



No matter who you are,  
or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here ...

# Annual Report 2021

**First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Waterloo, Iowa**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Page</b>	
2	Annual Meeting Agenda
25	Bazaar
22-23	Board of Creative Ministries
21	Board of Physical Resources
19-20	Board of Social Causes and Justice
18	Board of Spiritual Growth and Programs
17	Board of Spiritual Life and Care
3	Clerk
15	Director of Music
13-14	Director of Youth
24-25	Endowment
32-34	Financial Statement 2021
20	Grin and Grow Report
18	Memorial
27	Men's Breakfast
4-6	Minutes of Annual Meeting -- January 24, 2021
29-31	Nominations
23	Organ Capital Campaign
7-12	Pastor
27	Reopening Committee Report
26	Treasurer's Report
16	Trustees
28	Words of Appreciation by Moderator Anne Hoekstra

# ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA JANUARY 23, 2021

Call to Order	Anne Hoekstra, Moderator
Opening Prayer	Bret Myers, Pastor
Announcements and Appointment of Parliamentarian	
Acceptance of 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes	
1. Additions and Corrections	
2. Vote to Accept	
Acceptance of 2021 Annual Report	
1. Comments or Questions	
2. Treasurer's Report	Dave Allbaugh, Treasurer
3. Vote to Accept	
The State of the Church	Anne Hoekstra, Moderator
1. The State of Church	
2. In Memoriam	
3. Prayer	
Adoption of Budget for 2022	Dave Allbaugh, Treasurer
1. Comments and Discussion	
2. Vote to Accept	
Election of Officers and Board Members	Diane Highnam, Nominating
1. Nominating Committee Report	
2. Nominations from the floor	
3. Election	
Old Business	
Reopening Status	Tim Ahrens, Reopening Comm
New Business	
Search And Call	Diane Highnam, S & C Comm
Words of Appreciation	Anne Hoekstra, Moderator
Closing Prayer	Bret Myers, Pastor
Adjournment	

## REPORT OF THE CHURCH CLERK

MEMBERSHIP -- January 1, 2021 .....	307
Received during 2021	
Received by Confirmation .....	0
Received by Reaffirmation .....	0
TOTAL RECEIVED .....	0
Diminution during 2020	
By death .....	13
By Request .....	5
By Transfer .....	1
Declared Inactive .....	60
TOTAL DIMINUTION .....	79
MEMBERSHIP CHANGE DURING 2020 .....	-79
MEMBERSHIP -- JANUARY 1, 2021.....	228

### IN MEMORIAM

2020 (Not Listed Last Year)

Jen Johnson (June 12, 2020)

David Walters (December 14, 2020)

2021

Danny Steiber (March 2, 2021)

Richard "Dick" Grimm (August 31, 2021)

Sally Walker (March 9, 2021)

Kris Johnston (October 1, 2021)

Marian Greene (March 12, 2021)

Frieda Biesanz (October 7, 2021)

Steve Thorpe (April 3, 2021)

Maxine Clausman (October 31, 2021)

Donna Sheridan (May 1, 2021)

Tyler Greene (November 10, 2021)

Pearl Goos (December 14, 2021)

The 164<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church UCC was called to order by Moderator Paul Greene at 12:34 PM, Sunday January 24, 2021, using ZOOM technology due to the current COVID-19 virus conditions. David Zellhoefer was appointed Parliamentarian. A quorum was declared. Copies of the 2020 Annual Report and the 2021 Proposed Budget were available electronically, as well as a limited number in print form available at the church office.

The Rev. Bret Myers offered an opening prayer.

Moderator Greene asked for any additions or corrections to the minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting. None were offered.

**Motion:** To accept the minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting as presented. **D. Highnam / C. Jensen / Carried**

Moderator Greene presented the 2020 Annual Report, asking for any comments or questions. There were none.

**Motion:** To approve the 2020 Annual Report as presented. **J. Mardis / T. Ahrens / Carried**

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer David Allbaugh presented the Treasurer's report, beginning by stating the church finished the 2020 fiscal year in good condition. He then reviewed the report commenting on various line items. Current Pledges finished the year at 93.3% of budget, slightly under normal. He noted the 2019 additional donations received by special appeal to balance the budget in the amount of \$15,440. Total income finished at 92.5%. Reviewing the various expense lines in the remainder of the report, he noted most boards and committees underspent their budgets. Additionally, the senior pastor position was open for two months. These items combined with underspending in several areas due to the COVID-19 allowed the church to complete the year with total expenses at 91.0%, resulting in a positive balance of \$14,373. The ending cash position was \$70,496, nearly the same as the starting position. In closing, Dave expressed his concern for balancing future budgets due to the continued drop in pledge units.

**Motion:** To approve the Treasurer's Report for 2020. **D. Allbaugh / J. Mardis / Carried**

#### **Adoption of Budget for 2021**

Treasurer Allbaugh presented the proposed budget for 2021. He explained the use of four columns in the report. The budget was constructed with the understanding the church would remain physically closed for worship and usual church business for the first six months, due to the ongoing COVID-19 issue restricting large in-person gatherings. Both income and expenses are expected to be lower in this six month period. He shared that Memorial Pledges will remain the same, since there were no contributions made during the year. It was noted Non-Pledges include last year's carry over, plus another successful one time donation appeal to balance the 2021 budget. Staff salaries include a 2.5% increase for those in employment six months or more. He explained the OCWM line item and the research made to determine the amount

budgeted. While the amount will remain the same for the 2021 budget, the 2022 budget will follow the recommended 10% of income suggestion from the Iowa Conference. Discussion followed on what was to be considered “income” for that calculation. Given no action is necessary at this time, further discussion will occur as we approach the next budget year. Bottom line for this 2021 budget is in the black with a positive balance of \$798.00. Dave stressed the importance of maintaining a positive cash flow during the year to avoid the need to borrow monies for operating the church. Moderator Greene thanked Treasurer Allbaugh for his efforts, and Dave in turn thanked office manager Wolfe for her input as well.

**Motion:** To approve the proposed budget for 2021. **D. Allbaugh / D. Highnam / Carried**

### **State of the Church**

Rev. Bret Myers, our interim pastor of six months, reviewed his written report beginning with a few opening comments. He shared that it has been a joy to serve the church. An important concern for him has been that the members know they are still involved with a functioning church, even under the stress of the COVID-19 challenges. He has enjoyed participating in the smaller gatherings and using them to better acquaint with himself with individual members. He stressed he is always available to members for whatever the need, and that it is important for members to notify him of members in need. Suggestions are welcome on how to better reach out to people. He closed his comments by reviewing the 5 Developmental Interim Task presented in his written report.

Moderator Greene shared the list of In Memoriam members. A moment of silence was observed and Rev. Myers offered a prayer to finish.

### **Election of Officers and Board Members**

Diane Highnam thanked all those who have served over the past year. A quick review of the new nominees for 2021 was made. A request for any nominations from the floor was made. There were none. Particular note was made of Moderator Elect Anne Hoekstra to begin her 3 year term.

**Motion:** To accept the nominations for Officers and Board Members as presented in the Annual Report. **D. Highnam / J. Mardis / Carried**

### **New Business**

**Revisions to FCUCC Bylaws:** Moderator Greene presented a summary of the bylaw changes, offering explanations as needed. He noted that some suggested changes have gone through several revisions over the past several months. The changes have been made to reflect the status of the current church demographics and operation. There was a question concerning the selection of members to serve on the Endowment Trust Committee. Discussion followed with several members contributing to answer the concern of the Endowment Committee being approved by the Board of Trustees.

**Motion:** To accept the revised bylaws as presented. A two thirds affirmative vote is required for passage, per the current bylaws. **G. Casteel / C. Highnam / Carried with a unanimous vote**

### **Capital Campaign**

Moderator Greene reviewed and explained the need for the capital campaign to both maintain and enhance the 40 year old church pipe organ. A letter was sent to church members on January 5<sup>th</sup> detailing the need, cost and current private donations already pledged. Of the total cost of \$340,000, only a balance of about \$90,000 needs to be raised in the capital campaign. The need to cover sales tax of approximately \$2,800 was pointed out, and this amount will be added to the campaign goal. Some discussion on the project followed. Bob Brock was thanked for his many hours spent repairing the instrument over the last several years, saving the church substantial dollars, and his efforts to bring the need for a more complete repair and updated enhancements to the attention of the congregation.

**Motion:** To proceed with a capital campaign to repair and enhance the church organ with the steps listed below.

- 1) Approve the Reuter contract of \$338,857 plus Sales Tax for maintenance and enhancements to our pipe organ and to have work begin as soon as possible.
- 2) Approve a Capital Campaign in the amount of \$93,000 (\$90,000 plus Sale Tax) to begin immediately.
- 3) Accept the Endowment offer of loaning dollars to fund the project as needed while three-year pledges are being honored.
- 4) Accept the \$248,216 in anonymous gifts toward the organ maintenance and enhancements project.

**G. Lauterbach / L. Allbaugh / Carried**

### **Reopening the Church**

Moderator Greene commented on the status of reopening the church to full use, noting it is unlikely to happen in the near future as conditions now stand with the COVID-19 issue. Small groups have been meeting and forms are available to anyone wishing to have a small group gathering. Comments were made by Tim Ahrens, Reopening Committee chair, and Dr. Greg Hoekstra, medical advisor to the committee, concerning their regular meetings on the issue. The membership will be notified of any changes in the reopening status as they occur.

In closing the Annual Meeting, Moderator Elect Hoekstra thanked Paul Greene for his tireless efforts as moderator over the last three years. She listed numerous task Paul handled, noting he was the right person for the time.

Moderator Greene closed the meeting with his own words of appreciation for the support he has received while serving as our moderator.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Keith Jorgensen, Clerk

# 2021 DESIGNATED INTERIM PASTORAL REPORT

## A Year of Dealing with a Pandemic

2021 started and ended in a year of pandemic that changed the way we do church. This was a big adjustment with me, with other staff, and with the congregation at large. We all missed being able to do things that would ordinarily be normal for us, and we all grieved the loss of those things in this year, as in 2020.

To its credit, the reopening committee did a fine job of trying to keep the congregation safe while also trying to get us back to as normal as possible given the situation. My takeaway from this year of pandemic is that we all need to do our best to be thankful for what we have, give support for church workers (both staff and laypersons), and to be as little critical of actions taken for the benefit of the health and welfare of each person among us. When the going gets tougher, we need to care all the more for one another and pull together in the common spirit of Christ.

Worship services were being pre-recorded and sent to our Facebook and YouTube pages until we reopened the church in outdoor settings. In going back to in-person worship, we started outdoors on May 16<sup>th</sup>, and then went back inside our sanctuary on June 6<sup>th</sup>. These were welcomed reliefs for many members, though some expressed their concerns in returning to in person despite our measures to make things as safe as possible. We have done our best to be responsible given the circumstances, and it is the overall cooperation among our leadership on this that have been among the things I most appreciated about our church in 2021.

## Worship Services and Congregational Interactions

It was especially important given the pandemic to try to keep worship interesting and meaningful. We did many unique services and tried things that the congregation was not previously familiar with, as well as adjusting prior special services to meet the differing formats we used throughout the year. Special services throughout the year included: Epiphany, Rev. M.L. King, Jr. Sunday 1/17, Ash Wednesday, Amistad Sunday 3/7 (where we had movie night in watching the movie, Amistad, beforehand), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Earth Day, Music Sunday, Outdoor service at the Amphitheatre (which included passing out seedlings, and even a bike ride after worship 5/16), Pentecost, Youth/Senior Recognition Sunday, Outdoor services under our canopy at the entrance to the church starting 6/6, Mental Health Sunday, Rally Sunday 9/12, Songfest Sunday 9/19, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Blessing of the Animals 9/26, World Communion Sunday with breads and juices from around the world 10/3, Stewardship series in Oct/Nov, All Saints/Remembrance Sunday, Laity (Cliff Highnam) & Staff (Abbie Chronister) Sundays, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, and CarolFest (Evie Waack). All of these services helped bring diversity and enrichment to our congregation, especially in a time of pandemic, helping us to celebrate and appreciate the blessings of creativity that can be had even in non-normal time.

We tried to have after-church discussions for people to talk by zoom online during Lent, but these were not well-attended, and we didn't continue them after Lent.



Other events we did as a church were: the intergenerational outing at Hartman Reserve for maple syruping 3/7, Talent Show 3/20, Church Picnic after worship, Tree planting on the church property and free trees to members to plant at home, Kayaking after worship at Big Woods Lake 9/19, CROP Walk 9/26, Fall Festival (which included a chili cook-off, trunk or treat, biting an apple hung on a string with no hands!, hay rides, and guessing games of pumpkin's weight and candy corn in a jar) 10/31, Thanksgiving Concert online, and a Christmas Concert online.

We have given to all 5 for 5 Offerings in the UCC in 2021, which makes us a 5 for 5 congregation – something that, by the way, will look good to ministerial candidates on our church profile.

### **Spiritual Growth**

Spiritual growth is one of the areas I love about ministry, and one I especially accentuated since my arrival. I think taking a deeper look at scriptures, and providing other materials for people to read weekly is a good habit to have as Christians. Many of you thanked me throughout the year for the weekly Points to Ponder commentary and Nourishment for the Journey article that paralleled the theme of each Sunday that I wrote both for the bulletin and the Facebook page. It has been a commitment of mine to use the gift of writing people have told me I have to help deepen and broaden the faith of those congregants who enjoy reading about scriptures and religious themes to edify their spiritual journey. I have been concerned as a pastor of 3 ½ decades about the growing illiteracy in our country and our churches, and so am glad to provide this means of spiritual growth for those who are willing to invest the time to read the pieces. I have appreciated the questions, comments, and desire for more discussion by a number of you. The Pastor's Corner reflections and other pieces in Tidings have also been given to help broaden our spiritual understandings.

My prayer each week is that the sermons and liturgies found in worship will not only bolster each other in elucidating the theme for each Sunday, but that attenders will receive meaning and motivation from their content so as to live more deeply as Christians in their daily lives. I'm glad when I have routinely heard such comments that this is happening for many of you.

The Bible Study group has been a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our religious heritage as based in scripture, and to ponder not only the meaning of their thoughts back then, but also how the truths we can discern from the texts apply to our own culture and age. Because this is a weekly activity, I think I have seen more growth from those who attend than any other non-worship activity. It is a joy to learn together in this open-ended, yet guided, study of scripture.

### **Pastoral Interactions with the Congregation and Staff**

One of my joys is in speaking with you one on one or in small groups. This was done in a number of ways in 2021. Calls to members who were hospitalized, or ailing at home, were my first priority. If I heard you were sick, I tried getting a hold of you immediately.

Throughout the year, it was my pleasure and privilege to be able to connect with members of our congregation who were ill or having other issues they were dealing with. These one-on-one

times were a blessing to me, and am told they were by many of you as well. Some of you lost loved ones, had other ordeals you were facing, and were also at times overwhelmed by the pandemic. It was my honor to be with you in those times.

Later in the autumn, I was asked to contact the congregation at large, whether sick or not, and I started to do that at a vigorous pace. I was also asked to contact some specific people, in which I tried to reach everyone on the list. While I did not always receive a response back to my messages, I made sure every person noted was called and was left a message when possible. For those of you who I could reach, I relished our conversations and learning more about you. Some of those conversations were my favorite moments in being your pastor in 2021.

It was difficult to maintain safety to members in visiting in people's homes, but I tried to make myself available in settings where safety was less of a concern: e.g., larger rooms of the church, walks in parks, talks on porches/decks, and other suitable venues. I especially enjoyed the walks and other outdoor activities that some of you welcomed me to do with you. Pastoral walks, talks, and outdoor activities with members and couples in our congregation throughout the year were a source of blessing to me; and I hope too for you who did these with me.

Of course, we zoomed in a variety of ways. We continued our church's Wednesday evening fellowship group by zoom early into the year that was also a carry-over from the prior year. The Sunday morning book study stayed active, too, until the summer. I dearly loved those conversations. In September, we started the Tuesday afternoon Bible Study of Genesis, which continues on now into 2022. We are about halfway through our study. Of course, there were the board and committee meetings, and other small group organizational meetings that took place throughout the year. I also zoomed or talked by phone with some of you individually as well – whether church-related, or things going on in your own lives.

And, of course, there were the times of sadness. We would talk together, masked and in person, during these hard times. Speaking with families of loved ones who had passed on to life eternal, and arranging memorial and funeral services for them, has always been a special part of my ministry that I have cherished. It was my honor to be with you in your time of grief for those who asked for my counsel and services.

Some of you came individually to me with other concerns on your mind, and we addressed those as best as we could. I especially appreciate the support of those who individually taken the time to share your appreciation for various ways I have been able to be in ministry to you and to our congregation. Your encouragement has always been a blessing. And I also appreciated all of you who were willing to let me hear your stories and then you invited me to tell mine. Such respectfulness is the heart of our Christian community, and something we all need to work on as a whole church.

Staff meetings have been done monthly, and our staff is effective in going over upcoming happenings in our church. I have talked more at length with Abbie Greene/Chronister both in starting out in her position after I came, and when she had questions about entering seminary and being in ministry. I was glad to provide her with a hearty recommendation to enter seminary. I have tried to be helpful and encouraging as a mentor to her in her career decision. I'm happy that we have young people who are willing to make such a commitment, especially as the wider

society has not been as positive towards religion in general as in decades past. I pray for her success in her studies, and in her future in ministry. Our church has an excellent staff.

### **Pastoral Interactions with the Wider Community**

Beyond our own church book study, I participated in the Community book study in Waterloo, so as to reach out to the wider community through zoom book study – both last year with Ibrahim Kendi’s book, “How to be an Antiracist,” and in 2021 with Isabel Wilkerson’s book, “Caste.”

In February, I attended several virtual sessions to support Black students in the Cedar Falls schools to talk about their experiences of racism in their schools and in our community. Most disturbing were comments that our community as a whole doesn’t think we need to address racism, white supremacy and white privilege, and systemic matters that negatively affect Black and Brown persons in our schools and community. It was both saddening that they experienced these things still in 2021, but also uplifting to hear their resolve and hope that we could finally learn to confront white supremacy, racism, and discrimination in our society. I was glad to represent our church, and I did see one of our members, a teacher, who also was in attendance – which was a joy to see.

Also early in the year, I talked with UNI students on two occasions about Ibrahim Kendi’s book, “How to be an Antiracist” from a church and pastoral perspective with regard to how we need to change our communities to acknowledge our history of racism in this country so as to correct the ills of the past. I encouraged them in their own prospective teaching careers to help create a more inclusive, affirming, and just world. I told them about the benefits of being bold and holding true to their values, even when it may not be beneficial to their job situations and careers; for the greatest peace is being able to respect one’s self in living with integrity. They seemed very intrigued to hear a pastor speaking about these issues with them given their experience of other church settings they had experienced. Several were visibly moved at a pastor admitting the difficulties we are faced with as a nation, and how we need to proactively deal with racism, White supremacy, White privilege, and religious nationalism in our society. Seeing their hope and enthusiasm was one of the highlights of the year for me.

### **Clergy Collegiality**

It has always been a priority of mine to make connections with clergy in the area wherever I served. This was particularly difficult in this time of pandemic since clergy meetings were far more sparse than they would usually be. Nonetheless, when meetings were available, most by zoom, I tried to attend whenever I could do so. These included regional UCC Cluster Meetings, bi-weekly Community of Practice meetings with UCC clergy in our Tri-Conference, Cedar Valley Interfaith Council meetings, and the Cedar Valley Faith Leaders picnic and meetings. Of these, the bi-weekly Community of Practice meetings were most helpful to me in my setting here in our church in Waterloo. I would encourage you to continue to support clergy in your future with this opportunity.

I also maintained clergy relationships I have had from past communities, and also through social media sites. They are an important and continuing way of conversing about the matters of

churches nationally and internationally, and provides a good sounding board for the particular concerns of clergy as they practice in their churches weekly.

These interactions, beyond meetings with church and community groups, were among the best ways I got to know clergy in 2021.

### **Continuing Education**

I am an avid reader and have acquired books, commentaries, and such to help in my ministry at our church. This is pretty much a daily activity of keeping informed of issues in ministry, in church life, and in our culture to help us to be a light to the wider world.

I mentioned the two community book studies above that I attended, and those were educational in getting to know more members of the wider community, and the ongoing issues that affect our community at large. I probably learned more about Waterloo-Cedar Falls and the problems faced in this area through these discussions than any other single source. I would encourage others to join these community book studies when they are held.

Our TriConference UCC organized a talk about White Privilege. I reported back to the church, but there was little interest in following through on this topic. I hope that this will be reconsidered by our church at a later time, as I believe it to be particularly relevant to our community as well as to the society at large. UCC.ORG has a curriculum that can be downloaded that addresses this issue that I would recommend.

I attended the Marcus Borg Foundation's "Going Home to Another Way" online talk with Diana Butler Bass about church leadership in an age where we have to do things differently in order to survive and flourish in a culture that does not accept doctrinaire and traditional forms of Christianity. This was an excellent talk which nurtured further insights into the dilemma churches have in no longer being a respected institution of society – particularly among younger people. The Foundation has periodic talks that I would highly recommend to all who want to learn more about what is going on in our churches, and how we might negotiate and flourish in the years ahead. We read several of Borg's books in our book study since I have been here. Bass' books are also good reading for those seeking to understand where the church has been, is, and might go.

Another online event I attended was "Achieving Our Country: An Academy of Citizen Activism". It was a forum to connect activists, academics, artists, and other community members. It was organized by my friend, and former President of the NAACP, Cornell William Brooks with whom I resided in the same house in seminary.

Clergy Boundary Training on Clergy Health and Wellness, 12/9: This day long workshop focused on clergy health and wellness, and finding emotional and spiritual balance in ministry. It was designed as a series of presentations as well as smaller break-out groups. Some particular areas of focus were:

- Dealing with difficult people
- Tools for mindfulness and spiritual disciplines

- Compassion fatigue, burnout and the effects of secondary traumatic stress
- Preventing and responding to harm and harassment
- Working through stressful and changing times
- Financial wellness and financial planning

Clergy boundary training is periodically required among UCC clergy every couple of years, and this was one of the better ones that I have attended as it addressed real life scenarios that most clergy confront in the living out of their calling. I commend the Conference staff for selecting this theme, as it is especially needed for clergy in these days of polarization in our country and churches.

### **Planning in 2021**

I had weekly Monday meetings most of the year with Anne Hoekstra as the year's moderator, and Paul Greene, the prior year's moderator throughout the year. We went over things that we felt were important for our church.

Monthly staff meetings helped us to look forward and plan for the months to come. This staff works well together, and each contributes according to their areas and skills. It is good to have reliable persons to do their respective work in the church for the good of the whole.

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee met regularly throughout the year and were a positive place for me to share ideas, thoughts, concerns, and problems. I thank them for their service, but was saddened to see two members of the committee decide to relinquish their participation.

### **Personal Medical Issues**

I was dealing with eye problems in the first 2/3rds of the year, and this made mornings difficult for me until my surgery at the end of July and my recovery in the next months. Fortunately, the eye problems didn't last throughout the morning, so afternoons and evenings were possible to complete all of my duties. I had an unsuccessful procedure called Corneal scraping in Waterloo on January 19<sup>th</sup>; the result that my eye problems actually worsened – requiring numerous appointments to ease the situation. I appreciated Greg Hoekstra driving me to a doctor's appt 5/18 in Iowa City. I had a successful eye surgery 7/28, and am thankful to not have that recurrent pain.

### **Pastoral Services Performed**

*Graveside service for Steve Thorpe: 4/8/2021 at Waterloo Memorial Park Cemetery*

*Graveside service for Sally Walker: 5/12/2021 at Waterloo Memorial Park Cemetery*

*Memorial service for Donna Sheridan: 6/5/2021 at FCUCC*

*Funeral service for Dick Grimm: 9/8/2021 at Locke Funeral Home with committal at Waterloo Memorial Park Cemetery*

*Memorial service for Kris Johnston: 10/18/2021 at Waterloo Memorial Park Cemetery Chapel with committal there immediately following.*

*Funeral for Maxine Clausman: 11/5/2021 at Locke Funeral Home with committal at Waterloo Memorial Park Cemetery*

## DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

My first full year at First Congregational was full of blessings! While my official job title is the Youth Director, I was honored to be able to serve the church in a variety of other ways as needed, putting me into deeper conversations with congregants and strengthening relationships I would not have otherwise. This included filming and editing an online worship service, redesigning and revamping the website, putting together a couple of Tidings and Bulletins, and much more. Connections throughout the church have proven immensely valuable as I am constantly needing volunteers, programming support, and creative ideas. I could not do my job without the assistance of the congregation!

The first couple months of 2021 were spent creating Sunday School packets (that included instructional videos that I created) as well as providing a weekly children's message. I engaged with the wider church congregation through Wednesday night social hours and by participating in the Sunday Morning Book Study. I also connected with the wider community through discussions and meetings with the Neighborhood Engagement Specialist at Habitat for Humanity. By March, we had our first major youth gathering at Hartman Reserve where we helped tap the maple trees. It was incredible to see *so many* of our youth gathered in one place, socializing, and giving me the chance to get to know them better!

We kicked off the spring with an Easter Egg Hunt that happened before the virtual service on Easter Sunday. Again, this was a wonderful time to connect with youth and their families as well as work more closely with the Spiritual Growth and Programming Board. May was filled with organizing the virtual Youth Sunday for the end of that month. Youth were able to be engaged in the planning process during youth group meetings. I additionally met with each participating youth family separately to film their parts for the service and overall continue to build relationships. I also connected more deeply with our graduating seniors, discussing their future plans and putting together a bio for them to share with the congregation. I was also able to involve church members in the creation of senior gifts for the graduates.

The summer was full of youth fellowship! On top of starting regular office hours when it became safer to do so, I held weekly youth groups at the church and facilitated childcare during Sunday services. These experiences proved to be extremely valuable at continuing to enhance relationships with the youth of the congregation and some of their friends. Being in-person proved to be the best method of interacting with the youth, and I felt very blessed to be able to have weekly, in-person events. I was also able to visit Pilgrim Heights Camp with Gordon Lauterbach (a long-time Pilgrim Heights supporter) and connect with the director there. Additionally, I served as a delegate for the state of Iowa at the 33rd General Synod of the UCC. I worked alongside other delegates from the 'Iowa, Nebraska, & South Dakota Conferences' as well as attended plenaries and workshops. In participating, I was able to learn more about what it means to be a part of the UCC as a church and engage in specialized seminars that brought me into contact with other youth directors around the country and learn about and discuss relevant topics pertaining to youth ministry. It was an incredible experience to say the least!

The fall season ran as close to "normal" as we were able to do in a couple of years. Consistent programming included weekly Wednesday night youth groups and Sunday School (which started after our Rally Day celebration). We adjusted to the current needs of the congregation and its youth when it came to religious education offerings, and moved the traditional Sunday School program from before service, to during. This helped to get more youth engaged with the curriculum while the adults in their families remained in worship. Weekly youth groups continued to thrive most weeks, but attendance at Sunday School has overall remained low, with a couple of exceptions. Regardless, I am always grateful when I

have the opportunity to connect with youth whose immediate families are long-time church members, as well as with youth who visit and may not be members themselves, but are friends or extended family with members!

In collaboration with the Spiritual Growth and Programming Board, we put on the annual Fall Fest and had a wonderful turnout from church and community members alike! Additionally this fall, I attended some church social outings and missions events (such as kayaking and the CROP Walk) as well as a couple of plays and musicals that some of our youth were a part of. I also participated in a continuing education summit put on by ThreeHouse Collaborative Campus Ministries (on UNI's campus) and built connections with UNI students as well as local clergy. Tyler Greene was a huge influence in this, and for a time we met regularly to discuss ways that our church could be involved with ThreeHouse and vice versa. Tyler had also noted that the single-stall bathroom downstairs had outdated signage and that the opportunity was there to also add more inclusive language, and in collaboration with the Physical Resources committee, we were able to replace the signage for the downstairs bathroom to indicate that it is for all genders as well as accessible, and added ADA-compliant braille and pictograms to create more accessible signage as well. Most of the other bathrooms around the church were also updated to include ADA-compliant braille and pictograms. These actions are appropriate and needed, especially from a youth ministries perspective, as it is a tangible piece of part of the church motto, that "no matter who you are...you matter." No matter a youth's abilities or gender, they matter and deserve to have a bathroom space where they can feel affirmed. I am continually looking for ways that our youth ministries can be more inclusive and affirming to all.

As fall turned back into winter, I had the honor to plan and give the sermon for one Sunday. It was a wonderful opportunity to share more of my story with the wider congregation as well as put some of my seminary training to use. I am continually learning and growing as a seminarian, and am always eager to apply what I am learning to my work at the church. Additionally, we had the youth engaged with the annual Mitten Tree, which was then donated to families of Grin and Grow. Youth also were a part of worship services during the season of Advent, reading text that described aspects of the Advent Wreath. Lastly, a representative from Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa reached out to me to see if myself or any church members may be interested in volunteering for their program at Bunger Middle School, a partner in education of the church. One church member as well as myself will begin volunteering after the New Year, continuing to build relationships with Bunger staff and students.

Ongoing projects for me have included the creation of safety policies and procedures, compiling and organizing programming resources, and creating and maintaining an overall document and physical binders with a wealth of information, templates, and other resources intended to aid not just myself, but future youth directors to come. I have also been intentional about sending youth birthday cards in the mail as well as holiday cards to families, regardless if they have been coming to youth events or not.

Thank you for your continued support as we navigate what it means to provide youth ministries in the context of the twenty-first century and within current events! Your dedication does not go unnoticed, and I feel incredibly blessed to work for a congregation that is committed to their youth, their formation, and their education.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Abbie Chronister*

## DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Entering our third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, my role has continued to evolve and grow in all sorts of new and unexpected ways as we adapt and change according to the state of the pandemic in Iowa, the nation, and the world.

2021 started in the same way that 2020 ended; I was playing two distinct roles each week. The one I know best is that of the music director, working with special music, arranging virtual concerts, coordinating with Hudson on the weekly hymns, and recording all the music for worship services. The one that I learned as I went in 2020 and 2021 was that of video producer and editor. I would record service, edit and compile the raw video of music, pastor, and worship leader, and upload it to Facebook and YouTube each week for viewing on Sunday morning. I want to make sure to thank the team involved in that effort each week. With very few exceptions, we put together almost 60 weeks of worship without any significant problems. We certainly learned quite a bit about online video and worship during those weeks and months and I thank everyone that worked hard to make that possible.

In the summer of 2021, we had a return to normalcy with our worship. The case counts were very low and the Iowa weather was generally cooperative for outdoor worship. The Chancel Choir was able to present anthems each Sunday in our church beneath the car port, and Touch of Brass bell ensemble began to rehearse in the chapel to prepare for the eventual return to the sanctuary where we could ring indoors for service. Eventually, as the Iowa weather turned colder and outdoor worship was not possible, we moved our rehearsing, singing, and ringing into the sanctuary again. We were able to resume our pre-COVID schedule of Chancel Choir providing an anthem each Sunday with worship, and the Handbell ensemble providing a prelude once per month.

In addition to these typical Sunday worship contributions, I was asked again to put together a concert for Thanksgiving this year which would be released online for the congregation to enjoy during the Thanksgiving holiday. We had many wonderful contributions and put together a very nice concert for the congregation. The other major highlight of our fall semester was the Christmas Eve service, which the Handbell Ensemble supported with two pieces during the musical prelude ahead of the service, and the Chancel Choir supported with four carols during the service of Lessons and Carols.

Just as things have started to get back to our normal routine, the pandemic has proven once again to be anything but predictable. As case counts have risen to a new all-time high in Blackhawk county, we have made the decision to temporarily suspend our regular rehearsals and move the Sunday service to a live-streamed platform. Once again, I am moving into new territory, this time looking for ways that we can best improve the quality of the livestream video while we await the county positivity to drop to a level that we can once again safely worship, sing, and play in the sanctuary.

If the last three years have taught me anything, it is to not close my annual report with any predictions for the year to come! One thing that has remained constant through this entire ordeal, however, has been the relationships and sense of community between the musicians in both the handbell and chancel choirs. It is the strength of these relationships that makes it possible to adapt and change as the pandemic requires. I have every confidence that as we have done in 2020, 2021, and now 2022, we will get through this current challenge as we have the past challenges and look forward to a return to normal, whenever that may be.

Respectfully submitted,

*Luke Overton*



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

This is my first year as Moderator, or Chair of the Board of Trustees, the governing body of our church. The Trustees manages the affairs of the church, determines its policies and promotes the mission of the church. It is composed of the chairs of the 7 standing boards, 6 at-large members, and the executive committee, for a total of 16 members. Meetings occur at least 6 times a year—and more times as needed, and are open to the congregation. With so little time in meetings, it's obvious that most of the work of the church is implemented outside of those few hours, by those of you reading this report! Between our members and staff, we have found ways to get the work of the church accomplished.

It has been a steep learning curve for me this year, and another year of uncertainty and transition for the congregation. I think most of us are ready for a sense of stability and sameness, but we continue to deal with the difficulties and whims of covid as we enter the process of searching for a settled pastor.

The year began with our first ever Zoom annual meeting of the church. Our on-line worship began in March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic, and continued throughout most of the spring of 2021. Thankfully, we were able to start meeting together in late spring a few times outside, moving to the sanctuary in June (it was glorious to be in our sanctuary again!!!) until the Delta variant chased us outside again. Beginning in October, we again enjoyed sanctuary worship. I was so grateful for some of the “almost normal” experiences--of being able to sing with the Chancel Choir, to hear Touch of Brass Bell Choir play again, and to experience Hudson playing our gorgeously renovated organ! It was so good having our section leaders back in our midst again as well. We even got to celebrate being together again at the annual Fall Festival and Chili Cookoff! After so many months of being apart, it was good seeing so many loved ones again, at HOME, in our church setting! As I write this, we are dealing with the next wave of covid—the Omicron variant, and are adjusting accordingly.

Sadly, we miss those members who are no longer amongst us for whatever reason. We have been strong together, and those bonds run deep. We grieve those who have died during the past year, and those who have not been with us due to illness, or those who are absent for other reasons. “Just as there are many parts of our bodies, so it is with Christ’s body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.” (Romans 12:4-5) Each member is important to our church and we grieve when we lose members of our family.

Even with us dealing with our second year of covid, we have many things to celebrate. You will discover these accomplishments and the greater work of our committees, staff, and volunteers in the pages that follow. Let these folks know how much their work is appreciated. Each contribution is a part of the church being the “hands and feet of Christ”.

I want to personally thank the trustees, the various committees and volunteers, and our able staff for their continued work during tough times. We continue to do the work of the church which has taken on different forms in these past couple of years. We have many talented folks that help implement the mission of our congregation, and I appreciate all your work! Thank you! These are challenging times for the wider church as well as our own congregation. We may not appreciate all the challenges that come our way, but we know they offer us opportunities for learning and growth. I look forward to growing with you in the months and years ahead, as we grow together in our faith and mission of our church.

*Anne Hoekstra, Moderator*

## BOARD OF SPIRITUAL LIFE AND CARE

The focus of the Board of Spiritual Life and Care (formally the Board of Deacons) is to provide a ministry of caring to the church community. The Deacons supply spiritual leadership, greeters, support to worship and the celebration of communion, caring for our church members, funeral luncheons, reaching out to the community and providing Sunday set-up. The new by laws created a name change, a chair & vice chair requirement for the board and decreased membership to 8 members.

This year was very different as we continued to be flexible in how we fulfilled our duties. The church continued to be closed to in-person worship due to the Covid 19 pandemic through the spring. Services were held outdoors in the parking lot and RiverLoop Amphitheater in the summer and in the fall services were held in the sanctuary with guidance from our Covid Reopening Committee for the safety of our members and visitors. Each Deacon continued to reach out to church members through visits, calls, and/or cards.

In February a Valentine treat bag was assembled which included candies and a Lenten booklet for the upcoming Lenten season. The Bazaar committee supported the funding of this project. These were delivered to about 175 church members and friends. In March for Easter, with the support of the Goodrich Fund, flowers were assembled in ball jars with ribbons and 20 Easter bouquets were delivered to members that were in lockdown due to the pandemic. For Easter/Earth day, Easter cards with a seed packet were mailed to all other church members connecting Christ's Resurrection and Earth's spring renewal.

The funeral committee supported funeral luncheons as requested although these were very limited due to Covid 19 safety restrictions. Communion is currently provided by individual sealed communion cups. Special juices and breads were provided for World Communion Sunday.

In November decorated loaves of pumpkin bread and cards were delivered to 25 members and Christmas Cards and blessings were sent to church members that we have been missing. There has been some water damage to some of the Christmas decorations. These boxes were cleaned up and many decorations were thrown away. With special support from Janice Akin, Abbey Athey, and Nancy Heinick families, Christmas preparations included decorating the front of the sanctuary, poinsettias and removal and organization of the Christmas decorations closet.

The Goodrich Fund, an endowment fund created to assist senior church members, was used to support a member in the home. This fund is available to the Senior minister with Deacon support.

Resignations were received this year from Jill Jensen, Connie Jo Peirce, Evie Waack, Beth Hurley, Janice Akin, Nancy Heinick, Abbey Athey, and Bonnie Rickert. We thank each of them for their service. This leaves us with 3 active members; Cindy Thompson, Nancy Mahood and Gina Greene and 1 work from home member, Ginni Casteel. In order to continue to do the work of the church we will need more active members on the board.

Our mission continues to be to build a community of faith by learning and living the word of God. We will continue to work creatively to provide this support to our congregation and community.

Respectfully submitted:

*Gina Greene, Chair*

## **BOARD OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND PROGRAMS**

2021 was another challenging year with many events being cancelled. We didn't have our annual Youth Super Bowl Sub's Fundraiser due to Covid concerns but plan to resume this year.

April 4th we held Easter activities with an outdoor Easter egg hunt. The church picnic and Vacation Bible School were also cancelled due to Covid, instead Wednesday evening outdoor youth group activities were held. Student of the month luncheons with Bunger Middle School, our partners in education, are still on hold.

September 12 was Sunday School Rally Day with our board hosting an outdoor grill out.

October 31st we sponsored a successful Fall Festival, Chili Cook off, activities included; Trunk or treat, Hay rides, guessing the number of candy corn and weight of the pumpkin, pumpkin gourde carving and painting. We were joined by several Grin and Grow families.

Along with the Mission Board we once again sponsored Adopt a Family with Bunger Middle School, brightening up Christmas for ten people. A mitten tree was put in the crossroads with donations being directed to Grin & Grow. Special thanks to all that contributed!

We are hopeful for a healthier 2022.

R.E. Board members are Sue Hummel, Jane Slaughter, Kay Leary, Vicki Ahrens, Kelly Conrad and Peter Steva.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Tim Ahrens, Chair*

## **MEMORIAL COMMITTEE**

We started out the year with \$48,344.13. This year the only money spent was for the Capital Campaign Organ Project \$38,273.56

The majority of memorial funds are held within our agency account where these funds are invested. The totals shown on the December 31, 2021 accounting of the Memorial Committee showed \$15,854.01 invested with our agency account at the end of the year. These figures vary due to market fluctuations. The church office currently maintains \$2,580.57 in the Memorial checkbook.

Memorials were received for Scott Bessman, Linda Waldon, Sally Walker, Marian Greene, Steve Thorpe, Donna Sheridan, Shirley McGreevy, Dick Grimm, Frieda Biesanz, Maxine Clausman, and Tyler Greene in 2021.

*Michelle Wolfe, Office Manager*

## BOARD OF SOCIAL CAUSES AND JUSTICE

It was good to be able to organize participation in a few hands on volunteer activities this year in spite of the challenges of ongoing Covid disruptions! Meals on wheels were delivered Christmas week with special guests, Charlie and Teddy Mejia, on Karen and Craig Jensen's team. Thanks for the fine multigenerational modeling. This finished out a total of 13 deliveries of 3 different routes twice monthly by 16 congregants and friends over the last 7 months! FCUCC had a group of 12 participants (the most in the event) for the Crop walk in September with \$1,000 in contributions going to the Northeast Iowa Food Bank and Church World Service to relieve hunger everywhere. Diane Highnam, Sue Hummel, Sharon Holdiman and granddaughters, Corina and Callie, Ed and Eileen Dams and Kari Brock and Nevaeh shopped and wrapped presents for the Partners in Education adopt a family Christmas. Tim Ahrens coordinated and delivered the gifts to Bunger. Laurie Allbaugh solicited participation from inactive members. \$535 was donated this year for this project. That was combined with the \$500 in our budget for Partners so each of the 10 recipients received \$75-100 worth of clothes, toys, towels, and other items on their wish lists.

The board membership decided to donate the international and community mission funds in our budget to Habitat for Humanity, Love, INC, Grin and Grow and Retrieving Freedom. The adopt a cabin dollars were mailed to our camp for continuing upkeep. Since community meals have not resumed in 2021, that line item was not utilized. Also no dues were collected by the NE Iowa Association and there was no delegate expense last year. Our church supported the national OCWM as always, but have decreased the dollar amount in the 2022 budget as it is based on our current membership.

The Neighbors in Need Offering and One Great Hour of Sharing were publicized and collected with \$490 and \$325 donated respectively.

Diane Highnam spearheaded the gathering of toys to contribute to the Love, Inc Christmas stores. We were delighted the congregation responded with many donations especially considering the mitten tree and adopt a family are also part of the church's holiday offerings. Each month of the year Love, Inc highlights specific needs such as kitchen items and bedding which have been made known and donations delivered, often by staff member Kyle Lindaman.

Greg Hoekstra continued working with Grin and Grow on a variety of projects. The moving of the playground is on hold at this point.

National Night Out was celebrated with our help in supplying tables, chairs, water and restroom facilities as well as cookies by Gina Greene and watermelon from Anne Hoekstra. Diane Highnam made a salad for the Getting Ahead in the Cedar Valley class dinner held here in the Historic Church Row Neighborhood, and we added \$50 to join with the other churches in thanking the teachers at Lowell Elementary School.

Other opportunities to support a variety of local organizations have been highlighted in Tidings, including Love INC, Habitat for Humanity, the Job Foundation, the Salvation Army, Junior Achievement, the Grout Museum, Retrieving Freedom, Thanksgiving Food donations for veterans, Last Hope Animal Rescue, House of Hope, The Cedar Bend Humane Society, and our

Little Free Library box on 4th & South Streets. Several of the board and congregation wrote articles explaining what inspires mission for them.

We welcome more suggestions, participants and members!

Respectfully submitted,

***Laurie Allbaugh, Chair, Greg Hoekstra, Vice Chair,  
Diane Highnam, Secretary and Lois Johnson***

## **GRIN & GROW REPORT**

In 2004, First Congregational Church signed an agreement with Grin and Grow Childcare to open a site for childcare in our building. First C had been exploring opening its own day care as a way to share space in the education wing that was not being used during the week. At that time, it was a third location for the long-standing business. After many changes over the years, the location in our church is the only site in operation. There have been financial struggles for the business in the past, but with the dedicated work of many individuals, and the ability to apply and receive numerous grants, Grin and Grow is currently in a financially sound position.

Their mission is unique in Cedar Valley—to provide “safe, nurturing, quality daycare to a *diverse population regardless of income.*” Grin and Grow serves a population that is not easily served elsewhere in our community, and is why the church has continued to support its mission as our shared mission. They have continued to provide much-needed childcare services during the pandemic, although staffing is always challenging. Employee benefits and pay have been improved, which has helped recruit new teachers. Three new teachers with college degrees have recently been hired, which will allow more children to be enrolled. There are 23 staff members employed at this time, and approximately 50 children enrolled.

The rental agreement with our church has recently been updated to reflect current usage. Grin and Grow currently pays \$1170 per month, for the use of these areas of the building: nursery, main floor classrooms, upstairs classrooms, upstairs kitchen, office area at South Street entrance, the office next to Church Youth Director, parking area for staff, drop off area for children, outdoor playground space, and space at the south end of the garage. The agreement has specific language that says that the church can use any of the classroom/nursery space at times that Grin and Grow is not using the space.

Cliff Highnam and Karen Jensen serve on the Grin and Grow Board of Directors.

Submitted by  
***Karen Jensen***

## BOARD OF PHYSICAL RESOURCES

With the pandemic keeping the building closed to worship services and face to face meetings for much of the year, 2021 was an unusual year to say the least for the "physical resources" of the church. In addition, contractors have been extraordinarily busy and hard to schedule.

The failure of a radiator in the lower part of the corner of 4th and South caused water and moisture damage in the early part of the year. We have received an insurance settlement, and as of this writing we have not begun work on that restoration. That will likely be the major work of the board in the coming year.

We were able to upgrade the lighting in the sanctuary, the original lamps and wiring in the hanging fixtures were at the end of useful life. The new lighting is a major improvement. In addition the lighting in the parking lot has been repaired and upgraded, so coming and going after dark is now safer and more convenient than it has been.

About half of the planned tuck pointing was completed. Some significant deterioration was discovered and repaired in the south street tower. There is more to be done next summer. There is still roof work to be done on one of the towers that could not be scheduled this year.

We were able to support a successful parking lot sale as an alternative to the usual Bazaar in the fall. While physical resources are not the planners of such an event, it is a team effort to have a great event.

Kyle has done a great job, His work goes on even when we are not there because the building requires work to maintain its condition. There have been times when Kyle was the only church staff present in the building. When you see Kyle, please thank him for his work that often goes unseen.

It takes continual effort to keep buildings of this age and type in good shape, and we never know what the next challenge will be. Annual investment in the building is needed and the board appreciates the continued support of the church family in the efforts to maintain it.

*Gordon Lauterbach, Chair*

## BOARD OF CREATIVE MINISTRIES

While it is true the unfortunate, ongoing pandemic has slowed the implementation of some of your Creative Ministries Board, many good things still happened and will continue.

Early in the year the First Church Talent Show was a huge success. Greg Holt and Meach Meacham organized and hosted the show. The talent included beautiful photos by Dale Waack and artwork by Evie Waack set to equally beautiful vocals provided by Ed & Eileen Dams granddaughter Sydney, Jane Slaughter's granddaughter Eva enthusiastically reading Naturally Me, Karen Dew's granddaughter Meghan Wheelock regaled us with "It's A Fine, Fine Line" from Ave Q, John Mardis chose "The Flower Carol" for his usual enthusiastic vocals, Cliff Highnam playing the hammer dulcimer he crafted himself, Anne Hoekstra played Clair de Lune to a backdrop of Dale Waack photos all produced by Tim Ensworth, Molly Greene Bishop sang an historical medley of tunes while accompanying herself on guitar, that was followed by Brian Bishop performing an amazing magic rope trick with the help of two young helpers, Peter Steva bedazzled us with his juggling prowess, son Zachary then played "Ode to Joy" on the cello, the Men's Quartet offered their version of "Soon and Very Soon" accompanied by Anne Hoekstra and produced by Tim Ensworth, our own Meach Meacham gave us "I Am" in only the way he can, Jimmy followed his dad with a rendition of "Long, Long Ago" on the cello, Diane Highnam recited her thoughtful creation "The Quiet Church" with daughter Emily playing cello to a background of Diane's church photos, Greg Hoekstra continued the show with a Nat King Cole version of "Nature Boy" on trumpet, Julie & Andrew Thoreen performed a piece they composed entitled "I Love You", then Paul & Lucy Prescott on vocals & their own stringed accompaniment performed "Dream a Little Dream of Me", Greg took a break from emceeing to pick up his banjo and pick along with Paul Prescott while singing "Take 'em Away", "Inventions on Piano" by Bach was beautifully played on our grand piano by Kerri Mennenga, and finally Deb Prescott shared her inspirational story about the amazing adventures and travels of family wedding gowns. Watch it again on YouTube [Spring Talent Show 2021 - YouTube](#) or on our website.

"Creative Corner" in Tidings gave us a glimpse into the fine arts talents of many church family members and friends. All photos, artwork, crafts, hobbies have been accompanied by a short story of why it is all individually important. We hope to see more of you participate in the Creative Corner. Just let Anne, Michelle, or Paul know of your interest.

Ayanna Gregory's performance has been postponed twice because of the pandemic. She is the daughter of comedian and human rights activist Dick Gregory, and is still on our list of future events. From her website: *"In a time so needy of real and responsible art, Ayanna is bringing to the world a most beautiful and inspiring reflection of life. And with penetrating depth, she is making audiences feel and heal. For this singer, dramatist, educator and activist, music and art are more than entertainment; they are her mission."* We are very much looking forward to her inspirational message this coming spring.

Three members of our church family participated in the Iowa/Nebraska/South Dakota UCC virtual choir. Individuals recorded their individual parts and submitted them for editing into a larger, choir production. Their piece, "Like a Tree" was performed at the UCC Annual Meeting

JAM this year. This beautiful piece can be heard on the Iowa UCC website [Joint Annual Meeting 2021 on Vimeo](#) .

The Creative Ministries Board has much on its docket. If you would like to join in, please do!

*Paul Greene, Chair*

### ***Church Pipe Organ Capital FINAL Report***

We have been blessed with a beautiful instrument in our sanctuary for over forty years because of the generosity and forward-thinking of our church family in the 1970s. Our pipe organ is among the finest in the Cedar Valley, but just like the beautiful sanctuary, magnificent stained-glass windows, functional boiler system, and necessary roof we enjoy, it needed attention and maintenance. Our organ is a large, complex machine with many moving parts and electronic components that simply did not last forever. There were many repairs, maintenance, and replacements that were required now, after more than forty years. The Reuter Organ Company who initially installed the organ provided and installed the needed replacement components and repairs to keep our beautiful instrument functional for a cost of about \$130,000. That portion of the work has been completed.

Also, since 2010 we had been exploring the possibilities for enhancements to our organ including warmer sounds, enhancing the community-worship experience, and giving our organists more options for worship. This entailed a variety of changes in our organ chamber behind all of the pipes you see from the pews. These improvements had been raised in the past by our organists, visiting organists, and others who simply appreciated fine instruments and wanted to expand the flexibility and usefulness of ours. The cost of these enhancements to our organ were about \$210,000. The overall cost to make the required repairs and desired enhancements was, therefore, \$340,000. **All work has been completed.** Through anonymous gifts, that cost was reduced by about 74% to \$90,000. A three-year capital campaign through our church family covered the remaining cost of this project. All of the enhancements and 30% of the repair and maintenance were covered by the anonymous donors. We are very fortunate. The finished organ sounds beautiful and has met all expectations.

The final dollars look like this:

Anonymous Donations and Memorials	\$253,260.24
Pledges	<u>\$91,651.00</u>
Total	\$344,911.24

Invoices for Total Projects PAID	\$339,231.09
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Three-Year Pledges Yet to Receive	\$22,500.00	75% of Three Year Pledges PAID
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## ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

For those who like to see the values for themselves, we have provided a table of the Endowment Fund for 2020 and 2021 on the next page. You may compare and form your independent opinion about how the Endowment Funds are being managed. We welcome your questions and comments. It is your money too.

No bequests or gifts were received in 2021.

For those who just want a quick summary, we can report that the Endowment Fund had a good year financially. The Bequests and Gifts total \$2,454,964 and we have funds totaling \$2,296,215. The return on Endowment Funds was 13.7% in 2021 compared to 18.2% in 2020. We have \$158,749 less than the amounts given to us. This compares to 2020 when we had \$189,836 less than the bequests and gifts. We are reducing our shortfall.

We continue to work to support the Church Operating Budget by pledging \$70,954. In total, the Endowment gave \$119,619 in 2021. which was about 31% of the 2021 Church Operating budget and 5.3% of the Endowment. We also borrowed money at 4% interest, \$40,000, to cover the pledges for the Organ Project as they are paid by members over the next few years. In an internal bookkeeping procedure, we helped the Church establish a brokerage account for monies held for various payments to earn a better return than checking accounts pay. We have also begun to take a more conservative investment risk by having 60 percent of the 2021 portfolio in equities rather than 65% as we had in 2020.

Think of the Endowment as a vault. Once money goes in, it stays. We can spend the earnings every year and should do so wisely. The money in the vault should never come out unless there is a plan to replace it soon. We believe we have a plan and are working with our investment advisors to ensure we continue to have a considered and reliable support of the Church going forward.

For the Endowment Committee,

Jim Stevenson, Chair

Laurie Allbaugh

Ed Dams

Cliff Highnam

Craig Jensen

Gordon Lauterbach

Jill Mejia

Rich Thuesen

Gary Waldon

## Endowment

	2020		2021	
<b>Bequests and Gifts</b>	\$2,402,963		\$2,454,964	
<b>Begin Balance</b>		\$2,003,944		\$2,213,127
<b>Less Memorial Committee Fund</b>	\$47,109	\$1,956,835	\$47,109	\$2,118,910
<b>Disbursements to Church</b>	\$108,273		\$118,149	
<b>Memorial Pledges</b>	\$70,953		\$70,954	
<b>Section Leads</b>	\$4,820		\$6,300	
<b>Concerts</b>	\$2,500		\$0	
<b>Facilities Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b>	\$25,000		\$17,657	
<b>Capital Subsidy for Office Supplies &amp; Equipment</b>	\$3,000		\$3,000	
<b>High School Scholarship</b>	\$2,000		\$2,000	
<b>Capital &amp; Memorial Transfer to Agency Acc't</b>			\$18,238	
<b>Trustee and Tax Prep</b>	\$14,379	\$122,652	\$14,270	\$132,419
<b>Net After Disbursements</b>		\$1,834,183		\$1,986,491
<b>Change in Asset Value</b>		\$223,961		\$158,526
<b>Total Bequest Funds</b>		\$2,058,144		\$2,145,017
<b>Goodrich Proctor Fund</b>				
<b>Bequest</b>	\$100,000		\$100,000	
<b>Beginning Balance</b>		\$145,067		\$154,983
<b>Trustee and Tax Prep</b>	\$950		\$1,041	
<b>Disbursements to Church</b>	\$0	\$950	\$1,550	\$2,591
<b>Change in Asset Value</b>		\$8,966		-\$6,376
<b>Total Goodrich Proctor Fund</b>		\$154,983		\$151,198
<b>Total Endowment Funds</b>		\$2,213,127		\$2,296,215
<b>Fund Value minus Bequests and Gifts</b>		-\$189,836		-\$158,749

## BAZAAR REPORT

COVID unfortunately kept us from doing the annual bazaar again this year but we were able to put on a successful parking lot sale led by the bazaar committee. The sale took place on October 23, 2021. The popcorn and donut makers were a success and all proceeds were close to \$850.

Donations of \$1,000 each were given to the Cedar Bend Humane Society, Family & Children's Council, Salvation Army, House of Hope, Northeast Iowa Food Bank, Cedar Valley Honor Flights and Beyond Pink this year.

Thank you to Connie Jo Peirce, Jill Jensen, Jayne Slaughter and all those who spent so many volunteer hours of work for the bazaar and rummage sale on behalf of the church. The Bazaar Committee resigned toward the end of the year. If you are interested in volunteering to chair the committee, please contact the office.

*Michelle Wolfe, Office Manager*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Overall, our Church completed 2021 in good financial condition, despite the challenges caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. The operating budget finished the year with a positive \$7,307 balance. For comparison, we finished 2020 with a positive \$14,373 balance and 2019 with a \$14,937 deficit. Regarding cash flow, the Church ended the year with \$63,042 in our operating account, compared to \$70,496.72 in 2020 and \$73,921 in 2019.

For income, we budgeted \$387,509 and received 96 percent of total income, and 96 percent of pledge income. We used 92 percent of the budgeted Endowment disbursements which included Memorial Pledges and subsidies for Facilities Maintenance, the Capital Fund, and Section Leaders. The two largest sources of income were pledges at 56 percent and the endowment at 26 percent. We are fortunate that income was not significantly affected by the pandemic, and I thank all members for doing their best to meet pledge obligations.

For expenses, we budgeted \$386,711 and spent 95 percent of that amount. We planned on conducting Church activities virtually for the first six months of the year, which turned out to be pretty accurate. The pandemic resulted in reduced expenses for utilities, administrative costs, and professional expenses compared to “normal” years. Overall, spending was well controlled throughout the year.

Early in the year, we conducted a capital campaign to help fund the rebuild of our organ and 34 members participated. The campaign raised \$91,651 in payments and pledges. Pledges could be made over three years; 2021, 2022, 2023. As of 31 Dec 21, \$69,076 had been received and \$22,575 in pledges remained to be paid.

A significant concern is the continuing decline of membership pledge units. We are starting 2022 with 61 units compared to 74 in 2021, 76 in 2020, 79 in 2019, and 112 in 2015, down 46 percent in eight years. If we are to have the budget needed to support the staff and programs we want, we must find a way to increase membership!

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Dave Allbaugh, Treasurer*

## **MEN'S BREAKFAST**

Men's Breakfast attendance has risen from 5 regular attendees to 7 participants this year, recovering from the caution around COVID-19. In addition to a nutritious meal, we continue to provide fellowship for members and guest. Yes, we have a regular participant who is not a member of our church. We participated in the CROP Walk, raising \$65 to have a member put some miles on his shoes and get his step count up while helping those who seldom have a good breakfast.

Whether you need an alarm clock to be at the Village Inn at 212 W. Ridgeway Avenue in Waterloo or rise early and wait for 7:30 to roll around, you are welcome to come enjoy breakfast with us every first and third Tuesday each month. This year, February 22 is a "twos day", 2/22/22. We meet on the first and third Tuesday, so we won't meet on "twos day".

Are you an independent thinker? Have you thought about meeting for some Christian fellowship? Have memories of church history, Waterloo's past, or situations similar to current events? Are you willing to listen to others' recollections and share your own? Do you like to share your opinion? Would you like some discussion on topics you care about? Do you want to know what others might think about that? If you can answer "yes" to any of these questions, then we believe you will enjoy Men's Breakfast.

For the Men's Breakfast,  
*Jim Stevenson*

## **2021 REOPENING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Our reopening committee has been meeting weekly since August of 2020, at that time there were no Covid 19 vaccines available, so a lot has changed since, but unfortunately we are still dealing with increased infection rates with the newer Delta and most recent Omicron variant.

We will continue to meet and offer our best recommendations for the health and safety of our congregation, based on current Black Hawk County, state of Iowa and National Covid 19 Data.

As of this writing we have recommended worshipping via live-streaming as the current Black Hawk Co. infection rate has climbed to 39%.

In person worship is an important and meaningful part of our life together but given the current high transmission rates we want to do our part by keeping our members and our community as safe as possible. We wish to resume in person worship and return to some form of normalcy as soon as we can.

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding,

Your Reopening Committee;

*Tim, Beth, Greg, and Dave*

## 2021 WORDS OF APPRECIATION

This is my first year as moderator, and I continue to learn much about the workings of our church and our congregation. It has been an honor to serve you during these challenging days.

I have been blessed with the assistance from many. Paul Greene, past moderator, has answered a stream of questions and provides invaluable guidance and time as I am learning the governing aspects of our church. And the executive and personnel committees likewise, have been a good sounding board and source of information. They often remind me (in jest) that the moderator only needs to schedule a couple of meetings a year---easy peasy!

I am grateful for the reopening committee's weekly attention to conditions in our county, and their recommendations which try to balance risk with our need to gather in person. Staff have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to get the work of the church done. I especially want to thank Michelle for how she is able to be the hub of communication for the congregation, and so competently completes her duties, and more. I want to thank Luke for his serving us not only as director of music, but as techie who put together our prerecorded services for months, spending hours behind the scenes making everything work during our covid shut down. And a shout out to Abbie who has been willing to take over several ongoing responsibilities—supervising the church website, Facebook page, Sunday recording, and managing the marquee, stepping in for Michelle in her absence, to name a few. I appreciate what each staff person contributes to the workings of the church—each person is essential. I especially want to thank the trustees, committees, and boards for their tireless work on behalf of the mission of the church. We need each other working together for the benefit of all. Thank you one and all!!

*Anne Hoekstra*

# NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND BOARDS

*italics* = in second term    **N** = new nominations    + = completing unexpired term  
**OPEN** = there is a position open

Members can hold two positions only. One board and one committee or two committees, but not two boards. All committee and board positions are for one year terms except the Board of Trustees and the Endowment Committee. The chairperson of each committee or board is responsible for attending the Board of Trustees meetings.

## I. Officers

Moderator	Anne Hoekstra	(3 yr. term - Expires 2024)
Clerk	Keith Jorgensen	(1 yr. term - Expires 2023)
Treasurer	David Allbaugh	(1 yr. term - Expires 2023)
Historian	Roger Lane	(1 yr. term - Expires 2023)

## II. Board of Trustees

**3 YEARS (2 TERMS)**

Expires 2025	Lauren Reisinger (OPEN)
Expires 2024	<i>Diane Highnam</i> (OPEN)
Expires 2023	Karen Jensen Craig Driver

## III. Board of Spiritual Life and Care

Ginni Casteel	
Gina Greene	
Nancy Mahood	
Cindy Thompson	
(OPEN)	(OPEN)
(OPEN)	(OPEN)

## IV. Board of Physical Resources

Bob Brock
Cliff Highnam
Roger Lane
Gordon Lauterbach
John Mardis
Steve Maurer
Rich Thuesen

**V. Board of Spiritual Growth and Programs**

Tim Ahrens  
Vicki Ahrens  
Kelly Conrad  
Sue Hummel  
Kay Leary  
Jayne Slaughter  
Peter Steva

**VI. Board of Creative Ministries**

Bob Brock (Ex-Officio)  
Paul Greene  
Joan Grimm  
Dave Zellhoefer

Beth Lauterbach  
Barb Mardis  
Marcia Johnson

**VII. Board of Social Causes and Justice**

Lynette Doepke            N  
Lois Johnson  
Greg Hoekstra  
Diane Highnam  
Laurie Allbaugh

**Nominating Committee**

Diane Highnam  
Michelle Wolfe (Consultant)

**Endowment Committee**

Expires 2025	<i>Craig Jensen</i> <i>Jill Mejia</i> Dave Panicucci	N
Expires 2024	<i>Cliff Highnam</i> Laurie Allbaugh <i>Rich Thuesen</i>	
Expires 2023	<i>Gordon Lauterbach</i> Jim Stevenson <i>Gary Waldon</i>	

**Memorial Committee**

Bob Brock  
Barbara Hatinger  
John Mardis

**Scholarship Committee**

Evie Waack                      N

**Membership/Public Relations**

Dave Panicucci

**Pastor-Parish Relations Committee**

Peter Steva  
Craig Driver  
Sue Hummel  
Rev. Bret Myers

(These positions are appointed)



First Congregational Church Waterloo, Iowa	Year End 2021	Annual Budget	Percent of Budget
<b>INCOME</b>			
Offering Income:			
Current Pledges	210,341.05	218,417	96.3%
Past Pledges	10,150.00	11,500	88.3%
Memorial Pledges	70,954.00	70,954	100.0%
Non-Pledges	38,552.14	34,550	111.6%
Loose Offering	265.00	1,000	26.5%
Total Offering Income	330,262.19	336,421	98.2%
Other Income:			
Rent	12,840.00	12,000	107.0%
Parking Lot & Garbage	3,448.20	3,338	103.3%
Miscellaneous Income	-	250	0.0%
Facilities Maintenance Subsidy	17,657.47	25,000	70.6%
Capital Fund Subsidy	3,000.00	3,000	100.0%
Section Leader Subsidy	6,300.00	7,500	84.0%
Total Other Income	43,245.67	51,088	84.6%
Total Income	373,507.86	387,509	96.4%
<b>EXPENSE</b>			
Board of Trustees			
Pastor			
Salary	56,721.12	56,721	100.0%
Housing Allowance	16,837.92	16,838	100.0%
Annuity	10,299.00	10,299	100.0%
Health Insurance	12,323.00	11,710	105.2%
SS & Medicare Offset	5,628.00	5,628	100.0%
Disability Insurance	1,103.40	1,104	99.9%
Continuing Education	953.29	1,000	95.3%
Total Senior Minister	103,865.73	103,300	100.5%
Youth Director			
Salary	19,999.92	20,000	100.0%
Continuing Education	450.89	450	100.2%
Total Youth Director	20,450.81	20,450	100.0%
Professional Expense			
Senior Pastor Expense Allowance	1,372.90	1,000	137.3%
Youth Director Expense Allowance	300.00	300	100.0%
Organist Expense Allowance	74.95	500	15.0%
Delegate Expense Allowance	-	500	0.0%
Staff Continuing Education	-	500	0.0%
Pulpit Supply	300.00	800	37.5%
Total Professional Expense	2,047.85	3,600	56.9%
Staff Salaries			
Director of Music	12,607.92	12,608	100.0%
Organist	14,350.08	14,350	100.0%
Custodian	31,518.96	31,519	100.0%

First Congregational Church Waterloo, Iowa	Year End 2021	Annual Budget	Percent of Budget
Total Staff Salaries	58,476.96	58,477	100.0%
Office & Administration			
Office Manager	37,509.06	35,109	106.8%
Office Supplies/Expenses	3,821.49	4,000	95.5%
Internet	1,567.75	1,700	92.2%
Office Equipment/Maint.	3,370.98	3,500	96.3%
Postage	2,789.20	2,800	99.6%
Advertising	192.48	400	48.1%
Social Security (7.65%)	9,263.45	8,690	106.6%
Van Expense	659.29	300	219.8%
Capital Account	4,000.00	4,000	100.0%
Stewardship	39.95	200	20.0%
COVID Related Expenses	179.00	200	89.5%
Simple IRA Employer Match	1,318.75	-	-
Total Office & Administration	64,711.40	60,899	106.3%
Total Board of Trustees	249,552.75	246,726	101.1%
Board of Spiritual Life & Care (Deacons)			
Altar Care	447.05	150	298.0%
Flowers	330.11	150	220.1%
Dinners and Receptions	-	390	0.0%
Christmas Decorations	-	50	0.0%
C.U.E. Seminary Support	3,500.00	3,500	100.0%
Evangelism	-	50	0.0%
Total Diaconate	4,277.16	4,290	99.7%
Board Of Physical Resources (Building & Grounds)			
Utilities:			
MidAmerican	14,519.00	16,100	90.2%
Phones	868.53	900	96.5%
Waste Disposal	1,164.84	1,180	98.7%
Water Works	6,034.03	5,000	120.7%
Total Utilities	22,586.40	23,180	97.4%
Maintenance	24,134.95	40,000	60.3%
Maintenance Grin & Grow	820.31	1,000	82.0%
Insurance	17,497.50	15,000	116.7%
Custodial Supplies	1,991.06	2,000	99.6%
Total Building & Grounds	67,030.22	81,180	82.6%
Board of Spiritual Growth & Programs (Religious Education)			
Curriculum	355.50	400	88.9%
Supplemental Materials	-	100	0.0%
Equipment Maintenance	32.09	150	21.4%
Children's Fellowship	176.15	500	35.2%
Youth Fellowship	354.00	900	39.3%
Young Adults	-	200	0.0%
Childcare Salary	420.00	825	50.9%

First Congregational Church Waterloo, Iowa	Year End 2021	Annual Budget	Percent of Budget
Adult Education	-	200	0.0%
Special Events	413.85	1,500	27.6%
Summer Programming	101.80	500	20.4%
Library - Books/Periodicals	29.75	360	8.3%
<b>Total Religious Education</b>	<b>1,883.14</b>	<b>5,635</b>	<b>33.4%</b>
<b>Board of Creative Ministries (Fine Arts)</b>			
Section Leaders	6,300.00	7,500	84.0%
Guest Musicians	805.00	750	107.3%
Instrument Maintenance	289.55	2,000	14.5%
Program Materials	702.87	500	140.6%
Choir Robe Cleaning	-	150	0.0%
Copyright License	405.00	700	57.9%
Memberships & Assc	105.00	230	45.7%
Reception Supplies	-	300	0.0%
<b>Total Fine Arts</b>	<b>8,607.42</b>	<b>12,130</b>	<b>71.0%</b>
<b>Board of Social Causes &amp; Justice (Missions)</b>			
<b>World Mission</b>			
OCWM Basic Support	32,000.00	32,000	100.0%
Sunday School Mission Project	200.00	200	100.0%
<b>Regional Mission</b>			
Association Dues	-	700	0.0%
Delegate Expense	-	200	0.0%
Adopt-a-Cabin	100.00	100	100.0%
<b>Local Mission</b>			
Community Mission	2,000.00	2,000	100.0%
Community Meals	-	1,000	0.0%
Partners-in-Education	500.00	500	100.0%
Church Row Partnership	50.00	50	100.0%
<b>Total Missions</b>	<b>34,850.00</b>	<b>36,750</b>	<b>94.8%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>366,200.69</b>	<b>386,711</b>	<b>94.7%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>7,307.17</b>	<b>798</b>	

Cash Balance - General Acct	YTD
Beginning Cash Balance	70,496.72
Net Income	7,307.17
Transition Account Inc	
Taxes Withheld (Inc)	-
2021 Donations Rec'd in 2020	(4,200.00)
Advance Pledge 2021	(23,018.16)
Advance Pledge 2022	12,456.23
<b>Ending Cash Balance</b>	<b>63,041.96</b>