

Regular Meeting of the Congregation



ANNUAL REPORT

April 26, 2020



The First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ

106 N. Main Street, Oberlin OH 44074

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Firstchurchoberlin.org

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AGENDA

Call to Order
 Opening Prayer
 Report of the Nominating Committee
 Agenda Items from the floor
 Discussion
 Closing Song

Mike Schmid
 Rev. David T. Hill
 Karla Sanderson

Shalom

Shalom, my friends, shalom my friends. Shalom, shalom!
May peace be with you, may peace be with you. Shalom, shalom!

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ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE:

Our constitution specifies that "Regular Meetings of the Congregation shall be held, at times designated by the Executive Council, to ... receive the reports of the Standing Committees, and elect the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer, ... At any Congregational Meeting, fifty (50) member shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Members present shall have the right to vote." Due to the COVID-19 crisis and governmental edicts restricting large assemblies, we are unable to schedule a meeting requiring 50 or more people to meet. The Executive Council has voted to accept the recommendations of the Nominating Committee and authorize each appointment to "acting" status until those appointments can be voted on at a Congregational Meeting. Members with unexpired terms will continue to serve. We will announce a Regular Meeting as soon as one can safely be conducted in accordance with recommended practices.

Nominating Committee Report for the First Church in Oberlin, UCC • Congregational Annual Meeting—April, 26, 2020
NEW CANDIDATES (in bold and highlighted) as voted on by Executive Council as acting members, 3/25/2020

POSITION	CANDIDATES - new term beg. - 05/01/20	Term Start	Term exp.	Term Length	Eligible for re-election	Notes	OUTGOING members
Moderator	Schmid, Mike	2018	2022	2	N		Mike Schmid
Clerk	Gates, Linda	2019	2021	2	Y	(no term limit)	
Treasurer	Buck, Marty		2021	1	Y	(no term limit)	Marty Buck
Executive Council	Clark, Ruthann	2020	2023	3	Y		Flood, Dennis
	Sprague, Anne	2020	2023	3	Y		Preston, Dale
	Bandy, Rebecca	2015	2021	3	N	2 nd term	
	Conway, Anne	2018	2021	3	Y		
	Longworth, Carol	2019	2022	3	Y		
	Thompson, Ralph	2019	2022	3	Y		
Christian Education	Schaum, JJ	2017	2023	3	N	2nd term	Schaum, J.J.
	Wilburn, Drew	2020	2023	3	Y		Sprague, Anne
	Ring, Jen	2015	2021	3	N	2 nd term	
	Dakos, Jessica	2015	2021	3	N	Chair, 2 nd term	
	Campbell, Matt	2016	2022	3	N	2 nd term	
	Kepner, Val	2016	2022	3	N	2 nd term	
Facilities	Richards, Pete	2017	2023	3	N	Co-Chair, 2nd term	Richards, Pete
	Thompson, Rob	2017	2023	3	N	2nd term	Thompson, Rob
	Dakos, Stephen	2015	2021	3	N	2 nd term	
	Matthews, Gene	2015	2021	3	N	2 nd term, co-chair	
	Zwegat, Tina	2016	2022	3	N	2 nd term	
	Scheufler, David	2019	2022	3	Y		
Fellowship*	Matthews, Sandy	2020	2023	3	Y		Bolland, Janet
	Scotch, Denise	2019	2023	3	Y	2nd term	Scotch, Denise
	Scheufler, Janice	2018	2021	3	Y		
	Heard, Hannah	2018	2021	3	Y		
	Colson, Sarah	2019	2022	3	Y	Chair, filled vacancy	
	Velto, Margaret	2019	2022	3	Y		
Finance	Remster, Eric	2020	2022	3	Y		Andrews, Geoff
	Barlow, Bill	2020	2023	3	Y		Elder, John
	Schaum, Anne	2018	2021	3	Y	Chair, filled vacancy	
	TBD	2020	2022	3		EC – at large	Flood, Dennis
	Buck, Marty		2021	1		Treasurer	
	TBD	2020	2022	3		EC – at large	Preston, Dale
Ministerial Relations (appointed not nominated)	Al Sprague Ken Cheek Kristin Peterson Catherine Hoyle						

POSITION	NAME	Start Term	End Term	Term Length	Eligible for re-election	Notes	OUTGOING Members
Nominating	McKibben, Jeanne	2018	2022	2	N	2 nd term	
	Sanderson, Karla	2020	2022	2	Y	Chair	
	Longsworth, Bob	2020	2022	2	Y		
	Dakos, Jessica	2019	2021	2	Y		
	Schaum, Anne	2017	2021	2	N	2 nd term	
	Slocum, Harold	2017	2021	2	N	2 nd term	
Outreach and Service	Burke, Carol	2020	2023	3	Y		Gates, John
	Jacobson, Carl	2017	2023	3	N	2 nd term	Jacobson, Carl
	McKibben, Jeanne	2015	2021	3	N	2 nd term	
	Morris, Betty	2015	2021	3	N	2 nd term	
	Hampton, Tacie	2016	2022	3	N	2 nd term	
	Hall, Carol	2019	2022	3	Y		
Personnel (positions are appointed, not nominated)	Schmid, Mike	2018	2022			Moderator	
	Schaum, Anne	2019	2021			Finance	
	Conway, Anne	2019	2021			EC - at large	
	TBD	2020	2022			EC – at large	Preston, Dale
	Hill, Rev. David T.					Pastor	
Stewardship	Conway, Rollin	2017	2023	3	N	2 nd Term	Conway, Rollin
	Taylor, Tom	2019	2023	3	N	2 nd Term	Taylor, Tom
	Preston, Dale	2020	2021	3	Y	Filled Vacancy	OPEN
	Wettersten, Jill	2018	2021		Y		
	Gates, John	2020	2022	3	Y		OPEN
	Peterson, Kristin	2019	2022		Y		
Witness and Membership	Cheek, Ken	2017	2022	3	N	2 nd term	Cheek, Ken
	McDaniel, Mary	2017	2023	3	N	Chair, 2 nd term	McDaniel, Mary
	Wettersten, Vern	2018	2021		Y		
	Nelson, Mary	2015	2021		N	2 nd term	
	Orr, Elaine	2014	2022		N	2 nd term	
	Slocum, Linda	2014	2022		N	2 nd term	
Worship	Davis, Barbara	2020	2023	3	Y		Kerchner, Jody
	Slocum, Harold	2017	2023	3	N	2 nd term	Slocum, Harold
	Hayes, Ardith	2019	2021	3	Y	Filled vacancy	
	Thompson, Becky	2018	2021		Y	Chair	
	Peterson, Marci	2017	2022		Y		
	Harvey, Carol	2017	2022		Y		

*Note: Deidre Gargasz is the point person for funeral/memorial receptions

**Report of the Moderator
Michael Schmid
2019-2020**

“Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore, we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore, we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore, we must be saved by love.” Reinhold Niebuhr

“In everything the purpose must weigh with the folly.” Shakespeare: Henry IV, Part II, ii. 2

Here we sit literally waiting to restart our lives as individuals and as a congregation. Nevertheless, I believe we restarted First Church in Oberlin a year ago at the close of the sabbatical period and the start of this new congregational year marked by our annual meeting. We do not know when we will be able to conduct our annual meeting, but we have resolved to continue as if we had met and agreed to go forward, pending congregational approval.

Thanks to those who have accepted the new positions on our committees and the Executive Council. Your willingness to contribute while restricted at home is commendable.

This past year, our congregation endorsed the challenge of the Capital Campaign for the Future and successfully raised funds allowing us to pursue long delayed plans to renovate and refresh our tired facilities. Little did we know at the time that had we not pursued the campaign, collected a significant portion of the promised gifts, and placed the proceeds in safe, liquid financial assets, we would have missed the opportunity now closed by the virus induced economic panic.

Thanks to those that dreamed, looked to the past and the future for inspiration, organized and planned. Thanks to those who boldly believed we could ask for and receive the needed funding. Thanks to each of you that pledged. Thanks to those who implemented and managed the resulting projects. Thanks to all of you who have assisted in many ways to keep us moving forward.

So what does folly have to do with these notable efforts? Well, for every fix, we seemed to find another broken item. We demolished walls and discovered that we lacked insulation. We replaced windows and suffered water damage from failed steam pipes and leaking roofs. We pulled carpets and discovered asbestos. It is folly to think this process is ever complete.

And yet we move forward with a new view to Oberlin. First Church now looks east with a welcoming terrace, multiple new entrance doors and accessible entryways. We have announced to the community and college that we are alive and growing and here to serve. We have preserved the history reflected in our sandstone steps and have built new ways to share our faith with Oberlin and the world. I look forward to rejoining this community with you together in our reconfigured Meeting House whenever that may happen.

2020 Annual Report from the Clerk

REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION:

Minutes of the two regular meetings of the congregation of First Church are included:

- May 5, 2019, Regular Meeting of the Congregation Presentation of Annual Report and Report from the Nominating Committee with recommendations for appointments to Standing Committees for May 2019-May 2020;
- February 9, 2020, Regular Meeting of the Congregation for the presentation of the 2020 budget and appointment of the Nominating Committee.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE CONGREGATION AND/OR THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Since the May 5, 2019 regular meeting of the congregation, the Executive Council of First Church met on May 28, 2019, June 25, 2019, August 28, 2019, September 25, 2019, October 29, 2019, November 26, 2019, December 17, 2019, January 14, 2020, February 18, 2020, and on March 25, 2020, which took place by Zoom, due to physical distancing mandated because of the global coronavirus pandemic. Resolutions passed by the congregation and the Executive Council of First Church between May 5, 2019 and April 2020 follow:

(Correction to 2019 Annual Report: Note that the resolutions numbered (2018-25) through (2018-28) in the 2019 Annual report have been changed by the Clerk to (2019-01) through (2019-04). The text of those resolutions is unchanged.)

Resolutions passed by the Congregation and Executive Council May 5, 2019 to April 1, 2020: Regular Meeting of the Congregation, May 5, 2019:

(2019-05) RESOLVED, May 5, 2019, to accept the report of the Nominating Committee. **Motion:** Gene Matthews. **Second:** Mary McDaniel. The congregation voted unanimously by voice vote to accept the report.

(2019-06) RESOLVED, May 5, 2019, WHEREAS, the rental house is operating, at best, on a break even basis,

WHEREAS, the rental house will soon need significant expenditure to replace or repair existing systems,

WHEREAS, the tax liability for the rental house has significantly increased,

WHEREAS, the Executive Council has accepted recommendation of the Finance Committee,

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the First Church in Oberlin (UCC) to proceed with the demolition of the rental house at the earliest possible date after the last tenant vacates the property.

Motion: Bruce Gargas. **Second:** Dave Browne
The congregation voted unanimously by voice vote to accept the resolution.

Meetings of the Executive Council

(2019-07) RESOLVED, September 25, 2019, pursuant to a duly made, seconded and unanimously carried motion, the Executive Council of the First Church in Oberlin United Church of Christ (hereinafter referred to as First Church) adopted the following measure and resolution:

Resolved, that the Minister of First Church is hereby authorized to establish for and in behalf of the Corporation a revolving credit line in the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), from the NorthwestBank (hereinafter referred to as Bank) on the terms set out in the Revolving Credit Agreement prepared by said Bank and attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Resolved, that the Office Manager of First Church is hereby authorized to establish for and in behalf of the Corporation a revolving credit line in the sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000), from the Northwest Bank (hereinafter referred to as Bank) on the terms set out in the Revolving Credit Agreement prepared by said Bank and attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Resolved, the Treasurer of First Church is hereby authorized to certify that certifies that he or she is the duly appointed Treasurer of the First Church and that the above is a true, accurate, and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted at a meeting of the Executive Council of First Church thereof, convened and held in accordance with the Constitution of First Church on September 25, 2019, and that such resolution is now in full force and effect.

Motion: Carol Longsworth. **Second:** Rebecca Bandy. The resolution passed unanimously.

(2019-08) RESOLVED, October 29, 2019, that the EC approve the following appointments to fill committee vacancies: Stewardship: Tom Taylor; Facilities: Rob Thompson; Fellowship: Janet Bolland.

Motion: Dennis Flood. **Second:** Carol Longsworth. Approval was unanimous.

(2019-09) RESOLVED, December 17, 2019, that Gene Mathews be authorized to seek competitive bids from other fire alarm companies. **Motion:** Rebecca Bandy. **Second:** Dennis Flood. Approval was unanimous.

(2019-10) RESOLVED, December 17, 2019, that all of the pews on the ground floor and in choir area of the balcony have new pew cushions. **Motion:** Dennis Flood. **Second:** Dale Preston. Approval was unanimous.

(2019-11) RESOLVED, December 17, 2019, that the Facilities Committee look into recycling solutions for the discarded cushions. **Motion:** Carol Longsworth **Second:** Dennis Flood. Approval was unanimous.

(2019-12) RESOLVED, December 17, 2019, that \$24,000 of the minister's 2020 salary be designated as a housing allowance. **Motion:** Mike Schmid. **Second:** Dennis Flood. The motion passed unanimously at the January 14, 2020 meeting of the EC.

Regular Meeting of the Congregation, February 9, 2020

(2020-01) RESOLVED, February 9, 2020, to accept the proposed 2020 budget, as recommended by the Executive Council.

Motion: Dave Browne. **Second:** Gene Matthews
The motion passed unanimously.

(2020-02) RESOLVED, February 9, 2020, that the slate proposed by the Executive Council be approved by the congregation of First Church.
The motion passed unanimously.

(2020-03) RESOLVED, February 9, 2019, that First Church endorses raising additional funding from the Congregation and the wider Community and endorses expenditures for completion of the original Project scope of work and the Supplement Project based on the use of existing funds and pledges to be collected.

Motion: Margaret Gueulette. **Second:** Diana Steele. The motion passed unanimously.

Meetings of the Executive Council

(2020-04) RESOLVED, February 18, 2020, that \$24,000 of the minister's 2019 salary be designated as a housing allowance.

Motion: Dale Preston. **Second:** Carol Longsworth. The motion passed unanimously.

(2020-05) Resolution to secure a loan from Cornerstone Fund RESOLVED, February 18, 2020, that the First Church in Oberlin proceed at once to enter into a loan agreement in an amount not to exceed \$800,000; and that Martin Buck, Treasurer, and/or Michael Schmid, Moderator, be authorized and instructed to attend to all details involved in this building enterprise.

Motion: Ralph Thompson. **Second:** Rebecca Bandy. Approval was unanimous

(2020-06) Resolution to establish credit cards to three (3) staff members of First Church:

RESOLVED, February 18, 2020, pursuant to a duly made, seconded and unanimously carried motion, the Executive Council of the First Church in Oberlin United Church of Christ (hereinafter referred to as First Church) adopted the following measure and resolution:

RESOLVED, that David T. Hill, Minister of First Church, is hereby authorized to establish for and in behalf of First Church a credit card with a limit of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), from the Northwest Bank (hereinafter referred to as Bank) on the terms set out in the Revolving Credit Agreement prepared by said Bank and attached to the minutes of this meeting.

RESOLVED, that Diana Pierson, Office Manager of First Church, is hereby authorized to establish for and in behalf of First Church a credit card with a limit of two thousand dollars (\$2,000), from the Northwest Bank (hereinafter referred to as Bank) on the terms set out in the Credit Card Agreement prepared by said Bank and attached to the minutes of this meeting.

RESOLVED, that Jennifer Bertoni, Director of Faith Formation, is hereby authorized to establish for and in behalf of First Church a credit card with a limit of one thousand (\$1000), from the Northwest Bank (hereinafter referred to as Bank) on the terms set out in the Credit Card Agreement prepared by said Bank and attached to the minutes of this meeting.

RESOLVED, that the total limit on the credit cards issued will not exceed four thousand dollars (\$4,000).

RESOLVED, that Martin L. Buck, Treasurer of The First Church in Oberlin, UCC, is hereby authorized to certify that he is the duly appointed Treasurer of the First Church and that the above is a true, accurate, and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted at a meeting of the Executive Council of First Church thereof, convened and held in accordance with the Constitution of First Church on February 18, 2020 and that such resolution is now in full force and effect.

Motion: Dennis Flood. **Second:** Dale Preston. Approval was unanimous.



Christian Education Committee

The Christian Education Committee met on the third Monday of most months and consisted of the following members: Brandy Bring, Commissioned Minister of Faith Formation- Through Feb 2020; Jen Bertoni, Faith Formation- Started March 2020; Jessica Dakos, Chair; Anne Sprague; Matt Campbell; Val Kepner; J.J. Schaum; Jen Ring; and Rebecca Bandy—liaison to Executive Council

The biggest change this year was the transition from Brandy Bring to Jen Bertoni. We said our goodbye to one and have welcomed the next. Jen started right before the COVID-19 pandemic started. This forced the curriculum to go online. Faith formation hour is the time following worship on Sunday morning. This year it included Sunday school and occasional adult education.

We continued our approach for Sunday school that we started last year. During worship, children went to Children's Church which is a worship service designed specifically for them. Sunday school was held after church during our faith formation hour. Brandy Bring wrote the curriculum to follow the rotation style of Sunday school. Kids studied the same scripture text for a whole month while learning about it using art, games, science, music, drama, and cooking. This curriculum was designed to align with the Sunday worship service along with the children churches message.

Teachers/Helpers: Art: Kris Carter and Mary McDaniel Drama and Cooking: Laura Slocum and Rebecca Bandy. Games: Anne Schaum and Heather Torres Science: Marleen Caldwell and Val Kepner Music: Mary Ann Kershaw and Sarah Colson

The Nursery was staffed by Miranda Schaum and Jai Cunningham.

This year we have reviewed and modified our adult education schedule. We took a survey to help use these times in a more meaningful way. We received about 25 responses from a variety of congregants and used this data to evaluate the past curriculum. We chose to do this now because, due to the construction, the JFO room was unavailable for these events. In the fall of 2019 we did hold Adult Ed in Fellowship Hall and had community members and church members talk about a variety of topics. Some sort of regular adult education will continue in the fall of 2020.

The Friday Night Hangout (K-5th) continues to go strong meeting the first Friday of each month from 6:30-8:00pm. This was led by Brandy Bring and Robin Jindra was the helper until Jen Bertoni took over in March. Friday night hangout meets from Oct-April.

Our middle and high school students enjoyed fellowship at monthly youth group gatherings the 4th Sunday of the month. The students met in the evenings, 6:00 8:00pm. J.J. Schaum, Jessica Dakos, and Brandy Bring supervised these gatherings.

The summer of 2019 included a church wide canoe trip to Mohican. We also sent 7 kids to summer camp.

Some highlights of our year of fellowship, education, and service include:

- August: Family Canoe Trip at Mohican, Pool party for children and youth at the Koos home
- September: Welcome Back Sunday, Bible Presentation
- October: UNICEF collection, Youth Corn Maze
- November: Pumpkin roll sale, Shopping for Giving Tree Family
- December: Advent Workshop; Youth Christmas Party, Christmas pageant
- January: Family Camp
- February: Souper Bowl Collection; Altitude Trampoline Park Night for families, Snow Tubing; Goodbye celebration for Brandy Bring

- March: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
- April: Easter Sunday Easter egg hunt
- May: Whirlyball youth outing
- June: End of School Picnic with Fellowship Committee; Teacher and Graduation Recognition

As we add more families and young people to the First Church family, the need for strong programs such as these, with activities and growth opportunities for different age groups, becomes more and more important. The CE committee appreciates the capable leadership and all those who contribute to the success of our programs.

Respectfully submitted—Jessica Dakos, Christian Education Committee Chair

Facilities Committee

2019 was a very busy year for the Facilities Committee. Much of the committee's work was involved in supporting the Capital Campaign projects. There were many components such as pre-construction testing and surveys that needed to be completed prior to the start of work. The heating and cooling systems, and their controls, throughout the facilities are old and in need of repair. New, digital thermostats have been installed, projects to replace faulty components in the hot water heating system were initiated in the Fall of 2019. Some of those projects are scheduled to be completed this spring.

An aged and incompatible electric service was added to the Capital Campaign project list as well as an old and non-supported Fire Alarm system. The electric service conversion was completed in the spring, and the Fire Alarm replacement will be completed later this year.

In the fall it was discovered, as part of the JFO renovation, that none of the 1967 addition was insulated. Facilities funded the insulation project which was completed in December.

In addition to the items listed below the Facilities Committee has addressed multiple day to day issues, such as door security, power concerns, heating and cooling concerns, and lighting concerns, that arise on a regular basis. Many of these issues have been addressed by Facilities Committee members on a same day basis.

Below is a month by month list of the major projects that have been addressed.

January	Environmental, Site, and Geo Tech Surveys Hearing Loop Phase 1
February	Replace strainer on heating system piping
March	Narthex Painting Purchased new digital thermostats
April	Purchased 2 round tables for Fellowship Hall
May	Made repairs to dishwasher
June	Completed Ohio Historic Preservation Commission funded project to repair and refurbish all windows in the Meeting House, and complete masonry repairs on the North wall of the Meeting House.
July	Researched contractors for demolition/deconstruction of rental house.
August	Purchased 4 round tables for Fellowship Hall
September	Repaired Fellowship Hall North entrance door Repaired hinges on North JFO Room doors
October	Painted Men's restroom in Meeting House basement

- November** Painted women's restroom in Meeting House basement
 Installed Hearing Loop in JFO and Fellowship Hall
 Replaced closers on north entrance doors to Meeting House
 Supported Tyler Gargaz' Eagle Scout project to renovate 2nd Fl. closet in James Brand House.
- December** Replaced speakers in Fellowship Hall
 Insulated the exterior walls and ceilings of JFO, Fellowship Hall, kitchen, and both restrooms.
 Replaced faulty controls on ovens in Kitchen.
 Cleaned out and added additional storage in custodial room (Room 5), donated Television, cart, VCR, wheelchairs and walkers to Oberlin Senior Center.
 Set up storage for extra parts and materials from renovation project. Built new racks for mops and brooms.
 Had facilities cleanout day throughout the complex
 Phase I of window replacement in James Brand House

Respectfully submitted—Gene Matthews and Peter Richards, Facilities Committee Co-chairs

Fellowship Committee

The Fellowship Committee began the year with revised guidelines from the Executive Council. The Council believes that providing Fellowship opportunities to the congregation is a vital mission in First Church. Previous Fellowship members had raised the concern, however, that a robust calendar of Fellowship events had become too difficult for a small committee to handle. In response, the Council suggested that the work of the Committee be to plan and organize fellowship events, then reach out to the larger congregation to provide resources and labor to bring these events to fruition. We followed these new guidelines and are pleased to report that members of the congregation did join in to support our efforts. In the future we plan to expand our efforts to ask for help from the wider congregation for Fellowship events.

Our first event of the year was the welcome back potluck in September. The event was held outside and the congregation provided delicious and plentiful food. Just before Halloween we hosted a pumpkin carving event with all pumpkins donated by a local farmer. This was a very inter-generational event with a total of 30 - 40 in attendance. In early December we partnered with the Christian Education Committee on the Advent Workshop. Members of the congregation signed up to provide soup and/or bread. There were a wide range of soups, including vegetarian and gluten-free options. For Epiphany Sunday, members of the congregation signed up to provide traditional King's cake for fellowship time following the service. Volunteers dressed as the Three Kings hid in the church and the children searched for them. By February we were holding worship services in Fellowship Hall while extensive renovation was occurring in the Meeting House. For the Everybody's Birthday Luncheon, volunteers for each month provided a cake (or other confection) and decorated their table prior to the worship service. We moved directly from worship to a luncheon of loaded baked potatoes provided by the Committee. Members of the Committee and congregation provided a variety of toppings.

Future events are now on hold due to the uncertainty created by the coronavirus pandemic and the State of Ohio order that requires us all to remain in our homes. We had scheduled a major kitchen cleaning on May 2 and an end-of-the-year picnic in early June. As I write this report, I know we all pray for the day we are once again able to meet in fellowship and in person.

Respectfully submitted—Sarah Colson, Fellowship Committee Chair

Finance Committee

As reported last year, our financial picture has not changed; First Church is spending more than is taken in by a significant amount. We benefitted from strong performance of the stock market and contributions from people who included the church in estate gifts. The ongoing capital campaign work and diligent oversight by our Facilities committee helped reduce operating campaign expenses. However, the situation remains that our current revenue and expense patterns are unsustainable. We did open a Line of Credit to provide a source of revenue for the capital campaign to cover immediate expenses as the pledges come in over the next few years. We used the UCC's own Cornerstone fund for the line. The line was first needed in February 2020.

In previous reports the Finance Committee has spoken candidly about the power of endowment and how best to draw upon endowed resources, projecting endowment longevity based upon two assumptions. The first is that an endowment, over time, should return about 7% annually, though there is substantial variation within and among years. The second assumption is that a draw on that endowment of 4.5% annually is considered a healthy draw – the remaining 2.5% of the average growth gets reinvested as a hedge against inflation, and thus the endowment will sustain the same purchasing power in perpetuity. From 2009-2019, the average yield of the endowment has exceeded 7% - substantially in some years. Corrections happen, and the current COVID crisis has certainly brought a correction. In the first quarter of 2020, the Dow Jones tumbled over 30%, and the S&P fell 25%. So, while the First Church endowment fell 21.75%, that is better than it could have been. And over the long haul, the endowment is still performing in line with long term assumptions.

The committee made several decisions and changes this year, including recommending to Executive Council that we “deconstruct” the rental house; the building is now vacant. Should funding allow, the project would become part of the work funded by the capital campaign. To improve transparency, the committee asked Marty to close several obsolete budget lines (e.g., the Preschool) and to move other items in to the annual operating budget (e.g., Wednesday Night Supper). As a security measure, we moved from using debit cards to credit cards for approved employees. We moved the Office Manager to bimonthly salary payments rather than monthly. In addition, the committee feels it is important that we conduct a regular audit, but realized that we needed to overhaul the Financial Policies & Procedures Policy. Marty Buck, our Treasurer decided that, after years of service as both Treasurer and Bookkeeper, it is time to separate the duties. Beginning in 2020, the Treasurer is now a volunteer position that oversees both the Financial Secretary (who handles all pledges and revenue) and the Bookkeeper (who handles all expenditures). Finally, we introduced a new, documented procedure for collection of all cash and checks each week using the Tellers.

As with all functions of our faith family, the work of the Finance Committee is reliant upon an army of volunteers and workers. I offer profound thanks to the committee members themselves (including Geoff Andrews, Marty Buck, John Elder, Dennis Flood, and Dale Preston); to our Moderator, Mike Schmid, who attended all of our meetings; to the people who stepped in as Tellers on Sunday mornings; to Tom Taylor who agreed to serve as Bookkeeper (and rejected the allotted stipend); and to our Financial Secretary and generally amazing Office Manager, Diana Pierson, whose return has shed new light and hope on our organized record keeping.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Schaum, Finance Committee Chair



Christian Outreach and Service

During the church calendar year, May 2019 to May 2020, First Church contributed \$61,259 to organizations and individuals engaged in progressive social action endeavors. The recipients of our financial support are divided into eight categories: the UCC denomination (First Church contributed \$35,329 dollars through OCWM), the city of Oberlin, the county of Lorain, the state of Ohio, the U.S.A., the international community, and one individual (Jane Mathison).

In addition to the benevolences listed above, the CO&S committee engaged in a number of social action activities:

- October sponsorship of the Oberlin Candidates Night at First Church.
- Three Adult Education presentations:
 - “What First Church Is Doing with Regard to Sanctuary” by the Ad-Hoc Committee on Sanctuary
 - A presentation by HOLA OHIO Executive Director Veronica Dahlberg. HOLA OHIO is a grassroots organization empowering the Latinx Community in Northeastern and Northcentral Ohio through organizing, civic engagement, education, leadership development, legal support, and bonding.
 - October 16, after Wednesday Night Supper, “Voices of Expression on the Death Penalty”, a program to raise awareness on the unjust nature of capital punishment.
- In January 2020, the committee held two letter writing sessions to support DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients. Letters were sent to Senators Brown and Portman, and Congressman Jordan.
- In March, the committee sponsored a presentation by Jane Mathison and Lisa Thuer about their experiences at the Texas/Mexico border and in Mexico providing clothes, food, and medicine for adults and children in detention centers.

The committee had arranged for a “Folk Music” concert on April 02, 2020 to support the work of HOLA OHIO, but this program had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Throughout the fall, winter, and spring until mid-March, members of the committee and the church provided transportation for local undocumented immigrants to medical, legal, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) appointments, and Immigration Court hearings in Cleveland and Detroit.

Finally, throughout much of this year, members of the committee, the church, and the Quaker Meeting participated in vigils at ICE and immigration offices in Cleveland to protest deportations that were taking place without affording the deportees due process required by U.S. law.

Respectfully submitted,
John Gates—Outreach and Service Chair



Stewardship Committee

Members of the Stewardship Committee for 2019-2020 are: Rollin Conway, Kristin Peterson, Tom Taylor, and Jill Wettersten, with special thanks to Brian Carter, Laurel Price Jones, and Laura Slocum who served on the committee for part of the year. Ralph Thompson is the current liaison from the Executive Council; thanks to Dennis Flood, liaison early in the year. Financial Secretary, Diana Pierson, and Treasurer, Marty Buck, provided the data for this report. **The table below has been updated since January 2020 to reflect all changes as of April 20th.**

“First Things First” was the theme for our 2019 fall stewardship campaign because we felt compelled to put “first things first” by expressing appreciation to the members of the congregation for being generous and faithful stewards of their time, talent, and treasure. Not only did the congregation support the 2019 general operating budget, they also contributed generously to the special “Sabbatical Fund,” and showed overwhelming support for the 2019 capital “Campaign for the Future.” First Church is blessed by faithful and generous stewards – thank you!

Since the primary goal of the campaign was to seek pledges for the 2020 operating budget, “First Things First” emphasized three areas of programming that simply cannot happen without the congregation’s on-going support of the annual budget: (1) Outreach and Service, (2) Children’s Ministry and Faith Formation, and (3) Facilities and Preservation. Not only does our faithful support for the operating budget enable these important ministries, it also helps preserve the First Church endowment by minimizing the amount withdrawn to close the gap between our income and expenses. So, our giving to the annual budget provides for our current needs and helps guarantee the future.

	Total pledged	Number of pledges	Increased	Same as previous	Decreased or no pledge	New
2020	\$282,416	92	36	37	Decreased=8 No pledge=18	10

Witness and Membership Committee

The year our greatest joy was having three “Inquirer’s” events in March, October and January and welcoming twelve new members. We continue to reach out to those who come to worship. The Welcome Table plays a significant role in providing a link between visitors and the church.

The committee has made an effort to strengthen relationships with folks unable to attend church by writing notes, visiting, emailing or occasional phone calls. In the past note cards made by members of our congregation from Kendal have been available at the Welcome Table to make it easy for people to respond to a prayer request for someone who has had surgery, an injury, an illness or experienced the loss of a loved one. We hope to reinstate that connection with Kendal residents in the Memory Center. Blank cards, church book marks and seasonally daily devotionals are available at the Welcome Table.

The committee had heard a number of inquiries about daily devotionals. Thus, the committee purchased 30 copies of the UCC Advent Daily Devotionals which people could purchase. In January, Ralph Thompson attended our meeting to suggest having church members write their own devotional to share during Lent. We decided to have one for Maundy Thursday and the six Sundays of Lent. Each week one was published in Sunday’s bulletin and in the E-News. All were very well received.



Thank you, Ralph for sharing the idea and for bring it to fruition. Hopefully we can add to that group of devotionals next Lenten season.

Diana Pierson has facilitated the updating of Church Windows data and we are most grateful for her attention to detail and leadership in this area. In addition she has made it possible for all of us to have the church directory available on our phones. That is very helpful when writing notes or visiting a member at home.

Since people are required to stay at home during this Coronavirus pandemic, the Witness and Membership

committee has been working hard to keep connected with church friends through notes, emails or phone calls. We miss gathering with folks in person but recognize the importance of sheltering at home. When we return to our regular meetings in person, we will be discussing the book: Tell It Like It Is: Reclaiming the practice of Testimony by Lillian Daniel.

Committee members are: Ken Cheek, Mary McDaniel (chair), Mary Nelson, Elaine Orr, Linda Slocum (secretary), Vern Wettersten and Anne Conway (Ex Council liason)

Respectfully submitted—Mary McDaniel, Witness and Membership Committee Chair

Worship Committee

Committee Members: Carol Harvey, Ardith Hayes, David Hill, Jody Kerchner, Marci Peterson, Harold Slocum, and Becky Thompson, Ad Hoc member: Prue Richards, Liaison: Carol Longsworth, Guest: Thomas Bandy

Jody Kerchner served as the Worship Committee Chair through November 2019. Our Worship Committee has expressed much thanks to Jody for her informed, committed, and insightful leadership.

The Worship Committee has experienced a meaningful, inspiring, challenging, and productive year as we have sought to enhance the experience of worship among congregants, and be more inclusive and diverse in aspects of our worship service. We are seeking to be aware of our faith experience and commitment as we begin our Worship Committee meetings with prayer.

The Worship Committee responded to William Davis' letter of resignation with a letter of acknowledgement of and appreciation for his dedicated service to First Church. Ann Sprague collaborated with a couple of Worship Committee members to spearhead First Church's reception for Bill, on May 12th. A few members of the Worship Committee joined a larger church search committee for the next Director of Music, a person who would honor and continue First Church's tradition of musical excellence while also exploring additional ways to be inclusive and diverse in musical contributions that support congregational worship experiences. After a nation-wide search and an interview process, Dr. Thomas Bandy was selected to serve as Director of Music in addition to his organist responsibilities. Tom Bandy's contract, as Director of Music, was formalized in August, 2019.

The Worship committee has supported Tom in striving for greater participation of the congregation during worship. The Worship Committee reviewed, discussed, and modified all music staff descriptions. All music staff signed new contracts.

Throughout the spring, we focused on the nature and quality of our worship experience, and continued to explore ways we might more fully experience meaningful worship through the integration of varied musical genres – the traditional, the new, and that which is multicultural. We accessed one of the songs offered in the Amanda Powell Workshop, and shared it in Worship on March 31st and on Palm and Passion Sunday. We have been intentional about seeking to co-create a worship experience that has embraced a “broad arc” (David Hill) of the old, the new, and the many. David has continued contact with Amanda Powell and the committee is discerning how we might move forward with her.

The Worship Committee asked questions of, received feedback from, and met with several worship support persons responsible for functional aspects of services, e.g. communion set up, liturgy, sound system, ushering, greeting, unlocking and locking of doors, and the medical safety of congregants, as we sought to learn about their experience in serving and how we might best support them. We acknowledged Prue’s continued presence at Worship Committee meetings and her work to organize the sacristy and visually prepare our place of Worship. We continue to work on ways of encouraging the involvement of the congregation in these areas, including ways to provide orientation to the tasks. We accessed the tradition of Las Posadas as our Advent focus. The Worship Committee, in collaboration with several other committees, individuals, and the Worship Committee Sub-committee, collaborated in creating Advent services of Worship that explored themes of homelessness, immigration, seeking, denial, welcome, and celebration. The Worship Committee received significant positive feedback from congregants surrounding Advent and the Focus on Las Posadas: Committee members too, reported having found the experience of Advent and Las Posadas to have been especially meaningful to them: One person shared that “the lead up to and the experience of Las Posadas was a highlight in so many ways.”

In January, the Worship Committee actively supported the transition of the Worship Service into the Fellowship Hall. This work was greatly enhanced by a member who in detail spatially organized the room and adjusted it depending on the needs of the upcoming Worship service. We later invited congregants, via written responses, to answer the question: “One thing you like about the worship experience in Fellowship Hall?” Congregants most often reported liking the increased experience of being close together, community, seeing one-another face-to-face and knowing who is here, and having the choir in our midst. We have continued to be interested in and have discussed the worship experience of congregants and ourselves, as we have been traveling through the seasons of the church year, e.g. our inspiration in the use of darkness, light, and scripture on Christmas Eve., the richness of our congregational prayer-time, and the enhanced experience of community that congregants are expressing.

For much of our year, we have created sub-committees that have participated with David in planning for Advent, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, the Lenten Season, and Easter Worship. A committee member has acknowledged that David’s openness to the ideas of the Worship Committee and Sub-Committees has greatly impacted our connection with and sharing of our own worship experiences. We are continuing to meet as the entire Worship Committee, and as sub-committees, as we transition into the challenges and possibilities of worship via livestreaming. We have reflected on and responded to the written questions David has asked of us regarding our experience, via the livestreaming, of worship. A recent congregant’s response to the livestreaming of Worship has been that David, Jen, and Tom continue to help create a “warm and connected feeling.”

The Committee continues to reflect together on ways we might enhance the congregation’s experience of worship: We are now specifically focused on ways we can facilitate the upcoming transition from worship in the Fellowship Hall to worship in the Meeting House.

Respectfully submitted—Becky Thompson, Worship Committee Chair

Pastor's Report—Rev. David T. Hill

What a difference a year makes. At this time last year we were emerging from a time of sabbatical and entering into a new era as pastor and congregation. We were wrapping up a successful capital campaign in preparation for some major renovations to our church facility. We imagined a “year of discovery” as we explored a renewed sense of what it means to be the church. Change was expected but I don’t think anyone, myself included, imagined the degree of change we’ve experience in just one year.

In May, we celebrated the music ministry of Bill Davis upon his retirement. With the return of college students in the Fall, we welcomed Tom Bandy as our new Director of Music. As October passed into November we were blessed with the return of Diana Pierson as our Office Manager. With the coming of the new year we prepared to say goodbye to our Commissioned Minister for Faith Formation and Youth, Brandy Bring as she embarked on a new vocation. In our final few weeks of worshiping together before Ohio’s “stay at home” order we became acquainted with Jen Bertoni, our new Director of Faith Formation. Between the end of the sabbatical and the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic we navigated three major staffing transitions.

Change came not just in the form of staffing but also to the very core of our ministry: worship. New and renewed worship leadership brought change to the look, feel, and sound of worship as we leaned into anticipated changes to the Meeting House. While construction in other parts of the building necessitated some altered use of the building we were at least able to continue to gather on Sunday in our customary fashion. At the end of 2019, however, with the first phase of construction complete, renovations began in the Meeting House and Sunday worship moved to the Fellowship Hall. In that space we rediscovered the joy of greater physical closeness and spiritual intimacy. Just as we were anticipating moving into a newly renovated Meeting House Covid-19 took hold and we found ourselves fumbling with technology to connect to live streamed services from the pastor’s living room. In less than three months’ time our expectations and experiences of “where” worship occurs moved from grand auditorium to social hall to our individual homes.

There is tremendous comfort and strength in familiar patterns and known ways of being in the world. Change, while inevitable and often valuable, is also unsettling and exhausting. All of us depend on some perceived certainties in life to remain grounded. Scripture reveals, however, a God who has a known proclivity for shaking things up as a means of re-creation, renewal, and transformation. Yet even as God’s dynamic Spirit works with us, through us and upon us, we are assured of God’s love and constant presence. Knowing that even while God is stirring the pot God’s love for us is unwavering allows us to bend and adapt rather than become uprooted. One of the greatest gifts of faith is resiliency.

Even as Covid-19 forces us to surrender to changes beyond our control God remains with us refashioning even this crisis into an opportunity for greater connectedness. One of the lessons of the sabbatical that several parishioners have shared with me was the sense that “we are all in this together.” As we move through these uncertain times, we do so together: together as a congregation and pastor; together as a people called by God; together in the faith that, come what may, God is with us. I look forward to continuing to journey with you into a year of not just challenge and change but promise and hope. May this time in the wilderness of physical separation lead us to a richer sense of relationship both with one another and with the God we worship.

Director of Faith Formation—Jennifer Bertoni

It's certainly been a fascinating first six weeks!

I'm incredibly grateful that I was able to join in worship with you on March 8th, as it was vital to be able to have one service to meet folks before Worship went remote. Having that face-to-face time has made connecting remotely much easier.

Quite a bit of my time in the church this first few weeks has been spent redecorating and decluttering the Children's Church, Nursery, and Classroom spaces, which had gotten somewhat disorganized during the construction process. This process is ongoing - Music Room next! - but I can't wait for you to see and use the spaces. I'm curious about expanding their use beyond Sunday mornings! Our supplies are also in the process of being organized, and it will hopefully be easier in the future to pull from the supplies we have before purchases are made.

Since worship has gone remote, the families were contacted to ask how they would like to receive Children's Church and Faith Formation resources. The consensus was that a weekly written resource was the best way to do this. So for now, the Children's Church resource is available on Sunday, and the Faith Formation weekly resource goes out on Monday. We are also offering a storytime on alternate Wednesdays at noon, and a Youth hangout alternate Fridays at 7:30 - both via Zoom. I am open to other ideas about connecting.

As we move forward through this crazy year as a faith community, I know it will bring great joy to celebrate some of the milestone days we are now postponing. It may mean an egg hunt at the summer picnic, but we'll try to get it all in!

Summer will hopefully mean a return to camp. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Templed Hills! If you don't end up going to camp, fear not - we will be planning some activities around here as well.

As Fall approaches, I'll be looking forward to starting some adult education classes. We have tentatively talked about a class/practicum on spiritual practices, or possibly a study of the book of Revelation. I invite anyone with ideas about topics to share them with me. I am curious to know what you wish to know more about!

We will hopefully be ready to resume Sunday School in the Fall. I will be talking with the Christian Ed. team to find out what's worked well in the past, and to pick a curriculum that fits our kids and focuses on the stories we feel should form the core of their faith.

It's been an honor to get to know many of you as I begin to serve this congregation. I hope to continue getting to know you in person soon!

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Bertoni

Report on The Capital Campaign for First Church—April 1, 2020

As of today, the Campaign for First Church has secured a total of \$1,265,680 in new gifts and pledges from 130 families and individuals, as well as commitments from the State of Ohio and the National Fund for Sacred Places. Of this amount, \$831,775 already has been received. We expect the balance of \$433,904 over the next four years, with the majority to be received in the next 12 months.

The 2019 campaign for First Church actually began in the fall of 2018. At that time, members of the architectural committee began meeting with the campaign committee to review the many opportunities for new and renewed facilities presented to the congregation by the architectural firm Weber Murphy Fox in 2017. Together, these two committees drafted a set of preservation and construction projects expected to cost a total of \$1.4 million.

Available funds included the \$250,000 grant from the National Fund for Sacred Places as well as the balance of the Not For Us Alone campaign. It was determined that an \$800,000 campaign would allow the church to move forward with all planned restoration and renovation projects.

Bill Barlow and Laurel Price Jones agreed to chair the campaign, and began to quietly talk to members of the congregation and members of the community to secure initial gifts and to solicit feedback on the goal. With an early commitment of \$100,000, and total commitments of more than \$200,000, the congregation voted in March 2019 to approve a set of projects and the overall goal of raising \$800,000.

The campaign committee spent March preparing the case statements and planning for the solicitations. They began to make their calls in April and began to wrap up the campaign during May. By June 2, the congregation and community had come together to commit more than \$850,000.

As the work began and we sent out the requirements, seeking bids for each project, it became clear that the total raised would not be sufficient to complete all the work initially included in the goals approved by the congregation. In addition, additional projects were added to the original proposal either because of safety or environmental concerns or because - like new carpet from the Narthex to Fellowship Hall - they would complete the renovation and present our best face to the congregation and the wider community. These extra goals were approved by the congregation in February 2020 and, at the same time, a further pledge of \$150,000 from Fran and Roger Cooper meant that all these projects could be completed. We thank the Coopers again for their timely generosity.

Several people deserve special thanks for their commitment to managing the work: Gene Matthews, the project manager working with the Facilities Committee; and Mike Schmid and Marty Buck for coordinating the financing. The Executive Committee will receive regular reports. Diana Pierson should also be thanked for her constant, cheerful administrative support of the campaign.

We recognize here the members of the Architecture Design Group:

Marty Buck and Anne Conway, co-chairs

Brandy Bring, George Clark, David Hill, Janet Kelsey Werner, Carol Longsworth, Harold Slocum
Jan Thompson

as well as the members of the Campaign Committee:

Bill Barlow and Laurel Price Jones, co-chairs

Dennis Flood, Carl Jacobson, David Hill, Carol Longsworth, Gene Matthews, Jeanne McKibben,
David Orr, Dale Preston, Anne Schaum, Mike Schmid, Harold Slocum, Laura Slocum, Jan
Thompson

Respectfully Submitted—Laurel Price Jones, Capital Campaign Co-Chair