



First Congregational Church of La Grange

2021 Annual Report

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AGENDA OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 2022

January 23, 2022

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| I. Call to Order | Erik Toman, Moderator |
| II. Approval of the January 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes | |
| III. Approval of the Sanctuary Technology Congregational Meeting from September 12, 2021 | |
| IV. Financial Overview and 2022 Budget Proposal | Financial Team |
| V. Election of New Leadership | Nominations Committee |
| VI. Benediction | Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather |
| VII. Adjournment | |

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 2021

January 24, 2021

I. Call to Order

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the annual meeting was held on Zoom and was called to order by Moderator, Renee Bryant at 10:42 am. A quorum of 47 was confirmed by John Leininger who was acting as Zoom host for the meeting. Instructions for questions, comments and voting were reviewed for the congregation.

II. Approval of January 2020 Minutes

The Minutes of the January 2020 Annual Meeting were reviewed and approved with the following vote:

Motion to accept the January 2020 minutes: Jerry Palmer, 2nd Jill Tobin
Although there were difficulties with our first vote, the motion carried.

III. Business to Be Considered:

Review of the Reports of Leadership, Ministry Teams, and Committees yielded the following three corrections:

- The Missions Team, "White Audit Report" (p.13) should include in the list of vendors, our minority owned cleaning team: Shine in Your Place which is a Latinx company.
- The Moderator's report, (p.7 paragraph 3, Line 5) says Mission of Nurture but should read Ministry of Missions.
- The Worship report should include Noah Gardner as chair.

IV. Financial Overview

Unaudited 2020 Results - Covid-19 affected our budget in many ways. John Moellman, as Treasurer, pointed out 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. On the spending side, 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.

2021 Budget – Our pledges are over \$300,000 for the year. Currently Personnel is a flat line with no increases proposed for 2021. Property is back within its normal range. There being no questions, John Moellman proposed:

Motion to accept the proposed 2021 budget. Since the motion is offered by the Council, a second is not needed.

During discussion, Jerry Palmer proposed:

Motion to amend the Personnel budget, Line 5.2001, to \$228,969.00 to reflect a 3% raise for the staff for 2021. Jean O'Brien seconded.

Vote: 39 affirmative votes - Motion carried.

The 2021 budget includes a new line, Line 5.1501, Technology. Because of our increased use of technology this past year and projections that we will continue to need increased technology in the future, the technology portions of ministry/team budgets were removed from individual teams and consolidated under the new Technology line.

Motion to approve the 2021 budget as amended was made by Jerry Palmer.

Tom Lowry seconded. Vote: 40 affirmative votes - Motion carried.

The budget as amended and approved will be published and emailed to the congregation.

V. Election of new Leadership

Erik Toman is the new Moderator for 2021 and presented the slate of new nominations (P.16). This year's focus was to completely staff the Council and Finance committee and to have all committees and ministries to operate as normal and to have members who would normally be rolling off remain for one additional year to make up for this absent year. The following additions to the slate were made:

Kevin Cunningham, Treasurer

Jill Tobin, Personnel

Brian Kasnick, Council Member at Large

Motion to approve the nomination slate: Stephanie Johnston, 2nd Amanda Ries

Vote: 39 affirmative votes – Motion carried.

Appreciation was expressed to all the staff who worked to make services continue this year amid the complications this year created. Also to Mike Ries who is rolling off the Council after serving as Moderator, and to Renee Bryant who was Moderator throughout this pandemic year.

VI. Motion to adjourn: Tom Lowry

There being no protest, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherri Ries, Clerk

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

September 12, 2021

Subject: Funding for the Replacement of the Sound and Lighting Systems

A special meeting of the Congregation was called to address the funding of the possible replacement of the sound and lighting systems in the sanctuary. Materials were distributed indicating the issues and proposed solutions. As a result of broadcasting through the pandemic, shortcomings of our current systems have been brought to the forefront. In the Spring of 2021, the sound system (composed of components from the 1950s and several more recent reworked updates) stopped functioning. In February of 2019, one of the circuits in the 1930s era lighting control box shorted out, causing us to evacuate the sanctuary. A Sanctuary Technology Task Force was formed and met for 5 months to determine our current and future needs and contemporary solutions. The Task Force, chaired by Noah

Gartner, included Chris Bart, John Leininger, Erik Sander, and Brian Kasnick. Church staff, Ryan Cox and Carly Stucklen Sather, worked with the team.

It was determined that we met the quorum with 42 members in church and 7 on Zoom. (32 members were needed).

Council had approved the replacement pending the Congregation's approval of the expenditure.

I. Motion: The Congregation moves to approve the replacement and upgrade of the sound and light technology in the sanctuary and endorses the launch of a campaign to raise the remaining \$78,340.00.

II. Open discussion yielded the following questions, answers, and comments:

Q: Looking to cut costs, do we need the speakers in the Nursery?

A: The Nursery attendants requested speakers to both feel part of the congregation and to know how long the service was running.

Q: There are \$41,000 in the newly created Technology line. Can we use that money?

A: When we created the Technology budget line, we took money previously budgeted on technology from Administration, Membership, Communications and Worship. Most of that money was already earmarked for ongoing technological expenses like our Financial program, the Breeze program, online broadcasting services and fees, etc.

Q: If we are using the Memorial Funds, have the families been notified?

A: We have been able to contact all but one family.

Q: When will we have to have the money for lighting?

A: Hopefully by December. Our payments are broken into installments (25% to order, 50% on arrival and 25% upon completion) and we hope to have the work completed by Easter. There may be equipment supply issues that delay delivery of the equipment.

Q: What do we do if we don't raise all the money?

A: We will obtain a bank loan. It will NOT be a loan from the Endowment Fund.

Q: Our budget is currently in arrears. How do we plan to cover it?

A: The current deficit is normal for this time of the year. We have members who complete their pledges at the end of the year and we are normally on budget by December. The summertime deficit generally affects cash flow more than the final bottom line.

Q: Do we have to do both at the same time?

A: The sound system will take about 2 weeks depending on product availability. The current lighting system poses a fire hazard (the 1937 board by the organ caught fire 2 years ago).

Q: Can we coordinate the work to save money?

A: We would like to coordinate the work to possibly save on scaffolding but that all depends on the product availability. The contractors know that we are replacing both systems and are willing to coordinate when possible. If it's not possible, the scaffolding rental is actually a small portion of the project.

Due to supply shortages created by the pandemic, it may take longer than planned to receive the equipment so we should place orders quickly to get it rolling.

Q: Would it be better to have one company do both projects?

A: The task force looked into that but found no source that could accomplish both well.

Q: Is there an architect's rendering available?

A: Erik Sander has drawings that are available for viewing.

III. John Moellman called the question for vote. The results were -
44 – Ayes (2 from online members), Nay – 0, Abstain – 1

IV. The motion was approved as presented.

V. John Colombe moved for adjournment. Meeting was adjourned at 11:12 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherri Ries
Clerk

REPORT OF THE PASTOR

This has been a difficult year for everyone, even and perhaps especially for the life of the congregation.

We began the year meeting only virtually. Our services were prerecorded in various locations by different people, stitched together professionally, and broadcast on Sunday mornings. Coffee hours were via Zoom. Tablets and iPads containing the recorded services were delivered on Saturdays to people without internet access. Pastoral care was done by phone, text, Zoom, and email. Meetings were all on Zoom. And one household after another was testing positive for COVID.

When the vaccines became more widely available and the revolving 7-day positivity rate on COVID tests dropped below 10%, we ventured into worshiping in person with strict safety protocols and pre-registrations. The choirs began to rehearse and added so much to our worship services. We even dared to schedule a congregational meeting to discuss and approve replacing the sanctuary lights and sound systems. What joy it was to have Christmas Eve services with so many people in the sanctuary; we gathered in the flesh to celebrate God coming to us in flesh.

Then the virus mutated again. Omicron struck, knocking the 7-day positivity rate as high as 18% and we had no choice but to move back to virtual services. Even among vaccinated people, break through cases have locked families in their houses, children out of school, and elders struggling to stay healthy.

As 2021 ended, I found myself exhausted intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Nonetheless, I look back on this year and am grateful for the ministry we share at FCCLG. Despite the challenges, we have much to be thankful for.

- We met in person to worship 26 services including two on Christmas Eve. Oh, what joy!
- Our fellowship has been blessed to welcome hundreds of online worship participants each week. Our average weekly viewership for the year is 220 people and/or devices per Sunday with the highest Sunday being 354 on December 19 (255 online, 99 in person), and the low being 119 on May 23 (all online).
- Once we started meeting our in-person attendance averaged 54 while our online viewership remained over 200.
- We confirmed four young people's baptismal vows.
- We baptized six children and infants.
- We received ten new members into our family of faith.
- We were applied for and were awarded a congregational grant of over \$46,000 for clergy renewal from the Lily Foundation.
- We have approved and ordered the installation of new sound and lighting technology for the sanctuary – and we've raised the necessary funds to pay for it!
- We expanded the space shared with tenants to include a previously unused room on the third floor.
- We shared space with two agencies who provide virtual school for children who could not attend virtually at home.
- The number of households donating to the church's ministries reached 136. Collectively, these households contributed \$383,058.48 to the ministries, funds, and causes of the congregation.
- We have again ended the year with our income exceeding our expenses.

As the new year begins, I am grateful for the opportunity to take a sabbatical. I love being the leader of this congregation, and I look forward to returning refreshed and re-energized for ministry among you all.

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

Music making in 2021 began as we had done in 2020 – remotely, pre-recorded, very labor intensive. Then, in July we shifted to in-person worship where AnnLaura and I provided the vast majority of the music. During the late summer plans developed to bring the choir back to worship services. At the time, the Delta variant was dominant which required the use of masks for indoor singing. Using guidance from organizations such as the Grant Park Music Festival and the American Guild of Musical Artists the choir came back in September donning their singer masks and a new uniform of “mostly black.” It took a few weeks to get used to singing with the masks, with diction being the biggest challenge. However, our singers coped and ultimately succeeded, singing really well every week.

Among the challenges of planning for a smaller choir, masked, with possible shifts in available singers from week to week are: selecting repertoire that is rewarding yet can be sung well with unplanned absences; it's harder to breath quickly with a mask, so care was taken to limit that; it takes a lot of energy to sing clearly with a mask, so songs with fast or difficult texts were limited; accomplishing the above meant more time than usual to find new repertoire. The last challenge in particular ended up a blessing.

The Carillon Handbell Choir rang throughout 2021 and has hit their stride with our newer rehearsal configuration. We used to ring close together and each ringer could hear the others well and there were two ringers sharing music. Now we distance and each has their own music stand. At first hearing each other was challenging, but we have found other ways to stay together, like watching the conductor at least occasionally. As with the choir selecting music was a rewarding challenge. The consistent number of ringers was not always a traditional 7, 9, 11, or 13. This means finding pieces where assigning bells creatively allows the whole piece to be rung. Due to our smaller size we were able to ring music previously overlooked.

Unfortunately, children's music has not returned yet. I am hopeful that this can start up again in 2022.

Significant time was spent working on the Sanctuary Sound and Light project. I am eager to see and hear the major improvements in 2022. Another project was editing and organizing the choir music library. While not finished, huge progress was made with the help of some great volunteers.

Other shifts in how time is spent include additional preparations for each Sunday broadcast and bulletin. Images of hymns are created so that all of our at-home and in-person worshippers can participate without a hymnal. At least half of the hymns we use are from assorted hymnals, hence not using them in the pews. Creating text files for the AV team to subtitle the music is also weekly. Choir music is scanned and uploaded each week so singers can look at it during the week or iPad users can download.

AnnLaura Tapia continues to be a great partner and asset to 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. The most recent drive was in early 2020 but donations came in throughout 2021. In particular, gifts in memory of Margaret Melkonian entirely funded the Advent Choral Sermon. Thank you all who donated in the past couple of years.

Ryan Cox
Director of Music

CONSERVATORY REPORT

The First Conservatory of Music remains a strong presence. Students and teachers have mostly returned to in-person lessons. Some students have stayed online-only and a couple of teachers teach from home. Masks are compulsory for in-person lessons.

The gifted faculty has 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 of the church's pianos as well as provide musicians from the faculty for services throughout the year.

Ryan Cox
Director, First Conservatory of Music

MODERATOR'S REPORT

The year 2021 started off with much hope to return to our new normal. We started the year with our virtual services and continued to reimagine the way we worship. The church council welcomed new officers and worked to ensure the church operations continued seamlessly. The 2020 Council consisted of Renee Bryant (Past Moderator), Tom Lowry (Vice-Moderator), Kevin Cunningham (Treasurer), Sherri Ries (Clerk), Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather (Pastor), Deborah Gardiner and Brian Kasnick (Members at Large). Meeting on a monthly basis our goal was to come back to in-person church in a safe way, continue to stay on budget, and ensure the wellness of our staff.

Our vision to Build the Future continued to drive our discussions on the operations of our church. We knew early on that we needed to upgrade the technology in our sanctuary, however, finding the money in our budget would be hard. We worked with Pastor Carly and Ryan to set up a Sanctuary Technology Task Force to design, research and present a final proposal to the council for our blessing to come forward to the congregation to start a campaign to raise funds for a much-needed improvement to revitalize the church. We are happy that within a few short months we were able to raise more than our goal, which will allow us to preserve our delegated funds.

As COVID was heading into its 15th month, we gave our blessing to Sylvia Miller to be ordained through an online worship service while she was at her home church in California. Normal was starting to look promising and we were excited to start conversations about returning to in-person worship. Council agreed to a set of guidelines that would allow us to worship in-person and steps we needed to take to do it safely. Through the work of the Return to Worship Task Force, they established our operations to return and set up plans for the off chance we needed to go back to remote services.

Throughout the year, our church was able to stay up to date on our covenants with our leasing partners, onboard new staff, and continue with our missions. Even though we might not have been meeting in person much, many ministries were still meeting to serve the church purpose. As a council we've seen and heard the need to restructure the way in which we support the many facets of our church operations. As such we will be starting anew this coming year to come up with ways to revision our ministries.

The council worked with Pastor Carly to revise her sabbatical grant to the Lily Endowment Clergy

Renewal Program. Carly’s grant proposal was awarded to us for her to spend about four months to rest, spend time with family, and immerse herself into Spanish cultures. While Pastor Carly is on leave, the church will be working together to ReImagine, ReVision, and ReVitalize our Church through workshops with Rev. Miller and the work we do in our town hall sessions.

Respectfully,
 Erik Toman
 FCCLG Church Moderator

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF RECORDS

Ginger Scarborough		
Membership as of December 31, 2019		250
Received		15
Removed by Death		4
Membership as of December 31, 2020		248
Weddings:	Non-member weddings	3
	Member weddings	0
Births		0
Baptisms:	Children	6
Adults		0

IN MEMORIAM

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

Ruth Martin	2/18/1932 – 2/7/2021
Margaret Melkonian	5/28/1940 – 8/28/2021
David O’Brien	6/26/1968 – 3/17/2021
Fred Weiss	11/28/1925 – 2/3/2021

GREEN TEAM REPORT

The urgency of the climate crisis did not stop for the pandemic, and neither did the Green Team. Adapting to the challenges, the team continued to meet either outdoors or on Zoom—and, for one glorious month, indoors and in person.

Activities during 2021 included the following:

- Distribution of activity bags in honor of Earth Day to all the elementary school-age children in the church. 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, and shoes continued.
 - Paper shopping bags for donation to BEDS and fabric were added to the items collected.
 - An extensive list of recycling options was distributed.
 - Green Team members volunteered at the Styrofoam collection in Western Springs.
 - Green tips were placed in the Tidings and bulletin regularly.
 - Emphasis on a community approach continued, as members of three other local congregations attended our meetings regularly, as did a representative from SCARCE.
 - A Green Team member serves on the Village of La Grange’s Environmental Quality Commission.
- Recognizing that climate and environmental justice are not local problems, and they need to be

addressed with just policy at every level of government, advocacy continued to be a priority in 2021. We celebrated the passage of CEJA (Clean Energy Jobs Act) in Springfield. This important legislation will not only get Illinois to 100% clean energy by 2050 but also includes a commitment to justice.

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.

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

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION REPORT

The Adult Education Study Group continued meeting on Friday afternoons via Zoom. Attendance continued to be strong with an average of eleven participants per meeting. Jerry Palmer guided our studies of *The Gospel of Mark* by Marcus Borg, *Genesis to Revelation: Romans* by Robert Jewet and *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels. For our study of world religions, we read *God is Not One* by Stephen Prothero. Each of the religions included in the book was presented by a different class member.

We will be continuing our Friday afternoon Zoom format in 2022.

Linda Lauterbach, Adult Education (ad hoc)

REPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF MEMBERSHIP

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. Matthew 18:20

There are obviously many challenges trying to communicate and take care of a virtual congregation and faced with our second year of Covid restrictions, our work was mostly done behind the scenes. Carly was able to conduct a virtual confirmation class this year and we were happy to add the following Confirmands to our congregation in April:

- Camryn Borkowski
- Samantha Borkowski
- Wally Palmer
- Aurelio Tapia

Based on the local Covid percentages and staff comfort levels, we were able to return to in-person worship over the summer. As vaccination rates increased and tensions eased, our in-person ranks slowly increased. We were able to add to our congregation again in December when we officially welcomed the following six new members:

- Dianne Luhmann
- Michelle & Will Meuer
- Rev. Jed & Susan Watson
- Rev. Sean Williams

This year all of our ministry members will be rolling off the ministry as we have all served more than the allotted term. We know this ministry will be reimagined over the course of the next few months and look forward to that incarnation. If working to gain new members and maintaining the current membership sounds interesting to you, please contact the office. And, as always, any suggestions for connection possibilities are always welcome!

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Donaldson, Jean O'Brien, Petra Palmer and Sherri Ries

REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF MISSIONS

The Ministry of Missions met virtually during our second pandemic year. We allocated funds from

our budget to organizations that further the mission of FCCLG. Due to concerns during the pandemic, we did not offer any hands-on projects this year to the congregation. We promoted contributions to the four national UCC special offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund for retired clergy and lay persons in need of financial assistance. Our church is a Five for Five Church by the Chicago Metropolitan Association of the Illinois Conference of the UCC because we also donate to Our Church's Wider Mission. In 2021, our budget was \$32,254.87. Please see our separate financial report.

When the Saturday Meals Program resumed operations, we organized the laundering of dish towels and aprons on a weekly basis. The meal program had periods of being on hiatus during the pandemic. The summer collection of school supplies for The LeaderShop resulted in the donation of 339 notebooks and 140 sets of markers. CROP Walk was held in person this year. Our four walkers raised \$1343.40 in October for hunger projects. The La Grange Area CROP Walk donated \$994.03 to FCCLG's Saturday Lunch Program. Missions also supports the Second Baptist Church of La Grange's food pantry with member food donations. The food pantry assists residents without restricting participation to strict town/village boundaries.

We hosted a thought-provoking discussion of the book *The Life You Can Save* by Peter Singer. The basic premise of the book is that charitable contributions have a much bigger impact and can be lifesaving in developing countries as opposed to wealthy nations like the United States. As the result of our discussions, we added Helen Keller International (prevention of Vitamin A deficiency which causes blindness) and Against Malaria Foundation (supplies treated mosquito nets to prevent malaria) to our church's charitable donations.

We have had ongoing discussions on a Native American Land Acknowledgement for our church bulletin. It is important that a statement be more than just empty words since no type of compensation for land taken from and lives lost by the indigenous people of Illinois has ever occurred. We will continue to explore the most meaningful way to do this in 2022.

Several metropolitan UCC churches are exploring the best way to sponsor an Afghan refugee family locally. The Ministry of Missions endorses this idea and sends a representative member to the planning meetings.

For the second year, Gifts of Gratitude for Casa Central sign-up was on-line. Through the generosity of the congregation, we collected gifts and monetary donations for seventy-five children plus made additional donations of gift cards and cash for their Christmas celebration.

Kids Hope U.S.A., a child mentoring program, has been on hold during the pandemic, but it is scheduled to resume in late January.

We are grateful to our church community for the many ways you have supported the work of the Missions Ministry during this difficult year.

Members: Susan Schwall (Co-chair), Nancy Heil (Co-chair), Linda Lauterbach (Treasurer), Bobbi Nunez (Secretary), Laurie Braun, Diane Kasnick (Ad hoc member)

MINISTRY OF MISSIONS YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT

Organization	Amount	Scope
OCWM	\$10,000.00	UCC
BEDS Plus	\$2,000.00	Local
Pillars	\$3,500.00	Local
Caring Place Foundation	\$500.00	Local
Second Baptist Food Pantry	\$500.00	Local
Greater Chicago Food Depository	\$1,000.00	City
CASA (court advocates)	\$500.00	City
Casa Central	\$500.00	City
Community Diversity Group	\$200.00	Local
The LeaderShop	\$750.00	Local
TEACH	\$500.00	Local
Against Malaria Foundation	\$500.00	Int'l
Chicago Theological Seminary	\$750.00	UCC
Helen Keller International	\$500.00	Int'l
Interfaith Community Partners	\$500.00	Local
My Block, My Hood, My City	\$1,000.00	City
Night Ministry	\$2,000.00	City
San Lucas	\$1,000.00	City
Community Renewal Society	\$1,500.00	City
St. Leonard's Ministries	\$500.00	City
Feed My Starving Children	\$500.00	Int'l
Helping Hand	\$500.00	Local
KidsHope	\$450.00	Local
UCAN	\$1,000.00	City
Union Church Soup Kitchen	\$400.00	UCC
CWS - Afghan Crisis	\$1,000.00	Int'l
CWS - Haiti	\$204.87	Int'l
TOTAL	\$32,254.87	
 Budget Amount	 \$32,254.87	

REPORT OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The staff has been directly responsible for getting us through the challenges of 2021. Our Office Administrator, Ginger Scarborough, has kept the administrative roles of the church finely tuned and up to speed, adapting and re-creating ways to do the work through rocky roads of COVID. Stephanie McCullough joined the staff this summer as Office Assistant and Building Coordinator; she has kept our tenants' covenants up-to-date, toured prospective marital parties and event hosts through the space, and expertly overseen the internal and external communications of the congregation, social media, the website, and advertising. Fran Montoro continues as our Financial Coordinator; she is responsible for all outgoing funds, bookkeeping, and financial reporting to the Council and Congregation.

Musically, 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 by providing organ lessons through the Conservatory of Music. Ryan Cox is our musical genius Director of Music and Director of the Conservatory. He has been instrumental in providing his own musical talents as well as

providing his creativity to produce virtual choirs and soloists during this trying year. He joyously brought the choir on board as soon as we were able to worship in person. And through all of the pandemic, he has maintained a steady hand on the helm of the Conservatory through his support of our teachers and by using technology to adapt lessons. His energy and talents have been an inspiration to us all.

Our administrative assistant team was again in flux this year. In the Spring, we hired an Office Assistant who left us after just 6 weeks. So again Ginger Scarborough, our Office Administrator, stepped up and assumed the additional responsibilities relating to building sharing, special events, and communications. Over the summer months, our contracted Video Producer, Stephanie McCullough applied and was hired to fill this staff position.

We thank our entire church staff for consistently going above and beyond their job descriptions to enable me and church leadership to more fully serve our church and community. And of course, none of us can perform our tasks without the support of members of the Congregation who have donated their time and efforts during this difficult year.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather (Staff Liaison)

REPORT FROM THE SATURDAY MEALS PROGRAM

Saturday Meals Program met May 15th in the FCCLG dining room; to plan our reopening; our rebirth. Due to Covid, we had been shuttered for a long time. It was a productive, good discussion and out of it: we had a plan to reopen!

Working with the knowledge, that the vast majority of our usual guests were being housed in small hotels and motels and not migrating to sleeping locations. Because they were proactive in sheltering folks, when the shelter at St Barbara's was disbanded, the clients got to have healthcare and other guidance normally not available when moving from place to place. Because of this their guests were not sick and all were vaccinated.

Serving time would be 11:00 - 12:30. The first lunch would be Saturday July 17th. And we needed to get the word out that we are up and serving! There were posters, post cards, and social media announcements about SMP. We dropped off post cards at BEDS, food pantries and senior centers; any place we knew people in need gathered.

The SMP larder had been dispersed and needed to be rebuilt, Charlie, Tom, and Pete worked on that. They reached out to Mariano's, and they responded!

We decided that we would follow CDC, FCCLG, and local safety rules, spacing diners as much as possible while serving as many as possible. It was also decided volunteers would be fully vaccinated folks.

First Congregational Church folks volunteered! Tom & LuAnn, Angela, and I. Laundry heroes Linda, Jean, Sherri! And others! It was great! We reached out to the other churches and groups who previously supported and asked them to re-join us, and they did!

We opened...and folks came! A mix of some of our previous guests and seniors! We started with 12 guests and built up, mostly by word of mouth, to an average of 25. In speaking to the senior guests, we found they are fixed income folks, who were very appreciative of Saturday Meals and our great lunches!

Yes, like church, due to Covid, we are shut down again. But this time it feels so very different!

We will be back! There are plans to expand to new cooperations for Meals and service and 2022 will be an exciting time for this ministry; a ministry this church has supported for over 20 years!

Respectfully submitted:

Saturday Meals Program (Charlie Anderson, JoAnne Konkle)

REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Team is a ministry that has been unstaffed by volunteers for several years. With the help of Tom Lowry and the Church Council, we created two campaigns this year. The Annual Campaign goal was \$300,000. As of January 10, we have received pledges from 82 households that total \$298,574.00. Additionally, we have 13 households that usually pledge from whom we have not yet received a pledge but expect to; if these pledges match the 2021 pledge, we can expect an additional \$16,000 in pledges for 2022.

The second campaign was for the Sanctuary Technology Project. In September, 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 of a campaign to raise the \$78,340 in funds not available from the budget, memorials, or reserves. This campaign received generous pledges from 61 households totaling \$84,444.00. This decreases the amount we need to take from our reserves. Of the amount pledged, \$30,500 has already been received. Many thanks to all who generously helped in this effort.

For both of these campaigns, we are thankful to the members of Council who labored over methodology and verbiage, and to Ginger Scarborough who stuffed envelopes, fielded questions, and recorded all the pledges.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather

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

2021 FINANCIALS

The 2021 Financials, Property Report, and Treasurer's Report will be available as an Addendum prior to the Congregational Meeting on January 24, 2021.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2022

Account Name	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Prelim Unaudited*	2021 Budget	Proposed 2022 Budget
Income						
Church School Offering	\$150.57	\$104.00	\$31.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
Contractual Property Sharing	\$52,024.53	\$38,797.57	\$20,508.00	\$27,427.07	\$20,120.00	\$24,500.00
Event Receipts	\$7,067.50	\$6,218.97	\$380.00	\$4,160.48	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Fund Raising Events	\$1,614.40	\$1,547.06	\$68.15	\$105.93	\$750.00	\$750.00
Investment Income - General Fund	-\$7,489.44	\$31,105.87	\$14,333.27	-\$2,985.01	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Loose offering	\$4,982.80	\$4,064.00	\$424.00	\$1,022.00	\$800.00	\$800.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$2,631.00	\$496.00	\$29,354.53	\$8,142.84		
Money Market Income	\$9,435.30	\$809.38	\$13,961.19	\$11,278.23	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Pledges-Prior Year	\$360.00	\$0.00	\$700.00	\$4,284.00		
Pledges Received*	\$247,658.92	\$275,802.59	\$261,737.93	\$312,355.84	\$301,328.00	\$298,574.00
Unpledged Contributions	\$47,008.45	\$46,992.02	\$59,439.90	\$26,092.24	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
	\$365,444.03	\$405,937.46	\$400,937.97	\$391,883.62	\$382,098.00	\$383,724.00
Expense						
Administration	\$21,627.32	\$22,610.00	\$33,607.02	\$6,900.14	\$6,370.00	\$6,370.00
Technology				\$39,428.19	\$41,000.00	\$41,000.00
Personnel	\$211,656.41	\$220,783.00	\$223,851.06	\$211,327.63	\$226,427.00	\$239,786.19
Property	\$109,235.18	\$114,755.00	\$149,054.39	\$117,434.23	\$106,770.00	\$106,770.00
Ministries						
Ministry of Communications	\$414.46	\$1,340.00	\$760.71	\$240.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Ministry of Education	\$4,736.52	\$3,600.00	\$566.81	\$353.67	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Ministry of Membership	\$472.73	\$500.00	\$54.13	\$7.95	\$500.00	\$500.00
Ministry of Missions	\$39,607.15	\$34,516.07	\$36,024.19	\$33,450.17	\$37,476.00	\$30,600.50
Ministry of Nurture	\$876.55	\$1,200.00	\$122.80	\$77.90	\$500.00	\$500.00
Ministry of Stewardship	\$464.84	\$500.00	\$383.27	\$111.55	\$500.00	\$500.00
Ministry of Worship	\$5,614.33	\$7,450.00	\$5,638.88	\$4,701.10	\$5,220.00	\$5,220.00
	\$394,705.49	\$407,254.07	\$450,063.26	\$414,032.53	\$428,263.00	\$434,746.69
Transfers						
From Conservatory Fund	\$13,500.00	\$14,850.00	\$14,850.00	\$14,850.00	\$14,850.00	\$14,850.00
From Endowment Allowance	\$29,836.03	\$37,728.69	\$31,823.81	\$33,615.45	\$33,915.45	\$37,728.69
Total Transfers	\$43,336.03	\$52,578.69	\$46,673.81	\$48,465.45	\$48,765.45	\$52,578.69
Net Income (Loss)	\$14,074.57	\$51,262.08	-\$2,451.48	\$26,316.54	\$2,600.45	\$1,556.00

*2022 Pledges are recorded on January 10, 2022.

Transfer from Endowment Computation				
Date	1/1 Principle Balance	Deposits	12/31 Balance	12/31 Balance less cash deposits
2019	\$993,690.00	\$10,000.00	\$1,155,947.71	\$1,145,947.71
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
Three Year Average		\$10,000.00		\$1,257,623.04
Spendable as transfer in 2022		3.00%		\$37,728.69

<u>Missions Computation</u>		
Church School Offering		\$0.00
Loose Offering		\$482.00
Pledges Prior Year		\$4,284.00
Pledges Received		\$236,514.00
Unpledged Income		\$19,725.00
Total Undesignated Income		<u>\$261,005.00</u>
Missions Team Budget	10%	\$26,100.50
Saturday Meals		<u>\$4,500.00</u>
Total Missions		<u>\$30,600.50</u>

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.