

Regular Meeting of the Congregation



ANNUAL REPORT

April 24, 2022



The First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ

106 N. Main Street, Oberlin OH 44074

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Firstchurchoberlin.org

Fellow First Church in Oberlin Congregants,

Our Constitution directs us to have a regular meeting of the Congregation to accept the report of the Nominating Committee. We have scheduled this meeting to occur immediately after the close of the Sunday morning service on April 24th. Given the continued reduction of risk associated with Covid-19, we intend to conduct this meeting in person.

The Annual Report for April 2022 which includes reports from not only the Nominating Committee but also from the Standing Committees of the Church will be available prior to this meeting electronically. Hard copies may be obtained by request to the Office via pick-up or if required, by mail. If you have questions or concerns, prior to the meeting, please feel free to email the office office@firstchurchoberlin.org. Questions will also be entertained during the Congregational meeting.

We will also vote on a resolution to donating a gift of \$22,500 to POWER (Providing Oberlin With Efficiency Responsibly). POWER is a grassroots environmental justice organization whose mission is to increase the energy efficiency of homes, small businesses, non-profit organizations, and churches in Oberlin and the surrounding area. This gift is to be presented as a matching grant seeking additional contributions from members of our church and the community.

The money for this contribution has its roots in the unplanned benefit from the Payroll Protection Plan (known as PPP) application which resulted in an added \$45,000 funding to our 2021 budget. We subsequently spent that funding in compliance with the Federal requirements and have applied for conversion of the loan to a grant per the original agreement. You may recall that a number of members of our Congregation felt that we should direct some of the funds “freed” by this grant for charitable contributions to our community. This gift proposal will be presented and discussed at our Congregational meeting.

Thank you again for your faithfulness to the Church and to our wider community. The calling and the work continue despite the challenges of these dark times.

Mike Schmid

Moderator

AGENDA

Call to Order
 Opening Prayer
 Report of the 2022 Nominating Committee
 Report on the Outreach Committee Recommendations to support POWER
 Report on Motions from the Executive Council:

Mike Schmid
 Rev. David T. Hill
 Erik Andrews
 Anne Sprague

1. Resolved, to accept the report of the Nominating Committee confirming appointments to the Standing Committees for May 2022 to May 2023.
2. Resolved, that First Church endorses the payment of \$22,500 to POWER (Providing Oberlin With Efficiency Responsibly) to support a campaign to raise additional funding to support work undertaken by Power to weatherize, improve and maintain homes that would otherwise be left in disrepair.

Closing Prayer

Rev. David T. Hill

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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POSITION	CURRENT MEMBERS	Term Start	Term exp.	Term Length	Eligible for re-election	Notes	Nominated for Position	Term Exp.
Moderator Clerk	Schmid, Mike	2018	2022	2	N		Sprague, Anne	2024
	Richards, Prue	2021	2023	2	Y	(no term limit)		
Treasurer	Richards, Pete	2021	2022	1	Y	(no term limit)	Richards, Pete (last year)	2023
Executive Council	Clark, Ruthann	2020	2023	3	Y			
	Sprague, Anne	2020	2023	3	Y		Cheek, Ken	2023
	Matthews, Gene	2021	2024	3	Y			
	Conway, Anne	2018	2024	3	N	2nd term		
	Longworth, Carol	2019	2022	3	Y		Longworth, Carol	2025
	Thompson, Ralph	2019	2022	3	Y		Slocum, Linda	2025
Christian Education	Schaum, JJ	2017	2023	3	N	2nd term		
	Wilburn, Drew	2020	2023	3	Y			
	Baumann, Karyn	2021	2024	3	Y	Chair		
	Remster, Susan	2021	2024	3	Y			
				3			Vanderbilt, William	2025
	Kepner, Val	2016	2022	3	N	2nd term	Kim Preston	2025
Facilities	Buck, Marty	2021	2023	3	N	replacement		
	Thompson, Rob	2017	2023	3	N	2nd term		
	Andrew Garver	2021	2024	3	Y	replacement; co-chair		
	Price Jones, Laurel	2021	2024	3	Y			
	Zwegat, Tina	2016	2022	3	N	2nd term	Andrews, Erik	2025
	Scheufler, David	2019	2022	3	Y	co-chair	Scheufler, David	2025
Fellowship*	Matthews, Sandy	2020	2023	3	Y			
	Scotch, Denise	2019	2023	3	Y	2nd term		
	Scheufler, Janice	2018	2024	3	N	2nd term		
	Gueulette, Margaret	2021	2024	3	Y			
	Colson, Sarah	2019	2022	3	Y	Chair	Colson, Sarah	2025
	Velto, Margaret	2019	2022	3	Y		Sanderson, Karla	2025
Finance	Remster, Eric	2020	2022	3	Y		Hamilton, Bill	2025
	Barlow, Bill	2020	2023	3	Y			
	Schaum, Anne	2018	2024	3	N	Chair, 2nd term		
	Matthews, Gene	2021	2022	3		EC – at large		
	Richards, Pete	2021	2022	1		Treasurer	Plan for change in 2023	
	Conway, Anne	2021	2022	3		EC – at large		
Ministerial Relations <i>(appointed not nominated)</i>	Ralph Thompson							
	Ken Cheek							
	Kristin Peterson							
	Catherine Hoyle							

POSITION	NAME	Start Term	End Term	Term Length	Eligible for re-election	Notes	Nominated for Position	Term Exp
Nominating	Schmid, Mike	2022	2024	2	Y			
	Gates, Linda	2022	2024	2	Y			
	Longsworth, Bob	2020	2024	2	N	2nd term		
	Dakos, Jessica	2019	2023	2	N	2nd term		
	Andrews, Erik	2021	2023	2	Y			
	Jindra, Robin	2021	2023	2	Y			
Outreach and Service	Burke, Carol	2020	2023	3	Y			
	Jacobson, Carl	2017	2023	3	N	2nd term		
	Parish, Mark	2021	2024	3	Y			
	Preston, Thayer	2021	2024	3	Y			
	Kris Carter	2020	2022	3	Y	replacement	Carter, Kris	2025
Personnel (positions are appointed, not nominated)	Schaum, Miranda	2020	2022	3	Y	replacement, chair	Schaum, Miranda	2025
	Schmid, Mike	2018	2022			Moderator		
	Schaum, Anne	2019	2023			Finance		
	Conway, Anne	2019	2023			EC - at large		
	Clark, Ruth Ann	2020	2022			EC – at large		
	Hill, Rev. David T.					Pastor		
Stewardship	Conway, Rollin	2017	2023	3	N	2nd Term		
	Taylor, Tom	2019	2023	3	Y			
	Preston, Dale	2018	2024	3	N	2nd term		
	Steele, Diana	2021	2024	3	Y			
	Gates, John	2020	2022	3	Y	replacement	Gates, John	2025
	Peterson, Kristin	2019	2022	3	Y		Peterson, Kristin	2025
Witness and Membership	Cheek, Ken	2017	2023	3	N	2nd term	Jan Hendricks	2023
	McDaniel, Mary	2017	2023	3	N	Chair, 2nd term		
	Stefanidis, Gabe	2021	2024	3	Y		Nelson, Mary	2024
	Garver, Nancy	2021	2024	3	Y			
	Orr, Elaine	2016	2022	3	N	2nd term	Jones, Ashia	2025
Worship	Slocum, Linda	2016	2022	3	N	2nd term	Taylor, Shirley	2025
	Davis, Barbara	2020	2023	3	Y	co-chair		
	Johnson, Steve	2021	2023	3	N	replacement		
	Hayes, Ardiith	2019	2024	3	N	2nd term		
	Thompson, Becky	2018	2024	3	N	2nd term; co-chair		
	Peterson, Marci	2017	2022	3	Y		Orr, Elaine	2025
	McKibben, Jeanne	2021	2022	3	Y	replacement	McKibben, Jeanne	2025

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

Report of the Moderator

Michael Schmid
2021-2022

“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

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the spirit.” John 3:8 (NIV)

What remains to be done?

As I leave my role as Moderator, I am reminded of significant actions not taken which should be undertaken by the new Moderator, the Executive Council and the Congregation.

Our Constitution calls for a review of the Constitution to be performed every 10 years. We are a bit late in performing this review, but I believe the delay is justified. Any significant changes to our polity if required should be based on a fundamental understanding of how a church, how the Church, how our Church operates in a post/continuing Covid-19 environment. We now have an extended electronic congregation which will both need our support and be willing to support our Ministry. However we change, we must anticipate the nature of our scattered flock and work to keep everyone close enough to participate.

Before we make changes, we need to learn from our Staff, our Association and local congregations how they intend to adapt. We need to learn what works and search for what fits our mission and structure.

We worked hard on our “physical” ministry over the past four years: developing a design intent leading to architectural recommendations, executing a capital campaign to fund desired changes, managing the actual project and dealing with subsequent structural issues not anticipated in the original design. Our roofs, our sewers and eventually our heating plant will have benefitted from significant repair, overhaul and replacement. Our Facilities team is working with Oberlin College to figure out how First Church can integrate with the colleges new heating systems. That report will be presented soon and we will need to determine the best road forward.

Our most significant unfinished action is never finished and not unexpectedly is usually in need of restarting. Our First Church Vision Statement notes that “Drawing on our heritage, we will grow by being an intentionally inclusive, multicultural, just and loving community that practices relevant and inspiring worship, mobilized to collaborate with our wider community by opening our doors to be a central gathering place that is dedicated to healing brokenness in our relationship with God, each other and the Earth.” This wind is still blowing...

A wee bit on our shoulders. Thanks to all who assisted me over the past four years and who survived my inquiries and entreaties. It was a challenging four years, but I enjoyed every minute of it.

2022 Annual Report from the Clerk

Due to ongoing COVID concerns, a virtual Special Meeting of the Congregation was held via Zoom on November 8, 2021 to approve the unexpected expenditure of \$30,000 to repair our sanitary and storm sewers.

A virtual meeting of the congregation was held February 15th to approve the 2022 budget and the slate of Nominating Committee candidates. Anne Schaum (Finance Committee) presented the proposed budget and Moderator Mike Schmid presented the resolutions recommended by the Executive Council. These resolutions were put to the vote by mail-in ballot. The results of those actions are included in the body of resolutions approved by the EC from May 2021 to April 2022 below:

Here begin the resolutions passed after March 2021 submission of the Annual Report from the Clerk:

(2021-09) Resolved, April 27, 2021, that on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Executive Council approve the additional expense associated with the external audit.

The motion passed unanimously.

(2021-10) Resolved, May 2, 2021 to accept the report of the Nominating Committee for officers and committee appointments beginning May 2, 2021.

Motion: Anne Sprague. **Second:** Linda Slocum

The motion passed unanimously.

(2021-11) Resolved, May 25, 2021, to authorize an additional expenditure of \$2250 in support of the Winter Camp retreat in 2022.

Motion: Ruth Ann Clark. **Second:** Ralph Thompson.

The motion passed unanimously.

(2021-12) Resolved, September 28, 2021, to affirm that Jen Bertoni has the passion and gifts required for ordained ministry, and to endorse her as a member in discernment in the Living Water Association.

Motion: Ruth Ann Clark. **Second:** Anne Sprague.

The motion passed unanimously

(2021-13) Resolved, September 28, 2021, that First Church in Oberlin, UCC be the fiscal agent for Oberlin Community Supporting Immigrants (OCSI).

Motion: Ruth Ann Clark. **Second:** Carol Longworth.

The motion passed unanimously.

(2021-14) Resolved October 26, 2021, to call a Special Meeting of the congregation to approve the expenditure of \$30,000 to pay for repairs to the storm water and sanitary sewer systems.

Motion: Ralph Thompson. **Second:** Anne Conway

The motion passed unanimously

(2021-15). Resolved November 8, 2021, at a Special Meeting of the congregation of First Church in Oberlin (UCC) to approve the expenditure of up to \$30,000 to fix our storm and sanitary sewers including associated connections to the main sewers and associated expense to repair the driveway.

Motion to put to a vote: Steve Johnson. Second: Carol Longworth

Motion passed with a 50+ quorum for; 0 against.

(2021-16) Resolved November 30, 2021, that the Executive Council of First Church accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to increase the vacation allowance for the Pastor to six weeks and to designate the housing allowance to be \$24,000 for 2022. It also accepts their recommendation to increase the salaries of the Pastor, the Director of Faith Formation, the Director of Music and the Organist, as well as the wages of the Office Manager by 5.9% starting 1/1/2022.

Motion: Anne Sprague. Second: Ruth Anne Clark.

The motion passed unanimously

(2022-1) Resolved February 15, 2022, to accept the budget as submitted by the Finance Committee and approved by the Executive Council.

Moved, Gene Matthews. Second, Ralph Thompson.

Via electronic voting, the motion passed 51 ayes to 1 nay.

Nominating Committee Candidates: Moderator presented the Nominating Committee slate. Nominations from the Executive Council are,

Bob Longworth
Linda Gates
Mike Schmid

(2022-2) Resolved February 15, 2022, that the slate presented by the Executive Council be approved by the congregation of First Church.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Prue Richards, Clerk

Special Congregational Meeting

First Church Oberlin UCC

November 8, 2021

7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Mike Schmid, Moderator, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and thanked all for attending. As members of the congregation had had the opportunity to read and become familiar with the proposed resolution, to fund replacement of the storm and sanitary lines, over the previous two weeks, Mike summarized the issues briefly and then asked if there were any questions or discussion.

Steve Johnson raised his hand to say that he understood and supported the resolution but wondered if in addition to poor drainage of the downspout system, there might also be a grading problem in the yard that caused the water to pool up and seep into the Undercroft. Dave Scheufler, Facilities Chair, responded that there is a landscaping plan in place to restore the courtyard between the Meeting House and James Brand after our extensive renovation project, and that it will include grading water flow away from the buildings. He explained that the larger problem at this point is the actual storm water drain system is not working, so replacement of that is the first step.

There were no further questions or discussion. Mike suggested it was time to call the question.

Motion to put to a vote: Steve Johnson. Second: Carol Longworth

Using an electronic voting system via the Zoom link congregants registered their votes— The resolution passed by unanimous approval of a quorum of the membership.

(2021-15). Resolved November 8, 2021, at a Special Meeting of the congregation of First Church in Oberlin (UCC) to approve the expenditure of up to \$30,000 to fix our storm and sanitary sewers including associated connections to the main sewers and associated expense to repair the driveway. Motion passed with a 50+ quorum for; 0 against.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Prue Richards, Clerk

**Regular Meeting of the Congregation
Zoom Meeting
February 15, 2022, 7:00 p.m.**

Call to Order: Clerk Prue Richards verified that a quorum was present. Moderator Mike Schmid called the meeting to order.

Opening Prayer: Pastor David Hill opened the meeting with prayer

Review of Agenda: Mike reviewed the agenda for the meeting of the congregation.

Membership Report: Mike commented that we are down seven members from last year. He expressed hope that as we gradually emerge from COVID constraints our numbers will begin to grow again.

Stewardship Report: Rollin Conway shared the report from the Stewardship Committee. He reported that the final tally was 94 pledging units for a total of \$312,700. Commitments of direct withdrawals are now treated as if they were physical pledges.

Proposed Budget Presentation and Discussion:

Anne Schaum reviewed the high points of the proposed budget information, presented earlier at an informational congregational meeting and at an Adult Education session.

Anticipated Revenue for '22 is \$446,000— 78% made up from contributions, 21% coming from investment income, and the remaining 1% from rentals, coffee, Wed PM supper and the like.

Expenses for '22 are \$515,000—59% for staff salaries and benefits, 1% for committees, 24% for operations and maintenance, and 16% for benevolences (rate set as 20% of pledges).

Financial details of note include the fact that in 2021 FC conducted its first external audit to ensure our financial procedures are appropriate. The budget we prepare is for the Church Operations Account, so it does not include capital campaign(s) funds or funds set aside in prior years for activities that do not happen every year. And we have a loan from the capital campaign that started in 2021 at \$390,000. During '21 we reduced the balance to \$330,000, paying off the entire revolving loan (\$50k), and paid ~ \$80,000 in construction bills. We are still working on a strategy to pay off the loan as additional capital campaign pledge payments come in.

There were several last minute budget changes: an error in the statement of Pastor David's benefits was corrected, and pledges made last year for this year were added to the 2022 pledge total:

	As Printed	Adjusted
Income	\$435,463	\$446,414
Expenses	\$510,851	\$514,743
Deficit	\$75,388	\$68,329

Anne then gave a special shout out to Treasurer Pete Richards for the endless hours he's put in taking a detailed critical look at the structure of our accounts—identifying and rectifying billing problems and looking for ways to make things more efficient and more reliable. She also thanked Marty Buck for his many, many years, in multiple roles, of keeping FC finances under control and adapting them to the changing needs of the church; and Tom Taylor for making sure all the bills got paid.

The floor was opened for questions. Ralph Thompson asked whether this budget reflected the discussion of EC to designate half the PPP loan money we received for Outreach. Mike explained that had to be a congregational decision and would need to be presented as a proposed resolution to the congregation at the April Annual Meeting.

Carol Longworth asked whether monies given regularly by individuals, but not actually pledged, were being counted in the total on which the 20% designated for benevolence is based. Mike responded that yes, they are.

There being no further questions Mike called the question to bring the motion to a vote.

(2022-1) Resolved February 15, 2022, to accept the budget as submitted by the Finance Committee and approved by the Executive Council.

Moved, Gene Matthews. Second, Ralph Thompson.

Via electronic voting, the motion passed 51 ayes to 1 nay.

Nominating Committee Candidates: Moderator presented the Nominating Committee slate. Nominations from the Executive Council are,

Bob Longworth
Linda Gates
Mike Schmid

There being no further nominations from “the floor” the motion to approve this slate was presented to the congregation.

(2022-2) Resolved February 15, 2022, that the slate presented by the Executive Council be approved by the congregation of First Church.

The motion carried unanimously.

Closing Prayer: David shared a closing prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Prue Richards, Clerk

Christian Education Committee Annual Report 2021-2022

The Christian Education Committee met on the first Thursdays of most months and consisted of the following members: Jen Bertoni, Faith Formation- Karyn Baumann, Chair; Drew Wilburn, Val Kepner, JJ Schaum, Susan Remster, Matt Campbell; and Ruth Ann Clark - liaison to the Executive Council.

Covid continued to dominate the year and meetings, with the committee working around stop and start protocols and keeping people engaged. Spring was still in full virtual mode, with all activities such as Children’s Church, Sunday School, Friday Night Hangs and Sunday “hot topics” with the older youth. We also selected the curriculum program “Spill The Beans” which we felt best served our Sunday School and Children’s Church, and hired two childcare providers - Miranda Schaum and Sophie Schnake.

With warmer weather, we were excited to organize and participate in 2 volunteer activities that was open to all members of the church, and worked hard to paint and give fresh life to play equipment at a park near Splash Zone, and learned a little history while weeding, pruning and painting the Oberlin Heritage Center.

We also were thrilled to give financial assistance to 5 children to attend MMADD Camp at Temple Hills, and 2 others who joined with peers from Federated Church in Chagrin Falls for a camp experience in Colorado last summer.

Speaking of camps, we also navigated the question of Family Camp, deciding to postpone 2022 until the next year when hopefully the variants aren’t playing havoc. Jen worked with the camp and families to come to a reasonable and respectable scenario for all.

There were also some pockets of togetherness and normalcy as well, starting with Messy Church in October and followed by the Pumpkin Roll fundraiser and Christmas Pageant as in person activities, along with a skating outing that was enjoyed as well. With the resurgence of the virus, some activities, such as the Pancake Dinner and a larger Easter celebration with the Oberlin community put on hold until we could regroup and assess the safety and practicality of doing such endeavors.

We also had our Adult Ed. experience over Zoom, with a discussion of the book *White Too Long* by Robert P. Jones as the text. About 10 people signed up for these illuminating conversations, and many others held conversations about the role that the church has played in furthering White Supremacy, and what role we could play as First Church and individuals, to help foster positive change.

We are hopeful that the future will allow for more in person events, as we wrestle with keeping connected and expanding our learning and fellowship opportunities during these ever-changing times.

-Karyn Baumann, chair

Facilities Committee

This year has focused on several infrastructure needs in the church. These projects are necessary for the function of the building(s), but are generally invisible and therefore frustrating to spend funds on. However, when basic systems are not working correctly, everyone can see the problems. Below is a list of activities that the facilities committee has overseen this year.

- Installed the Pulpit – rebuilt from the old pulpit
- A/V Camera upgrades to permit remote services
- Upgrades to the Wi-Fi system within the church to better service remote meetings and services.
- Refrigerators from the rental house were recycled
- Undercroft exterior doors replaced
- Hosted 2 workdays: filled 2 dumpsters with years of ‘collected items’ that were of no use
- Removed the dead tree on the South lawn
- Slate roof repairs (an annual item, but roofers anticipate many more years of use with regular maintenance.)
- Multiple sink, faucet & Toilet repairs
- Adjustments to several doors that were sticking, failed to close, etc.
- Electrical work completed for future installation of a Washer and Dryer in the undercroft
- Repaired a water pump on the heating system
- Replaced the Steam Condensate return line in the basement of James Brand
- Replaced the Sanitary Sewer line from the basement of James Brand out to the driveway
- Improved the downspout storm line into a larger catch basin which is now connected to the city storm water lines. (Fixes water backup in the courtyard, undercroft and James Brand basement)

Where appropriate, material has been donated or recycled. The courtyard is currently a dirt pile due to all of the winter work that occurred. This area, as well as sidewalk replacement and driveway repairs, will occur through Spring and Summer.

Fellowship Committee Annual Report 2021-22

Much like the previous year, Fellowship activities at First Church were greatly curtailed due to covid restrictions. Many of the traditional fellowship activities did not take place. The committee gathered in September to begin cleaning the kitchen following construction activity and in preparation for the church to begin hosting memorial services and receptions. After the church was opened for in person worship, the Committee hosted coffee hour following worship during Advent. The Committee hopes to offer some outdoor fellowship opportunities as the temperatures start to rise this Spring.

Respectfully submitted
Sarah Colson

Finance Committee Report

As reported last year, our financial picture has not changed; First Church is spending more than is taken in by a significant amount. The endowment is still performing in line with long term assumptions thanks largely to devoted congregation members leaving estate gifts to the church. While we still have a deficit, it is necessary to support our staff and physical plant. We believe we can manage the risks and still support our major mission commitments.

In addition to our routine duties, the committee embarked on a few other projects over the last year.

- We contracted with Clifton Larson Allen LLP to assess our controls and suggest a more streamlined approach to financial reporting. The consulting agreement resulted in a dozen recommendations for ongoing practices and procedures.
- The rental house was declared tax exempt and we were rebated nearly \$3,500 in back taxes
- Review of the remaining revolving loan we carry for the capital campaign
- Detailed analysis of the investments and transactions including adjustment of discrepancies in the reporting of our investments among funds in Church Windows and in quarterly financial reports
- Review of the non-Church-Operations-Account balances maintained in our checking account
- Clean up of financial records including a review of Journal Entries, an investigation of billing anomalies with our VISA and with IGA, elimination of dead A/R and A/P entries, resolution of long-standing confusion of Quill account, and discovery of billing error on copier lease
- Review of the policies & procedures regarding use of extraordinary withdrawals from investments. Proposed an updated policy to the Executive Council to ensure policy matches practice.
- Application of records retention policy resulting in clearing out the safe
- Addition of OCSI fiscal agent responsibilities
- PPP loan forgiveness attained
- Gift Annuity program closed with the passing of the last participant
- Analysis and modification of the methodology used to adjust endowment funds in CW for market changes and withdrawals/additions to specific funds, notably the Parsonage Fund.

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 Bill Barlow, Anne Conway, Gene Matthews, Eric Remster, and Pete Richards (Treasurer)); to our Moderator, Mike Schmid, who attended our meetings; to our Financial Secretary, Marty Buck; and to our Bookkeeper, Tom Taylor.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Schaum

Annual Report to the First Church Congregation on the work of OCSI

A very large sign both on the front and rear of the First Church building says “Welcome Immigrants and Refugees.” It was in the fall of 2021 that First Church was able to make the words on these signs a reality. At that time, First Church accepted the challenge of assisting two immigrant families to find a successful resettlement in Oberlin. Five months have passed and so it is time to share the good news about the progress the two families are making. The adults and children in these two families are thriving, learning to speak English, discovering the community of Oberlin, Oberlin College and the wonderful students who have chosen to study here, and the diverse communities of Lorain and Norwalk. The adults in these families are eager to learn English under the tutelage of Kendal residents and Oberlin College students. One child is enrolled in the pre-kindergarten program of the Oberlin City Schools. She is very popular with her classmates, teachers, and aides, and her language skills are growing rapidly. Another child is enrolled in the Kendal Early Learning Center. The teachers at the KELC are amazing in the myriad ways they develop confidence, a spirit of inquiry, and the importance of building positive relationships in the children they are instructing. The one remaining child, too young for formal school, is nevertheless making rapid progress in learning English. She loves to walk outside without anyone holding her hand, with never a complaint about rain, wind, or snow in her time outside in Oberlin’s parks.

In addition to the volunteer teachers of English, six people have provided transportation for school runs, grocery shopping, medical appointments, trips to do laundry, and securing identification papers. One person is working with legal counsel in the asylum application process. All of this resettlement work is being directed by the Oberlin Community Supporting Immigrants (OCSI), a committee that includes a number of faith communities. Many people in the Oberlin community have been generous with their donations to underwrite this project and to ensure its success. All of us are very grateful for so many people who recognize the humanitarian needs of immigrants, refugees, and asylum applicants.

Donations can be made to OCSI by writing a check to First Church (UCC) in Oberlin with OCSI in the subject line and sent to:

Oberlin Community Supporting Immigrants
c/o Marty Buck, Treasurer
60 North Cedar Street
Oberlin, OH 44074

Christian Outreach and Service Committee

First Church contributed \$62,270 to organizations and individuals engaged in progressive social action endeavors. Of this First Church contributed \$33,950 to the UCC’s Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM).

Locally, recipients of benevolences included Oberlin Community Services, Oberlin Weekday Community Meals, and Ruby Jones Scholarship Fund.

At the county level, donations included to the Lorain County Free Clinic, Good Knights of Lorain County, Genesis House, and El Centro.

State entities included Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE), HOLA Ohio, and Jobs with Justice.

National benevolences included Crossroad Child and Family Services and to Chicago, and United and Eden (CUE) Seminaries.

International donations were made to SEPA Guatemala and Haiti Food Resources.

In addition, special offerings were collected and made to One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need and the Christmas Fund/Veterans of the Cross.

Throughout the year, we promoted various volunteer opportunities such as the Weekly Peace Vigil, participation in Ohio Faith Communities for Death Penalty Abolition Week, and Empty Mugs. Even though we did the promoting, the members of the congregation are the ones who put time and effort into these worthy causes. For that, we thank you!

In June, the Living Water Association proposal in which we joined with Avon Lake and Brownhelm UCCs was funded. It sought \$12,000 to help the Haven Homeless Shelter in Lorain improve its air handling system.

In July and August, we partnered with the Christian Education Committee to organize and then promote service projects to the congregation. This involved organizational meetings, making surveys, sign up sheets, flyers, etc. In July, the project was scraping, cleaning, and repainting the Hamilton Field dolphin and turtle. In August, the project was an afternoon of general landscaping assistance at Oberlin Heritage Center.

Also in the summer, we worked on updating our bulletin board by Fellowship Hall in an attempt to be more transparent to the congregation.

This year, we wanted to make sure who we are benevolent towards reflected the congregation's desires as much as possible. Therefore, in January, we created and promoted a survey that evaluated what is important to our parishioners. We are still currently trying to best reflect the answers we received in our benevolences.

In January and February, we partnered with Christian Education again to set up and promote a Genesis House Donation Drive. The materials we collected were also sent with encouraging notes written by our youth.

Respectfully submitted,
Miranda Schaum

Stewardship Committee Report

Members of the Stewardship Committee for 2021-2022 are: Rollin Conway, Co-chairperson, Dale Preston, Co-chairperson & Secretary, Kristin Peterson, Tom Taylor, Dianna Steele, and John Gates. Ralph Thompson is the liaison from the Executive Council. Financial Secretary, Marty Buck, and Treasurer, Pete Richards, have helped provide data for this report, and have been invaluable resources throughout the year. We anticipate receiving additional pledges for 2022, so the final report may show an increase in the total number of pledges and the total amount pledged.

As always, our faithful financial support for the new year's operating budget will enable the success of our most important ministries. Every gift to the operating budget helps preserve the First Church endowment by minimizing the amount withdrawn to close the gap between our income and expenses. And perhaps most importantly, twenty percent of every dollar pledged is budgeted for outreach and mission, so if you have not yet turned in your pledge for 2022, please do so as soon as possible.

Year	Amount Pledged	# of Pledges	# of New Pledges	# of Increased Pledges	# of Same as Previous Year Pledges	# of Decreased Pledges
2022	\$312,701	94	10	39	23	21
2021	\$272,441	95	17	24	41	13
2020	\$279,776	91	8	36	39	8
2019	\$303,671	100	14	53	25	8
2018	\$294,122	100	14	53	25	8
2017	\$303,859	103	6	50	35	12
2016	\$299,165	103	5	37	40	21
2015	\$302,821	105	14	45	33	13
2014	\$295,050	104	5	56	32	11

Report of the Witness & Membership Committee 2021-2022

For a second year, Covid restrictions prevented the Witness & Membership Committee from welcoming people at church in-person, holding Inquirer's Events for those interested in learning more about First United and visiting friends or folks in need in their homes. The committee has continued to hold its meetings on the second Wednesday afternoon of each month via ZOOM all year. As the church began to gradually open to in-person meetings, we considered it but decided to let the new committee members make that decision when they join in May, 2022.

Committee members have made an effort to help church members stay connected to First Church by writing notes, emails or occasional phone calls as well as visiting when possible. Note cards of church renovation and Oberlin in various seasons in the time of isolation was helpful in keeping us all connected but regular notes and postcards are appreciated now. Tom Cramer and Syd Comings found a special way to reach out to a former First Church member who gave a handmade church mouse to each new member or visitor. She and her husband also wrote a book about First Church mice and all the behind the scenes work they do. Tom and Syd found a story about mice and had it available for all church members to sign and send greetings. Then they delivered it to former member and friend Joan Smith.

As our church began to open up gradually in the Fall and we could meet in-person, it was a delight to welcome five new members to the First Church family. We welcomed Jan and Jim Heron, their daughter Anjanette Hignett, Karyn Baumann and Bill Hamilton. We look forward to getting to know each of them better as we resume adult education, coffee fellowship, in-person meetings and a wider use of our church building.

The committee recognized a need for a Grief Support group for a few people in our congregation and checked to see if other churches might be interested. Church member Christine Vanderbilt has experience working in Hospice and is currently taking classes related to this field. When the certified facilitator was unable to attend the first meeting, Christine was able to lead the group of five people for five sessions during the Thanksgiving/Christmas holidays when one may feel a loved one's absence greatly. A support group is meant for a limited period of time so the committee will need to revisit this endeavor as the need arises.

Marci Peterson, with help from the church manager and David Hill continues to be the head of Called to Care. There is some in-person contact now, but Marci is faithful in emailing folks on the Called to Care and Witness and Membership committees as well as the church book group for prayer requests.

We look forward to continuing our efforts to welcome and support new members and participants and to deepen our understanding and sharing of our faith.

Committee members are: Ken Cheek, Mary McDaniel(chair), Elaine Orr, Linda Slocum, Anne Sprague (Executive Council liaison), and Gabe Stefanides.

As we begin a new "committee Year", we want to thank Elaine Orr and Linda Slocum for their faithful service and Gabe Stefanides for his willingness to serve. I offer my gratitude to the committee for their support and my personal prayers and best wishes to them as we all move into the next church year.

Worship Committee Annual Report: 2022 March 31, 2022, bst

The Worship Committee and larger Worship Team: David Hill, Pastor; Thomas Bandy, Organist and Director of Music; Jen Bertoni, Director of Faith Formation; Carol Longsworth, Liaison; Prue Richards, Ad Hoc; Ardith Hayes, Marci Peterson, Barbara Davis, Jeanne McKibben, Stephen Johnson, and Becky Thompson

During this past year, the Worship Committee has sought to move forward in trust and commitment as we have been impacted by Covid; and at the same time, have joined with our caring, committed, and persevering faith community. The Worship Committee has been practicing a way of coming together and moving through each of our meetings. One member has shared her reflections related to that process, "I appreciate that the meeting starts with prayer and then a check-in time. The committee members listen to one another and seem able to share their thoughts on whatever we are discussing."

In the spring, we were continuing to worship via live-streaming. While in that space, the Worship Committee helped plan worship during the seasons of Lent and Easter. A highlight of the Palm Sunday live-streamed service was the embedded video-taped waving of palm branches by smiling congregants.

In April, we participated in an online webinar sponsored by Heartland Conference and led by Jim Keats, that was entitled, "So you want to Build a Hybrid Worship Experience." In addition, we have continued to access webinars offered by Marcia McFee, in which she shares guidelines for creating and participating in meaningful and inspiring worship. First Church staff are accessing one of the series that Marcia McFee has created entitled, Good Enough, during this period of Lent and will also access it for our Easter Worship Service.

In June, one of our members joined the Reopening Committee and has thus participated in creating worship protocols, among other protocols, based on variable COVID statistics and First Church's appropriate responses

During May and June, we began to envision the fall and the upcoming 2021 church year: At that time, we recognized our need to learn more about the needs, hopes, gifts, and offerings of congregants. We thus decided to interview a number of congregants, and created the following questions to ask them:

- What are you needing; what are you hoping for; what are you passionate about for worship this year?
- What makes it a good Sunday for you?
- What do you bring/see yourself bringing to the worship service?

On July 8, Worship Committee members and some members of the broader Worship planning team gathered for a Planning Retreat: It was here that we reflected on what we heard interviewees say, asked ourselves the same three questions, reflected together on our own responses, categorized the interviewee responses into themes, and then asked ourselves, “Where do we go from here?” and explored specific directly-related questions. As a committee person has noted, “The survey was one way to get new ideas and get the congregation involved as we moved forward in worship.”

We later developed a survey in which we offered the same three questions to congregants during the months of September and October. We also distilled themes from this new feedback: We have subsequently sought to directly respond to congregants’ feedback regarding their needs, hopes, ideas, and gifts, and offerings as we have planned aspects of worship services.

Some of the ways we trust that congregants’ feedback has been heard and realized in worship throughout this past year include the following - children and youths’ active participation in worship, e.g., reading of scripture, participation in the Christmas pageant, offerings of special music; congregants’ participation during Totenfest – their sharing of written memories and lighting of candles for loved ones who had died; Tom’s, soloists’, and the choir’s offerings of varieties of music during worship; two congregants’ sharing during Advent about their personal faith journeys; congregants’ active participation in the invitation to purchase a poinsettia/s and/or donate money to the community during Advent; the Worship Committee’s preparation and leadership of a July Worship Service; the Worship Committee’s preparation and offering of major aspects of the February 13th Worship Service; and the staff’s decision, in collaboration with the Worship Committee, to offer the Ash Wednesday service in the more informal Fellowship Hall: A number of people reported experiencing connection and community during the service.

In addition to what we have sought to plan/do/support as a Worship Committee, one of our Worship Committee members has been collaborating with Jen on a monthly basis as they reflect and plan Faith Formation programs for the children, youth, and adults.

On a very practical note, in December, we reviewed the 2021 Worship Committee Budget, made appropriate changes, and submitted our Worship Committee 2022 Budget Proposal. As we look forward, we are planning for 6.26.22, 8.14.22, 9.25.22, and 10.30.22, worship services in which David will not be preaching: Two Worship Committee members met with David Hill on 3.1.22, and co-generated a list of people resources that we might access on those Sundays. On 3.21.22, Worship Committee members and members of the larger Worship Planning Team participated in a Planning Retreat in which we expanded this list of resources, discerned theme ideas for each of the four services, paired a resource person with each Worship Service, paired a Worship Committee member or David (as he believes is appropriate) with each of the resource people to be contacted, and established a protocol for contact follow-through and worship service planning. The co-chairs, Barbara Davis and Becky Thompson, met with David Hill on 3.30.22 and determined some initial actions that will be taken in making contacts and in helping us more fully discern our direction for the four services.

One of our team shared the following reflections regarding the planning for these Sundays,

"This can be a time-consuming task. I would suggest that in the 2022 year we start planning early for all the Sundays that are in need of pulpit fill. I believe the task would be more productive seeing as the people we may be wanting to invite might have full schedules or calendars. If we could reach them early in the year for all weeks needed, they could put us on their calendars and we would have more success in getting those individuals or groups we invite."

Last, and very important, the taking of the minutes is a challenge that it appears none of us has often been most excited to accept. Two members, in particular, carried through with the lion's share of this task. We are thus especially organized and informed because of their commitment and sacrifice. I believe I can speak for the Worship Committee and larger team as I say that we are looking forward to this new year, as we are seeking to faithfully serve each other, our community, our world, and the authentic in ourselves; and as we seek to follow Jesus and commit to the principles that he taught and lived.

PASTOR'S REPORT 2021-2022

To everything (turn, turn, turn)
 There is a season (turn, turn, turn)
 And a time to every purpose, under heaven

Ecclesiastes 3:1, as adapted by Pete Seeger

When I went to prepare this report and searched for my comments from last year I was reminded that I did not create a Pastor's Report for 2020-2021. I think that pretty much sums up how many of us have felt at times about the past year: nothing much to report; let's just move on to what happens next. Going back one year further I came across the remarks I shared in April 2020, but one month into what would become a longer than expected COVID odyssey. As we look back over the past two years, what might we carry with us in the years ahead?

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.

COVID-19 robbed us of many things but perhaps most significantly it pulled the rug out from underneath our feet when it came to the assumed constants in our lives that ground our daily living: the ability to physically connect with friends and family, work routines, community events and gatherings, travel, weddings, funerals, in-person worship, and the ability to plan ahead. We were regularly reminded of the truth of the Yiddish saying, "Mann Tracht, Un Gott Lacht": "Man Plans, and God Laughs." In struggling to reassert some modicum of control over our lives, we became reacquainted with the joy of experimentation and spontaneity. We tried new things and new ways of being together. Aided by the wonders of technology we found intimacy and connection through separate screens that nonetheless tied us together as one community. We fumbled through the blessing and curse of Zoom and Facebook. As we moved from broadcasting from an iPad to a laptop, and then to multiple cameras and an A/V tech, the reach of our mission and ministry expanded beyond the physical walls of the church to include neighbors near and far, fellow pilgrims on the journey of faith. In the midst of a pandemic we rediscovered our footing in God's loving support.

Knowing that even while God is stirring the pot, God's love is unwavering allows us to bend and adapt rather than become uprooted. One of the greatest gifts of faith is resiliency.

As we've been forced to return again and again to the well of resiliency there have been times when I've wondered how much more we could take before that well ran dry. I imagine we've all had moments of being at the end of our rope, of thinking I just can't manage one more upsetting of the apple cart, one more disappointment, one more loss. And yet, time and time again, as we've leaned on each other and surrendered ourselves to God's grace we've found strength, comfort, peace, and direction if only one day at a time. In navigating the pandemic's storm we've needed to throw some

things overboard to lighten the load and stay focused. Our pattern of worship was stripped down to basics and we temporarily suspended valued occasions for fellowship such as Wed. Night Supper and post-worship coffee time. We also gained new skills and tools for being the church – who could have imagined we’d become so Zoom proficient! In the midst of the storm, we’ve held a steady course; spilling wind and reefing our sails as together as the church we’ve navigated billowing waves for calmer waters.

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.... As we move through these uncertain times, we do so together...

I think the most unexpected outcome of the pandemic is how it has drawn us together as a congregation. We are stronger for having weathered this experience as a congregation. In the weeks just prior to when we shut down the church facility in mid-March 2020, we were preparing to return to worshipping in the renovated Meeting House. As folks anticipated gathering in that beloved space many also celebrated the sense of togetherness and intimacy we had discovered while worshipping in the Fellowship Hall. How might we take that sense of being together into a renewed worship space? Next thing you knew we were “Live, from the Pastor’s Living Room!” and the wonders and frustrations of remote worship became our new norm. Yet even in the midst of our technological floundering (Why does the piano sound like it is being played underwater? How do you Sharescreen again?), we forged unexpected connections with folks we’d hardly or ever met before. In adapting our means of ministry, our virtual “Meeting House” enabled us to reach people beyond our physical building.

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.

As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, I pray we do not cast aside what we’ve learned these past two years about being church. Pete Seeger reminds us, in his take on Ecclesiastes, that everything is always turning, constantly in motion, inviting us day in and day out to consider what we need to plant and we need to pluck up, what we need to break down and what we need to build up, what we need to cast away and what we need to gather together. May we not lose sight of the lessons the pandemic instilled within us: the need for nimbleness and spontaneity, the joy of experimentation and discovery, the strength and resiliency found in holding fast to God’s extravagant love and abounding grace.

In closing, I want to express special thanks to Mike Schmid who is completing a remarkable four years as Moderator. Throughout my time as your Pastor I have felt that each and every Moderator has been the right person for that particular time in the life of the church. Mike brought his unique gifts for leadership to a period that spanned a pastoral sabbatical, sizable capital campaign, significant renovations to the church facility, multiple staff changes, and radical reimagining of how we go about being the church. For his wisdom, guidance, and patience, I am extremely grateful.

Grace and Peace,
David

Community, College and Wider Church Involvement:

Firelands Program District (Lorain County): UCC Clergy Group

Living Water Association: Senior Pastors Group; Community of Practice; Committee on Ministry, Chair, Oversight Working Group; Member in Discernment Mentor.

Heartland Conference: Member, Antiracism Network; Member, Fitness Review Response Team

City of Oberlin – Climate Adaptation Task Force

Oberlin Business Partnership, Board Member

Annual Report 2022 - Faith Formation Director

Last year, I ended my report with a cry of “Next year, in person!” I am thrilled to see that prediction has indeed come to pass. (Having a prediction be correct is a unique experience for me - please do not come to me for winning lottery numbers...) Anyway, as we emerge yet again from the shadow cast by COVID, it's time to recap the year in Faith Formation.

We started the spring still in fully virtual mode, with Zoom Children's Church before worship, and Zoom Sunday School following worship. The monthly Friday Night Hangouts and Sunday Youth Group experiences were also online - Friday focusing on Zoom games, and Sunday on “Hot Topic” discussions with the older youth.

In place of our traditional Easter Egg Hunt, we held an Easter Egg Picture Hunt with the help of 9 downtown merchants. About 44 people participated and took an egg from the basket on the church terrace at the end of the hunt. Our spring virtual Adult Ed sessions focused on the Book of Ecclesiastes. We had 12 people register for the four sessions of the series, which used the “Listen Up! Bible Study” format from UCC Resources.

We honored our Zoom Sunday School teachers in May. Thanks again to Rebecca Bandy, Marleen Caldwell, Kris Carter, Jessica Dakos and Val Kepner for sticking with the program in a time of difficult adjustments.

We welcomed members back into worship on June 20th. Children stayed in the worship space with their families, so our Summer Storytime series moved to YouTube. It was called “Colorful Pages,” and focused on stories of diversity and individuality. Many thanks to our readers: Karyn Baumann, Molly Caldwell-Kepner, Ruth Ann Clark, Val Kepner, Carol & Bob Longsworth, Jen Ring, Anne Sprague, Ralph and Becky Thompson, and Drew Wilburn! Childcare for our youngest visitors restarted on June 20th, and we hired two childcare providers - Sophie Schnake and Miranda Schaum. We put games and activities outside after worship for kids to engage with as their families enjoyed social time outside.

Five children signed up for camp at Temples Hills - all going to MMADD Camp. Two other children joined children from Federated Church in Chagrin Falls for a camp experience in Colorado last summer. All of the children received assistance in paying for camp from First Church.

Rob Thompson provided an Adult Ed. experience on the ongoing redistricting issue in Ohio on June 10th. Thanks to Rob for his continued work on this issue. The CE Committee also teamed up with the Outreach and Service Committee to sponsor two Summer Service Activities: we repainted the statues at the Hamilton Street Sports Complex, and we trimmed bushes and pulled weeds at the Oberlin Heritage Center. Thanks to Carol Burke and Anne Sprague for their help in organizing these projects.

In the Fall, we returned to in-person Sunday School and Children's Church! Children's Church now takes place during worship in Room 3, with a focus on grades K-5; and Sunday School takes place for a half-hour after worship, with a focus on grades 5-12. Both programs were run on a hybrid basis in the fall. (Now that it's spring, only our Sunday School classes after worship need to be hybrid.) We started using a new, lectionary-based curriculum resource from the Scottish Reformed Church, called “Spill the Beans.” Thanks to our Sunday School teachers - Karyn Baumann, Heather Bring, Carol Burke, Marleen Caldwell, Sarah Colson, Val Kepner, Mary Ann Kershaw, and Peter Thomas - who were very good sports about adapting to the new framework! Mariana Thomas also joined the team in the fall as our substitute Childcare Worker.

Our Adult Ed. experience for the fall was a Zoom discussion of the book *White Too Long*, by Robert P. Jones. About ten people signed up for these fruitful discussions about the role the church has played in furthering White Supremacy. We also made an effort to discuss the legacy of First Church in particular - both the good and the bad, and talked about possibilities for the future.

In October, we planned a “Messy Church” - style experience for the congregation, with intergenerational activities taking the place of the traditional sermon. The theme for the day was “Perfect Love Casts Away Fear.” The service ended up providing food for thought, as well as an opportunity for fellowship. Thanks again to Gabe Stephanides, J.J. Schaum, Val Kepner, Karyn Baumann, and Susan Remster, who helped make the day possible.

We were able to enjoy a hint of normalcy in November and December, as we held the Pumpkin Roll fundraiser and Christmas Pageant as fully in-person activities. Ruth Ann Clark and Marleen Caldwell were the brave and calm adults on the kitchen with Jen and the kids, and 30-some pumpkin rolls went to good homes. Because of the sale, we were able to sponsor 3 children in the Holiday Helping Hands drive. (Thanks to Drew Wilburn for braving the chaos of Walmart with Jen and the youth!) The pageant was called “No Room,” and was part of the December 19th service. Thanks especially to Mary Ann Kershaw for preparing the kids musically for their piece with the Finney choir on that same day.

The resurgence of the Omicron variant caused us to go back to Zoom Sunday School for the months of January and February. Our childcare workers were available for those two months, but no children of childcare age came to worship. We also put Adult Ed. on hold until it could be held virtually. Family Camp was postponed until 2023, and all money paid by members was refunded. We were able to have an in-person youth event in February, as 15 of us ventured out to Elyria’s ice rink for a little wintry fun!

In March, we hit the “restart” button, Faith Formation-wise, and Children’s Church, Sunday School and Adult Ed. came back in-person. Thanks to all the parents and kids who have hung in there through all the twists and turns, at-home deliveries, Zoom meetings, and reminders to pull their masks up! Thanks also to the amazingly patient William Vanderbilt, whose long-awaited class on the Bible, “The World’s Most Read Book,” started March 20th, and will end May 1st.

The labyrinth that was put in the Children’s Worship area in November seems an apt metaphor for the way this year has seemed at times in Faith Formation - full of unexpected reversals. I am amazingly grateful to the many individuals who have come alongside on the journey this year - whether as Sunday School teachers, pageant prop providers, or substitute Message providers when I couldn’t be in worship (thanks Marci!). Faith Formation is supposed to be a process that is lifelong, and involves all of us. I am blessed to travel with you as we explore the next year together!

In All Things - Love,

Jen Bertoni

Outreach and Service Proposal

On the recommendation of the Outreach and Service Committee and the Executive Council, the First Church in Oberlin is looking forward to donating a gift of \$22,500 to POWER (Providing Oberlin With Efficiency Responsibly). POWER is a grassroots environmental justice organization whose mission is to increase the energy efficiency of homes, small businesses, non-profit organizations, and churches in Oberlin and the surrounding area. Keeping our brothers and sisters comfortable and healthy through the work of POWER is one way that we at First Church can act on our faith and care for those around us. As a donation, our funds will be able to be used for work that POWER is currently unable to complete due to city regulations and funding restrictions, and will increase POWER's ability to weatherize, improve, and maintain homes that might otherwise be left in disrepair. This work not only improves the lives of those residents immediately affected, but improves property values and quality of life in our community.

If this expenditure is approved by the congregation, First Church proposes to engage the community, encouraging them to match our funds up to \$22,500, potentially doubling our gift and the work that POWER can accomplish repairing roofs, replacing hot water heaters, insulating houses, and generally making homes warmer, dryer, and more energy efficient.