966.00.

Goals for 2024:

- Hire an independent audit firm to conduct either an audit or review of FCC financial reports/statements.
- Continue our work with Breakwater to review and enhance, as needed, the endowment investments.
- Apply for a 2025 Irving S. Gilmore Grant.
- Roll out the updated Legacy giving program and Century Fund.
- Stewardship and budget 2025.

Carol Dunleavy-Chandler, Treasurer

Children's Nature Playscape

Accomplishments in 2023:

- Hosted over 4500 visits from children (a 300% increase from 2022 season).
- 41% of these visits were from children who live or attend school within The CNP Zone (the 10-block radius surrounding Bronson Park).
- Raised over \$310K toward completion of Phase 2 construction, 2023 operations, and 2024 operations.
- Loo installation is complete and paid for!
- Diversified our paid staff to better reflect Kalamazoo as a whole.
- Launched our Signature Early Learning Program, Reading, and Exploring in Nature, wherein we hosted 27 STEM activities and gave away 100 books to Kalamazoo families for FREE.
- Nurtured strong partnerships with popular and established local organizations like Rooted, Sounds of the Zoo, Gryphon Place, Goodwill Industries, KRESA, and Kzoo Parks and Rec.

Goals for 2024:

- Increase our CNP Zone percentage to at least 60%.
- Complete Phase 2 construction (learning pavilion and sensory garden instruments).
- Secure funds for 2025 operations.

With gratitude,
Nora Seilheimer (she/her)
CNP Executive Director

Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care Center

Accomplishments in 2023:

- KDCCC served 92 families and 130 children during 2023.
- Our average daily attendance was 10. (Still recovering from Covid).
- 22 times families said they were looking for permanent housing or moving.
- 32 times families said they were looking for employment.
- 159 times families said they were attending medical or other appointments.
- 15 times families said they used KDCCC to attend Court.
- Other reasons used most often were for respite, personal time, errands, school or study or employment.
- Our numbers are still not up to what they were at pre-Covid, but each year we are getting closer.
- Our budget still looks good for the end of 2023. Our fund balance was secure in 2023 due to 2 federal one-time childcare grants in 2022.

Goals for 2024:

- We will be looking for ways to maintain our fund balance through 2024.
- We hope to raise our numbers to pre-Covid.
- The KDCCC board of Directors will be putting together a marketing plan to get the word out to reach more families in our community.
- We will welcome our new Volunteer Coordinator/Administrative Assistant on January 8 and train her in her new position.

Kathy McNinch
Executive Director
Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care Center

Church Staff 2024

Senior Designated Pastor	Rev. Mary Austin
Pastor for Faith Formation	Rev. Sarah Schmidt-Lee
Church Administrator	Tad Drabik
Interim Director of Music Ministries	Jeff Cachero
Interim Director of Handbells	Jamie Sue Knight
Director of Parish Care	Dianne Roberts
Director of Children's Worship Arts	Kim Licavoli
Organist	Kory Heitzig
Secretary	Polly Blowers
Sexton	Hayden Blowers
Housekeeper	Deb Zandt

2024 Budget Summary

FCC BUDGET FORECAST GENERAL FUND 2024			01/09/24
INCOME	2023 BUDGET	2024 BUDGET	INC/-DEC
CONGREGATIONAL GIVING:	375,000	415,000	40,000
SPECIAL OFFERINGS	30,000	20,000	(10,000)
FOUNDATION GRANTS	105,000	120,000	15,000
OTHER INCOME	12,000	12,000	-
			-
TOTAL INCOME	522,000	567,000	45,000
TRANSFERS:			
FCC ENDOWMENT FUNDS	169,000	169,000	-
DESIGNATED FUND RESERVES	21,135	0	(21,135)
OTHER INVESTMENTS	4,000	8,000	4,000
TOTAL TRANSFERS	194,135	177,000	(17,135)
TOTAL INCOME & TRANSFERS	716,135	744,000	27,865
EXPENSES	2023 BUDGET	2024 BUDGET	INC/-DEC
PERSONNEL	416,200	467,215	51,015
PROPERTY: Bldg. Serv. & Supplies	84,000	82,600	(1,400)
Maintenance & Repair	55,000	65,000	10,000
Debt Service	25,000	30,000	5,000
MISSIONS: Outreach	20,000	22,000	2,000
Special Offerings	30,000	20,000	(10,000)
FAITH FORMATION	7,000	8,000	1,000
WORSHIP ARTS	17,000	25,000	8,000
OFFICE & GENERAL ADMIN.	40,000	21,300	(18,700)
HOSPITALITY	4,000	4,000	-
COMMUNICATION	0	14,000	14,000
HUMAN RESOURCES	0	2,000	2,000
TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES	698,200	761,115	62,915
CURRENT YEAR SURPLUS/DEFICIT	17,935	(17,115)	(35,050)
PREVIOUS YEAR SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(17,935)	19,540	37,475
CUMULATIVE SURPLUS/DEFICIT	0	2,425	2,425

NOTES: Council Approved 01/10/24

