

"MAKING ALL THINGS NEW" continued...

The goal would be to receive a minimum of \$32,000 in pledges. Pledges will be asked to be made by July 16 and can be paid in one-time gifts or paid over the next 12 months (August 2023 to July 2024) in monthly or quarterly payments.



Central "Christ" window showing gaps due to lower glass panel sinking into the sill below.



Looking through the glass of central "Christ" window - woodwork in need of repair & replacement.

Many of you may have already noticed that the campaign has "phase one" in the title. Unfortunately, the repair of the stained-glass windows is not the only the pressing need of the church building. Those who attended an Awareness Campaign meeting will remember a "five-year plan" that stretched out to 2028 with items we know are on the horizon. Part of our Capital Campaign Planning Team's discernment has been the decision to take care of the most immediate needs now, but to be prepared to act over the next several years as we gradually "Make All Things New"!

The team will be available to answer questions and discuss the "Making All Things New" campaign further when we gather for our Spring Congregational Meeting on May 21. Or you may reach out to any of their members: Bill, Bond, Carolyn Heatwole, Jeanne Mantsch, Joe Mueller, Karen Oftedahl, Ray Shupe, and Pastor Scott if you have questions.



THIS MONTH'S WINDOW INTO OUR PAST - HONORING OUR "FOREMOTHERS"

Our May installment honoring our 125th anniversary highlights women in our church. The information was gleaned from our church historical collection.

Of the 27 founding members in 1898, 20 were women. Reflecting the time and the legalities of the day, it was the seven men who were elected to the seven offices at the organizational meeting. The women were voting members of the congregation, not a given in every church community of the day. While the men were seeing to the legalities of incorporation, securing pastoral leadership, and seeking recognition as a member church by the regional Congregational Church governance, the women had their own allied agenda.

On Wednesday afternoon, April 13, 1898, (just three days after our congregation's organizational meeting) 17 women gathered at the home of Mrs. A.A. Farmer for the initial meeting of the Women's Auxiliary of the Congregational Church. *(continued...)*

"WOMEN OF THE CHURCH" continued...

They organized as a "sewing society" and at their first weekly meetings were busy with cutting and hand sewing aprons and sun bonnets, doing "fancywork", and creating carpet rags for fundraising events. Hostess duties rotated through the membership and the hostess prepared a luncheon at their house for the members. In addition to their donated labor, members and guests also paid "dues" (\$.05) at each meeting they attended. Fines of \$.25 were charged for seconds of food or beverage!

In the first months of our church, our Women's Auxiliary held an ice cream dinner, organized a Sunday School picnic, planned a "Fair" at the Opera House that required eight cooked turkeys, purchased a communion set, communion linens, and Sunday School song books. The group made an initial \$200 gift to start the subscription list for a church building campaign. Thus began a vital service to the congregation's life and finances.

Women of the congregation worked, shared, and learned together as the congregation grew. Connections were made with church women in other congregations and within the wider church. I am struck by how tirelessly they organized countless food-focused events and fundraising efforts, often combining the two. Over the years they have made and sold Christmas hard candy (created from the still secret recipe of Evelyn C. Smith), had magazine subscription drives, held church bazaars, offered Christmas cookie exchanges, sponsored congregational meeting dinners, created "assigned" potlucks, planned fundraising meals open to the wider community, served meals following funerals and memorial services, held receptions for new members, confirmations, ordinations and installations, and hosted fellowship times after Sunday worship. Cookbooks were created as fundraisers several times over the years, most recently in 2000. These and other fundraising efforts allowed the women's group to provide significant financial support to annual budgets, and to purchase needed equipment and supplies.

In November 1952, the Women's Auxiliary changed their name to the Women's Fellowship of First Congregational Church of Port Washington. The membership was divided into five smaller groups called "Circles" to facilitate regular gathering in members' homes. Programmed meetings, fundraisers, and sewing at meetings continued to be part of the calendar of events. Attendance at meetings of Women's Fellowship groups declined in the 1970s and Women's Fellowship activities were eventually incorporated into the Church Council with the Fellowship Team structure we know today. As seems appropriate, the Fellowship Team now includes both men and women and still provides the people power to allow us to gather, eat, and celebrate as a community.

First journal of minutes of Women's Auxiliary, various cook books



Submitted by Jane Spalding,
125th Anniversary
Planning Team Member