2023 First Church Annual Report

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Senior Minister's Report

God, you are my shepherd, I lack nothing. You make me lie down in green pastures; you lead me beside still waters; you restore my soul. –Psalm 23:1-3a

A Year of Restoration

In 2023, we emerged from winter's "triple-demic" of flu, COVID-19, and RSV to slowly build the muscle of regathering in familiar ways. We restored our coffee hour first to the Community Hall and then to the narthex, enjoyed the first Easter pancake breakfast since 2019, and resumed potluck community meals in the fall. The opportunity to break bread together provided nourishment for the body and our community. Our choir grew, and under the leadership of Leela Koilpillai, our Director of Music Ministry, we hosted the Duke Chorale for a deeply-felt Palm Sunday worship service. We baptized toddlers and adults. We welcomed new members. By spring's end, we had nearly worn ourselves out as many facets of our lives reopened to social and programmatic commitments.

Over the summer, we encouraged our Commissions to take time off from meeting together, enjoying the summer to rest, dream, and restore. I attended the first in-person General Synod of the UCC in the wake of the pandemic, along with a cohort of First Church leaders. Rev. Sam led our youth on a service-learning trip to eastern Kentucky, repairing homes, engaging the local community, and deepening relationships.

In the fall, we experienced a 30% growth (from the previous fall) in worship attendance, which lasted throughout the year's end. Old friends reappeared in the pews and newcomers joined us every Sunday, some of them becoming regular friends. The Drop-In Center served over 100 clients at the Thanksgiving feast, with the help of new volunteers. God's Spirit of restoration was at work in our hearts, ministries, and building. I give thanks for a vibrant year of shared ministry as a thriving church.

An Antiracist Church

We faithfully lived into our calling as an antiracist church in 2023 by training our leadership, commissioning research on enslaved laborers who worked the land at 10th & G, commissioning memorial artwork to honor them, designing an All Saints worship service with Dr. Renee K. Harrison to speak the names aloud for the first time, and participating in the antiracism work of the wider UCC through General Synod.

Following months of pre-work (podcasts, articles, reflection questions) on March 11, the Rev. LaShauna Austria and Minister Min Jae Kim of Seeds of Change trained our staff, members of the church Council, commission chairs, and other church leaders in antiracism, asking: Where is white supremacy culture showing up at First Church? What are the true costs of racism? After debriefing the training, Minister Min Jae led a workshop on "The Circle Way," which was used to launch two communities of practice, meeting twice monthly during the fall. These communities served as support groups and sounding boards to reflect on the work of antiracism in our lives

and shared life together. In 2024 they will recommend how we might expand and continue communities of practice so all can access the support, challenge, and accountability necessary in an antiracist church. Rev. Austria helped lead worship in late November and wrapped up her time with a congregational conversation.

In early 2023, we contracted with Antonio Austin, a PhD student at Howard University, to research the enslaved laborers who worked the land on which our church now sits. Mr. Austin wrote a report, "Slavery on G Street" which is available on our website, uncovering their names. When I met with Meg Maguire and Dr. Renee K. Harrison of Howard University's School of Divinity to discuss the report and our dream of a memorial, a new idea was born—to commission a memorial artwork for our narthex to display the names of these enslaved persons to honor their memory. A Memorial Artwork Task Force was formed, and local artist Jessica Valoris has been commissioned. We also planned an All-Saints worship service of lament and healing to speak their names aloud in the sanctuary. Hannah Long-Higgins is producing a short film based on these efforts.

This year, the seeds of collaborative antiracist work in the Potomac Association came to fruition in the wider UCC. The Antiracism Audit, for which I served on the design team and First Church piloted, has now been published by the Central Atlantic Conference (CAC). Church leaders and Conference Ministers from around the country are reaching out to the CAC to learn more, and two other congregations have undergone the audit. The Confronting White Supremacy study and action guide, which I co-authored, is a curriculum for use in churches across the spectrum. This resource was introduced to the national UCC at General Synod, and the resolution calling congregations to confront white supremacy passed. For more information on how First Church lived into our antiracist calling this year, please refer to the Antiracism Committee report.

Sacred Moments in Community

In 2023 we were blessed to baptize Owen Heming, Barrett McCaffrey, and Erin Williams. On the first Sunday in May, we welcomed a wonderful cohort of new members: Rev. Sydney Avent (ordained Disciples of Christ), Thaddaeus Elliott (Justice & Witness Fellow in UCC's DC Office), Lynn Gaaserut, Nikie King, Jaimie Orr, and Erin Williams. Rev. Laura Simmons transferred her membership from associate to full membership. We also mourned the death of Robert (Bob) Crossley, who joined First Church in 1962, where he met Jennie Hunt, with whom he shared a lifelong companionship. We mourned with Jennie as we remembered Bob and celebrated his life in March. Two births gave hopeful signs of new life—Felix (child of Rev. David Lindsey & Carrie Dobmeier) and Echo Evangeline (child of Mike Zawada & Erin Griffith), beloved children of God.

Heartfelt Gratitude

The vital work of this thriving community would be impossible without all of you. I want to thank our church Council under the thoughtful and dedicated leadership of Moderator Andrew Hamilton and Assistant Moderator Lindsay Swisher for navigating this season of restoration with grace and trust, always returning to our shared covenant and the importance of relationship. Lucille Dickinson's faithful labor as our Treasurer kept us on track, informed, and grateful.

Finally, I wish to thank our tremendous staff. In a year brimming with ministry, I am grateful for their hard work, insight, and compassion. In the wake of COVID-19 we saw a noticeable uptick in need among the unhoused and mentally ill. This year we onboarded Nai-lah Dixon to job-share with Kemmesha Thomas as our Sunday Morning Coordinators, assisting those walking

through our doors in search of resources or a safe harbor. Drop-In Center Coordinator Jarred Bowman offered the same on Tuesday nights all while leading volunteers and cultivating relationships, amidst a sharp increase in the number of guests we serve. When the Sasha Bruce coordinator left for another opportunity, Jarred capably addressed challenges with clarity and collaboration. In February, we welcomed Whitney McColley as our new Administrative Assistant. With the help of a Communications Plan by consultant Jessica Quinn, Whitney unveiled a new format for our weekly newsletters. Her organization and wisdom continue to anchor our office. Ines kept our building safe and clean as we maximized space use. Byron secured rental agreements with vital performance arts organizations and updated our rates, allowing us to increase our space-use income beyond expectations. His detail-oriented care for our building and institutional wisdom proved essential. Rev. Sam led our youth on a grand adventure to eastern Kentucky and created dynamic new Christian Education opportunities and special Sunday services for our children, drawing families back into our fold. His compassionate pastoral care is a hallmark of our community. Leela led our growing choir to enrich our worship services in every liturgical season with a depth of spirit. Through her leadership, the Gabrieli Brass Quintet enlivened special services, a collaboration with the Duke Chorale on Palm Sunday moved us deeply, and Benjamin Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols" blessed our Christmas season. It has been a privilege to lead and co-labor alongside our staff team as we strive to forward the mission of First Church with all of you, "walking together in ways revealed by the Holy Spirit."

In Peace,
Rev. Amanda

Director of Music Ministry's Report

"There must be in every persons' lifetime place for the singing of angels, some place for that which in itself is breathlessly beautiful and, by an inherent prerogative, throws all the rest of life into a new and creative relatedness, something that gathers up in itself all the freshets of experience from drab and commonplace areas of living and glows in one bright light of penetrating beauty and meaning…The commonplace is shot through with new glory; old burdens become lighter; deep and ancient wounds lose much of their old, old hurting…Despite all the crassness of life, despite all the hardness of life, despite all the harsh discords of life, life is saved by the singing of angels." --Howard Thurman

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving you in the capacity of Director of Music Ministry, organist, and choir director. The quote above has been the inspiration for the vision that guides me as Director of Music Ministry. There continues to be a strong spirit of appreciation and support for musical innovation in my second year of work at First Church. I'd like to share some words of gratitude that poured in after the Christmas Concert:

- *"service yesterday was transformative, lifting me out of a low period to an expansive sense of wonder …ambitious, difficult and beautifully performed choral music…"* Meg Maguire
- *"created such an exquisite atmosphere and energy and in addition to the gorgeous music, I love how you curated the mood with lighting and movement. It was the kind of experiential and contemplative service that really resonates with me and I didn't realize how much I needed it today. I left feeling a sense of creative and spiritual inspiration and awe..."* Hannah Higgins-Long

First Church Choir

The choral program is tailored to promote the greatest success, growth and satisfaction of its members, with singers in various stages of skill, experience, levels of ability and/or commitment. Rehearsals are configured in ways that allow the participation of the greatest number of individuals possible. This involvement strengthens collective and individual music development of the singing ensemble. We relish the joy of achieving artistic, spiritual, and expressive performances in sacred service.

Over the past year, our choir developed musically through the process of concentrated rehearsal. Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* offered many musical challenges and we enthusiastically met the task of mastering these. Choir members came to extra rehearsals, went over the music with recordings, and found enjoyment engaging with music of the highest calibre in performance on December 17. This transformative experience came about through dedication, hard work and musical success which advanced our progress as singer-musicians.

The latest practice schedule, Sunday mornings at 9 am and once-a-month rehearsals on third Saturday mornings, seems to work better for a wider spectrum of singers. This is conducive to attracting a number of new choir members this season, including Rose Berman, Casey Capsambelis, Laura Darling-LaGamma, Jaimie Orr, Peter Tracey, and Rev. Jason Carson Wilson who sang at the concert. We're delighted to have these new singers.

We welcome musicians of all ages and experiences to participate in the music ministry at First Church. If you sing or play an instrument (including piano) please contact Leela at lrkoillpillai@gmail.com. From student musicians to professionals, there is a place for you here.

Music in Worship Services

First Church Choir sings during worship

Careful discernment goes into the selection of service music. Choral anthems, special music, and hymn selections incorporate various styles and pieces composed by women and music of other cultures with an emphasis on Afro-American, gospel, Negro spirituals. Spanish, Brazilian, Native American, and French music has also been presented. We continue to feature contemporary composers and familiar anthems in addition to traditional classical repertoire.

Less-familiar choices were also presented to our congregation, which have been well-received, and the core of familiar, beloved hymns is expanding. Organ accompaniments which modulate into the final stanza and offer harmonization and descants enhance engagement in hymn singing and bring new heights and dimensionality to the experience. And, our incredible organ and piano provide preludes that help create a sacred atmosphere; uplifting postludes are received with enthusiastic applause! The choir has played an important leadership role in hymn singing. We have endeavored to encourage more participation of the congregation by the singing of introits, responses and psalms. Through these efforts our congregation has embraced making a joyful noise to the Lord!

Guest Musicians

We are ultra-blessed to have Robin Olson providing music by voice and trombone—though not simultaneously! His organization of the Gabrielli Brass Quintet has been a tremendous blessing to our congregation. They provided special music during five occasions: Easter, July 4th, Homecoming Sunday, Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve. People have danced in the aisles in response to their upbeat playing.

In addition, we have had a number of other special guests. Amy Domingues played an exquisite viol de gamba during the service on November 5, 2023. David Griffiths, baritone-extraordinaire (and a former student) provided leadership on the piano and voice in gospel style for the special October 29, All-Saints' Day Service. Kristen Jepperson, harp, was the featured accompanist for the Choral Concert on December 17. Our own professional violinist, Mary Hayes graced our Christmas Eve service with her exquisite violin playing. Dennis Turner has provided unfailing support and a regular presence in our worship services as substitute organist/choir director and has accompanied the choir on several occasions.

Duke University Chorale, under the direction of Dr. Allan Friedman, worshiped with us on Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023 and joined our church choir for a glorious combined anthem, which I was privileged to direct. They also presented three pieces in a chorale prelude for our church service. Finally, they performed a mini-concert following worship, making it convenient for the congregation to attend.

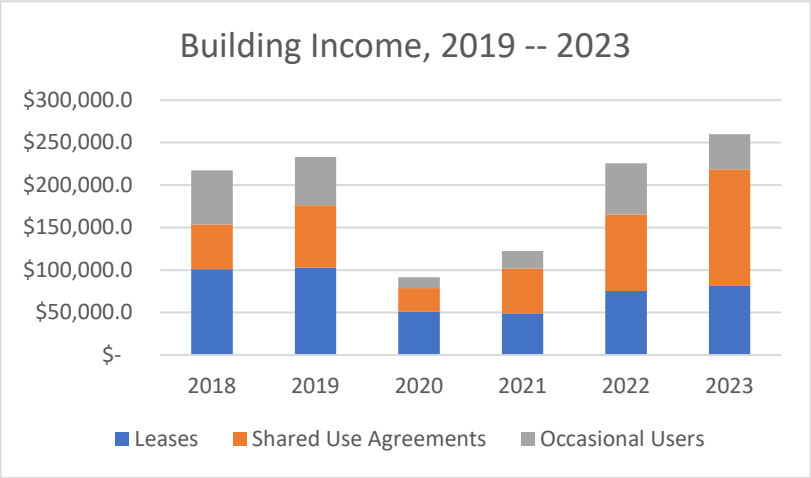
Duke University Chorale and First Church Choir sing together on Palm Sunday
Photo Credit: Joseph Darling-LaGamma

Andrew Hamilton, Diane Brenneman, Nora Marsh and Dwan Reece have accompanied and led services with guitar and singing, providing contemporary, casual services. Other musical members of the congregation also offered special music including; Marian Drake, Eric Olsen, Moira Jones, John Smeltzer, Dwan Reece, Sophie Jones, Jaimie Orr, Polly Gordon, Michael Hopkins, and Abigail Cipparone.

Submitted by Leela Koilpillai

Building Manager's Report

Building use by others has fully recovered from the COVID pandemic. For 2023, the building generated $260,016 in income from leases, shared use agreements, and occasional use. The graph below dramatically shows how our building income was rising, crashed during the pandemic, and returned. Of particular note, is how income from shared use agreements grew and is now the largest segment of building income. This reinforces the statement I make every year that our building income is a relational business rather than a transactional one.



Based on demand for the sanctuary for concerts and rates for competing venues of similar size, the Facilities Commission approved increasing the hourly sanctuary rental rate from $235 in 2023 to $260 in 2024.

In 2024, lease income will increase by 5% in accordance with lease terms. Income from shared use agreements is not budgeted to increase over 2024 as we generally are conservative about this line and some of the shared use is difficult to predict this far out. Occasional use income is budgeted at $47,250, an aggressive 14% increase over our 2023 actual number. This increase is rooted in our 10% increase of the sanctuary rental rate and the fact that Young Clergy Women International is having a three-day conference here in May and the estimate for that is nearly $5,000. If you take a look at the building calendar (available online) you will see that we already have many events booked through June.

Washington Gas

In the spring, Washington Gas discovered that they underbilled us for gas usage over several years because of their faulty equipment. They sent us a bill for more than $26,000. LPC property manager Melissa Braddy fought valiantly on our behalf for months dealing with the incompetence of the WGL's customer service department. In the summer, they reversed the charges while researching the issue.

As of this writing, they have not re-charged us, and in early November they replaced the faulty transponder (and the meter it was connected to). They have billed us for a bit of gas usage in November but for none of the gas showing on the meter that they removed and took back to their facility. And in late December, they started all over again with a bill that said we had no gas usage in December. This is because they couldn't get a reading off the transponder (located two levels below street level). We have now identified where on the WGL customer account website we can submit our own meter reading – this will be our new practice (assuming their website works...) in order to avoid future surprises.

Property Manager
We continue our relationship with Lincoln Property Company to maintain building systems. Lead Engineer Doug Baires and Maintenance Engineer Osmar Campos are on-site and are prompt, courteous, and always willing to go above and beyond what our contract requires them to do. They do an impressive job keeping all of our building equipment running well.

Sexton
Our full-time sexton, Ines Marques, does an amazing job keeping our building clean. My heartfelt thanks to Ines. Her dedication, sense of humor, and calm in the face of the busyness of 2023 makes this place work. I couldn't do this job without her.

Anti-Racism
Facilities Commission developed two major goals from the work of the anti-racism audit:

- *To be intentional about who we have do work in the building in the sense of trying to steer our repair work and the like to companies with diverse ownership.* We reviewed the ownership of new contractors coming in and our progress in 2023 includes an IT/LAN contractor and a new event host who are persons of color. Additionally, two new caterers on our approved list are Black men.
- *To develop new ways/programs to support more diversity in the groups that use our space and in the wider community*. In 2023, we provided event space for several groups more racially representative of our city's demographics along with a couple of additional events that the producers ended up cancelling or shifting to a different venue.

The Washington Chorus presents Tomorrow *at First Church under the direction of Eugene Roberts. Photo credit: Shannon Finney*

Repairs & Improvements
In 2023, we had a number of repairs but a calmer year than in 2022.

Major projects for 2024 include:

- Making the balcony railing unclimbable and the lower portion higher in order to prevent young children from climbing it like a ladder. I hope to have a preliminary proposal for Council this month and then we will figure out scheduling.
- Install closing mechanisms for the front doors that are less expensive to maintain.
- A replacement of two triple valves which are essential to our heating and cooling.
- Electricity savings through a multi-year contract for electricity supply and re-programming our HVAC automation system to reduce pump use and cooling/heating demands.
- Retrofitting our lighting fixtures for LEDs.
- Completion of the building procedures manual.

Submitted by Byron Adams

Moderator's Report

It has been a challenging year for the world, and for the church in the world and in response to the world.

Some 2000 years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote a powerful letter to the followers of Jesus living in the imperial capital of Rome, articulating (in Romans Chapters 14-15) God's call to them to be a community of radical welcome, practical grace, and love of neighbor. Paul's message throughout his letters is to live out this call in pursuit of a unity that upended the religious-cultural divisions (especially Jewish vs Greco-Roman) and hierarchies (enslaved vs non-enslaved, male vs female) that their world was marked by.

I believe that our call at First Church is a descendant of this call spoken by Paul to the church in Rome. We also find ourselves in the capital of the largest military power on earth. Our world has similar divisions and hierarchies. We have a legacy of slavery, built on socially constructed concepts of race and racism, and which (I would argue) is one of the root causes now of the threats to our imperfect democratic institutions. We also have highly contested questions about gender and sexual identity. And much of this is refracted through divisive religious rhetoric and practice, as many corners of American Christianity broadcast calls for exclusion rather than inclusion.

In these times, we see and hear and feel this same call to radical welcome, practical grace, and love of neighbor concretely at 10th and G. First Church has, over the past year, continued to grow and thrive in the living out of this call.

We had a superb Church Council that helped shepherd the church through the year. Here is a list of key Council actions that I would remind us all of:

- Our leadership (Council, Commission Chairs, Staff) participated in an anti-racism training in March with outside facilitators (Rev. LaShauna Austria and Min Jae Kim). This was something envisioned in our Racial Justice Audit from 2022.

- Coming out of that training, we convened two Communities of Practice groups to continue the concrete work of racial justice. Those groups completed a round of activity this past fall and are in active discussion about how to continue their work in appropriate ways and potentially invite more members of our community to participate.

- We hired a new office administrator (Whitney McColley) in February. Whitney has been a tremendous addition to our staff.

- We nominated our own Mari Castellanos and Susan Saudek to both receive the Seabury Award for servant leadership in UCC and Episcopal congregations. Both were then honored at an award ceremony in May for their work in support of immigrants.

- We held the first ever (to our knowledge) First Church Hootenanny, with potluck food and group music. Many thanks to Gail Sonneman (and her husband Sam Brylawski, dear friend of First Church) for hosting this event!

- We welcomed many new members, both infants being and adults joining. See the Clerk's report from Alyx Cheng for details.

- As we assessed the changing COVID situation, we returned to our pre-pandemic practice of having regular church potluck meals after select worship services, including the Easter Pancake Breakfast.

- We commissioned an artwork to commemorate the enslaved laborers who once lived and worked on the land that First Church now occupies (to be dedicated and installed later this year).

- Continued to plan with Rev. Amanda for her upcoming sabbatical, tentatively to occur in the summer of 2025.

It has been Council's tremendous privilege to serve with our dedicated staff and contractors – Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss, Rev. Sam McFerran, Leela Koilpillai, Byron Adams, Whitney McColley, Ines Marquez, Kemmesha Thomas, Nai'Lah Dixon, and Jarred Bowman.

<u>2023 Council:</u>

Andrew Hamilton, *Moderator*
Lindsay Swisher, *Assistant Moderator*
Alyx Cheng, *Clerk*
Lucille Dickinson, *Treasurer*
Marian Drake, *At-large*
Dwan Reece, *At-large*
Jamey Moore, *Care of Parish*
Kurt Fishbeck, *Christian Education*
Nora Marsh (with support from Kristy Goodfellow), *Facilities*
Ann Bushmiller, *Finance*
Fredda Sparks, *Outreach & Membership*
LaTayna Purnell, *SAAC*
Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, *Worship*

Submitted by Andrew Hamilton

Clerk's Report

Membership Count

As of January 1, 2023 (per 2023 Annual Report): 203
As of January 1, 2024: 206

Births

Felix Edward Dobmeier-Lindsey
Echo Evangeline Zawada

Baptisms

Owen Heming
Barrett McCaffrey
Erin Williams

Added to the Book of Life

Robert Crossley

Photo credit: Matthew LaGamma

New Full Members

Sydney Avent
Thaddaeus Elliott
Lynn Gaaserud
Nikie King
Jaimie Orr
Laura Simmons (previously Associate Member)
Erin Williams

New Associate Members: n/a

Seabury Celebration of Service Honorees from First Church

Rev. Mari Castellanos
Susan Saudek

Requested Removal from Membership Roll

John Lorenz
Emmanuel Okorie

Requested Conversion to Friend: n/a

Requested Letter of Transfer to Another Congregation: n/a

Submitted by Alyx Cheng

Care of Parish Commission Report

Members: David Greer (chair), Rose Berman, James Moore, Polly Gordon, Anna B. Kiss

Care of Parish had an active year in 2023, featuring the return to many in-person activities while balancing the health and safety of First Church members and friends. Coffee hour returned in full force with Care of Parish setting up a schedule of coffee hour hosts. We ran into a few issues including resuming coffee hours during low-attendance three-day weekends, most effective use of decaf coffee and ensuring a proper amount of dry and non-dry goods. As the Church returned to a full-time hosting schedule, there were a few hiccups, but the spirit of the Church always brought someone to help and fill in.

Care of Parish also hosted several community events during the course of the year. Rose Berman took the lead on hosting Bob Crossley's memorial service, which was of great comfort to his long-time partner Jennifer Hunt. Care of Parish also hosted a reception for the nurture discussion of Dwan Reece's book, "Musical Crossroads: Stories Behind the Objects of African American Music."

In addition to these events, Care of Parish hosted the first Easter Pancake Breakfast since 2019, which was the last breakfast held before the Pandemic. Care of Parish focused on the basics – pancakes, butter, syrup, toppings. We planned for lower numbers as we were still unsure how members felt about eating together in one room. The turnout was beyond our expectations with more than 70 members, family and guests attending. The breakfast would not have been a success without Care of Parish being able to lean on several long-time members (The Bushmillers, Kim Darling) for their experience gained from previous breakfasts.

In the Summer, Care of Parish hosted the first ever Hootenanny at the home of Gail Sonneman. More than 40 people gathered to sing songs from the great American songbook, eat fried chicken and share a warm June afternoon together. Also in the summer, we hosted an ice cream social after church with several different flavors and an array of toppings.

In the Fall, Care of Parish brought the Homecoming Sunday Potluck back. Like the Easter Pancake Breakfast, it was well attended and offered an abundance of food and fellowship. We facilitated a Christmas cookie exchange (approximately 40 participants) following an Advent service on December 11th which provided more cookies than expected, which allowed the church to donate a dozen to the drop-in center.

We also recognized our members who were in need as we started meal trains for the families of David Lindsey and Mike Zwada, who both welcomed new born children into their families.

Throughout 2023, Care of Parish was honored to shepherd the church into more in-person events as so much of the grace and blessings of First Church are bestowed when we are together. In 2024, Care of Parish will build on this momentum.

Submitted by David Greer

Christian Education Report

Members: Patrick Darling-LaGamma (chair), Kurt Fischbeck, Anne Saudek, Elise Villemez. Friend of CE: Matthew LaGamma. Staff: Rev. Sam McFerran

2023 was a joyful year of renewal and connection. We especially were thrilled to see so many families return from Covid and participate in the life of the church. We are so grateful to the commission, teachers, staff, children and youth who made this year such a special success!

Rev. Sam enjoyed supporting Faith Formation at Church. During the Summer and over-Thanksgiving, he took eight weeks of Sabbatical, to celebrate his 7+ years of service at First Church.

This year, the four primary goals for the church were:

1. To continue to provide meaningful and inviting faith formation to children and youth.
2. To create meaningful and accessible activities for our high school youth and young adults.
3. To provide adult education opportunities.
4. To help us on our journey as becoming a stronger anti-racist force and community.

Goal 1: Provide meaningful and inviting faith formation to children and youth

1. We successfully reopened the nursery for young children. While we had a partial re-opening of the nursery in the Spring, we were able to fully reopen the Nursery in the Fall thanks to the leadership of Patrick Darling-LaGamma, and the additional hires of stellar childcare workers Shae Ramberg and Sherrel Dailey. We were also grateful to Pilar Holder who helped in the Spring before heading to College.
2. We provided meaningful Sunday School where we continued to follow the spiritual practices of the Follow Me curricula. In 2023, these spiritual practices included *Loving God, Neighbor and Enemy*; *Doing Justice*; and *Crossing Borders*.
3. We were able to Sing Our Faith with Dennis Turner. Dennis led the children to sing their faith during 3 Sunday School lessons on singing, and a performance during a worship service. We sang "This LIttle Light of Mine", "The Greatest Thing", and "The Servant Song."
4. We are grateful to dedicated teaching by Anna Kiss, Susan Anderson, Patrick Darling-LaGamma, Kim Darling, Lauren McFerran, Elise Villemez, CJ Thayer, Ann Bushmiller, Ann Saudek and Karen Pence.

5. As part of our *Do Justice* unit, we had a walk around our downtown neighborhood where we noticed issues of light and brokenness in Gallery Place and Penn Quarter.

6. The children acted out the Palm Sunday story in Children's Theatre.
7. Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss, Anna Kiss, and Rev. Barbara Gerlach-Mack taught *Our Whole Lives*, a progressive curriculum on our bodies, health, sexuality and gender to our Kindergartners to 2nd graders.
8. We had a joyful 100% in-person pageant with 35 participants with a theme of Peace with Doves. It included a lot of great performances and a wonderful congregational song of the Beatles "Here Comes the Sun" as the closing reprise.
9. We continued to serve our neighbors at Tommy's Pantry, a ministry in Silver Spring that provides meals, wellness kits, light bulbs and other essential needs to a neighborhood where many immigrants from Latin America have located.

Goal 2: Create meaningful and accessible activities for our youth and young adults.

1. Our high school youth had a fantastic trip in June to Eastern Kentucky. This trip included Joseph Darling-LaGamma, Liam Chaffee-Hobbs, Jess Chaffee-Hobbs, Tadashi Tanaka-Dodge, Rachel Schneider, Mai Abongwa and Maitlan Abongwa. Rev. Sam was helped by Grace Campbell, who was a terrific youth leader. Together they led the youth in a series of zoom conversations and gatherings prior to the trip. During the trip, we spent one night in Ronceverte, WV, hiked McAffee's Knob, and spent 4 nights in Hazard, KY. In Hazard, we met amazing people, restored a porch and patio that had been damaged by a flood, and went swimming in Buckhorn Lake. The trip was such a success the youth did a great job staying connected in the Fall, including great Zoom gatherings and full participation in the Christmas Pageant as liturgists or Angels.
2. We created meaningful parish internship opportunities for two sophomores from St. John's High School (DC). Zakkary Parker-Kelly and Eli Montgomery served the church and learned about hospitality by volunteering over 20 hours for First Church.

3. The Young Adults continue to be a strong and vibrant part of First Church. Whether it was a gathering at the National Portrait Gallery, a pot-luck at Lindsay Swisher's, or an Advent sharing in the home of Abigail Cipparone and MIchael Hopkins. We are grateful to Lindsay, Abigail, Michael and Thaddaeus Elliott for their leadership.

Goal 3: Provide Adult Education Opportunities

Adult education opportunities included:

1. Bible Workbench was offered in a hybrid fashion, led by Andrew Hamilton.
2. We continued on our journey to be an anti-racist community, with trained sessions led by Revs. LaShauna Austria and Min Jae Kim.
3. A nurture led by Rev. Sam McFerran on vocation.
4. A two part Advent nurture series was led by Rev. Barbara Gerlach where we heard from church members share their hopes and fears.

Goal 4: Advance our community as an Anti-Racist Church

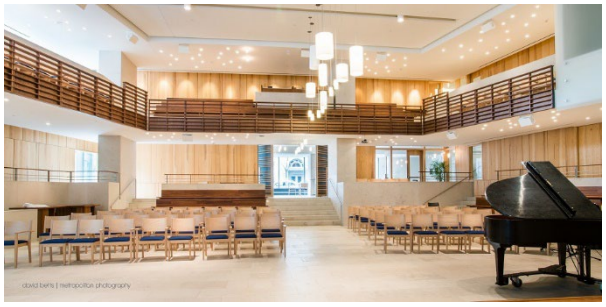
1. The most intentional anti-racist focus was the Sunday School Unit on the spiritual practice of Doing Justice and Crossing Borders.
2. The Church worked hard to learn about the enslaved laborers who worked on the land prior to First Church's founding. This groundbreaking effort was led by the theological framework of Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss and Rev. Renee Harrison, the historical research of Antonio Austin, and the artist, Ms. Jessica Valoris. Ms. Valoris has been commissioned to create a permanent artwork to honor these individuals and families within our sanctuary. She led a dynamic listening session to both answer questions but also to capture hopes and prayers for what the art would mean to First Church.
3. For the 6th year, we hosted a Toy Drive that benefitted over 125 children. Our beneficiaries were A Wider Circle, Shaw Community Ministries, and friends of First Church.

We are grateful for the support and love of the Congregation to make this all possible!

Submitted by Rev. Sam McFerran

Facilities Commission Report

Members: Kristy Goodfellow Mills (Chair), Nora Marsh, Christopher Byrne, Hilary Oat-Judge, and Mike Zawada. Staff: Byron Adams, Building Manager



The building is being used in wonderful and dynamic ways and continues to serve the congregation and guests wonderfully. The congregation gathers weekly for Sunday morning worship, Faith Formation, congregational meetings, and small group activities. The Drop-in Center is doing amazing work every Tuesday in the Narthex and Living Room with the assistance of one of our regular tenants, Table Church. Building income was at an all-time high at $260,016. This was an increase of about $30,000 from last year and is largely the result of increased income from shared-use agreements.

To support the Church's anti-racism work, the Building Manager has made an effort to consider contractors and building users who more accurately reflect the community we live in. Please see the Building Manager report for an update on those two areas.

Our building has what we commonly refer to as a 50-year plan that lays out what major systems will need to be replaced and estimates how much we need to save to be able to afford to replace these items. It became apparent two years ago that the plan needed to be updated to include other systems and to reflect both increased prices and usage. At that time, we received an updated plan from LPC, but Byron is concerned that the numbers are too low. We anticipate needing to replace most air handling units and pumps in 2026. Facilities will need to do the following over the next few years:

- Identify an HVAC engineer who will be able to evaluate the air handlers to see which ones will need to be replaced first, and which ones can wait another year or two. Hiring this HVAC engineer is an excellent opportunity to use a people-of-color-owned business; we recommend that next year's commission reach out to predominantly Black DC churches to see if they have someone they might recommend.
- Coordinate with staff and HVAC engineer to identify the best time to replace the items. We recommend targeting mid-June 2026. Summer tends to be a good time for major repairs as it is the least disruptive time to the Church calendar and a low point in building rentals. We will need to block out 4-6 weeks with no rentals or extra use of the building to accomplish the work.
- Investigate new technology that is more environmentally friendly.
- The Building Manger oversaw some HVAC work that more efficiently maintains building temperatures, and work on this can continue.

The status of the front doors remains unchanged in 2023. We continue working toward a permanent fix. As reported last year, from almost the beginning of our occupancy of this

building, we've had issues with the front door closers. Each year we budget between $5,000 and $10,000 to have them repaired. The issues are a result of both the type of door closer that was used and water that accumulates in the trench below the doors. Byron was able to speak with someone from the architect firm that designed the building and is familiar with the issues. They came back with three options:

1. Re-trench what we have and put in drain lines to prevent water from accumulating. As this does not deal with the long-term issue of unreliable door closers, we did not pursue this recommendation on its own. However, this will need to be done no matter which of the other choices is made.
2. Replace the power assist closer with a Tormax TN110 and put in the drain lines. Estimated cost $40,000-$50,000.
3. Replace all eight of the front doors (interior and exterior) with top mounted closers. This would require substantial effort, as the doors currently go all the way to the ceiling and there is HVAC ducting above. This could cost as much as $100,000, but we won't know for sure until we start shopping for replacement doors.

Facilities Commission recommends option 2. The Building Managers is currently working to find a contractor who is able to install the recommended parts, which has been a challenge. This expense will not come from our annual budget, nor is it one that has been budgeted for as part of the Capital Reserve Fund. Council will need to determine the best way to pay for this fix.

Church Safety

During this year, Facilities Commission reviewed the draft Safe Church Plan and prepared an emergency evacuation and shelter-in-place plan. Facilities Commission worked in conjunction with the Safety Task Force, which is developing a separate plan focused on deescalating certain situations. The Safety Take Force continues to work on a solution for communication between the congregation and the Children's Education suite in certain emergencies. For next year, we suggest that Facilities Commission seek professional review of the evacuation plan (in case of fire), and then follow through with trainings and a practice evacuation. We suggest that the Facilities Commission also consider work on relevant signage. Please see Building manager report for more information on modifying the balcony to improve child safety.

Notably, the group did not make a serious attempt to find renters for the Church parking spots and did not take responsibility for finding zoom moderators/coordinators for Church services, which has been discussed in the previous few years. This is something that could be considered in future years.

Our thanks go to both our Building Manager, Byron, and our Sexton, Ines for all the work and planning that goes into keeping our building in good repair and ready for use by both the congregation and outside renters. We also appreciate all of the other contractors that help out, including our church handyman, occasional use staff, AV technicians, and the many others who work behind the scenes.

Submitted by Kristy Goodfellow

Finance Commission Report

Members: Mary Hayes (chair), Ann Bushmiller, Lucille Dickinson (Treasurer), Anne Mascolino, Peter Tracey, Karen Tramontano (ex-officio as Stewardship Chair)

Finance Commission Responsibilities

Finance Commission is responsible for the financial affairs of the Church. The Church's operating revenue includes: 36% pledges, 30% income from the building, and 20% income from the Endowment Fund.

The Commission reviews monthly budget-to-actual comparisons and recommends necessary adjustments to make sure the budget stays "balanced" (i.e., doesn't use more of a recent large bequest than planned to cover the deficit). From early fall through January, the Commission manages the budget development process for the following year (the budget is approved at the annual congregational meeting in late January) and the Commission is responsible for the annual stewardship campaign to obtain financial pledges from members and friends.

Financial Picture 2023

Deficit for 2023 is projected to be approximately $66,000, not including a possible liability to Washington Gas as a result of Washington Gas's erroneous billing to the church from March 2020 through February 2023. The financial implications of that matter is unknown as of this writing, despite the diligent efforts since March 2023 of the church's property manager to have Washington Gas fix their metering equipment.

Pledges held at 98% in 2023, which is consistent with our historical collection rate.

First Church received a generous Endowment transfer from Bethel UCC.

Projections 2024

Deficit for 2024 is projected to be approximately $99,500.

We expect to meet our pledge goal of $290,000 for 2024 (despite some departures), with several new or returned pledgers, and pledge averages increasing.

2023 Highlights

Racial Justice Audit Goals

Finance Commission investigated the possibility of transferring our banking to Black-owned Industrial Bank, but found that it would create undue complications for daily operations by the volunteers who perform treasurer duties because there is not a network of branches that are easy to access.

Finance Commission will be proactive in moving money from other accounts (e.g., the CapitalOne savings account containing endowment fund cash) into our account at City

First Bank, the largest Black-led Minority Depository Institution in the nation, in order to maintain the maximum balance there.

Lincoln Property Company
Finance Commission met with Building Manager Byron Adams to review our relationship with LPC in order to reduce expenditures.

Budget Process 2024
In September Commissions were asked to provide their budget requests for 2024. These were compiled by the Treasurer into the 2024 asking budget, which was reviewed by Finance before being submitted to Council, and guided the 2024 pledge goal.

Stewardship

Finance Commission, with Reverend Amanda and Stewardship Chair Karen Tramontano, chose the theme "Because of You, Our Church Changes Lives". Karen did a spectacular job – she organized a calendar of emails, invited speakers for each Sunday from October 15 through November 19 (Commitment Sunday), invited members to write testimonials for the newsletter, and wrote articles for the Horn. The commitment letter, commitment form and special narrative budget enclosure were sent first-class in late October. Karen sent thank you notes, and a guide for online giving. Karen wrote up a Stewardship Campaign Guide based on her experience, which can be used in future years.

Planned Giving
Following the Pledge Campaign, in early 2024, Finance Commission will provide information (written, and a possible nurture session) to give guidance about planned giving.

Thanks to all who served on the Finance Commission in 2023.

Submitted by Mary Hayes

Investment Commission Report

Members: Ann Bushmiller, Lucille Dickinson (Treasurer), John Smeltzer, Peter Tracey (Finance), Mike Zawada; Karen Pence, advisor

The church's investments rose 15.74 percent in 2023 after declining 15.81 percent in 2022. Since the church's endowment is invested in broad-based index funds that track the overall market, the church's returns were in line with broader market changes. The portfolio's domestic stocks rose 25-30 percent, its international stocks rose 15 percent, its bond holdings rose 6 to 9 percent, and its inflation hedge rose 5 percent. As a result, at the end of 2023, the total core endowment was $5,651,155 and the separate capital reserve was $641,075. At the end of 2022, the core endowment was $5,032,032.

The endowment is intended to be a financial support for the church in perpetuity. To gauge whether this support is staying constant in inflation-adjusted dollars, we calculate an inflation-adjusted benchmark. That benchmark is the funding from the 2012 site redevelopment that established the endowment, adjusted for subsequent inflation. At the end of 2023, the benchmark was $5,010,781, approximately $600,000 lower than the core endowment value. The comparison indicates that after paying out approximately 3 percent of the principal each year to support the church budget, the endowment in 2023 has kept up with inflation over its ten years.

At times the congregation has considered tapping the endowment for special projects. To gauge whether there are extra funds in the endowment that could be used for these projects without threatening the endowment's principal purpose of supporting the church, we also compute a second benchmark that is the inflation-adjusted benchmark plus a 10 percent cushion. The rationale for this cushion is that in normal times, when stocks and bonds act as effective hedges for each other, the endowment should rarely fall more than 10 percent. The inflation benchmark plus 10% cushion was $5,511,860 at the end of 2023, about $100,000 below the core endowment value. The Investment Commission is relieved to have the endowment at this more-comfortable level and also notes that there are no guarantees that the endowment will not fall in the future.

The Investment Commission typically rebalances the portfolio when it sells assets to fund the annual contribution to the church's budget. In 2022, the Commission decided not to sell assets so that the church would not lock in losses if the endowment's decline turned out to be temporary; the transfer to the general fund in 2022 was able to be accomplished with cash. In 2023, the Commission moved $125,000 from the Total US Stock index fund, $25,000 from the US Social Index Fund, and $25,000 from Total International Stock index fund. This total $175,000 transfer to cash accounts kept the portfolio in line with our targets and provided sufficient cash to make the 2023 net transfer.

In the first quarter of 2024, the Commission will need to sell assets to fund the contribution and will rebalance the portfolio at that time. As part of its rebalancing process, the Commission plans to consider whether a modest increase in the stock-allocation target might lead to higher long-term returns without jeopardizing the ability of the endowment to provide stable permanent income on an ongoing basis for the church.

The Investment Policy approved in May 2012 is included at the end of this report.

TABLE 1

PORTFOLIO ALLOCATION	Target		Actual 12/31/2023	
Cash	5.0%		1.1%	
Bonds	35.0%		33.5%	
Stocks	55.0%		60.2%	
Total Domestic		*37.0%*		*41.9%*
Domestic, Broad		*33.3%*		*37.3%*
Domestic, Socially Responsible		*3.7%*		*4.6%*
International		*18.0%*		*18.3%*
Inflation Hedge	*5.0%*		*5.2%*	
Total	100.0%		100.0%	

TABLE 2 SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE BALANCE SHEET

VANGUARD	Balance 12/31/2023	Rate of Return, 2023
Total U.S. Stock Market Index	$ 2,348,967	25.0%
Total International Stock Index	$ 1,150,606	15.3%
Total Bond Market Index	$ 1,231,088	5.7%
Total International Bond Index	$ 584,904	8.8%
Intermediate-Term Investment-Grade Securities	$ 293,337	8.6%
Short-Term Inflation-Protected Securities	$ 323,328	4.6%
Social Index Fund (domestic stocks)	$ 289,897	29.7%
CASH		
Capital One 360 Acct	$ 69,714	0.5%
Truist	$ 390	0%
TOTAL		
Overall Investments	$ 6,292,230	15.74%
Core Endowment	$ 5,651,155	
Capital Reserve	$ 641,075	
Benchmarks for Core Endowment		
Target balance: growing at inflation	$ 5,010,781	
Target balance with cushion: inflation + 10%	$ 5,511,860	

Investment Policy Statement Ratified by Congregation on May 6, 2012

The following Investment Policy Statement is drafted to conform to the FCUCC bylaws in effect at the time of its drafting.

Objectives: The primary goals of the FCUCC Investment Commission will be 1) to preserve the capital of the Endowment Fund, 2) to provide a significant income contribution to each year's annual budget, 3) to protect the endowment from inflation, and 4) to grow the size of the endowment. Where consistent with the goals stated above, the Investment Commission will seek to integrate concern for the Church's mission and socially responsible investing into its management of the endowment investments.

The Investment Commission will seek to earn at least 3% net total return after subtracting inflation each calendar year based on the total value of the Endowment Fund as of December 31st of the preceding year. By "net total return" the Investment Commission means both the income earned from the Endowment Fund's investments plus all capital gains (minus all capital loses and investment costs), which have accrued during the year.

Investment Guidelines: To achieve its objectives, the Investment Commission may invest the Church's endowment funds in stocks, bonds, mutual funds, CDs, Real Estate Investment Trusts, and traditional bank accounts. It will not invest the Endowment Fund directly in real estate or other real property. As a means for limiting risk, the Investment Commission will not make investments through short sales or sales on the margin. Up to 40% of the Church's endowment may be invested in foreign (non-U.S.) financial instruments.

The primary vehicle for protecting the Church's endowment will be diversification of assets. To implement this policy there is expected to be diversification across asset types, diversification within asset types, diversification across sectors of the economy, and diversification across national economies.

No more than 10% of the endowment will be invested in any one particular financial instrument at any time. This limit does not apply to broadly diversified mutual funds.

The Investment Commission will make its investment decisions with a moderate tolerance for risk. Each year the Investment Commission will distribute to the congregation for its approval at the annual meeting in January a statement of the Investment Commission's strategy for the coming year. This Investment Principles statement will include a review of the composition and results of the endowment investments during the preceding year, the recommended asset allocation for the coming year with explanation, and a description of any major strategic moves that the Investment Commission anticipates making in the coming year. In 2012 this Investment Principles statement will be distributed prior to the May 6, 2012, congregational meeting; subject to congregational approval on May 6, 2012, these Investment Principles will cover the period from May 7, 2012, through the January 2013 annual congregational meeting. The Investment Principles document for 2012 is attached to this Investment Policy Statement as Appendix A.

Annual Transfer of Money from the Endowment Fund to the General Fund for Operations: The Investment Commission will provide annually for the transfer of a portion of the Endowment Fund to the General Fund of the Church. The Investment Commission will use a Total Return process for determining how much, each year, may be so transferred.

Beginning in 2015, each January the Investment Commission will calculate the average (arithmetic mean) value of the endowment at the end of each of the previous 12 quarters. In 2013 the average will be calculated on the previous four quarters, and in 2014 the average will be calculated on the previous eight quarters. The Investment Commission will then recommend to the Finance Commission, by January 6th, an amount up to 4% of the average endowment value, as calculated above, which may be used in the Church's budget during the coming year. At any time, the Investment Commission may recommend that less than 4% of the average endowment value be used in a given year's budget. If the Finance Commission and the Investment Commission disagree about the amount of endowment money to be used in the coming year's budget, the Church Council will have the final decision.

Any decision to transfer more than 4% of the average value of the endowment, as calculated over the preceding twelve quarters (four quarters in 2013 and eight quarters in 2014), in any one year for whatever reason must be approved by at least three members of the Investment Commission voting at a meeting of that Commission, and a majority of the Church Council voting at a meeting of that body, and a majority of the congregation voting at a properly called congregational meeting.

One-quarter of the amount to be transferred from the Endowment Fund to the General Fund of the Church in any given year will be shifted between the two funds each quarter of the year. Purchases and sales of Endowment Fund assets must always be timed to ensure that sufficient money will be available for the next quarterly transfer from the Endowment Fund to the General Fund of the Church.

All endowment monies beyond those transferred from the Endowment Fund to the General Fund each year shall remain in the Endowment Fund to protect against the effects of inflation and to grow the size of the endowment.

Capital Reserve Fund

The Declaration of Reciprocal Easements, Covenants, and Restrictions, which governs the relationship between the Office Owner and the Church, requires that the Church must provide for reasonable capital reserves the amount of which is to be established by the Office Owner on or before October 1 of each year for the ensuing year. Beginning in 2012 and continuing for the length of the plan, an amount that meets the requirements of this capital plan will be included in the Church's annual operating budget. (An estimate of a 50-year plan is attached to this document as Appendix B.)

These capital reserves will be managed and invested by the Investment Commission along with the monies in the Endowment Fund. However, the Capital Reserve Fund will be treated for bookkeeping purposes as a distinct, restricted fund (the Capital Reserve Fund). The monies in the Capital Reserve Fund will not be included in the annual calculation of the amount to be withdrawn from the Endowment Fund for use in the Church's General Fund. One-quarter of the money which is budgeted each year to go into the Capital Reserve Fund from the General Fund will be transferred during each quarter of the calendar year.

Withdrawals from this Capital Reserve Fund shall be made only for major capital maintenance or replacement as contemplated by the plan. This money cannot be used to pay regular annual maintenance expenses which normally are included in the annual Operating Budget. Withdrawal of any amount of money from the Capital Reserve Fund must be approved by a

majority of the members of the Facilities Commission, three or more members of the Investment Commission and a majority of the members of the Church Council.

Operating Procedures: The Investment Commission shall review all of the Church's endowment and capital fund investments at least once each month, shall meet as a Commission at least once every three months, shall report on the status of the Church's investments to the Church Council at least once every three months, and shall report to the congregation at each of the regularly scheduled congregational meetings (January, May, and October).

All investment decisions of the Investment Commission must be approved by three or more of the Commission's five members. The Investment Commission will keep a detailed written record of all of its investment decisions.

Each year the Investment Commission will report to the congregation on the specific steps it has taken to ensure that there is appropriate Commission handling of endowment cash (including appropriate redundancy) and adequate monitoring of the endowment investments. This report for 2012 appears as Appendix C to this document.

The Investment Commission may, if approved by at least three or more of its members, hire a professional financial consultant or financial manager to manage the Endowment Fund. To prevent any possibility of conflict of interest, this hired professional manager must not be a member of the Church or be related directly to any member of the Church. Furthermore, any business relationships between this professional and a member of the congregation must be disclosed to the Church Council. If an external, professional manager is used by the Investment Commission, that manager must adhere to all provisions of this Investment Policy Statement, to the annual Investment Strategy Statement for each year, and to any other conditions specified by the Investment Commission. The costs of such a professional manager must be accounted for in the calculation of the average value of the endowment each year.

Appendix A

Investment Principles

The Investment Commission shall seek to maximize investment returns, consistent with a moderate tolerance for risk, by following these broad principles. These principles are intended to guide the Commission in making its investment decisions and are not intended to be hard-and-fast rules.

The Commission shall maximize returns by:

1. Sticking to a long-term asset allocation strategy and not attempting to time the market
2. Favoring investments in broadly diversified, low-cost mutual funds
3. Rebalancing its portfolio annually in line with its asset allocation objectives
4. Minimizing transaction costs and fees
5. Taking advantage of its tax-advantaged status by favoring fully taxable investments (but not at the expense of diversification)
6. To reflect the Church's moderate tolerance for risk and its preference for fully taxable investments, maintaining a small overweight of short- and intermediate-bonds (within the bond category) and dividend-producing stocks (within stocks).

The Commission shall minimize risk by:

7. Investing primarily in diversified mutual funds rather than individual stocks, bonds, or other securities
8. Investing in a broad array of asset classes whose returns have historically been somewhat uncorrelated with each other
9. Emphasizing simple and transparent investments, and as such avoiding the use of hedge funds, synthetic investments, and derivatives
10. Depositing funds in any depository institution only up to the FDIC-insured maximum
11. Ensuring that Commission members are familiar with the salient characteristics of all Endowment Fund investments and how each fits into the overall investment strategy.

Asset allocation: The Commission will invest its assets in four broad areas:

1. Cash: checking, saving, and money market accounts; certificates of deposits
2. Bonds: Treasury, agency, corporate, and municipal; asset- and mortgage-backed securities; investment-grade and high-yield; domestic and foreign
3. Stocks: large, medium, and small-cap; domestic, international, and emerging market
4. Inflation hedge: commodities, real estate, and inflation-protected securities

Current targets, as percent of total investments

	Target	Range
Cash	5%	0-10%
Bonds	35%	30-40%
Investment grade	30%	25-35%
High-yield	5%	0-10%
Stocks	55%	50-60%
Domestic	35%	30-40%
International	15%	10-20%
Emerging	5%	0-10%
Inflation hedge	5%	0-10%

Submitted by Lucille Dickinson

Outreach & Membership Commission Report

Members: Nan McConnell (chair), Grace Bassler, Kim Darling, Moira Jones, Nick McConnell, and Fredda Sparks

A big thanks to the Outreach and Membership Committee this year. We can report that we had a busy year. A special thanks to Fredda, who served as Council liaison and our Secretary, and to Grace and Moira, who are rotating off after two years of dedicated service.

When Outreach and Membership Commission met for the first time, we agreed on three priorities: 1) Keeping the usher schedule full. Ushers are the first contact with First Church and provide an essential role welcoming and engaging visitors. 2) Brainstorming on membership development. We need to have more people come through the door and then learn how they want to be a part of our community. 3) Continuing implementation of O and M's commitment to racial justice.

Priority 1: Ushering
Kim took responsibility for the usher schedule. We have made great progress this year in recruiting and training new ushers to ensure people feel welcome.

Priority 2: Membership Development

a. Conducted a review of website: Nick took responsibility to review messaging on the website as it relates to O and M.

b. Held a discussion with Rev. Amanda on developing membership. Some of the suggestions and comments from that session:
- People come because they are invited.
- Think about what we love about church and share with those who might want to join us.
- When people Google us they need more than a rainbow symbol to emphasize that we are gay friendly.
- How we follow up is the most important element.

c. Developed protocols for follow up with blue cards. Ushers send photos of blue cards to Nick. Nick reaches out immediately to anyone interested in more information. The cards are left in the office and Office Manager also sends Nick scans of the cards on Tuesday. This is necessary because sometimes the photos were not clear. After three visits, Rev. Amanda follows up.

d. Publicity. Moira took lead on ideas for a banner, which is now in window on 10 th and G Street. Commission also developed magnets and a list of "engagement" opportunities to be at the usher table.

e. Held two Inquirers Gatherings April 23 and Sept 24 -both were well-attended and went well. One is scheduled for January by Zoom.

f. Organized Nurture on Becoming an Invitational Church. The Commission sponsored a nurture April 30. Rev. Amanda and Kim co-led. As a welcoming congregation seeking to grow, inviting friends and family through the doors of our church is vital to our ministry of outreach. How can we help make this happen? Questions to be addressed: When have you experienced the grace of true hospitality and extravagant welcome? What inspired you to claim First Church as your spiritual home? How will we challenge ourselves and one another to be active in our growth? How will those who walk through the doors of the church invite us to change as part of the transforming body of Christ? In reviewing this session, we agreed it was successful beyond expectations in both number attending and richness of discussion. As follow up, Nan wrote up the list of elevator speech suggestions for the Horn.

g. Calls to members who haven't been in church for a while. The Commission divided up a list provided by Rev. Amanda and reached out – once for Homecoming and one for Advent/Christmas. Turnout has increased, and missing members are starting to return.

h. Potlucks and Coffee Hour. The Commission discussed the importance of both these activities and was willing to share the responsibility for a potluck so we can continue to have them regularly.

Priority 3: Racial Justice.
Per the annual report 2022, O&M focused on the following opportunities for improvement: to be more intentional about our welcome to all persons who walk through our doors; to give abundant and quick attention to follow-up with visitors, especially letting them know we look forward to getting to know them more and that we are available to respond to any questions they have about our community; and offer a discussion to increase awareness among congregation members about how to be more actively welcoming. In addition, Kim, Moira, and Fredda attended the Antiracism training session March 11, 2023:

The Commission is encouraged that our efforts this year – increased attention to ushering, developing protocols for timely follow up and the many membership development activities listed above – are helping to build an anti-racist congregation.

Submitted by Nan McConnell

Social Action and Awareness Commission Report

Members: Kaeley McEvoy (chair), Diane Brenneman, Hannah Long-Higgins, Joe Mills, LaTayna Purnell

This year SAAC contributed to the life of the church by hosting the second Sunday special offerings to different organizations:

January – Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
February – Thrive DC & Seabury's Aging in Place
March – One Great Hour of Sharing (special offering of the UCC)
April – Interfaith Power & Light (DC)
May – Sasha Bruce Youthwork
June – SMYAL (Supporting & Mentoring Youth Advocates & Leaders) DC
July – Strengthen the Church (UCC special offering)
August – Shaw Community Center
September – Tommy's Pantry
October – National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition
November – Neighbors in Need (UCC special offering)
December – Christmas Fund (UCC special offering)
Christmas Eve – Olaiya's Cradle

Our regular meeting schedule took a hiatus for the majority of the year due to scheduling difficulties and personal capacity at a low. At this unique time in congregational life, it may be worth assessing the structures through which social justice work finds ways to thrive in our community. However, the Sanctuary Committee, Antiracism Committee, and Drop-In Center contributed to the life of the church greatly this year under the umbrella of SAAC and their reports can be read below. We also celebrate the work of the Potomac Association on affordable housing, co-led by Michael Hopkins, who placed a powerful letter to the editor in the Washington Post on April 7th, arguing for the transition of vacant office space to affordable housing.

Submitted by Rev. Kaeley McEvoy

Antiracism Committee Report

Antiracism Committee Members: Rev. Sydney Avent, Diane Brenneman, Kim Darling, Lucille Dickinson, Lynaya Morris, Jessica Prentice, LaTayna Purnell, Janneke Ratcliffe, Gail Sonnemann, Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, and Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss (convener)

The First Church Antiracism Committee functions as a supportive group for those committed to the journey of antiracism, a creative ground to cultivate the practice of antiracism within the congregation, and a source of grounding and accountability throughout the ministries of First Church as the majority of members also serve in other leadership positions. At the

start of the year we planned for Lenten Learning Circles; small groups committed to discussion based on books, podcasts, or workbooks related to antiracism. This year's circles included: *I Bring the Voices of My People: A Womanist Vision for Racial Reconciliation* by Chenequa Walker-Barnes (co-convened by Rev. Sydney Avent and Kim Darling); *Do the Work: An Antiracist Activity Book* by W. Kamau Bell and Kate Schatz (co-convened by Rev. Jason Carson Wilson and Janneke Ratcliffe); Memory Wars podcast (one circle convened by Lucille Dickinson and Diane Brenneman, the other by Lynaya Morris and Gail Sonnemann); *Reading the Bible from the Margins* by Miguel de la Torre (Rev. Amanda as convener). Thirty-five people participated in our Lenten Learning Circles.

In the spring we lived into one of the primary goals of First Church's Antiracism Audit process by working with the Rev. LaShauna Austria and Minister Min Jae Kim of Seeds of Change to ensure our leadership became trained in antiracism. Beginning in 2022 with pre-work, culminating in an in-person (and online) training followed by a debrief and introduction to "The Circle Way," nearly forty members of our congregation experienced Rev. Austria's training, asking questions like: Where is white supremacy showing up at First Church? What is the real cost of white supremacy? In the fall, two Communities of Practice convened to meet regularly as support groups for the ongoing work of antiracism in our lives and in the church. Rev. LaShanua helped lead worship in November and concluded her time with us through a nurture discussion.

Over the summer we participated in the United Church of Christ's *How to Be an Antiracist* (by Ibram X. Kendi) all-church read by convening a book group with our sibling church, Peoples Congregational UCC, co-facilitated by Dr. Vivian Jackson and Rev. Amanda. Twenty-one participants committed to this group over the process of four months. Rev. Amanda and Dr. Jackson were thrilled to experience Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's conversation with Rev. Traci Blackmon and the Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson in person at the UCC's General Synod. At General Synod, Rev. Amanda and Rev. Jason Carson Wilson voted to support several antiracist resolutions at the national level of the United Church of Christ, including a resolution to investigate and make amends for our denomination's historical complicity in Native American boarding schools; a resolution urging congregations to confront white supremacy utilizing a curriculum resource that Rev. Amanda helped to develop; and a resolution supporting reparations, to name a few. Later in the summer a delegation from First Church participated in the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington, and Rev. Jason Carson Wilson organized a forum hosted at First Church focused on LGBTQ+ leadership in the Civil Rights movement.

In the fall, Rev. Amanda took part in a cohort field testing a new curriculum focused on reparations produced by the award-winning Rev. Rebecca Voelkel entitled Sacred Reckonings. Janneke, Lynaya, and Lucille took part in a weekend virtual workshop to learn more about the resource. This experience led Rev. Amanda and Lucille to invite Bethel UCC, in a conversation with their consulting pastor, the Rev. Chris Mereschuk, to consider giving reparatory gifts to historically Black congregations in the Central Atlantic Conference as Bethel closed their doors. Bethel UCC made historic reparatory gifts, thanks to the leadership of Kristen Wheeler, President of Bethel's Legacy Committee, who now worships at First Church.

The wall of names of enslaved people who worked the land where First Church now rests.

At the start of the new year, First Church contracted with Howard University PhD student Antonio Austin, under the supervision of Dr. Renee K. Harrison, to research the history of enslaved laborers who worked the land on which our church now rests. In his report, "Slavery on G Street," Mr. Austin revealed, for the first time, their names. The First Church Council voted to commission local artist Jessica Valoris to create a permanent artwork installation to memorialize these enslaved people. A special task force including Thaddaeus Elliott, Meg Maguire, Dwan Reece, and Fredda Sparks is working with Jessica to bring this vision to life. On All Saints Sunday, Dr. Renee Harrison served as our guest preacher and ritualist as we spoke the names of the enslaved laborers who worked this land aloud for the first time in worship. The service also included stations of lament and healing. Hannah Long-Higgins is editing a short film to share the depth of spirit experienced by all on that day.

Thank you to the tremendous team that is the Antiracism Committee, to Council, and to the Memorial Artwork Task Force for stewarding all of this incredible work in 2023; a history-making year at First Church.

Submitted by Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

Drop-In Center Report

2023 was a revitalizing year for the Drop-In Center under Jarred Bowman's leadership as our Drop-In Center Coordinator. We shifted toward serving people of all ages, while keeping a youth-focus at the core, and to meet growing demand as DC's housing crisis continues. We now regularly serve 80 to 100 clients each Tuesday and have the system running smoothly. Other positive markers include adding 5 new volunteers - much needed as attrition and COVID-19 thinned our ranks. Table Church volunteers have made a strong, essential commitment to our joint mission as well. We continue to offer services such as yoga, screenings, H3 project and Five Medicine. Movies in the living room are back! Other highlights include warm clothing drives, annual Thanksgiving feast, and sharing of Christmas cookies.

All credit goes to Jarred Bowman with strong support from Amanda as they negotiated some challenges this year including a staff transition from Sasha Bruce that resulted in a staffing shortage. Stand Up for Kids discerned they can no longer send volunteers to serve at the Drop-In Center due to the inclusion of older adults as guests. Throughout, Jarred has modeled respect toward all clients, volunteers and partners. The mission is going strong and will continue to flourish with support from First Church.

Submitted by Janneke Ratcliffe

Sanctuary Committee Report

Sanctuary Group is an offshoot of Social Action and Awareness Commission. Members include James Moore (chair), Cynthia Hobbs, Susan Saudek, and Peter Tracey.

2023 Highlights include seeing Susan Saudek receive the Seabury Celebration of Service Award on May 3, 2023 at Washington Cathedral. Susan has done so much for the Immigrant community; it was fitting that she be recognized by the UCC and Episcopalian communities.

On June 4, 2023, after church, we hosted a brunch at Immigrant Food on 13th Street as a public relations gesture to hopefully recruit new members and explain our mission and vision.

During Adventtide 2023, led by Susan Saudek we had a successful Palestinian olive oil sale and raised about $1,700 for peace and social justice initiatives in Palestine. Moving forward, we feel that this is a project that Social Action and Awareness should handle.

We looked at the possibility of partnering with a non-profit to sponsor another immigrant family but realized that with our team of four we could not realistically sustain this. We continue to look for opportunities to serve our immigrant and refugee neighbors.

Susan Saudek served as our ambassador to CAN (Congregation Action Network), CAIR (Capitol Area Immigrant Rights) and other organizations joining in their advocacy and service projects, such as sorting clothes at John Wesley AME Zion Church.

To be more effective we need more people, like you, to join us. We usually meet the first Monday of the month, with a summer hiatus. Please let me know if you have any questions and/or would like to join us.

Submitted by James "Jamey" Moore

Worship Commission Report

Members: Peter Byrne (chair), Ellen Bushmiller, Rev. Jason Carson-Wilson, and Alisa Tanaka-Dodge. Staff: Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss, Leela Koilipilai, and Rev. Sam McFerran.

This was the first year of fully in-person worship since Rev. Amanda's arrival at the beginning of the pandemic. The Commission sought to provide engaging worship in order to encourage people to attend in person. Some changes necessitated by the pandemic remain; for example, the Church exclusively uses individual cups of juice for Communion (which raises an environmental concern we are considering). In addition, the pre-Offertory announcement on how to donate on-line permanently replaced physical offering plate-passing.

The Church also continued offering remote access to worship services via Zoom and posting the Zoom recordings on First Church's YouTube channel, and intends to continue these practices indefinitely. To maintain Zoom worship, many members had to serve as zoom moderators; sincere thanks are due to all of them, but especially to Alyx Cheng, who supported many services and instructed other moderators. A persistent problem has been the auditory quality of music on Zoom.

A core activity for Commission members was setting up the sanctuary for Sunday worship, including dressing the table and other furniture with cloths, providing flowers or greens, and lighting candles. The small number of Commission members made it challenging to cover every worship service throughout the year. The Commission appreciates the help from Chris Byrne (the banner master), Rev. Laura Simmons, and Nick McConnell, all of whom set up when Commission members were not available. A larger Worship Commission for 2024 is desirable.

The return to regular in person worship facilitated impressive growth in service music. Music was strong this year and provides a foundation for moving forward. Leela led an enhanced choir, which accomplished remarkable heights, culminating in the Advent cantata service featuring Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. Leela also contributed fine organ and piano accompaniment and solos. Music was also enhanced by an excellent selection of guest musicians. We hosted the Duke Chorale on Palm Sunday, thanks to Leela. Special thanks should be given to the Gabrielli Brass Quintet, which performed often, and to our long-time substitute musician and choir leader, Dennis Turner.

Photo Credit: Matthew LaGamma

Rev. Amanda organized themes for different church seasons with input from Commission members. These included:

- Lent: Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith.
- Summer: A New Thing.
- Fall: Renewing the Journey.

- Stewardship: Because of You, Our Church Changes Lives.
- Advent: How Does a Weary World Rejoice?

Her preaching was a constant highlight of worship services, and she was meticulous in organizing the elements.

Rev. Sam also contributed to worship with Children's Moments that engaged people of all ages, as well as leading prayers and delivering sermons. The children's musical service in November and the Pageant were highlights, as well as the youth-led service after they returned from their service trip. The Church hosted a large group of youth from the Minnesota and Northern Plains conferences over the summer.

Dr. Renee Harrison preaches at First Church
Photo credit: Joseph Darling-LaGamma

Worship Commission continued to seek to implement the Church's Anti-Racism commitment. Worship leaders and guest preachers consistently included members of Asian, Latinx and African descent. We focused on Black History month throughout February, with Pauli Murray being an ancestor/saint voice to which we attended throughout the month. An important capstone was the All Saints service, where the Church welcomed a sermon by Dr. Renee Harrison of the Howard University Divinity School and recognized the enslaved persons who labored for the previous owners of our site. The memorable music from that service included guest musician, David Griffiths, and the choir singing, "Goin' Home." Our Anti-Racism trainer, Rev. LaShauna Austria, participated in worship on November 11 and then joined a community conversation afterwards. A guest poet, CeLillianne Green, read her poem "Your Evolution Will Not Be Televised," on Pentecost.

Worship is central to the life of First Church. This year saw a return to vibrant in-person worship post-COVID. Attendance grew throughout the year. We look forward to even greater energy and participation in 2024.

Submitted by Peter Byrne

Treasurer's Report

First, I want to thank the Assistant Treasurers for all their work:

> Nora Marsh handled the bi-weekly payroll and the paperwork necessary for the various benefits that the church provides staff. Nora's expertise as a Certified Public Accountant has been invaluable in making sure the church's books are up to standard.
>
> Polly Gordon handled all the non-payroll payments--on the church credit card; to contractors; reimbursements to staff and members for expenses from their own pockets; and for a wide variety of operating expenses.
>
> Karen Pence served as an advisor to the Investments Commission.

I served as an ex officio member of Finance Commission and a member of Council. I kept track of the big picture and reported to Finance and Council each month on how things are going and flagged any issues that needed attention. I kept track of all the income – offerings via cash, paper checks, Vanco, PayPal, and stock donations; rent payments from tenants; and occasional use income. I also tracked and recorded the monthly payments to Lincoln Property Co., the property manager with whom the church contracts.

Much of our work product can be seen in other sections of this annual report – the 2023 budget to actual and 2024 proposed budget and accompanying narrative, the balance sheet as of December 31, and the report of the Investment Commission. The Finance Commission and I seek broad involvement, transparency, and checks and balances in stewarding your money. Please send me your questions and I will try to de-mystify the processes and numbers, lucilledickinson@aol.com.

Thanks also to the members of the Finance Commission for their questions, comments, and advice, and to Whitney McColley for her work on the membership database. As a result, you can view online the pledges and other donations that are entered into the database. This saves expenses and volunteer hours formerly devoted to printing and mailing periodic statements to the vast majority of donors.

It bears repeating that the church is so very fortunate to have the financial resources both to weather the storm from the pandemic since early 2020 and to provide a smooth transition to a balanced budget and support Rev. Amanda in her ministry.

Submitted by Lucille Dickinson

PLEDGE STATISTICS 2020 to 2024

Table I -- Pledging Summary

	2024 As of Jan 5, 2024	2023 As of July 26, 2023	2022 As of Jan 30, 2022	2021 As of Jan 31, 2021	2020 As of Jan 17, 2020
Pledges	72	74	79	82	76
Persons Pledging	106	105	112	117	105
Total Amount	281,700	285,934	299,000	283,982	273,694
Average per pledge	3,913	3,864	3,785	3,463	3,601
Average per person	2,658	2,723	2,670	2,427	2,607

Table II -- Number of Pledges by Amount

1-599	6	4	8	12	12
600-999	7	6	7	7	9
1000-1999	15	26	19	18	15
2000-2999	11	8	10	10	7
3000-5999	17	15	21	24	22
6000 & over	16	15	14	11	11
TOTAL	72	74	79	82	76

Table III -- Changes in Amount Pledged

Pledges Continuing					
Increased	37	39	52	36	45
Unchanged	18	23	15	26	18
Decreased	7	7	4	6	3
New or returned	10	5	8	14	10
TOTAL	72	74	79	82	76

January 11, 2024

First Congregational Church
Preliminary Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2023

		Total	Endowment Fund and Capital Reserve	General Fund
1	**ASSETS**			
2	**Current Assets**			
3	**Bank Accounts**			
4	**Capital One 360**	69,713.44	69,713.44	0.00
5	**City First Bank Money Mkt**	249,224.65	0.00	249,224.65
6	**Truist Checking**	109,642.50	0.00	109,642.50
7	**Truist Holding Account for Endowment**	389.79	389.79	0.00
8	**Total Bank Accounts**	**$ 428,970.38**	**$ 70,103.23**	**$ 358,867.15**
9	**Other Current Assets**			
10	**Account Receivable**	62,366.20	0.00	62,366.20
11	**Adams Dental Insurance**	17.23	0.00	17.23
12	**Adams Vision Insurance**	-6.35	0.00	-6.35
13	**Total Account Receivable**	**$ 62,377.08**	**$ 0.00**	**$ 62,377.08**
14	**Prepaid Expenses**	14,274.96	0.00	14,274.96
15	**Reserve Held by Lincoln Properties**	19,947.38	0.00	19,947.38
16	**Total Other Current Assets**	**$ 96,599.42**	**$ 0.00**	**$ 96,599.42**
17	**Total Current Assets**	**$ 525,569.80**	**$ 70,103.23**	**$ 455,466.57**
18	**Other Assets**			
23	**Endowment Fund and Capital Reserve Fund Investments**			
24	**Vanguard FTSE Social Index Investment**			
25	**Vanguard FTSE Social Index Investment**	93,452.74	93,452.74	0.00
26	**Vanguard FTSE Social Index Investment unrealized gain or loss**	196,443.87	196,443.87	0.00
27	**Total Vanguard FTSE Social Index Investment**	**$ 289,896.61**	**$ 289,896.61**	**$ 0.00**
28	**Vanguard Intermediate Term Investment Grade Total**			
29	**Vanguard Intermediate Term Investment Grade**	345,889.25	345,889.25	0.00
30	**Vanguard Intermediate Term Investment Grade Fund unrealized gain or loss**	-52,552.41	-52,552.41	0.00
31	**Total Vanguard Intermediate Term Investment Grade Total**	**$ 293,336.84**	**$ 293,336.84**	**$ 0.00**
32	**Vanguard Short Term Inflation Protected Securities Fund Total**			
33	**Vanguard Short Term Inflation Protected Securities Fund**	335,910.46	335,910.46	0.00
34	**Vanguard Short Term Inflation Protected Securities Fund unrealized gain or loss**	-12,582.92	-12,582.92	0.00
35	**Total Vanguard Short Term Inflation Protected Securities Fund Total**	**$ 323,327.54**	**$ 323,327.54**	**$ 0.00**

January 11, 2024

First Congregational Church
Preliminary Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2023

		Total	Endowment Fund and Capital Reserve	General Fund
36	Vanguard Total Bond Fund Total			
37	Vanguard Total Bond Fund	882,850.15	882,850.15	0.00
38	Vanguard Total Bond Fund unrealized gain or loss	348,237.67	348,237.67	0.00
39	**Total Vanguard Total Bond Fund Total**	**$ 1,231,087.82**	**$ 1,231,087.82**	**$ 0.00**
40	Vanguard Total International Bond Index Total			
41	Vanguard International Bond Index	633,860.28	633,860.28	0.00
42	Vanguard Total International Bond Index unrealized gain or loss	-48,956.52	-48,956.52	0.00
43	**Total Vanguard Total International Bond Index Total**	**$ 584,903.76**	**$ 584,903.76**	**$ 0.00**
44	Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund Total			
45	Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund	970,669.04	970,669.04	0.00
46	Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund unrealized gain or loss	179,937.38	179,937.38	0.00
47	**Total Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund Total**	**$ 1,150,606.42**	**$ 1,150,606.42**	**$ 0.00**
48	Vanguard Total Stock Fund Total			
49	Vanguard Total Stock Fund	269,072.62	269,072.62	0.00
50	Vanguard Total Stock Fund unrealized gain or loss	2,079,894.54	2,079,894.54	0.00
51	**Total Vanguard Total Stock Fund Total**	**$ 2,348,967.16**	**$ 2,348,967.16**	**$ 0.00**
52	**Total Endowment Fund and Capital Reserve Fund Investments**	**$ 6,222,126.15**	**$ 6,222,126.15**	**$ 0.00**
53	**Total Other Assets**	**$ 6,222,126.15**	**$ 6,222,126.15**	**$ 0.00**
54	**TOTAL ASSETS**	**$ 6,747,695.95**	**$ 6,292,229.38**	**$ 455,466.57**
55	**LIABILITIES AND EQUITY**			
56	**Liabilities**			
57	**Current Liabilities**			
58	**Accounts Payable**			
59	**Accounts Payable (A/P)**	4,507.00	0.00	4,507.00
60	**Total Accounts Payable**	**$ 4,507.00**	**$ 0.00**	**$ 4,507.00**
61	**Other Current Liabilities**			
62	**Income Received Before Applicable Period, owed to subsequent year budget**	0.00	0.00	0.00
63	**Prepaid Occasional Use**	9,673.55	0.00	9,673.55
64	**Prepaid Pledges**	12,900.00	0.00	12,900.00
65	**Total Income Received Before Applicable Period, owed to subsequent year budget**	**$ 22,573.55**	**$ 0.00**	**$ 22,573.55**
66	**Payables**	4,551.24	0.00	4,551.24

January 11, 2024

First Congregational Church
Preliminary Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2023

		Total	Endowment Fund and Capital Reserve	General Fund
69	Total Payables	$ 4,551.24	$ 0.00	$ 4,551.24
73	Payroll Liabilities	-265.96	0.00	-265.96
74	Pension Withholding Payable	771.34	0.00	771.34
75	Total Payroll Liabilities	$ 505.38	$ 0.00	$ 505.38
76	Security Deposits received from renters, users	0.00	0.00	0.00
77	Flex space security deposit	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
78	Friday Morning Music Club	500.00	0.00	500.00
79	Table Church security deposit	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
80	Total Security Deposits received from renters, users	$ 5,000.00	$ 0.00	$ 5,000.00
81	Total Other Current Liabilities	$ 32,630.17	$ 0.00	$ 32,630.17
82	Total Current Liabilities	$ 37,137.17	$ 0.00	$ 37,137.17
83	Long-Term Liabilities			
84	Capital Reserve Fund	641,074.84	641,074.84	0.00
86	Total Long-Term Liabilities	$ 641,074.84	$ 641,074.84	$ 0.00
87	Total Liabilities	$ 678,212.01	$ 641,074.84	$ 37,137.17
88	Equity			
89	EQUITY	0.00	0.00	0.00
90	NET ASSETS			
91	Endowment Fund Net Assets			
92	Redevelopment proceeds	3,397,628.91	3,397,628.91	0.00
93	Restricted by Donor	5,214.16	5,214.16	0.00
94	Griffis Bequest	15,093.41	15,093.41	0.00
95	Joan King bequest	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00
96	Ross Trust donation 2007; one half of annual income to Mission budget	141,742.73	141,742.73	0.00
97	Total Restricted by Donor	$ 172,050.30	$ 172,050.30	$ 0.00
98	Restricted by Specific Church Action			
99	Ruth Shinn bequest and family donation	117,300.00	117,300.00	0.00
100	Allocated for 2022 commitment	0.00	0.00	0.00
101	Allocated for 2023 commitment	0.00	0.00	0.00
102	Total Ruth Shinn bequest and family donation	$ 117,300.00	$ 117,300.00	$ 0.00
103	Total Restricted by Specific Church Action	$ 117,300.00	$ 117,300.00	$ 0.00
104	Unrestricted			

January 11, 2024

First Congregational Church
Preliminary Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2023

		Total	Endowment Fund and Capital Reserve	General Fund
105	Other - Cumulative Unrestricted Endowment	1,092,867.29	1,092,867.29	0.00
106	**Total Unrestricted**	**$ 1,092,867.29**	**$ 1,092,867.29**	**$ 0.00**
107	**Total Endowment Fund Net Assets**	**$ 4,779,846.50**	**$ 4,779,846.50**	**$ 0.00**
108	**Funds Restricted by Church Action**	0.00	0.00	0.00
109	Bequests Remaining in Gen Fund	396,168.87	0.00	396,168.87
110	Special Memorial Art fund (2023)	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00
111	CAC air quality monitoring grant (2023)	500.00	0.00	500.00
112	Special Achakzai Family Fund (2022)	8,134.54	0.00	8,134.54
113	Special Communications Fund (2022)	144.00	0.00	144.00
114	**Total Funds Restricted by Church Action**	**$ 414,947.41**	**$ 0.00**	**$ 414,947.41**
115	**General Fund Net Assets**			
116	Dedicated General Fund Balances			
118	C. Memorials	0.00	0.00	0.00
119	Cummings, Claricia	1,100.00	0.00	1,100.00
120	Griffis, Anne	1,125.05	0.00	1,125.05
121	Griffis, Richard	368.00	0.00	368.00
122	Hanson, Bruce	385.00	0.00	385.00
123	Hayes, Barbara	50.00	0.00	50.00
124	King, Joan	50.00	0.00	50.00
125	Lorenz, Peg	0.00	0.00	0.00
126	Marsh, Dwight	130.00	0.00	130.00
127	Olson, Sally	100.00	0.00	100.00
128	Shinn, Ruth	0.00	0.00	0.00
129	Total C. Memorials	$ 3,308.05	$ 0.00	$ 3,308.05
130	**Total Dedicated General Fund Balances**	**$ 3,308.05**	**$ 0.00**	**$ 3,308.05**
131	Unrestricted General Fund Assets	64,047.63	0.00	64,047.63
132	**Total General Fund Net Assets**	**$ 67,355.68**	**$ 0.00**	**$ 67,355.68**
133	**Total NET ASSETS**	**$ 5,262,149.59**	**$ 4,779,846.50**	**$ 482,303.09**
136	Net Income	807,334.35	873,222.19	(65,887.84)
137	**Total Equity**	**$ 6,069,483.94**	**$ 5,653,068.69**	**$ 416,415.25**
138	**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY**	**$ 6,747,695.95**	**$ 6,294,143.53**	**$ 453,552.42**

2023 Actual Income and Expenses and 2024 Proposed Budget Narrative

The following exhibit shows the 2023 actual income and expenses and the 2024 proposed budget. In summary:

Income

Major sources of income as a percent of total expenses:

	2023 Actual	2024 Proposed
Pledges, unpledged (line 4)	37.9%	36.4%
Building use (line 28)	31.4%	30.5%
Endowment transfers (line 32)	19.6%	20.1%
Subtotal	*88.9%*	*87.0%*
Other, Second Sunday, Special Offerings	3.4%	1.6%
Deficit	7.7%	11.4%

Pledges:

- 2023 -- By mid 2023, 74 pledges had been received for $285,934. The average pledge was $3,864.
- 2024 -- By January 5, 2024, 72 pledges have been received for $281,700. The average pledge is $3,913

Building use income:

- 2023 actual exceeded the budget by $11,000. 2024 proposed is the same as 2023 actual.

Endowment transfers:

- 2024 transfer is up $9,000 over 2023, in large part due to the positive rate of return on investments in 2023. The 2023 rate of return was 15.74%, vs. 2022's negative 15.81%.

Expenses

Benevolences, Second Sunday offerings, and special offerings (lines 59-85): Nothing unusual to note. Benevolences come from the unified budget. Second Sunday and special offerings operate as pass-through donations and go in and out.

Capital (lines 87-89): Nothing unusual to note. On the balance sheet, the reserve for planned capital system replacements has $641,075 as of December 31, 2023 (in line with the level required per the 50-year Capital Reserve plan projected in 2012).

Facilities, non personnel (lines 91-114):

$168,900 – line 102 - Lincoln Property Co. (LPC) contract for paying utilities ($86,300 in 2024), performing repairs and maintenance ($50,000 in 2024), providing engineering services
$21,180 – line 109 - expenses not through LPC
$33,858 –line 111 - property insurance
$21,280 – line 112 - occasional use coverage
$1,290 - other
$246,508 total in 2024 (line 114). Represents 28.1% of total proposed expenses in 2024.

Ministerial program (lines 116-126): Nothing unusual to note. Senior Minister (and all staff) will get 3% COLA. The fact of a 27th bi-weekly payroll in 2024 bumps up 2024 costs. (Under bi-weekly payroll schemes, 27 payrolls fall within one calendar year every 10-15 years.)

Parish programs (lines 128-219):

- Staff positions (Associate Minister, Director of Music Ministry, Building Manager, Office Assistant, Sexton). All budgeted for 3% COLA and a 27th payroll.
- Office expenses (lines 158-169): $27,258 in 2024. This category has ranged from $20,000 to $24,000 in 2020-2023. Accounting system costs are up $900 in 2024 and Internet and cable up $800 in 2024.
- Commission and child care budgets: $33,390 actual 2023, $38,347 proposed 2024. (Half of this difference – or $2,400 of the total $5,000 -- comes from proposed child care expenses, which will cover more weeks than in 2023.)

Bottom Line

2024 deficit $101,506. Note that $14,248 of this is due to the 27th payroll in 2024.

Deficits since 2021 that have been (or will be) covered by the $520,000 in bequests in late 2019:

- $91,604 - 2021
- $36,053 - 2022
- $65,888 – 2023 (Note: not including any possible old liability to Washington Gas which failed to bill the church accurately from early 2020 through February 2023.)
- $101,506 - 2024 proposed
- $295,051 total

January 10, 2024 for 2023 annual report

First Congregational Church

2023 Budget vs. Actuals through Dec 2023, 2024 proposed

		2023 budget to actual			2024	
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed	
	INCOME					
	GENERAL INCOME					
	A. Pledges					
1	Pledges–Current	278,737.89	285,000.00	97.80%	290,000	
2	Pledges–Prior Year	12,916.00	13,000.00	99.35%	5,000	
3	Unpledged	30,803.11	24,000.00	128.35%	25,000	
4	**Total A. Pledges**	**$ 322,457.00**	**$ 322,000.00**	**100.14%**	**$ 320,000**	**36.4% of total expenses is supported by pledges and offerings**
5	**B. Other Income - General Fund**					
6	Investment	269.05	280.00	96.09%	280	
7	Other income - COVID credits					
8	Other income - other	1,008.27	750.00	134.44%	1,000	
9	**Total B. Other Income - General Fund**	**$ 1,277.32**	**$ 1,030.00**	**124.01%**	**$ 1,280**	
10	**C. Building use**					
11	**1. Lease agreements**					
12	a. Washington Chorus	31,890.00	31,894.00	99.99%	33,480	5% incr 2024
13	b. Pathways to Housing lease	49,336.00	49,574.00	99.52%	50,808	5% incr 2024
14	**Total 1. Lease agreements**	**$ 81,226.00**	**$ 81,468.00**	**99.70%**	**84,288**	
15	**2. Shared Use Agreements**					
16	Close up Foundation	22,650.00	20,000.00	113.25%	21,000	
17	Committee of 100 shared use agreement	10,820.10	7,800.00	138.72%	8,647	
18	Congressional Chorus	20,088.50	20,515.00	97.92%	23,161	
19	Encore Chorale Agreement	8,250.00	8,250.00	100.00%	8,663	
20	Friday Morning Music Club	3,750.00	3,150.00	119.05%	3,000	
21	Table Church	38,035.04	37,180.00	102.30%	37,538	
22	Washington Bach Consort	20,326.50	20,650.00	98.43%	22,949	
23	Washington Hebrew Congregation				-	
24	Washington Chorus (separate from lease)	13,424.30	8,000.00	167.80%	10,985	
25	**Total 2. Shared Use Agreements**	**$ 137,344.44**	**$ 125,545.00**	**109.40%**	**135,943**	
26	**3. Occasional Use**	41,445.79	45,000.00	92.10%	47,250	
27	**4. Parking space lease with LAZ**	7,154.95	4,000.00	178.87%	-	Office building terminated lease in 2022.

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2023 Budget vs. Actuals through Dec 2023, 2024 proposed

		2023 budget to actual			2024		
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed		
28	**Total C. Building use**	**$ 267,171.18**	**$ 256,013.00**	**104.36%**	**267,481**	**30.5%**	**of total expenses is supported by building income**
29	**D. Transfers from Endowment Funds**						
30	**1. Transfer from Endowment Fund - Ops**	167,300.00	167,300.00	100.00%	165,200		3% of the average endowment fund balance over last 12 qtrs. Investment Commission recommends no change in this calculation at this time. Transferring more than 3% would cause the principal to fail to keep up with inflation, which is one of primary goals of current investment policy.
31	**2. Transfer from Endowment Fund - Mission**				11,000		Half of the earnings on the James and Miriam Ross bequest. Return was 15.74% in 2023.
32	**Total D. Transfers from Endowment Funds**	**$ 167,300.00**	**$ 167,300.00**	**100.00%**	**$ 176,200**	**20.1%**	**of total expenses is supported by endowment fund transfers**
33	**F. Contributions for Flowers**	1,481.00	$ 800.00		0		Whatever is collected is spent
34	**G. Second Sunday Offerings**		12,500.00		12,500		
35	**a. JANUARY**	470.00					SURJ
36	**b. FEBRUARY**	1,190.00					ThriveDC
37	**c. MARCH**	2,235.00					UCC's OGHS
38	**d. APRIL**	1,025.00					Interfaith Power and Light
39	**e. MAY**	1,169.00					Sasha Bruce Youthwork
40	**f. JUNE**	1,325.00					SMYAL (Supporting and Mentoring Youth Advocates and Leaders)
41	**g. JULY**	200.00					UCC's Strengthen the Church
42	**h. AUGUST**	1,150.00					Shaw Community Center
43	**i. SEPTEMBER**	1,425.00					Tommy's Pantry
44	**j. OCTOBER**	1,525.00					Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition
45	**k. NOVEMBER**	1,645.00					UCC's Neighbors in Need
46	**l. DECEMBER**	1,410.00					UCC's Christmas Fund
47	**Total G. Second Sunday Offerings**	**$ 14,769.00**	**$ 12,500.00**	**118.15%**	**$ 12,500**		
48	**H. Other special offerings**	**$ 0.00**					
49	**Special Achakzai Family Fund**						Unspent funds from 2022 are on the balance sheet. $8,134 is available for spending.

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2023 Budget vs. Actuals through Dec 2023, 2024 proposed

		2023 budget to actual			2024	
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed	
50	Special funds for communication					Unspent funds from 2022 $2644 donation have been on the balance sheet. $144 still available for spending.
	Christmas Eve	$ 568.00				
51	Special funds for art/memorial	$ 10,000.00				Unspent funds from 2023 will be available on balance sheet
52	CAC air quality monitoring grant	$ 500.00				Unspent funds from 2023 will be available on balance sheet
53	Total H. Other special offerings	$ 11,068.00				
54	Total GENERAL INCOME	$ 785,523.50	$ 759,643.00	103.41%	$ 777,461	
55	Uncategorized income	0.00				
56	Total INCOME	$ 785,523.50	$ 759,643.00		$ 777,461	
57						
58	GENERAL EXPENSES					
59	A. BENEVOLENCE and SECOND SUNDAY					
60	1. Our Church's Wider Mission	30,000.00	30,000.00	100.00%	30,000	
61	2. Potomac Association	7,110.00	7,110.00	100.00%	7,500	
62	3. Wash. Interfaith Network	2,500.00	2,500.00	100.00%	2,500	
63	4. Congregation Action Network	1,000.00	1,000.00	100.00%	1,000	
64	5. Shaw Community Center					Changed to Second Sunday offering in 2023.
65	6. Second Sunday Offering					
66	a. JANUARY	470.00				
67	b. FEBRUARY	1,190.00				
68	c. MARCH	2,235.00				
69	d. APRIL	1,025.00				
70	e. MAY	1,169.00				
71	f. JUNE	1,325.00				
72	g. JULY	350.00				
73	h. AUGUST	1,150.00				
74	i. SEPTEMBER	1,425.00				
75	j. OCTOBER	1,525.00				
76	k. NOVEMBER	1,645.00				
77	l. DECEMBER	1,410.00				

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First Congregational Church
2023 Budget vs. Actuals through Dec 2023, 2024 proposed

		2023 budget to actual			2024	
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed	
78	**Total 6. Second Sunday Offering**	**$ 14,919.00**	**12,500.00**	**119.35%**	**12,500**	Expenses always match income
79	**7. Other special offerings**					
80	**Special Achakzai Family Fund**					Unspent funds from 2022 are on the balance sheet. $8134 is available for spending.
81	**Special funds for communication**					Unspent funds from 2022 are on the balance sheet. $144 is available for spending.
	Christmas Eve	$ 568.00				
82	**Special funds for art/memorial**	$ 10,000.00				Unspent funds from 2023 will be available on the balance sheet
83	**CAC air quality monitoring grant**	$ 500.00				Unspent funds from 2023 will be available on the balance sheet
84	**Total 7. Other special offerings**	**$ 11,068.00**				
85	**Total A. BENEVOLENCE and SECOND SUNDAY**	**$ 66,597.00**	**$ 53,110.00**	**125.39%**	**$ 53,500**	
86	**B. CAPITAL**					
87	**1. Major Repairs**	15,701.38	15,000.00	104.68%	15,000	
88	**2. Planned Capital Replacement Reserve**	42,500.00	42,500.00	100.00%	42,500	
89	**Total B. CAPITAL**	**$ 58,201.38**	**$ 57,500.00**	**101.22%**	**57,500**	
90	**C. FACILITIES**					
91	**1. FCC Share of Lincoln Properties Expense**					
92	**LPC Administrative Expense**	1,120.20	961.00	116.57%	1,000	
93	**LPC Utilities**					
94	**Electricity**	78,231.53	66,500.00	117.64%	75,000	
95	**Gas**	365.45	600.00	60.91%	7,600	Wash Gas continues to make errors in their billing. Late 2023 bills did not accurately reflect usage in Oct-Dec. No resolution yet on their failure to bill March 2020 - Feb 2023. See note at end.
96	**Trash Removal**	1,215.42	1,200.00	101.29%	1,200	
97	**Water and Sewer**	2,338.39	6,175.00	37.87%	2,500	
98	**Total Utilities**	82,150.79	74,475.00	110.31%	86,300	
99	**LPC Repairs & Maintenance**	54,351.80	55,096.00	98.65%	50,000	
100	**LPC Management Fee**	21,600.00	21,800.00	99.08%	21,600	
101	**LPC Payroll**	8,202.67	8,012.00	102.38%	10,000	

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2023 Budget vs. Actuals through Dec 2023, 2024 proposed

		2023 budget to actual			2024	
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed	
102	**Total 1. FCC Share of Lincoln Properties Expense**	**$ 167,425.46**	**$ 160,344.00**	**104.42%**	**168,900**	
103	**Maintenance and Supplies not via LPC**					
104	**Audio Visual/IT Support**	11,469.99	9,530.00	120.36%	9,980	
105	**Consumable Maintenance Supplies**	2,681.82	3,500.00	76.62%	3,500	
106	**Equipment Maint and Supp not covered by LPC**	433.57	2,000.00	21.68%	4,000	2024 request centralized here
107	**Instrument Maintenance**	3,065.75	4,400.00	69.68%	3,700	
108	**Other Maint and Supp not via Lincoln Properties**	3,484.59	2,500.00	139.38%	-	
109	**Total 3. Maintenance and Supplies not via LPC**	**21,135.72**	**$ 21,930.00**	**96.38%**	**$ 21,180.00**	
110	**4. Event Space Marketing**	612.50	690.00	88.77%	690	
111	**5. Property and professional liability, umbrella**	31,350.00	31,350.00	100.00%	33,858	
112	**6. Facilities Commission**	600.00	600.00	100.00%	600	
113	**7. Occasional use coverage**	19,886.00	20,000.00	99.43%	21,280	
114	**Total C. FACILITIES**	**$ 241,009.68**	**$ 234,914.00**	**102.59%**	**$ 246,508**	28.1% of total expenses are facilities, non personnel expenses
115	**D. MINISTERIAL PROGRAM**					
116	**1. Senior Minister**					
117	**a. Salary, Housing Allowance, Soc Sec offset**	99,469.04	99,686.00	99.78%	106,626	40 hours/week. 4% increase 2022, 6% in 2023, 3% in 2024 and 27th payroll.
118	**b. Health Insurance**	15,989.25	16,037.00	99.70%	16,518	
119	**c. Life Insurance & Disability**	1,488.27	1,495.00	99.55%	1,599	
120	**d. Pension**	13,890.28	13,956.00	99.53%	14,928	
121	**e. Continuing education**	949.89	1,200.00	79.16%	1,200	
122	**f. Reimbursable Expenses**	1,860.94	2,650.00	70.22%	2,650	
123	**Total 1. Senior Minister**	**$ 133,647.67**	**$ 135,024.00**	**98.98%**	**$ 143,521**	
124	**2. Guest Preachers**	2,650.00	3,500.00	75.71%	3,500	
125	**7. Pastor's Discretionary**	465.60	1,000.00	46.56%	1,000	
126	**Total D. MINISTERIAL PROGRAM**	**$ 136,763.27**	**$ 139,524.00**	**98.02%**	**$ 148,021**	
127	**E. PARISH**					
128	**Care of Parish**	2,496.84	1,500.00	166.46%	2,400	
129	**Child Care**					
130	**a. Child Care Workers**	2,421.75	4,104.00	59.01%	4,674	41 weeks, 3 hrs/wk, 2 staff, $19/hr

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		2023 budget to actual			2024	
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed	
131	b. Child Care Workers payroll tax expense	177.64	313.96	56.58%	358	
132	**Total Child Care**	**$ 2,599.39**	**$ 4,417.96**	58.84%	**$ 5,032**	
133	Christian Education					
134	Christian Education Commission	1,989.49	1,800.00	110.53%	1,800	
135	Special project (Music Ministry)	800.00			1,000	
136	Youth Service Project Expenses	2,800.65	2,200.00	127.30%	2,200	
137	Associate Minister					
138	A. Salary, Soc Sec offset	63,361.79	63,500.00	99.78%	68,191	30 hours/week. 4% increase in 2022. 6% in 2023, 3% in 2024 and 27th payroll
139	B. Health Stipend	6,060.88	6,071.00	99.83%	6,360	
140	C. Disability insurance	948.07	952.00	99.59%	1,023	
141	D. Retirement benefit	6,320.08	6,350.00	99.53%	6,819	
142	E. Professional Development		250.00	0.00%	250	
143	Total c. Associate Minister	**$ 76,690.82**	**$ 77,123.00**	**99.44%**	**$ 82,643**	
144	**Total Christian Education**	**$ 82,280.96**	**$ 81,123.00**	**101.43%**	**$ 87,643**	
145	Conf. & Mtg. Expenses	1,326.02	1,513.00	87.64%	500	
146	Contingency	467.31	1,000.00	46.73%	1,000	
147	Finance Commission					
148	Flowers	1,481.00	800.00	185.13%	-	Expenses will equal donations
149	Member Ordination Support	250.00	500.00	50.00%	600	
150	Music - Director of Music Ministry					
151	a. Salary	40,001.01	39,750.00	100.63%	42,518	18 hours/week. 6% incr 2023. 3% in 2024 and 27th payroll
152	b. Payroll Taxes	3,245.24	3,041.00	106.72%	3,253	
153	c. Health Stipend	1,737.38	1,739.00	99.91%	1,652	
154	d. Retirement benefit	1,639.83	1,450.00	113.09%	1,488	
155	e. Disability insurance	596.28	596.00	100.05%	638	
156	e. Professional Development	565.00	300.00	188.33%	500	
157	**Total Music - Director of Music Ministry**	**$ 47,784.74**	**$ 46,876.00**	**101.94%**	**$ 50,049**	
158	Office					
159	Accounting System	2,820.66	2,500.00	112.83%	3,700	
160	Bank Charges	465.32	300.00	155.11%	500	

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2023 Budget vs. Actuals through Dec 2023, 2024 proposed

		2023 budget to actual			2024	
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed	
161	Giving Fees	2,366.24	2,700.00	87.64%	2,400	
162	Internet and Cable - monthly	2,947.23	3,432.00	85.88%	3,678	
163	Licenses and Fees	80.00	180.00	44.44%	180	
164	Office equipment maintenance	7,420.53	7,500.00	98.94%	7,500	
165	Postage	73.00	200.00	36.50%	200	
166	Printing & Office Supplies	3,985.16	3,500.00	113.86%	3,700	
167	Telephone - monthly	1,865.52	1,900.00	98.19%	1,900	
168	Workers Compensation Insurance	3,296.92	2,195.00	150.20%	3,500	
169	**Total Office**	**$ 25,320.58**	**$ 24,407.00**	**103.74%**	**27,258**	
170	Office and Building Staff					
171	Building Manager					
172	A. Salary	63,139.79	63,829.00	98.92%	68,270	30 hours/week. 4% increase in 2022, 6% in 2023, 3% 2024 and 27th payroll
173	B. Payroll tax expense	4,835.90	4,883.00	99.04%	5,223	
174	C. Health insurance	10,476.00	10,476.00	100.00%	10,800	
175	D. Retirement benefit	2,223.50	2,234.00	99.53%	2,389	
176	E. Disability insurance	952.96	957.00	99.58%	1,024	
177	F. Professional Development	0.00	250.00	0.00%	250	
178	**Total Building Manager**	**$ 81,628.15**	**$ 82,629.00**	**98.79%**	**$ 87,956**	
179	Office Assistant					
180	A. Salary	21,787.50	21,787.50	100.00%	27,810	Started February 2023. 20 hours/week. $25/hour. 3% incr 2024 and 27th payroll
181	B. Payroll tax expense	1,904.80	1,667.00	114.27%	2,127	
182	C. Health Stipend	2,428.78	2,429.00	99.99%	2,580	
183	D. Retirement Expense	758.40	850.00	89.22%	973	
184	E. Disability insurance	227.57	360.00	63.21%	417	
185	F. Professional Development		250.00	0.00%	250	
186	G. Office Assistant Coverage	6,925.80	6,636.00	104.37%	1,200	
187	**Total Office Assistant**	**$ 34,032.85**	**$ 33,979.50**	**100.16%**	**$ 35,358**	
188	Sexton					
189	A. Sexton salary	35,092.08	34,863.00	100.66%	37,290	37 hours/week. 2022: $17.10/hour (pegged to $17.95 union rate with some adjustments). 6% incr 2023. 3% incr 2024 and 27th payroll

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		2023 budget to actual			2024	
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed	
190	B. Sexton payroll tax expense	3,182.97	2,667.00	119.35%	2,853	
191	C. Sexton Health Stipend	5,832.33	5,842.00	99.83%	6,720	
192	D. Sexton retirement expense	1,214.55	1,220.00	99.55%	1,305	
193	E. Sexton disability insurance	520.51	523.00	99.52%	559	
194	**Total Sexton**	**$ 45,842.44**	**$ 45,115.00**	**101.61%**	**$ 48,727**	
195	**Total Office and Building Staff**	**$ 161,503.44**	**$ 161,723.50**	**99.86%**	**$ 172,041**	
196	**Outreach and Membership Commission**					
197	Outreach and Membership	1,977.93	1,910.00	103.56%	2,030	
198	**Total Outreach and Membership Commission**	**$ 1,977.93**	**$ 1,910.00**	**103.56%**	**$ 2,030**	
	FYI only: $2,500 spent on communications contractor, with special donation in 2022	*$ 2,500.00*				
199	Pathways Sunday Support	3,191.99	2,400.00	133.00%	3,175	$25/hr X 3 hrs/Sunday = $75/Sunday X 37 Sundays. plus $400 for snacks. Three hours per Sunday started Oct 2023.
200	**Publicity**					
201	Public Visibility		0.00		0.00	
202	Website		200.00	0.00%	200	
203	**Total Publicity**		**$ 200.00**	**0.00%**	**200**	
204	**Social Action Commission**					
205	A. Social Action and Awareness	236.15	500.00	47.23%	500	
206	B. Justice & Witness/Anti Racism Group	819.58	2,250.00	36.43%	2,250	
	FYI only: AR training from Ruth Shinn funds	*3,000.00*				
	FYI only: Antonio Austin research from Ruth Shinn funds	*1,000.00*				
	FYI only: Filming of Oct 29 service from Ruth Shinn funds	*1,000.00*				
207	C. Sanctuary Task Force	-29.88	1,550.00	-1.93%	1,550	2023 actual reflects income from $3,000 UCC grant for migrant services. which was split $2500 to Congregational Action Network and $500 to FCC.
208	D. Drop in Center					
209	1. Social Action Contractor	6,360.00	6,360.00	100.00%	6,360	
210	2. Drop In Center Supplies	1,633.55	900.00	181.51%	1,500	
211	**Total D. Drop in Center**	**$ 7,993.55**	**$ 7,260.00**	**110.10%**	**$ 7,860**	

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		2023 budget to actual			2024	
		Actual 2023	Adjusted Budget	% of Budget	Proposed	
212	**Total Social Action Commission**	**$ 9,019.40**	**$ 11,560.00**	**78.02%**	**$ 12,160**	
213	**Worship Commission**					
214	**A. Music - Contract Musicians**	3,225.00	3,200.00	100.78%	3,200	
215	**C. Music - Vacation Organist**	2,700.00	2,000.00	135.00%	2,400	$300/Sunday for vacation organist, for 8 Sundays
216	**D. Music Supplies**	1,672.04	1,500.00	111.47%	1,500	
217	**E. Worship Supplies**	916.62	1,250.00	73.33%	1,250	
218	**Total Worship Commission**	**$ 8,513.66**	**$ 7,950.00**	**107.09%**	**$ 8,350**	
219	**Total E. PARISH**	**$ 348,213.26**	**$ 347,880.46**	100.10%	**$ 372,438**	
220	**Total GENERAL EXPENSES**	**$ 850,784.59**	**$ 832,928.46**	102.14%	**$ 877,967**	
221	**Uncategorized expenses**	626.75				PBUCC charge to be clarified
222	**Total EXPENSES**	**$ 851,411.34**	**$ 832,928.46**	**102.22%**	**$ 877,967**	
223	**Net Operating Income (covered with Special Funds)**	**(65,887.84)**	**(73,285.46)**		**(100,506)**	Cost of 27th payroll ($14,248) bumps up 2024 deficit. Occurs every 7 or 8 years.

Note only: Erroneous Wash Gas bills (2020-early 2023) still to be resolved. Liability could be up to $20,000. **(20,000.00)**

Statements of Faith, Vision, and Mission

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith

Adapted by Robert V. Moss

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:

God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.

Amen.

Statement on Being a Just Peace Church

First Congregational United Church of Christ affirms itself to be a Just Peace Local Church. By this affirmation, we understand that we commit ourselves both as a church and as individuals to a process by which we seek to discern and act upon the links between justice and peace. Our affirmation of the United Church of Christ as a Just Peace Church, together with the study document *A Just Peace*, have been and will continue to be useful resources in pursuing this course.

Open and Affirming Statement

Approved January 31, 2016

We, the community of First Congregational United Church of Christ, are a diverse group of people; we are persons of different ages, races, sexual orientations, and gender identities who have come from varying social, economic, political, and religious backgrounds. We celebrate our diversity even as we acknowledge and affirm our unity in the presence of God. The differences among us are to be understood in the context of a tradition of inclusiveness. The Apostle Paul declared this truth when he spoke of the Christian response to significant categorizations of society in his time:

There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free person, male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. – Galatians 3:28

We come to this church community with all the complexities of our individual situations. Among the goals of our ministry to each other is the desire to heal the brokenness we experience in ourselves and our relationships with each other and with God. Our congregation's history shows our desire to heal such brokenness; the church's decisions to be a racially integrated community (1865), to stay in the inner city (1956), and to enter into covenant with the Metropolitan Community Church (1973) exemplify our desire to be open and inclusive.

We realize our intentions to be inclusive cannot be fulfilled by pointing to our history. Rather, we must act, and continue to act, if healing is to occur.

Within this context, recognizing that sexual orientation and gender identity can be barriers in our society but should not be a part of the brokenness among us, we therefore confirm our church as an Open and Affirming church with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity.

With faith in and the help of God, we lift up the following as evidence of our openness and affirmation:

- We are open to all sexual orientations and gender identities in our church's celebrations and sacraments.
- We encourage involvement by persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the ministry and teaching of the church.
- We are open to all sexual orientations and gender identities in our employment.
- We support education for all ages about sexual orientation and gender identity as part of the broad spectrum of human sexuality.
- We commit ourselves as advocates for persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities so that our openness may be affirmed externally as well as internally.

Multiracial and Multicultural Vision

Reviewed and affirmed at the Fall Planning Evening, October 14, 2014

We, the community of First Congregational United Church of Christ, have long been committed to social justice, and to racial and cultural diversity. We celebrate the diversity of our membership, of the many who use the hospitality of our building, and of our city.

We were founded in 1865 at the conclusion of the Civil War by abolitionists committed to racial equality. The founding of Howard University in 1867 was a major early achievement of our church. A dispute over welcoming African-Americans at the same communion table divided the new church, culminating in 1869 when the segregationists, led by the pastor, withdrew. Howard University purchased the note on the new building, saving us for this day.

Our denomination, the United Church of Christ, was formed in 1957 from four distinct denominations, inspired by the prayer of Jesus Christ that they may all be one. The new denomination was dedicated to being a united and uniting church. This tradition of inclusion is a prophetic call to our ministry.

In 1973 and again in 1986, we responded to the exclusion of gays and lesbians from full participation in many churches. In 1973 we entered into a covenant with the Metropolitan Community Church of Washington to share space and ministry. In 1986 we declared ourselves an Open and Affirming church.

We declared ourselves a Just Peace church in 1985, dedicating ourselves to work for a peace based upon social justice. We strive to be an accessible church for people with disabilities, overcoming both physical and attitudinal barriers.

In 1993 the 19th General Synod of the United Church of Christ in St. Louis, Missouri, adopted *A Pronouncement and Proposal for Action on Becoming a Multiracial and Multicultural Church*, calling on us to be racially and culturally inclusive throughout the life of the church. We are responding to that call.

Despite varied and recurrent efforts, racism and cultural biases have not been extinguished from our midst. When we read the Apostle Paul declaring that there is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus, we recognize the call to claim an identity which is deeper than race and culture, one which affirms our unity and calls us to be a beloved community, a community where each and every one is the beloved of God.

We therefore declare ourselves a Multiracial and Multicultural church. In a Multiracial and Multicultural church, all have a place at the table of Christ within the household of God: one body, one family, no insiders, no outsiders, each person's gifts recognized and affirmed. Further, we pledge that the fruit of the Multiracial and Multicultural church will be manifest in our staffing, our music and worship, our programs, our relationships, and our outreach.

By affirming ourselves as a Multiracial and Multicultural church, we are expanding our response to God's call to be the beloved community. Our purpose is not simply to welcome the stranger, but to know ourselves as one with the stranger; not simply to make our community more diverse, but to become one with the whole community of God. By claiming our identity as a Multiracial and Multicultural church, we commit ourselves to a path of discernment and action which will lead us toward the fulfillment of Christ's prayer that we may all be one. We acknowledge that our essential identity is grounded in that oneness. We commit ourselves to proclaiming this message beyond our walls and to supporting others who likewise seek to be the beloved community.

Statement on Becoming an Anti-Racist Church

Adopted May 23, 2021

Introduction

Our nation was founded on a contradiction. Our founders sought and proclaimed personal and religious liberty, but pursued their claims through actions rooted in the original sins of colonialism and slavery. Believing themselves superior to the darker- skinned peoples of other continents, our European ancestors took the lands of the Americas from their indigenous occupants and enslaved the peoples of Africa to aid in this conquest. Slowly over the past two centuries — through abolition, recognition of Native American rights, and the civil rights movement — our country has made strides to undo that founding contradiction and to extend the principles of liberty to all. But recent social and political events remind us that the legacy of white supremacy and racism remains entrenched in the economic and social fabric of our nation and in our governing institutions.

Our Church shares in this legacy. We were founded in 1865 by abolitionists, who also helped to create Howard University. Our Church was one of the first racially integrated churches in the District. But our building also stands on the ancestral lands of the Anacostan/Nacotchtank peoples of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, "the people where the rivers blend." And the same land was used as a plantation worked by enslaved people. Some of the abolitionists who founded our church opposed an integrated communion table, resulting in a major split within the congregation four years after its founding. In the century and a half that followed, our attention to the presence of racism both in our church and wider community has been uneven. We are alerted by current events of the need to be more steadfast and proactive in our response to the enduring injustice of systemic racism.

Scripture teaches that all humans are created in God's image, worthy of freedom and well-being. We are followers of Jesus, who fiercely defended the oppressed. The Rev. Dr. James Hal Cone, the father of Black liberation theology, revealed to us that Jesus was, of course, the Son of the God of the Oppressed. Our history and our faith call us to renew and strengthen our commitment to eliminate racism. We acknowledge our failings both personal and collective, and rely on the promise of forgiveness, so that we are not bound by our failures but set free to act justly. In the words of our Covenant, we seek to bind ourselves, in God's Redeeming Presence, to walk together in ways revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in sacrament and Word, study and prayer, fellowship and mission.

Commitment

1. Acknowledging that systemic racism and subconscious bias burdens every part of our lives, the members of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Washington, DC (First Church) hereby declare that we are committed to identifying the presence of such racism in ourselves, in our congregation, and in the wider world, and to uprooting it with our whole hearts and minds.

2. We desire as a church to live out our faith through witness and action, to affirm the humanity of and advocate with those who are systematically oppressed in social, economic, and political ways due to their racial identity. We acknowledge that to live into this commitment, we must first listen and hear oppressed people when they speak up—including when they directly challenge white privilege—before we respond. This is fundamental to being anti-racist.

3. We desire as a church to be an anti-racist congregation that confronts racial injustice. We acknowledge the reality of white privilege and the benefits that many of us have received from that privilege. We strive to turn that privilege against itself, to use the resources and opportunities that many of us have acquired through such privilege to combat systemic behaviors and institutional practices that perpetuate racial injustice and oppression. This includes confronting how Christianity itself was manipulated to perpetuate white supremacy and how our congregation benefited from white privilege.

4. We are a church family bound together by our Covenant, not by any creed or any political dogma. We are all God's children. Like all children, each one is unique. We might not all call God the same name, and we bring a variety of opinions and perspectives to the table. So, we must work toward ways to respond to systemic oppression and racial injustice that carefully consider and reflect a myriad of opinions. We will center the voices of those enduring systemic oppression/racism and racial injustice.

5. As we discern ways to be anti-racist and policies to combat systemic racism, we acknowledge the need to proceed with a thoughtful urgency. Deliberations that merely delay necessary reforms serve only to perpetuate injustice.

Call for Advocacy

The Church hereby directs Council to appoint an Anti-Racism Committee to assist the congregation in living into our calling to the work of racial justice. The Church authorizes and directs the Committee to assist the Church in carrying out the First Church Comprehensive Plan to Dismantle Racism (a working document adopted by the Church Council in 2020 to deepen
our inner work, attend to the structures and practice at First Church, and strive to dismantle racism in the wider world). The committee would also coordinate implementation of recommendations from the racial justice audit.

In accordance with our Policy on Social Action Advocacy (adopted in November 2020), the Church also authorizes and directs the Anti-Racism Committee, as an ad hoc committee of the Social Action and Awareness Commission, and under the guidance of the Senior Minister, to work in partnership with the United Church of Christ, the Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference, and other churches and partner organizations to advocate for federal, state, and local laws and regulations to confront and remedy systemic racism (and to oppose any contrary efforts). Such advocacy work may include work to support:

- voting laws that help ensure equal access to the ballot box;
- housing policies that limit displacement of long-term residents from gentrification and that promote residential desegregation;
- policing policies that assure true, just, and compassionate public safety for all;
- criminal justice reforms that confront inequities in legal representation, arrest, and incarceration rates, and that seek to prevent gun violence that disproportionately impacts communities of color;
- education polices that reduce inequities in access to all levels of education;
- economic policies that provide for greater investment and job opportunities in low income and distressed communities;
- health-care policies that address racial disparities in access to quality health care;
- environmental-justice policies aimed at reducing pollution impacts from industrial and municipal facilities disproportionately sited in low-income communities; and
- efforts to attain DC statehood (to provide self-government and representation in national government to the residents of our city, the majority of whom are African American or members of other racial or ethnic minorities).

Prepared and submitted by the Anti-Racism Task Force (2021) (Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, Diane Brenneman, Rev. Karen Byrne, Kim Darling, Lucille Dickinson, Rev. Laura Johnson, Jessica Prentice, LaTayna Purnell, Janneke Ratcliffe, Gail Sonnemann, and Priscilla Waters.

Mission Statement and Eleven Suggested Actions for Our Future

Reviewed and Affirmed at Planning Evening, October 14, 2014. See the Moderator's Report for additional insights about the eleven actions stemming from the Fall Planning Retreat, September 2015.

Working Mission Statement
Approved at Annual Meeting, January 2013

We are a United Church of Christ congregation in the heart of Washington, D.C., led by the Spirit and in covenant with God and each other. We seek to understand and experience God and respond to the call of Jesus Christ as reflected in our heritage and today's experiences.

We welcome people of all ages, abilities, racial and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, and beliefs to share and grow in faith through worship, prayer, education, social action, and community.

In so doing, by God's grace, we nourish each other; embrace spiritual transformation; stand for justice and peace; and strive to heal our city, nation, and the world.

The Eleven Actions:
Life Within the Church

- Make intentional efforts to be a place of extravagant hospitality—designing our programs, ministries, and leadership to be a more welcoming of a more multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi- generational, and diverse community.

- Explore ways to welcome and engage new members into the life of the congregation with open hearts and minds to the gifts and interests they may offer to enrich us as we change and grow.
- Explore inspirational, challenging and welcoming worship, music, and preaching that nurtures those who are members and also intentionally considers guests and visitors.
- Continue to strengthen our adult education and spiritual formation efforts as we renew our commitment to intentional children's and youth ministry.

The Church and the Community

- Explore how to engage in our historical commitment to the most vulnerable on the streets of DC.
- Choose to explore a contemporary social concern that connects locally, nationally, globally and with the wider UCC – to be a prophetic voice.
- Strengthen our collaboration, relationships, and connections with other organizations in the District through action.
- Explore ways to offer our building to engage the community through music and the arts, cultural events, and lectures; to develop rental policies that support our mission direction; and to seek out potential building uses that advance that mission.
- Move forward as a growing church — lovingly and intentionally in ministry and leadership.

Relationships and Communications

- Explore and nurture our understanding of what it means to live in covenant/unity/fellowship with one another in ways that facilitate open communication, kindness, civility and prayerful support of one another.
- Critically examine and evaluate the different roles and relationships among clergy, staff, members and friends in order to achieve our shared vision and effectively carry out the work of the church.

Covenant of First Congregational United Church of Christ

In grateful response to the call of Jesus Christ, we covenant with God and with each other to be a Church of Christ. We bind ourselves, in God's Redeeming Presence, to walk together in ways revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in sacrament and Word, study and prayer, fellowship and mission.

Minutes from Prior Meetings

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: JANUARY 22, 2023

Moderator Susan Anderson welcomed all in person and on-line members into the sanctuary for the Annual Congregational Meeting which was called to order at 12:05 p.m., having determined that a quorum of 42 members had assembled immediately following our worship service. Rev. Amanda opened the meeting with a prayer of gratitude.

Rev. Amanda summarized her written 2022 Annual report regarding the many things for which she has been grateful over the last year: her installation service as our Senior Minister in April and the joyful roof top reception that followed; in May, welcoming our new Director of Music Ministry, Leela Koipillai; in June, welcoming the UCC leaders from around the country as we joined the Poor People's Mass Assembly and Moral March on Washington; in the Fall welcoming more members back into the sanctuary in person; welcoming over 100 members and friends back for Homecoming Sunday; Rev. Sam launching a new year of in-person Sunday school for our children; incredible in person worship services in the Fall; Byron facilitating the return of performance arts and justice oriented events through space use rentals at a higher rate than 2019; then all the way up to an incredible and beautiful

Christmas eve service. Looking back at where we were at the beginning of 2022 and where we ended the year, such incredible progress makes her give thanks to God.

Amanda is very excited about the New Year ahead. Growth is important in the coming year. We continue to welcome new members. We will continue to build on the goals of the Racial Justice Audit of 2021 in March when church leadership and staff will participate in deeper Anti-Racism training to begin addressing structural and governance issues in the church.

She is grateful for new leaders: Andrew Hamilton and Lindsay Swisher. She gives many thanks for Susan Anderson's leadership and support this last year. She was grateful for all the work of staff members Byron, Inez, Sam, and Leela. She was especially appreciative of the assistance of our treasurer Lucille as they continue to look to fill the open administrative position.

Andrew gave a report on the state of the Covid Taskforce that has consisted of Kim, Susan, Andrew, and Amanda and has evolved as the public health policies have changed over the course of the pandemic. Currently it has moved from established phases that defined parishioner participation to a set of guidelines that does not depend on out of date metrics. The Task Force continues to meet monthly and monitor the situation and take suggestions and comments. Our church has proceeded on a more cautious path given the number of different viewpoints and vulnerabilities in the congregation. Meg asked whether there is some consideration to resume the occasional potlucks. Peter commented that he had been in London in much larger churches where everyone was unmasked.

Susan reported that 33 people will be attending the anti-racism training with LaShauna. There are some open spots, so if anyone would like to take the training, please let Amanda know.

A by-laws committee will be meeting in the first quarter to work on revising the by-laws to reflect any structural or organizational changes that need to be made to be compatible with our Anti-Racist policy. The committee is Ann Bushmiller, Diane Brenneman, Lucille Dickinson, Andrew Hamilton. Forward any suggestions or ideas you may have.

As a result of the Anti Racist Audit, the Council has adopted the idea that every monthly meeting of our commisions and council should have as part of their agendas issues of Anti-Racism that affects the church or the commision's work. We need to be mindful, focused, and own the work we must do as we seek to become an anti-racist church.

Susan then introduced John Smelzer to discuss the Motion from Council to approve Part One of the Safe Church Policy that is up for a review and vote. Copies of the policy were provided. John gave a brief history and the scope of what it applies to. It also addresses physical safety in the building; signage; and expanded the education guidelines to the whole church; safety screenings for all employee positions in the church. This document is Part One of the Safe Church Policy proposed by Council. Part Two will be developed for other adult issues and general public interaction for safety measures in the church.

Some comments: Alisa suggested clearer definitions of harassment; Meg thought there

should be some training component, especially for the children, given the danger of the balcony; Dennis was concerned about what to do in the event violent people come in to the service; and Gail had suggestions about posting information.

Amanda said that she and Kemmesha are trained in mental health first aid, but we have to develop a whole policy about emergencies in the building; protocols for communications etc.

There being no further discussion, Susan put the Safe Church Policy: Part One to the congregation for a vote. The congregation as assembled unanimously approved the adoption of the Safe Church Policy: PartOne.

The Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting of January 23, 2022; The Minutes of the Spring Congregational Meeting of May 22, 2022; and The Minutes of the Congregational Meeting of October 23, 2022, were all approved unanimously.

The Slate of Nominees for 2023, with the additions of Karen Pence as Assistant Treasurer and Chris Byrne for Facilities, was approved unanimously.

Lucille went over the budget reports included in the printed Annual Report. Susan called for a vote on the Proposed Budget for 2023. It was approved unanimously.

In closing remarks Susan also reflected on the joy of installing Rev. Amanda as our Senior Minister after waiting so many years. She also welcomed and thanked Leela for her ministry of music. She also thanked Lucille for her service to the church and acknowledged her recognition by the Seabury Celebration of Service at the National Cathedral in May. And she thanked everyone present for their support and all of the Commissions for their reports and work.

All incoming Commission members were brought forward and Sam and Amanda invoked a special prayer of blessing on their work to come.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:16 pm.

Minutes prepared by Diane Brenneman, Clerk

MINUTES OF THE SPRING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: MAY 21, 2023

Approval of January Minutes

28 voted affirmatively in person and 5 voted affirmatively online. No votes against the measure were recorded. January minutes approved unanimously by the congregation.

Moderator's Report

Andrew Hamilton reported on growth at First Church, the Safe Church Policy and Task Force, and the COVID Task Force.

Growth at the Church

- Exciting spate of growth - 7 new members recently joined

- Recent baptisms, for both adults and children
- People are excited about what is happening at the church

Safe Church Policy/Task Force

- Safe Church policy was approved in January, focused on the safety of children and youth
- Second phase will focus on safety of everyone, especially related to gun violence, mental and physical health challenges
- We want to respond to any events in supportive ways and ensure we are not needlessly involving law enforcement
- Task force members are: Ellen Bushmiller, Kim Darling, Emily Laing, John Smeltzer, Nick McConnell
- Comment to consider having Narcan available and to do so expeditiously
- DC peacekeeper team could be a good resource for this task force

COVID Task Force

- This group has gone into "advisory mode" - given our entering a "post-pandemic" world, many of the controls we had in place are no longer required
- This group will remain on "stand by" as the situation may evolve
- Many thanks to Kim Darling for her tireless work and steady guidance through this time

Racial Justice Update

Lindsay Swisher reported that Council and First Church staff recently participated in two different anti-racist trainings (one hybrid and one online). We will now transition to Communities of Practice, where we will be responsible for taking what we've learned into action. Members of the congregation are welcome to join but are requested to complete some pre-work that others have already worked through. Additionally the *How to be an Anti-Racist* book group with Peoples UCC recently kicked off. Comments from members reflected that many of us could use practice in how we relate to others with different thought processes and ways of thinking.

Senior Minister's Report

Amanda reported that she will attend the upcoming UCC General Synod in Indianapolis, IN in June as a delegate and as part of the planning team for "Join the Movement for Racial Justice" and a promoter for an initiative that calls on predominantly white congregations to confront white supremacy and invite anti-racism transformation. Several other members of our congregation will also attend Synod in various capacities, including Thaddeus Elliott, Karen Byrne, and Sandy Sorensen.

We are consulting with a communications specialist at the national office (Jessie Quinn) on how to observe best practices in our communication and social media. The initial report was just received on Friday which will go to Council and staff. The hope is that this will result in people being able to connect into the life of our church more easily (both current members and those looking to connect with us).

Finally, Amanda shared that given all that has occurred during, as a result of, and "after" the pandemic, there has never been a more important time to be the church. We are the kind of place where people can come to have their spiritual hunger met and to encounter God, which is a great joy and privilege. She acknowledged that many people

are exhausted (e.g. parents, teachers, nurses), causing individuals to reconsider their commitments: variable participation is happening across the life of the church. Amanda cited the Zoom Moderator team, where at least 2 more regular volunteers are needed to continue our commitment to hybrid worship. The most important thing we do as a church is on Sundays in worship, fellowship, and Christian education. Amanda encourage commissions to take 1-2 months off over the summer to make space for rest.

Amanda shared her thanks to the staff for all of the rebuilding work over the past few years. Byron has done much work to rebuild relationships and has nearly filled the calendar in terms of rental availability. Ines continues to ensure our building is in great shape for both our use and for tenants/renters. Leela has done incredible work to rebuild the music program, which has truly reinvigorated our worship. Please reach out to her if you are interested in offering your musical gifts during the summer of special music. Sam has taken what has been an online program over the past few years - every Sunday, regardless of attendance. He has taken everything up with joy and enthusiasm. Whitney is anchoring the office in a capable and professional way and has truly lightened the burden on all staff members

As we consider what it means for us to be a covenantal community at this time, consider where you want to grow and how that might drive the areas in which you are willing to contribute and give of your gifts to the church.

Associate Minister's Report

Sam appeared via a video recording, acknowledging that in the post-pandemic world, we are challenged with wanting to be in several places at once. He shared three lessons we've learned about church in the last six months:

1. God delights in you: whether you're at church, at school, at home - God loves you and delights in you
2. We delight in one another: when we're together, we thank God for being the community we've been called to be and we have fun together. We learn about loving our neighbor and ourselves and justice. And we love being a community together
3. God cares for our neighbor and the world: there are so many ways we are called to care for each other, like the drop-in center and volunteering at Tommy's Pantry. This summer, the Youth are going to Appalachia to learn from our neighbors and help those who have suffered from the effects of flooding, plus doing some community-building work

Treasurer's Report

Lucille Dickinson, treasurer, reported on the current state of the 2023 budget and offered an updated budget for approval vote.

- Deficit is $1,400 higher than originally budgeted
    - This is without any changes to commission budgets and without any adjustments to pledge estimates
- $71,000 deficit originally planned, which we will cover with the special bequest. There is not as much opportunity to close the deficit as we have in previous years (e.g. we had some empty positions, building income previously grew a lot faster than expected)

- We are lucky to have the $500,000+ bequest to help us cover our gaps as we enter the new normal
- Lucille will begin planning for 2024 soon
- Vote to approve changes to budget - motion passes
    - 21 voted affirmatively in person
    - 5 voted affirmatively online
    - No votes against in person or online

Care of Parish Report

Jamey Moore reported that Sanctuary Group will be going to Immigrant Food on June 4 - please join if you're interested in hearing more about what the group is up to. The Summer Hootenanny at Gail Sonneman's house is coming up on June 24. Additional logistical details will be shared soon. Community Potlucks will return starting on September 10 for Homecoming. Care of Parish will try to hold one on the first Sunday of the month going forward. Guidance on potlucks will be sent out later this summer.

Closing

Rev. Amanda closed us in prayer at 1pm.

Minutes prepared by Alyx Cheng, clerk

MINUTES OF THE FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: OCTOBER 22, 2023

The Fall 2023 Congregational meeting took place on October 22. The meeting involved reports from the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Moderator, and Treasurer. Commissions were asked to begin preparing for the annual report, with an explicit ask to include how racial justice/last year's racial justice audit has come to life through the commissions' work. The plans for commission/installation of memorial artwork, honoring the people who worked the land on which the church worships now, were shared - we hope the artwork will be installed next fall. Lastly, the congregational unanimously approved the individuals who will lead 2024 nominations.

Minutes prepared by Alyx Cheng, clerk

2023 Thank Yous

2023 Church Council
Andrew Hamilton (Moderator)
Lindsay Swisher (Asst. Moderator)
Lucille Dickinson (Treasurer)
Alexandra Cheng (Clerk)

At-large members:
Marian Drake
Dwan Reece

Commission Representatives:
Care of Parish: James Moore
Christan Education: Kurt Fischbeck
Facilities: Nora Marsh
Finance: Ann Bushmiller
Outreach & Membership: Fredda Sparks
Social Action: LaTayna Purnell
Worship: Rev. Jason Carson Wilson

Senior Ministerial Relations Team
Andrew Hamilton (Moderator)
Lindsay Swisher (Assistant Moderator)
Susan Anderson (Immediate Past Moderator)
Kim Darling (Personnel)

Nominating Committee
Lindsay Swisher (Assistant Moderator)
Chris Byrne
Mark Jensen
Sandy Sorensen

Personnel Committee
Kim Darling (chair)
Susan Anderson
Karen Tramontano

Care of Parish Commission
David Greer (chair)
Rose Berman
Polly Gordon
Anna Kiss
Jamey Moore

Christian Education Commission
Patrick Darling-LaGamma (chair)
Kurt Fischbeck
Ann Saudek
Elise Villemez
Rev. Sam McFerran (staff)

Adult Education & Formation Working Group
Peter Byrne
Karen Byrne
Andrew Hamilton
Emily Laing
John Smeltzer

Facilities Commission
Kristy Goodfellow Mills (chair)
Chris Byrne
Nora Marsh
Mike Zawada
Byron Adams (staff)

Finance Commission
Mary Hayes (chair)
Ann Bushmiller
Anne Mascolino
Peter Tracey

Stewardship Chair
Karen Tramontano

Investment Commission
Lucille Dickinson, Treasurer
Karen Pence, Asst. Treasurer
Peter Tracey, Finance

Assistant Treasurers
Polly Gordon (payments)
Nora Marsh (payroll)
Karen Pence (investments)

Outreach & Membership Commission
Nan McConnell (chair)
Grace Bassler
Kim Darling
Moira Jones
Nick McConnell
Fredda Sparks

Ushers
Grace Bassler
Natalie Bucks
Ellen Bushmiller
Karen Byrne
Peter Byrne
Kim Darling
Joseph Darling-LaGamma
Patrick Darling-LaGamma
David Greer
Matthew LaGamma
Meg Maguire
Anne Mascolino
Nan McConnell
Nick McConnell
Karen Pence
Fredda Sparks
Lindsay Swisher
Erin Williams
Garnell Yarbrough
Mike Zawada

Social Action & Awareness Commission
Kaeley McEvoy (chair)
Diane Brenneman
Hannah Long-Higgins
Joe Mills
LaTayna Purnell

Sanctuary Committee
Jamey Moore (chair)
Cynthia Hobbs
Joe Mills
Susan Saudek

Anti-Racism Committee
Diane Brenneman
Kim Darling
Lucille Dickinson
Jason Carson Wilson
Lynaya Morris
Jessica Prentice
LaTayna Purnell
Janneke Ratcliff
Gail Sonnemann
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss (staff)

Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth Volunteers
Janneke Ratcliffe, scheduler
Judy Augustino
Sydney Avent
Susan Anderson
Kim Darling
JD Dunn
Natalie Fertig
Polly Gordon
David Greer
Matthew LaGamma
Nan McConnell
Sarah McKinnis
Joe Mills
Byron Perkins
Antionette Philpot
Susan Saudek
Gail Sonnemann
Sandy Sorensen
Erin Williams
Jarred Bowman, DIC Coordinator
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss (staff)

Representatives & Volunteers
Washington Interfaith Network: n/a
Potomac Association Justice & Witness: Hannah Long-Higgins

Worship Commission
Peter Byrne (chair)
Ellen Bushmiller
Jason Carson Wilson
David Lindsey
Alisa Tanaka-Dodge
Leela Koilpillai (staff)
Rev. Sam McFerran (staff)
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss (staff)

Vocalists
Abigail Cipparone
Marian Drake
Polly Gordon
David Griffiths
Andrew Hamilton
Moira Jones
Sophie Jones
Nora Marsh
Whitney McColley
Eric Olson
Robin Olson
Jaimie Orr
Dwan Reece
John Smeltzer
Ron Yoder

Instrumentalists
Diane Brenneman, guitar
Amy Domingues, viol de gamba
Andrew Hamilton, guitar
Mary Hayes, violin
Michael Hopkins, percussion
Kristen Jepperson, harp
Rev. David Lindsey, guitar
Eric Olson, piano
Robin Olson, trombone
The Gabrieli Quintet: Paul Weiss, Isaac Roberts, Jeff Tucker, John Norden, Robin Olson

Guest Pianists
Karen Bartman
Dennis Turner

Choir Members
Diane Brennemann
Casey Elizabeth Capsambelis
Abigail Cipparone
Laura Darling-LaGamma
Lucille Dickinson
Marian Drake
Polly Gordon
Moira Jones
Sophie Jones
Nora Marsh
Nick McConnell
Robin Olson
Jaimie Orr
Dwan Reece
John Smeltzer
Gail Sonnemann

Breakaway Meditation
Nora Marsh

Volunteer Photographers
Joseph Darling-LaGamma
Matthew LaGamma

Sunday School Teachers
Susan Anderson
Ann Bushmiller
Kim Darling
Patrick Darling-LaGamma
Anna Kiss
Lauren McFerran
Karen Pence
Ann Saudek
Elise Villemez
Rev. Sam McFerran (staff)

Our Whole Lives Teaching Team
Barbara Gerlach
Anna Kiss
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss (staff)

COVID Safety Task Force
Kim Darling (chair)
Susan Anderson
Andrew Hamilton
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss (staff)

Safe Church Task Force
Kim Darling
Ellen Bushmiller
Andrew Hamilton
Emily Laing
John Smeltzer
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss (staff)

Sustainability Task Force
Kim Darling
Lucille Dickinson
Thaddaeus Elliott
Andrew Hamilton
Nan McConnell
John Smeltzer

Memorial Art Work Task Force
Thaddaeus Elliott
Meg Maguire
Dwan Reece
Fredda Sparks

Audio Visual Technicians
Joseph Hiep
Graham Marsh
Lydia Petersen
Tom Sowers

Zoom Moderators/Coordinators
Alyx Cheng
Kim Darling
Joseph Darling-LaGamma
Lucille Dickinson
Welling Hall
Barry Mills
Allison Truhlar
Erin Williams

Staff
Byron Adams, Building Manager
Jarred Bowman, Drop-In Center Coordinator
Nai-lah Dixon, Sunday Morning Coordinator (July – Dec.)
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss, Senior Minister
Leela Koilpillai, Director of Music
Ines Marques, Sexton
Whitney McColley, Administrative Assistant
Rev. Sam McFerran, Associate Pastor
Kemmesha Thomas, Sunday Morning Coordinator

Nominations for 2024

Moderator: Lindsay Swisher
Assistant Moderator: Dwan Reece
Clerk: Alyx Cheng
Treasurer: John Smeltzer
Assistant Treasurer: Lucille Dickinson
Assistant Treasurer: Polly Gordon
At-Large: Abigail Cipparone
At-Large: Marian Drake
Potomac Association Representative: Karen Byrne

Care of Parish
Kim Darling
Polly Gordon
Anna Kiss
Fredda Sparks
Alisa Tanaka-Dodge
Elise Villemez

Christian Education
Kristy Goodfellow
Tom McCaffrey
Andy Raver
Ann Saudek
CJ Thayer

Facilities
Chris Byrne
Lucille Dickinson
Nora Marsh
Hilary Oat-Judge
(through June)

Finance
Ann Bushmiller
Mary Hayes
Dan Thayer
Peter Tracey

Investment
Finance Commission
Rep (TBD)
John Smeltzer (Treasurer)
Lucille Dickinson
Karen Tramontano
Mike Zawada

Nominating
Chris Byrne
Mark Jensen
Sandy Sorensen

Outreach & Membership
Karen Byrne
David Greer
Nan McConnell
Nick McConnell
Jamie Orr
Erin Williams

Social Action and Awareness (SAAC)
Sydney Avent
Thaddaeus Elliott
JD Dunn
Kaeley McEvoy
LaTayna Purnell
Janneke Ratcliffe
Gail Sonneman
Sandy Sorensen

Worship
Rose Berman
Ellen Bushmiller
Peter Byrne
Jason Carlson Wilson
Patrick
Darling-LaGamma
Moira Jones
Jamey Moore