

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC REPORT

In the time since my previous board report, we have continued to keep our Thursday evening rehearsals for both Touch of Brass handbell choir as well as the Chancel Choir. Both ensembles have contributed musical elements to the worship services, with Chancel Choir singing weekly and Touch of Brass once per month.

Looking forward to Christmas and beyond, we are excited to be working in collaboration with our neighbors in Church Row to present a Christmas cantata in December. First Methodist, First Baptist, and the Chancel Choir from First Congregational will be presenting “Canticle of Joy” by Joseph M. Martin on December 10th at First Baptist. It will be a wonderful opportunity to worship together this Christmas season as we present that musical work during worship service.

In February, we will again partner with our neighbors to present a Jazz Sunday service across the street at First Methodist ahead of Lent beginning. This was a wonderful worship experience last year, and I’m sure it will be well received again this year.

Finally, in May each of the three choirs and congregations will worship with us on our Music Sunday May 5th. This will give us a chance to celebrate the musicians who bring their talents to our worship services each Sunday, as well as gives us a chance once more to be in fellowship and community with our neighbor congregations.

I will update the church and Board as soon as there is more information for any of the three of these unique opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,

~ Luke Overton Director of Music

OFFICE MANAGER REPORT

As advertised in Tidings I am currently working on sending out contribution statements as of September 30th which will show giving to date but also any amount due on general or organ pledge.

We are beginning Stewardship season and I have purchased the UCC material to start printing out pledge cards and posters to advertise. I have also reached out to each committee / board chair requesting their appropriate budget line items to be reviewed and a proposed budget for 2024 to be sent back to the office.

I have reached out to Metronet to find out what the cost would be to switch to fiber internet. They stated that they have a target date of January 2024 to be available at our church address.

Otherwise the office is running smoothly as we move into the final quarter of 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

~ Michelle Wolfe, Office Manager

BOARD OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH & PROGRAMS REPORT

October 29th will be our annual Fall Festival. We're planning for another successful event, more details to come. Our Board will soon be decorating the crossroads entry.

Two of our Middle and High School youth are attending the R.Y.E. (Region Youth Event) along with 13 other participants in Cedar Rapids with the Collaborative Youth Group Friday October 27th - 29th.

Our church will be hosting the weekly Wednesday night youth events during the month of November.

Partners in Education activities with Bunger Middle School have resumed and October 24th is the student of the month luncheon.

Respectfully Submitted,

~ *Tim Ahrens, Chair*

BOARD OF SPIRITUAL LIFE & CARE REPORT

Thank you to the B of SLC for working together, being flexible and accomplishing what needs to happen to keep Sundays running smoothly. Thank you to Kyle for his support in set-up, clean up, ordering supplies and coming up with great ideas to keep things going. Sunday responsibilities are currently assigned through the end of November. A special thank you to the church for their willingness to assist when asked. Church members have volunteered as cookie bakers and will continue to be contacted to provide cookies and to help with Sunday mornings as needed. We are still in need of new B of SLC members.

Things are in place for Sunday morning duties and communion. Special thanks to Nancy Mahood for continuing to chair funeral meals with the support of our members. An August 25 Funeral was held in the church for a non-member.

We have connected active church members with our church family that is not able to attend services. Please reach out to our members if they need something in the absence of a minister. We continue to look for opportunities to bring members together and to support our members unable to attend church.

Thanks,

~ *Gina Greene, Chair*

BOARD OF CREATIVE MINISTRIES REPORT

Dave Allbaugh met with Nahyun from Hawkeye Community College to see about donating one of our unused pianos in the downstairs area to the college. They are probably not interested.

Chancel choir and Touch of Brass bell choir have both resumed their Thursday night rehearsals and worship offerings.

Hudson has a Brazilian friend, Sandro Silva, who is an accomplished pianist and organist living now on the US east coast. Hudson would like to bring him here for a concert of some type in the future. We have challenged Hudson and the Creative Ministries Board with determining a way we could use Sandro in our sanctuary and for the community besides a simple concert.

Hudson had been interested in providing a concert last spring, but scheduling complications didn't permit. We are looking for another possible date for Hudson to perform in conjunction with other local musicians, e.g. Suzuki Strings.

We are planning to offer the Bible readings again next year and will work with Greg Holt again. The contributing churches all seem to be interested in partnering again. There may be some changes made to create a more community feel to the event.

Maximum Sight & Sound of Waterloo has been contracted to furnish and install a new sound control board, three cameras, and a system for significantly upgrading our ability to provide a quality live-streamed service to the community. The new systems should be installed this month. The project will be funded by the Memorial Fund and the Goodrich Fund.

The choir will be participating in a Christmas Cantata with First Baptist and First Methodist this year. They will also be participating in the First Methodist Jazz Sunday next year again. A three choir event is planned for our congregation for our Music Sunday in May next year.

We are exploring the possibility of sharing used, but quality, instruments with those who are in need and interested in pursuing a musical instrument. We are first exploring existing programs and need in the community.

Future Ideas:

Carol Montag leading a worship service

Brazilian Twins retuning for a mission-based concert

Mark Pellemounter from Cedar Falls

Richard Bruxwoort Colligan from Twin Cities returning for worship

Celeste Bembry returning for another worship service and/or concert

Respectfully submitted,

~ *Paul Greene, Chair*

BOARD OF SOCIAL CAUSES & JUSTICE REPORT

The SC&J board continues to support and encourage the members of FCUCC to participate in a variety of mission projects in the neighborhood and the community.

We had 8 members walking for CROP Walk this year and we collected a total of \$625 from the walkers and the congregation. One-fourth of that money will stay in the community at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. The rest is donated to the Church World Service organization to combat hunger in needed locations.

We continue to have a monthly volunteer session at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. We typically have between 10-12 church members contributing 2 hours each month. Our next scheduled session is Oct 24 from 6-8pm. The Food Bank is looking for additional volunteers throughout the month. They are hosting an open house this month and we will continue to promote it whenever possible.

We plan to have our monthly Potlucks with a Purpose back up beginning in November 2023. Since November is Native American Awareness month, Leon Deal will be asked to lead the discussion at the potluck with his perspective. We are aiming for November 12 after church for the potluck.

We discussed the possibility of the SC&J board funding the purchase of t-shirts with the church logo on it. Since many of the activities involve community outreach and participation, it was determined to be a good cause for our funds. We will let Paul Greene know that we will fund the next round of orders.

We continue to have 3 representatives from our board at the Church Row Coalition monthly meetings. The coalition is planning another Clothing and Bedding Giveaway. We will continue to promote donations to church lobby until Thursday, Oct 26th, and look for volunteers to help with sorting clothes on Friday, Oct 27th at First Baptist church. The actual giveaway will be Saturday, Oct 28th in the morning. The Coalition also creates a monthly calendar of Community Meals that are provided. A copy of this calendar will be placed in the church lobby for reference.

Greg Hoekstra continues to be the board liaison for the Job Foundation, which is held at our church weekly.

Many members of our congregation participated in the Habitat for Humanity Sites & Bites tour of the Walnut neighborhood and Church Row neighborhood. We continue to promote and support Habitat building opportunities when they arise and look forward to being an active congregation in the new builds and renovations.

We continue to support the mission of Love INC by having drop boxes in our church lobby. The donation requests change monthly and will be mentioned in the Tidings and during worship to encourage congregational participation.

The Social Causes & Justice Board appreciates the participation and dedication of the congregation to ongoing projects in the community. We will be brainstorming and discussing new possibilities at our next meeting and providing more information as new projects emerge.

~ Diane Highnam, secretary

BOARD OF PHYSICAL RESOURCES REPORT

1. **Sanctuary:** Final “walk through” inspection was completed for Cardinal Construction's water damage repair of the sanctuary, the north foyer and the basement stairwell. This bill was paid in full.
2. **Chapel:** Double-pane thermal windows have been installed in the chapel by Steve Nowack Construction. Stained glass windows, which were removed for this task, were reinstalled by Peter Colver on these thermal windows in August.
3. **Stained Glass Window Repair:** Don Vanderhoff has refurbished and installed three more stained glass windows in the sanctuary. The bill for this work was paid in September. He removed the last two windows for repair. They will probably be ready in the spring of 2024.
4. **Over-flow Valve:** An over-flow valve was installed by Young Plumbing into the utility sink in the custodian’s closet on the second floor of GM.
5. **Bell Tower Roof:** A contract to repair the flat roof on the north bell tower was signed in September. The work will be completed this fall by **Service Roofing** of Waterloo.
6. **Front Doors:** Plans have been made for recovering the front doors on the south end of the sanctuary on 4th Street. Regal Plastic is cutting PVC panels for these doors. Cliff and Kyle will remove the existed doors, resurface and paint them using these panels, and reinstall them this fall.
7. **Repainting Cafeteria/lounge:** A quote from Corey's Painting was submitted for removing the decorative wall-paper trim that surrounds the cafeteria and painting the walls and the heat registers. That quote was accepted and this work will begin this fall with Cory’s to complete the work in about 10-12 days.
8. **Fall Clean-up.** Seven church members participated in a fall clean-up that involved raking leaves, spreading mulch and planting over 200 bulbs on the east side of the church along 4th Street.
9. **Boiler:** The boiler was lit on Friday 13, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

~ *Cliff Highnam, Chair*

GRIN & GROW (GROWING MINDS) REPORT

An event is being planned to promote the rebranding of Grin and Grow to Growing Minds Early Learning Center. No date has been set.

The staff and families served express their appreciation for the continued support of First Congregational Church.

Respectfully Submitted,

~ *Karen Jensen*

Endowment Committee

Unrestricted Fund

The Fund's assets were within the target ranges of 60% Equity and 40% Fixed Income and Cash. The actual values are 61.2% Equities, 36.8% Fixed Income and 2.0% Cash.

The Unrestricted Fund had a beginning balance of \$1,659,436.52, had income of \$13,718.11 (\$10,192.37 plus \$3,525.74 accrued), **loss of \$60,570.86** for a total **loss of \$48,852.75**. In addition, special bequest allocations of \$87,595.85 (Bainter \$31,961.67, Jacobs \$4,494.18, YEP \$25,570.00 and Stevens \$25,570.00) were also in the Unrestricted Fund.

We had withdrawals of \$4,500 for Section Lead Salaries and \$3,157.21 in Fees and Expenses) for a new balance of \$1,692,522.41.

This is a **decrease of 2.7%** before expenses; **-3.1%** overall. This compares to our benchmark of **-3.04%**. We are still **\$667,919.96** short of the total bequests of \$2,354,963.97.

Restricted Fund (Goodrich)

The Goodrich Fund is within the target ranges of 25% Equities and 75% Fixed Income and Cash. The actual distribution is 27.0% Equities, 71.1% Fixed Income and 1.9% Cash.

The Restricted Fund had a beginning balance of \$134,730.55 with income of \$1,196.83 (\$929.31 and accrual of \$267.52) with **loss of \$5,126.16** for a total **loss of \$3,929.33**

We had Fees and Expenses of **\$296.54** for a new balance of \$130,504.68.

This was a **decrease of 2.9%** before expenses and **-3.1%** overall. This compared to our benchmark of **-3.23%**. We were \$30,504.68 above the total bequest of \$100,000.00.

For the Endowment Committee,
Jim Stevenson, Chair