



First Congregational Church of La Grange

2022 Annual Report

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AGENDA OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 2023

January 22, 2023

- | | | |
|------|---|----------------------------|
| I. | Call to Order | Tom Lowry, Moderator |
| II. | Approval of the January 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes | |
| III. | Discussion of the Annual Reports | |
| | Motion from the Missions Team on Tribal Lands | Mission Team |
| IV. | Financial Overview and 2023 Budget Proposal | Financial Team |
| V. | Election of New Leadership | Nominations Committee |
| VI. | Introduce the New Leadership | |
| VII. | Benediction | Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather |

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 2022 (JANUARY 23, 2022)

I. Call to Order

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the annual meeting was held on Zoom and in-person. The meeting was called to order by Moderator Eric Toman at 10:42 am. A quorum of 30 was confirmed by Stephanie McCullough, the Zoom host for the meeting. There were 33 persons online and 16 persons present in the sanctuary.

Instructions for questions, comments and voting were reviewed for the congregation.

II. Approval of January 2021 Minutes

The Minutes of the January 2021 Annual Meeting were reviewed and approved with the following vote:

Motion: by Tom Lowry to accept the minutes of the January 2020 Annual Congregational Meeting: Seconded by Brian Shannon.

The motion carried.

III. Approval of Sanctuary Technology Congregational Meeting from September 12, 2021 Minutes

The Minutes of the Sanctuary Technology Congregational Meeting from September 12, 2021 Annual Meeting were reviewed and approved with the following vote:

Motion: To accept the minutes of the Sanctuary Technology Congregational Meeting of September 12, 2021 minutes: Seconded by Jean O'Brien.

The motion carried.

IV. Financial Overview

Unaudited 2020 Results - Covid-19 affected our budget in many ways. Treasurer John Moellman highlighted a one-time line entry of Miscellaneous Income of \$29,500 from our Federal PPP loan. The loan was received in late spring to provide support of employee salaries for 3 months. The loan will be forgiven. Regarding pledges, the received and unpledged contributions ultimately equaled each other. Regarding our spending, it was also noted that our 2020 budget plan morphed to provide for extended administration and technological expenses caused in reaction to Covid, including new computers capable of editing, recording software and a part-time video editor who is responsible for

producing our internet services. Property made use of the empty sanctuary to complete some long-term Capital Plan projects including replacing carpeting and completing other floor work.

2022 Budget – Our current pledge total is \$298,574.00, just under the proposed \$300,000 for the year.

John Colombe proposed a ***motion to accept the proposed 2022 budget***. Since the motion is offered by the Council, a second is not needed.

Questions were encouraged/fielded:

Q: Dick Lauterbach asked: “If more pledge donations are made, how will they be recorded in the budget?”

Clarification was given that any additional money will initially be applied to the “unpledged contribution” line but monies can be reassigned from there.

There were no additional questions. The 2022 budget was passed unanimously.

The motion carried.

V. Election of new Leadership

Since most ministry members have served additional terms due to the pandemic, the slate is minimal this year. We have plans to reimagine ministries going forward. This reimagining process is in the beginning stages. Thanks to Renee Bryant.

The ballot consists of two people to be elected and two persons who were appointed by the Council to be affirmed.

Tom Lowry is the new Moderator for 2022 and presented the slate of new nominations (P.14).

The following additions to the slate were made:

Vice Moderator	Jean O’Brien
Volunteer Coordinator	Stephanie Johnston
Clerk of the Council	Sherri Ries (second complete term)
Treasurer	Kevin Cunningham

Motion to approve the nomination slate: Seconded by Deb Gardiner and Dick Lauterbach.

Vote of 49 people approving. ***Motion carried.***

Appreciation was expressed to all the staff who worked to make services continue this year amid the continued pandemic complications; to Renee Bryant for her leadership over the past four years, and to Eric Toman who was Moderator throughout this second pandemic year.

VI. After the benediction, a *motion to adjourn* was made by JoAnne Konkle.

As there was no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sherri Ries, Clerk

REPORT OF THE PASTOR

2022 was another year of change and challenges. As we move through the 21st century, change will be our constant companion. The world continues to change. Our new reality includes repeated mass killings and ever rising gun violence here at home and the rise of extremism and terror all over the world, political absurdities and divisions, an ever-widening gap between rich and poor, budget issues, unpredictable weather patterns and rising oceans, pandemic illnesses, and civil wars...change, change, change.

With change as our only constant, the Church (universal) must find ways to reinvent ourselves to be relevant to the ever-changing world around us. While change is not new, the rate at which change happens today is a major adjustment for the institution of the Church and for each local congregation. The good news is this: the God of Abraham, Sarah, Miriam, David, Joseph, Mary, Jesus, Paul, and all the saints before us has – does – and will always walk beside us through these trials and we will come through it.

We started the year in Pandemic Mode with very few teams and committees staffed by church members. Some teams whose members' terms had expired continued to meet and do the work of ministry. The ministry of other teams' work was either picked up by staff or was put on hold until we can find a new place of stability and function in the post-pandemic era. By re-arranging the roles of the office staff to be most efficient, we've kept to our Personnel budget and given clear lines of responsibility to each of our office staff.

In February, I left for 12 weeks of sabbatical followed by 3 weeks of vacation. With the bulletins for each Sunday written before I left, the congregation was treated to a wide variety of preachers, pastoral care by a former student intern, and some work of dreaming of a new future together; these resulted in varying degrees of success. I credit the experience and worship expertise of Ryan Cox and AnnLaura Tapia for seeing that weekly worship went well, Tom Lowry and Jean O'Brien for keeping the church leadership moving forward, and Ginger Scarborough and Stephanie McCullough for keeping the administrative life of the church moving forward. The congregation had an opportunity to gather, grow in self-knowledge, and enjoy one another's company thanks to the excellent work of volunteers and members of the Nurture Team.

Thanks to a large donation from an anonymous estate, we received a new parking lot in June; in exchange for the Village of La Grange's needs for more permeable space, we traded a 6' width of the previous parking lot, but we gained an extra parking space. Over the summer, one of our youth and an Eagle Scout candidate, Benjamin Sander, created a fire pit in this newly acquired space so that the youth and the congregation can gather around a warm fire for fellowship. This is the completion of a dream of long-time member, Tom Pitman, who was a scout leader and a supporter of all things Boys Scouts.

Also over the summer months, the long-planned Sanctuary Technology Project became reality. With a new sound system, new lights, and digitized controls for both, we are now able to provide excellent quality video streaming of our worship services, weddings, funerals, and other sanctuary-based activities. The best news is that we completed the project within \$1,000 of the projected budget and have received 94% of the pledged gifts to pay for it.

We spent the summer planning for congregational participation in a futures project with Rev. Cameron Trimble. Similar in purpose to the Alban Planning process, we need as much congregational participation as possible. This work continues with the Futures Team and Rev. Trimble. For the first time in 6 years, we will end the year with a deficit. This is due solely to the loss of market value of our investments. Our 2022 Annual Campaign resulted in roughly \$3600 more than was pledged. And our expenses were significantly below budget. Roughly 74% of our 116 households completed pledges for 2022; this up from 60% in 2016.

Finally, the goal of the Alban Team has been met: the building is now drawing in a significant amount of the cost of running the building – leaving more resources available for us to do ministry instead of paying for infrastructure. This is due in no small part to the work of Stephanie McCullough, who excels in producing advertising for space through social media and other free resources, books and staffs non-member weddings and events, and works with tenants to ensure happy ministry partners in this space.

Our work together is not done. As I write this ninth annual report, I look forward to the ministry that together we will reimagine and plan. Our niche in this community continues to be our extravagant welcome, no-questions-asked hospitality, and a progressive and prophetic faith.

As I've said each year in this final paragraph: Let's journey forward into this developing and ever-changing future together with intentionality and purpose, following the path that God is revealing for our congregation. We indeed have a bright future at the corner of South La Grange Road and Cossitt Avenue.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC REPORT 2022

Music making in 2022 has transitioned to a more normal feel. Rehearsals have been in-person; masking has become optional while Cook County is in low or medium risk categories; and most of all, joy is now a more prevalent feeling.

Pastor Carly was on sabbatical during the first part of the year. Her planning and preparation with the guest pastors made for a smooth few months. The leadership of Tom Lowry and Jean O'Brien were very helpful during this time.

For the Chancel Choir there are challenges of planning for a small to medium choir, with possible shifts in available singers from week to week. However, those challenges are minor given we can sing repertoire that is rewarding. The Chancel Choir added new members in 2022, and their presence – along with the veterans – makes for a vital group.

The Carillon Handbell Choir rang throughout 2022 and has moved its rehearsal space to room 305. At first, we missed the sound in the choir room, but now appreciate having our own space. We have begun ringing closer together, and that is helping us feel connected as an ensemble. While generally a smaller ensemble, we can ring beautiful - sometimes challenging - music at least once a month in worship.

Children’s music made its return in September, and interest was strong. AnnLaura has been a huge asset in rehearsals. Every rehearsal had a variety of singing, ringing or other instrument. In November, rehearsals changed content to Christmas Musical preparations. Janet Bednar graciously volunteered to be at every rehearsal to help with music and staging.

The Sanctuary Sound and Light project was completed in 2022 and the results are very positive. The flexibility of both the sound and light systems has been a pleasure to “play” with. I worked with a local woodworking firm in Chicago to create the custom AV desk.

Musical highlights of the year include: the Lenten Choral Sermon of “If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee” by Mendelssohn. This piece was planned for the Spring of 2020, so performing it had extra meaning for the musicians. Other highlights include Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter services; Messy Church in October; All Saints in November; the Advent Choral Sermon of “Ceremony of Carols” by Benjamin Britten; the Christmas musical “’Twas the Year Before Christmas”; and two beautiful Christmas Eve services.

AnnLaura Tapia continues to be a great colleague and is integral to the success of our music program. Her playing on Christmas Eve is a testament to her abilities and preparation. The “Friends of Music” fund continued to sustain guest musicians, particularly in December. Thank you all who donated in the past couple of years.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ryan Cox
Director of Music

CONSERVATORY REPORT

The First Conservatory of Music remains a strong presence and is feeling more normal. Students and teachers have mostly returned to in-person lessons. The exceptions are students who have chosen to stay online. We are happy to be able to accommodate this arrangement.

The Conservatory board approved a fee raise in the Spring. The increase was phased in over the course of two months. It was the first raise in 5 years, and the vast majority went to the teachers. Future fee raises will be smaller and more frequent, every 12-18 months.

The gifted faculty have continued to enrich the music program at the church by sharing their talents in worship courtesy of the Conservatory. The Conservatory contributes \$1237.50/month for use of classrooms and continues to provide the piano tuning for all the church’s pianos, as well as providing musicians from the faculty for services throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ryan Cox
Director, First Conservatory of Music

REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF WORSHIP

The Ministry of Worship did not meet formally in 2022. However, its most important roles

continued to be filled by members of the committee as it stood in 2020, as well as ad hoc volunteers and increased staff time.

Traditional Ministry of Worship Responsibilities

Altar Flowers	Plymouth Place bulletin delivery
Greeters	Liturgists
Ushers	Offertory Collection
Candles	Paraments
Communion Preparation	Organ Tuning and Maintenance
Worship Decorations	

Special services throughout the year

Regular Participants in 2022: Janet Bednar (Flowers), Lawrence Bain (Head usher) Ryan Cox (Staff), Bob Klestil (Communion), Jean Tomkinson (Plymouth Place bulletin delivery). Our volunteer coordinator, Stephanie Johnston, has helped secure liturgists and greeters.

Thank you to everyone who has been a greeter, liturgist, usher, helped decorate for Advent, clean up afterwards, and provide support for our worship services.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ryan Cox
Director of Music

2022 MODERATOR’S REPORT

2022 began with COVID still a presence in our lives. This year’s Church Council consisted of Erik Toman (Past Moderator), Jean O’Brien (Vice-Moderator), Kevin Cunningham (Treasurer), Sherri Ries (Clerk), Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather (Pastor), Deborah Gardiner and Brian Kasnick (Members at Large) and Tom Lowry (Moderator). Carly was able to take a much needed and deserved sabbatical, in large part from a generous grant provided by the Lily Foundation, to re-energize. The council met monthly to discuss the safest ways to worship in person, to monitor the church’s finances, ensure the wellness of our staff and work toward implementation of our new and re-imagined worship experience.

The work continued through the summer by the Sanctuary Technology Task Force for the upgrade of our sanctuary lighting and sound systems. I’m happy to report that the upgrade work was completed during the summer of 2022 with minimal disruption to the use of the building and our worship services. A big thank you to all involved in this important project.

As part of the Build the Future discussions, we conducted three congregational workshops with Rev. Brandyn Simmons to tackle the broad concept of how to handle change. In the fall, A “Re-Imagine” workshop was held with the congregation to imagine what the church would look like in the far distant future. From those efforts, a “Futures Team” was formed, guided by Rev. Cameron Trimble, and consisting of Tom Lowry, Jean O’Brien, Mike Ries, Stephanie Johnston, Nancy Coleman, and Rev. Carly. The purpose of the Futures Team is to help distill the ideas of change for consideration by the congregation. This team will continue work during the 2023 council year.

Throughout the year, our church was able to stay up to date on our covenants with our leasing partners, onboard new staff, remain financially strong, and continue with our mission. I look forward to the new opportunities that await our church in 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tom Lowry
FCCLG Church Moderator

REPORT OF THE FUTURES TEAM

The Futures Team is off the ground and beginning a four-to-six-month process to envision our church as it could potentially exist and serve others.

Carly's sabbatical offered us the chance to begin this journey. A year ago on January 9, 2022, the church participated in a question burst, during which we brainstormed open-ended, speculative questions about our church, such as:

How do we maintain an extended community after the pandemic is over?

What do we need from each other? And

What are other churches doing that we can replicate?

In preparation for future town hall meetings, following the session we were asked to consider the questions and what the worst possible outcome could be from the process.

We hired Brandyn Simmons with the intention of having him guide the town hall meetings, a series of three hybrid (in-person and virtual) workshops that would build on each other. These were to take place during Carly's sabbatical in the early spring. Unfortunately, there was some confusion about the process and purpose of these meetings, and they did not yield the envisioned results.

The Council regrouped over the summer and approved the hiring of Rev. Cameron Trimble of Convergence - an organization that supports the reshaping of congregations - to lead us in a different approach. We recruited 42 congregants to participate in the first step of our new futuring effort called The Futures Lab on November 13th. Via Zoom, Cameron asked both the live and the virtual participants to share their ideas of a world they would bet on in 2070, what the church might look like then, and our *desirable* church in 2070. Last, we imagined an almost apocalyptic 2070 and what the church would look like in this scenario. From this exercise, we learned that our church's main values are the following:

1. Community and connection with each other
2. The continued practice of our faith traditions
3. The creative expression of faith, e.g. through activism
4. Congregational and community care

The Futures Team (Tom Lowry and Jean O'Brien plus Nancy Coleman, Stephanie Johnston and Mike Ries) met via Zoom with Cameron for the first time on December 12th, with Carly participating in an ad-hoc capacity. Cameron shared a full report of the November 13th Lab with the team and led us to form a plan of action to engage in experimentation that will hopefully open our minds to a possibility for our future. The expected timeline is as follows.

January/February 2023: Step 1 - All members of the church will be asked to complete a congregational assessment (via an online survey). The Futures Team will conduct interviews with various leaders of the community. Both the assessment and the interviews will consist of standardized questions that will help Convergence guide us to determine our next step.

March 2023: Step 2 - Based on the answers gathered in the assessments and interviews, we will form prototype experimental missions and outreach programs.

April/May 2023: Step 3 - We will draft the strategy document and present it to the congregation.

This process will involve the questions:

What are we trying to do and why?

How might we get to where we want to go?

Are we doing this right?

How can we push ahead together?

When is this "done"?

The team's intention for this exercise is that it will bring into clearer focus the needs for change in the way we "do church" - that is, what the future ministries of the church will look like as well as how we will finance and staff these ministries with paid positions and volunteers, both immediately and in the more distant future. Further, the futuring strategy document will guide us in a process for creating this change over a five-year period.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jean O'Brien
Futures Team Leader

REPORT ON BUILDING USE IN 2022

Weddings

- May 18th : Chapel Wedding. Angela Harrison, Officiant. Stephanie McCullough Wedding Host.
- June 25th: Sanctuary Wedding. LaShinda and Stephanie McCullough, Hosts
- July 7th: Sanctuary Wedding. Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather Officiant. Angela Harrison & Stephanie McCullough, Hosts.
- Sept 4th: Sanctuary Wedding. Angela Harrison Host, Stephanie McCullough Youtube Stream Tech.
- Nov. 12th: Sanctuary Wedding with Founder's Room Reception: Angela Harrison, Dave Watts and Stephanie McCullough Wedding Hosts.

Non-Weddings/Events

- March 19th, Tower Chorale Fundraiser, Founder's Room
- April 16th, Private Memorial gathering, Drawing Room
- May 30th, Art Auction, Founder's Room
- Oct 2nd, Dr. Clodagh Ryan Conference, Founder's Room

Space Share Covenants in 2022

- **AA Support group**, Mondays 6:30 pm in The Drawing Room.
- **Age Options**, Thrive with Pride Café (virtual) for 2022.
 - They have lost funding for this program and will not be continuing in 2023.
- **Al-Anon**, Support group, Fridays 7:30 pm in The Drawing Room.
- **Apogee Academy**, Specialized day school program, M-F in room 111.
 - Began covenant with us in October 2022
 - Includes use of one parking space.
- **Galaxy Theater**, Had their first post-pandemic production in our Dining Hall last April (spring performance) and a fall performance in October. They have a 2023 performance schedule lined up.
- **Illinois Association for Free and Charitable Clinics**, Continuing their covenant for rooms 203 and 204.
 - Includes 2 parking spaces.
- **Ivy League Kids**, School district 102 use of Dining Room during the 2021-22 Academic year on designated days when regular classes were cancelled (per contract).
- **Overeaters Anonymous** Support group, Sundays at 7:00 pm and Fridays at 9:30 am in The Drawing Room.
- **Teaching English for Advancing Change (TEACH)** Continued their covenant for rooms 201 and 202. In 2022, TEACH added room 316 to their covenant for use as storage for teaching supplies.
 - Includes 3 parking spaces.
- **TINY TOES**, Wednesday music classes in room 103. They returned to FCCLG this fall!
- **Youth Outreach Services**, Continued their covenant for rooms 108 & 109. New contract signed for 2023.
 - Includes 3 parking spaces.
- - Respectfully Submitted,
- Stephanie McCullough
Events and Building Coordinator

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF RECORDS

Rev. Adrienne Stricker, Office Administrator

Membership as of December 31, 2021	240
Received	0
Removed by Death	5
Removed by Relocation	6
Membership as of December 31, 2022	229
Weddings: Non-member weddings	5
Member weddings	0
Births	1
Baptisms: Children	4

Adults

0

PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP



Worship Attendance. Measuring “attendance” in worship has become complicated. While we can physically count how many people are in our sanctuary on a Sunday morning, we cannot count how many individuals are participating in worship through the internet or a retirement home’s cable access. We can only count how many individual internet connections watch the live broadcast or the recording of the broadcast later in the week. Retirement communities such as Plymouth Place only appear as one connection even though the program is available to every resident. For statistical purposes, we are counting each connection as a household, recognizing that it is likely this undercounts the actual number of people participating.

Changes in Worship Patterns. Since the onset of COVID-19, the makeup of our worship participation has changed. Pre-2020, we saw 12-14 households participating in worship online, and our sanctuary each week would host an average of 110 per week. These numbers have reversed. As this graph indicates, our online worship participation far exceeds our in-person participation. In 2021, we averaged 221 participating households online, and 54 individuals in person. In 2022, we averaged 175 households online, and 54 individuals in-person.

IN MEMORIAM

We remember with honor and affection our members who have died during the past year:

Rev. Diana S. Coberly	12/9/1946 - 8/21/2022
James Clayton	4/27/1932 – 8/30/2022
Glenda Hoff	4/05/1927 – 9/03/2022
John Colombe	9/18/1945 – 10/20/2022
Robert Hathaway	9/03/1956 - 11/17/2022

FINANCIAL SUMMARY & PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET

2023 Budget Proposal

Account Number	Account Name	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Projected*	2022 Budget	Proposed 2023 Budget
Income						
4.1001	Church School Offering	\$31.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00
4.1005	Contractual Property Sharing	\$20,508.00	\$27,427.07	\$27,500.00	\$27,500.00	\$28,541.40
4.1015	Event Receipts	\$380.00	\$4,160.48	\$5,660.00	\$2,000.00	\$6,850.00
4.1021	Fund Raising Events	\$68.15	\$105.93	\$78.00	\$750.00	\$3,000.00
4.1025	Investment Income - General Fund*	\$14,333.27	-\$2,985.01	-\$89,990.14	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
4.1031	Loose offering	\$424.00	\$1,022.00	\$2,070.03	\$3,000.00	\$2,200.00
4.1035	Miscellaneous Income	\$29,354.53	\$8,142.84			
4.1042	Money Market Income*	\$13,961.19	\$11,278.23	-\$15,130.21	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
4.1045	Pledges-Prior Year	\$700.00	\$4,284.00	\$1,350.00		
4.1051	Pledges Received	\$261,737.93	\$312,355.84	\$310,703.11	\$310,494.47	\$315,000.00
4.1055	Unpledged Contributions	\$59,439.90	\$26,092.24	\$34,338.39	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
	Total Income	\$400,937.97	\$391,883.62	\$276,579.18	\$401,344.47	\$413,091.40
Expense						
5.1001	Administration	\$33,607.02	\$6,900.14	\$6,370.00	\$6,370.00	\$6,370.00
5.1501	Technology		\$39,428.19	\$41,000.00	\$41,000.00	\$28,000.00
5.2001	Personnel	\$223,851.06	\$211,327.63	\$226,427.00	\$239,786.19	\$268,338.70
5.3001	Property	\$149,054.39	\$117,434.23	\$109,951.00	\$106,770.00	\$112,962.66
Ministries						
5.4001	Ministry of Communications	\$760.71	\$240.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
5.5001	Ministry of Education	\$566.81	\$353.67	\$760.00	\$2,000.00	\$500.00
5.6001	Ministry of Membership	\$54.13	\$7.95	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$250.00
5.7001	Ministry of Missions	\$36,024.19	\$33,450.17	\$38,325.41	\$38,325.41	\$39,325.29
5.8001	Ministry of Nurture	\$122.80	\$77.90	1,097.44	\$500.00	\$500.00
5.9001	Ministry of Stewardship	\$383.27	\$111.55	\$289.99	\$500.00	\$300.00
6.1001	Ministry of Worship	\$5,638.88	\$4,701.10	\$5,220.00	\$5,220.00	\$8,145.00
	Total Expense	\$450,063.26	\$414,032.53	\$430,440.84	\$441,971.60	\$465,691.65
Transfers						
	From Conservatory Fund	\$14,850.00	\$14,850.00	\$14,850.00	\$14,850.00	\$14,850.00
	From Endowment Allowance	\$31,823.81	\$33,615.45	\$33,915.45	\$37,728.69	\$37,871.10
	Total Transfers	\$46,673.81	\$48,465.45	\$48,765.45	\$52,578.69	\$52,721.10
	Net Income (Loss)	-\$2,451.48	26,316.54	-\$105,096.21	\$11,951.56	\$120.85

Transfer from Endowment Computation				
Date	1/1 Principle Bal:	Deposits	12/31 Balance*	12/31 Balance less cash
2020	\$ 1,155,947.71		\$1,251,907.00	\$1,251,907.00
2021	\$ 1,251,907.00		\$1,375,014.42	\$1,375,014.42
2022*	\$ 1,375,014.42		\$1,160,188.90	\$1,160,188.90
Three Year Average		\$0.00		\$1,262,370.11
Spendable as transfer in 2023		3.00%		\$37,871.10

* 2022 end balance is from 11/31/2022 to be finalized a year end. Updated data will be available at the Congregational Meeting

Missions Computation	
Church School Offering	\$0.00
Loose Offering	\$2,070.03
Pledges Prior Year	\$1,350.00
Pledges Received	\$310,494.47
Unpledged Income	\$34,338.39
Total Undesignated Income as of 10/31/2022	\$348,252.89
Missions Team Budget	10% \$ 34,825.29
Saturday Meals	\$ 4,500.00
Total Missions	\$ 39,325.29

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

With the lessening of restrictions due to the pandemic, the Property Committee remained busy maintaining the building and grounds, including the completion of several upgrades.

2022 was expected to be an opportune year to embark on several neglected projects to upgrade various areas of the church. Indeed, the Property Committee prepared several requests for proposals, including replacement of the Drawing Room air conditioning, replacement of the kindergarten room exterior windows, the renovation of a men's restroom, and replacement of the flooring in room 100A/B. Unfortunately, the acquisition of competitive bids proved to be difficult this year amid the supply chain woes and labor shortage, and none of these projects moved forward.

On the positive side, several great projects were still accomplished this year:

- Replacement of church sound system
- Upgrade of Sanctuary lighting and controls
- Renovation of church office
- Replacement of parking lot and drive
- Replacement and upgrade of parts for the boilers and pumps
- Replacement of the rotted swinging door at the exterior stone marker
- Relocation of pastor portraits in corridor
- Various repairs to the parsonage exterior
- Creation of fire pit and outdoor seating area by Boy Scout Troop 111 as part of Ben Sander's Eagle Project

In addition, the Property Committee started studies on future work that will be included in an upcoming Capital Campaign. These studies include the replacement of the building elevator and substantial masonry repairs to address deterioration and moisture infiltration.

Beyond individual projects, the Property Committee faithfully manages the continual maintenance of the boilers, lawn mowing, fall leaf removal, and snow removal. Maintaining an aging property - parts of which are approaching 150 years old - will require a continued investment if we are to continue to perform our missions. Some of the improvements identified on the 15-year Capital Plan that had been deferred due to funding will come up again in 2023 and beyond, as well as the unanticipated repairs that are endemic to buildings like ours. The Property Committee always welcomes anyone who is willing to share their time and talents, whether it be to paint and make repairs or to spread salt on the sidewalks after a good snowstorm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Erik Sander

Members: Erik Sander, chair; Dick Lauterbach; Dave Ries, Dave Watts; Orin Crumrine; Peter Van Kempen

GREEN TEAM REPORT

Continuing to adapt to the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Green Team met either outdoors or on Zoom throughout the year.

Activities during 2022 included the following:

- Distribution of activity bags in honor of Earth Day to children at the Easter Sunday service. The bags included seashells, stickers, seeds and a pot for planting, coloring pages, and other Earth Day

activities.

- Thanks to careful tending, the butterfly garden has matured and is more beautiful than ever.
- Collection of Styrofoam, corks, shoes, and paper shopping bags continued.
- The church also became a collection point for fabric, thanks to Dave Bryant and Go Green La Grange.
- An extensive list of recycling options was distributed.
- Green Team members volunteered as a group and individually at the Styrofoam collection in Western Springs.
- Emphasis on a community approach continued, as members of three other local congregations attended our meetings regularly.
- We mourned the loss of faithful attendee Sr. Marlene Schemmel of the Sisters of St. Joseph.
- Green Team members volunteered at the La Grange Farmers Market.
- During a coffee hour in September, the Green Team held their first Sustainability Fair, at which sustainable products were displayed and sustainable practices were explained.
- A Green Team member serves on the Village of La Grange's Environmental Quality Commission and as FCCLG's liaison to the Green Team at the First Congregational Church of Western Springs.

The Green Team recognizes that climate and environmental justice are not local problems, and that they need to be addressed with just policy at every level of government. Advocacy continues to be a priority for us in 2023. With the passage of the CEJA (Clean Energy Jobs Act) in Springfield in 2021, and the IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) at the federal level in 2022, both hugely important climate bills, one task before us is to educate the community about these policies.

The Green Team is a nonhierarchical group with no requirements for membership except an interest in environmental justice and responsible stewardship of the Earth. We invite all to join us, whether for one meeting or one project, or as a core member of the team.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Braun, Claudia Byrne, Mary Anne Daniels, Nancy Heil, Diane Kasnick, Dawn Mackie, Bobbi Nunez

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION REPORT

The adult education class for 2022 read four books: *Know Doubt* by John Ortberg; *Outrageous Justice* by Craig DeRoche; *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi* by Amy-Jill Levine, and *The Heart of Christianity* by Marcus Borg. Attendance continued to be strong, averaging 12 per class. We continued the class via Zoom, which allowed several to attend who would otherwise not be able to participate. Everyone was challenged and enriched by our wide-ranging discussions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Lauterbach, Adult Education (ad hoc)

REPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF MEMBERSHIP

This ministry team is not currently meeting.

REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF MISSIONS

The Ministry of Missions continued to meet regularly via Zoom during the third year of the pandemic. Missions receives 10% of the church's undesignated income, averaging \$33,000 annually in recent years, and is charged with disbursing the funds to charitable organizations. Careful thought goes into selecting the organizations. Missions attempts to follow the teaching of Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan, in which he answered the question "Who is my neighbor?" Missions recognizes that our obligations extend beyond the walls of the church, and therefore we support the direct social services of our church as well as local, regional, and international charities that protect vulnerable populations. After Missions members read Peter Singer's explanation of effective altruism in *The Life You Can Save*, we realized that relatively small donations to highly effective projects can literally save lives in developing countries, so we added two maximum-impact international organizations to our recipient list. We support the United Church of Christ through Our Church's Wider Mission, and in 2022 we allocated funds for disaster relief in Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Pakistan. Please review the financial report below and list of the many other organizations your church has supported through Missions this year.

In addition to disbursing the funds allocated to us, Missions participates in many other projects each year.

- In the past, Missions has organized family projects like Feed My Starving Children, hands-on local projects for adults, and adult mission trips. Due to pandemic-related concerns, we did not offer any hands-on projects to the congregation in 2022.
- The Saturday Meals Program is an important asset for our church and the local community. The program currently feeds roughly 50 people each Saturday, including elderly people on inadequate, fixed incomes. Missions is responsible for organizing congregational volunteers to launder the dish towels and aprons used each week.
- Each summer, Missions promotes the collection of donations for The LeaderShop's school supply drive, which provides required school materials for children whose families have difficulty affording them. Every year, our church members generously exceed the requested number of donations. In 2022, The LeaderShop was grateful to receive 308 notebooks and 142 sets of markers.
- Missions promotes the annual CROP Hunger Walk, in which our church has participated for over 35 years. In 2022, the La Grange/Western Springs/Brookfield CROP Hunger Walk raised \$13,501.24, of which 25% stays in the local community and is distributed to participating churches that run food pantries or provide hunger relief. This includes our Saturday Meals Program and the Food Pantry of the Second Baptist Church of La Grange.
- For many years, Missions has collected donations of nonperishable food for the Food Pantry of the Second Baptist Church of La Grange, which assists residents without restricting participation to strict town/village boundaries. Donations were scant this year, so we are transitioning to collecting cash donations.

- As a member of the Greater Chicago Food Depository, Second Baptist can purchase food effectively with cash donations, so we are hopeful that this approach will benefit even more families and individuals.
- Continuing our decades-long relationship with The LeaderShop and the CommUNITY Diversity Group, Missions co-sponsored the Second Annual Building Inclusive Community Conference in April at Lyons Township High School South. With the CommUNITY Diversity Group, we hosted a book discussion of their summer book read, *The Sum of Us*, by Heather McGhee, in September.
- At the request of Pastor Carly, beginning in 2021, Missions has been researching and providing education about local Indigenous history in preparation for drafting a land acknowledgment for the church. A temporary exhibit of 25 posters illustrating Native American history in Illinois has graced our hallways since August. On Kick-off Sunday in September, Joseph Standing Bear Schranz, a member of the Ojibwe Nation, gave a sermon on the history of Indigenous care of God's creation. In response, the congregation donated over \$2,000 for scholarships for students chosen by the Midwest SOARRING Foundation. Members from Missions attended a Powwow in November, where the check was presented. Our scholarship recipient had planned to put her studies on hold for financial reasons, but the scholarship gave her the encouragement she needed to continue. The congregation will be asked to vote on our proposed land acknowledgment at the congregational meeting in January.
- Gifts of Gratitude, which provides gifts to children in Casa Central's programs, is a much-loved Advent tradition that Missions organizes. Diane Kasnick volunteers each year to direct the activity. This year, Casa Central provided the names of 90 preschool-age children. The congregation generously filled all of the gift requests and made additional donations of gift cards for the Casa Central Christmas celebration.
- Kids Hope U.S.A., a child mentoring program, resumed in 2022. Four volunteers meet weekly with their matched children at Congress Park School. This year, one volunteer is from St. Francis Xavier. Kathy Donaldson organizes this worthwhile effort, which is valued by the children in the program.
- When the church launched its new website, Missions updated the information on resources for mental health and substance use disorders.

Missions is grateful to our church community for the many ways it has supported the work of the Ministry of Missions.

Special thanks to Rev. Adrienne Stricker and Dr. Stephanie McCullough for providing vital support to our work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Schwall (chair), Dawn Mackie, JoAnne Konkle, Nancy Heil, Linda Lauterbach (financial liaison), Bobbi Nunez, Laurie Braun, Diane Kasnick (ad hoc member)

MINISTRY OF MISSIONS YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT

Charitable Organization

Against Malaria Foundation	\$500.00	Int'l
BEDS Plus (Building Ecumenical Discipleship through Sheltering)	\$2,000.00	Local
Caring Place Foundation	\$500.00	Local
Casa Central	\$500.00	City
Church World Service (CWS) designated for Pakistan	\$645.41	Int'l
Church World Service (CWS) designated for Ukraine	\$1,000.00	Int'l
CommUNITY Diversity Group	\$200.00	Local
Community Renewal Society	\$1,500.00	City
Court Appointed Special Advocates of Cook County (CASA)	\$500.00	City
CUE Seminaries	\$750.00	UCC
Feed My Starving Children	\$500.00	Int'l
Greater Chicago Food Depository	\$1,000.00	City
Helen Keller International	\$500.00	Int'l
Helping Hand	\$500.00	Local
Interfaith Community Partners (ICP)	\$500.00	Local
Kids Hope USA	\$450.00	Local
LeaderShop, The	\$880.00	Local
My Block, My Hood, My City	\$1,000.00	City
Night Ministry, The	\$2,000.00	City
Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)	\$10,000.00	UCC
Pillars Community Health	\$3,500.00	Local
Saint Leonard's Ministries	\$500.00	City
San Lucas United Church of Christ	\$1,000.00	City
Second Baptist Church of LaGrange Food Pantry	\$500.00	Local
TEACH (Tutoring English to Advance Change)	\$500.00	Local
UCAN	\$1,000.00	City
Union Church of Hinsdale Soup Kitchen	\$400.00	UCC
World Food Program USA (WFP) designated for Afghanistan	\$1,000.00	Int'l
TOTAL DONATED	\$33,825.41	

Amount budgeted for 2022 \$33,825.41

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS DONATED TO IN 2022

The Missions team believes that our charitable giving activities require active management, just like an investment portfolio, and requires periodic adjustment. We maintain connections with local organizations. We have several long-time connections with Chicago-based charities and learn about new ones through print and broadcast media. We examine the efficacy of international organizations and respond to current disasters. In 2022, on your behalf, the following 27 charitable organizations received our allocated funds.

Against Malaria Foundation is a United-Kingdom based charity that provides insecticidal bed netting to populations at high risk of malaria, primarily in Africa. They work with distribution partners to ensure

they are used. The Foundation tracks and reports on net use and impact. In 2022, this organization received top ratings by GiveWell, The Life You Can Save, and Giving What We Can.

BEDS (Building Ecumenical Discipleship through Sheltering) was founded in 1988 by area faith and lay leaders to address the issue of community residents sleeping outdoors while experiencing homelessness. Two people from the FCCLG community were instrumental in developing the first overnight shelter at Hope Lutheran Church in Countryside. Cooks from FCCLG provided the weekly dinner meal. BEDS expanded its reach and mission becoming **BEDS Plus**. In 2018, they opened the Ogden Avenue Supportive Housing facility. On December 15, 2022, they cut the ribbon for The Linda Sokol Francis Summit Service Center, which will provide medical respite care for homeless persons who are too ill or frail to recover from illness or injury on the streets. Our continuing support has grown to over \$148,000 over the years.

Caring Place Foundation was founded 19 years ago by Revs. Maurice and Shawana McGee to take care of at-risk students after school. In addition, they serve festive holiday meals throughout the year for homeless and seniors. Caring Place is funded strictly from donations from area churches.

Casa Central provides family-centered services to Chicago's Hispanic community. They provide many programs like an Adult Wellness Center, a School Age Program and the Early Learning Home-based Program. In addition to a monetary donations, we are a Holiday Magic partner. Through **Gifts of Gratitude** we provided gifts for 90 children in the Early Learning Home-based Program in 2022.

Church World Service (CWS) works worldwide to help welcome and settle refugee families who have fled due to climate change or violence. They respond to the immediate needs after natural or humanitarian (war) disasters, then focus on long-term recovery. In recent years, we have earmarked donations for Haiti, Pakistan, Ukraine and Afghanistan. **CROP Hunger Walks** are community-wide events sponsored by CWS and organized by local congregations to raise funds to end hunger at home and around the world. FCCLG has participated in these walks for over 40 years. This year our area raised over \$13,500. Twenty-five percent of this amount stays locally and is distributed to food pantries and hunger relief programs run by churches that participate in the CROP Walk. This includes our Saturday Meals Program.

CommUNITY Diversity Group acknowledges our cultural and racial differences and celebrates the richness these differences give our society. It is a local 501(c)(3) charitable organization that relies on donations from local churches and private individuals. CDG organizes the annual Race Unity Rally, along with a book and movie discussion in September. Donations fund the Scholarship Program which provides opportunities for children to participate in extra-curricular activities and summer camps.

Community Renewal Society is a 136 year-old faith-based organization that works to achieve justice and equality. CRS works on issues of police accountability, justice reform, community development and reparations, LGBTQIA+ equity and restorative justice.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA of Cook County) provides child victims of abuse and neglect in foster care with a consistent and caring CASA volunteer by their side during their time in the child welfare system. These children are overwhelmingly Black and Brown, live below the poverty line, and are from Chicago communities that have experienced historical racial inequities, including over-representation in the child welfare system, policing, and the war on drugs.

CUE Seminaries of the UCC consists of Chicago, United and Eden Theological Seminaries. These seminaries educate and train future pastors, chaplains, counselors, and ministers that will serve communities like ours.

Feed My Starving Children runs permanent and mobile sites where children and adults hand-pack nutritious MannaPack meals designed to assist in reversing and preventing undernutrition. These meals are sent to 109 countries all over the world. More than 90% of total donations are spent directly on the meal production.

Greater Chicago Food Depository has provided food for food pantries and food programs across Chicago and Cook County since 1979. In addition, GCFD helps people apply for food and medical benefits, find free diapers and provides nutritious food boxes for older adults. They are committed to taking on the root cause of hunger.

Helen Keller International was founded to deliver high-dose supplements of vitamin A, twice a year, to children in need under five years of age to save their sight and life. These supplements reach millions of vulnerable children annually in countries across Africa. Helen Keller International is highly rated for effectiveness by charity rating organizations GiveWell and Giving What We Can.

Helping Hand Center, located in Countryside, serves 670 children and adults with developmental disabilities in suburban Cook County. They offer a range of programs and services, including outpatient therapies, early intervention, a school for children with autism, high school transition, residential homes, employment services, adult developmental training, behavioral services and special recreation programs.

Interfaith Community Partners (ICP) is a church-supported organization that provides older adults with safe, accompanied transportation to medical appointments and allows them to stay connected to their community and live quality lives. During the pandemic they provided services like grocery and pharmacy shopping.

Kids Hope USA pairs church partners with public schools for mentoring elementary students once a week for one hour. They provide screening, training and supervision by a program director. We currently mentor 4 students at Congress Park School in Brookfield.

The LeaderShop provides mentors for youth between the ages of 6 and 12 who are in need of additional adult support. They run a summer camp for 1st through 8th grade students, as well as junior and high school leadership programs and after school tutoring for 1st through 8th grade students

My Block, My Hood, My City (M3) provides experiential education opportunities to hundreds of youth in Chicago. They host multiple volunteer events per month through their Community Development Initiatives, like cleaning alleys, mowing lawns and shoveling for seniors. Their Explorers Program makes youth aware of the world and opportunities beyond their neighborhood by exploring Vocational Education, Arts Expression and providing Culinary and Recreational experiences.

The Night Ministry is a Chicago based organization whose mission is to provide housing, health care, and human connection to community members struggling with poverty or homelessness. Known for their 38-foot Health Outreach Bus that brings basic medical care to communities, they also run seven other programs, including the Crib Overnight Emergency Shelter for homeless young adults, ages 18-24.

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) supports four Covenanted Ministry partners. The *Office of General Ministries* involves the business end of the UCC. *Local Church Ministries* helps churches find new pastors and develops resources for ministers. *Wider Church Ministries* provides disaster relief and long-term disaster recovery. *Justice and Witness Ministries* works toward a more just, peaceful and compassionate world that honors all of God's creation.

Pillars Community Health integrates primary medical and dental care with mental health and social services. Their programs include: **Constance Morris House** which houses victims of domestic and sexual violence; **Buddy's Place** which supports children who are grieving; and The Living Room for adults ages 18 and older who need help during a mental health crisis.

Saint Leonard's Ministries' mission is to empower formerly incarcerated men and women to lead whole and productive lives. They provide emergency and permanent supportive housing, cognitive behavioral therapy, healthcare, substance abuse treatment, education, and employment training.

San Lucas United Church of Christ, a church with a long history of service and social justice, serves the Spanish/English community of Humboldt Park. The church helps seniors and families needing energy assistance through the CEDA program and gives out clothing, blankets and hygiene products. A Community Meal is served every Tuesday and fruits and vegetables are brought in monthly. Their big event is a Thanksgiving meal for everyone in Humboldt Park.

Second Baptist Church of LaGrange runs a food pantry out of their church that is available for the food insecure in La Grange and the surrounding communities. Every year, they participate in the CROP Hunger Walk and receive part of the 25% that stays in the community.

TEACH (Tutoring English to Advance Change) provides one-on-one English literacy tutoring, health literacy training, cultural mentoring, and citizenship test preparation to English language learners in DuPage, Western Cook and Will counties. They rent office space in FCCLG.

UCAN works toward the simple vision that youth who suffer trauma can become our future leaders and that inspiring them will help break cycles of violence, abuse and neglect and help them become advocates for change in their communities. This social service organization is over 150 years old and has deep roots in the UCC.

Union Church of Hinsdale Soup Kitchen is a group of men who love to cook soup and provide soup every week of the year for the San Lucas UCC's Tuesday meal and our Saturday Meals Program.

World Food Program USA (WFP) does whatever it takes to deliver lifesaving food to children and families most in need around the globe by distributing staples during emergencies, providing meals in schools, and delivering food vouchers in conflict zones.

Summary

In addition to financial support, many of these charitable organization have received our time and talent through group projects or with long term individual volunteers. Groups have sorted and packed food for the **Greater Chicago Food Depository**, made MannaPack meals for **Feed My Starving Children**, and made hygiene packs and prepared food to serve at health bus locations for **The Night Ministry**. We have made emergency cleanup buckets and hygiene kits for **Church World Service** and participate in their yearly **CROP Hunger Walk**. The church has served as a summer shelter for **BEDS Plus** and prepared and served

the evening meal. Our Gifts of Gratitude collection provides gifts for 75-90 children at **Casa Central**. Every summer we collect school supplies to be given to students in need through **The LeaderShop**. Individuals have given hundreds of hours volunteering with BEDS Plus, The LeaderShop, Interfaith Community Partners, TEACH, The Caring Place Foundation, the CommUNITY Diversity Group, Kids Hope and UCC's Justice and Witness Ministry.

REPORT OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Our administrative assistant team was again in flux this year. In April, our part time Office Administrator of nine years, Ginger Scarborough, gave notice that she had accepted a full-time position elsewhere. We utilized the services of a temp agency through July while we redesigned the office positions to reflect our current needs. What had been a shared position between two people doing the office management became two positions with separate responsibilities:

- **The Office Administrator** oversees the executive functions of the church, coordinates and facilitates the day-to-day operations of the church, and provides member support. This includes coordination of communication between staff, ministry teams, and church leadership; management of the Administrative and Office budgets and working cooperatively with the team of staff and volunteers to coordinate the efficient and smooth execution of the ministries of the church. This is a part time position of 25 – 30 hours per week depending upon the church calendar.
- **The Events and Building Coordinator** coordinates the use of the church's largest asset, the physical plant. This position is responsible for recruiting, screening, coordinating, contracting, invoicing, and interacting with tenants, venue clients, and other non-ministry uses of the church, recruiting and coordinating member-hosts for events, and overseeing the internal and external communications of the congregation, including social media, the website, and advertising.

In mid-August, **Rev. Adrienne Stricker** joined our staff as the Office Administrator. While her position with us is not a pastoral role, Adrienne's ministerial call is to "Administry," which fits perfectly within the Office Administrator's position. She brings outstanding organizational and administrative skills to the position and is an excellent addition to our team.

With Office Assistant responsibilities off her plate, **Stephanie McCullough** is blossoming as the Events and Building Coordinator. She has kept our tenants' covenants up to date, toured prospective marital parties and event hosts through the space, and started up a weekly mini newsletter sent by email to members. Our exclusive use sharable space is 85% full, and a new tenant, the Apogee Academy, now uses our Sunday School space during the week.

Fran Montoro continues as our Financial Coordinator; she is responsible for all outgoing funds, bookkeeping, and financial reporting to the Council and Congregation.

AnnLaura Tapia continues to provide us with excellent organ and piano accompaniment for the choir, soloists, and the congregation. She is also preparing future church musicians – including some of our youth -- by providing organ lessons through the Conservatory of Music.

Ryan Cox began his 20th year as our Director of Music on November 4. He artfully and expertly directed our choirs and soloists, and he has brought back the choir's Christmas Cantata and the children's Christmas Musical. As the Director of First Conservatory, his steady hand on the helm has kept our music teaching ministry thriving. His talent, energy, and creativity are an inspiration to us all.

We thank our entire church staff for consistently going above and beyond their job descriptions to enable me and church leadership to serve our church and community more fully. And, of course, none of us can perform our tasks without the support of members of the congregation, who continue to provide energy and resources to make ministry possible.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather (Staff Liaison)

REPORT FROM THE SATURDAY MEALS PROGRAM

Saturday Meals Program 2022 Report: A Leap of Faith

In 2022, when Saturday Meals Program decided to reopen, we weren't sure who we would be feeding, or if after all the closures due to the Covid mandates anyone would still need us. Could we restore the ministry and find folks to work with us? While in 2021 we had a couple of starts, in 2022 we took a leap of faith and opened! With Carly's help, invitations and new flyers were spread to churches, libraries, the VA, BEDS, and any place we could reach out. And people started to come, but not who we expected!

When Saturday Meals Program was first created, its goal was to feed those in need of a meal. At the time, many participants were moving from one BEDS shelter to another. But the folks who found us when we started in 2022 were seniors affected by the economy and on fixed incomes.

We are averaging 40-45 guests each Saturday. Now that BEDS has reopened their sleeping shelters, we've seen an uptick in those guests as well. In 2022, we prepared and served 4,200 hot and bagged meals. Our leap of faith has amazed all who have worked to bring this needed ministry back!

There is a core group of volunteers who have worked together to make Saturday Meals Program the vibrant ministry it is for a very long time: Charlie Anderson, director; LuAnn Hall, who has been with SMP from the beginning, and Ron Long, longtime board member. Carly, Tom Lowry, and I round out the SMP board.

Tom Lowry is executive chef; he plans the meals and sees to their serving. LuAnn is a trusty sous chef, often coming in during the week to work with Tom to get the food ready for final presentation on Saturday.

Maryann and Tom D. sort the donations received from Mariano's every Saturday and clean produce. If not needed for the day's meal, they package it up so it can be frozen for future use, or the guests can take it. Chuck is the freezer curator. He lets Tom know what's in the freezers, whether we have an abundance of ground beef, chicken thighs, or soup that needs to be eaten!

We have a group of people who sterilize dishes, soup bowls, and cups before and after each meal, roll silverware, cut desserts, and then help serve the meal and clean up. When new folks - especially youth - volunteer we place them with senior volunteers who mentor and help ensure they have a safe and enjoyable time in the kitchen.

And then there is that important group the Laundry Heroes, who have some pretty scuzzy aprons and towels to wash and get back to us for the next week's lunch. It can be a vicious circle!

We are grateful that so many other churches have joined us in this ministry to feed those in need: First United Methodist Church, St Francis Xavier, and those who are moved by God, but have no affiliation. We are also of course grateful for the outpouring of FCCLG people who have stepped forward to help us in our leap of faith!

I have had the pleasure of being the Volunteer Coordinator for the Saturday Meals Program for over 7 years, and I realize that if this ministry is to grow into the future, we need someone who has outreach skills and abilities. If you or someone you know would like the feeling a “good tired,” please let Carly, Charlie, Tom, LuAnn, or myself know. This is a leap of faith you would never regret!

Respectfully Submitted,
JoAnne Konkle Saturday Meals Program Volunteer Coordinator

REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Team is a ministry that has been unstaffed by volunteers for several years.

2022 Annual Campaign Results

Our Goal for the 2022 campaign was \$300,000. Through the generosity of 82 households, we anticipate finishing the year with \$310,000 in pledged income.

The Sanctuary Technology Project

In September 2021, the congregation approved the replacement and upgrade of the sound and light technology in the sanctuary at a cost of \$166,800, and to launch a campaign to raise the \$78,340 in funds not available from the budget, memorials, or reserves. This campaign had pledges from 59 households totaling \$81,139.00. Of the amount pledged, \$75,768.27.00 has been received as of December 18. Many thanks to all who generously helped in this effort.

With the help of Tom Lowry, the 2023 Annual Campaign concluded on December 11, 2022. The Campaign goal is \$315,000. As of December 18, we have received pledges from 49 households that total \$212,000. Additionally, we have 30 households that usually pledge from whom we have not yet received a pledge but expect to; if these pledges match the 2022 pledge, we can expect an additional \$94,440 in pledges for 2023.

Interesting factoids about the church’s stewardship:

- Over 50% of gifts to the church come by way of electronic payments
- 79% of our pledging households utilize electronic payments.
- Surprise! The largest percentage of electronic donors are over age 60!
- Since 2016, donations to the general fund have increased an average of 4.1% per year.
- Since 2016, pledges received has exceeded the pledges made by an average 3.2% per year.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather

REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF NURTURE

“When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.” Romans 12:13

The Ministry of Nurture is responsible for creating fellowship opportunities, welcoming our church community and visitors, and helping to strengthen relationships among us. Our work is greatly augmented by the time, talents, and donations of others who help us in fulfilling our nurturing mission. Thank you to the many people who have assisted us this year.

A longstanding ministry of the Nurture Team is the weekly Sunday Fellowship Coffee Hour. Amanda and Mike Ries oversaw the installation of the water line for our new coffee maker, which brews individual pots of coffee and is more versatile for small gatherings. We use the urn for large events. Betsy Colombe coordinates coffee hour and makes sure standard supplies are available. We thank the many church members who signed up to host coffee hour this year.

Other Nurture-hosted events this year included the Jan. 30 Sabbatical Send-Off celebration for Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather, and Easter Brunch on April 17. We assisted Vice Moderator Jean O’Brien at the Multi-Generational Craft Event on May 1, and the Welcome Back luncheon for Rev. Carly on May 15. Amy Crumrine spearheaded the effort behind the Sept 11 indoor church picnic. We also hosted several memorial receptions, including those honoring Lyle Brumley, John Colombe, and John Sayles, Jr.

This year, we reorganized the closets in the Founders’ Room. This yielded more effective chair storage. Tablecloths that were no longer in use were donated to charity. We routinely check to ensure the Founders’ Room and adjoining kitchen are ready for upcoming events.

Our work has been greatly impacted by the pandemic. The terms of all members now serving expired years ago. We welcome any volunteers who like to entertain to join us on the Nurture Team!

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Ries, Angela Harrison, Amy Crumrine, Betsy Colombe

REPORT FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Council is offering a very light ballot this year due to the uncertainty of our structure in the coming year due to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ballot consists of two people to be elected, and two people who were appointed by the Council to be affirmed.

Ballot:

New to positions:

Vice Moderator: Jean O’Brien

Volunteer Coordinator: Stephanie Johnston

Council Appointments to be affirmed:

Clerk: Sherri Ries, second one-year term.

Treasurer: Kevin Cunningham, term ending in 2023.

Pending approval of the above ballot, the following elected people will have unexpired terms on the remaining teams and committees (Term expires at the January congregational meeting in year indicated):

Council

Tom Lowry, (moderator) 2023
Jean O'Brien (vice moderator), 2024
Erik Toman (past moderator), 2022
Kevin Cunningham (treasurer), 2023
Deborah Gardiner (at large), 2023
Brian Kasnick (at large), 2024

Finance

Kevin Cunningham, 2023

Stewardship

none

Personnel

Brian Shannon, 2024
Jill Tobin, 2023

Property

David Ries, 2023

Communication

John Leininger, 2023

Education

none

Membership

none

Missions

none

Nurture

none

Worship

Noah Gardner, 2023

Officers and other positions:

Historian

vacant

Assistant Treasurer

vacant

Volunteer Coordinator

Stephanie Johnston

Chief Usher

vacant

We are grateful for the many people who have continued to serve on our teams and committees through the pandemic. We are especially thankful to Renee Bryant who served as Moderator and Past Moderator and is now retiring from Council responsibilities. Well done!

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather

2022 FINANCIALS

The final 2022 Financials will be available as an addendum prior to the Congregational Meeting on January 22, 2023.

STATEMENT OF MISSION

As people of the First Congregational Church of La Grange, both individually and collectively, we declare our mission to be as follows:

To love, worship, and serve God.

To increase our awareness of and thankfulness to God.

To become more sensitive to the needs of our local and worldwide neighbors and to strengthen our commitment to help meet these needs.

To grow in Christian love and fellowship and in our living of the ways taught by Jesus.

To educate and nurture children, youth, and adults in the heritage and application of the Christian faith.

To encourage others to share our pilgrimage of faith and to adopt this Statement of Mission as a guide for their lives.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

Adopted by First Congregational Church of La Grange on May 16, 1999

We, the members of First Congregational Church of La Grange, affirm our regard for the worth and dignity of all persons as beloved children of God.

We welcome persons of diverse racial and ethnic heritage, socioeconomic circumstance, gender, age, physical and mental ability, marital status, faith perspective, and sexual orientation to join our congregation and participate fully in its life and ministry.

We condemn all acts of discrimination and violence, and advocate in word and deed for justice and inclusiveness.

We welcome all families, traditional and nontraditional, as they strive to function within principles of love, justice, faith, and commitment.

We join together to celebrate our common life as children of God and to serve a hurting world.