



# 2025 First Church Annual Report

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## Senior Minister's Report

*God is in the midst of the city, it shall not be moved.  
God will help it when the morning dawns. –Psalm 46:5*

### **A Year of Turmoil in the Nation's Capital**

Zora Neale Hurston once wrote, "There are years that ask questions and years that answer." 2025 interrogated our most deeply held values, provoking introspection and direct action in response. Within weeks of the inauguration of President Trump, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) began dismantling the federal workforce. USAID was shuttered, resulting in immediate deadly gaps in public health around the world. White House officials were quoted saying that they wished to traumatize federal workers, and many in our congregation were impacted by the intentional cruelty and demoralization. Over the summer, after much protest on the part of our congregation and faith leaders in DC, a bill passed to slash food assistance and health care coverage to provide tax breaks for the wealthy and funding for Immigrations & Customs Enforcement (ICE) efforts to deport thousands of immigrants. Federal forces moved into DC, violently apprehending and disappearing our migrant neighbors, while clearing encampments, where our unhoused neighbors' valued belongings were trashed to "clean the streets." In the fall, we endured the longest government shutdown in history. Museums, churches and schools have faced attempts to retell our history in ways that benefit the most privileged as diversity, equity, and inclusion have been demonized and trans people targeted. Tremendous suffering has been unleashed, with the "least of these" paying the highest price as our democracy continues to unravel.



*Photo credit: Joseph Darling-LaGamma*

My heart has taken great courage this year as we have met the moment with prayer, collective discernment, truth-telling, support for our federal workers, immigrant and unhoused neighbors, advocacy, press conferences, and protests. We have deepened our solidarity with sibling congregations, co-sponsoring a webinar on ethics and a service of lament and healing for federal employees. We expanded our work with trusted partner organizations doing the work of justice and compassion on the ground. We have held fast to God's dream of a world where the inherent dignity of every human being is honored, and justice rolls down like waterfalls. In 2025, we stood in need of one another, strengthening our covenant as we walked together in ways revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

### **Freedom Summer**

On Memorial Day weekend, I embarked on my first sabbatical. My time away included a clergy pilgrimage from Slovenia to Italy, with a hike up to Mount Lussari, my most physically challenging adventure in recent years. I attended the 35th General Synod of the UCC, where I had the

opportunity to speak from the main stage, telling the story of how First Church has excavated our history with commemorative artwork. My sabbatical was book-ended by the graduation of my oldest, Myles, from high school in June and moving him into his dorm room at Christopher Newport University in August. Throughout it all, I took seriously the call to renew my spirit in God's refreshing grace.

With the help of Chandra DeNap Whetstine, our seminary intern, the congregation engaged in intentional worship planning for the summer, selecting the theme of Freedom Summer. Drawing upon hard-won wisdom from the summer of 1964, including that of our own Rev. Bruce Hanson, lay and ordained members of the congregation led worship and testified about God's call to us today. Rev. Sam McFerran, Rev. Barbara Gerlach, Rev. Karen Byrne, and Sandy Sorensen led worship, creating space for authentic sharing in community. Our new Director of Music Ministry, Ulung Tanoto, collaborated with vocalists and instrumentalists to bring the music of Freedom Summer to life, aided by the expertise of ethnomusicologist (and Moderator) Dwan Reece.

### **An Antiracist Church**

We began 2025 by creating standard operating procedures for a rapid response to ICE presence in our building. This document was rooted in our theology, values, and history of advocacy alongside immigrants and refugees as a Sanctuary Congregation. In the months that followed, we educated ourselves and the public on the rights people have when stopped by law-enforcement, how to monitor an unfolding ICE raid, and rapid response in partnership with local organizations. We volunteered at Tommy's Pantry and Food Justice DMV to box and, in some cases, deliver food to immigrant families living in fear and experiencing the economic disruptions of ICE raids.

In August, we were astounded by the luminous beauty of a new stained-glass installation, "Forever in the Path," commissioned by artist Jessica Valoris. This artwork commemorates the Black people who lived and labored in bondage on the land on which our church now sits. We marked the installation with a Dedication Sunday on September 14th, featuring guest preacher Dr. Renee K. Harrison of Howard University's School of Divinity. Following a rich service of worship which told the story of excavating our history and included a ritual of blessing surrounding the artwork, Dwan Reece facilitated an engaging panel conversation with Jessica Valoris, Dr. Harrison, and the scholar who researched our history, Dr. Antonio Austin. This commemoration marks a new beginning of truth-telling about our history, particularly as we anticipate the 250th anniversary of our nation's independence in 2026.

### **Sacred Moments in Community**

During two New Member Sundays in 2025—in May and October—we welcomed ten new members into the life of our congregation! The energy and leadership they bring to First Church are already transforming us in meaningful ways as they sing in the choir, provide special music, volunteer at the Drop-In Center, and serve as worship leaders. We also bid farewell to Chandra DeNap Whetstine, our seminary intern, as well as a beloved member of our congregation—the Rev. Sydney Avent, and we wish them every blessing in their new communities.

We were deeply saddened by the unexpected death of Robin Hall, a member and regular presence at First Church. Rev. Sam led her memorial service in July. We also mourned the death of longtime member, the Rev. Dr. Mari Castellanos, former policy analyst for the UCC's DC office of Justice & Witness and beloved wife of Diana Gomez de Molina. Even as we mourned these deaths, we celebrated the new life in our midst with the baptisms of Echo Zawada, Kenneth Ofori-Atta Acheampong, and Malachi Simmons (who went on to play the role of baby Jesus in this year's Christmas Pageant). How grateful I am to be called to ministry in the church, which blesses and accompanies us in every season and milestone of life.

In a challenging year, we also took time to celebrate. In early fall, we enjoyed a congregational retreat, which may become an annual event. From shared meals, a low ropes course, and singing around the campfire to discussions about our justice ministries and spiritual practices, the Spirit of the Living God refreshed and renewed us in the company of ancient trees and blue skies. Then in October, we were profoundly blessed to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Rev. Sam's ministry among us with sharing from children, parents, a dialogue sermon facilitated by Rev. Karen Byrne, singing, and cake. The joy was palpable!

### **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 dedicated, visionary leadership of Moderator Dwan Reece and Assistant Moderator Peter Tracey for navigating us through a challenging year with grace and trust, always returning to our shared covenant and commitment to living justly.

I wish to thank our tremendous staff. Kemmesha Thomas and Mykel Thompson served as our Sunday Morning Coordinators, assisting those walking through our doors in search of resources or safe harbor. Moe Shorter joined the team in late December, and we will see more of him in 2026. Tom Sowers, our Audio-Visual Professional, handed the reins over to Dwight Isaiah Davis at the end of summer, and we thank them both for the hard work that makes Sunday worship accessible. Drop-In Center Coordinator Jarred Bowman led us through another year of change at the Drop-In Center as we re-focused on youth and young adults and navigated staffing changes at Sasha Bruce Youthwork, our valued partner organization. Whitney McColley anchors our office with the wisdom, grace, and skill that has allowed us to tackle new projects around communications and visibility. Ines has kept our building sparkling clean and a favorite rental spot for performance arts groups. Byron managed major repair projects and expanded our building use in keeping with our inclusive values. Rev. Sam led our youth on a meaningful service project to West Virginia, taught our children and youth with his characteristic kindness, and provided phenomenal leadership during my sabbatical. On Easter Sunday in 2025, we gave thanks for the music ministry of Dennis Turner, who served as our Designated Musician during our search process. In April, we welcomed Ulung Tanoto as our new Director of Music Ministry. A composer and multi-instrumentalist, Ulung led us into our vision of an expansive, multicultural music ministry. His collaborative style blessed us as members and new friends stepped forward to generously contribute their musical gifts, culminating in a Christmas Cantata. Just before the end of the year, we announced that, due to unforeseen circumstances, Ulung's work permit

expired, resulting in a mutual agreement to end his contract. We anticipate his work permit will be renewed, and we are grateful that Dennis Turner has agreed to return to the role of Designated Musician. It has been a privilege to lead and co-labor alongside our staff team as we serve, together with all of you, the God of justice and love with whom all things are possible.

In Peace,  
Rev. Amanda

## Moderator's Report

So much has happened in the world and in the life of our church this past year. We have lived through seasons of turmoil, injustice, frustration, and grief that have truly tested our resilience and resolve. Throughout it all, we have entered into the vulnerable work of authentic relationship—sharing both joys and sorrows, listening deeply, and caring for one another. In the midst of uncertainty, we have continued to foster a faith community rooted in welcome and belonging, sustaining ourselves as a congregation while bearing faithful witness in the world around us. Serving as your Moderator this year, I have experienced God's presence among us in powerful and sustaining ways.



Photo Credit: Joseph Darling-  
LaGamma

Working with this year's Church Council has been a tremendous honor. Each member approached our shared work with thoughtfulness, care, and insight, and together we advanced the life and mission of First Church. Highlights from the year include:

- Affirming the Music Director Search Committee's selection of Ulung Tanoto as our new Director of Music Ministry.
- Supporting Rev. Amanda during her summer sabbatical and worshipping together under the theme Freedom Summer, recalling 1964, when the nation's attention was drawn to the Civil Rights Movement and the struggle for social justice through direct action. With First Church members offering sermons, scripture, poetry, and special music, we explored what liberation means today and how our faith calls us to action in protecting the freedom God grants to each of us.
- Discussing the Sustainability Task Force Report and recommendations at the May congregational meeting.
- Nominating our own Jamey Moore to receive the Seabury Award for servant leadership in the UCC and Episcopal congregations.
- Establishing Signal groups for the First Church community as a way to share information about upcoming events and programming, including groups for General Announcements, Christian Education, Social Action, and Young Adults.
- Supporting the continued ecclesiastical endorsement of Rev. Laura Simmons.
- Completing the Commemorative Artwork Project honoring the enslaved men, women, and children who labored on the land where First Church stands, and dedicating Jessica

Valoris's six-panel stained glass work, Forever in the Path, during worship on Dedication Sunday in September.

- Hosting First Church's Fall Retreat at Camp Bennett in Brookeville, Maryland.

It has been Council's great honor to serve alongside our dedicated staff and contractors: Rev. Amanda Hendl-Voss, Rev. Sam McFerran, Byron Adams, Whitney McColley, Ulung Tanoto, Ines Marquez, Kemmesha Thomas, Mykel Thompson, Jarred Bowman, and Dennis Turner.

2025 Council:

Dwan Reece, Moderator

Peter Tracey, Assistant Moderator

Michael Enseki-Frank, Clerk

John Smeltzer, Treasurer

Abigail Cipparone, At-Large

Anna Kiss, At-Large

Abigail Goodman-Johnson, Christian

Education

Nora Marsh, SAAC

Jamey Moore, Worship

Dan Thayer, Finance

Kristen Wheeler, Care of Parish

Whit Wheeler, Outreach & Membership

Garnell Yarbrough, Facilities

Submitted by Dwan Reece

## Music Ministry Report

On Easter Sunday in 2025, we gave thanks for the music ministry of Dennis Turner, who served as our Designated Musician during our search process. In April, we welcomed Ulung Tanoto as our new Director of Music Ministry. Building on Dennis Turner's legacy, he continued to broaden the music at church through an expanded stylistic range, instrumental diversity, creative arrangements, and improvisation. He launched the choir program with pieces that emphasize rhythm, including a contemporary selection, Hold Us Together by Matt Maher. His wife, Dian Permana, has also contributed occasionally as pianist.

Throughout the summer, the music ministry demonstrated collaboration and flexibility during Amanda's sabbatical and the choir's seasonal break. Worship services featured a variety of musical expressions, supported by individual musicians and small ensembles. Congregational singing was strengthened through the introduction of vocal leadership by cantors, as well as the use of chanted psalms and sung responses. The season included notable performances by Dwan Reece and Andrew Hamilton, who opened the summer with a vocal and guitar duet featuring a new hymn by Rhiannon Giddens. Moira Jones presented a commissioned vocal piece accompanied by flute and cello, while Katie Koza offered a creative mash-up of American Tune and the Passion Chorale, singing and playing violin. Classical and contemporary selections were contributed by Polly Gordon, who performed a work by Vaughan Williams, and Casey Capsambelis, who offered a renewed interpretation of You'll Never Walk Alone. Additional musical offerings included Abigail Cipparone's performance of Blackbird by The Beatles and Reshma William's contemporary Christian selection. Robin Olson contributed a jazz standard while singing and playing trombone, and Jason Carson Wilson concluded a service with a spontaneous postlude of I Was Born This Way. The Olson Brothers (Eric and Robin) performed I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free, and Nora Marsh and Katie Koza closed the summer season with One More Dollar.



Several special services highlighted the breadth of the music ministry. Homecoming Sunday featured a combined ensemble of the choir, the Gabrieli Quintet, and a combo band including Andrew Hamilton's guitar solo. World Communion Sunday incorporated global instruments and multilingual singing, reflecting the church's commitment to inclusive worship. The blessing of the stained-glass artwork included a guitar-led procession from the sanctuary to the annex hall. Rev. Sam McFerran's tenth anniversary was celebrated with children's choir performances, followed by a collaborative performance with the adult choir of a Bruce Springsteen piece.

Participation in special music continued to grow, with both new and longtime musicians contributing throughout the year. New singers Omari Hardy and Trevor Bakker provided solo

performances and joined the choir. New choir members included Lois Stovall and Jim Riker (who also plays guitar and drums). Ongoing and new instrumentalists generously shared their musical gifts: Katie Koza, (violin, percussion), Michael Hopkins (percussion), Diane Brenneman (piano, guitar), Robin Olson (trombone), Eric Olson (piano, guitar), Dwight Davis (piano, percussion), Reshma William (clarinet), Sophie Jones (violin), Nora Marsh (percussion and whistling), Casey Capsambelis (guitar), Rev. Sam (trumpet), and Beatriz Saudek (violin and guitar).

The Christmas season marked a high point with the presentation of Joel Raney's *A Thrill of Hope*, performed by the choir with a chamber orchestra. The Christmas pageant further highlighted strong musical collaboration and enthusiastic performances by the children of the church.

Just before the year's end, due to unforeseen circumstances, Ulung's work permit expired, resulting in a mutual agreement to end his contract. We anticipate his work permit will be renewed, and we are grateful that Dennis Turner has agreed to return to the role of Designated Musician.

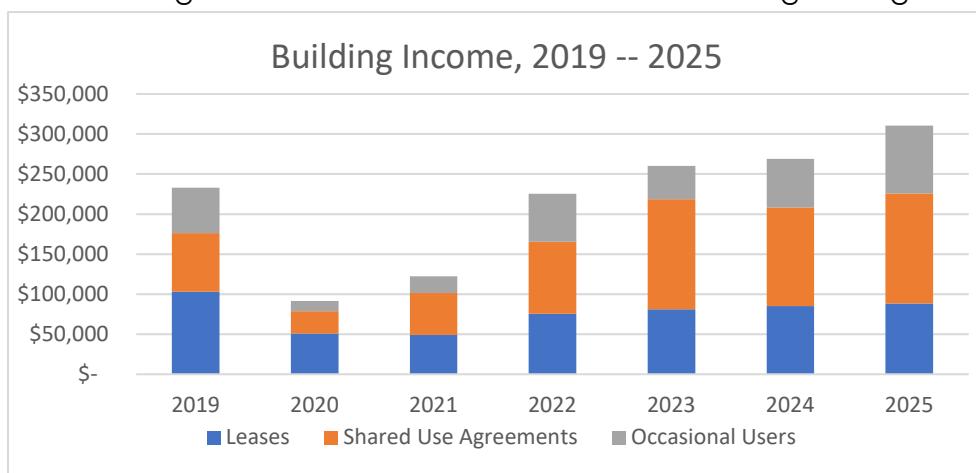
*Submitted by Rev. Amanda Hendl-Voss & Ulung Tanoto*

## Building Manager's Report

Building use by others in 2025 was our best year ever! For 2025, the building generated \$310,723 in income from leases, shared use agreements, and occasional use. The graph below dramatically shows how our building income has rebounded after crashing during the pandemic.

It was a good year even though Congressional Chorus did not return in the fall for Monday night rehearsals due to losing grant funding.

We were fortunate to replace them with DC's Different Drummers who came knocking on our door looking for weekly rehearsal space for their symphonic band and jazz ensembles. We also hosted the tri-annual Johansen International Competition for the third time. And we had large rentals from the International Pride Orchestra and Opera Lafayette, both of whom came to us because of turmoil at the Kennedy Center. Opera Lafayette has scheduled additional rehearsals here in 2026 and the Johansen Competition reserved dates for 2028. TheatreLab will also return in 2026.



As I say every year, our building income is a relational business rather than a transactional one. International Pride Orchestra, Opera Lafayette, and DC's Different Drummers all came to us because they have musicians in their organizations who have performed here.

Based on the demand for the sanctuary for concerts and rates for competing venues of similar size, we have increased the hourly sanctuary rental rate from \$290 in 2025 to \$300 in 2026. The rate for the sanctuary was \$235 in 2023, amounting to a 27% increase over the course of three years.

### Electricity Consumption

We are implementing HVAC control programming changes and LED lightbulbs to further reduce our consumption because of cost and environmental concerns.

### 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, prompt,

courteous, always smiling, and always willing to go above and beyond what our contract requires. 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 busy-ness of 2025 makes this place work. I couldn't do this job without her.

### **Repairs & Improvements**

In 2025, we had a lot of repairs. Given that our HVAC systems cycled on early in 2011 and ran 24/7 for nearly a year, some of the equipment is reaching the end of its lifespan. We have spent tens of thousands of dollars this year from the capital reserve, our repairs and replacement line, and repair lines in the LPC budget to replace, repair, or resolve many issues.

- HVAC -- several major pumps, the Community Hall air handler repairs, variable frequency drives on two pumps, motor for the sanctuary outside air unit.
- Plumbing -- pressure reducing valve. A leak in the organ chamber which miraculously did not damage the organ. First floor water fountain.
- IT/LAN issues along with new desktop computers for office staff.
- AV – upgrades to sanctuary and community hall systems.
- Kitchen – ice machine.
- Front doors – several visits to resolve lingering issues.
- Rekeying some miss-keyed doors and repairing a couple of door mechanisms.
- Handyman Celvin Medrano also took care of a long list of small projects.

### **Repairs and replacements already scheduled for 2026:**

- Hot water loop vibration isolators. Replacing them prevents failure and leaks.
- 2nd floor outside air unit. Has not been properly heating/cooling the outside air it pulls into the building.
- Elevator machine room air conditioner. Needed to keep equipment cool during the summer.
- Reach in freezer in the main kitchen. Tech says not worth repairing.
- Hot water recirculating pump. So you don't have to wait 5-10 minutes for hot water to get to the kitchen.
- Coffee brewing system spray arm. It's leaking.
- Pump for lobby water feature. Working to find an affordable solution.

A major leak on the third floor caused water damage on the north end of our second floor. Remediation and repair was covered by the contractor who caused the leak.

Submitted by Byron Adams

## Clerk's Report

### Membership Count:

As of January 1, 2025: 181

As of January 1, 2026: 183

### Births:

Malachi Carter Simmons

### Baptisms:

Echo Evangeline Zawada

Kenneth Ofori-Atta Acheampong

Malachi Carter Simmons

### Added to the Book of Life:

Robin Hall

Mari Castellanos

### New Full Members:

Trevor Bakker

Jolanda Cornish

Roz Grigsby

Omari Hardy

Jody Kenney

Mike Kenney

Ethan Miller

Angie Ofori-Atta

Ken Ofori-Atta

Jim Rikker

### New Associate Members:

n/a

### Seabury Celebration of Service Honorees from First Church:

Jamey Moore

### Removal from Membership Roll:

Oladayo Moses Alabi

Cara Bidwell

Amy Dugan

Joe Mills

### Requested Conversion to Friend:

Troy Bent

Jo-Anne Henry

### Requested Letter of Transfer to Another Congregation:

David Lindsey

Jean Alexander

Submitted by Michael Enseki-Frank



## Care of Parish Commission Report

Members: Rose Berman, Kim Darling (chair), Nan McConnell, Nick McConnell, Fredda Sparks, Alisa Tanaka-Dodge, Kristen Wheeler (council rep)

In 2025, Care of Parish continued to focus on fostering community and caring for the congregation. We continued to try to have coffee hour every Sunday. We organized several potlucks, provided the Maundy Thursday meal, had an extremely successful Easter Pancake Breakfast, made sure all could eat their fill at the Ice Cream Social, and pitched in for the Cookie Showcase. In addition, we provided refreshments for staff and member transitions, teamed with Christian Education to provide soup for the Annual and Spring Congregational meetings, and provided cards for members were going through difficult times, life transitions, or celebratory moments. The commission also decided that supporting Amazon was not consistent with our values, canceled our Prime membership and began buying supplies from other stores whose values more closely align with our own.

**Coffee Hour:** Coffee Hour is an important time that allows members and visitors alike a post-service period for fellowship. This is one of our congregation's key ways of showing hospitality to each person who comes through our doors each Sunday morning. Coffee Hour is dependent on every member of our congregation hosting at least twice a year. As part of our commitment to ensure hosting doesn't place a substantial burden on any member, we provide shelf stable snacks and reimbursement. We struggled this year getting volunteers to sign up to host coffee hour which meant that several members of Care of Parish were filling in on a regular basis. We've determined this is not sustainable which means that 2026 may bring some Sundays with no coffee hour.

**Potlucks:** We scheduled several potlucks this year including our annual Homecoming Potluck in September. Potlucks remain a great way for members and guests to spend time together as well as an opportunity for members to showcase their background and culture in the foods they bring to share.



**Special Events:** This Maundy Thursday we provided a simple meal for all who attended. This had been a regular part of our celebration prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we were thankful that we could bring it back. We even had a visitor who mentioned how she had attended before the pandemic and was so happy to see this return. Easter Sunday brought the ever popular Easter Pancake Breakfast. This event requires a great number of volunteers to help set up, clean up, and cook specialty pancakes. Thank you all for your help. We especially would like to thank the Bushmiller family for doing the bulk of the shopping as well as cooking sausages (both regular and vegan) and an abundance of plain pancakes. In July we hosted our annual

Ice Cream Social complete with regular and vegan frozen treats as well as a variety of toppings. In December, we organized and helped host the annual Christmas Cookie Showcase which also allowed us to provide several dozen cookies for the Drop-In Center.

**Receptions:** Care of Parish provided support for a number of receptions including Chandra DeNap Whetstone's last Sunday, Rev. Sam's tenth anniversary as our Associate Minister, and Robin Hall's memorial service. We would like to thank all who helped make these receptions happen.

**Card Ministry:** The Card Ministry provides a written reminder to members and friends that our congregation walks with them in both good and bad times. We send cards to members who are going through difficult times and have lost loved ones, those who have had events to celebrate – births, graduations, marriages – and thank you cards for those who serve our congregation.

We would like to thank our staff for all the ways they assist our commission in carrying out its charter from keeping us up-to-date on congregational needs and events to gently reminding us when Horn and Newsletter articles are due to helping us troubleshoot various problems. Everything we do as a church is a team effort, and we're extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated and professional staff as part of our team.

We were also fortunate this year to have a commission full of enthusiastic members who understood that the role of Care of Parish is more than just making sure there's coffee on Sundays – it's helping finding ways to grow our community bonds and help all to feel welcomed and loved. Thank you.

Submitted by Kim Darling

## Christian Education Report

Commission Members – Abby Goodman-Johnson (Council Rep), CJ Thayer (Chair), Thomas McCaffrey, Andry Raver, Kristy Goodfellow-Mills, Matthew LaGamma (Friend of CE), Rev. Sam McFerran (Staff)

First Church celebrates another wonderful year of faith formation for our youth, young adults, and adult community. Throughout the year we reflected on different ways to engage our spirituality and live out our faith - through worship, learning, service, and acts of justice.

The Worship Commission is grateful to so many church members who supported Faith Formation at First Church - whether through teaching, supporting special events like the Pageant or the Talent Show, or just by valuing faith formation for their family by showing up throughout the year. We are grateful. Below is a brief report that highlights our activities of the year -

**Strengthening partnerships with diverse communities** - This goal which emerged from the Anti-Racism Audit continues to be a priority of the CE Commission. We are grateful to deepen our bonds with our church siblings at People's UCC. In the Spring, we had an outdoor worship/community building experience with People's at Anacostia Park. In the Fall, we co-hosted a game and movie night at First Church with children from the ages of 4-16. We loved games, popcorn, and enjoyed watching *McFarland USA*.

Another blossoming partnership is with the 8th Ward Hub of A Wider Circle. This vibrant community center serves the Washington Highlands Neighborhood, an isolated neighborhood that faces a variety of social and economic needs. We supported them through food/toiletry drives and included them in the Christmas drive. In the new year, we look forward to supporting their on-site programs and activities.

**Robust Sunday School Programming** - Throughout the year, our children (Pre-K through Grade 8) enjoyed Sunday School. Highlights included:

1. Exploring the Exodus Story alongside the Underground Railroad and the leadership of Harriet Tubman.
2. Seven weeks of Lenten Faith Formation based upon God's Greatest Commandment, learning spiritual practices to live out our faith with courage and compassion.
3. Exploring key moments of Freedom Summer during the Summer.

### **Children in Worship -**

1. Throughout the year, we have loved including children and youth in Worship. Each month, children served as scripture readers, liturgists, and basket holders for Communion.
2. We also had several services which centered youth:
  - a. In support of Black History Month and the stories of the Exodus and the Underground Railroad, the children choir sang "Go Down, Moses" under the leadership of Dennis Turner.

- b. During Children & Youth Sunday in the spring, youth reflected upon the spiritual practices learned over Lent. They also led a participatory worship experience inviting congregants to write prayers of gratitude, care, or intercession on post-it notes on behalf of loved ones and neighbors. The service also featured a hand-washing ritual (akin to Jesus washing the disciples' feet). The children and youth led the church in wonderful songs including, "This Little Light of Mine."
- c. In October, the children sang three pieces under Dennis Turner's leadership: "Radiant Love of God," "I Sing Because I'm Happy," and "The Rising" under the leadership of Ulung Tanoto. Their music was part of the service's celebration of Rev. Sam's 10 year anniversary at First Church.
- d. The Christmas Pageant was a joyful celebration featuring the nativity story as an important reminder to college students returning to DC. Disillusioned by what was happening in the world, an angel reminded them of God's presence and their spiritual home (First Church). Over 30 children and youth participated, including wonderful acting, singing and versions of "What's Up" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." Huge gratitude to Ulung Tanoto, Michael Hopkins and Katie Koza for their musical accompaniment, and to so many parents for volunteering to ensure its success. We also were grateful that Celvin repaired our beloved manger.
- e. At the Christmas Eve Service, 4th Grader Xavier Prentice and college student Tadashi Dodge led lovely reflections on the Christmas story.
- f. Before this year's Youth Service Trip, the Church blessed and commissioned 6 youth. Following the trip, the youth reflected in worship on what they learned.



### **Experiences of Service and Celebration**

1. In February we presented our first Talent Show. This intergenerational event featured cheerleading, singing Taylor Swift, skits, poetry reading, and improv violin playing. We were grateful to all the adults and youth who participated, especially the leadership of Reshma Williams and Ann Saudek.
2. At the First Church Retreat, we had a wonderful time at beautiful Camp Bennett, where we enjoyed spending quality time together, roasting marshmallows, playing on the field, doing the ropes course, and having thoughtful conversations about our Social Justice ministries. We also affirmed our commitment to these intergenerational retreats by beginning the planning for 2026.
3. We value Tommy's Pantry as a key service partner to care for our neighbors in need in Silver Spring and Takoma Park. Tommy's Pantry provides meaningful 'packing' and 'distribution' opportunities for our children and youth. We volunteered at least 6 times over the course of the year.

4. In July, we shared a wonderful service trip to Ronceverte, WV for six rising 8th and 9th graders. We had a wonderful host in Rev. Stephen Baldwin of Ronceverte Presbyterian Church. We completed service projects at a children's advocacy center, domestic violence shelter, food pantry, literacy organization, and a congregant whose shed needed to be repaired. In addition to service, we enjoyed a wonderful hike, swam in a river, and grew in love of neighbor, while strengthening our friendships with one another. A huge thank you to Grace Campbell for providing her leadership as the female trip leader. We also thank the congregation for all their support for the various trip fundraisers.
5. In June, Art educator Koto Maesaka-Dunn taught the children and youth to make origami cranes as a Peace memorial which we displayed in the G Street Window.
6. We celebrated Easter with an egg hunt and pancake breakfast, and the children flowered the cross during the worship service.
7. We had limited participation in a few events including the Anacostia River Clean-Up and a trip to the Capital Jewish Museum,

### **Childcare**

We continue to be blessed with wonderful childcare workers. This year, our team included Maddie Gee, Eli Haverman, Shae Ramberg, Meredith Baker, Louisa Jensen, and Patrick Darling La-Gamma. Eli's time ended with us in June. Maddie returned to Georgia in August. Shae graduated in December and Meredith heads for a semester abroad in January to Italy. We are grateful for the care and attention they provided to our youngest ones. We look forward to Meredith returning next fall, as we add new members to our team in January.

### **Our Whole Lives**

In 2025, First Church offered the Our Whole Lives (OWL) class on faith and sexuality to a cohort of 1<sup>st</sup>- 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. We are grateful to Anna Kiss, Chandra DeNap Whetstone, and Rev. Amanda for teaching them.

### **Adult Education Nurtures & Community Building**

1. Lenten Learning Circles
2. Panel Discussion on the stained-glass artwork, "Forever in the Path," commemorating the lives of the enslaved laborers and families who worked on the land First Church is situated on.
3. Rev. Amanda shared her hopes and learnings before and after her sabbatical.
4. Eddy Ameen introduced us to A Wider Circle's 8th Ward Hub.
5. Advent Nurtures led by Rev. Barbara Gerlach with meaningful sharing from church members.
6. Rev. Amanda led a series on "The Bible as a Handbook to Resist Tyranny."
7. The congregation also enjoyed a Nationals Baseball Game together.

*Submitted by Rev. Sam McFerran*

## Finance Commission Report

Members: Peter Byrne (Chair), Courtney McCaffrey, John Smeltzer (Treasurer), Dan Thayer (Council Rep), Karen Tramontano.

The Finance Commission is responsible for the financial affairs of the Church. The Commission meets monthly to review budget-to-actual comparisons and recommends necessary adjustments to keep the budget accurate and up to date. The Commission is responsible for the annual stewardship campaign to obtain financial pledges from members and friends. From early fall through January, the Commission oversees the budget development process for the following year (the budget is approved at the annual congregational meeting in late January). In all this, the Commission is greatly aided by the work of the world's best Assistant Treasurer, Lucille Dickinson, who provides the monthly reports upon which the Commission depends. The Church's regular income comes from three sources: contributions, building use fees, and income from the Endowment Fund. In 2024, the Church ran a deficit of approximately \$100,000. That shortfall was made up by funds from the separate Ross bequest, which has sustained the Church through the lean years following the pandemic.

Our finances improved in 2025. Contributions and building income increased, while expenses declined slightly. While increased income contributed to the church's stronger finances, so did avoiding additional expenses during Rev. Amanda's sabbatical. Many volunteers helped the Church thrive during the sabbatical, but the Commission wants to single out Rev. Barbara Gerlach and Rev. Karen Byrne, who led worship services without receiving any compensation. The deficit for 2025 decreased to approximately \$15,000. This brings us closer to the essential goal of eliminating the deficit and also preserves funds in the Ross bequest for sustenance in the nearer future.

During the year, the Finance Commission recommended approval for the withdrawal of funds from our capital reserve to pay for repairs to our HVAC system. The capital reserve is funded through the budget each year to meet such expenses, but these expenditures, recommended by the Facilities Commission, occurred before the time that had been scheduled for them. Next year the Facilities Commission will study whether the capital reserve fund remains sufficiently funded to meet all future needs. There is no urgent problem; the capital reserve fund has benefitted from higher-than-expected earnings.

The Finance Commission organized the Church's annual stewardship campaign, which adopted the theme, *Dreaming God's Dream*. The Commission was grateful to follow the protocol created two years prior by Karen Tramontano for the campaign, which kicked off with a paper letter to all members and friends with an accompanying commitment card. Every member of the Commission and several other members of the congregation offered spoken or written statements of what the Church has meant to them and why it deserves support.

Treasurer John Smeltzer compiled a narrative budget. Rev. Amanda provided guidance and constant support. The campaign concluded with a commitment ritual during worship on November 16, when the Commission chair also preached. The goal for pledges was set at \$320,000, a 5% increase over the prior year. As of this writing, it appears that actual pledges will exceed our goal by more than \$10,000.

The budget process for the coming year begins with construction of an asking budget, reflecting requests from commissions, assessing staff and facility needs, and estimating future income. The proposed budget to be considered by the congregation projects a 2026 deficit of approximately \$52,566. The deficit is swollen by the decision of Table Church to end renting our space for worship, but this does provide an opportunity for new rentals, which may shrink the deficit. Again, this deficit will be covered by funds from the Ross bequest.

The Finance Commission believes that the Church runs a lean and reasonably efficient operation. During the year, the Commission reviewed an interim report by a Fiscal Sustainability Task Force, formed to study how to overcome our structural deficit. The Commission agrees with the basic conclusion of the Task Force that there are no significant expenses that can be cut without damaging the work of the Church. The realistic pathway for eliminating the deficit is growth in membership. In the meantime, we are fortunate to have reserve funds to cover any lingering deficit for several more years.

Submitted by Peter Byrne

## Investment Commission Report

Members: Michael Hopkins, Karen Tramontano, Mike Zawada, John Smeltzer (Treasurer), Lucille Dickinson (Assistant Treasurer), Karen Pence (Advisor)

The Investment Commission manages the Church's endowment and capital reserve fund (which are comingled for investment purposes) in accordance with the Church's Bylaws and Investment Policy (2012). We meet periodically to authorize the sale of assets (stocks or bonds) to generate income for approved expenditures, and to review and adjust asset allocation in relation to the guidelines and objectives set out in the Investment Policy.

### A. Transactions

**Endowment Transfer.** The 2025 Operating Budget called for a contribution of \$174,200 from the endowment for operational purposes, and for the payment of \$37,500 from operating income to the capital reserve fund, leaving a balance of \$136,700 to be transferred from the endowment for operational purposes. We transferred one half of that amount (\$87,100) in March and the other half in July.

**Capital Reserve Transfer.** In 2025, Council approved the expenditure of funds from the capital reserve for the replacement of several HVAC components. We withdrew a total of \$49,422 for those projects.

**Reallocations.** In April 2025, to provide cash for the above transfers and to rebalance our holdings—which were heavy in stock and low in cash compared to our targets—we voted to liquidate \$130,000 in stock to cash as follows: (a) \$80,000 from our main stock index fund, (b) \$30,000 from our socially responsible fund, and (c) \$20,000 from our international stock fund. However, after the withdrawal of cash for operational purposes and due to market growth, our stock holdings (as a percentage of total value) remained above our policy targets. Accordingly, in November, we voted to liquidate another \$250,000 in stock to cash as follows: (a) \$150,000 from our main stock index fund, (b) \$85,000 from our international stock fund, and (c) \$15,000 from our socially responsible investing fund. At the same time, we voted to open a Vanguard Cash Plus Account to hold our cash investments, to earn a higher rate of interest on those holdings (3.35% interest with Vanguard as compared to less than 1% with Capital One). Due to complications in opening the new account, the \$250,000 in stock liquidation was not completed until early January 2026 and is not reflected in the year end allocations (below).

### B. Investment Performance

Our endowment and capital reserve are invested together in a portfolio of stock and bond funds with Vanguard and in cash accounts. The following table summarizes the transfers from and performance of our investments in 2025. For each fund, the table shows the beginning and ending values, any transfers or withdrawals, the change in value in dollars and percentage terms, and the change in value (rate of return) for each asset type disregarding transfers and

withdrawals. As shown, for the year, our combined investments finished 12.4% higher in value after transfers and withdrawals, and 13.25% higher disregarding transfers. Considering inflation (estimated 2.7%), the combined investments were 9.7% higher in value than at the beginning of the year.

Fund	Value 12/31/24	Trans- actions	Value 12/31/25	Change (\$)	Change (%)	Asset Growth
<b>U.S. Stock Index</b>	2,747,006	-80,000	3,119,173	372,167	13.5%	16.5%
<b>Socially Responsible</b>	299,436	-30,000	313,747	14,311	4.8%	14.8%
<b>International Stocks</b>	1,210,151	-20,000	1,574,564	364,413	30%	31.8%
<b>U.S. Bonds</b>	1,197,139	0	1,282,755	85,616	7.2%	7.2%
<b>International Bonds</b>	606,657	0	624,621	17,964	3%	3%
<b>Investment Grade</b>	302,979	0	332,199	29,220	9.6%	9.6%
<b>Short Term Infl. Prot.</b>	338,635	0	359,057	20,422	6%	6%
<b>Cash</b>	121,187	-54,922	66,324	(54,863)	-45.3%	0.05%
<b>All Funds/Accounts</b>	6,823,190	-184,922	7,672,440	849,250	<b>12.4%</b>	<b>13.25%</b>
<b>Endowment</b>	6,137,824		6,908,180	770,356	12.6%	
<b>Capital Reserve</b>	685,368		764,260	78,892	11.5%	
<b>Total</b>	6,823,192		7,672,440	849,248	<b>12.4%</b>	<b>13.25%</b>
<b>Inflation (estimate)</b>					2.7%	
<b>Investment Growth Above Inflation</b>					<b>9.7%</b>	

We measure the endowment's long-term performance against two benchmarks: (1) the endowment's original (2013) value adjusted annually to account for inflation, which we refer to as the "inflation benchmark," and (2) the same inflation benchmark plus a 10% cushion. Meeting the former benchmark means we have retained the endowment's value. Meeting the latter benchmark provides assurance of maintaining such value in the event of a market crash. If our portfolio remains within the allocation targets, we assume that a loss of more than 10% on the endowment's total value is unlikely, even if, e.g., losses on stock funds are greater. At the end of 2025, the actual value of the endowment was \$6,908,180, or approximately \$1.3 million higher than its original inflation-adjusted benchmark value of \$5,591,986, and \$750,000 above the benchmark value plus 10% cushion. Thus, through the end of 2025, we have exceeded both benchmarks.

	endowment value
2013 actual	\$4,152,676
2013 inflation adjusted (through 12/31/25)	\$5,591,986
2013 inflation adjusted plus 10%	\$6,151,184
actual 12/31/25 (after earnings and transfers)	\$6,908,180

### C. Year-End Allocations

Considering all transactions, we ended 2025 with the following asset allocation, as compared to our targets. As noted above, in early January 2026, we liquidated \$250,000 in stocks to be held in cash, to bring our stock and cash allocations closer to our targets.

Asset Type	Target	Actual*
Cash	5%	0.9%
Bonds	35%	29.2%
Stocks	55%	65.3%
<i>Domestic</i>	35%	40.7%
<i>International</i>	15%	20.5%
<i>Socially Responsible</i>	n/a	4.1%
Inflation hedge (short maturity Treasury Infl. Protected Securities)	5%	4.7%

\*The percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

### D. Transfer for 2026

The investment commission calculates the annual transfer from the endowment based on a 12-quarter average value (or “rolling average”). Our settled practice is to recommend a transfer of 3.0% of the endowment’s rolling average plus half of the interest earned on a 2007 bequest from James F. Ross. For 2026, those numbers are \$179,000 (3% of rolling average) plus \$9,300 (Ross transfer), for a **total recommended transfer of \$188,300** (representing 3.15% of the rolling average). This is \$14,100 greater than the 2025 transfer (\$174,200).

### E. Potential Change to Endowment Management

In the fall of 2024, Council charged the Investment Commission with reviewing the Church’s investment policies to determine if we can enhance earnings to help reduce our operating deficits. Under our Bylaws and Investment Policy, our core objective is to maintain the endowment’s value relative to inflation, so the endowment can continually provide the same level of earnings for Church operations into the future. Upon review, the Investment Commission was not confident that we can alter our endowment portfolio to generate significant additional earnings or that we can increase our target average annual transfer and still meet our core objective. But due to market conditions over the past few years that outpaced historical averages, we have succeeded in growing the endowment and now sit comfortably above our inflation benchmarks. In a Report on the Endowment (January 10, 2025), the Commission recommended withdrawing \$250,000 from that realized growth to add to our current bridge funds to help sustain our growth and to help us move toward eliminating our deficits. In November 2025, the Commission reviewed and reaffirmed that recommendation.

Submitted by John Smeltzer

## Outreach & Membership Commission Report

Members: Karen Byrne (chair), David Greer, Jaimie Orr (Secretary), Mary Pence, Whit Wheeler (Council rep), Erin Williams

This commission has a twofold purpose set forth in our current Charter (dated 2015-2016): to increase the visibility of the Church, including its people and missions, to the community and to welcome visitors and help them become involved in the life of the church. Careful consideration of this charge was the focus of our initial meeting last February.

We celebrate the 10 new members who joined First Church in the past year.

Trevor Bakker	Mike Kenney
Jolanda Cornish	Ethan Miller
Roz Grigsby	Angie Ofori-Atta
Omari Hardy	Ken Ofori-Atta
Jody Kenney	Jim Riker

We maintained the usher program carried out by "anchor" ushers who regularly take one Sunday a month and "occasional" ushers who substitute for the anchors and help with special services and events. Erin Williams introduced us to an alternate software for signup – cleverly named "SignUp" -- which we found to be more user friendly than *SignUpGenius*. She and Whitney McColley added a link to it on the church website's first page, sensibly placed next to the zoom and worship folder links and making it more accessible to anyone, not just those already participating.

As in prior years, a member of O&M attended each Inquirers Gathering led by Rev. Amanda. In addition to supporting her leadership, we found that a side benefit of this experience is that it creates one-on-one connections between the commission members and the inquirers that are memorable and cultivate relationships. O&M discussed ways we might extend a personal invitation to newcomers, e.g. a dinner invitation to those who have visited more than three times in the past six months.

Using a \$3,000 grant from the CAC's Trinity fund that Nan McConnell obtained last year, we worked with a church communications consultant, Jessica Quinn, to optimize our presence in on-line searches and better communicate our identity through signs, brochures, posters and other places. Mary Pence served as the contact person for this effort, expanding it to include invitation cards which illustrate various strengths of First Church, including Rev. Amanda, the youth program led by Rev. Sam, anti-racism, and affirmation of LGBT people, as well as an Advent and Christmas services invitation. Other special topic cards are in the works, including one extolling our music program. We became aware that we needed to review and refine the content of our message and are in the process of forming a short-term working group to study that question and propose succinct and effective message phrases. Relying on these

accomplishments, Mary and Nan successfully applied for a second grant for 2026. We were awarded \$3,600, and were commended for our “thoughtful, visionary approach to getting the word out in these perilous times.”



We discussed the year just ended in preparation for this report. We kept returning to the idea that our commission has helped to stimulate a greater awareness in the congregation of the ways First Church can be more visible in the world, and why that matters. It is important to draw to us people who seek a faith home where they can nurture their souls and join us in a ministry calling for justice and peace.

*Submitted by Karen Byrne*

## Social Action and Awareness Commission Report

Members: Jason Carson Wilson, Thaddaeus Elliot (co-chair), Sandy Sorensen (co-chair), Nora Marsh (Council rep)

As expected, 2025 was a full and challenging year for the SAAC and First Congregational DC, as we struggled to be a prophetic, compassionate voice in the midst of so many attacks on basic rights, the constitutional rule of law, the integrity of government agencies and offices charged with acting for the public good, and a devastating budget measure that will cause untold harm to the most marginalized of our neighbors.

A key challenge throughout the year, and one that continues as we move forward, is how best to be strategic, visible and collaborative in our justice witness in the midst of so many calls for witness and service. How do we move forward in the midst of multiple priorities and a public square "zone" flooded with an avalanche of Administration actions, statements and executive orders? How can we be wise as serpents and innocent as doves, aware of the limits of our resources, yet still responsive to needs and visionary in our work? How do we support and accompany the many federal workers in our congregation? How do we reach across the geographic borders of the DMV in our advocacy and education efforts? How do we tend our own spirits and souls in a time of such despair and alarm? A key question for us is how are we uniquely poised and equipped as a faith community rooted in the Nation's Capital, grounded in our theological and faith call to justice - to build a just, compassionate world for all. How do we most effectively leverage our resources and channel our energies for transformative change?



Given those challenges, here are some of the highlights of this year's justice engagement:

- In February SAAC and the Sanctuary Commission collaborated to host visiting preacher Rev. Rhina Ramos. Following worship Rev. Ramos led a conversation on her book "My Heart is a Volcano," reflecting on her experience as an immigrant and UCC faith leader. It was a particularly timely message and conversation as the new Administration announced escalating attacks on immigrant communities.
- From February through August, SAAC and First Church members supported the Repairers of the Breach Moral Mondays campaign with regular witnesses in front of the Supreme Court opposing the Administration's massive budget bill making devastating cuts to social safety net programs.

- SAAC and the Sanctuary Committee invited First Church members to participate in a DMV May Day march in support of worker rights and immigrant rights, ending with a rally at Lafayette Square.
- SAAC co-chair Thaddaeus Elliott suggested a summer worship organized around a remembrance of the 1960s Freedom Summer movement for civil and voting rights. First Church members were invited to think of current efforts to protect basic civil and human rights in the context of that historic justice movement. The Freedom Summer theme was a catalyst for vibrant worship and powerful reflection on our justice identity and commitments.
- In June SAAC coordinated with leaders in the UCC Potomac Association to support World Pride celebrations and witnesses in support of the trans community. First Church members marched in the pride parade and engaged in outreach for First Church.
- With the National Guard occupation of Washington DC in August, along with escalating attacks on immigrant and unhoused communities, SAAC and First Church members worked with Free DC and other community organizing allies like Congregation Action Network, Amica, Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid and advocates for the unhoused to witness against the occupation and engage in community education and empowerment efforts like Know Your Rights, Court Watch and ICE Watch.
- SAAC organized a contingent of First Church members to participate in a September Free DC march opposing National Guard occupation and an October NO Kings march and rally.
- In the midst of an historic, 43-day long government shutdown, SAAC engaged in conversations with various partners about how best to support our own impacted members as well as how to address cutbacks in vital services.
- In October, SAAC invited First Church members to support a Capitol Hill witness of UCC conference ministers standing in solidarity with our most marginalized neighbors under attack by multiple Administration actions and executive orders.
- SAAC members led a congregational conversation about our First Church justice identity and witness at the Fall Annual Retreat. SAAC followed up on that conversation with a congregational survey around our justice identity.
- SAAC continued to support the work of the Drop-In Center, the work of the Anti-Racism and Sanctuary Committees and our congregational involvement in local service projects. SAAC also promoted our First Church Second Sunday offerings lifting up community organizing efforts and highlighting these ongoing partnerships.
- In January 2026, SAAC will lead a congregational discussion of our justice work for the upcoming year, with a theme of Engaged Citizenship: Showing Up in Community.

*Submitted in faith and hope by Sandy Sorensen*

## Antiracism Committee Report

Members: Diane Brenneman, Kim Darling, Lynaya Morris, Jessica Prentice, Rev. Dr. LaTayna Purnell, Janneke Ratcliffe, Gail Sonnemann, Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, and Rev. Amanda Handler-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 most 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: The Politics of Jesus by Obrey Hendricks (co-convened by Lynaya Morris and LaTayna Purnell); Dancing in the Darkness by Otis Moss III (co-convened by Kim Darling, Janneke Ratcliffe, and Rev. Jason Carson Wilson); and Origin, a film by Ava DuVernay based on Isabelle Wilkerson's book Caste (co-convened by Gail Sonnemann and Rev. Amanda).

Throughout the year, we continued the Love Your Neighbor Initiative, sending members out to worship with the historically Black UCC congregations in the DC metro area. On Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday, our congregation worshiped with People's Congregational UCC during the inaugural weekend as a rally was planned for Sunday at the Capital One Arena, closing streets and bringing crowds to the Gallery Place/Chinatown neighborhood. On March 16th, Rev. Jason Carson Wilson and Gail Sonnemann attended worship at Inner Light Ministries, with Jason serving as a guest preacher. On March 23rd, Rev. Amanda was invited to preach at Riverside Baptist, led by the Rev. Mia McClain. During Rev. Amanda's sabbatical, she attended and was invited to preach at Covenant Baptist UCC. Then in September, members of the Antiracism Committee attended a Peace Walk with Covenant Baptist UCC throughout their neighborhood in Ward 8 during the occupation of the city by federal forces.

On September 14th, the Commemorative Artwork Task Force of Thaddaeus Elliott, Meg Maguire, Dwan Reece and Fredda Sparks helped plan and lead "Dedication Sunday" to celebrate the installation of the stained-glass artwork, "Forever in the Path," by artist Jessica Valoris, commemorating those who once lived and labored in bondage on the land on which our church now sits. Dr. Renee K. Harrison of Howard University's School of Divinity served as our guest preacher, and the service closed with a guitar-led procession into the narthex for a ritual of blessing in the presence of the commemorative artwork. Following the service, Dwan Reece moderated a panel discussion with Dr. Harrison, Jessica Valoris, and historian Dr. Antonio Austin



whose research uncovered the names of those enslaved on the land. The announcement of the event noted, "Our nation's narrative of 'freedom and justice for all' calls us to reckon with the core contradiction of slavery and enduring racism, and to remember those whose hands and forced labor built our nation. We speak this truth in a time when our nation's president weaponizes political power to whitewash our history of slavery and Jim Crow by distorting the stories of triumph over adversity, silencing the songs of resistance, and punishing institutions that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. 'Forever in the Path' calls us to renew our covenant to seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God." The event was widely covered by the UCC News.

In the fall we looked ahead to 2026, discerning that antiracism training led by facilitators from the wider Central Atlantic Conference would be a priority. We secured a proposal, which was approved by the church Council, for a six-week antiracism training during Lent offered in two cohorts, in-person and on Zoom. As we seek to build a critical mass of members accompanying one another on the lifelong journey of antiracism, we are prioritizing new members and those who anticipate serving in a leadership capacity in 2026. The training will focus on content from the UCC's Sacred Conversations to End Racism. The facilitation team includes Dr. Vivian Jackson of Peoples Congregational UCC, the Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma, Senior Minister of St. Paul's UCC in MD, and Saskia Campbell, member at Hope UCC and Executive Director of the George Mason University Career Services.

Submitted by Rev. Amanda Hendl-Voss

## Drop-In Center Report

Under the leadership of Jarred Bowman, our Coordinator, and in partnership with Sasha Bruce, our weekly Drop-in Center continues to serve underhoused youth in downtown DC. For ten years, through pandemic closures, staff transitions, and changing community needs, this partnership has provided services to young people in need.

Each Tuesday evening from 6-8 pm approximately 40 youth come for food, a safe place to gather, talk, play games, and recharge. If guests need additional services, Sasha Bruce is on site to facilitate connections and referrals. After a reset since Covid, Sasha Bruce is once again offering programming in the evening on such subjects as social media bullying, healthy relationships as well as trivia contests. A highlight for church participation is the annual Thanksgiving feast. Thirty First Church volunteers provided food and served guests with a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

The program's success is a testament to the dedication of both organizations and the consistent commitment of Jarred Bowen. Jarred has been the constant operational anchor earning the trust of partners, volunteers, and youth alike. We thank Jarred Bowman for his clear

communication of expectations with compassion and continuity in staffing. In addition to First Church volunteers, Table Church volunteers have made a strong, essential commitment to our joint mission. We give thanks for Jarred, our volunteers, and FCC volunteer coordinator, Gail Sonnemann.

Submitted by Nan McConnell

## Sanctuary Committee Report

*The Sanctuary group is a committee of the Social Action & Awareness Commission. Members: Michael Enseki-Frank, Cynthia Hobbs, Jody Kenney, James Moore, Susan Saudek, Peter Tracey*

“Justice, justice, shall you pursue.” Deuteronomy 16:11

With a new administration, 2025 was the worst year for our immigrant siblings as ICE increased brutality and violence against Brown and Black residents. First Church provided witness and support in many ways, often partnering with organizations like CAN, AMICA, Free DC, Migrant Mutual Aid Network, Tommy's Pantry and Food Justice DMV. Food Justice DMV was designated as a Second Sunday Offering recipient. Jody Kenney obtained a \$5k grant from the UCC's Global Hope program to support Food Justice DMV. Jody and Mike Kenney along with Abby Goodman-Johnson volunteered at Food Justice DMV, packing and delivering groceries to immigrant families. Rev. Sam led our youth in packing and delivering food boxes for Tommy's Pantry.

In the Autumn we created a mission statement to dedicate the back wall space in the Narthex to twice/yearly gallery shows highlighting social justice issues. Our first exhibit, “Building Bridges” from The Family Diversity Project shows photographic portraits of immigrants and refugees to the US, telling their stories. Thanks to Cynthia Hobbs and Ed Chaffee for securing and installing this powerful exhibit.

On May 20, 2025, I was humbled and blessed to receive the Seabury Senior Volunteer of the Year award at the National Cathedral. My sincere thanks to all of you, as I could not have achieved this without all your support.

Several First Church members including Sandy Sorensen, Susan Saudek, Rev. Barbara Gerlach and Rev. Amanda Hendl-Voss stood as witness at vigils and protest rallies, as well as providing accompaniment at courthouses and visitation in detention centers. These events were organized by our partners at CAN, Free DC, Amica and Migrant Mutual Aid Society. CAN offers a free power of attorney service for DC immigrants, and First Church has agreed to provide the \$8 fee required for this service.

2026 will be another year of challenges, as we pursue justice together. Thanks to the Sanctuary Committee and other Church members for their support.

Submitted by James “Jamey” Moore

## Worship Commission Report

Members: Ann Bushmiller (chair), Chris Byrne, Patrick Darling LaGamma, Sarah McKinnis, Jamey Moore (Council rep), and Lynaya Morris. Staff: Rev. Amanda Handler-Voss, Rev. Sam McFerran, and Ulung Tanoto, Director of Music Ministry.

A core activity for the Commission and other interested members is preparing the sanctuary for Sunday worship. It's an opportunity to be creative – we place cloths on the altar and lectern, bring flowers or greens, prepare and light candles, provide the communion elements, and help decorate the full sanctuary for Advent. The Commission appreciates Chris Byrne's consistent help mounting the large banners that set the tone for the service or season. Commission members cleaned and organized the worship closet behind the altar, which has made the Sunday set ups easier.

We welcomed Ulung Tanoto, the new Music Director, in May and at his request provided consistent feedback on the music ministry. His collaborative skills, fresh viewpoint, and ability to play an unbelievable number of instruments are all very welcome. We hope to re-engage with him later this year.

We happily celebrated the baptisms of three babies this year: Echo Evangeline Zawada, Kenneth Ofori-Atta Acheampong, and Malachi Carter Simmons.

As a special project this summer, the Commission supported Karen Byrne, Barbara Gerlach, and Sam McFerran as they planned worship services and provided pastoral coverage during Rev. Amanda's sabbatical. During this time, we experimented with a more intimate set up that we have carried over for holiday Sundays and evening services. We were inspired by sermons from a diverse range of church members and visiting clergy, including Kaeley McEvoy, Jason Carson Wilson, Karen Byrne, Aubra Love, Joseph Darling-LaGamma, LaTayna Purnell, Meg Maguire, Andrew Hamilton, Sandy Sorenson, Nick McConnell, Sophie Miyoshi, and Sam McFerran. We were moved by their perspectives and wisdom. Thank you all!

The Commission provided input to Rev. Amanda regarding the themes for church seasons:

- Lent: Everything in Between: Meeting God in the Midst of Extremes
- Summer: Freedom Summer
- Fall: Into The Deep
- Stewardship: Dreaming God's Dream
- Advent: What Do You Fear: Insisting on Hope

We considered how to transition more purposefully into sacred time and the role to be served by the prelude and postlude.

On September 14, we dedicated the beautiful stained-glass windows that we commissioned as part of church's reckoning with the knowledge that our home at 10th and G was part of a slaveholding plantation less than 200 years ago.

Submitted by Ann Bushmiller

## Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer oversees and coordinates the management of the Church's finances, including by serving ex officio as a member of the Finance Commission and as the convening member of the Investment Commission. Please see the reports of those commissions for additional details. Attached to this report are: (1) a preliminary balance sheet for the end of 2025; (2) a final report on the 2025 operating budget and proposed budget for 2026; and (3) a report on pledge statistics for the past few years.

The good news: in 2025, we saw a substantial improvement in the Church's financial position. Since 2020, we have been running annual operating deficits, which began during the COVID 19 pandemic, when we experienced a large drop in building use and income. We chose to continue deficit spending in the succeeding years to maintain staffing levels and Church vitality, and to foster Church growth. We were blessed to receive approximately \$500,000 in bequests in 2019, which we designated as "bridge funds" in 2020 to enable a period of sustained deficit spending as an investment in our future. At the beginning of 2025, we had a projected annual deficit of \$82,228, which would have reduced our remaining bridge funds (\$229,836) by more than a third. Fortunately, as detailed below, due to much better than anticipated building income, strong giving by our members and friends, and some unanticipated savings, we ended 2025 with a deficit of only **\$22,074.33**, which will extend the life of the bridge funds and give us more time to pursue growth. We are blessed for the strong financial support from old and new members and friends that enabled us to finish the year so strongly.

We also look forward to strong support and solid finances in 2026, albeit with a step back with respect to the deficit. The asking budget has a projected deficit of \$52,556, which is due principally to an expected decline in building income, rising building costs (due to an aging building) and higher personnel costs (to keep pace with inflation). On the plus side, pledged and unpledged income for 2026 is projected to exceed 2025 levels and our endowment transfer (due to strong market performance) will also rise. Compared to our starting point one year ago, we remain on a positive trajectory.

The details:

- We ended 2025 with total offerings (pledged and unpledged) of \$340,485.88, nearly \$14,500 higher than originally projected (Budget Report Line 4). Due to a strong pledge campaign, we anticipate further increases in 2026. The asking budget includes \$330,000 in pledged income (based on commitments in hand) and anticipates \$377,500 in all offerings.
- We also ended 2025 with substantially higher building income (\$321,949) than originally anticipated (Line 28). The increase (of nearly \$43,000) was fueled by substantially greater occasional use (Budget Report Line 26) and greater shared use (Line 25). We applaud Byron (our Building Manager) and the Facilities Commission for outstanding work in

achieving these results. For 2026, we project a reduction in shared use due in part to the loss of one longstanding shared user, and a reduction in occasional use based on current commitments and knowledge that some use from last year will not recur. Although lease income (Line 14) and parking income (Line 27) are expected to rise, we project total building income in 2026 (\$291,279) to be approximately \$30,000 lower than where we finished in 2025 (Line 28).

- Keeping with market trends, our investments (the endowment and capital reserve fund) had another strong year in 2025. After earnings, expenses, and withdrawals for operational purposes, our combined investment accounts ended 2025 with a total value of \$7,672,440, as compared to \$6,823,192 at the beginning of the year. That amounts to a gain of \$849,248 or 12.4%. For comparison, the annual inflation rate was approximately 2.7%. Due to strong market performances over the last three years, the asking budget calls for a transfer of \$188,300 from the endowment fund to be applied toward the 2026 budget, up from \$174,200 in 2025 (Line 32). See the Investment Commission report for more details.
- We ended 2025 with total income—from offerings, building income, and the endowment transfer—of \$859,446 which is \$66,453 higher than projected at the beginning of the year (Line 54). For 2026, we project a modest increase in total income of \$870,499 (Line 52).
- On the expense side, we ended 2025 with total building expenses of 272,845, or nearly \$15,000 more than anticipated (Line 109). In addition, Council approved \$49,222 in spending from the capital reserve fund—which is managed separately from the annual budget—for the replacement of HVAC components (Lines 8, 54, and 217). These extra building expenses are indicative of an aging building and could signal higher building costs in the future. The Facilities Commission intends to conduct a comprehensive review of the capital reserve in 2026, to ensure that we are setting sufficient reserves aside to meet anticipated future capital expenses. The 2026 asking includes \$278,078 for non-capital (regularly budgeted) building expenses, a modest increase from 2025 (Line 109).
- In the category “parish expenses” (which includes most non-building expenses), our 2025 spending was below the approved annual amount by \$22,308 (Line 215), due principally to lower than anticipated office expenses (Line 166), one time savings in the music program due to the transition in staffing (Line 153), and funds left unspent in the budgets for Outreach and Membership (Line 195) and Social Action (Line 208). Compared to 2025, the 2026 asking budget calls for an increase of more than \$32,000 in parish spending (Line 215). These increases assume that some of the savings in 2025 will not be realized in 2026. In addition, the 2026 budget includes a 2.9 percent cost of living adjustment (or COLA) for all employees and contractors.
- Excluding transfers from the capital reserve for capital replacements, our total income in 2025 was \$859,446 (Line 54) and our total expenses were \$881,531 (Line 218) for a net

operating deficit of \$22,074 (Line 219), our best performance since 2019. For 2026, we project total income of \$870,499 (Line 52), total expenses of \$923,055 (Line 216), for a net deficit of \$52,556 (Line 219). Our annual income, expenses, and operating surplus or deficit since 2018 are shown on the following table. The numbers for 2026 are projections based on the asking budget.

Year	Total Income	Total Expenses	Surplus or (Deficit)
2018	746,349	680,687	65,662
2019	698,242	679,714	8,448
2020	609,007	683,301	(74,294)
2021	631,014	722,138	(91,124)
2022	760,419	795,707	(35,288)
2023	785,040	851,947	(66,907)
2024	778,291	877,785	(99,494)
<b>2025</b>	<b>865,113</b>	<b>881,531</b>	<b>(20,074)</b>
2026	879,499	923,055	(52,556)

This report is based on data compiled by Assistant Treasurer Lucille Dickinson, who monitors all Church assets, income, and expenses, including by tracking pledges and pledge income, by preparing monthly progress reports on income and expenses in relation to our approved operating budget, and by maintaining the Church's balance sheets. The Church could not operate without Lucille's steadfast commitment. The Church also could not manage financially without Assistant Treasurer Polly Gordon, who handles the Church's checkbook and pays nearly all the church bills. And the Investment Commission could not complete its work without the wise counsel and assistance of Karen Pence. Lucille, Polly, and Karen, thank you very much for your service to the Church and for making my tenure as Treasurer easy.

Submitted by John Smeltzer

## PLEDGE STATISTICS 2022 to 2026

Table I -- Pledging Summary

	2026 As of Jan 8, 2026	2025 As of Jan 14, 2025	2024 As of Jan 5, 2024	2023 As of July 26, 2023	2022 As of Jan 30, 2022
Pledges	63	71	72	74	79
Persons Pledging	99	99	106	105	112
Total Amount	329,035	309,325	281,700	285,934	299,000
Average per pledge	5,223	4,357	3,913	3,864	3,785
Average per person	3,324	3,124	2,658	2,723	2,670

Table II -- Number of Pledges by Amount

1-599	2	5	6	4	8
600-999	4	5	7	6	7
1000-1999	11	15	15	26	19
2000-2999	12	14	11	8	10
3000-5999	14	12	17	15	21
6000 & over	20	20	16	15	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>79</b>

Table III -- Changes in Amount Pledged

### Pledges Continuing

Increased	36	43	37	39	52
Unchanged	15	15	18	23	15
Decreased	6	8	7	7	4
New or returned	6	5	10	5	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>79</b>

January 15, 2026

**First Congregational Church Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2025**

	Distribution account	Total
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
Capital One 360	65,934.52	
City First Bank Money Mkt	139,658.76	
Truist Checking	137,278.18	
Truist Holding Account for Endowment	389.79	
<b>Total for Bank Accounts</b>		<b>\$343,261.25</b>
Other Current Assets		
Account Receivable	59,341.45	
Adams Dental Insurance	-49.34	
Adams FSA account	5.28	
Adams Vision Insurance	163.19	
<b>Total for Account Receivable</b>		<b>\$59,460.58</b>
Prepaid Expenses	5,171.07	
Reserve Held by Lincoln Properties	-3,216.64	
<b>Total for Other Current Assets</b>		<b>\$61,415.01</b>
<b>Total for Current Assets</b>		<b>\$404,676.26</b>
Endowment Fund and Capital Reserve Fund Investments		
Vanguard FTSE Social Index Investment		
Vanguard FTSE Social Index Investment	9,428.38	
Vanguard FTSE Social Index Investment unrealized gain or loss	304,318.53	
<b>Total for Vanguard FTSE Social Index Investment</b>		<b>\$313,746.91</b>
Vanguard Intermediate Term Investment Grade Total		
Vanguard Intermediate Term Investment Grade	375,568.56	
Vanguard Intermediate Term Investment Grade Fund unrealized gain or loss	-43,369.75	
<b>Total for Vanguard Intermediate Term Investment Grade Total</b>		<b>\$332,198.81</b>
Vanguard Short Term Inflation Protected Securities Fund Total		
Vanguard Short Term Inflation Protected Securities Fund	358,072.09	
Vanguard Short Term Inflation Protected Securities Fund unrealized gain or loss	984.72	
<b>Total for Vanguard Short Term Inflation Protected Securities Fund Total</b>		<b>\$359,056.81</b>
Vanguard Total Bond Fund Total		
Vanguard Total Bond Fund	923,065.66	

January 15, 2026

**First Congregational Church Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2025**

Distribution account	Total
Vanguard Total Bond Fund unrealized gain or loss	359,689.68
<b>Total for Vanguard Total Bond Fund Total</b>	<b>\$1,282,755.34</b>
Vanguard Total International Bond Index Total	
Vanguard International Bond Index	684,848.49
Vanguard Total International Bond Index unrealized gain or loss	-60,227.23
<b>Total for Vanguard Total International Bond Index Total</b>	<b>\$624,621.26</b>
Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund Total	
Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund	1,038,537.68
Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund unrealized gain or loss	536,026.64
<b>Total for Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund Total</b>	<b>\$1,574,564.32</b>
Vanguard Total Stock Fund Total	
Vanguard Total Stock Fund	118,743.96
Vanguard Total Stock Fund unrealized gain or loss	3,000,429.26
<b>Total for Vanguard Total Stock Fund Total</b>	<b>\$3,119,173.22</b>
<b>Total for Endowment Fund and Capital Reserve Fund Investments</b>	<b>\$7,606,116.67</b>
<b>Total for Other Assets</b>	<b>\$7,606,116.67</b>
<b>Total for Assets</b>	<b>\$8,010,792.93</b>
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable (A/P)	3,757.00
<b>Total for Accounts Payable</b>	<b>\$3,757.00</b>
Other Current Liabilities	
Income Received Before Applicable Period, owed to subsequent year budget	0.00
Prepaid Occasional Use	11,070.72
Prepaid Pledges	32,707.11
<b>Total for Income Received Before Applicable Period, owed to subsequent year budget</b>	<b>\$43,777.83</b>
Payables	12,556.38
<b>Total for Payables</b>	<b>\$12,556.38</b>
Payroll Clearing	0.00
Adams Dental Insurance deductions	-47.00
<b>Total for Payroll Clearing</b>	<b>-\$47.00</b>

January 15, 2026

**First Congregational Church Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2025**

Distribution account	Total
Payroll Liabilities	0.00
Pension Withholding Payable	100.92
<b>Total for Payroll Liabilities</b>	<b>\$100.92</b>
Security Deposits received from renters, users	0.00
Flex space security deposit	5,500.00
Friday Morning Music Club	500.00
Table Church security deposit	2,000.00
<b>Total for Security Deposits received from renters, users</b>	<b>\$8,000.00</b>
<b>Total for Other Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$64,388.13</b>
<b>Total for Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$68,145.13</b>
Long-term Liabilities	
Capital Reserve Fund	764,260.84
<b>Total for Long-term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$764,260.84</b>
<b>Total for Liabilities</b>	<b>\$832,405.97</b>
Net Assets	
Endowment Fund Net Assets	
Redevelopment proceeds	3,397,628.91
Restricted by Donor	0.00
Griffis Bequest	15,093.41
Joan King bequest	10,000.00
Ross Trust donation 2007; one half of annual income to Mission budget	141,742.73
<b>Total for Restricted by Donor</b>	<b>\$166,836.14</b>
Restricted by Specific Church Action	
Ruth Shinn bequest and family donation	99,300.00
Allocated for 2024 commitment	250.00
Allocated for 2025 commitment	6,000.00
Allocated for 2026 commitment	6,000.00
<b>Total for Ruth Shinn bequest and family donation</b>	<b>\$111,550.00</b>
<b>Total for Restricted by Specific Church Action</b>	<b>\$111,550.00</b>
Unrestricted	
Other - Cumulative Unrestricted Endowment	2,187,944.20
<b>Total for Unrestricted</b>	<b>\$2,187,944.20</b>
<b>Total for Endowment Fund Net Assets</b>	<b>\$5,863,959.25</b>

January 15, 2026

**First Congregational Church Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2025**

Distribution account	Total
Funds Restricted by Church Action	
Bequests Remaining in Gen Fund	229,835.38
CAC grant air quality monitoring	500.00
Special Achakzai Family Fund	0.00
Special Art Memorial Fund	-650.00
Special Communications Fund	144.00
<b>Total for Funds Restricted by Church Action</b>	<b>\$229,829.38</b>
General Fund Net Assets	
Dedicated General Fund Balances	
C. Memorials	0.00
Cummings, Claricia	1,100.00
Griffis, Anne	1,125.05
Griffis, Richard	368.00
Hanson, Bruce	385.00
Hayes, Barbara	50.00
King, Joan	50.00
Marsh, Dwight	130.00
Olson, Sally	100.00
<b>Total for C. Memorials</b>	<b>\$3,308.05</b>
<b>Total for Dedicated General Fund Balances</b>	<b>\$3,308.05</b>
Restricted General Fund Balances	5,214.16
Unrestricted General Fund Assets	63,979.57
<b>Total for General Fund Net Assets</b>	<b>\$72,501.78</b>
Retained Earnings	0.00
Net Income 2025. \$1,034,170.88 net income endowment fund, (\$22,074.33) deficit for general fund	1,012,096.55
<b>Total for Net Assets</b>	<b>\$7,178,386.96</b>
<b>Total for Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$8,010,792.93</b>

December 31, 2025 FINAL		First Congregational Church		2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025		Finance/Council/Personnel	
SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Fin/Invest	O&M	Sr. Min	Facilities
COP	Finance						
		Actual Dec 31	2025 Approved	Variance from Approved Budget	% compare to 100%	Comments	Estimate
<b>GENERAL INCOME</b>							
<b>A. Pledges</b>							
Pledges--Current		304,762.85	305,000	-237.15	99.92%	2026: Asking was \$320,000	330,000
Pledges--Prior Year		7,425.00	6,000	1,425.00	123.75%	2026: Asking was \$7,500	17,500
Unpledged		28,298.03	15,000	13,298.03	188.65%	2026: Asking was \$18,000	30,000
<b>Total A. Pledges</b>		<b>\$ 340,485.88</b>	<b>\$ 326,000</b>	<b>14,485.88</b>	<b>104.44%</b>		<b>\$ 377,500</b>
<b>B. Other Income - General Fund</b>							
Investment		195.05	300	-104.95	65.02%		220
Other income - other		636.00	950	-314.00	66.95%	Interest on cash held by LPC	700
Transfer from Capital Reserve		49,222.00				2025 YTD: Front door fix, LPC's replacement of VFD in Feb	
Write off old receivable and payables		(3,965.00)					
<b>Total B. Other Income - General Fund</b>		<b>\$ 46,088.05</b>	<b>\$ 1,250</b>	<b>\$ 44,838.05</b>			<b>\$ 920</b>
<b>C. Building use</b>							
1. Lease agreements							
a. Washington Chorus		35,893.00	35,154	739.00	102.10%	5% incr per contract.	36,784
b. Pathways to Housing lease		52,436.00	53,392	44.00	100.08%	3% incr office plus \$262.50/mo pkg space.	54,312
<b>Total 1. Lease agreements</b>		<b>\$ 88,329.00</b>	<b>87,546</b>	<b>\$ 783.00</b>	<b>100.89%</b>		<b>\$ 91,096</b>
2. Shared Use Agreements							
Close Up Foundation		16,584.50	22,639	-6,054.50	73.26%		17,944
Committee of 100 shared use agreement		8,433.00	9,000	-567.00	93.70%		8,688
Congressional Chorus		11,375.00	20,941	-16,791.00	54.32%		-
DC Drummers		13,980.00					20,577
Encore Chorale Agreement		8,850.00	8,792	58.00	100.66%		9,150
Friday Morning Music Club		4,150.00	4,195	-45.00	98.93%		4,880
Table Church		25,839.00	15,000	10,839.00	172.26%	CHANGE IN ASKING 2026: Since Oct 2025 congregational mtg, Table Church notified FCCC they would leave after 2025, except for some storage space.	3,150

December 31, 2025 FINAL  
 First Congregational Church  
 2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025

	SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Finance/Council/PPersonnel	St. Min	Facilities
	COP	Finance	Fin/Invest	O&M			
<b>Budget ownership is color-coded per legend above.</b>							
22	Theater Lab summer program	20,000.00	20,000	0.00	100.00%	8 wks, 5 days/wk	16,500
23	Washington Bach Consort	20,980.00	20,703	277.00	101.3%		24,639
24	Washington Chorus (separate from lease)	13,037.80	9,500	3,557.80	137.45%		13,855
25	<b>Total 2. Shared Use Agreements</b>	<b>\$143,249.30</b>	<b>130,770</b>	<b>12,479.30</b>	<b>109.54%</b>		<b>119,383</b>
26	<b>3. Occasional Use</b>						
27	<b>4. Parking Space contracts</b>						
28	<b>Total C. Building use</b>	<b>\$ 321,948.65</b>	<b>\$ 279,053</b>	<b>42,895.65</b>	<b>115.37%</b>		<b>\$ 291,279</b>
29	<b>D. Transfers from Endowment Funds</b>						
30	1. Transfer from Endowment Fund - Ops	166,000.00	166,000	0.00	100.00%	3% transfer	179,000
31	2. Transfer from Endowment Fund -Mission	8,200.00	8,200	0.00	100.00%	Hall interest on Jim/Miriam Ross bequest	9,300
32	<b>Total D. Transfers from Endowment Funds</b>	<b>\$ 174,200.00</b>	<b>174,200</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>		<b>188,300</b>
33	<b>F. Contributions for Flowers</b>						
34	<b>G. Second Sunday Offerings</b>						
35	a. JANUARY	1,583.33	1,583.33			HBCU Micro Scholarship Fund	
36	b. FEBRUARY	671.00	671.00			ThriveDC	
37	c. MARCH	1,710.00	1,710.00			UCC's One Great Hour of Sharing	
38	d. APRIL	900.00	900.00			Anacostia Watershed Society and Interfaith	
39	e. MAY	971.00	971.00			Power and Light	
40	f. JUNE	1,335.00	1,335.00			Wider Circle	
41	g. JULY	625.00	625.00			Trans Lifeline	
42	h. AUGUST	1,233.00	1,233.00			UCC's Strengthen the Church	
43	i. SEPTEMBER	875.00	875.00			Amica Center	
44	j. OCTOBER	1,196.00	1,196.00			Ward 2 Mutual Aid	
45	k. NOVEMBER	3,415.00	3,415.00			UCC's Neighbors in Need	
						Help for federal workers/Food Justice	

December 31, 2025 FINAL  
 First Congregational Church  
 2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025

	SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Finance/Council/PPersonnel	St. Min	Facilities
	COP	Finance	Fin/Invest	O&M			
<b>Budget ownership is color-coded per legend above.</b>							
46	<b>I. DECEMBER</b>						
47	Total G. Second Sunday Offerings						
48	H. Other special offerings						
49	Christmas Eve						
50	Other special offerings						
51	Total H. Other special offerings						
52	<b>Total GENERAL INCOME</b>						
53	Uncategorized income						
54	Adjusted total GENERAL INCOME						
55	<b>GENERAL EXPENSES</b>						
56	<b>A. BENEVOLENCE and SECOND SUNDAY</b>						
57	1. Our Church's Wider Mission						
58	2. Potomac Association						
59	3. Wash. Interfaith Network						
60	4. Congregation Action Network						
61	<b>6. Second Sunday Offering</b>						
62	a. JANUARY						
63	b. FEBRUARY						
64	c. MARCH						
65	d. APRIL						
66	e. MAY						
67	f. JUNE						
68	g. JULY						
69	h. AUGUST						
70	i. SEPTEMBER						
71	j. OCTOBER						
72	k. NOVEMBER						
73	<b>I. DECEMBER</b>						

December 31, 2025 FINAL  
 First Congregational Church  
 2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025

	SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Finance/Council/PPersonnel	St. Min	Facilities
	COP	Finance	Fin/Invest	O&M			
<b>Budget ownership is color-coded per legend above.</b>							
		Actual Dec 31	2025 Approved	Approved Budget	Variance from Approved Budget	% compare to 100%	Comments
							<b>2026 Estimate</b>
		\$ 15,504.33	12,500	\$ 3,004.33	124.03%		\$ 12,500.00
74	Total 6. Second Sunday Offering						
75	7. Other special offerings						
76	Christmas Eve	511.30		511.30			Mary House
77	Other special offerings	7,740.00		7,740.00			Shaw, DIC, Staff gift
78	Total 7. Other special offerings	\$ 8,251.30	\$ 0	\$ 8,251.30			
79	Total A. BENEVOLENCE and SECOND SUNDAY	\$ 64,794.63	\$ 53,500	\$ 11,294.63	121.11%		\$ 54,000.00
80	<b>B. CAPITAL</b>						
81	1. Major Repairs	16,904.19	15,000	1,904.19	112.69%		25,000
82	2. Planned Capital Replacement Reserve	37,500.00	37,500	0.00	100.00%	2025: Lower budget then incr 1.5%/yr. With rate of return, capital reserve should be adequate.	38,065
83	Capital Reserve projects	49,222.00					
84	Total B. CAPITAL	\$ 103,626.19	\$ 52,500	\$ 51,126.19			<b>63,065</b>
85	<b>C. FACILITIES</b>						
86	1. FCC Share of Lincoln Properties Expense						
87	a. LPC Taxes & Insurance	1,090.93	1,020	70.93	106.95%		1,140
88	b. LPC Administrative Expense						
89	c. LPC Utilities						
90	Electricity	68,902.04	71,310	-2,407.96	96.62%		71,180
91	Gas	10,410.42	7,815	2,595.42	133.21%		9,300
92	Trash Removal	1,925.16	1,560	365.16	123.41%		1,515
93	Water and Sewer	2,232.08	2,748	-515.92	81.23%		2,600
94	Total c. LPC Utilities	\$83,469.70	\$ 83,433	\$ 36.70	100.04%		<b>84,595</b>
95	d. LPC Repairs & Maintenance	59,780.91	53,092	6,688.91	112.60%		66,183
96	e. LPC Management Fee	21,600.00	21,600	0.00	100.00%		21,600
97	f. LPC Payroll	12,670.28	10,241	2,429.28	123.72%		10,596
98	Total 1. FCC Share of Lincoln Properties Expense	\$178,611.82	\$ 169,386	\$ 9,225.82	105.45%		<b>\$ 184,114</b>
99	3. Maintenance and Supplies not via LPC						

December 31, 2025 FINAL  
 First Congregational Church  
 2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025

	SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Finance/Council/PPersonnel	St. Min	Facilities
	COP	Finance	Fin/Invest	O&M			
<b>Budget ownership is color-coded per legend above.</b>							
	Actual Dec 31	2025 Approved	Approved Budget	Variance from Approved Budget	% compare to 100%	Comments	2026 Estimate
100	14,473.00	12,710	1,763.00	113.87% incl 2%incr contract workers			12,620.00
101	4,562.54	4,000	562.54	114.06%			5,000.00
102	2,172.60	3,000	-827.40	72.42%			3,400.00
103	8,019.39	4,500	3,519.39	178.21%			6,000.00
104	<b>\$ 29,227.53</b>	<b>\$ 24,210</b>	<b>5,017.33</b>	<b>120.73%</b>			<b>\$ 27,020.00</b>
105	612.50	700	-87.50	87.50%			700
106	<b>37,244.00</b>	<b>37,244</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b> No change in 2026			<b>37244</b>
107	802.50	700	102.50	114.64%			\$ 1,000.00
108	26,346.59	24,000	2,346.59	109.78%			28000
109	<b>\$ 272,844.94</b>	<b>\$ 256,240</b>	<b>16,604.94</b>	<b>106.48%</b>			<b>\$ 278,078</b>
110	<b>D. MINISTERIAL PROGRAM</b>						
111	<b>1. Senior Minister</b>						
112	a. Salary, Housing All., Soc Sec offset	104,740.71	104,730	10.71	100.01%		107,768
113	b. Health Insurance	16,975.50	17,014	-38.50	99.77%		18,458
114	c. Life Insurance & Disability	1,571.04	1,571	0.04	100.00%		1,617
115	d. Pension	14,662.44	14,662	0.44	100.00%		15,087
116	e. Continuing education	1,023.64	1,200	-176.36	85.30%		1,300
117	f. Reimbursable Expenses	2,301.15	2,650	-348.85	86.84%		2,850
118	<b>Total 1. Senior Minister</b>	<b>\$ 141,274.48</b>	<b>141,827</b>	<b>-\$ 552.52</b>	<b>99.61%</b>		<b>\$ 147,080</b>
119	<b>2. Guest Preachers</b>						
120	2,660.00	3,300	-640.00	80.61%			3,000
121	<b>7. Pastor's Discretionary</b>						
122	<b>Total D. MINISTERIAL PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$ 144,927.79</b>	<b>\$ 146,127</b>	<b>(-\$ 1,199.21)</b>	<b>99.18%</b>		<b>\$ 151,180</b>
123	<b>E. PARISH</b>						
124	Care of Parish	1,585.52	2,700	-1,114.48	58.72%		2,700
125	Child Care						
126	a. Child Care Workers	4,921.09	4,535	386.09	108.51% 3 hrs, 2 staff per Sun; 75% of yr; 2% COLA		4,762
127	b. Child Care Workers payroll tax expense	306.71	347	-40.29	88.33%		364
128	Total Child Care	<b>\$5,227.80</b>	<b>4,882</b>	<b>\$ 345.80</b>	<b>107.08%</b>		<b>\$ 5,126</b>
	Christian Education						

December 31, 2025 FINAL  
 First Congregational Church  
 2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025

	SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Finance/Council/PPersonnel	St. Min	Facilities
	COP	Finance	Fin/Invest	O&M			
<b>Budget ownership is color-coded per legend above.</b>							
		Actual Dec 31	2025 Approved	Variance from Approved Budget	% compare to 100%	Comments	2026 Estimate
129	a. Christian Education Commission	2,101.67	1,800	301.67	116.76%		1,700
130	b. Special Project (Music Min)	600.00	1,000	-400.00	60.00%		1,000
131	c. Youth Service Project Expenses	1,335.47	2,200	-844.53	61.61% 2025: Reflects \$1,637 donations for youth service project, \$2,100 from six families of participants, and \$750 Potomac Assoc grant		2,200
132	<b>d. Associate Minister</b>						
133	A. Assoc. Salary	67,711.60	66,979	732.60	101.09%		68,648
134	B. Assoc. Health Stipend	6,556.28	6,551	-14.72	99.78%		7,644
135	C. Assoc. disability insurance	1,000.80	1,005	-4.20	99.58%		1,030
136	D. Assoc. Retirement benefit	6,671.40	6,698	-26.60	99.60%		6,865
137	E. Assoc. Professional Development		250	-250.00	0.00%		250
138	Total d. Associate Minister						
139	Total Christian Education	<b>\$ 81,920.08</b>	<b>\$ 81,483</b>	<b>\$ 437.08</b>	<b>100.54%</b>		<b>\$ 84,437</b>
140	Conf. & Mtg. Expenses	882.50	1,000	-117.50	88.25% 2025: Reflects deposit for fall retreat offset by payments from attendees.		500
141	Contingency	288.04	1,000	-711.96	28.80% Includes \$250 gift for Tom S offset by \$95 in donations.		1,000
142	Finance Commission						
143	Flowers	49.99	100	-50.01	49.99% Stewardship resources		100
144	Member Ordination Support	1,739.76	-	1,789.76			0
145	<b>Music - Director of Music Ministry</b>	500.00	500	0.00	100.00%		500
146	a. Dir. of Music Min. Salary	19,936.00	37,440	-17,504.00	53.25%		30,821
147	b. Dir. of Music Min. Payroll Taxes	1,739.64	2,864	-1,124.36	60.74%		2,358
148	c. Dir. of Music Min. Health Stipend	2,007.72	2,000	7.72	10.39%		2,900
149	d. Dir. of Music Min. Retirement benefit	998.40	1,310	-311.60	76.21% 5% retirement benefit started May 1		1,541
150	e. Dir. of Music Disability Insurance	0.00	562	-562.00	0.00%		-
151	f. Dir. of Music Min. Prof. Dev.	30.73	250	-219.27	12.29%		250
152	<b>Music Interim Period</b>	10,800.00		10,800.00			
153	Total Music - Director of Music Ministry	<b>\$ 35,512.49</b>	<b>\$ 44,426</b>	<b>(8,913.51)</b>	<b>79.94%</b>		<b>\$ 37,870</b>
154	Office						

December 31, 2025 FINAL  
 First Congregational Church  
 2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025

	SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Finance/Council/Personnel	Fin/Invest	O&M	St. Min	Facilities
<b>Budget ownership is color-coded per legend above.</b>									
155	Accounting System	3,731.92	3,700	31.92	100.86%				3,700
156	Bank Charges	264.51	500	-245.49	50.90%				150
157	Giving Fees	2,053.14	2,000	53.14	102.66%				2,400
158	Internet - monthly	1,639.56	2,500	-870.44	65.18%				3,678
159	Licenses and Fees	0.00	200	-200.00					180
160	Office equipment maintenance	7,084.29	7,500	-415.71	94.46%				7,500
161	Office Software	2,305.43	3,000	-694.57	76.85%				2,500
162	Postage	273.95	200	73.95	136.98%				200
163	Printing & Office Supplies	2,164.33	3,500	-1,365.67	60.98%				3,500
164	Telephone - monthly	2,067.30	2,500	-432.70	82.69%				1,900
165	Workers Compensation Insurance	2,057.00	2,500	-443.00	82.28%				2,500
166	<b>Total Office</b>	<b>\$ 23,591.43</b>	<b>\$ 28,100</b>	<b>-\$ 4,508.57</b>	<b>83.96%</b>				<b>\$ 28,208</b>
167	<b>Office and Building Staff</b>								
168	<b>Building Manager</b>								
169	<b>A. Building Manager salary</b>	67,830.79	67,056	774.79	101.16% 2026 asking; includes extra 40 hrs for operating manual				70,784
170	<b>B. Building Manager payroll tax expense</b>	5,020.78	5,130	-109.22	97.87%				5,414
171	<b>C. Building Manager health insurance</b>	11,568.00	11,556	12.00	100.10%				12,108
172	<b>D. Building Manager Retirement benefit</b>	2,347.26	2,347	0.26	100.01%				2,415
173	<b>E. Building Manager disability insurance</b>	1,006.08	1,006	0.08	100.01%				1,035
174	<b>F. Building Manager Professional Dev</b>	0.00	250	-250.00	0.00%				250
175	<b>Total Building Manager</b>	<b>\$ 87,772.91</b>	<b>\$ 87,345</b>	<b>\$ 427.91</b>	<b>100.49%</b>				<b>\$ 92,006</b>
176	<b>Office Assistant</b>								
177	<b>A. Office Assistant salary</b>	27,375.47	27,316	59.47	100.22%				28,113
178	<b>B. Office Assistant payroll tax expense</b>	2,386.23	2,090	276.23	113.22%				2,390
179	<b>C. Office Assistant Health Spend</b>	2,651.50	2,657	-5.50	99.75%				2,657
180	<b>D. Office Assistant Retirement Expense</b>	956.28	956	0.28	100.03%				984
181	<b>E. Office Assistant disability insurance</b>	409.92	410	-0.08	99.98%				422
182	<b>F. Office Assistant Professional Dev</b>	0.00	250	-250.00	0.00%				250
183	<b>G. Office Assistant Vacation Coverage</b>	0.00	1,200	-1,200.00	0.00%				1,200

December 31, 2025 FINAL  
 First Congregational Church  
 2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025

	SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Finance/Council/PPersonnel	St. Min	Facilities
	COP	Finance	Fin/Invest	O&M			
<b>Budget ownership is color-coded per legend above.</b>							
184	Total Office Assistant						2026 Estimate
185	Sexton						36,015
186	A. Sexton salary	\$ 33,759.40	\$ 34,879	-\$ 1,119.60	9.679%		
187	B. Sexton payroll tax expense	36,973.41	37,131	-157.59	99.58%	2025 and 2026 Assumes 37.5/hours/week	38,191
188	C. Sexton Health Stipend	3,385.55	2,841	544.35	119.17%		3,246
189	D. Sexton retirement expense	6,905.95	6,922	-16.05	99.77%		7613
190	E. Sexton disability insurance	1,281.60	1,300	-18.40	98.58%		1,337
191	Total Sexton	549.24	557	-7.76	98.61%		573
192	Total Office and Building Staff	<b>\$ 49,055.75</b>	<b>\$ 48,751</b>	<b>\$ 344.75</b>	<b>100.77%</b>		<b>\$ 50,960</b>
193	Outreach and Membership Commission	<b>\$ 170,628.06</b>	<b>\$ 170,975</b>	<b>-\$ 346.94</b>	<b>99.80%</b>		<b>\$ 178,981</b>
194	Outreach and Membership	813.52	1,650	-836.48	49.30% 2025 budget: banner + monthly pmts for database. 2025 YTD: reflects all four \$750 installments of grant via CAC. 2026: database, \$3,000 signage, \$350 misc.	4,000	
195	Total Outreach and Membership Commission	<b>\$ 813.52</b>	<b>\$ 1,650</b>	<b>-\$ 836.48</b>	<b>49.30%</b>		<b>\$ 4,000</b>
196	Pathways Sunday Support	<b>\$ 3,375.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,900</b>	<b>-\$ 525.00</b>	<b>86.54% \$75 each Sunday</b>		<b>\$ 3,900</b>
197	Publicity						
198	Website		\$ 200	-200.00	0.00% 2026: for professional help to work with Whitney	3,000	
199	Total Publicity	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>\$ 200</b>	<b>-\$ 200.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>		<b>\$ 3,000</b>
200	Social Action Commission						
201	A. Social Action and Awareness	80.00	500	-420.00	16.00%		500
202	B. Justice & Witness/Anti Racism Group	0.00	1,550	-1,550.00	0.00% The final payment to Jessica Valoros was covered by Ruth Shinn bequest funds for 2024. 2025 allocation of \$6,000 not yet spent	1,550	
203	C. Sanctuary Task Force	110.91	1,550	-1,439.09	7.16%		1,550
204	D. Drop in Center						
205	1. Social Action Contractor	7,344.00	7,201	143.00	101.99% 2026: 2.9% COLA .		7,410
206	2. Drop In Center Supplies	684.78	1,500	-815.22	45.65%		1,500
207	Total D. Drop in Center	<b>\$ 8,028.78</b>	<b>\$ 8,701</b>	<b>-\$ 672.22</b>	<b>92.27%</b>		<b>\$ 8,910</b>
208	Total Social Action Commission	<b>\$ 8,219.69</b>	<b>\$ 12,301</b>	<b>-\$ 4,081.31</b>	<b>66.82%</b>		<b>\$ 12,510</b>

		SAAC	CE	Treas/Admin Asst	Worship/Mus. Dir.	Finance/Council/Personnel	
		COP	Finance	Fin/Invest	O&M	St. Min	Facilities
<b>December 31, 2025 FINAL</b>							
<b>First Congregational Church</b>							
<b>2025 Budget to Actual Dec 31, 2025</b>							
		Actual Dec 31	2025 Approved	Variance from Approved Budget	% compare to 100%	Comments	2026 Estimate
<b>Budget ownership is color-coded per legend above.</b>							
209	Worship Commission			0.00			
210	A. Music - Contract Musicians	3,150.00	3,200	-50.00	98.44%		3,600
211	C. Music - Vacation Organist	800.00	2,700	-1,900.00	29.63%		2,700
212	D. Music Supplies	1,016.44	1,500	-483.56	67.78%		1,500
213	E. Worship Supplies	1,151.53	1,250	-98.47	92.12%		1,200
214	Total Worship Commission	<b>\$ 6,117.97</b>	<b>8,650</b>	<b>-\$ 2,532.03</b>	<b>70.73%</b>		<b>\$ 9,000</b>
215	Total E. PARISH	<b>\$ 344,558.99</b>	<b>\$ 366,867</b>	<b>-\$ 22,308.01</b>	<b>93.92%</b>		<b>\$ 376,732</b>
216	Total GENERAL EXPENSES	<b>\$ 930,732.54</b>	<b>\$ 875,234</b>	<b>-\$ 55,518.54</b>	<b>106.34%</b>		<b>\$ 923,055</b>
217	FYI: non recurring expenditures from Capital Reserve (Line 83)						
218	Adjusted total GENERAL EXPENSES	<b>\$ 881,530.54</b>					
219	Net Operating Income	<b>(22,074.33)</b>	<b>(82,231)</b>				<b>(\$2,555.92)</b>

## 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 policies 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**

##### 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.

#### **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.

## **Statement of Being a Sanctuary Congregation**

We, the community of First Congregational United Church of Christ, are a diverse group. We are people of different ages, races, sexual orientations, and gender identities who have come from a variety of social, economic, political, religious, geographic and ethnic backgrounds. Our congregation has long been committed to seeking justice, both within our community and in the world at large. We are rooted in bold response to important crossroads moments. First Church was founded by abolitionists at the end of the Civil War, and we were the first racially integrated congregation in the District of Columbia. We declared ourselves a Just Peace Church in 1985, an Open and Affirming Congregation in 1986, and a Multiracial and Multicultural Church in 2003. We have taken these actions as we strive to embody Christ's beloved community here on earth.

We again find ourselves at a crossroads as more than 11 million undocumented immigrants face the real threat of persecution and deportation, and other marginalized people suffer under increased surveillance as well as physical, rhetorical and political attacks. How are we, as a people of faith, called to respond? Leviticus 19:33-34 tells us, "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God." Jesus Christ and his family also were immigrants who were forced to flee from their homeland to Egypt because of the cruel dictates of an imperious ruler. In his teachings, Jesus stressed the importance of compassion and providing aid to anyone in need. "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35)

As people of faith and people of conscience, we declare that we will resist policy proposals that seek to deport or otherwise target millions of undocumented immigrants and that enable, affirm or codify discrimination against immigrants and other vulnerable and marginalized communities. We make this declaration both because we are called to stand in solidarity with immigrants and other vulnerable and marginalized people everywhere and because

many members and friends of First Church fall within one or more of these groups. We will accordingly marshal the efforts and energies of our congregation and fellowship in a spirit of hope, faith, inclusion, and love to help those targeted by fear, suspicion, bigotry, and hate. We will work alongside our friends, families and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people.

We declare ourselves to be a Sanctuary Congregation and affirm our responsibility to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. We will work together with partner organizations to resist any harmful or unjust policy proposals that undermine due process, lead to discrimination based on identity, or otherwise violate Constitutionally-protected rights.

We are dedicated to educating ourselves and our community concerning destructive policies and practices.

We pledge to stand in solidarity with all those who are facing persecution based upon their identity, with a focus on national origin, immigration status, faith, race, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity.

We note that historically the Sanctuary Movement in this country has concentrated its efforts on providing shelter to immigrants at risk of deportation. Following careful consideration, First Congregational UCC does not presently commit to physically housing individuals or families on church property. We will, however, stand in solidarity with and provide support to those organizations and individuals who do provide physical refuge.

The Sanctuary Task Force recommends the church become involved in the New Sanctuary Movement in the following ways:

1. Publicly declaring our commitment to being a Sanctuary Congregation by placing a banner in our window, adding a statement to our website, and communicating this as part of our identity in other formats as appropriate.
2. Creating a committee that would be responsible for the following:
  - a. Coordinating the efforts of both individual congregants and the congregation as a whole in resisting unjust policies and actions that target marginalized people,

- b. Continuing to discern what First Church and its members and friends are called to do in support of the Sanctuary Movement, and
- c. Maintaining our connection with other organizations involved in the Sanctuary Movement.

3. Provide a gathering place for marches, trainings, and lobbying efforts.
4. Work with other entities to provide resources and support to undocumented immigrants, other marginalized individuals, and their families.
5. Directly lobby local, state, and federal government to enact equitable immigration policies and laws that are fairly enforced with humanity and compassion, to de-militarize interactions between police and individuals and to develop a pathway to citizenship for all immigrants.



## Minutes from Prior Meetings

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: JANUARY 26, 2025

#	Topic	Notes
1	Welcome (Lindsay)	Lindsay opened the meeting
2	Approval of past minutes (Lindsay)	<b>Motion to approve minutes passed</b> Related Materials: <a href="#">October 2024 Congregational Meeting Minutes</a>
3	Moderator's report (Lindsay)	Lindsay ran through the agenda and reflected on highlights for Council and the body of the church over the last year.
4	Senior Minister's report (Rev. Amanda)	Rev. Amanda reflected on the past year in faith and democracy, First UCC living into its call to be an antiracist church, important events from the last year in our community, and expressed gratitude for the congregation, staff, and leadership.
5	Associate Minister's report (Rev Sam)	Rev. Sam provided thoughts on the past year and upcoming highlights for the youth and CE suite over the coming months.
6	Sustainability Task Force report (Andrew Hamilton)	Andrew provided a general readout of the sustainability task force, including information on the forthcoming report and thoughts on how to offer recommendations in the spirit of shared values alongside realistic ways the church may choose to do things differently
7	Treasurer's report & Approval of 2025 Budget (John Smeltzer)	John updated the congregation on the final 2024 budget and proposed 2025 budget Related Materials: <a href="https://www.firstuccdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/FCC-budget-report-for-2024-YTD-incl-2025-proposed-Jan-13-2025-1.pdf">https://www.firstuccdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/FCC-budget-report-for-2024-YTD-incl-2025-proposed-Jan-13-2025-1.pdf</a> <b>Motion to approve 2025 operating budget passes</b>
8	Election of 2025 officers and commissions (Dwan Reece)	Dawn introduced slate of officers and who will be on each commission Related materials:

#	Topic	Notes
		<p><a href="https://www.firstuccdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-Annual-Report-FINAL.pdf">https://www.firstuccdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-Annual-Report-FINAL.pdf</a> (see last section entitled Nominations for 2025)</p> <p><b>Motion to approve election of 2025 officers and commissions passes</b></p>
9	Blessing of the 2025 leadership (Rev. Amanda)	Rev. Amanda led blessing of the new leadership for the coming year
10	Closing Prayer (Rev. Amanda)	Rev. Amanda closed the meeting in prayer

Minutes prepared by Alyx Cheng, Clerk

MINUTES OF THE SPRING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: MAY 18, 2025

#	Topic	Notes
1	Welcome and Moderator's Report (Dwan)	<p>Approval of Minutes from January's Annual Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion to Approve</li> <li>• Second</li> <li>• 28 Approve - Motion Passes</li> </ul> <p>Approval of Changes to Membership Roll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed from Active Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Oladayo Moses Alabi</li> <li>◦ Cara Bidwell</li> <li>◦ Amy Dugan</li> <li>◦ Joe Mills</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Changed of Status to "Friend" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Troy Bent</li> <li>◦ Jo-Anne Henry</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Motion to Approve</li> <li>• Second</li> <li>• Voice Vote Passes</li> </ul> <p>Approval of Ulung Tanoto, Director of Music Ministry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion to Approve</li> <li>• Second</li> <li>• Voice Vote Passes</li> </ul>

#	Topic	Notes
		<p>Moderator's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member has applied for status in discernment. We have affirmed his application and the application is moving through the committee on ministry.</li> <li>• Sustainability Task Force <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ This is a carryover from our discussion in January on how we sustain ourselves as a church. We want to be good stewards of our funds and marry our mission to the community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• System for Communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ We are implementing Signal as a form of opt-in communication for the church. Not everyone needs to join. There will be individual channels for different topics. More information will be communicated about this in the weeks to come.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Commemorative Artwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Dwan showed one of the panels of the commemorative artwork.</li> <li>◦ We are looking to install the artwork in late June or early July.</li> <li>◦ The target date for the commemoration service is September 14th, after Rev. Amanda has returned from her sabbatical.</li> <li>◦ This is an opportunity to make First Church a public space. We can position ourselves as a place where these ideas are discussed. We are looking to hold a public program in the fall. Dwan would like to continue a community dialogue.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Fall Retreat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fall Retreat is scheduled for October 3rd to 5th at Camp Bennett in Brookeville, Maryland. This is a multiuse facility, about a 30 minute drive from DC with dorm-style cabins.</li> <li>• The estimated cost per person will be between \$124 and 148 assuming that at least 50 people sign up.</li> <li>• Our two focus topics for the retreat will be sustainability and SAAC/Social Justice Work.</li> </ul>
2	Associate Minister's Report (Rev. Sam)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jamey Moore will receive the Seabury Celebration of Service award.</li> <li>• CE is going to continue community building, including through events at the park, a gathering at Capitol Hill, a movie night, an event at an escape room, and a West Virginia Youth Service Trip.</li> <li>• We will also be attending a baseball game on July 20th between the Nationals and the Padres.</li> </ul>

#	Topic	Notes
3	Senior Minister's Report (Rev. Amanda)	<p>Overview of Spring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We had a successful Maundy-Thursday Service with 50 people showing up.</li> <li>• We have welcomed six new members into the community.</li> <li>• The community is thriving with energy from our music ministry and the new commemorative artwork.</li> </ul> <p>Thanks to Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are grateful to our staff members, including Inez, Whitney, Byron, Rev. Sam, and Ulung.</li> </ul> <p>Sabbatical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev. Amanda is taking a scheduled sabbatical.</li> <li>• We have created a sabbatical guidelines document that details how Rev. Amanda's duties are being delegated.</li> <li>• The sabbatical is "no-contact." Rev. Sam and Dwan can be in touch with Rev. Amanda in case of emergency.</li> </ul>
4	Treasurer's Report (John)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The full report has been prepared by Lucille.</li> <li>• Our pledge income is above target, especially unpledged income.</li> <li>• Building income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ We are lowering our estimate for building income due to reduced usage. However, the facilities commission and Byron have supplemented building income with occasional use and revenues from parking spaces.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expense Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Most of our items are close to our target with the exception of our gas bill. We won't pay much for gas until the fall, so we aren't too worried about this.</li> <li>◦ The conference and meeting expenses are over projections because of the retreat, but this will be defrayed by people paying for their spots at the retreat.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Net Income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ We are running a deficit deliberately as we use a bequest we received.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#	Topic	Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The investment commission put out a report last year presented at the annual meeting recommending using some of the endowment to supplement the bridge fund. Despite the downturn in the market, the market has bounced back. We are pretty much where we expected to be.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5	Sustainability Task Force (Andrew)	<p>The mission of the sustainability task force is to examine the structural deficit and make recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our expenses are pretty fixed given the church mission and staff capacity.</li> <li>• The path to a sustainable budget is growth. The good news is that we are already on a sustainable path. This is a growing and flourishing congregation.</li> <li>• Most of the endowment is a result of the deal that the church put together with the building, which included selling the “air rights” above the building.</li> <li>• Our primary recommendation is to think about how we communicate who we are to the local area/DC community. There are ways in which we may “hide our light under a bushel.” We rent a lot of space to different groups. It is very easy for someone to attend an event in our building and not know (1) that we are a church, and (2) what kind of church we are. We hope to change these things – outreach and membership is thinking along similar lines.</li> <li>• Outreach and Membership has hired a communications consultant for the church to help with both internal and external messaging.</li> <li>• We will vote on the sustainability plan in the fall retreat – namely the proposed draw from the endowment for the bridge funds.</li> </ul>
6	Musical Blessing	Rolling Waters
7	Closing Prayer	Rev. Amanda closed us in prayer.

Minutes prepared by Michael Enseki-Frank, clerk

MINUTES OF THE FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: October 19, 2025

#	Topic	Notes
1	Moderator's Report (Dwan)	<p>Approval of Spring Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion to Approve</li> <li>• Second</li> <li>• 27 Approve - Motion Passes</li> </ul> <p>We will vote on a draw down on the endowment in January.</p> <p>Highlights from the Summer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverend Amanda had her sabbatical.</li> <li>• The theme for the summer was "Freedom Summer"—we did a good job experimenting with services while Rev. Amanda was away.</li> <li>• We rolled out the First Church Signal groups. We hope that this will be a good tool for organizing. There will be a tutorial for how to use Signal at our upcoming potluck.</li> <li>• The commemoration for the artwork in the Narthex is upcoming.</li> <li>• Discussion of the Fall Retreat.</li> <li>• There are ongoing business expenses for building upkeep. We expect these expenses to continue.</li> <li>• Council has been discussing the current administration and political climate.</li> <li>• We are working on a letter of support for Laura Simmons who is renewing her ecclesiastical endorsement.</li> <li>• We will discuss a drawdown of the endowment in the ensuing months.</li> <li>• We may need to invest in the church website going forward.</li> </ul>
2	Associate Minister's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our children will be singing our faith next week.</li> <li>• We are excited to prepare for the upcoming Christmas Pageant.</li> <li>• We have exciting opportunities for a youth service trip.</li> <li>• There are many opportunities to serve our community through the church including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Tommy's Pantry</li> <li>◦ Costume drives</li> <li>◦ Toy drives</li> <li>◦ Clothing drives</li> <li>◦ Volunteering and Sunday School</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The CE commission has done a great job this year.</li> <li>• Next Sunday we will be honoring Rev. Sam's 10 year anniversary with the church.</li> <li>• Please check in on one another as we continue through these difficult times.</li> </ul>

#	Topic	Notes
3	Senior Minister's Report	<p>It is not an easy time to live in DC or to be the church in DC right now. We should live our faith based on three prongs in these times:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Telling the Truth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The truth is being intentionally distorted. History is being twisted. Political language is being used to attack the vulnerable. In some instances, it is reaching physical violence.</li> <li>• First Congregational is a place where Rev. Amanda is able to speak the truth freely. It is important that we continue to be a church that can speak the truth – see, e.g. the commemorative artwork. As a community we tell our history differently than we did ten years ago.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Deepening Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We had an incredible fall retreat. We want the fall retreat to be flexible so that people can attend moving forward.</li> <li>• The congregation continues to grow.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Spiritual Practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing up on Sunday mornings is the most important thing that we do together. Please show up on Sunday mornings!</li> <li>• Your worship leadership staff works hard each week to plan and prepare a worship service that can meet this moment.</li> <li>• We need to be serious about our spiritual practices: e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Breakaway meditation</li> <li>◦ Singing in the choir</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Our commitment to justice flows out of our faith. If we engage in these three practices, we will be serving justice.</p> <p>Commitment Cards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev. Amanda asks us to discern what we can give, both in terms of money, but also in terms of service and talents (on the back of the commitment card).</li> <li>• You can turn in your commitment card as early as today. The final day to turn into your commitment card is November 16<sup>th</sup> (Commitment Sunday).</li> </ul>
4	Treasurer's Report	<p>The bottom line is that we are in very good shape for 2025—much better than we expected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have gotten more offerings than we expected.</li> <li>• Our building income is good—our building has been fully utilized</li> </ul>

#	Topic	Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are projected to be up in income, which will considerably cut into our projected deficit.</li> <li>• We had some additional capital expenses. Final line expenses are projected to be below what we had originally projected.</li> <li>• A lot of capital spending we're doing is being funded by the capital reserve. The big issue is that we're needing to use our capital reserve.</li> </ul>
5	Closing Prayer	Rev. Amanda closed us in prayer.

Minutes prepared by Michael Enseki-Frank, clerk

# 2025 Thank Yous

## Church Council

Dwan Reece (Moderator)  
Peter Tracey (Asst. Moderator)  
John Smeltzer (Treasurer)  
Michael Enseki-Frank (Clerk)

### At-large members:

Abigail Cipparone  
Anna Kiss

### Commission Representatives:

Care of Parish: Kristen Wheeler  
Christian Education:  
    Abigail Goodman-Johnson  
Facilities: Garnell Yarbrough  
Finance: Dan Thayer  
Outreach & Membership: Whit Wheeler  
Social Action: Nora Marsh  
Worship: Jamey Moore

## Senior Ministerial Relations Team

Dwan Reece (Moderator)  
Peter Tracey (Assistant Moderator)  
Lindsay Swisher (Immediate Past Moderator)  
Andrew Hamilton (Personnel)

## Nominating Committee

Peter Tracey (Assistant Moderator)  
Diane Brenneman  
Abigail Cipparone  
Thaddaeus Elliott

## Personnel Committee

Andrew Hamilton (chair)  
Susan Anderson  
Marian Drake

## Care of Parish Commission

Kim Darling (chair)  
Rose Berman  
Nan McConnell  
Nick McConnell  
Fredda Sparks  
Alisa Tanaka-Dodge  
Kristen Wheeler

## Christian Education Commission

CJ Thayer (chair)  
Kristy Goodfellow-Mills  
Abby Goodman-Johnson  
Tom McCaffrey  
Andy Raver

## Adult Education & Formation

### Working Group

Trevor Bakker  
Karen Byrne  
Peter Byrne  
Thaddaeus Elliott  
Andrew Hamilton  
Karen Pence

## Facilities Commission

Ellen Bushmiller, chair  
Diane Brenneman  
Anthony Leonard  
Tony Saudek  
Garnell Yarbrough  
Byron Adams (staff)

## Finance Commission

Peter Byrne, chair  
Courtney McCaffrey  
Dan Thayer  
Karen Tramontano

## Investment Commission

John Smeltzer, chair  
Lucille Dickinson  
Michael Hopkins  
Karen Tramontano  
Mike Zawada  
Karen Pence (advisor)

## Assistant Treasurers

Lucille Dickinson  
Polly Gordon  
Karen Pence

### **Outreach & Membership Commission**

Karen Byrne, chair  
David Greer  
Jaimie Orr  
Mary Pence  
Erin Williams  
Whit Wheeler

### **Anchor Ushers**

Kristen & Whit Wheeler  
Nan McConnell & Nick McConnell  
Anne Mascolino & Karen Byrne  
Matt LaGamma & Fredda Sparks

### **Occasional Ushers**

Ellen Bushmiller  
Lynn Gaaserud  
David Greer  
Courtney, Tom, Greta and Barrett  
McCaffery  
Jaimie Orr  
Karen and Natalie Pence  
Gail Sonnemann  
Erin Williams

### **Social Action & Awareness Commission**

Thaddaeus Elliott (co-chair)  
Sandy Sorensen (co-chair)  
Nora Marsh  
Jason Carson Wilson  
Jamey Moore (Sanctuary rep)  
Gail Sonnemann (DIC rep)

### **Sanctuary Committee**

Michael Ensenki-Frank  
Cynthia Hobbs  
Jody Kenney  
James Moore  
Susan Saudek  
Peter Tracey

### **Anti-Racism Committee**

Diane Brenneman  
Kim Darling  
Lynaya Morris  
Jessica Prentice  
LaTayna Purnell  
Janneke Ratcliff  
Gail Sonnemann  
Jason Carson Wilson  
Rev. Amanda Handler-Voss (staff)

### **Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth Volunteers**

Gail Sonnemann, volunteer coordinator  
Susan Anderson  
Kevin Anderson  
Bev Brown  
Susanna Brylawski  
Chris Byrne  
Karen Byrne  
Casey Capsambelis  
Peter Byrne  
Kim Darling  
Marian Drake  
Michael Enseki-Frank  
Kristy Goodfellow  
Abby Goodman  
Polly Gordon  
Roz Grigsby  
Cynthia Hobbs  
Kelly Hudson  
Louisa Jensen  
Natalie Jensen  
Moira Jones  
Sophie Jones  
Jody Kenney  
Mike Kenney  
Matthew LaGamma  
Nora Marsh  
Nan McConnell  
Sarah McKinnis  
Angie Ofori-Atta  
Ken Ofori-Atta  
Jamie Orr  
LaTayna Purnell  
Dwan Reese  
Jim Riker  
Ann Saudek  
Beatrice Saudek  
Susan Saudek

### **DIC Volunteers (cont'd)**

John Smeltzer  
Gail Sonnemann  
Sandy Sorensen  
Alisa Tanaka-Dodge  
Dan Thayer  
Sophie Thayer  
Peter Tracey  
Karen Tramontano  
Elise Villemez  
Kristen Wheeler  
Reshma William  
Erin Williams  
Jarred Bowman, DIC Coordinator  
Rev. Amanda Helder-Voss (staff)

### **Potomac Association Rep**

Kristen Wheeler

### **Worship Commission**

Ann Bushmiller, chair  
Chris Byrne  
Moira Jones  
Patrick LaGamma  
Sarah McKinnis  
Jamey Moore  
Lynaya Morris

### **Vocalists**

Casey Capsambelis  
Abigail Cipparone  
Marian Drake  
Polly Gordon  
Andrew Hamilton  
Omari Hardy  
Moira Jones  
Sophie Jones  
Katie Koza  
Nora Marsh  
Eric Olson  
Robin Olson  
Dwan Reece  
John Smeltzer  
Reshma William

### **Instrumentalists**

Diane Brenneman  
Casey Capsambelis  
Dwight Davis  
Andrew Hamilton

### **Instrumentalists (cont'd)**

Michael Hopkins  
Sophie Jones  
Katie Koza  
Nora Marsh  
Ryan McFerran  
Sam McFerran  
Eric Olson  
Robin Olson  
Dian Permana  
Beatriz Saudek  
Ulung Tanoto  
Reshma William  
Gabrieli Brass Quintet

### **Guest Pianists**

Karen Bartman  
Dennis Turner

### **Choir Members**

Kevin Anderson  
Trevor Bakker  
Diane Brenneman  
Casey Capsambelis  
Abigail Cipparone  
Lucille Dickinson  
Polly Gordon  
Judith Gray  
Omari Hardy  
Mary Hayes  
Moira Jones  
Sophie Jones  
Julia Koza  
Katie Koza  
Nora Marsh  
Nick McConnell  
Robin Olson  
Jaime Orr  
Dan Pence  
Dian Permana  
Dwan Reece  
Jim Riker  
John Smeltzer  
Gail Sonnemann  
Gretchen Spencer  
Lois Stovall  
Peter Tracey  
Reshma William

### **Breakaway Meditation**

Nora Marsh

### **Volunteer Photographers**

Joseph Darling-LaGamma  
Matthew LaGamma

### **Childcare Workers**

Meredith Baker  
Patrick Darling-LaGamma  
Maddie Gee  
Eli Haverman  
Louisa Jensen  
Shae Ramberg

### **Christian Education Volunteers**

Susan Anderson  
Kim Darling  
Chandra DeNap Whetstone  
Kristy Goodfellow-Mills  
Anna Kiss  
Courtney McCaffrey  
Kaeley McEvoy  
Lauren McFerran  
Karen Pence  
Mary Pence  
LaTayna Purnell  
Andy Raver  
Ann Saudek  
Tony Saudek  
CJ Thayer  
Elise Villemez

### **Sustainability Task Force**

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

### **Commemorative Artwork Task Force**

Thaddaeus Elliott  
Meg Maguire  
Dwan Reece  
Fredda Sparks

### **Audio Visual Technicians**

Tom Sowers, consultant  
Dwight Davis  
Joseph Hiip  
Graham Marsh

### **Zoom Moderators/Coordinators**

Alyx Cheng  
Kim Darling  
Barry Mills  
Erin Williams

### **Staff**

Byron Adams  
Building Manager  
Jarred Bowman  
Drop-In Center Coordinator  
Chandra DeNap Whetstone  
Seminary Intern  
Rev. Amanda Hendl-Voss  
Senior Minister  
Ines Marques  
Sexton  
Whitney McColley  
Administrative Assistant  
Rev. Sam McFerran  
Associate Pastor  
Ulung Tanoto  
Director of Music Ministry (started April 2025)  
Moe Shorter  
Sunday Morning Coordinator  
Kemmesha Thomas  
Sunday Morning Coordinator  
Mykel Thompson  
Sunday Morning Coordinator  
Dennis Turner  
Designated Musician (Jan. - April)

## Nominations for 2026

**Moderator:** Peter Tracey

**Assistant Moderator:** Michael Enseki-Frank

**Clerk:** Abigail Cipparone

**Treasurer:** Lucille Dickinson

**Assistant Treasurer:** John Smeltzer

**Assistant Treasurer:** Polly Gordon

**At-Large:** Erin Williams

**At-Large:** Anna Kiss

**Potomac Association Representatives:** Kristen Wheeler & Jaimie Orr

### Care of Parish

Susan Anderson

Kristy Goodfellow-Mills

Nan McConnell

Nick McConnell

Kristen Wheeler

Fredda Sparks (Volunteer)

### Christian Education

Casey Capsambelis

Thaddaeus Elliott

Abby Goodman-Johnson

Ken Ofori-Atta

Alisa Tanaka-Dodge

CJ Thayer (Volunteer)

### Facilities

Diane Brenneman

Ellen Bushmiller

Anthony Leonard

Dan Pence

Tony Saudek

Garnell Yarbrough

### Finance

Lucille Dickinson (ex officio)

Peter Byrne

Courtney McCaffrey

John Smeltzer

Karen Tramontano

Mike Zawada

Nan McConnell (Volunteer)

### Investment

Lucille Dickinson (ex officio)

Michael Hopkins

Andy Raver

John Smeltzer

Lindsay Swisher

Karen Pence (advisor)

### Nominating

Peter Tracey, Chair

Diane Brenneman

Abigail Cipparone

Thaddaeus Elliott

### Outreach & Membership

Patrick Darling-LaGamma

Andrew Hamilton

Angie Ofori-Atta

Mary Pence

Dan Thayer

Whit Wheeler

Sandy Sorenson (Volunteer)

### Personnel

Andrew Hamilton, chair

Susan Anderson

Marian Drake

### Social Action and Awareness (SAAC)

Jason Carson-Wilson

Nora Marsh

Jamey Moore

Jamie Orr

LaTayna Purnell

Jim Riker

Meg Maguire (Volunteer)

### Worship

Trevor Bakker

Ann Bushmiller

Chris Byrne

Kim Darling

David Greer

Sarah McKinnis

Lynaya Morris

Reshma Williams