



First Congregational Church  
*Different Paths. Same Journey.*

**Annual Report**  
**for**  
**Annual Meeting of 2012**

**April 28, 2013**

**10:00 a.m.**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
162<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING - APRIL 28, 2013**

Table of Contents.....	2-3
<b>I. In Loving Memory.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>II. Minutes</b>	
Minutes of the 161 <sup>h</sup> Annual Meeting April 22, 2012.....	5-7
Minutes of June 17, 2012 Congregational Meeting.....	7
Minutes of September 16, 2012 Congregational Meeting.....	8
Minutes of September 30, 2012 Congregational Meeting.....	9
<b>III. Review &amp; Reception of Annual Reports by Officers, Committees &amp; Staff</b>	
Moderator/Moderator Elect/Ministry Council: Anne Romond .....	10
Church Clerk: Sue Coghill.....	11
Treasurer: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker.....	12-14
Budget 2013: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker.....	16
Balance Sheet 2012: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker.....	17
<b>WORSHIP AREA:</b>	
Worship Ministry Group: David Elbing.....	18
Music Ministry Group: Cathy Starck Wille.....	18
<b>NURTURE AREA:</b>	
Nurturing Ministry Coordinator: Ginnie Sherer.....	19-20
Fellowship Ministry Group: Ginnie Sherer.....	21
<b>MISSION AND OUTREACH AREA:</b>	
Benevolence Ministry Group: Ann Marshall.....	22
Social Justice Ministry Group: Ron Harrell .....	23
New Member Development Ministry Group: Cheryl Hentz.....	24
ESTHER Core Team: Pat Blades .....	25

**CHURCH OPERATIONS AREA:**

Building & Grounds Ministry Group: Dave Ruby.....25  
Finance Ministry Group: John Oman Sr.....26  
Stewardship Committee: John Oman Sr.....26  
Personnel Ministry Group: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker.....27  
Building Use: Cynthia Hunt.....27

**TEACHING AND LEARNING AREA:**

Adult Education Ministry Group: Cheryl Hentz.....28  
Youth Ministry Group: Sandie Miller-Schreiter.....29  
Church School Ministry Group: Corinne Saidla.....30  
    Church Library: Joyce Frohn .....31  
Memorial Committee: Ann Marshall.....31  
Women’s Fellowship: Karen LaBorde.....32  
Conference Minister Report: David S. Moyer.....33-34

**FCC STAFF**

Co-Pastors: Ralph & Carol DiBiasio-Snyder.....35-36  
Teaching and Learning Ministries Coordinator: Sandie Miller-Schreiter.....37  
Lay Ministry Coordinator: Tina Haffeman.....38  
    Media Ministry Coordinator: Joe Wiedenmeier  
    Child Care Coordinator: Theresa Brewer  
Chancel Choir Director/Organist: Joanne Peterson.....39  
Faith Ringers/Handbell Choir Director: Patrick Meyer.....40  
Angel Choir Director: Christina Conn.....41  
Liturgical Movement Choirs Director: Missy Allen.....42



Anita Dahlke

Carol Ann Henkle

Leroy Hobart

Harry Koster

Marjorie McCallan

Bernice Montgomery

Joyce Narel

Joan Plummer

Donald Sullivan

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN – April 22, 2012

Moderator Jen Norden called the 161<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church to order following the morning worship service. Ralph DiBiasio-Snyder opened the meeting with prayer. Throughout the meeting, power point slides prepared by Joe Wiedenmeier illustrated the business items.

The Annual Report booklet with reports of the Officers and Ministry Groups for the 2011-2012 year was distributed. Minutes of the 2011 Annual Meeting were approved as printed.

**Year in Review:** Moderator Jen Norden reported on highlights of the past year:

Holy Conversations: Our congregational life has focused on these goals:

- Encouraging a thoughtful faith that expresses itself in action

Sharing our resources generously with our community and the world

Among the many ways the congregation lived out these goals are: opening our building for use by community groups ... a series of cultural/musical programs offered to the community in celebration of the centennial of the sanctuary ... successful inter-faith Servapalooza in the fall ... overwhelming support of the newly-arrived family from Burma.

Money Matters: Over the last 18 months this task force has studied the financial challenges facing our congregation, recognizing that overall we are a healthy church. Financial issues were presented to the congregation during stewardship house meetings, and in a series of emails we responded to the questions and issues raised. There is interest in examining our connections to our two denominations with the clear suggestion that we reduce our contribution to the NACCC. Also, the practice that we set-aside 16% of pledged income for Benevolences will be re-assessed. A task force just now being formed, *Mission Matters*, will explore these issues, bringing specific proposals before the congregation in the early fall, to be implemented in the 2013 financial campaign and budgeting.

Kitchen Renovation: Womens Fellowship has spearheaded the effort to raise necessary funds to renovate our out-dated kitchen. Progress is being made to reach the goal of \$200,000.00.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Mary Beth Bossert distributed two reports: 2012 Approved Budget & Financial History and FCC Funds at Oshkosh Area Community Foundation (OACF) for year 2011.

**New Century Fund:** Mary Beth Bossert distributed a resolution proposed by the Finance Ministry Group advocating transfer of the New Century Fund to the endowment fund at the OACF. The resolution reads:

Resolution proposed by the Finance Ministry Group and the Ministry Council of First Congregational Church of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, at the Congregation's Annual Meeting on Sunday, April 22, 2012, regarding the New Century Fund established in 1997 by Congregational vote.

The congregation created the New Century Fund as an endowment fund in 1997. An endowment fund has been created at the Oshkosh Community Foundation with the same purposes in mind. To best serve the future needs of First Congregational Church and to improve investment management efficiency, it seems prudent to combine the two funds.

*Therefore:*

Be it resolved that the New Century Fund be liquidated and the funds be transferred to the First Congregational Church Endowment Fund at the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation.

*Respectfully submitted by John Oman, Finance Ministry Group Facilitator*

Motion made by Mary Beth Bossert on behalf of the Finance Ministry Group to adopt above resolution. Motion carried.

**Co-Pastors' Report:** Ralph and Carol DiBiasio-Snyder expressed their thanks for a good year at FCC. Several new initiatives have been organized and the congregation benefits from this enthusiasm and interest. They expressed thanks for the excellent church staff and the support and encouragement they receive from the congregation.

The two outgoing officers – Moderator Jen Norden and Treasurer Mary Beth Bossert – received gifts of pottery made by Carol to thank them for their leadership and dedication to the congregation.

**Co-Pastors' Compensation:** Jeff Puhlmann-Becker presented the compensation package for Ralph and Carol DiBiasio-Snyder, as recommended by the Personnel Ministry Group. Beginning in 2012, the church will pay their pension directly, so 2012 salary is lower by this amount. This arrangement lowers the amount subject to FICA tax which is paid by the church.

Motion made by Jeff Puhlmann-Becker on behalf of the Personnel Ministry Group to approve the Co-Pastors' 2012 Compensation Package as presented. Motion carried.

**Elections:** Tina Haffeman, Lay Ministry Coordinator, distributed the slate of nominations for 2012-2013 Officers and Ministry Group members:

Officers:

Moderator:	Anne Romond
Moderator-elect:	[to be elected at a later date]
Treasurer:	Jeff Puhlmann-Becker
Clerk:	Susan Coghill

Ministry Group members:

*(names in italics are new members)*

**Adult Education:** Cheryl Hentz, David Jones, Bethany Jorenby, Jim Paulson, *Rebecca Romenesko*, Nick Schneider, Val Williams

**Benevolence:** *Vicki Drabrandt*, Len Herricks, Ann Marshall, *John Nichols*

**Building and Grounds:** *Joe LeHockey*, *James Mayer*, John Oman Jr., Steve Robe, Dave Ruby, Dave Seeley, Bruce Thomas, Gary Wilner

**Church School:** *John Brooks*, *Cynthia DeVoe*, Lorie Hadel, Corinne Saidla, *Cathy Weideman*, Val Williams, McKenna Hadel (youth advisor)

**Fellowship:** Karen Bowen, Vonnie Cushman, Kitty Day, Tom Hallquist, *Carol Williams*

**Finance:** *Lurton Blassingame*, Mary Beth Bossert, *Mike Duffy*, *Dave Elbing*, *Len Herricks*, John Oman, Sr., *Dave Ruby*, Stan Ziblut, *Jeff Puhlmann-Becker* (Treasurer)

**Music:** Lynn Fulcher, James Grine, Vernice Haase, Pat Inch, Cathy Wille

**New Member Development Ministry Group:** Carolyn Blassingame, Lee Fenendael, Becky Gratz, Cheryl Hentz, Cynthia Thorpe, Dorry Wilner, Lorie Yaste-Zajicek

**Personnel:** Howard Blades, Lurton Blassingame, Cyndi DeVoe, Jeff Puhlmann-Becker, Cynthia Thorpe

**Social Justice:** *Paula Allen*, Ted Balser, *Mary Burns*, Jody Harrell, Ron Harrell, John Oman Sr., Jone Oman, Amy Smith, Brian Tokoph, *Terry Wesenberg*, *Anne Wesenberg*, Dorry Wilner

**Worship:** Kathy Chapman, Dave Elbing, Bethany Estrada, Jack Frohn, *Mary Martin*, Pat Nichols, Corinne Saidla, *Paula Veard*

**Youth:** *Mary Herricks*, Stacey Otto, *Phyllis Thompson*

Committee members:

**Landscape:** Carolyn Blassingame, Eric Kropp, Jen Stellflug, Lisa Wesenberg, Carol Williams, Dorry Wilner

**Pastor/Congregation Relations:** Liz Kaprelian, Dennis Kavanaugh, Shelly Maxwell, Jen Norden, Tracie Schlaak, Tom Zak

**Stewardship:** Bruce Abraham, Mary Beth Bossert, Jack Frohn, John Oman Sr., Corinne Saidla, Maria Talin, Dorry Wilner

**Teaching and Learning Coordinator/Congregation Relations:** Lorie Hadel, Bethany Jorenby, Chris Laufer, Deb Nelson, Anne Romond

**Money Matters:** Ann Marshall, Anne Romond, Brian Tokoph, Chris Laufer, Eric Kropp, Jeff Puhlmann-Becker, Jen Norden, Jodi Braun, Jone Oman, Maria Talin, Mary Beth Bossert

**ESTHER Core:** Dorry Wilner, Ron Harrell, Brian Tokoph, Pat Blades, Tina Haffeman

**Stephen Leaders:** Ginnie Sherer, Dick Oelschlager, Cynthia Thorpe, Sue Coghill

Motion made by Tina Haffeman on behalf of the Nominations Committee to elect the slate as presented. Motion carried.

Tina thanked the retiring officers and ministry group members (also listed) for their leadership and contributions to the ministry of the church.

Meeting adjourned by Moderator Jen Norden. A potluck luncheon was served with help from Sue Heft and Jack Talin in Fellowship Hall after the meeting.

Susan Coghill

Church Clerk

First Congregational Church, Oshkosh, Wisconsin

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

June 17, 2012

The meeting of the congregation was called to order at the close of the worship service by Moderator Anne Romond. There was a quorum present. Purpose of the meeting was to elect the Moderator-Elect.

Moderator Romond announced that Pat Blades has agreed to serve as Moderator-Elect. Motion made/seconded by Jack Frohn/Kay Sanders to elect Pat Blades to the office of Moderator-Elect. Motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Susan Coghill, Church Clerk

First Congregational Church, Oshkosh, Wisconsin

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

September 16, 2012

The meeting of the congregation was called to order at the close of the worship service by Moderator Anne Romond. Purpose of the meeting was to hear the report of the *Mission Matters* Task Force.

Ann Marshall and John Nichols, members of the Task Force, presented the report *A New Way of Doing 'Benevolence'* by power point and discussion.

Some background: Since 1973 First Congregational Church has committed 16% of its pledged income to Benevolences. Of this 16%, 75% is sent on to our two denominations – UCC and NACCC – and 25% is used for local benevolences.

In recent years our congregation has experienced budget shortfalls. Members affirm their desire to live out their faith as “a giving church” yet question the need to support two denominations with our current budgets.

*Mission Matters* recommendation is to restructure the process of Benevolence giving. The goals of the new plan include:

- Address our budget shortfall by lowering the percentage of pledged income currently being earmarked for benevolences, while exploring new avenues of funding for outreach and mission.
- Maintain and even increase our financial support of local mission.

Affirm our need for and participation in the United Church of Christ statewide, nationally and internationally.

Because of our congregation's strong relationship with the UCC, the task force recommends FCC continue its support of the UCC while gradually reducing support of NACCC, realizing a savings of \$12,500 a year. This reduction would change the % of pledged income for benevolences to 12%, rather than the current 16%.

For local benevolences, a continuing fund – *Partner Fund* – will be established outside of the operating budget. Donations to/out of this fund will reflect the congregation's interest in supporting specific programs, both financially and with hours of personal service.

The recommendation to reduce the designation of pledged income for benevolence from 16% to 12% will be voted on at the September 30 congregational meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Susan Coghill, Church Clerk



First Congregational Church, Oshkosh, Wisconsin

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

September 30, 2012

The meeting of the congregation was called to order at the close of the worship service by Moderator Anne Romond. There was a quorum present.

Purpose of the meeting was to consider the proposal from the *Mission Matters* Task Force regarding funding for Benevolence.

Moderator Romond called on Ann Marshall, a member of the task force, to read the motion before the congregation:

*First Congregational Church shall designate 12% of pledged income for benevolence, mission and outreach, with at least 20% of the benevolence funds to be used for outreach in the local community, to be distributed by the Benevolence Group.*

On behalf of the *Mission Matters* Task Force, Ann Marshall moved that the motion be adopted. Motion seconded and carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Susan Coghill, Church Clerk

## **REPORT OF THE MODERATOR, MODERATOR ELECT, AND THE MINISTRY COUNCIL**

We are blessed to be part of a church community which is nurturing and welcoming to all. People come for a variety of reasons: friendship, support, education, social ministry, inspiring music, thoughtful and instructive sermons, and great co-pastors. Our community is first and foremost committed to living the example of Christ as he lived, that is, with openness, love and compassion.

Within the enclosed annual report you will find the specifics which describe in some detail all the works which members of our church community have performed this past year. As you read through, you will see that many people have given many hours to the ministry of this church. It demonstrates quite clearly that the church is just a physical structure. It is the people who act in community who are our church.

Anne Romond  
Moderator 2012-2013

## **REPORT OF THE CHURCH CLERK**

Members received by:

Confirmation 5

Re-affirmation of Faith 5

—

10

Members lost by:

Death 9

**TOTAL MEMBERSHIP – March 10, 2013: 449**

### **Members received by Confirmation:**

Noah Bossert

Jonathan Gibson

Jenna Janssen

Edie Trebon

Marty Trebon

### **Members received by Re-affirmation of Faith:**

Jessica Clements

Mark Clements

Amanda Frank

Nate Frank

James Hoffman

### **Members lost by Death:**

Anita Dahlke

Carol Ann Henkle

Leroy Hobart

Harry Koster

Marjorie McCallan

Bernice Montgomery

Joyce Narel

Joan Plummer

Donald Sullivan

## 2012 TREASURER'S REPORT

### Treasurer's Report

The 2013 budget is filled with good news and bad news – and, as always, it's only a matter of which you want to hear first! It's also a matter of how you look at things. Both are very real observations about where we are and where we're going. Hang on – in the interest of transparency this report is long, but an easy read!

On the positive side, we did better in fiscal year 2012 than we projected one year ago when we adopted the budget for 2012. We projected we'd lose almost \$45,000, but we only lost about \$24,000. That's good news – we lost less – but it is bad news, too. We lost money. Our pledges do not cover our expenses to maintain this ministry. We continue to struggle to balance the budget, even after we tap \$20,000 in investment income (this is planned as part of our annual budget – and has been for many years – and is funded from the income on our sizable investment accounts) to supplement the donations we receive.

Another positive note is the fact we are projecting a loss of only about \$8,000 in 2013 – about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of what we *actually* lost in 2012. Of course, you will note that there is good and bad news here, too – it's significantly smaller than the deficit last year, but it is still a loss. Given the careful management of these funds that our staff and ministry groups normally exhibit, and given the fact we were conservative on the income projections for 2013, we could well end up balancing the budget by the end of the year. It is a distinct possibility. That would be good news.

This news about the 2013 budget comes with some fine print. How in the world did we manage to reduce the deficit by \$16,000? Here are the highlights:

Perhaps the biggest change in our expenses is in our benevolent giving. After much discussion and prayer the congregation voted to reduce support to the NACCC and use our limited resources to support only one denomination. This change accounts for almost \$9,000 of the expense savings. We still commit 12% of our entire budget to missions beyond our church walls – benevolent giving – including support to the United Church of Christ.

Ralph and Carol have moved from the NACCC health insurance plan to the UCC plan for some minor savings. We continue to pursue moving Sandie to the UCC plan.

In the Buildings and Grounds section of the budget we did not plan to put operating money into a “building fund”. In the past we budgeted for regular repairs to the building *plus* we put \$2,000 aside in our “building savings fund” for unforeseen major expenses. In times when we had excess money in our operating budget this made sense. It provided a buffer against the years when significant repairs were due.

The theory behind the move to discontinue putting money in a building fund is simply this: if we can't balance our annual operating budget how can we afford to put money in a savings account (building fund)? We can't. Last year we *did* put \$2,000 in the building fund and we ran a deficit in the operating budget. How did we pay for the deficit? We withdrew money from our savings (investment) account. It just doesn't work – and it doesn't make any sense in challenging financial times like these.

As a side note, we already have \$122,000 in funds specifically designated for building care and improvements, including the previously mentioned building fund which stands at \$24,000. If there is a catastrophe we have very good insurance. If a major need comes up the Ministry Council can (and has, in the past) taken funds from our general reserves (investments, which are largely bequests to the church and remainders from the years when our budget always had a surplus) to meet building needs. And there is one more thing worth mentioning. When we have a building need people of this congregation have been very generous in rising up to meet the need. The fact that we have discontinued putting money in our building fund does not jeopardize our budget or building at all.

We didn't make any changes on the income side to lessen the deficit, in fact, we were conservative (but responsible) on what we projected for income. Hopefully we will surpass our best guesses as presented in this document.

There is one more part of this story that should be told. There's one more reason we were able to close the gap – and this is, by far, the biggest reason. For many years this church was blessed with a couple who had the wherewithal to give generously to support the mission of this church. When I say “generously” I mean in the range of \$35,000 annually. They were quiet, unassuming people who were fortunate enough to have been blessed with money – and they were always committed to using it to make the world a better place – but never with any acknowledgment or fanfare. In fact, they specifically asked that their names not be mentioned when they occasionally stopped by the office at the end of the year and asked how much was needed to balance the budget. They went out of their way to mask who the donor was when they bought a \$10,000 lawn tractor for Pilgrim Center. They were blessed – and they were committed to making sure they shared their blessings.

About 10 years ago they established the Triss Fund – money given to the church recognizing that someday they would not be with us anymore, and as a church, there would be a big hole in the budget. Given the fact this one family funded more than 12% of our budget, their observation was accurate. Once they were gone we'd be suffering “cold turkey”. The shock to the budget would have been drastic.

The Triss Fund was specifically established to wean us off their annual pledge after they were gone. Note the past tense reference – their pledge ended last year upon the death of the second spouse.

Over the years the balance of the Triss Fund grew to approximately \$126,000. We withdrew \$21,000 in 2012 to make up the difference between what the couple pledged and what we actually received – leaving a current balance of approximately \$105,000. What a gift this is to us – and what foresight these humble salt-of-the-earth people had to leave this as one of their many quiet legacies.

The Finance Committee recommended the following plan to use these funds to wean us off this generous annual pledge, though the quiet generosity of this family will always be missed:

<u>PROPOSED TRISS WITHDRAWALS</u>		
	21,000.00	2012
100%	35,000.00	2013
80%	28,000.00	2014
60%	21,000.00	2015
40%	14,000.00	2016
20%	7,000.00	2017
TOTAL	<u>126,000.00</u>	

I started this lengthy report warning the budget contained both good news and bad news. The good news is stories like the couple who had the love for the church, a commitment to share the blessings of their lives, and the foresight to give the congregation time to rise up and meet the challenge when once they were gone.

The good news is that we can rise up to meet the challenge. These two people aren't the only two among us with a passion to generously share our resources. They are not the only two who were blessed by steady income and a good life. Their "numbers" may be different and bigger than most of ours, but most of us *are* richly blessed – especially by the world's standards – and have much for which we can be grateful.

It is from this sense of blessing that we will rise up and meet this need – by prayerfully considering our financial commitment to sustaining and growing the ministry of this church, by telling others of our church and inviting others to join our community, and by using the talents we have been given to make this world a better place.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jeff Puhlmann-Becker

Treasurer

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**First Congregational Church Oshkosh  
2013 Budget  
Adopted March 14, 2013**

	2012 <u>Actual</u>	2012 <u>Budget</u>	2013 <u>Budget</u>
Contributions	255,782	273,879	250,000
Other Contributions	20,451	17,000	17,000
Plate Income	5,143	5,000	5,000
Interest and Dividends	5,033	5,000	5,000
Rent	2,390	2,000	2,000
Miscellaneous	-333	0	0
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>288,466</b>	<b>302,879</b>	<b>279,000</b>
Personnel Compensation	234,112	246,769	235,466
Admin and Office Expenses	13,803	13,800	12,668
Building Operations and Utilities	40,176	42,900	40,200
Fellowship Ministry Group	885	975	1,200
Finance Ministry Group	235	425	184
Buildings and Grounds Maintenance	7,365	4,000	4,000
Personnel Ministry Group	130	0	0
Church School Ministry Group	2,582	4,606	3,625
Youth Ministry Group	1,027	1,000	1,250
Adult Ministry Group	348	750	750
Benevolence	43,821	43,821	34,200
Music Ministry Group	775	300	625
Angel Choir	210	230	200
Handbell Choir	66	200	51
General Music Expenses	2,886	2,160	2,355
Worship Ministry Group	3,353	2,575	2,449
Ministry Council	95	750	900
New Member Ministry Group	1,058	2,200	910
Social Justice Ministry Group	250	550	250
Stephen Ministry	1,732	3,672	700
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>353,178</b>	<b>368,011</b>	<b>341,983</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>-64,712</b>	<b>-65,132</b>	<b>-62,983</b>
TRANSFER FROM OACF - OPERATING	20,000	20,000	20,000
TRANSFER FROM TRISS FUND	21,000	0	35,000
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>-23,712</b>	<b>-45,132</b>	<b>-7,983</b>

**PROPOSED TRISS WITHDRAWALS**

	21,000.00	2012
100%	35,000.00	2013
80%	28,000.00	2014
60%	21,000.00	2015
40%	14,000.00	2016
20%	7,000.00	2017
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>126,000.00</b>	



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
BALANCE SHEET STATEMENT**

**Fiscal Year 2012**

**ASSETS**

Total Cash & Money Markets	67,317.39
Current Receivables	-
Prepaid Insurance & Expenses	-
Mutual Funds	411,230.47
OACF General Fund	506,904.35
OACF Endowment Fund	27,737.55
OACF Marquart Maintenance Fund	27,736.74
OACF Manser Memorial Fund	68,826.84
OACF Triss Fund	126,051.98
CD Old Natl Bank-Drebus/Redfd	1,500.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>1,237,305.32</u></b>

**LIABILITIES/CAPITAL FUNDS**

Current Liabilities	91,904.51
Church Apparel Fund	(2,014.45)
Maintenance Reserve Fund	25,176.49
Memorials	12,358.21
New Century Fund	151,108.40
Undesignated Reserve Fund	265,026.42
OACF General Fund	499,195.37
OACF General Fund Interest Income	7,708.98
OACF Endowment Fund	26,734.52
OACF Endowment Interest Income	1,003.03
OACF Triss Fund	100,000.00
OACF Triss Fund Interest Income	26,051.98
OACF Manser Memorial Fund	66,543.69
OACF Manser Memorial Interest Income	2,283.15
OACF Marquart Maint. Fund	26,736.75
OACF Marquart Maint. Interest Income	999.99
Centennial Celebration Fund	-
Kitchen Fund	12,939.00
<b>Current Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b><u>(76,450.72)</u></b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES/CAPITAL FUNDS</b>	<b><u>1,237,305.32</u></b>

## **REPORT OF THE WORSHIP MINISTRY GROUP(2012)**

2012 was a very uneventful year for the Worship Ministry Group which definitely positive. It indicates all is going well!!

We are blessed to have all of our committee members from 2012 volunteer to continue on for 2013. We have had very good attendance the past year from all members and have had some very insightful discussions.

We will continue to schedule meetings based on the needs that Ralph and Carol have for our input. Again, this will probably be 9-10 meetings per year on Wednesday evenings. Thursday night services will continue until Ralph & Carol decide they are not beneficial.

We are very pleased with the suggestions made by Ralph and Carol and by the creativity they have displayed in the diversification they present in worship services. Since the feedback from the congregation has been very positive we will continue to proceed in the same direction.

Dave Elbing, Facilitator

## **MUSIC MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012**

The purpose of the Music Ministry Group is to enrich the music ministry of the church by supporting our music staff and thinking creatively about how music can be part of the life of the church. This work includes helping in recruitment of volunteers for the various music groups, looking into musical instrument updates and acquisitions and expressing appreciation to the many volunteers that make up the music groups. In addition we provide constructive feedback, help manage the music budget, help sponsor and provide support for musical events and fill music staff vacancies when needed.

This has been a busy year for the music ministry group. The completion of the Anniversary Celebration with its many different musical offerings was a wonderful success. We are deeply grateful to the Anniversary Committee for including the importance of music in the history of this congregation.

Because we have so many requests to hold concerts and recital performances in our sanctuary, we developed a policy to help monitor the building usage and recover some of the expenses related to those events. The policy has been put in place and is finally working well.

With funds that the Music Ministry has received from several bequests, for which we are very appreciative, we have been able to maintain the instruments (organ, piano and bells). We were also able to purchase an electronic keyboard that will be placed in the Angel Choir rehearsal room, and because it is portable, we will be able to use it in different rooms of the building when we have events that require musical accompaniment and performance.

We are pleased to have such talented musicians in Joanne Peterson, Christina Conn and Patrick Meyer and thank them for their willingness to share their musical talents with us. They are truly gifted and serve our congregation with warmth and devotion. We are especially appreciative of the leadership that Joanne provides as the head of staff for the music program. We are sincerely grateful to Pastors Carol and Ralph for their direction, love and support of our music program.

We are, also, very grateful for the volunteers who offer their time and talents to the music ministry of the church. There are very few other groups in the church that commit so much time and hard work to sharing with the congregation the gifts that God has given them. They are all a blessing.

Finally, I would like to thank the Music Ministry Committee for their devotion and concern for this ministry. With their knowledge and guidance I believe we have one of the finest music programs in Oshkosh and maybe even, beyond.

Proudly submitted,  
Cathleen Starck Wille  
Music Ministry Facilitator

## **REPORT OF THE NURTURE MINISTRIES COORDINATOR**

Nurture Ministries at First Congregational Church currently encompasses the following ministries of the church: Stephen Ministry; Visitation Ministry; Flower Delivery Ministry; Meal Delivery Ministry; Prayer Shawl and Pillow Ministry; Prayer Circle and Fellowship Ministry. The Nurture Ministries Coordinator provides staff support to these caring ministries. The Coordinator provides staff support to the Fellowship Ministry Group.

Stephen Ministry and Visitation Ministry are coordinated directly by the Nurture Ministries Coordinator. Referrals to these ministries most often come from co-pastors, Carol and Ralph, with the Nurture Ministries Coordinator making the determination which ministry might be the best fit for the individual who has care needs. The Nurture Ministries Coordinator is responsible for matching the persons serving in these ministry areas with the individual needing care.

### **Stephen Ministry**

Stephen Ministry had been led by Ginnie Sherer, Dick Oelschlager and Cynthia Thorpe-Kavanaugh. In April, 2012, Sue Coghill completed the week-long Stephen Ministry Leader Training in St. Louis, so Sue has now joined the leadership team at FCC. The leaders' role is to provide training and on-going education for this ministry. They also lead the monthly Supportivision group. Supportivision is a peer supervision/support group that provides support and oversight to those involved in this lay ministry program. Supportivision is a vital and key component to this ministry as it provides Stephen Ministers with regular peer and leader support to help the Stephen Minister grow in their ministry to their care receiver. This helps to ensure that care receivers are given the best possible care while participating in this ministry.

During 2012, there were 10 ministers that provided care to 10 individuals. Two Stephen Ministers have left the ministry during 2012. Six matches with care receivers came to a close during 2012. Three of these matches ended because of the care receiver passed away; two matches ended upon mutual agreement of the Stephen Minister and care receiver; and one match ended when the Stephen Minister was no longer able to serve in Stephen Ministry.

Stephen Ministers meet one-on-one with their care receivers for approximately 1 hour per week. This has led to hundreds of hours of lay ministry care being provided over the past year. It is hoped that in the year ahead more individuals will be matched with the 4 Stephen Ministers who are ready to provide care.

Stephen Ministry also provides a series of books about grieving to those that been affected by loss. This is a series of 4 books that are provided to a person over the course of a year. In 2012, 3 individuals were recipients of this series.

### **Visitation Ministry**

Visitation Ministry has been a vital ministry to those homebound members of FCC. Volunteers are assigned one person to visit on a monthly basis. Over the past year, 10 individuals have been making visits with 7 homebound people.

## **Flower Delivery Ministry**

Giving of altar flowers has been encouraged in the past year by putting a sign-up sheet in the narthex. People who give flowers make a decision whether the flowers will be delivered to someone or taken by the person providing the flowers. Volunteers in the Flower Delivery Ministry group deliver Sunday's altar flowers to people who are unable to attend worship services, recovering from hospitalization or have experienced a loss. Currently there are 8 people who assist in delivering flowers. In 2012, 36 flower arrangements were delivered to 20 individuals. Rebecca Robe coordinates the schedule for this ministry.

## **Meal Ministry**

Meal Ministry is coordinated by three volunteers from the congregation: Andrea Schneider, Jodi Braun, and Sue Coghill. Each coordinator takes lead responsibility for a two month period of time. Their role is to arrange for people to deliver meals to those that need them. Meals are offered to people following hospitalization, illness, injury or a loss in their family. It has become more uncommon that the offer of meals is accepted, but by those who do accept the offer it is very much appreciated. There are 30 volunteers that can be called by the coordinators to prepare meals for home delivery. During 2012, 14 meals were provided to 3 families in the church.

## **Prayer Shawl and Pillow Ministry**

Pray Shawl and Pillow Ministry is coordinated by Sue Coghill. Volunteers in this ministry make shawls and pillows that can be delivered to people who are ill, recovering from surgery or are homebound. These items are distributed primarily by Carol and Ralph during pastoral care visits. In 2013, we hope to grow this ministry by recruiting more people who can make shawls and lap quilts. In 2012, 2 people received shawls or lap quilts.

## **Prayer Circle**

The prayer circle allows those with the gift of intercession to serve others at FCC by praying for concerns that are submitted. Prayers are listed on a password protected website that members of the pray circle access from their home computers. Evelyn Bowerman provides coordination for this ministry. She edits the website information for the circle and sends emails to members of the pray circle when new prayer requests are added. Currently 20 people participate in raising other's concerns in prayer via the pray circle. Evelyn also initiates phone calls to those who are made aware of pray requests by phone so that people who do not have Internet access can also participate in the Prayer Circle.

Ginnie Sherer

## **REPORT OF FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY GROUP**

The Fellowship Ministry Group's purpose is to support of the fellowship of the congregation.

In the past year, the Fellowship MG planned Hanging of the Greens which was then done a bit differently than in previous years. This year, pew boughs were assembled on the Saturday prior to Hanging of the Greens on Sunday, 12/9/12. Wreaths were hung on the front doors on Saturday; garland was strung on the organ case and around the center doors in the narthex. The large Christmas tree was placed in the Chancel and a tree was set up for the hanging of the Chrismons. During the worship service, the pew boughs were hung, Chrismons were hung on the trees, children helped to hang wreaths on the doors in the sanctuary. Hanging the greens during the worship service allowed many people to participate in the decorating, many who would not have helped otherwise. It also allowed the congregation to hear about the significance of various symbols during the worship service.

Easter Breakfast was also sponsored by Fellowship Ministry Group and the Mission Trip Team on 4/4/12. Proceeds from the breakfast were given to the Mission Trip Team. This event served about 125 people. Members of Fellowship MG and several others provided breakfast casseroles. Suz Heft helped in the kitchen.

Fellowship Ministry Group continues to coordinate hosts for the weekly Coffee Hour following worship services. We have attempted to streamline the hosting of Coffee Hour by having the Sunday custodian make the coffee and put out the cookies that are provided through Fellowship MG. The lounge is arranged for seating prior to Sunday, so the hosts responsibilities are limited to making punch; greeting people, and clean-up. Coffee Hour continues to be well attended and seems to serve a meaningful purpose to support connections between people following worship services. Continuing to recruit hosts for Coffee Hour remains a focus.

Over the past year, the Fellowship Ministry Group has struggled with understanding what Fellowship means in the life of the church today and how people make connections within the church. Some of the activities that were planned by Fellowship Ministry in the past, no longer are of interest today. This coupled with waning interest in people coming forward to help with planned activities has contributed to a need to take a step back over the next year and look more carefully at some questions: "What Fellowship means today in the life of the church?" and "How can Fellowship Ministry Group support connections for people in the church in activities that are meaningful?". Thus, the work of this group over the next year will be devoted to recruiting of hosts for Coffee Hour. This will be done by Karen Bowen and Ginnie Sherer. Church leadership will help with gathering some targeted focus groups to help discern what will aid people in establishing connections/relationships and, hopefully, lead us to understanding what Fellowship means at FCC today.

We would like to sincerely thank everyone who has helped with our activities. Clearly, fellowship remains important to the First Congregational family.  
Ginnie Sherer

## 2012 REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENCE MINISTRY GROUP

**Members:** Vicki Drabandt, Len Herricks, Ann Marshall, John Nichols and staff liaison Ralph DiBiasio-Snyder

This group determines where to donate allocated church funds in the broader community and the world. It also selects the projects, agencies, and organizations to receive our “special offerings”. The congregation decided many years ago to designate 16% of pledged income for charitable giving. FCC has historically been and continues to be a caring, giving church. This year the congregation voted to make some changes in how charitable dollars will be processed in 2013, but in 2012 the distribution of outreach dollars was handled as in the past.

Part of the benevolence money is used in support of the two denominations to which FCC belongs: the United Church of Christ and the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. Both organizations offer many services to their member churches and support national and international missions and disaster relief efforts. Part of the money designated for the NACCC is earmarked for mission work. \$5,700 was sent to our “friends” the Mazahua Mission in Mexico where we have gone on several mission trips.

In 2012 we continued to support the Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin’s Parent Connection program with \$2000 (the final payment of a 3 year grant) and \$2,000 to the Red Cross Bridges program (2<sup>nd</sup> payment of a 3year grant).

### **Special Offerings:**

Easter offering of \$1,700 went to One Great Hour of Sharing  
Thanksgiving offering of \$861 went to the Samaritan Counseling Center  
Christmas offering of \$623 was donated to the local World Relief Organization

### **Locally, financial support was also given to:**

- Back to School Fair \$500
- FCC sponsored refugee family \$450
- Assisted an FCC youth in Lego League \$100
- Day-By-Day Warming Shelter \$3000
- Tri-County Community Dental Clinic \$1400
- Samaritan Counseling Center \$500
- Ministers’ Emergency Discretionary Fund \$1000

Thank you for your generous giving. We would appreciate your suggestions of local services or agencies that would benefit from FCC benevolence dollars.

Ann Marshall, Facilitator

## **REPORT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY GROUP 2012-2013**

The Social Justice Ministry Group was founded in July of 2010 to help replace the Social Concerns Ministry Group that had been founded in 2005. Lots of effort went into this year's Social Justice proceedings.

Two activities dominated the volunteer time spent by this year's members: the Myanmar resettlement undertaking and the Community Gardens plot.

Several members spent countless hours helping the Tum Cem family from Myanmar get settled in Oshkosh and get acclimated to life in the United States. Before the family arrived, after the family flew in to Appleton on May 4, 2012, to the hour of their departure for Dallas on January 20, 2013, members were active. Even after the family left, members stayed involved, attending to several post-departure details. During the eight months the family stayed in Oshkosh, SJ members helped with the apartment, worked with local agencies on a variety of subjects, tended to the family's educational and medical needs, encouraged the parents to plant, weed and harvest a garden, transported members to various venues, and helped look for jobs.

The Community Gardens plot at the Winnebago County Extension site off Sherman Road took an unusual amount of time. Because of an extremely dry summer, members carted 40 gallons of water daily to the garden, ensuring a harvest that found its way to the Oshkosh Area Community Food Pantry. Members also assisted the Tum Cem family with their plot, located within the FCC area.

Members helped out with the Christmas in July and Christmas Teen Gift projects, the October CROP Walk, Servapalooza, Habitat ReStore, the Oaklawn School referendum, Race Unity Day, Friends of Austin meetings, the Chester Marcol Suicide Awareness Walk and the alternative Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at First Presbyterian Church.

Most meetings began with a speaker (on a social justice issue), a discussion of activities the group could undertake, and a to-do list for the next month. Among the speakers participating were Fran Caruana and Margo Goff of the Oshkosh Area Public Schools (ESL issues), Anne Ruby (Court Towers renovation and relocation), Julie Dumke and Rick Leib (Oshkosh North's Communities), Stephanie Gyldenvand, Lawrence Stahowiak, and Bridget Weber (Oshkosh food co-op), members of the Oaklawn Referendum team, Joe Wiedenmeier of PFLAG, Amber McCord, "Growing Seeds of Change" Oshkosh Urban Community Garden, and Michell Pascarella and Emily Wolter of the Living Healthy Community Clinic.

The group also viewed *The Line*, a Sojourners DVD that was very powerful in its depiction of poverty and the federal poverty line. Several segments showed the impact of poverty on people working two jobs and still falling below the line, people whose life circumstances left them feeling meaningless, former affluent individuals facing joblessness for the first time, and oil spills that put fishermen out of work. The DVD is available in the church office.

Members of the group were Paula Allen, John and Jone Oman, Ron and Jody Harrell, Dorry Wilner, Amy Smith, Ted Balsler, Mary Burns, Brian Tokopf, Tina Haffeman and Ralph and Carol Dibiasio-Snyder. Ron served as chairperson and Jody was the secretary. Amy was the group's Ministry Council representative.

Ron Harrell, Chair

## **NEW MEMBER DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY GROUP**

During the past year, the New Member Development Ministry Group took on and accomplished several projects in an effort to grow the church membership and the community's awareness of our existence. Following are some of the more significant things we did throughout the year:

We created FCC t-shirts that featured the word cloud using the various words people have used to describe FCC. These t-shirts come in a variety of sizes and are offered for sale in the church office and after worship on various Sundays. They're a great way to help spread the word about FCC and what we have to offer. People are encouraged to purchase one or some if they haven't already.

The Welcome Center in the narthex was completely redone this past year. It now features a large, flat screen TV that has scrolling messages about things going on at FCC, meeting places for various events, etc. Response to the changes has been positive. New stenciling in the area has also been a project this past year. Thanks to Ralph and administrative assistant Cynthia Hunt for their efforts in making this possible and keeping it updated.

We continued with our project of placing member info on the web site and in the weekly Member Bridge to help existing members get to know each other better, but also to let the community know who goes to FCC, and why.

We continued to submit articles to the Oshkosh Northwestern Community Newsroom. This year the articles included ones highlighting special services FCC was holding, First Tuesdays, Newcomer Classes, and a reminder to the community about the weeknight worship service. Lifelong Learning presentations that might be of interest to the general community-at-large, were also featured in these articles. These no-cost articles appear both online and in hard copy format and are designed to draw people's interest to FCC.

New member classes were split into two categories this past year: Ready to Join classes, designed for people who had been attending FCC for a little while and were ready to become members; and LAF (Learn about FCC) classes, designed for people who had heard about FCC and wanted to learn more. In both classes, snacks and beverages were served in an inviting atmosphere and people heard a short history of the church, and learned from others what makes the church special to them. A short tour of the building was also offered. For those who were ready to join an inventory of their talents and interests was taken to help determine where they might be able to serve the church. Part of the presentations for both groups is being put on DVD so it will be a little more interactive for future attendees.

We continued to recognize and emphasize the importance of creating a warm, welcoming and hospitable atmosphere for both our current members and guests. And all members are encouraged to invite family members or friends to come worship with them, helping to spread the word about our exciting and unique church community.

Submitted by: Cheryl Hentz



## **ESTHER Core Team**

ESTHER [Empowerment-Solidarity-Truth-Honor-Equality-Reform] is a grassroots, interfaith, social justice organization working in the greater Fox Valley area. The FCC Core Group and Oshkosh ESTHER work independently as well as with the larger group on various state and local social justice issues.

In 2011 the Day by Day Warming Shelter was opened with the help of Oshkosh ESTHER and the passion of Tina Haffeman. It continues serving an ever-increasing number of homeless in the community.

In 2012 FCC and Oshkosh groups have been working with others locally and on the state level with the 11 x 15 Safer, Healthier Communities Prison Reform Campaign. Wisconsin has more than 22,000 people incarcerated, more than twice as many as Minnesota with only 9,000. The goal is to decrease the incarcerated population to 11,000 by 2015. On March 15<sup>th</sup> members of all groups traveled to Madison to meet with legislators to bring attention to this issue.

Oshkosh ESTHER for some time has been working to expand the local celebration of Martin Luther King Day by making it affordable so more people can participate. Working with the University of Oshkosh in 2012, the group was able to add a free event to the UW-O dinner which has a fee. The first event in January, 2013, was a huge success with an inspiring evening of speakers, dance and music. The groups will continue to work to expand the event for 2014.

Anyone interested in working on social justice issues is welcome to join us.

FCC ESTHER Core Group

Pat Blades Tina Haffeman Brian Tokoph Dorry Wilner

## **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS MINISTRY GROUP**

2012 Annual Report

NO REPORT AVAILABLE AT TIME OF PRINTING.

## **FINANCE MINISTRY GROUP REPORT**

The purpose of the Finance Ministry Group is to oversee the Church's finances, to report the finances to the Ministry Council and the Congregation, and to advise the Ministry Council and Congregation on income, expenses and budget. Cynthia Hunt, Office Administrator, and Jeff Puhlmann-Becker, Treasurer, are both a great help in seeing that accurate and clear records are kept. New financial software has improved the efficiency of record keeping and opened new possibilities. Finance has worked to see that reports most clearly reflect both the current income and expenses, but also of total assets. A discussion of the similarities and differences of church finances and business finances is one way the group used to improve the reports.

John Oman

## **REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Financial Stewardship Committee used a very low key approach to estimates of giving for 2013. This approach had mixed results. Corrine Saidla, Jeff Puhlmann-Becker and Pastor Ralph DiBiasio-Snyder all need to be thanked for their efforts in this area.

John Oman.

## **REPORT OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The Personnel Committee may have one of the easiest jobs in the church – advocating for and supporting our staff! We are blessed with a group of people who bring great energy and passion to our common life. We also benefit from the longevity in our staff’s work among us – this brings stability and a common vision to our ministry and programs, but also means we’re not spending a lot of time interviewing, hiring, and training new staff members.

Having said that, we did hire two employees over the last 12 months:

Jim Friedrich started his work with us in November of last year, and has done an excellent job settling in and understanding the needs and schedules of the many groups that use this facility.

Jonathan Gibson started as our Sunday custodian last July. He quickly fit into the Sunday routine to make the church ready and welcoming on Sunday mornings.

Many would say that the church isn’t the pastor, but it’s the *people* who make the community of faith. People who say this are right, it’s not the pastor or the staff that “makes the church”, and it’s us! But how fortunate we are to have this staff – these wonderfully gifted people – ministering with and among us as we gather in this Christian Community in this place and time!

Howard Blades, Lurton Blassingame, Cyndi DeVoe, Jeff Puhlmann-Becker, Facilitator, Cynthia Thorpe-Kavanaugh

## **REPORT ON THE USE OF THE BUILDING**

During 2012 a host of activities and groups have utilized the First Congregational Church. These are basically broken down into 4 groups below.

### Music groups

Various Recitals, including the Centennial Celebrations, Andrew Armstrong Concert, Sara Kind Recital, Tenkopfeldt recital, Lasecki/King piano duo, Joyce Andrews Vocal Students, Suziki recital, Oshkosh North Concert, UWO- Chamber Ensemble, Heid Music, Grine-Fisher Recitals , Peterson/Pung concert as well as 6 First Tuesday concerts and luncheons.

### Civic activities:

PFLAG, World Relief and Resettlement meetings, Oaklawn Referendum Meeting, ESTHER of Oshkosh, Day by Day Warming Shelter Board meetings, Take Back the Night meetings, League of Women Voters, PEO, William Waters event, ½ Marathon Pasta dinner supporting Advocap and CP, Christine Ann Center Christmas Gift Program. Senior Center Spanish Classes. GSA Conference. NEA Executive Committee.

### Special Interest Activities:

Oshkosh Photoshop users, Tai Chi Classes, UWO-Meditation, Girl Scouts,

### Other Religious activities:

Emmaus Ecumenical Catholic Community, the ZEN Buddha Group. Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve reception.

The building has also hosted a number of congregation member’s personal events from baby showers to birthday parties.

Cynthia Hunt  
Office Administrator

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012 OF THE ADULT EDUCATION MINISTRY GROUP – SUBMITTED**  
**JANUARY 31, 2013**

Members: Bethany Jorenby, Cheryl Hentz, David Jones, Val Williams, Nick Schneider, and Jim Paulson.  
Co-Facilitators: Bethany Jorenby and Cheryl Hentz  
Staff Liaison: Sandie Miller-Schreiter

We met several times over the summer and early fall to review our mission statement and consider how our mission can better help the church meet its ministry goals. With that in mind, we put together many diverse programs for the year, several of which were well-attended and had nice compliments paid about them.

We also had a lot of nice comments about the Program Guides that we started doing last year, with people saying they found them useful and liked having a complete list and description of upcoming Sunday morning Lifelong Learning programs all in one place so they could plan ahead. We also continued announcing our Sunday morning programs, Tuesday Night Spirituality discussions and other miscellaneous activities in the bulletins, Member Bridge, Tidings and on the web site.

We continued videotaping our Sunday morning presentations and putting them on the web for people who can't attend them or for non-members visiting our web site. This was originally a request last year from some of the people who sang in the choir or taught Church School and couldn't necessarily attend the sessions in person. While we haven't heard directly from them, we hope this continues to be a benefit to them. We want to thank Joe Wiedenmeier for all his assistance in getting these sessions uploaded to the Internet. This added service would not be possible without him.

While our programming and events are geared more toward FCC members there are also some that are of interest to the general public. So, when those events that might generate more widespread interest were scheduled, we placed announcements in the Oshkosh Northwestern to bring in people from outside the church. This is something the New Member Development Ministry Group was happy about, too.

For the third year, we continued to offer a weeknight opportunity for ongoing learning and spirituality, led by Bethany Jorenby. The Tuesday Night Spirituality Discussion Group is generally attended by 7-12 people. As a reminder to folks, every session is designed to be stand-alone, so if someone misses a week or joins after a session has already started, there is nothing for them to really catch up on and they can easily join in. We meet at 7pm Tuesday evenings at church and welcome anyone who wishes to broaden their minds about spirituality and what it really means to them.

Finally, we are always open to and welcome suggestions on possible topics for upcoming sessions – whether for Sunday morning Lifelong Learning, Tuesday Night Spirituality, or some other special presentation. If you have any ideas, please contact one of the facilitators or our staff liaison, Sandie Miller-Schreiter.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl Hentz  
Adult Education Ministry Group Co-Facilitator

## **REPORT OF THE YOUTH MINISTRY GROUP**

"Small but Mighty" is what Sandie Miller Schreiter called us from the beginning. Stacey Otto, Mary Herricks, and Phyllis Thompson accepted nominations for the Youth Ministry Group.

Meeting monthly, we planned activities for middle and high school students outside of the Confirmation class, mission trip, and education.

From the beginning we focused on offering meaningful activities, hoping for a connectedness among youth members of FCC. Our first attempt was to offer an overnight "lock in" just before school started. It was our intent to have those attending to brainstorm ideas for service and activities they'd like offered throughout the year. With only one eighth grader from FCC and two of her friends participating, we fell short of our goal for the gathering but did have a great time with those that attended.

We offered other activities on Sundays after church: tie dieing - one middle school and two grade school students participated; glass fusion workshop was the most highly attended with 10. A fun "minute to win it" game brought several youth. Wrapping gifts for the Christine Ann Center involved a good number of the confirmation students.

As we evaluated our efforts we decided to send a survey to parents asking them what they want their church to provide for their middle and high school students. This survey will be ready for discussion before the next Youth Ministry group meets for the first time. We nominated several for the Youth Ministry group including students who we hope will be advisory members. Stacey Otto and Mary Herricks will remain on the committee.

Submitted by Phyllis Thompson

## **REPORT OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL MINISTRY GROUP**

Members: Lorie Hadel, McKenna Hadel, Amanda Hammond, Chris Hammond, Val Williams, and Corinne Saidla.

The Church School Ministry Group began preparations for the 2011-2012 church school year by recruiting teachers. Group members made personal phone calls to potential teachers and shepherds. Volunteers for the "Kid Vid" series during the summer and childcare were also recruited.

We didn't offer Vacation Bible School this year because Sandie Miller-Schreiter was on Sabbatical.

Sandie found a "new" program to use during the "Ready to Worship" program to get the children who do not stay during the sermon portion of the service more ready to stay in the church service. The children and adults are getting use to the new program.

The rotation format continues to be used for students in second through sixth grade. The preschool, kindergarten/first grade, middle school and high school continue the classroom approach. The same topics were used for the rotations as they were for the worship services. This seems to have been a good format.

The group continues to review Middle School curriculum for the 2011-2012 year. The group is looking for curriculum that is a good match theologically and is user friendly.

The group assisted with the organization of the Christmas Pageant i.e.: checking costumes in and out, assisting children with getting ready for the pageant.

The group did some revamping of the Church School rooms by using cloth and other materials to make the rooms more inviting to the children.

The group continues to schedule Toy Washes. This year, we have been washing the toys one day and then letting them air dry and putting them away a different day mostly Sunday mornings. This system seems to be working well.

The group continues to work on incorporating the Holy Conversations of encouraging and sharing into our ministry.

Corinne Saidla  
Church School Ministry Group

## **CHURCH LIBRARY REPORT**

We were all saddened with the passing of Carol Henkle, who did so much for the church in general and specifically for the church library. Personally she was the one who taught me so much about library science and life.

I would like to introduce the new librarian: Jean Moench. She has only been a member of this church for a year and is already bringing her special gifts to where they are needed most. So far she has fixed our ancient computer and is helping process in books at record speed. She will be doing much of the work of transferring the card catalog to the new computer.

Please be patient with us as we transfer the card catalog. There may be times that the card catalog is not available. Feel free to ask for help. Until we have transferred the catalog, we ask to hold your donations.

So far we have moved some older videos to archives and the rest of the videos, CDs and DVDs to the wide rack by the computer. Our children's books in several categories are now in the bookcase under the Hmong quilt.

Because of the time required to transfer books we will be weeding books in all categories. If there are older books that you think should stay in the library; check them out.

We will be sending out overdue notices by e-mail this year.

We have processed in 5,000 items in our library over the years, although that does include items that have been withdrawn. Support the library by checking books out and returning over due books.

Joyce Frohn

## **REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL COMMITTEE - 2012**

Members: Dixie Laehn, Ann Marshall, Deanie Minniear, Maria Talin and Dorothy Unger

Friends and family members often give a monetary gift to the church in memory of a loved one. These gifts are put into a memorial fund account and the money is used to meet needs of the church that fall outside the operations budget. When appropriate, the family is consulted when use of their relative's memorial is being considered. Usually the money goes toward projects that will pay a lasting tribute.

2012 was a relatively quiet year for the Memorial Committee. Only one request for funds to be used for the church came to the committee's attention. What has been noticed in the past couple of years is that some families designate immediately what they wish done with the money donated in memory of their loved one. For example, they may request that the money go to the "kitchen renovation fund", to the music program, or to the library, etc. That money may pass through Memorials, but because it is clear where the final donation is to go, the money is transferred out of Memorials to the appropriate account. The committee is not yet sure if this is a trend, but will continue to monitor that possibility in the next year or two

As of the end of 2012 there was over \$12,350 in Memorials. The committee always welcomes suggestions for use of memorial monies. Contact any member of the committee and your proposal will receive prompt consideration.

Ann Marshall

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP REPORT 2012**  
WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP REPORT APRIL 2012-2013

To demonstrate to our compassion for the members and friends of FCC, Women's Fellowship has used their funds to send cards and flowers for many events, both happy and sad. This past year we have sent nineteen sympathy cards, twenty-four get well cards, eleven thinking of you cards, one 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary card, and four new baby cards. We have sent flower bouquets to members staying in the hospital. This year a total of eleven bouquets were sent. Altar flowers were given twice in memory of Adaline Choate.

A very special member of our board, Carol Ann Henkle, died this year. Carol always kept us on our toes, she remembered every detail and date. She will be deeply missed. In her memory, we have made a donation to the matching kitchen fund.

Every year the board gives money for a scholarship to the Women's Retreat. This is a great opportunity for women of all ages to participate in. Women need to take time for themselves and we try to help in this small monetary way.

In the past the committee has hosted fellowship hour only once a year, but due to the plea for extra help we hosted three times. Since we are a fellowship group, we felt it was necessary for us to host more than one time per year. After church is a great time for us to enjoy each other's company.

Our big project for the year was raising money for the matching kitchen fund. During the spring our plant sale raised \$958.00. The entire year was a fund raiser called "That's My Pan". The final total from that project is \$1200.00. Thank you to the entire board who helped one way or another to make these projects work. At the time of this report, the matching kitchen fund had a total of \$25,144.00. This is a combined total from the church account and the Oshkosh Foundation account. We are half way to our goal! The board also contributed six new non-breakable water pitchers to the kitchen. (The metal pitchers desperately needed to be replaced).

We do not just serve our members and our church, but the community as well. Women's Fellowship gave money to the reading specialists in the Oshkosh elementary school system. We gave \$50.00 to each of the specialists at the fifteen elementary schools. They were to spend it on books as they saw fit. This money did not belong to the school system. If they chose to give the books to a child or keep it in their library it was up to them. The teachers were ecstatic with this opportunity. Church member Lorie Yaste-Zajicek helped us distribute the money, since she is the reading specialist at Webster Stanley Elementary.

Last on the report is the addition of two fabulous new board members: Chris Dempsey and Jody Harrell. We are very lucky to have such talented and energetic ladies join our board.

Karen Zentner LaBorde



## **Conference Minister Annual Report 2012**

Grace and peace to you in the spirit of Christ. It is my privilege to bring this report of the ministry that we share together as the congregations of the United Church of Christ in Wisconsin.

This will be my final annual report, and I will miss these chances, along with many others, to be in touch with our churches. It has been a joy and a delight. I will retire in July 2013, concluding my third term as Conference Minister and 25 years on the staff of the Conference.

**Ecumenical Partnerships** 2012 began with our Board chair, Steve Hirby and I traveling to the Synod of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland to complete the signing of a new partnership agreement with the EKIR. We were hosted with gracious hospitality, and we were delighted that much of the Synod meeting had a theme of “God is Still Speaking”, honoring our UCC/German relationships. From the western part of Germany, we visited our partners in the eastern part of the country, Berlin, Reichenbach, and Goerlitz.

In June we hosted the Bishop of the Church of Berlin-Brandenburg, Schlesische-Oberlausitz along with a group of church officials. In July two youth from Reichenbach visited, spending time with our youth at the National Youth Event and then were guests of Moon Beach Camp for the remainder of the summer. In October a group of 16 pastors came from the Rhineland for a seminar in “Confession of Faith in a Secular Age” at Pilgrim Center. Our Wisconsin Conference “Gospellers” choir, coordinated by Fritz West, toured Germany and Poland in the summer, building friendships and partnerships around the gift of music.

Our Honduran Partnership continues to sponsor two home building trips per year.

**Youth Ministry** The National Youth Event of the United Church of Christ was held at Purdue University. 3000 people attended for worship, speakers, music, and workshops on faith and life. Wisconsin’s took three busloads of youth and adult leaders, with our Youth Coordinator, Lisa Hart organizing the trip. The weather was hot, but the event was a terrific experience for all.

**Annual Meeting** With all the issues in the world that involve the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religions, our Annual Meeting for 2012 included a program on the “Three Abrahamic Religions.” The panel of scholars from the three traditions, Dr. Karl Kuhn, Professor Charles Cohen, and Dr. Othman Atta offered us deeply spiritual as well as historical perspectives on the traditions. Many delegates and visitors identified the program as exceptionally helpful in interfaith relations.

**Lay Spiritual Growth and Leadership** At the center of Conference life for the past 12 years has been the Lay Academy. Under the direction of Debbie Payden, the new Lay Academy classes this past fall grew significantly in enrollment. The basic two-year program and the additional classes have provided lay leaders with strong UCC identity and theological, leadership and ministry skills to strengthen the church. Congratulations to all who have completed the program, and thanks to those who have directed and taught in the program.

**Support of Clergy** Two new programs are essential to the future of our UCC ministry in Wisconsin. “Communities of Practice” are groups of pastors who meet with trained facilitators to process issues in their ministries and to support one another and hold one another accountable to best of their shared vocation. We were delighted to have 72 pastors sign up for 12 groups. Joanne Thomson provides staff direction, and Cathy Wille of Samaritan Counseling has trained the facilitators. We also benefitted from training from staff funded by the Lily Foundation.

The other program has been the training of a group of clergy and lay leaders to serve as “Search Associates” to work with staff in the Search and Call process when a church seeks a new pastoral leader. These persons have been trained and will “shadow” a staff person in a search process and will then be available to work

with search committees in the introduction and search profile preparation phase. Staff will continue to provide the consultation in the ministerial profile review phase.

**Outdoor Ministry:** The past year in our outdoor ministry was a challenging one of change. I am grateful to Glenn Svetnika, director at Moon Beach and our new director at Pilgrim Center, Mike Klemp-North for their dedicated leadership in strengthening our exceptional camping and retreat program including a national model for work with persons on the autism spectrum.

**Transitions** 2012 has been our first full year with new staff patterns and with the closing of the four individual Association offices. The changes were difficult and painful, but we have made great progress in adapting to new realities, and our ministerial staff is working well together to assist churches, and our Trost Center office staff are trying to stay ahead of ever-increasing demands. I am grateful to all for a positive and willing spirit in the midst of significant changes.

**Stewardship** Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) has stabilized, allowing us to anticipate finishing the year 2012 in a positive financial position after several years of deficits. We increased our giving to the national UCC and were able to complete our commitments to mission partners. Our OCWM income for 2012 included our first ever annual fund appeal to individuals who have been involved in the life of the Conference. As I write this report, these gifts were more than \$10,000.

As I complete this final annual report, our Board is working hard and well on leadership transitions. I am thankful for their vision and their support. I am most grateful for staff and colleagues among our clergy as well as so many faithful, creative and committed lay leaders. It has been quite a journey for me, and I am thankful to God for all the companions along the way and for the grace to be a part of the wonderful ministry and relationships in the Wisconsin Conference. God bless you all.

Wishing you many blessings.

David S. Moyer  
Conference Minister

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CO-PASTORS

March, 2013

2012 began with a wonderful celebration of thanks for the gift of awesome beauty and quiet reverence that is the wonderful sanctuary of this church, 100 years old. (That is, the building, not the gathered congregation which is 163 years old!) Preaching the first Sunday of our second century of worship in that place, looking toward the future (leading with a Call to Worship done in slam-poetry style) was a recent seminary grad, Erik Ekay Koepnick – a living symbol and embodiment of the church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As unknown and daunting is the future of churches like ours, we can have faith that the faith will go on under the leadership of young men and women like Erik. It was a wonderful year of remembering our history, but also leaning courageously into the future.

We are thankful for another year of ministry among the good people of First Congregational. Their faith continued to be expressed in several venues:

+ Sponsoring yet another refugee family – the Cem family: Dar and Tum, Biak and Cung, here from Myanmar. Hours and hours of loving care were given by so many people to make the Cems' landing in a new world safe and welcoming.

+ Addressing honestly, and with great care, the deficits of recent years, especially the question of our inability to fully support both of our wider church connections – the UCC and the NACCC. Discussions made it clear that our primary relationship is with the UCC for many reasons, and that while we had no quarrel with the NACCC we simply cannot continue to give equal support to them.

A congregational vote October 31 lowered our percentage of benevolence giving from 16% of pledges to 12%, which will allow us to continue our support of the UCC and local outreach at the present level. We will reduce the NACCC giving, over a three-year time period (using Undesignated Reserve funds) to \$500. The NACCC office and officers were told of our decision.

This reduction of denominational support, combined with our joining the health insurance plan of the UCC, allowed a reduction in the operating budget of about \$16,000.

+ To encourage more giving to local outreach, both in money and in time, the Partner Fund was created, using \$8000 of the New Century Fund. We hope that this will be a continuing fund as people give to it this year.

+ We continue to share our facilities with many community groups including the Zen Buddhists on Tuesdays evenings, the Emmaus Catholic Community Saturday evenings, PFLAG, several other groups, as well as numerous concerts. For the first time, we hosted the state Gay-Straight Alliance annual conference, with over 100 in attendance.

+ Continuing our long-standing relationship with Mazahua Mission, the youth mission team spent a week there serving side by side with several adults from the church. It was a wonderful experience, fully supported by the entire congregation.

Ralph was able to serve the community this year as a member of the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry, serving as the Chair of the Personnel Committee. He led a search for a new Executive Director in July – a search that had to be repeated in November. In 2012 he began a term on the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Conference, and found himself chairing yet another Search Committee, this time for the Interim Conference Minister.

In response to a need for a worship time other than Sunday mornings, we began a Thursday evening worship experience. Meeting in the balcony of the sanctuary, this service allows time for silence, reflection, prayer, and discussion. About 25 people have been part of this experiment, with perhaps 4 to 8 people there on any given night.

In the summer of 2012 we were happy to share with *The Congregationalist* (the national magazine of the NACCC) an article with news of our Centennial celebrations. At the close of the article we mentioned that FCC is an Open and Affirming church – an item that caught the eye of the ten churches of the Georgia-Alabama Association of the NACCC. At their annual meeting the end of October, they created a statement condemning our welcome of gay and lesbian people into the full life of the church – a statement that was published in the next issue of *The Congregationalist*. The leadership of FCC chose not to respond to this assault on our faith, leaving that to a number of writers in the January 2013 issue of the magazine who ably defended our right to obey our *still-speaking* God.

The congregation was graced for another year with a caring and hardworking staff. As Co-pastors, we are grateful for what each member of the staff brings to our common ministry. First Congregational Church is blessed in abundance with creative, energetic, thoughtful and faithful leadership! Thank you, staff partners in ministry!

The lay leaders of the church did a wonderful job leading the congregation through the issue of taking a hard look at our benevolence giving, in addition to all the “routine” work that is done by our Ministry Groups and church Officers. It is the leadership and dedicated work of the people of FCC that make it the church that it is.

Moderator Anne Romond, assisted by Moderator-elect Pat Blades were a great help in many ways, with Treasurer Jeff Puhlmann-Becker leading us in financial matters and Clerk Sue Coghill recording our Ministry Council meetings and keeping our membership records accurate. Thank you!

There is more to tell and you can read many more exciting happenings in ministry at First Congregational Church in the other reports in this Annual Report. With a deep commitment to, and emphasis on outreach and mission, we are, with the help of our Creator God, improving our own lives and the lives of others because of our gathering to worship and going out to serve. We are grateful to this congregation in so many ways and it is our blessing to serve here. As we spend time in the next year seeking wisdom for our future mission, we are open to the leading of the Spirit in the Still-Speaking God.

Ralph and Carol DiBiasio-Snyder , Co-pastors

## **Annual Report for the Teaching and Learning Ministries Coordinator (TLMC) 2012.**

As I reflect on this year, I am amazed by the number of folks that work in the Teaching and Learning Ministries. Teachers, shepherds, childcare providers, Ministry group members from Adult Education, Youth and Church School, Youth leaders and chaperones, children, youth and adults who participate in the activities, folks that bring newspapers, fill clipboards, check busy bags, help with the activity table, donate supplies and much more. Thank you to all of you that share in the faith formation of this church! I am blessed to be in partnership with you.

This year our youth mission trip was a big endeavor. Jack Brown from Olivet College invited us to join on their mission trip to the Mazahua Mission in Mexico. Seven youth: Emilie Braun, Noah Bossert, Kevin Frank, Ben Laufer, Matt Salbego, Olivia Seeley and Ellie Thomas, and five adults: Greg Bossert, Sandie Miller-Schreiter, Jen Norden, Margaret Salbego and Paula Seeley served in June of 2012. It was a life changing experience for us. While we were there we had the opportunity to help with the Special Friends camp which serves folks in the community with disabilities, a medical mission which helped many with their medical needs, spread lime, build cisterns, wash dishes, and more to be of service to the people in the community. We also had the opportunity to worship in the community and do a day of touring to see more of the area. We are blessed to have gone and blessed by you who attended our fundraisers and supported our trip by your giving and prayers. Thank you!

Another change this year is the activity table. Several summers ago when we worship in Fellowship Hall we had a table in the back for kids to work on activities during worship. This summer we put an activity table near the front by the piano. Kids can do an activity (color mandalas, work with play dough, etc.) and still be part of the service and see and hear what is happen in the service and be a part of it. We offered this in place of the summer Kid Video option. It worked so well that we decided to offer the activity table all year. It has been a great addition to the options for kids during worship and helps them know they are welcome here.

We held an intergenerational gratitude event this year on November 18<sup>th</sup> during the 9:00 hour. Children, youth and adults had an opportunity to count their blessings, think about the abundance in their life and how to use those blessings to serve others.

Theresa Brewer, our Child Care Coordinator, has been on staff for over five years now. Thank you to Theresa and the adult volunteers that provide care in the nursery and toddler room. Having a staff person to be with our children each week during the Church School year has brought consistency to our childcare and help make it a warm and welcoming place to our youngest.

Pumpkin Caroling and Christmas caroling was shared with Ginnie Sherer and Christina Conn. These events bring joy to both the singers and the folks we sing to. This year we picked two care facilities (Century Oaks and Gabriel's Villa). It worked well to go to just one place to sing and the residents enjoyed it.

Thank you to all who have participated in the life of the Teaching and Learning Ministries! I look forward to continuing our ministry together in the upcoming year.

With much Gratitude,  
Sandie Miller-Schreiter  
Teaching and Learning Ministries Coordinator

## **REPORT OF THE LAY MINISTRIES COORDINATOR 2012**

Those who serve on Ministry Groups and other committees and task forces put their faith into action and help to give FCC its reputation as a vital and caring church. Once again this year over 90 members served in ways that ranged from reading at worship to helping refugees assimilate to a new way of life in Oshkosh.

This year, in addition to the traditional ministry groups, there were a number of special groups at work. One group helped to educate the congregation on the issues involved with the Oaklawn School referendum. A Mission Matters group created the new Partner Fund and studied our denominational obligations in order to advise a new direction for FCC on that matter. The Centennial group continued to work hard on special events to celebrate our anniversary, More Holy Conversations continue and a group worked to organize the annual women's retreat.

New members were encouraged at several new member classes over the year as FCC welcomed new friends to our FCC family. This year, in addition to the new member class, an informational session was added for people who are newly interested in FCC. The class is called LAF (Learn About First Congregational Church) and is designed for those who may not even have been to a service at FCC but are interested and curious. Both the LAF and the New Member classes are promoted in the Northwestern and have attracted several new members.

I never fail to be amazed at the number of people at FCC who step forward to serve with enthusiasm and dedication. It is no wonder that we are widely known as a vibrant community that reflects the example of Jesus.

Tina Haffeman

## REPORT OF THE CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR AND ORGANIST - 2012

The Chancel Choir sings regularly from September through May.

Regular Chancel Choir members were Terry Thomas, Bridget Thorpe-Kavanaugh, Bethany Estrada, Karen LaBorde, Judy DeBroux, Pat Dwyer-Hallquist, Darcy Duffy, Vernice Haase, Carol Niendorf, Jacki Mueller, Cathy Wille, Ed Schneider, Patrick Meyer, George Coghill, Doug Henkle, Eric Kropp, Thatcher Peterson, Art Wille, Jen Stellpflug, and Doug Pire. Christin Buchholz, a student at UW0, joined the choir.

Both Christina Conn, Angel Choir Director, Ellie Thomas, and Bridget Duffy provided competent and musical substitution for the Choir Director and Organist throughout the year. Organ scholarship students Ellie Thomas and Noah Bossert as well as Jay Thomas and Pam Lane also provided service as organists and pianists for summer worship.

The Chancel Choir presented Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Song of the Birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ*, on Sunday, December 23, 2012. This 15-minute composition featured soprano and alto soloists, Christina Conn and Bridget Duffy, with Jon Del Ray, a UWO student doing student teaching, singing the baritone part. A string ensemble, with FCC member and UWO music student, Matt Abraham, playing cello; Pat Hallquist, from the choir, playing 2<sup>nd</sup> Violin, and Crag Heckner, a UWO music student, playing 1<sup>st</sup> Violin. I conducted from the organ keyboard.

At the Christmas Eve 5 p.m. service, Sydney and Carson Hall; Kiska Deering; Alice Rioux; Martha Becker; Ruby and Mia Salbego, all on piano and Kiera Robe and Kaitlin Hassler on violin provided some of the gathering music. Christina Conn and Martha Becker, accompanied on the piano by Ellie Thomas, sang a duet. Molly Schlaak sang a solo at both services, and Danny Schierl, accompanied by Ellie Thomas on piano, played on the bells, *Oh, How a Rose Ere Blooming* at the 7:30 p.m. service. The Chancel Choir sang two anthems at the 7:30 p.m. service.

At other times during the year, additional music was provided by Tanya Paulson, Kiera Robe; Laural Sanders, Ellie Thomas, Sarah McLane, Frank Hoffmeister, Matt Abraham, Rebecca Ottman, Noah Bossert, John Schwerbel, Ben Hedquist, Jon Gibson, Molly Schlaak, Pat Dyer-Hallquist, Jay Thomas, Judy DeBroux and her daughter, Cathy Schmidt, Kristopher Ulrich, Bridget Duffy, Christin Buchholz, Nate Hillary, Christina Conn, the North High School Madrigals, and the Handbell Trio of Patrick Meyer, Paula Allen, and Barbara Ziblut.

The Choir performed Bradley Ellingboe's 45-minute *Requiem* on March 17, 2013, with Molly Schlack as soloist. Matt Abraham played cello and Gretchen Hermann oboe.

The 1911 Casavant pipe organ (Op. 469) was returned to the Casavant factory in 1985 so the leather pouches at the base of the pipes could be replaced and tuning collars added to the pipes. In addition, Casavant built a new console. The first significant upkeep was performed in April by Salzman Pipe Organ Services, Appleton WI (he took over servicing the organ in 2011, upon the retirement of James Taylor). The cost was approximately \$14,000 with funding primarily from the Bill & Jesse Fuller memorial funds. Bill Fuller was an accomplished French horn player. He sang in the Chancel Choirs for over 40 years, retiring when he was age 85. He loved the sound of the pipe organ.

Respectfully submitted,

*Joanne Peterson*

Chancel Choir Director & Organist

## FAITH RINGERS/ HANDBELL CHOIR

### *Report from the Handbell Director*

This was a year of new beginnings, of increased technical prowess, and an occasion to honor and say good bye to a fellow ringer.

Faith Ringers still struggles with putting a full ensemble together. The first half of the year we were able to play two octave music in Feb. (*A Joyous Ring, Celebration # 3*), Mar. (*Amazing Grace*), and Easter's selections—*All Creatures of Our God and King* and *Thine Be the Glory*.

May 6<sup>th</sup> we held a potluck supper at church. At this event I opened up to the group about doing some small ensemble groups. I located a two octave setting of *America, the Beautiful* (w/Ellie Thomas, piano) and enlisted the help of Barb Ziblut, and a very brave soul, Paula Allen, to round out the trio. It would be played on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Understand this—Paula had not done anything like this in her life! Normally, ringers would only have 2-4 bells in front of them to play. In this situation, she not only had about eight bells to play, but actually had to share them at some point with two other players! I think, and, Paula would probably agree, that playing in small ensembles is a very gratifying experience. It builds confidence in one's abilities and transfers that experience and knowledge when performing in a larger group.

In September the chime choir was started once more. The group started out with 8 in the beginning and was pretty sporadic throughout the fall. With one month of no-shows I tabled the group for another year. Parents and children alike must understand that there has to be a commitment to showing up at each practice. I can pretty much guarantee that if there was a solid commitment by both parents and children for four months, that they will see good results and that they will want to continue in the program.

On Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>, Veterans Day, we honored a veteran and fellow ringer Harry Koster. Harry was a Viet Nam vet and I was a Desert Storm vet. Because of Harry's war experience, he became active in the peace movement. That is why I chose the text: "...they shall beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. For the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken it." (*Micka 4: 3-4*) *A Canticle for Peace* is the second movement of a work that I am currently working on entitled **Patriot Suite**. It is written for 3-5 octaves of bell, SATB choir, with soprano solo (Christina Conn). Harry, we miss you! You showed us what real courage is all about.

With Christmas we continued our small ensemble work. *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* (Danny Schierl, bell solo w/ Ellie Thomas, piano) and *Hark, the Harold Angels Sing* (Thom Hadel, Tony Hangst, Pat Nichols, Paula Allen, bell quartet w/Joanne Peterson, piano).

The members of our ensemble included: Tony Hangst, Thom Hadel, Barbara Ziblut, Danny Schierl, Emily Weiss, Pat Nichols, Patrick Meyer, and Paula Allen. Additional performers in *A Canticle for Peace*: Sue Coghill, Bridget Duffy (North HS choral Dir.), and Cara Davis, Emily Loper, & John Andrasko from **En-core! Handbell Ensemble**.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Patrick W. Meyer  
Faith Ringers Handbell Choir Director



## **REPORT OF THE ANGEL CHOIR DIRECTOR 2012**

This year's Angel Choir members are Alice Rioux, Julia Bock, Elizabeth Frohn-Hengst, Claire Veard, McKenna Haedl, Kassie Herring and Brandon and Ethan Moench. Angel Choir has been accompanied by Ellie Thomas and Noah Bossert on piano and John Gibson on guitar this year. Our Angel Choir room looks a little different this year with the addition of a new keyboard which will also be used for smaller church services held in the building besides the sanctuary. Our singers love to use their voices to sing and do activities like movement and music games.

Our Middle School "Choir" members include Martha Becker and Jack Wagner. We are still trying to find a more fitting name for our group, especially because we're a little small to do choir music! Martha and Jack prepared a song for Christmas, but only Martha and I were able to be there to perform. It turned out beautifully and we hope to have Jack sing with us in the spring. Jack is also preparing to song Panis Angelicus as special music. My goal is to provide middle school students with opportunities to use their musical gifts, and although we're a small group, I do believe that goal is being met.

Our tradition of pumpkin caroling and Christmas caroling continued this year and we spread some holiday cheer to folks who weren't able to make it in to church. Sandy Miller-Schreiter and Ginnie Sherer also helped coordinate both caroling events by organizing a list of people and figuring out our caroling routes. This year we moved our caroling back to Wednesday nights and had great turn-outs. Sandie organized the food and she and Ginnie figured out where we were going and who we were singing to, and I took care of making caroling booklets. We decided to have each group go to just one place and do more extensive caroling than go to five places and sing just a few songs. Overall, the feedback was that this way is more desirable. Our planning was so efficient, and I look forward to caroling again next year! We will wrap up our singing season on Mother's Day with a song for our Moms.

Christina Conn  
Angel Choir Director

## **LITURGICAL MOVEMENT CHOIRS:**

We have two liturgical movement choirs here at FCC. The youngest choir - Faith in Motion -grew from 6 girls and 2 boys to 11 girls and 4 boys ranging in age from Kindergarten through seventh grade. The older choir - Dancing Spirit - grow from 6 girls to 10 girls ranging in age from fourth grade through college.

The calendar of performances for 2012 was:

- 1) February 12th - Faith in Motion performed the "Gaelic Benediction" which we keep in repertoire from year to year and perform with the adult choir.
- 2) April 1st - Dancing Spirit performed "Let Us Break Bread" and brought in communion. This is also in our repertoire.
- 3) April 22nd - Both choirs performed for Earth Day dancing to "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" using giant earth beach balls.
- 4) November 4th - Both choirs performed a liturgical jazz dance to songs from Sister Act = "Ode to Joy" danced by Faith in Motion (15 dancers) in bright turquoise T-shirts. Dancing Spirit danced to "I Will Follow Him" in purple T-shirts.
- 5) December 16th - Christmas Pageant both choirs danced together doing a calepso dance to "African Alleluia"

I thought it was a very exciting year for both choirs. We have 4 boys dancing with us and our numbers have increased. Hopefully, we can maintain the interest.

As always, it is a pleasure for me to work with the youth of FCC.

Respectfully submitted by: Missy Allen