

2023 – 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

PORT WASHINGTON, WISCONSIN



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
CHURCH COUNCIL  
2023-2024

OFFICERS

MODERATOR: Jason Jacque

ASSOCIATE MODERATOR: Jodi Cowen

CLERK: Rhonda Thompson

TREASURER: Phil Stepanski

TEAM REPRESENTATIVES

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Shandy Roehrig

FELLOWSHIP: Jennifer Dimmer

STAFF SUPPORT & REVIEW: Ken Matthews

PROPERTY: Bill Bond

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Eric Olson

LITURGY: Tracy Greymont

STEWARDSHIP:

**PASTOR  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

Pastor Scott McLeod resigned from First Congregational Church. His last Sunday was April 7, 2024.

**MODERATOR  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

I would like to personally thank what I will call “the hardest working Council” in our long history at First Congregational Church. Council got started early by meeting in August to discuss the possibility of consolidating our worship services and to set the calendar for our program year. In addition to starting off the program year early, we stayed late with several Council Meetings lasting well past 9pm as we discussed the critical challenges of our little church on the hill. To make the best decisions and to guide our congregation through the many challenges we faced this past year, we also met more often than our normal monthly schedule including two special meetings, a closed session meeting, an Exit Interview, and an additional Congregational Meeting in February. While the challenges we faced just seemed to keep coming, we were able to face them together.

- Responding to our elevator repair needs while remaining Accessible to All (A2A) by moving worship services to Fellowship Hall
- Pushing forward as new challenges were uncovered with each step of the Elevator repair process
- Our hope with each rental space opportunity that sprouted, but has yet to flower
- Phil’s resignation as Financial Administrator, but then being able to fill our Treasurer role on Executive Team
- Running a Stewardship Campaign without a representative on Council, and dividing the work to deliver a successful campaign
- Taking on our budget challenge when we could have tried to kick the can down the road another year
- Accepting Pastor Scott’s resignation and saying good-bye through the Exit Interview and Liturgy of Farewell
- All our Teams stepping up to support our congregation as we learned about Pulpit Supply and the Interim Search process

In addition to our challenges, there were many joys that stand out in my mind including a successful “Making All Things New, Phase 1” capital campaign that this summer will lead to the repair of our Stained Glass, the Celebration for our 25+ year members, 8am Communion Service in the Sanctuary, Breakfast with Santa, the performance by the South African Choir “29:11 International Exchange”, and End of the Program Year service including the performance of the inspirational “We Will Rise Again” as written by Brett Dimmer. With many challenges behind us, I am optimistic that together, we are building a stronger, more vibrant church. I am deeply grateful for the dedication and spirit of service that each one of you brings to our congregation.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jason Jacque, Moderator

**TREASURER  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

2023 was less a budgetary deficit than anticipated which we are all grateful for. Looking forward to the 2024 budget, the change in minister, while difficult in a lot of ways, actually helps from a budget standpoint.

In August of 2023 I accepted a new position for my regular job and resigned as Financial Administrator in April. The Council voted to hire Kristina Tontis, CPA, to oversee the church finances. I am now the Treasurer on Church Council.

We have had several meetings to divide the financial responsibilities between Kris Tontis, CPA, our Office Manager, Beckie Perez, and myself. We are still refining that process.

In April, the church purchased software for a new financial contribution tracking system "Realm" from ACS Technologies. This system will track our contributions, fund accounting, chart of accounts, produce contribution statements, and much more. Beckie was trained on the system and reports the weekly church financials to Kris and me.

Moving forward, I will present accurate financial reports, a combination of Realm (FCC) and QuickBooks (Kris Tontis) to Church Council at our monthly meetings. Kris has done a great job reconciling our accounts and getting all the financials current.

We'll be looking to rebuild the Finance Team as well.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Phil Stepanski, Treasurer

**LITURGY TEAM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

It is hard to believe that one year has passed since I joined the Liturgy Team. We are very fortunate to have dedicated members sharing the tasks at hand to ensure the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are inviting to all, and represent the season of worship throughout the church year.

One big shift this year was moving our worship services to Fellowship Hall in September when we learned the elevator needed repair. All church teams and members pulled together to move chairs, bibles, hymnals, and décor to help transform Fellowship Hall into our temporary sanctuary. (Which as I learned when this addition was planned, was meant to serve as a back-up.) We all pulled together to make sure we could continue to meet and worship together within this space.

With this first year under my belt, I am extremely thankful and grateful to each team member who conscientiously fulfills both the major and minor responsibilities, often unnoticed, that contribute to creating a rich worship experience within a beautifully arranged and well-equipped sanctuary. As the saying goes, many hands make light work.

Many thanks to the following who work behind the scenes for the parts they play to ensure we have a meaningful worship service.

**Mike Spalding**, for his time to select the hymns the congregation will sing every Sunday, and tuning our piano.

**Jane Spalding**, for creating the beautiful altar and flower arrangements that change throughout the church seasons.

**Dawn Guschl and Bill Bond**, for preparing the Communion elements.

**Phil Stepanski and Tracy Bretl**, for continuing to hang the stained-glass panels in Fellowship Hall for each liturgical season.

And a special thanks to the **Cowen Family** for decorating the church Christmas tree; **Jane Spalding and Beckie Perez** for taking care of the Christmas and Easter flowers; and **Brett Dimmer** for his time and creativity producing YouTube videos of our Sunday Services.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tracy Greymont, Team Representative

**STAFF SUPPORT AND REVIEW TEAM**

## **ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2024**

The year has been challenging for staff as we once again are transitioning from a full-time Pastor to Supply Ministers, to Interim Minister, and finally to a settled Minister. This has especially affected the Office Staff and the Council as we continue to maintain a weekly Sunday service schedule.

The Office Staff maintains morning hours Monday through Friday; however, hours have increased with no minister in place. FCC purchased a new software program from ACS Technologies: Realm Accounting Plan and Realm Connect Plan. Realm Accounting allows the church to track all contributions and funds, as well as fund accounting, chart of accounts, and contribution statements. Beckie Perez, our Office Manager, was trained on the system and will manage it and provide weekly financials to our new Accountant, Kris Tontis. The Realm Connect Plan will replace our 20+ year-old 'Power Church' data base system which holds all the information of our members and friends. Beckie, and Amy Gilhooly, our Communications Director, will learn the new software and transfer over all individual profiles in the months to come.

Our Executive Team and Church Council would like to see more participation from our members and friends with our church initiatives and activities. All of them recognize the difficult times we are experiencing and are moving ahead the best they are able.

Looking forward to better times in the coming months and years.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ken Matthews, Team Representative

**FELLOWSHIP TEAM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

Our Fellowship Team had another fun year. Potluck lunches after church service were a huge hit. At our meals, we served pulled pork, soup and salad, and hot beef sandwiches.

In November, we hosted a “Bow Making” workshop to create bows that would adorn the wreaths sold at our Christmas tree sale.

In December, we kicked off the Advent season by reviving the tradition of exchanging Christmas cookies. It was fun to gather and see the old favorites back on our Christmas cookie plates. We hosted another workshop, “Make and Take Christmas Swag” made from fresh tree boughs. We had extra tree boughs and ribbon to make more bows, so we created more to sell at our Christmas tree sale. It was a lot of fun creating the swags! We also helped with the Breakfast with Santa church fundraiser. This was a wonderful event and we heard that we had the best Santa in town. We will want to continue this tradition.

In March, we provided a soup and salad dinner prior to a community wide ecumenical Lenten service hosted by FCC. We continued our tradition of serving cinnamon rolls on Palm Sunday during Fellowship Hour.

We worked together with the Stewardship Team and hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Dr. Seuss Breakfast church fundraiser. It was wonderful to invite the community to come into our church for breakfast and Dr. Seuss activities.

Unfortunately, many of our events were moved to the old pre-school classrooms because the elevator broke down in September and Fellowship Hall became our temporary sanctuary. The Fellowship Team and many volunteers worked together to move tables and chairs back and forth to Fellowship Hall and the classrooms. Our priority has been to worship together and be there for everyone. We have been very fortunate to do that with our large space.

The Congregational Care Team has been utilizing the celebration/care/concern cards that were created at card-making workshops to send to members and friends for their birthday, anniversary, etc. So many people have commented how much they love receiving a card from church!

The Fellowship Team invites you to try the gift card program for fundraising for our church through RaiseRight. By planning ahead and purchasing gift cards, you can continue shopping at your favorite stores and raise money for First Congregational Church. Please contact Jennifer Dimmer or Rhonda Thompson for more information about the RaiseRight program.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the Fellowship Team or if you’d like to join the team.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer Dimmer, Team Representative



**STEWARDSHIP TEAM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

The Stewardship Team worked hard to execute a successful Fall Stewardship Campaign to ensure our church's day to day operations and programs continue. Our campaign began in October 2023 and highlighted inspiring examples of our congregation's gifts of time, talents, and treasures. The campaign was led by Pastor Scott, and supported by Communications Director Amy Gilhooly, Office Administrator Beckie Perez, and Financial Administrator Phil Stepanski. This year's campaign included:

- In-person and written testimonials from church members
- Facebook posts supporting our campaign
- Updated page on our church website
- Pastoral statements as part of worship
- Stewardship newsletter mailing
- Follow up phone calls, texts, and emails
- Thank-you cards created by Church School kids

We closed our Stewardship Campaign at the end of December with pledges totaling just over \$162,000. We would like to thank everyone who pledged, especially to those who increased their pledge. Every pledge was graciously acknowledged with a handwritten thank you card. The Stewardship Team also helped with several fundraisers including the continuation of Brat Frys, Dr. Seuss Breakfast, and Breakfast with Santa.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jodi Cowen, Team Member

**PROPERTY TEAM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

The last 12 months have been a challenge for your Property Team.

Roof leaks, water leaking into Fellowship Hall under the door on the southeast side of the room, and the ongoing elevator repair issue.

Even as our church slows down for the summer months, we continue to stick to our weekly, monthly and quarterly building inspections, a positive for our team.

We emptied three file cabinets of old records and church folks helped us transport the files to a free community shedding event.

The elevator broke down in September. There has been an unexpected list of problems primarily with the initial electrical failure (March 2023) and all those problems center around Otis Elevator. They have “nonstandard” preparatory electrical testing equipment used to troubleshoot electrical problems on their elevators. They found a problem with 2 control boards and after a month of waiting for replacement boards we were informed that they ordered one board and sent one out for repair. Another few weeks went by, with weekly calls by me asking for any update on the schedule of replacement of the new and rebuilt boards. They informed me that the board that was sent out for repair was LOST, and a new board will need to be ordered. Another few weeks went by, and I was told that both boards were in their possession and would be installed that week. After the 2 boards were installed, the service techs found another electrical problem that would need additional troubleshooting to determine what that additional problem is. That is where we are now with Otis sending us the quote for the troubleshooting to find their additional electrical issue.

We ask for your patience and God’s help to resolve this darned elevator failure so our church can once again worship in our Sanctuary.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bill Bond, Team Representative

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TEAM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

Our Christian Education program had an eventful and positive 2023-2024 program year. Our Church School met monthly, with an average attendance of 10 children per class ranging from 3k to 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

In November we added a monthly Kids Club class to our schedule. The kids start with their families in church, and after special music, they gather in the Dennett Room for activities. We averaged 6 children per class, with all attendees under the age of 8. Children created individualized name tags, which they added ribbons to during each visit and displayed between lessons. We began the year using a resource called the Seasons of Fusion, from the Seasons of the Spirit curriculum. The curriculum ended following the November lesson, at which point the monthly lessons were selected from the Shine curriculum purchased by the church several years ago.

Each month a lesson was selected, with various service projects, crafts or congregational care activities designed to support the theme. In total, 18 different scripture passages were utilized from Exodus, Acts, Corinthians, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and James, and a Psalm.

We executed three community service projects which included a food drive, we partnered with our Community Outreach Team for Christmas gift-a-child, and we held a collection drive for Life cereal---all benefiting the Port Food Pantry. We supported the Stewardship Team and created thank-you cards that were sent to all our members and friends who made a financial pledge to the church. We made small gift and snack mix bags that were given out following church service. We decorated wood ornaments that were given out to customers at the church Christmas tree sale. We created centerpieces for church fundraisers. We created crafts which were displayed in our hallways.

In October we hosted a 'donuts with grown-ups' event, to connect our Church School children with the adults of the congregation. We included hats as a nod to our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and the crazy hat events from the past. We hosted Fellowship Hour several times throughout the year as well.

Our Confirmation Program included seven 8<sup>th</sup> graders. They helped lead the worship service once a month, and participated in numerous activities. They spent time working at the Port Food Pantry, painted rooms at Daycholah Center, helped at our church fundraising events, provided nursery care during worship service, participated in our annual Christmas Eve Pageant, helped sell Christmas trees at our tree sale, walked the stations of the cross at Holy Hill with Don Niederfrank and more!

Thanks to a dedicated team, our Church School program has continued to flourish. We had a few new families join us this year, and have had strong consistency with attendance. As we look ahead, the team is hoping to continue to bring in new families and explore ways in which to tie our community into our service projects and monthly lessons.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shandy Roehrig, Christian Education Team Representative  
Jennifer Dimmer  
Dawn Rychtik  
Tom Roehrig  
Amanda Malloy

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH TEAM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 2024**

We are looking forward to another great upcoming year with our Community Outreach team at First Congregational Church! We have some events that we are excited to plan for the upcoming year. We look forward to putting together a back-to-school supplies collection later this summer for classroom essentials. In addition, we will plan for another paper goods collection, as well as specific donations related requests from Family Promise and the Port Food Pantry. Finally, we will continue participating in the Christmas Gift-A-Child program. This is a wonderful opportunity in which an individual is matched with a child in our community and provided gift suggestions from the parents based on age and gender. The gift suggestions were in the categories of something the child wants, something they need, something to wear, and something to read. Through the generosity of our congregation, we gifted numerous children. We look forward to growing our relationship with Family Promise, Port Food Pantry, and Ozaukee Food Alliance.

Please continue to reach out with any additional ideas or needs that may help us better serve our community. We look forward to seeing you in our amazing community.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eric Olson, Team Representative