



First Congregational Church
Different Paths. Same Journey.

Annual Report
for
Annual Meeting of 2013

May 4, 2014

10:00 a.m.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
163rd ANNUAL MEETING - May 4, 2014

Table of Contents.....2-3

I. In Loving Memory.....4

II. Minutes

 Minutes of the 162nd Annual Meeting April 28, 2013.....5-7

 Congregational Meeting August 25, 2013.....8

III. Review & Reception of Annual Reports by Officers, Committees & Staff

 Moderator/Moderator Elect/Ministry Council: Pat Blades.....9

 Church Clerk: Sue Coghill.....10

 Treasurer: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker.....11-12

 Budget 2014: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker.....

 Balance Sheet 2013: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker.....13

WORSHIP AREA:

 Worship Ministry Group: David Elbing.....14

 Music Ministry Group: Cathy Starck Wille.....14

NURTURE AREA:

 Nurturing Ministry Coordinator: Ginnie Sherer.....15

MISSION AND OUTREACH AREA:

 Benevolence Ministry Group: Maria Talin.....16

 Social Justice Ministry Group: Amy Smith & Brian Tokoph17

 New Member Development Ministry Group: Cheryl Hentz.....18

 ESTHER Core Team: Dorry Wilner.....19

CHURCH OPERATIONS AREA:

 Building & Grounds Ministry Group: Dave Ruby.....19

 Finance Ministry Group: John Oman Sr.....20

 Stewardship Committee: Cheryl Hentz.....21

 Personnel Ministry Group: Jeff Puhlmann-Becker.....22

 Building Use: Cynthia Hunt.....22

TEACHING AND LEARNING AREA:

Adult Education Ministry Group: Cheryl Hentz.....23
Youth Ministry Group: Sandie Miller-Schreiter.....24
Church School Ministry Group: Corinne Saidla.....25
 Church Library: Joyce Frohn26
Memorial Committee: Ann Marshall.....26
Women’s Fellowship: Karen LaBorde.....27
Conference Minister Report: Michael Obenauer.....28

FCC STAFF

Co-Pastors: Ralph & Carol DiBiasio-Snyder.....29-30
 Resolution to the Wisconsin Conference.....30-31
Resolution to the Wisconsin Conference
Teaching and Learning Ministries Coordinator: Sandie Miller-Schreiter.....32
Interim Lay Ministry Coordinator: Ginnie Sherer.....33
 Media Ministry Coordinator: Joe Wiedenmeier
 Child Care Coordinator: Theresa Brewer
Chancel Choir Director/Organist: Joanne Peterson.....34
Angel Choir Director: Christina Conn.....35
Liturgical Movement Choirs Director: Missy Allen.....35



Maurine Drummond

Nancy Lloyd

Mary McCain

Jackson Medley

Gordon "Corky" Montgom-
ery

Rita Pennau

Anita Simm

Margaret "Peg" Watson

Tom Williams

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN – April 28, 2013

Moderator-elect Pat Blades called the 162nd Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church to order. The meeting was held as part of the morning worship service. Throughout the service, power point slides prepared by Joe Wiedenmeier illustrated the worship and agenda items.

Pat Blades led the Call to Worship with words from our church covenant: *We have declared to each other that “our purpose is to discover the will of God for our lives, and to mediate the spirit of Christianity and the things of God to our community, that God’s will may be fulfilled in individuals and in society.”*

Clerk Susan Coghill confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Annual Report booklet with reports of the Officers and Ministry Groups for the 2012-2013 year was distributed.

Minutes of the 2012 Annual Meeting were approved as printed in the booklet.

Pat Blades reviewed the six attributes used by our congregation to focus our ministries:

- *Welcoming*, with respect, people of diverse traditions, backgrounds and perspectives
- *Honoring* the whole person by nourishing mind, body, soul
- *Caring* for each other with love, compassion and joy
- *Gathering* children, youth, and adults to worship God in creative and meaningful ways
- *Encouraging* a thoughtful faith that expresses itself in action

Sharing our resources generously with our community and the world

During the Children’s Time, Sandie Miller-Schreiter, Teaching and Learning Ministry Coordinator, reviewed with the children the many ways our congregation “*gathers children, youth, and adults to worship God in creative and meaningful ways.*”

Celebrating the Year

The Annual Report including reports from ministry groups, committees and staff was approved as printed. Pat Blades expressed thanks to the many in our church who contribute to our mission through work on ministry groups and committees.

Special thanks were expressed for a few of these groups to highlight activities in the past year:

- Emilie Braun described the work of the **mission team’s ministry at Mazahua Mission**, “*encouraging a thoughtful faith that expresses itself in action.*”
- Anne Wesenberg shared how the **refugee resettlement project** with the Burmese refugee family “*welcomed with respect, people of diverse traditions, backgrounds and perspectives.*”
- Cathy Wille described the commitment of the many participants in the **ministry of music** which is one way we “*honor the whole person by nourishing mind, body and soul.*”

Ralph DiBiasio-Snyder explained how our program of **Benevolent Giving and Doing** – revised in the last year to recognize volunteer work by individuals – helps us “*share our resources generously with our community and world.*”

Looking to the Year Ahead

Finances: Treasurer Jeff Puhlmann-Becker presented financial reports for the years 2012 and 2013. Our financial picture is mixed, as we are operating with a significant deficit; however, a special gift – the Triss Fund – to be spent down over five years allows us time to bring our budget to a healthier position. The next few years are important for our long-term finances.

A question from the floor inquired whether FCC has investments in companies dealing in fossil fuels and cited the movement to divest from such investments by some denominations. This question will be referred to the Ministry Council and Finance Ministry Group.

Election of Officers and Ministry Groups: Tina Haffeman, Lay Ministries Coordinator, presented the slate of nominees for church officers, ministry groups and committees for the coming year. There were no nominees from the floor.

Pat Blades called for acceptance of the slate as presented by voice vote: “Amen.”

Vote was favorable.

See below for complete list of those elected to leadership for 2013-2014.

Pat thanked those who have served in the past year, especially those whose terms are ending.

Co-Pastors’ Report: Pat Blades called on co-pastors Ralph and Carol DiBiasio-Snyder – now serving First Congregational Church for 25 years! – for their report.

Carol expressed the gratitude she and Ralph have for the generosity of the congregation shown in many ways to each other and the community. She also gave thanks for the fine church staff which serves us.

Ralph reminded us of the six attributes which identify the ministry of the church. These were formulated eight years ago. Our congregation has changed since that time, so in the coming year, we will begin a process to discern an updated mission statement for the church.

Co-Pastors Compensation: As is our custom, Ralph and Carol were excused from the meeting for discussion of their compensation. Jeff Puhlmann-Becker presented the compensation package recommended by the Personnel Ministry Group.

Jeff moved that the congregation adopt the pastors’ compensation package and benefits as presented by the Personnel Ministry Group. Motion carried.

Housing Compensation: A Housing Allowance is included in the compensation package for the co-pastors. The IRS requires the amount designated to be approved separately. Ralph and Carol request that \$12,000 (each) be designated as housing. Motion made/seconded (Thatcher Peterson/Joyce Frohn): That the congregation, at the request of the co-pastors, designate \$12,000 (each) of their compensation to housing. Motion carried.

Celebration of Ralph and Carol’s Ministry: With Ralph and Carol out of the room, Jeff reminded the congregation of the “Top Secret” plans to celebrate the 25 years of Ralph and Carol’s ministry at FCC on May 19, during the worship service with a reception to follow.

There being no further business, Pat Blades declared the meeting adjourned at the close of the Benediction.

Susan Coghill
Church Clerk

First Congregational Church Leadership – 2013-2014

Elected April 28, 2013

<u>Officers:</u>	Moderator	Anne Romond
	Moderator-elect	Pat Blades
	Clerk	Susan Coghill
	Treasurer	Jeff Puhlmann-Becker

Ministry Group members: *(names in italics are new members)*

Adult Education: Cheryl Hentz, David Jones, Bethany Jorenby, Jim Paulson,
Nick Schneider, *Ted Balsler*

Benevolence: Vicki Drabrandt, Len Herricks, Ann Marshall, John Nichols, *Cheryl Pagel, Mary Wiedenmeier, Anne Ruby, Maria Talin, Mary Bauknecht*

Buildings and Grounds: John Oman Jr., Dave Ruby, Bruce Thomas, Gary Wilner,
Dave Elbing

Church School: Lorie Hadel, Corinne Saidla, Val Williams, McKenna Hadel (youth advisor), *Jennifer Boos, Jennifer Burgess*

Fellowship: In the process of reorganization of purpose and focus

Finance: Lurton Blassingame, Mike Duffy, Len Herricks, John Oman, Sr.,
Jeff Puhlmann-Becker (Treasurer), *Jim Hoffman*

Music: Lynn Fulcher, James Grine, Vernice Haase, Pat Inch, Doug Pire, Cathy Wille,
Gretchen Hermann

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

Personnel: Howard Blades, Lurton Blassingame, Cyndi DeVoe, Jeff Puhlmann-Becker, *Ann Marshall*

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

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

Youth: Mary Herricks, Stacey Otto, *Paula Seeley*

Committee appointments:

Landscape: Carolyn Blassingame, Eric Kropp, Jen Stellpflug, Carol Williams,
Dorry Wilner

Ralph & Carol's Mutual Ministry Group: Shelly Maxwell, Glenn Nelson,
Chris Baganz

Stewardship: Bruce Abraham, John Oman Sr., Corinne Saidla, Dorry Wilner,
Cheryl Hentz, Anne Romond, Kay Sanders

Sandie's Mutual Ministry Group: Pat Blades

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

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

Coffee Hour Coordinators: Ginnie Sherer, Karen Bowen

Retiring Ministry Group members:

Adult Education: Val Williams

Buildings and Grounds: Joe LeHockey

Church School: John Brooks

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

Finance: Dave Elbing, Stan Ziblut, Dave Ruby

Financial Stewardship: Mary Beth Bossert, Maria Talin, Jack Frohn

Memorial Committee: Dorothy Unger

Personnel: Cynthia Thorpe

Social Justice: Mary Burns

Worship: Kathy Chapman

Youth: Phyllis Thompson

First Congregational Church, Oshkosh WI

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

August 25, 2013

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

Moderator Blades presented the name of Cathy Wille as the nominee for the position of Moderator-Elect. There were no additional nominations. Vote to elect Cathy Wille was favorable, with no objections. Cathy Wille is elected Moderator-Elect for the congregation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Susan Coghill

Susan Coghill, Church Clerk

REPORT OF THE MODERATOR 2013

In 2012 FCC celebrated its centennial. In her report as Moderator for last year, Maria Talin, referred to the many, many wonderful things FCC has accomplished throughout its history, and ended her report by asking, "What will the next hundred years look like?" In 2013 FCC began a process not only to consider, but to shape what will happen at least into the next decade.

As with all churches, FCC is aware of changing demographics and what that means in terms of church attendance and particularly in the area of church giving. While FCC is very fortunate to have a very strong financial foundation and strong reserves, there have been some operating losses over the years which are being addressed in a number of ways throughout the church. One of the changes made was to start drawing down our giving to the CCCNA (Congregational Christian Churches National Association) to better reflect our membership participation. FCC has been and continues to be dually affiliated with both the CCCNA and the UCC (United Church of Christ).

While this change lessened the amount being given to benevolences, giving has been partly offset by the establishment of the Partner Fund. The new Partner Fund allows for members of FCC to report volunteer hours worked at FCC but also hours of service OUTSIDE of FCC. Based on hours worked, funds are distributed to local charities determined by the Benevolence Committee. In 2013 over four thousand hours of service to FCC and to our community we recorded and \$8,000 distributed to four local charities. Some funds to replenish the fund were received in 2013 and the Christmas offering added over three hundred dollars to the fund. It is hoped that additional funds can be raised to keep this project that both recognizes the work of volunteers and benefits our community can be continued.

While assessing and making changes based on demographics and finances, what has not changed is the commitment of the members of FCC to our church and to our community. In 2013 we began an appreciative inquiry process that will look at what's RIGHT with FCC and how we build on those strengths. In this process, members of FCC will be interviewed to find their hopes and dreams for FCC and for the community. It is a chance to dream and commit to making the next hundred years of FCC even better than the last.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Blades

Moderator

REPORT OF THE CHURCH CLERK

Members received by:		Members lost by:	
Confirmation	10	Death	8
Reaffirmation	3		
Letter of Transfer	<u>1</u>		<u> </u>
	14		8

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP - March 25, 2014: 455

Members received by Confirmation:

Cameron Christopher Frank
Boone Charles Heft
Ian Michael Henscheid
Caitlin Rene MacWilliams
Louis Robert Niendorf
Zack Gregory Rogers
Matthew Nicholas Salbego
Olivia Rose Seeley
Jonas Robert Wagner
Isaac James Whiting

Members received by Reaffirmation of Faith:

Lynn Dubinski
Vanessa Frank
Kristin Kluz

Members received by Letter of Transfer:

Dellora Vogt

Members lost by Death:

Nancy Lloyd
Mary McCain
Jackson Medley
Gordon Montgomery
Rita Pennau
Anita Simm
Margaret Watson
Thomas Williams

TREASURER'S REPORT

No report available at time of printing

Jeff Puhlmann-Becker

Treasurer

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
BALANCE SHEET STATEMENT**

Fiscal Year 2013, Period 12 (12/01/2013 to 12/31/2013)

ASSETS

Total Cash & Money Markets	98,432.12
Current Receivables	-
Prepaid Insurance & Expenses	-
Mutual Funds	449,721.98
OACF General Fund	547,512.89
OACF Endowment Fund	31,538.69
OACF Marquart Maintenance Fund	8,102.08
OACF Manser Memorial Fund	78,256.19
OACF Triss Fund	90,802.82
CD Old Natl Bank-Drebus/Redfd	<u>1,500.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>1,305,866.77</u>

LIABILITIES/CAPITAL FUNDS

Current Liabilities	154,888.29
Church Apparel Fund	(1,950.05)
Maintenance Reserve Fund	23,343.56
Memorials	15,233.21
New Century Fund	164,935.66
Undesignated Reserve Fund	280,173.99
OACF General Fund	547,512.89
OACF General Fund Interest Income	-
OACF Endowment Fund	30,057.67
OACF Endowment Interest Income	1,481.02
OACF Triss Fund	125,864.17
OACF Triss Fund Interest Income	(35,061.35)
OACF Manser Memorial Fund	74,787.02
OACF Manser Memorial Interest Income	3,469.17
OACF Marquart Maint. Fund	8,102.08
OACF Marquart Maint. Interest Income	-
Centennial Celebration Fund	-
Kitchen Fund	33,516.00
Cinotte Fund	-
Operating Fund	(76,450.72)
Current Surplus (Deficit)	<u>(43,813.84)</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES/CAPITAL FUNDS	<u>1,305,866.77</u>

REPORT OF THE WORSHIP MINISTRY GROUP(2013)

2013 was a very uneventful year for the Worship Ministry Group which is mostly positive. Things are going well, and Ralph & Carol felt it was not necessary to have a meeting every month.

One thing that we need to address in 2014 is the search for new members. Several current members have chosen not to be part of this committee because of personal conflicts including health issues. We will look at what the goals are and what the pastors may want to change, alter, or add.

We have had very good attendance the past year from 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 at 6pm.

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 2013

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.

We have many requests to hold concerts and recital performances in our sanctuary from community musicians. We have wonderful instruments and space to provide these opportunities. We appreciate the support from the congregation to help bring wonderful music to Oshkosh and the surrounding communities.

We are pleased to have such talented musicians in Joanne Peterson, Christina Conn and Kelsey Tarbet who is filling in during Christina's pregnancy leave. We want to 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 also grateful that our musicians have increased in number with the birth of Edward Lowell Conn. (We hope he is a tenor.) We thank Patrick Meyer for his efforts with the bell and chimes choir. 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 continues to encompass 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. The Nurture Ministries Coordinator is responsible for matching the persons serving in these ministry areas with the individual needing care.

Stephen Ministry continues to be led by Ginnie Sherer, Sue Coghill, Dick Oelschlager and Cynthia Thorpe-Kavanaugh. 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. In Fall 2013, the leaders made a concerted effort to recruit others to become trained Stephen Ministers. In January, 2014, they began training two individuals for commissioning as Stephen Ministers. The training for Stephen Ministry is about 30 hours.

During 2013, there were 6 ministers that provided care to 7 individuals. One of these Stephen Ministers left the group late in 2013 and as a result, the match with this Stephen Minister can't be close. Matches in Stephen Minister generally come to a close by mutual agreement. We find that we are serving individuals on in long term relationships with Stephen Ministers. 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. 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 2013, 6 individuals were recipients of this book series.

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 2013, altar flowers were delivered to people about 60% of the time. About 12 individuals receive flowers on a rotating basis as they are unable to join us for worship services. This means that these individuals receive flowers about 2-3 times per year.

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 the 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 over 30 volunteers that can be called by the coordinators to prepare meals for home delivery.

Prayer Shawl and Pillow Ministry

Prayer 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.

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 prayer circle access from their home computers. There is also a phone chain for members of the prayer circle that do not have access to the Internet. Currently 20 people participate in raising other's concerns in prayer via the prayer circle. Those who are made aware of prayer requests by phone so that people who do not have Internet access can also participate in the Prayer Circle.

Ginnie Sherer, Nurture Ministries Coordinator

2013 REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENCE MINISTRY GROUP

Members: Maria Talin, facilitator, Ann Marshall, Mary Wiedenmeier, Anne Ruby, Len Herricks, John Nichols, Vicki Drabrant, Mary Bauknecht, Cheryl Pagel and staff liaison, Ralph DiBiasio-Snyder

Benevolence: an inclination to do good; kindness; a kindly, charitable act or gift

That is how Webster's defines benevolence. The Benevolence Ministry Group of First Congregational Church determines which local groups would benefit from giving by our congregation. 12% of pledged income was allocated to benevolence. In 2013 that figure was \$34,200. Of that amount \$23,395 went to the UCC to support our conference and Our Church's Wider Mission which supports national and international missions and disaster relief projects. \$8,805 was designated for local support. We also had several "special offerings" and donations to the Partner Fund.

Special Offerings:

Easter Offering of \$1,083 to One Great Hour of Sharing

Thanksgiving Offering of \$1,212 to Oshkosh Area Community Pantry

Christmas Offering of \$900 to the Partner Fund for Habitat for Humanity and Day by Day Warming Shelter to be given in 2014

Partner Fund:

The Partner Fund was funded by \$8,000 from church funds in 2013. In the future the Partner Fund would have to be supported by individual donations.

Oshkosh Area Community Pantry

Day By Day Warming Shelter

Samaritan Counseling Center

Tri-County Dental Clinic

Local financial support given to:

Red Cross Bridges Program - \$2,000

Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services - \$1,000

Dolly Parton Imagination Library - \$700 (20 children)

Oshkosh Community Back to School Fair - \$1,000

Habitat for Humanity of Oshkosh (Interfaith Build 2014) - \$3,000

Minister's Discretionary Fund - \$605

Shoreline Restoration Project at Menominee Park - \$500

Benevolence Ministry Group welcomes suggestions for local organizations needing financial assistance.

Maria Talin, Facilitator

REPORT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY GROUP 2012-2013.

Members of the group were John and Jone Oman, Paula Allen, Ron and Jody Harrell, Dorry Wilner, Amy Smith, Ted Balsler, Brian Tokopf, Anne and Terry Wesenberg and Ralph DiBiasio-Snyder. Amy and Brian served as chairpersons and Jody was the secretary. Amy Smith was the group's Ministry Council representative.

This Ministry Group emphasizes faith in action by raising awareness of and providing hands-on opportunities for bringing justice to our community and beyond. The Social Justice Ministry Group may work in partnership and coordination with other groups such as the Benevolence Ministry Group, the Adult Education Ministry Group, the Mission Team and groups beyond First Congregational Church as well. Under its umbrella is the Esther Core Team that was formed in 2011.

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. Ideas for speakers come from group members. Topics covered were:

January	Tum Cem Update	World Relief
February	Michelle Pascarella/ Emily Wolter	Living Healthy Community Clinic Growing Seeds of Change-
	Amber McCord, Kathryn Simons	Oshkosh Urban Community Garden
April	Ragina Labby	Sex Trafficking in Midwest/ Northeast Wisconsin
May	Mike Olig	11x15
August	Cathy Thompson	Religious Coalition for Religious Choice
October	Warden Judy Smith	11x15 and Prison programs
November	Nicole Lemke/Fair Housing	Fair Housing of Northeast Wisconsin
December	Gordon Hintz	Pay Day Loan

In the summer, the group planted and maintained a garden plot at the Community Gardens near the state hospital. Group members then took the produce they raised to the Oshkosh Community Pantry. There was also a garden at the urban gardens on Jefferson St. In all, SJ contributed more than 700 pounds of produce to the pantry.

Members helped out with the Christmas in July and Christmas Teen Gift projects, the October CROP Walk, Empty Bowls. They also led a small Holiday Gift Bag donation drive for the Day-by-Day Warming Shelter. Ann Wesenberg volunteered at World Relief and kept us aware of needs and activities. There were several educational fellowship hours; one environmental /nutrition/recycling in the spring and one on social justice awareness in the fall. Dorry, Brian, worked with 11x15 and the MLK event. Members helped with "Goodwill not Landfill" at UWO and Chester Marcol Walk, and the Back to School Fair follow up from information shared during speaker time. Homelessness of families in Oshkosh was explored.

Amy Smith and Brian Tokoph.

NEW MEMBER DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY GROUP – SUBMITTED MARCH 2014

New Member Development was very busy this past year taking on and accomplishing new projects and participating in continuing education opportunities to make First Congregational more hospitable and welcoming, and to help 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:

You may recall that last year we redid the Welcome Center in the Narthex which included the addition of the flat screen TV that features scrolling messages about things going on at FCC, meeting places for various events, etc. This year, soft, faith-centered music was added to the program in the background. It is more welcoming than just a "quiet" TV screen, and the response has been positive.

This year the Involvement Center board in the Narthex was also given a facelift, making it current, better organized and easier for folks to sign up to get involved in ways to serve the church.

In addition to exterior signage at the main entrance we also placed interior directional signage, making it easier for new members and visitors to find their way to activities, restrooms, etc. And our church's tag line was added above the office entrance sign.

We continued with making follow-up calls to visitors and tweaked our greeter scheduling.

We continued with our project of periodically 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.

Hospitality-related messages are now being placed in the weekly bulletins and Tidings monthly newsletter, sometimes in weekly Member Bridge.

We also continued to submit articles to the Oshkosh Northwestern's Community Newsroom highlighting the many different things going on at FCC. We continue to hear that many people find FCC through these no-cost articles, which help spread our message. Several new member and LAF (Learn About FCC) were held during the year and a number of new members joined as a result.

We reviewed our advertising opportunities and, as a result, dropped Yellow Page advertising – something FCC had done for many years. But with times changing, people just are not using Yellow Pages, or phone books in general anymore, and more people seem to be finding FCC through the Internet, word of mouth and newspaper. This change in advertising will save FCC several hundred to one thousand dollars per year.

We continued to promote FCC and its brand through t-shirt sales and as a push to help pay off the cost of printing the t-shirts, held a Pie sale on March 2. It was a huge success and we were able to raise \$693. Thanks to the many folks who contributed to making or supplying pies, who worked to help set up the event and promote it, and to all who bought either a piece of whole pie that day. And anyone who bought a whole pie got a free t-shirt, so this event was a huge success and fun was had by all.

We continued to recognize and emphasize the importance of creating a warm, welcoming and hospitable atmosphere for both our current members and guests. In that spirit, three of our members (Cynthia Thorpe, Becky Gratz and Pastor Carol) attended a daylong training session which emphasized hospitality and new member welcome. Following that meeting, the entire group convened, along with members of two other ministry groups, to start brainstorming about how we can put some of these ideas into action at FCC. As this is an ever-evolving process, meetings and new ideas will continue to occur. In the meantime, all members of FCC 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.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Hentz

ESTHER Core Team

No report available at time of printing

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS MINISTRY GROUP

2013 Annual Report

The year of small projects that cost big dollars. Our church has invested a lot in two categories this year and if you haven't noticed them, all the better.

First, much of our lighting has been updated with new bulbs and new wiring at the fixture. The bulbs in the Sanctuary had literally been falling to earth. That job required a very brave John Oman Jr. To do a lot of very high work. Through out the building many of our florescent lighting has been redone.

Other than lighting we have redone our parking lot. There are still miles to go with striping the lot and making the edging beautiful with green space.

Hopefully our next year finds us fine tuning more if church, and keeping this a wonderful special place of worship for generations to come.

Sincerely
Dave Ruby.

FINANCE MINISTRY GROUP REPORT

The Finance Ministry Group advises the Ministry Council and congregation on financial and budget matters.

As personnel changes, we are reminded of the importance of volunteers and staff. Cynthia has picked up financial duties and continues to do an excellent job. Jeff Puhlman-Becker puts a lot of effort into the routine duties as well as preparing reports for the Finance Group, Ministry Council, and the congregation. Robert Niendorf and Mary Beth Bossert left some big shoes for Jeff to fill. It is taking a small army to replace Marilyn Ward who spent many years of Sunday afternoons, counting and recording Sunday offerings.

As times and technology change, each of us has changed how our personal finances are handled. Likewise, the church needs to do the same. Things like credit cards, electronic banking, procedures and reports, and investments need to be reevaluated.

At this point in time, it does not seem wise for the Church to accept credit cards or electronic fund transfers since banks would charge the Church processing fees. For most people, their bank will make periodic payments to the Church for no cost. Jeff, Cynthia, and finance continually look for ways to provide checks and balances for handling money, while simplifying and clarifying procedures and reports. The group is looking at reinvesting some of the Church's money in new ways that increase rates of returns, are as safe or safer than current investments, and are more socially responsible. Hopefully, recommendations on new investments will be made to the Ministry Council and the congregation this year.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Oman, Facilitator

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT – SUBMITTED JANUARY 2014

This past year's campaign was centered around a football theme and appropriately named "Rushing to Action...Pass It Forward." Church members and friends were divided into teams and each member of the team passed the pledge kit and resource materials on to the next person on their team until every person had been made contact with and the team leaders would see that they got into the "end zone" by being returned to the church office.

The "rushing to action" part was based on the immediate need to gather pledges from people so the church could develop a budget for the new year. The "pass it forward" part of the theme really had two meanings: one, where team members passed the materials on to the next team member, and; two, where not only were we all passing the material forward, but the pledges were important so we could continue passing forward the gift of building maintenance and all the services, and benefits the church has to offer to those who worship at FCC.

We set an ambitious goal of trying to reach \$315,000 so that we would have an adequate amount of money in which to operate and do the various work FCC sets out to do, without necessarily having to dig into or utilize other funds. The campaign kicked off on Oct. 27 and, appropriately enough, ended on Gratitude Sunday, Nov. 24, though there were still some people to reach and others who made pledges after that date.

Here are the numbers we reported in January:

Pledges received (as of Jan. 7, 2014) from 141 households) - \$239,997 (we were still trying to get a reply from 10-13 households – which, based on what they had previously pledged would put us at \$253,577). Additionally, 25 households said that, while they could not make a pledge at that time, they would contribute as they were able. Included in the \$239,997 pledged, there were **6 first-time pledges from people new to the church**, for \$4,680; there were **17 families who resumed pledging** (had not pledged in 2013, but had done so in previous years), for a total of \$15,920.

That's \$20,600 pledged for 2014 from households who had NOT pledged in 2013.

In addition, **42 households INCREASED** their pledge for an additional \$12,313.

That's a total of *\$32,913 of new or increased pledges!*

UNFORTUNATELY . . . We lost \$14,200 due to deaths in the congregation (about twice as much as is typical in a given year)

. . . And **22 households decreased their pledges**, due to changes in jobs, family structures, school or college expense, aging population or retirement, etc., totaling an overall loss of \$15,107.

BOTTOM LINE

Gain \$32,913 . . . loss \$29,307 . . . which brings us just about to where we were in 2013!

While it was wonderful to see so many increases in pledges, the bottom line numbers show that we have to consistently work hard just to stay the same, or improve slightly . . . because we will always have financial losses due to death, relocations, or changes in church membership; and some people, as their lives change, will need to give less. To maintain the present ministries in personnel and in maintaining the facilities we have to keep replacing those losses! We are very grateful for the gifts we have at FCC, and we are equally grateful for everyone's pledges, or periodic offerings – no matter the amount – to maintain those gifts and keep "passing them forward!" Thank you one and all!!

Cheryl Hentz

PERSONNEL MINISTRY GROUP

No report available at time of printing.

REPORT ON THE USE OF THE BUILDING 2013

During 2013 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 Suzuki recital; Grine-Fisher Recitals; Peterson Recitals; McDowell Concert; Green Lake Festival of Music.; Wyatt Smith Organ Concert; Katie Riemer, Sharon Tenhundfeld & Joanne Person Concert; Mary Thornton Concert to benefit Day By Day Warming Shelter; Catherine Kautsy Piano Concert; Peterson/Ottman/Cable Concert; The Rutter Gloria Performance by 3 area High Schools; Meredith Vis Studio Recital; as well as 6 First Tuesday concerts and luncheons.

Civic activities:

PFLAG; ESTHER of Oshkosh; Day by Day Warming Shelter Board meetings; PEO; 1/2 Marathon Pasta dinner supporting Advocap and CP; Christine Ann Center Christmas Gift Program; Senior Center Spanish Classes; Habitat for Humanity; Sudanese Prayer and potluck.; Red Cross Blood Drive; Debt Management information sessions; Ladies Benevolence Society 150th Speaker and Lunch; Oshkosh4Education; Empty Bowls Prep.

Special Interest Activities:

Tai Chi Classes, Girl Scouts, GSA Pride Prom, Soccer Club Pancake Breakfast, Tibetan Monk Presentation.,

Other Religious activities:

Emmaus Ecumenical Catholic Community, the ZEN Buddha Group.

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

Cynthia Hunt

Office Administrator

ADULT EDUCATION MINISTRY GROUP – SUBMITTED MARCH 2014

Members: Bethany Jorenby, Cheryl Hentz, David Jones, Nick Schneider, Paula Veard, and Jim Paulson.

Co-Facilitators: Bethany Jorenby and Cheryl Hentz

Staff Liaison: Sandie Miller-Schreiter

This year, instead of printing program guides with several months of Lifelong Learning sessions listed in them, we opted for printing one month of information at a time. In addition to listing it in the Tidings, bulletins, Member Bridge, etc., Sandie Miller-Schreiter printed a larger version and placed it on an easel in the Narthex by one of the entrances, making it available and easier for folks to see.

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 our second or third full year of doing this, although due to a number of different circumstances, not all got taped. A regular attendee of the Sunday morning sessions, Steve Barney, was kind enough to audiotape many of them and they were then placed on the web also. Thank you, Steve. We also want to thank Jon Gibson for setting up all the necessary equipment each Sunday and Joe Wiedenmeier for all his assistance in getting these sessions uploaded to the Internet. This added audio/video service would not be possible without these individuals and their assistance.

For the fourth year in a row, we continued to offer a weeknight opportunity for ongoing learning and spirituality, initially led by Bethany Jorenby. But mid-year Bethany relocated out of Oshkosh and this discussion group, as well as the Adult Ed Ministry Group as a whole, was taken over by Cheryl Hentz as the sole facilitator. However, members of the Tuesday Night Spirituality Discussion Group have all stepped up to lead a weekly discussion and offer topic ideas for ongoing spiritual learning. The group is generally attended by 5-10 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.

We always welcome suggestions for possible topics for upcoming sessions – whether for Sunday morning Lifelong Learning, Tuesday Night Spirituality, or some other special presentation. This year we got a lot of good ideas from Pastor Carol (thank you!) and various members of the congregation (thank you, also). If you have any ideas, please contact facilitator, Cheryl Hentz, or our staff liaison, Sandie Miller-Schreiter. And, as always, we encourage you to attend on a Sunday morning or Tuesday evening.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Hentz

Adult Education Ministry Group Facilitator

REPORT OF THE YOUTH MINISTRY GROUP 2013

We had a small ministry group this year but were energized and care about our youth.

Last year events that focused on art were the youth events that were well attended. Also the youth at the Hanging of the greens this year loved the origami event. So creativity and art were the focus of this year's youth events for middle and High School youth. We had a Christmas craft night to make gifts for others, a fused glass pendant event, a Mosaic event and an origami event, and a craft night to just create.

We also met once a month with our 3rd through 5th grade youth. We combined several of their events with the Middle and High School youth. We also did a fondue event, swimming event, made stepping stones, and learned about the Humane Society and made cat toys.

We continue to explore what the group can offer to help nurture the spirituality and faith of our youth.

With regards,

The Youth Ministry Group.

REPORT OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL MINISTRY GROUP

Members: Lorie Hadel, McKenna Hadel, Jen Boos, Val Williams, and Corinne Saidla.

The Church School Ministry Group began preparations for the 2013-2014 church school year by recruiting teachers. Group members made personal phone calls to potential teachers and shepherds. Another option for children during the sermon time is a crafts table that is in the sanctuary by the piano. We didn't offer the "Kid Vid" series during the summer because we had difficulty finding enough people for child care. We did recruit for childcare volunteers.

We didn't offer Vacation Bible School this year because we haven't had many families interested in the program.

The "Ready to Worship" program is used to get the children who do not stay during the sermon portion of the service more ready to stay in the church service. It is a good program that uses wooden figures and pieces of felt to assist in the understanding of the story/lesson that is being discussed that day.

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. We are using the "Spark" series for Preschool and Kindergarten/first grade classes.

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.

Each of the classes received an adopted grandparent to send a card, picture, etc to throughout the year. 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.

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 - 2013

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. If possible, 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.

The Memorial Committee received no requests for funds during 2013. Memorial donations totaled \$2875 for the year. As has been the trend in the last two or three years, several families requested that money donated in memory of their loved one go to a particular project. In 2013 an additional \$9465 in memorial gifts went directly to the FCC Kitchen Fund.

At the end of 2013 over \$15,000 was in the Memorial Fund account. 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 2013
APRIL 2013-2014

During the past year Women's Fellowship has used some of their funds to send a little physical reminder of our concern to the members of our church. We have done that by sending out cards and bouquets to members staying in Oshkosh hospitals. This past year twenty-eight sympathy cards, six thinking of you, seventeen get well, three new baby, three special occasion, and thirteen thank you cards were sent. In addition, flowers were sent twelve times to the hospital. We also give altar flowers twice a year in honor of Adaline Choate who made our funds possible.

Nancy Lloyd, a very dear member of our board died this year. The board with assistance from PEO and other church members provided her reception after her funeral. Her memorial money was donated to the matching kitchen fund. Women's Fellowship also made a donation in her memory. We also did the reception for Mary McCain and provided assistance for Jackson Medley's funeral. Both had their memorial money donated to the matching kitchen fund. Since Mary McCain was a longtime member of the board a donation from Women's Fellowship was made to the matching kitchen fund.

A firm believer in promoting women finding time for discovering themselves, Women's Fellowship made a donation to the Women's Retreat scholarship fund. This retreat allows the women of the church an opportunity to take time for themselves, which shouldn't be hampered by financial limitations. This amount can be used as Carol sees fit.

The group hosted fellowship hour after church. This is a great time to chat with others from the church.

Women's Fellowship is concerned with the community as well as the church. During the past year we gave to the Community Back to School Fair. In addition, money was given to Christina Conn to give to the Oshkosh Middle School Choral Program. It will be used for all of the middle schools in their joint program.

Our newest member is Becky Gratz. Becky is a longtime member of First Congregational Church and we welcome her to our team.

Of course our main project has been the kitchen. Over the past year we have finished the Pan Sale, had a Kraut Kuchen Sale, and most recently a Bread and Soup sale. Thanks to the congregation all were great successes. We are very pleased to announce with fund raisers, donations, and memorials we have made the MATCHING \$50,000.00. However, we still need to raise more to reach our final goal of \$200,000.00. It is possible, and with your help WE WILL DO IT !

Karen Zentner LaBorde

Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ Highlights since August 15, 2013



This report reflects highlights from the beginning of my time among you, August 15, 2013.

Life in the Wisconsin Conference in 2013 has been eventful. While the Conference sustains the many programs itemized in previous reports to you at this time of the year, here are some of the most memorable happenings in my tenure thus far:

James Jang, a minister from the United Reformed Church of Great Britain, visited the Conference in October to continue the annual exchange of visitors between the Wisconsin Conference and the URC.

The Rev. Art Wille retired in October as the Associate Conference Minister for Support of Pastors and Care of Churches. The Rev. Rebecca Johnston and the Rev. Don Baumann have assumed temporary leadership for wider church functions in the two Northern Associations of the Conference.

UCCI, Inc., providing leadership in Outdoor Ministries in behalf of the Wisconsin Conference, has begun the preliminary work to begin a Capital Funds Campaign to provide sustaining income and new and upgraded facilities at Moon Beach and Pilgrim Center.

The delegates to the Conference Meeting in June, 2013 set the tone for the study in local congregations of the Wisconsin Conference of the potential of the Wisconsin Conference becoming an Open and Affirming Conference of the United Church of Christ.

There are three distinct Search Committees working to fill leadership positions on the Conference Staff: Conference Minister; Interim Conference Minister for Support of Pastors and Care of Churches (North); and the Director/Minister of the Lay Academy.

Continuing a practice of the past years, the Conference Board of Directors approved grants to recent seminary graduates now serving in local congregations of the Conference to lighten the load of heavy financial debt incurred from educational loans.

Plans are well underway for a joyous celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Lay Academy at the 2014 Conference Meeting.

The Honduran Mission Partnership is making a last trip to Honduras as I write this report. This trip will result in the completion of two houses there. The project in Honduras will end due to the uncertain and violent political atmosphere in that country. Great thanks to all of the dedicated people who has made this mission vital over the years.

Youth ministry programs in the Conference continue to thrive, with numbers being up and new and exciting programming evolving.

Communities of Practice and the Church Renewal Program continue to make a meaningful impact on the vitality of pastoral ministry and local congregations seeking fresh insight and renewal.

Conference Staff continues to practice the core ministries of consulting on Search and Call with local congregations in need of pastoral leadership, working with Church and Ministry Committees to authorize and monitor vocational ministry in behalf of the entire United Church of Christ, and to be present in times of congregational stress and conflict.

Thank you for all of the many ways in which you support and enrich the life of the Wisconsin Conference.

We pray God's continued blessing and guidance on the work of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, its congregations, and related institutions. This ministry is a gift from God!

With Great Hope,
Michael E. Obenauer, Interim Conference Minister

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CO-PASTORS, MARCH 2014

We begin this Annual Report — once again — with great thanks for the people of First Congregational Church: for their love and energy, their openness and courage, their faith expressed in service to their world. And we say — yet again — that we are profoundly grateful for the great privilege we have been given to serve as pastors to this fine group of people. As you read the reports contained here, you get a flavor of the faithfulness and vitality of this faith community.

We were especially grateful this past year when, on February 1st, we marked the 25th anniversary of ministry in this place. The celebration in May (a complete surprise, carried off with great skill by your church leaders!) was overwhelming, and received with great thankfulness. The kind words by Art Wille, the marvelous dinner that followed, the gifts from the congregation — the stunning glass vase, the extra week of vacation for renewal, the very generous monetary gift — and especially the many expressions of your love in words spoken and written — all these we will remember the rest of our lives. Thank you.

We also want to thank the wonderful staff people with whom we work. Their remarkable gifts together with their encouragement and support make serving this congregation even more fulfilling. Thank you! This church and we, personally are so blessed by each one of you!

We did have some staff changes this year. Tina Haffeman who has served as the Lay Ministries Coordinator left that position to better the wider community especially through the Day by Day Warming Shelter and to have more time with her family. Her enthusiasm for and commitment to social justice continues to inspire us. We are grateful that Ginnie Sherer was willing to add extra hours to her job to pick up much of Tina's work, at least temporarily.

And after three years as our Handbell Choir Director, Patrick Meyer also resigned this year. We are grateful for his dedication to ringing, and for the dedicated attention he gave to our bell program.

Ralph completed five years of service on the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry in November. He had chaired the Personnel Committee through that time. Taking his place on that board is Ron Harrell, continue FCC's tradition of leadership with the food pantry that dates back 25+ years.

Carol participated in a committee planning the festivities of thanks to Art Wille who in November retired as an Associate Conference Minister (Wisconsin Conference, UCC). She and Ralph were honored to bring the sermon at that worship service at First Congregational UCC, Appleton, and Carol was active in planning the reception that followed. Congratulations to Art on his many years of faithful service to the UCC churches of Wisconsin. We're grateful that he and Cathy will continue to be part of this congregation.

Ralph continued to serve on the Conference Board of Directors, chairing the Search Committee that brought the Rev. Michael Obenauer to be our Interim Conference Minister. He began his ministry in August.

FCC forwarded a Resolution to the Conference to honor Jeff Puhlmann-Becker and his family for their 25 years of service at Pilgrim Conference Center. Ralph read the Resolution Saturday evening at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on Green Lake, and it was met with a resounding, standing ovation for the Puhlmann-Beckers. FCC is so proud to claim them as "our own," and again thank them for their service to the people of the Conference.

We had an especially large Confirmation Class this year, having combined 9th and 10th grade just for this year. It was (as it always is!) a great experience, and we were happy to welcome such a fine group into membership in May.

The year concluded once again with two lovely and moving candlelight Christmas Eve services, with over 500 people in attendance.

Lastly we thank all the lay leaders of the congregation, particularly the officers Pat Blades (Moderator), Cathy Wille (Moderator-elect), Jeff Puhlmann-Becker (Treasurer), and Sue Coghill (Clerk). They with the chairs of the various Ministry Groups not only “keep things running,” but more importantly set the tone of everything we do — an atmosphere of cooperation and hope, faith and compassion.

Ralph and Carol DiBiasio-Snyder, Co-pastors

Resolution for the Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ

To recognize, honor, and thank

JEFF PUHLMANN-BECKER

For his twenty-six year ministry as the Managing Director of Pilgrim Center

WHEREAS Jesus said, “the greatest among you will be your servant,” (Matthew 23:11), and;

WHEREAS Jesus also said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another; by this everyone will know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another,” (John 13:34, 35) and;

WHEREAS St. Paul too urged us to “love one another with mutual affection; outdoing one another in showing honor,” (Romans 12:10), and;

WHEREAS St. Paul taught us that “we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another,” (Romans 12:5), and;

WHEREAS God has given each of us gifts to use for the common good – gifts of leadership and compassion, generosity, ministry and teaching, (Romans 12:6-8), and;

WHEREAS Jeff Puhlmann-Becker shared his many gifts with us for twenty-six years, including gifts of leadership and compassion, generosity, ministry, and teaching, and;

WHEREAS as the Managing Director of Pilgrim Center Jeff, with great love for his profession and for the people he served, tirelessly used his gifts of joyful leadership, deep compassion, generosity of spirit, creative ministry, teaching by word and example countless children, youth, and adults, the way of Christ, and;

WHEREAS, before Jeff began his ministry the Wisconsin Conference had been forced to consider closing one of our camping facilities, with Jeff's consistent and hopeful presence at Pilgrim Center the Conference and United Church Camps, Inc. transformed the camping program to be the thriving, growing, and creative ministry that it is today, a ministry that is a great source of pride for us as a Conference, and;

WHEREAS during Jeff's tenure significant expansion and renovation of the facilities took place, particularly the building of Oak Mound Lodge, Ley Chapel, the Facilities Manager's home, the addition to Norenberg Lodge, and the replacing of numerous cabins and shower/restroom buildings -- all under Jeff's careful and thoughtful planning, and;

WHEREAS Jeff led in bringing technological advances to the office, and to the camp in general, allowing the camp's work to be efficient, and the programs grow, and;

WHEREAS Jeff was a faithful and enthusiastic ambassador for the camping programs, visiting churches across the state, speaking on behalf of the programs of the Conference, and;

WHEREAS Jeff shared his gifts, experience, and leadership with the national church through the Outdoor Ministries Association of the United Church of Christ, serving as its President, as well as the National Council of Churches Committee on Outdoor Ministry, and, here in Wisconsin, with United Church Camps, Incorporated, and;

WHEREAS Jeff's partner, Jill, and the whole Puhlmann-Becker family – Matthew and Michael and Martha – shared wholeheartedly in the ministry of Pilgrim Center, not only supporting Jeff in his work, but serving campers and staff in uncountable ways, from directing camps, planning curriculum and creating programs, overseeing the health center, the waterfront, and the camp kitchen, to cleaning rooms, watering gardens -- helping in any way they could to enrich the camp experience, and;

WHEREAS Jeff and his family through all these years have also been faithful members and leaders in their home church, First Congregational UCC, Oshkosh, who enthusiastically brings this Resolution before the wider church, the Wisconsin Conference,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, recognizes Jeff's long ministry at Pilgrim Center as the creative, caring, energetic, and vital ministry to the Conference that it was, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Conference honors the service that Jeff and his family joyfully and tirelessly and lovingly gave to the thousands of children, youth, and adults who came to Pilgrim Center throughout their time there, examples of the servanthood to which Jesus calls us, and;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the people of the Wisconsin Conference hereby extend their deepest gratitude to Jeff and Jill, Matthew, Michael, and Martha for all that they did to make Pilgrim Center a place of warmth and welcome, of community and peace – a “home away from home” where the Spirit of the Christ was embodied, reflected in their smiles and in their work done on behalf of the Conference, because of their love for God and for us all. *Thank you.*

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING MINISTRIES COORDINATOR
(TLMC) 2013.

The word that comes to mind this year is Blessings. We are truly blessed. We are blessed to have our children and youth whose wisdom and insight is an inspiration. We are blessed to have infants who add to our worship of God by their sweet cooing sounds. We are blessed by adults that are interested in growing and nurturing their faith and are willing to talk with others. We are blessed with adults eager to teach and learn with our children and youth. We are blessed by you!

A new thing we offered this year is the OWL's program to our 8th through 10th graders. Our Whole Lives (OWL's) is a sexual education/healthy relationship curriculum developed by the Unitarian/Universalist and the United Church of Christ. In August we hosted a training for facilitators in Partnership with the UU Fellowship in Appleton and had 25 people attend from Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan. Stacey Otto, Doug Pire, Shelly Maxwell, Joe Weidenmeier, Paula Seeley and Sandie Miller-Schreiter were trained as facilitators. In September we held our first class and had 11 youth attend. Thank you to the facilitators for your dedication to our youth.

This year our youth mission trip was to Back Bay mission in Biloxi, Mississippi. Thirteen youth: Emilie Braun, Max Bossert, Noah Bossert, Zoe Bossert, Cameron Frank, Kevin Frank, Jon Gibson, Ian Henscheid, Ben Laufer, Kiera Robe, Zack Rogers, Matt Salbego, Olivia Seeley and five adults: Mary Beth Bossert, Sandie Miller-Schreiter, Jeff Rogers, Nick Salbego and Paula Seeley served in June of 2013. We worked on a home Back Bay purchase and was refurbishing to sell to a low income family. We also had the opportunity to worship in the community and do a half 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!

This is the second full year of the activity table in the sanctuary. After the Children's time one of the many options children and youth have is to sit at the activity table. They can hear everything that is going on in worship but still have some kind of activity they can be working on.

We held an intergenerational gratitude event this year on November 23 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 six years now. Thank you to Theresa and the 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 has helped to 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 INTERIM LAY MINISTRIES COORDINATOR 2013

I am currently filling the role of Lay Ministries Coordinator on an interim basis following the resignation of Tina Haffeman in Fall 2013. In my capacity as Interim Lay Ministries Coordinator, my primary focus has been to work with Ministry Groups and assist with the nomination process which began in February, 2014.

In an effort to invite the entire congregation into the nominations process, the Nominations Committee hosted the FCC Draft following the Worship Service on 2/9/14. This included a potluck lunch. Each ministry group provide information about their work and the need for new people to join in each ministry group's work. This event was tremendously successful with about 24 people electing to join Ministry Groups following the Annual Meeting. It was wonderful to see youth also interested in serving on some of our Ministry Groups.

As part of the nomination process, Cathy Wille, Moderator Elect, and I talked with the Ministry Council about the fact that a number of people have been serving on Ministry Groups for long periods of time. It was the consensus of the Ministry Council that we should focus on bringing new people into ministry groups each year and allow people to continue to serve in areas of the church where they have a passion for the work.

I have also been involved in New Member Meetings when they have occurred. To help in gathering information that is useful in connecting people to areas where they have interests, I have updated the Interest Sheets that we ask new members to fill out when they join the church.

We are fortunate at FCC to have so many people who are willing to come forward to serve others in our faith community and in our wider world. We have over 80 people who serve on committees and/or give of their time to usher, provide child care, teach church school, serve communion, read scripture during worship services or sing in the choir. Thus, it is no surprise that we are thought of as a vibrant church that reflects the example of Jesus in our community.

Ginnie Sherer

REPORT OF THE CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR AND ORGANIST - 2013

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. Dellora Vogt joined the choir. Christin Buchholz, a student at UW0, joined for the year before returning to her home in Madison. Terry Thomas and Bridget Thorpe-Kavanaugh took a leave of absence, the latter owing to her second baby. The Chancel Choir sings regularly from September through May.

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 student, Ellie Thomas, and Pam Lane, Bridget Duffy, and John Penkoske also provided service as organists and pianists for summer worship.

At other times during the year, additional music was provided by Tanya Paulson, Kiera Robe; Laural Sanders, Jonas Wagner, Doug Pire, 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.

As part of the Easter celebration, 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. As special Christmas music, the Chancel Choir performed a set consisting of Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Magnificat*, Alice Parker's *Magnificat*, ending with Vaughan Williams *Nunc Dimittis*, with Christina Conn and Bridget Duffy singing the solos.

The first significant upkeep on the pipe organ in the past 30 years 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

REPORT OF THE ANGEL CHOIR DIRECTOR 2013

Angel Choir members from 2013-2014 are Elizabeth Frohn-Hengst, Kassie Herring, Alice Rioux, Ethan Moench, Talan Boos, Jedidiah Larsen, Claire Veard, Julia Bock, McKenna Hadel (and Talan's friend--Maddi).

We had a fantastic year singing, growing, and playing together. For a small group, they really sing well and with heart. Some memorable solos and duets were sung this year by Elizabeth, McKenna, Alice, and Claire. Pumpkin and Christmas Caroling events were both a success.

We had enough singers to have one good sized caroling group that went to two nursing homes to spread some holiday cheer.

We look forward to those events every year! Mrs. Conn had a big year (literally!) as she had her first baby! While on maternity leave in the spring, Kelsey Tarbert filled in for her and worked with the Angel Choir on their Palm Sunday and Mother's Day songs.

Christina Conn
Angel Choir Director

LITURGICAL MOVEMENT CHOIRS

February 17, 2013 The Faith in Motion Choir put the Alleluia big white letters to bed until Easter. There were 4 boys and 4 girls.

March 24, 2013 The Dancing Spirit lead the palm parade, followed by the whole congregation.

April 21, 2013 Both the Dancing Spirit and the Faith in Motion choirs danced for Earth Day with big Earth beach balls. We had 15 dancers. What a joy

May 5, 2013 Confirmation Sunday = 11 Dancing Spirit dancers performed "God of the Bible"

November 17, 2013 Both choirs performed a jazz dance to Philip Philips' Home. We have only 3 young girls, 2 eighth grade boys, and 8 older girls. Don't know why we lost so many young dancers but it was great having the 2 older boys

So for December 22, 2013 for the Christmas pageant, to keep the boys and 3 younger girls involved, the 5 played instruments for "The Carol of the Bells" which was performed by the 8 older girls of the Dancing Spirit Choir. The boys played triangles and the 3 girls played hand cymbals. It was quite lovely.

I will have to do some recruiting in the Fall to get a few more young dancers.

Respectfully submitted by,

Missy Allen