



is a **Community of Christians**  
inviting all **people** to grow in  
their **relationship** with **God**  
and to live their **faith** in the **world**.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

**First United Methodist Church of Evanston  
February 9, 2020**

**Special Church Conference Agenda  
First United Methodist Church of Evanston  
February 9, 2020**

<b>Welcome and Greeting</b>	Grace Imathiu
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	Jane Cheema
<b>Membership Report</b>	Mary Taylor Johnson
<b>Reaffirmation of Candidates for Ordained Ministry</b> Carmanie Bhatti, Annie Lockhart-Gilroy, Matthew Mariani (Reaffirmation requires only a voice vote)	Chris Nieuwsma
<b>Recognition of Clergy with Church Conference Relationships</b> Kathy Cheney-Egan (Diaconal Minister, Northern Illinois Conference) Anne Hampson (Deacon Northern Illinois Conference) Virginia Lee (Deacon Virginia Conference)	
<b>Staff Parish: Adoption of Clergy Compensation</b>	Chris Nieuwsma
<b>Finance Committee: Adoption of the 2020 Budget</b>	Rebecca Smith
<b>Daisy's Place</b>	Bill Brown and Craig Chambers
<b>Church by Numbers</b>	Marion Clemens
<b>Concise Reports will be received</b>	

# Annual Report

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# **SPRC Report to Church Conference**

**February 9, 2020**

SPRC supported the life of the church by focusing on the following in 2019:

Onboarding of Pastor Grace

- Significant time and energy invested determining who does what and why - like any leadership transition where the prior leader held the role for 23 years
- New leadership means staffing changes were inevitably required - to support the strategic plan and to support Pastor Grace's unique gifts and passions:
  - Reconfiguration of Mary Taylor Johnson's role to leading Communications and Membership Engagement
  - Focusing of Bonny's role on Pastoral Care
  - Creation of a new role, led by Mitchell Jackson, focused on Christian Education and Young Adult Ministry
  - A complete turnover of all roles related to Children's Ministry - from the Chair of Children's Council, to nursery staff, to Chapel leaders, and the Children's Ministry leader
  - In partnership with Jane Cheema and Judith Campbell, Children's Council Chair, decision to enter into an engagement with Ministry Architects consulting firm to source candidates for our Children's Ministry Director role – candidates to be interviewed and selected by FUMC
  - Partnered closely with the Total Child Center board on the interim plan to replace former Director Beth Ruppe, and launched a selection committee made up of TCC board members and staff, and FUMC members to select the next Director
  - Pam Farnquist's move out of state allowed us to reconsider office and administrative support structure, resulting in the hiring of Receptionist Kimberly Simeonov and Administrative Assistant Kelsey Morton

Other items in support of the above:

- In process of updating job descriptions for staff to aid in expectation setting and annual performance reviews
- Initial review of policy and benefits manuals, with further updates planned in 2020

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Todd Bowen, David Cera, Kitty Dutenhaver, Anne Hampson, Jack Hinz, Abbey Ogunbola, Pam Peters and Martha Rudy

Chris Nieuwsma, Chair SPRC

## **Clergy with Secondary Appointments & Candidates for Ordained Ministry**

**Virginia A. Lee**

**Deacon – Secondary Appointment -- Charge Conference Report**

For the fourth year, I was a part of the Garrett-Evanston CDF Freedom Schools program, sponsored by Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, and located in the Fifth Ward of Evanston. The Freedom Schools program is a literacy-based six-week summer program designed to help children fall in love with reading. It is a program for scholars (children in grades three through eight) to build self-esteem and recognize their own agency to make change in the world. As one of the co-executive directors, I also have the privilege to get to know the Servant Leader Interns (young adults ages 19-30 who serve as the teachers) and the scholars, and to watch their enthusiasm for learning how to make a difference in their community.

I am in my ninth year on faculty at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. In my role as a seminary professor, I have the privilege to co-lead a travel class of students to the Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry at Haley Farm in Clinton, TN every July, where I am also a part of the faculty for the Proctor Institute's Dale Andrews Freedom Seminary. It is a place where "beloved community" is visible and tangible. It is a place where one hears bold and prophetic preaching, learns skills from a variety of workshops, hears the voices and experiences of children, contributes to the future and well-being of children, and praises God through music. Students are always transformed by the experience and it is a place of spiritual renewal for me. It is a sacred experience on holy ground. At the 2019 Proctor Institute, the book I co-edited with my Garrett colleague, Dr. Reginald Blount, *Let Your Light Shine: Mobilizing for Justice with Children and Youth*, was premiered and featured.

It was my honor and pleasure to accompany students who are discerning a call or are in the process to be ordained a deacon to Lake Junaluska, NC in September for a national deacon gathering/event. Students had a chance to meet deacons from around the connection, find persons with similar interests and ministries, and be affirmed in their call and ministry.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as an ordained deacon where I have the opportunity to help persons live out their baptismal vows to "resist evil, injustice, and oppression."

Rev. Dr. Virginia A. Lee

Member of the Virginia Annual Conference

Primary Appointment:

Associate Professor of Christian Education

Director of Deacon Studies

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Secondary Appointment: First United Methodist Church, Evanston

**Anne C. Hampson**  
**Deacon/Endorsed Pastoral Counselor**

**Retired November 2019**

I celebrate the theme of excellent numbers that the First United Methodist Church of Evanston has for the many ministries provided there. However, that theme doesn't apply to the ministry of pastoral counseling which has been my primary appointment by the Northern Illinois Annual Conference. This past year I worked with clergy, seminary students and a diverse population that came from multiple walks in life. Many of my clients had been marginalized, abused or made to feel unaccepted by their families, communities, cultural context, denomination or congregations due to their sexual orientation, mental or physical illness, economic status, marital status, ageism, racism, and sexism. Themes like meaning of life, justice, purpose, reconciliation, resurrection, boundaries, self-care, hope, sin, forgiveness, and grace has been a part of my work with persons. This type of deep, inward journey is hard work as my clients worked toward a sense of self that is based on qualities not quantifiable. I genuinely love working with people on this level. However, this past November 2019 I closed my private practice and retired from my appointment in the United Methodist Church. My LCPC license is still active and I may find ways to work in my passion again.

Meanwhile, I continue to assist on the Bishop's Response Team in the Northern Illinois Annual Conference. This past September I began serving on the Chicago Northwestern District Committee of Ordained Ministry, as the Psychological Coordinator. In my Charge Conference, at the First United Methodist Church of Evanston, Illinois I am on the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

**Heesung Hwang**  
**Ordained Deacon, Northern Illinois Conference**

The year of 2019 is a milestone in my life in many ways. I graduated from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary with PhD degree in Christian Education and Congregational Studies; and was selected as a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Louisville Institute. As a postdoctoral fellow, I also began the two year appointment in teaching at Chicago Theological Seminary as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Education. These experiences have been a confirmation of my love for research and teaching as my calling to the ministry of academia to equip both laity and clergy. Chicago Theological Seminary has been so supportive creating new courses with me, such as Religious Education in the Multicultural Contexts, taught in Korean; and LGBTQ Learning and Developmental Theories. Both became the first courses offered in seminaries in the US.

With great success and some challenges along the way paving a new path, I am so thankful for the academic training I've received at G-ETS, and for spiritual nurture at First Church. First Church has been my spiritual shelter for those years I needed so much.

Upon graduation, I moved to near Chicago, and have recently decided to join the Chicago Temple since January 2020, as my secondary appointment. With prayerful conversation with the leadership there, I found the needs I can relate to and contribute in weekly bases. I can't thank enough for what First Church has done in my life while residing in Evanston. It has been a true blessing for me. Even though my physical being will be leaving, my heart, thoughts and prayers will stay. Peace in Christ.

Rev. Dr. Heesung Hwang

## **Annie Lockhart-Gilroy**

### **Commissioned Deacon**

The highlight of my ministry this past year was being commissioned at annual conference in June. I am now participating in the residency program which brings me back to Northern Illinois a few times a year. My primary appointment is to Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, OK. I am in my second year there, so this past year I have found myself settling in my new city and at the school. Since it had been a while since Phillips had a Christian educator, my focus has been on developing three Christian Education classes that will all fulfill the new CE requirement: Approaches to Christian Education, which is geared towards those feeling called to pastoring congregations; Christian Education through the lifespan, which is geared for those called to age specific ministries, and Education as a Practice of a Freedom, geared towards those that seek to focus on social justice work outside of the congregation. I do, however, understand that sometimes students have to pick classes based on their schedule and not necessarily based on their vocational leanings. So, there are foundational premises that lie in each course along with a final project that would be geared towards a students' contexts. These vocational interests also do not live in isolation. It is important for pastors to see education as an act of freedom and know the pedagogical needs throughout the life span and the same can be said for all vocational tracks. So, the courses will be taught as such.

I spent the summer finishing two writing projects, one monograph and one edited work. The monograph, *Nurturing the Sanctified Imagination of Urban Youth*, is being published by Urban Loft Publishers, and is due to be out in March of 2020. The edited work, *From Lament to Public Advocacy: Black Religious Education and Public Theology* is being published by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. I am happy that these texts are completed and look forward to having them physically in my hands.

My work with a local congregation, St. Paul's UMC has been a bit more constant. I preach there about once a quarter and teach Christian Education classes. Teaching classes in a congregational setting again have been life giving in a way that is different from teaching seminarians, and I am thoroughly enjoying it. It has been a busy and sometimes overwhelming year. The work in the local congregation continues to ground me in deep and profound ways so I feel a little less overwhelmed.

## **Carmanie Bhatti**

### **Candidate for Ordained Ministry**

My name is Carmanie Bhatti. I am a recent graduate of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary: Master of Divinity, 2017 and Master of Theological Studies, *Magna Cum Laude* 2019. I graduated as the President of the local chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa, national honor society for religious studies and theology.

Having lived six years in the living facility on campus, the dorm, I was forced to not only move out storing all my belongings at a safe place, but also move in to a place where I could live and spend the rest of the days until I could be back in Evanston. Hence, I accepted my brother's invitation to come and live with him in Midtown Manhattan, New York and stay there until I appeared before the DCOM for my next interview and receive an appointment.

Since my arrival in New York, I have been part of a theatre group. As one who has performed at my former school in Pakistan, FUMC Evanston, Garrett-Evangelical, Northwestern University, as well as DePaul University, I thought it might be very helpful to make use of my time in New York and, work on my gift of acting and performing. Hence, I also graduated with a Diploma in Acting from the New York Film Academy, New York, and currently am completing my one year Conservatory program at The Lee Strasberg Theater & Film Institute, in New York, where I am learning the technique of Method Acting. Though most actors seem to understand acting as mere performance or their paid job, I have been able to perceive acting more than story telling. An actor is an instrument that helps bring to the audience the suffering of humans belonging to diverse groups, the unheard cry of needy and oppressed and, sometimes the anger people have against God that includes dissatisfaction among persons about the practice of religion. I believe, this has been one of the most challenging experiences of all.

## **Matthew Mariani**

### **Candidate for Ordained Ministry**

A lot has been going on over the past year and much will be going on this year as well! Perhaps the most pressing topic is my status in the candidacy process. In May of 2019 I was relicensed, recertified, and recommended to go before the Board of Ordained Ministry for a second attempt at a commissioning recommendation for provisional elder. And it's happening tomorrow February 10<sup>th</sup> at 8AM! Hopefully I'll have good news for next year's report.

This also marks a little over a year and a half since I became a two-point charge pastor. Ministry is very busy but extremely gratifying as seeds are beginning to sprout and community members begin to walk into the doors of the church for the first time. From October 2018 to April 2019 I completed a unit of CPE at Sherman Hospital and have since engaged in more chaplaincy education for first responders and crisis management. I've been seeking out resources and coursework to tie crisis intervention and spiritual care into parish work as well. My work with the fire department has begun to bear evangelistic fruit as more members are beginning to seek me out for spiritual discernment and several have come to holiday services with family members.

Several community members have also sent letters thanking the department for my work in assisting them in moments of crisis.

All of this work is thanks to your continued support as a congregation. And I hope to stand before you next year as a provisional elder!

## Finance Committee Reports

### Financial Position, YTD 2019 Operating Performance, Committee Activities and 2020 Operating Budget

#### Financial Position

FUMC continues to be in a strong financial position due to the foresight and generosity of past members of our congregation, devoted pledge fulfillment by the current congregation, controlled budgeting and management of expenses by our staff, timely financial reporting by our staff, and stewardship of our resources by the Finance Committee.

The balance sheets for the Operating Fund, Building Fund, and Endowment & Trust Funds detail the financial position. Each maintains strong Net Assets positions, significant liquidity and almost no obligations or liabilities.

(\$ in 000s)	Operating		Building		Endowment	
	Audit 2018	Dec 2019	Audit 2018	Dec 2019	Audit 2018	Dec 2019
Cash & Equivalents	\$655	\$537	\$8	\$8	\$0	\$0
Due from Other Funds	0	56	257	0	15	0
Other/Buildings/Investments	270	0	7,577	7,778	4,524	5,518
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$925</b>	<b>\$593</b>	<b>\$7,842</b>	<b>\$7,785</b>	<b>\$4,539</b>	<b>\$4,953</b>
Due to Other Funds	\$272	\$0	\$0	\$2	\$0	\$54
Other Liabilities	202	125	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$474</b>	<b>\$125</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$54</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$451</b>	<b>\$468</b>	<b>\$7,842</b>	<b>\$7,783</b>	<b>\$4,539</b>	<b>\$4,899</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$925</b>	<b>\$593</b>	<b>\$7,842</b>	<b>\$7,785</b>	<b>\$4,539</b>	<b>\$4,953</b>

#### YTD 2019 Operating Performance

The results for 2019 are not finalized as of this reporting. The Operating Fund is likely to break even for the full year.

Preliminary December 2019 results show the operating fund had a deficit of income compared to budget of (\$51,000) or approximately 4% of Total Income. This was a result of reduced Non-pledged Giving of (\$39,000) and Pledged Giving of (\$12,000).

Spending as of the preliminary December results are approximately (\$52,000) below budget. The SPRC budget had the largest reduced spending (\$42,000).

### Committee Activities

In October 2019, the Finance Committee passed creating liaison relationships with the church staff and committee leaders. This relationship continues to enhance the Committee's Mission that was redefined in 2018 as stated below:

*The Finance Committee's main purpose and highest priority is to ensure the short- and long-term financial viability of the Church, thru oversight of the Church's financial policies and timely monitoring of the Church's current financial state. The Committee should focus on accuracy, effectiveness, transparency and sustainability. The roles and responsibilities of this committee are in conformity with the Book of Discipline.*

The liaison relationship is to enhance the knowledge and understanding of each of the ministry areas for the finance committee, increase communication between the committee and the ministry area, and to support the ministry area on fiscal related topics in their area as they carry out the work of the ministry and stewardship of the church.

### 2020 Operating Budget

The budgeting process at FUMC is coordinated by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee consolidates budgetary "asks" from each church committee and interest group to establish the Expense portion of the budget. The staff provides budgets for General & Administrative and Building & Grounds. The Income portion of the budget is derived from the results of the annual Stewardship Campaign.

The 2020 budget reflects continued, conservative use of the church's resources including:

- Meeting the entire Northern Illinois Conference apportionment,
- A 6.6% increase in the Staff Parish Relations Committee asking budget. This reflects a Zero % increase for the Clergy; the hiring of a full time Director of Children Ministry, and the full year of increased compensation for additional work responsibilities for the Director of Membership and Communication (formerly Director of Membership and Visitor Connection).

# Membership Committee Report

## Membership Committee 2019 Annual Report

Submitted by Ann Weatherhead, Chair

Committee Members: Mike Bergmann, Kevin Chanashing, Jean Clipperton, Jonathan Easter, Joanna Gwinn, Leah Holzwarth, Abbey Ogunbola, Sara Osborne, Matt Peters, Mary Taylor-Johnson (staff), and Ann Weatherhead.

Now in our second year as a standing committee, we continue to define our membership growth work using the helpful language of “welcoming, connecting, engaging.” Following is our annual report “by the numbers.”

### Welcoming

- Welcome Spots were staffed weekly by a pool of 30 volunteers. Locations include Fountain Foyer (before & after 10:30am service) and summer worship services in the Park and Tittle Chapel. This year we added a Super Greeter role for the Church Street entrance.
- On average, 36 visitors (identified, local adults) are in worship on any given Sunday, or 13% of our worshipping total.
- Approximately 70% of all worshippers since Rally Day have signed the welcome folders. We encourage all members to sign the welcome folder, including contact info, and pass to other who are likely to follow your example. This will enable us to identify visitors so we can extend a welcome.

### Connecting and Engaging

- Hosted 3 Visitor Coffees for persons interested in meeting Pastor Grace and learning more about First Church. 3-5 volunteers helped with each Visitor Coffee.
- Hosted 2 social gatherings in homes for Inquirers and new members, with 32 attendees total.
- 3 Inquirers Classes with 40 total participants.
- 45 new members in 2019: 38 adults and 7 8th grade confirmands.
- 12 current members served as sponsors for the Inquirers who joined, and another 5-7 current members served as mentors for the youth confirmands.
- 24 of the 38 adult new members are actively serving in some capacity at the church and/or participating in a group.

## How can you help?

- Fill out the welcome folder completely and pass it on to others in your pew.
- Say hello and introduce yourself to others you have not met – members and visitors.
- Volunteer at the Welcome Spot or as part of the Greeter/Usher Team.
- Wear an Ask Me button to identify yourself as approachable and knowledgeable.
- Wear a button designating your preferred pronouns.

## **2019 Membership Report**

**Submitted by Mary Taylor-Johnson**

**Director of Communications and Membership Engagement**

### Membership Totals

**718 total professing members**

459 households

In 2019:

47 member additions

28 member subtractions

Also participating in our worshipping congregation:

30 ordained clergy

141 children and not-yet-confirmed youth

71 constituents

110 prospective members

### Member Additions

#### **Reinstated (2)**

Julian and Lisa Coleman

#### **New Members (45)**

##### *2019 Winter Inquirers (20)*

(10 transfers from another UMC; 6 transfers from another denomination; 2 by affirmation of faith; 2 by profession of faith; 1 affiliate member)

John Bausch, Linda Boardman, Tom Butler, Jean Clipperton, Kim Coffing, Ginny Dearborn, Matt Jankiewicz, Selena Jankiewicz, Jason Lewis, Diana Mawhinney, Jim O'Connell, Nicole O'Connell, Pranali Parmar, Henry Pleas, Jean Price, Bridget Reyes, Sergio Reyes, Miles Shultz, A.J. Stoner, Beth Tipton

##### *2019 Spring Inquirers (4)*

(3 transfers from another UMC; 1 transfer from another denomination)

Bruce Greene, David Hawkins, Amy Wells, Susie Zeiser

*2019 Fall Inquirers (14)*

(6 transfers from another UMC; 4 transfers from another denomination; 3 affirmation of faith; 1 profession of faith)

Sam Bottum, Betty Campbell, Melanie Domer, Christian Farr, Karen Farr, Ezechiele Habwawihe, Esperance Harimenshi, Jean Henderson, Pete Henderson, Nancy Lynn, Devin McDonough, Mary-Elizabeth McDonough, Chris Williams, Karen Williams

*Youth confirmands (7)*

(All joined via profession of faith)

Charlotte Calkins, Sam Diener, Max Funk, Jonathan Maerklin, Jack McClintock, Henry Van De Walle, Trey Vander Velde

*Baptisms (12)* — Note that baptism does not make one a professing member.

Archie Bloem, William Boutross, John Farr, Clark Gertsberg, Elizabeth Haughney, Cameron Henry, Selena Jankiewicz, Benjamin Lewis, Everett Lewis, Jason Lewis, Joachim Pontes, Connor Sabrsula

Member Subtractions

**Withdrawals and Transfers (18)**

Richard Barker, Ashtin Barker – moved to Georgia; transferred to UMC  
Jennifer Christensen – transferred to Presbyterian Church in Wilmette  
Mollie Foster – transferred to Park Ridge Community Church where she serves as pastor  
Lisa Huff and Robert Sahadevan – relocated to Dallas area; not attending another church  
Christopher Huston -- withdrawn  
Peggy and Rob Magee – moved to Minnesota; transferred to UMC  
Nicole Nicholas – withdrawn; has settled in Michigan  
Jessica Powell – relocated to California  
Karalee Robb and Nigel Serbe – withdrawn; attending Trinity UMC in Wilmette.  
Kevin Roth – relocated out of the area  
David and Sarah Tredo -relocated to Virginia  
Brent and Tracy Woefle – moved to Deerfield; attending Presbyterian Church there

**Deaths (5)**

Ethelyn Bond  
Pat Dean (2018 death date; notified in 2019)  
Steve Fargo  
Bernice Klosterman  
Mary Ellen Van Ness  
Also: Ajit Cheema (nonmember), Louise McGrotha Hill (nonmember), Antoinette Scholl (nonmember), Robert Wadsworth (past member)

**Removed by Charge Conference Action - Feb. 2019 (5)**

Christine and Gabe Bridger, Joycelyn Chisholm-Wynter, Julian and Lisa Coleman

**Candidates for possible removal via charge conference action**

*For removal now:*

Katherine Rae Cramer, Paige Doyle

*For removal in one year:*

Brian Armstrong, Michelle DeTolla, Rick Doyle, Jesse Hunt, Jonathan Long, Debby Pool, Claus-Peter and Ute Richter, Sam Stahl, Anne Marie Williams, Everett Williams

Worship Attendance (January-December 2019)

Sunday morning average: 275

Sunday morning average during program year: 309

# Clergy Reports

## Jane Berman Cheema

### Pastor of Mission and Discipleship

This report is my version of the story of this community inviting all people to grow in their relationship with God and live their faith in the world. This is a very powerful witness to the love and grace of God. I have been incredibly blessed to share in this work with the amazing, loving and gifted community here at First Church for the past 23-ish years.

**Learning and growing in relationship with God:** Part of my primary focus in ministry at First Church Evanston is to work with children, youth and their families to help them learn and live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Our youth, children and families continue to grow in discipleship and to live out practices of our faith. This is evident week after week in our Children's Sunday school classes, in Children's Chapel, Children's Choir, Confirmation classes, High School Sunday School, youth Fellowship groups, on our youth mission trips to communities in Appalachia and Polo, IL, through local mission and outreach work and through participation in worship.

As a Deacon appointed to this local church, my job is to help connection the gifts of the church to the needs of the world. The process of connecting the congregation to the needs of the world happens through the relationship we have with Christ and through Christ. I believe that we need to nurture and model this relationship with Christ in our relationships with each other and this is the basis of our teaching and learning at First Church Evanston.

We have many practices of forming community that undergird our classes and worship. Sunday mornings are the core of our worship and faith development through teaching, learning and experiencing God's word as a gathered community. We are then charged to go into the world and to share the love of God made known and experienced in Jesus with everyone we encounter.

This year in my ministry I have helped to connect the congregation to the needs of the world through worship leadership, teaching, youth groups, confirmation class, leading youth mission trips to Polo, IL and Chavies, KY, and leading an adult mission trip to Puerto Rico.

I am privileged to serve this community with gifted and dedicated colleagues. In July we celebrated the retirement of Cherie Asante and began a new chapter of ministry with Children. In addition to Cherie's retirement, we also said goodbye to Gloria Feliciano who had served as our Children's Chapel leader for the past few years as well as goodbye to Nicki and Lilly who had served in our Nursery providing amazing care for our youngest children. In this time of transition- we have been blessed with an amazing Children's Council led by Judith Campbell. The Children's Council has been hard at work recruiting and training Sunday school teachers and making sure all is well as we plan for our next Children's Ministry leader.

The mission of the Children's Ministry at First Church is to build a community of children, parents, and families who grow in their practice of Christian living through worship, service within and beyond the church, education, fellowship in a fun and nurturing environment.

**Inviting all people and forming community:** Our youth program has been nurtured with volunteer youth leaders Katherine Logan, Steve Brawn, Dylan Powell, Whitney Shellstrom, Crystal Bockoven, Tina Cheema Stoner and AJ Stoner providing leadership for Youth Fellowship programs. Jim Hagedorn has served as the anchor for our Confirmation program and has created a wonderful community of dedicated students who come each week to explore faith. This is our second year of group mentoring in Confirmation. We have 10 adults from the congregation who have been trained to serve as mentors- engaging our students in conversation and making connection with them. Under Jim's leadership we have started our second year with a group of amazing adult Mentors.

Youth Ministry continues to grow and change with a model of ministry that involves multiple places to connect with the church and youth community. We have done away with a one size fits all youth program and have created new groups- Journey and Friday Night Live in addition to Sunday afternoon youth fellowship. The High school mid-week gathering called Journey has provided dinner and a place to "rest" each week for our students who come from school, rehearsals and sports practices and includes time for reflection and devotion as well as food and fellowship.

Middle School group that meets once a month for fun! This group is growing, and the level of fun has at least doubled! Sunday afternoon youth fellowship is now a series of Road trips and Rest stops that keep our youth having fun and connected to each other. Our Road Trips have included the trips to a Ninja Gym, a Corn Maze- and all over Evanston.

Our Youth Retreats were awesome this year- a group of High School Students traveled to St. Louis to attend the special session of General Conference- where they learned about and observed the workings of our Denomination. Our Fall retreat included both our Confirmation class and High School students- learning about community and leadership.

**Living our faith in the world:** Another big part of my work is to guide the work of this faith community in mission to the larger community of Evanston, Chicago and further out in the world! I am the staff liaison to the Mission and Outreach committee and have the pleasure of serving God's people alongside many incredible persons from our faith community.

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The leadership teams for our youth mission trips this summer to Polo, Il and Rockford Il and Chavies, Kentucky. Mike McGuire, James Ogunbola, Jim Niemira, Katherine Logan, Jim Hagedorn, Brad Woodman, Dylan Powell, Kathy Cheney Egan, Steve Lobacz, Tina Cheema, Martha Rudy, Steve Brawn, Paul Christensen, AJ Stoner, Grant Bailey, Becky Eberhart, Tim Eberhart, Kevin Bond, Mike Green, Ross McLean, Matthew Mariani, Whitney Shellstrom,

Chase Bailey, Ferris Ingraham, Nancy Pendergrass, Jeff Vice, Jean Vice, Crystal Bockoven, Zack Warhus.

Please read the Mission and Outreach committee report to understand all the great work being done! Local Missions has been extremely active this year with the growth of our Diaper Pantry serving almost 400 children in our community each month. And our food ministry continues to meet at need in the Evanston area with sack lunches made each Sunday and taken to Connection for the Homeless, Thursday Night Soup Kitchen and First Friday Lunches. The continued work of our Sack Lunch ministry and Friday Lunch ministry and Soup Kitchen are more signs of this community's living their faith in the world.

This year of 2019 has been a year of joy and challenge for my family- I am grateful for the support of this community! We celebrated our daughter's wedding the Sanctuary on October 5<sup>th</sup>! It really was the best day ever. About a month after, my husband was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer that has made the end of this year quite a challenge. Again- so grateful for the support of my colleagues and the community here.

I look forward to 2020 bringing more challenges and opportunities to serve God's people.

Grace and Peace,

Jane Cheema

## **Bonny Stalnaker Roth**

### **Pastor of Pastoral Care and Adult Faith Formation**

The year 2019 offered much to celebrate in my ministry areas of Pastoral Care, Adult Education, and Adult Faith Formation. My ¾-time position shifted mid-year: Mitchell Jackson stepped into Adult Christian Education. That shift has allowed me to devote additional hours to Pastoral Care and to Adult Faith Formation.

#### **Pastoral Care**

Offering pastoral care to our members and constituents is a great joy and privilege. Our congregation invites me into their homes, coffee shops, quiet corners of the church, hospital rooms, rehabilitation rooms, long-term care facilities. We pray at a hospital before surgery, hear concerns about family members, explore questions of faith, read scripture, laugh and cry together while grieving a loved one's death. I treat these sacred times with confidentiality, as mandated for all clergy by The United Methodist Church.

While pastoral care is not readily quantifiable, I can offer these numbers. Pastor Grace, Deacon Jane, and I are available at these times and for these persons:

- **Days and times available:** 24 hrs. a day, 7 days a week, 365/366 days a year
- **Persons who may be served:** 855. (Members, ordained persons, constituents, prospective members, students of Northwestern and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.)

My year included the following:

- **Years serving on staff in Pastoral Care:** 7.5
- **In-person visits, phone conversations, e-mail exchanges:** Countless
- **Memorial services:** 9
- **Sermons:** 5
- **Lay Visitors trained:** 5. **Total Lay Visitors serving members:** 14.
- **Weddings:** 2
- **Mather Vespers:** 1

#### **Congregational Care Committee**

This past year our Congregational Care Committee, for which I serve as staff liaison, has become revitalized with the leadership of Ashley Eckman and a gifted, faithful committee. This group supports the work of the following care activities and assesses congregational needs for new services:

- Delivering altar flowers following Sunday worship.
- Organizing meals for families with new babies and those experiencing crisis.
- Organizing transportation to worship, medical appointments, and other needs.
- Offering the Advent Luncheon.
- Training Lay Visitors with the leadership of Janet Lutz.
- Intercessory prayer ministry.

### **Adult Education: January to June 2019**

In addition to Pastoral Care, my other ministry area was Adult Education from January to June 2019. In that role I served as staff liaison to Adult Council, the group that organized and supported classes, such as the following:

- Lent One Church One Book: *Note to Self: Old Men Can Learn Too*, a series based on the memoir by Don Baker.
- *Fifteen Spirituals That Will Change Your Life*, a series led by the author Henry Carrigan.
- *Women Bishops of The United Methodist Church: Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit*, led by authors Sharon Rader and Margaret Ann Crain.
- Bible and Homosexuality led by Phyllis Bird.
- Gospel of Luke led by Dennis Damon-Moore.
- A Way Forward discussions led by several persons.
- Ongoing classes/groups: Abide, Faith and Parenting and Bring Your Own Bible and Newspaper (now Church and Culture).
  
- **Sunday 9:15 participation January—June 2019:** average 31 per Sunday

Adult Council sponsored the first First Church **World Labyrinth Day** on Saturday, May 4. Experienced and inexperienced walkers enjoyed the sunny, cool day. That occasion is one of several guided opportunities for member to experience this ancient prayer practice, which continues to appeal to 21<sup>st</sup> century seekers. Anyone who would like an introduction may send me an e-mail. Watch for information on World Labyrinth Day 2020.

### **Adult Faith Formation: January to December**

Throughout 2019, including June through December, I have continued organizing and supporting Adult Faith Formation, which includes ongoing small groups. The listing below indicates the number of years each group has been meeting through 2019 and the group's status. I facilitate or co-facilitate five of these groups and participate in one.

- Abide (3, continues)
- God's Story Our Stories (8, continues)
- Grace Circle (4, continues)
- Intercessory Prayer (1, continues)
- Moms in Prayer (7, continues)
- Parents & Play (3, continues)
- Read Pray Love (10, ended)
- Read Pray Love 2 (10, continues)
- Wednesday Morning Bible Study (5, continues)

I contribute to our Inquirers classes regularly, especially related to faith formation.

### **Renewal Leave: 2019 to 2020**

I am grateful to Staff-Parish Relations Committee for granting me a renewal leave and to Pastor Grace for supporting this leave. In keeping with renewal leaves granted to other staff, my leave

spans eight weeks. In contrast to a typical model of eight consecutive weeks, my leave is occurring in five-to-ten-day segments from summer 2019 to summer 2020.

This model allows me to pursue a fifteen-year dream of writing a book-length memoir on my spiritual journey as a co-parent with my spouse Bob and my transformation through transracial adoption and loving a child with a debilitating mental illness. Last summer I immersed myself in this project during two separate weeks at Iowa Summer Writing Festival. In the fall I engaged in a self-guided writing retreat and plan another one this spring. In summer 2020 I plan to return to Iowa City for two more weeks of intensive workshops.

### **Northern Illinois Conference Residency Leadership Team**

To support the work of our NIC, I serve on the Residency Leadership Team as chaplain. Our nine-person team plans and implements the continuing education component required of provisional deacons and elders as they prepare two years or more for ordination.

- **Years served:** 4
- **Meetings with provisional participants:** 1 overnight retreat; 4 all-day meetings
- **Candidate interview days:** 3

### **Hospital Chaplain**

Serving First Church part-time has allowed me to continue serving in a limited capacity as an On-Call Chaplain for NorthShore University HealthSystem. This ministry extends my reach, as well as the church's reach, into the broader Evanston and North Shore community. It also enhances my effectiveness as a pastor to our members, especially those who are patients in one of the NSUHS hospitals. Each week I facilitate a group conversation on faith and life on the Intensive Care Psychiatric unit. This group offers hope to patients and renews my faith in the Holy Spirit's movement among God's beloved children.

- **Years serving:** 14
- **Hospitals served:** 4

I continue to be grateful for this community of faith that has nurtured my family and me for over 38 years. Your care opened my heart to God's call to ordained ministry that led to my ordination in 2012. Your ongoing support of my ministry inspires me to grow with you as we claim our place as beloved children of God and live our faith in the world.

## **Program Staff Reports**

### **Mary Taylor-Johnson**

#### **Director of Communications and Membership Engagement**

This January I began my 15th year on the First Church staff. In August 2019 I moved into a new role, which is the third time I have moved into a new position created in response to the church's strategic plan. First, it was the church's 2004 goal to create an Adult Education program with staffing dedicated solely to that. In January 2018 I was moved to work full-time in Membership Growth; and in August 2019 I moved into this new position, which essentially added communications to my portfolio and expanded membership growth to "membership engagement." This change came in response to the church's desire to improve internal and external communication, to develop infrastructure to support membership growth and other ministry areas, and to more intentionally address the engagement/retention of the congregation.

Thankfully, the new position included a highly capable part-time administrative assistant who provides support for many of the weekly tasks around communications, infrastructure, visitor tracking and outreach, and membership data. Without the help of Kelsey Morton, I would not be able to handle this expanded position.

As a communications director, I bring familiarity with this congregation and its ministries and a decade of experience writing and producing the monthly newsletter, but no other professional communications background. I am learning a lot and very much appreciate the goodwill and expertise of the Communication Committee. (See the "Comm Comm" report for more on that work). It has been particularly helpful to work with that group and with the Pastor's Advisory Team during this time of confusion and controversy in the UMC.

For the past six months of gearing up with communications, the membership growth piece has typically taken a bit of a back seat, and I am leaning more on the Membership Committee. (See the Membership Committee report.) I believe, though, that improvements in communications and infrastructure will benefit visitors and prospective members as much as they will help current members, so I think this prioritization makes sense. As you'll see in the membership report (another separate report), our new member numbers continue to be strong.

In terms of infrastructure, we have begun to track attendance for 10:30 a.m. worship and for adult, youth, and children's classes, Children's Chapel and the nursery on Sunday. (So be sure you sign in the welcome folder and sign your children in!). We are also working to record participation in groups —committees, fellowship groups, adult learning and faith formation groups, for example — in Realm. These records will help us in 2020 as we move to focus more on member retention and engagement. On the whole we are working, albeit slowly, to develop additional ways to help folks connect to meaningful opportunities and to each other.

My position includes three committee assignments. I lead the Communications Committee, co-facilitate the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee with Pastor Grace, and serve

on the Membership Committee which is chaired by Ann Weatherhead. These three committees are all integral to my work and they demand a fair number of evening work hours.

What I love about my work also can frustrate me. I love welcoming new people to this community and helping them make meaningful connections. One of my strengths is knowing the congregation and the programs and working on the systems — but I miss having time for more interpersonal interaction. I am motivated to create strong communication pieces but I have a lot of other things on my plate competing for time and attention.

My goals for 2020 are to focus on the big picture, to look for ways to share the work of welcoming and connecting, and to invest time and effort in processes and systems that will enable us to keep growing our ministry.

## **Brian Schoettler**

### **Minister of Music & Organist**

Music continues to be an essential part of worship here at First Church. The Chancel Choir provides weekly music and our Gospel, Handbell, and Children's Choirs perform every 4-6 weeks. The Festival Choir, Worship in the Park Ensemble, Youth Ensemble, and the pageant offer seasonal opportunities for musicians of all ages to participate in the musical life of our congregation. Over 70 children, youth, and adults are regular participants in our Music Ministry.

In this transitional time for The United Methodist Church, we look to our musical heritage and how it informs our current identity. This is true of our Sunday worship services but perhaps best encapsulated in the Festival Choir's spring concert titled *Evanston's Own*. The concert featured choral works by composers who at one point called Evanston home – many of whom were connected with our church or served as one of our musicians. Many of these pieces were sung in worship but their place in the program helped to tell our story. Memorable moments included *Carry the flame* with brass, handbells, organ, timpani, and congregation, the observation of Austin Lovelace's centennial with a performance of his cantata, *Job of Uz*, for chorus, organ, and brass octet, and Robert Ray's *He never failed me yet* with a guest soloist from Second Baptist – the church who commissioned the work.

The year concluded with Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. Performed in concert, on Christmas Eve, and as part of our Lessons and Carols service – this work juxtaposes past and present. A gay, 20th-century composer sets centuries-old texts for choir and harp and, in the process, intertwines both then and now creating something seemingly eternal. Our pageant serves a similar role: teaching scripture and songs of faith to the next generation. The children learn texts and music from the thirteenth century to the present along with music from different traditions which work together to assist them in learning and sharing the story of Christ's nativity.

While careful attention is given each week to provide music that supports the scripture and the liturgy, several highlights are worth noting:

- Saxophone ensemble on Epiphany and All Saints Sundays.

- Maundy Thursday with the Treble Choir singing Ola Gjeilo's *Ubi caritas*.
- An exciting Rally Day with choir, brass, and balloons.
- A memorable All Saints Day with the congregation gathered in the Memorial Garden.
- Over 200 in attendance for the fall Festival Choir concert.

I'm thankful for everyone involved in our Music Ministry but want to extend special thank yous to:

- to Gale Hartman for her gift of a baby grand piano (Glenna Hall).
- to the Bowers family for their donation of an upright piano (Room 33).
- to John Hardy and Jim Niemira who continue to maintain the sanctuary organ blower.
- to Jan Peterson for her continued maintenance of our choir and acolyte robes.
- to Bob Roth for his assistance with the choral library.
- to Jane Kotten for over 50 years of service in the Chancel Choir.

The Chancel Choir has been invited to perform at the 2020 General Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Monday, May 11th. Our presence and our music will be a witness to our inclusive community in Evanston. We pray that we might be instruments of God's peace and a beacon of hope in a world that so desperately needs it.

In Christ,

Brian Schoettler

## **Mitchell Jackson**

### **Director of Christian Education & Young Adult Ministry**

It's been a great year for Christian Education at First Church. After what felt like a long summer of planning, we kicked off the program year with a great Rally Day. Nearly 50 people showed up to our Christian Ed. Showcase Breakfast to hear about the new and ongoing Sunday morning classes and small groups. It was a good start.

Our plan for Sunday mornings was to focus on four key themes: 1. Bible study, 2. church history and tradition, 3. Methodism, and 4. spiritual disciplines (prayer and meditation).

**Bible Study:** Sue Hagedorn and Tom Scott co-facilitated the short-term Disciple study, Invitation to the Old Testament. It was a great opportunity for people to learn about the scriptures that informed Jesus's own faith. Janet Lutz also led TWO Disciple classes on the Psalms and a weekday class on Paul's letters.

**Church History:** The Church & Culture class (formerly BYOBible&Newspaper) put the Gospel of Matthew in conversation with contemporary social issues. Led by Jonathan Ng and myself, this class also tapped into the First Church archives (as well as newspaper archives) to see how our church (and Methodists in general) responded to social issues in the past.

**Methodism:** We were very fortunate to offer Faithful & Inclusive, which was developed by Rev. Rob Fuquay of St. Luke's UMC in Indianapolis. Faithful & Inclusive covered Methodism, Church History and Bible Study, as it explored many of the issues surrounding GC2020. This engaging study was led by Bonnie Beckonchrist, S.E. Brick and Scott Nelson.

**Spiritual Disciplines:** Abide (co-facilitated by Tim and Becky Eberhart), Faith & Family (co-facilitated by Austin and Sam Spencer), and Prayer & Meditation (facilitated by Bonny Roth) offered opportunities to explore faith in community with others. These Sunday morning small groups explored the Bible (and other texts), they practiced prayer and meditation, and they provided spiritual support to group members.

In addition to Sunday morning, a number of weekday small groups continued to provide opportunities to learn and grow in the Christian faith. Among these groups were the Progressive Christians Reading Group; God's Stories, Our Stories; Read, Pray, Love 2; Wednesday Morning Bible Study and Grace Circle.

Many of these groups are continuing in the Winter, and we've added Invitation to the New Testament, which is co-facilitated by Pastor Grace and Matt and Selena Jankiewicz. We're also planning to offer another installment of Faithful & Inclusive.

And, of course, we'd be remiss if we didn't mention One Church, One Book, which was our Advent series featuring Amy-Jill Levine's book, *Light of the World*. We were very fortunate to have Dr. Levine join us in December. Her talks were not only well-attended, they were well-received and engaging for all who attended.

Here are some numbers to put the Fall in context:

**139** people attended an adult education event since Rally Day (Sept. 15, 2019) – This number includes Sunday and Weekday classes/groups.

**120** people attended an adult education event on Sunday Morning since Rally day.

**117** people who attended a class made a financial contribution to the church (Christian ed and faith formation has a positive impact on giving!).

The 2019 **Christian Ed. Preview Breakfast** had **45** attendees.

**Abide** averages **13** attendees per week.

**Church and Culture** averages **8** attendees.

**Invitation to the Old Testament** (A class offered in the Fall) averaged **5** people.

**Invitation to the New Testament** (A class offered this Spring) has **14** regular attendees.

**Faith and Family** averages **7**.

**Faithful and Inclusive** averaged **12**.

**One Church, One Book:**

**59** people attended the first week (and it was the Sunday after Thanksgiving!)

**Nearly 120 showed up to hear Amy-Jill Levine speak** on Sunday morning; **Nearly 65 showed up to hear her on Saturday evening** (including several from the JRC, Second Baptist, and the surrounding community).

# Program Committee Reports

## Reconciling Ministries Task Force – 2019 Report

Co-facilitators: S.E. Brick, Kathy Cheney-Egan

Participants: Bonnie Beckonchrist, Jess Chadwick, Terri Nelson, Nancy Pendergrass, Beth Swanick

Staff Liaison: Pastor Grace Imathiu

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Recognizing the challenges facing the denomination in the coming years, we believe our work for inclusivity is vitally important right now. We have engaged this work prayerfully, pragmatically, hopefully, and with great joy at the opportunity to bring forward the Kindom of God!

The following is a list of some of the highlights of our work:

- Researching and beginning a process of providing gender neutral bathrooms
- Developing a relationship with the first Reconciling Congregation in Africa – Moheto FUMC in Kenya – Thanks to the outreach of Pastor Grace, this church was able to formally claim their inclusivity and support for LGBTQ people and become a Reconciling Congregation.
- Led Faithful and Inclusive workshops – a DVD study of the Bible, Sexuality and The United Methodist Church. Scott Nelson and Rev. Bonnie Beckonchrist co-led this workshop
- Led in the development of the Rainbow Connection – an social gathering for LGBTQ people in the church
- Began an exploration of deepening our welcome along the lines of *We're Reconciling – Now What?* It should be noted here that Rev. Jane Cheema made it possible for a group of our youth to visit GC 2019 Special Session. This is one of the ways we deepen this commitment – letting our youth lead us. We hope to recruit youth members to our Task Force.
- Requesting that the Task Force become a formal Committee of the congregation. This will elevate our profile and allow us to become a part of the budget to fund our work.
- Staffed table at program fair
- Host hospitality on February 16
- Introduced the use of pronoun buttons on Sunday and held meeting with hospitality and welcome teams to discuss – we just ordered new pronoun buttons and they are on display around the entrances to the sanctuary
- Helped to organize and plan upcoming event with Mark Miller – This event is co-hosted by the Music Ministry and Reconciling Task Force. It will be a day of workshops for local musicians and choirs followed by a concert by participants in the workshops where an offering will be taken for Reconciling Ministry Network.

We are very grateful for the tremendous support of this congregation in this work. It is a privilege to be part of such an inclusive community! We look forward to continuing in this journey and welcome any who would like to join us. We meet the second Thursday of every month – and there are snacks ;)

Faithfully submitted by S.E. Brick & Kathy Cheney-Egan

## **Communications Committee 2019 Report**

Submitted by Mary Taylor-Johnson for the committee

Committee members: Melissa Appelt, Jordan Bloem, S.E. Brick, Matthew Jankiewicz, Jim O’Connell, Martha Rudy, and Mary Taylor-Johnson. Steve Betzner serve as the Church Council representative.

### Background

Our committee was recruited by the Nominations Committee last spring following a gap of 2+ years when the PR/Marketing Committee (our predecessor) was mostly inactive. For many years up to August 2019 internal church communications was primarily the responsibility of an office staff member. The First Things First section of the worship bulletin was, at best, a collage of news and notes from around the church submitted by church members and leaders with final say by the Senior Pastor and program staff. The weekly “all-church” email included three highlights and occasionally additional items. The website, designed specifically for visitors and church shoppers, received high marks from visitors but didn’t meet the information needs of engaged church members and constituents. The church’s social media channels, Facebook and Twitter, were not effectively used and rarely received oversight.

While our communications was better than that of many churches, it was not a priority for church leadership or staff, and the quality reflected that lack of attention. One exception was the church newsletter, which was produced monthly for 10 years and generally considered pretty well done. That newsletter was discontinued when the program staff member responsible for it was moved to a new position in January 2018.

### Getting started

Collectively, members of the “Comm Comm” bring expertise in writing, corporate communications and media relations, marketing and branding, publicity, and IT/systems. Most committee members are fairly new to First Church and so bring fresh eyes; three are longtime members with broad familiarity and leadership experience in different areas of our ministry. It is a great group of motivated individuals with a “can do” attitude.

Our work began in September 2019. As Mary was just a month in to her new role as communications director (and a newbie in this field), we spent much of the past five months addressing immediate needs/questions, identifying and attending to easy and obvious changes, and considering the larger picture of First Church communications.

We created an online calendar and publicity request that invites submissions for our all-church communication channels. (See [www.faithatfirst.com/registrations/](http://www.faithatfirst.com/registrations/).) The goal of this process is to gather complete info in an efficient manner and clarify our criteria for determining what will be included and how. The volume of our programming has increased a great deal over the past 5-7 years, and our communications channels up have not kept up. This online submission process helps us to better handle the amount of info and to be thoughtful about how we use our various channels and what may be missing from them. Recently we added a calendar room booking piece to that online form, to better streamline that process. All of this will continue to evolve, and input is welcome.

We have significantly expanded the weekly e-news and are more intentional about including that material on the website as appropriate. We have slowly been making some changes/additions to the website with the goal of making the current site more helpful while also imagining a new one.

We have developed a new church events calendar as a way to make available more comprehensive information about fellowship group gatherings, small group and Christian education opportunities, children's and youth ministry events, mission opportunities, special worship services, etc. You may view it at [www.faithatfirst.com/events/](http://www.faithatfirst.com/events/) or simply to go the home page and click on the calendar icon.

We created and administered a brief survey to assess the congregation's communication practices and preferences, and learned that: for the most part church members are happy with communication as it now stands; age is not a big factor in a person's preference for one form of communication over another; the weekly e-news is the most used/preferred source of info with the First Things First typically a second choice; social media is the least used/preferred source; and the website is reported to be hard to navigate and so (not surprisingly) is widely underutilized. A more detailed summary, as prepared by Jean Clipperton, a church member and NU social scientist, follows.

#### Focus for the next sixth months

1. We have begun some preliminary work for a new website, with the role of a seamless transition to a new, easily navigable and more informative website, as soon as resources allow.
2. We will consider how we can promote and integrate communication that features Pastor Grace's distinctive voice and inspiring messages.

3. We will determine how we can incorporate more “news” such as program development, updates on the administrative work of the committees, etc. into the communication stream.
4. We will consider how to better communicate and promote opportunities for persons to connect with volunteer opportunities, groups, etc.

### **Summary of the 2020 Communications Survey**

In short, people are not unhappy, appreciate the different ways of getting news, and would like to see more specific and detailed information about what is happening at the church. There are slight differences in preferences for how people would like to get this information (different values for First Things First vs Grace Note, for example) across frequency of attendance but not by age group (although these elements are likely related – age vs attendance). Finally, with respect to what people would like more of: they want an improved online calendar with advance notice/advanced entry for upcoming dates (good job on getting one up!), more detailed news about what is going on, and a more efficient way to get that information/news to congregants. There are some differences here across ages and frequency of attendance but that may be due more to different factors/interest levels driving attendance (e.g. more frequent attenders want to be more engaged).

A more detailed analysis of results is here:

<http://faiththatfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Communications-Survey-analysis-summary.pdf>

## **Adult Council**

### **2019 Report to Church Conference**

In 2019, Adult Council brought several additional Christian education classes to First Church while continuing to support successful ongoing groups. These new offerings aligned with our mission statement: to provide opportunities to learn, reflect, and explore in a supportive community so that we grow in our relationship with God and each other, and live our faith in the world.

Adult Council oversees programming that involves both short-term, single-topic classes meeting on Sunday mornings before worship or during the week for 2-5 sessions, and small groups that meet regularly throughout the church year. Our goal is to offer formats and topics that appeal to a variety of demographics. Since Rally Day 2019 (9/15/19), 139 people have attended an adult education offering. (Perhaps it’s worth noting that 117 of these individuals also made financial contributions to the church.)

Faith and Family (for parents with young children), Abide (which helps participants explore living out Christian faith in daily life), and Church and Culture (which takes a critical look at news and events and examines the roles that Church plays in our ever-changing culture) are our successful ongoing Sunday small groups. These groups experience consistent attendance

(between 7 and 13 regular attendees) and foster a strong sense of fellowship. Other weekday, long-term groups, such as Grace Circle, Progressive Christians Reading Group and God's Story, Our Stories also have loyal followings.

During Advent, First Church also discussed the importance of Jesus's Jewish identity by theologian Amy-Jill Levine and hosted Dr. Levine for an educational weekend. During the first week of the discussion, 59 people attended, and nearly 120 heard Dr. Levine speak on Sunday morning.

We have been updating our communications, sending out more proactive emails to adult education participants and church members, holding information sessions about upcoming offerings and keeping the First Church website updated to reflect current classes and groups. We continue to develop new outreach methods.

Ahead of decisions to be made in May at General Conference 2020, we are also holding a series of all-church sessions in collaboration with the Pastor's Advisory Team on what will be under discussion and what church members may expect. The series has already included a discussion with Bishop Sally Dick, and in February, First Church will host Rev. Neal Christy, Assistant General Secretary for Education & Leadership Formation at Church and Society.

## **Mission & Outreach Committee**

### **Craig Chambers, Chair**

Mission & Outreach at First Church encompasses the activities of many sub-committees, programs, and partnerships. The Mission & Outreach Committee is charged with oversight of these activities with a goal of caring for people in need and supporting the congregation as we live our faith in the world through experiences, education, and support.

2019 was a very eventful year for FUMC Mission & Outreach! Some of the many ministry and outreach activities undertaken by the Mission & Outreach Committee and sub-committees in 2019 include the following:

- **Women's Shelter "Daisy's Place":** Following the murder of Taniel "Daisy" Major on the church steps at the end of 2018, the Committee spent the first half of the year holding discussions with Staff and various other Committees to determine whether we would be able to host a shelter funded and operated by Connections for the Homeless. After securing approval from Church Council and Trustees, we went to work to obtain the proper zoning approval from the City of Evanston. After receiving zoning approval at the beginning of September, Trustees began work with Connections on modifications to the building to accommodate the shelter and legal review of use agreements. Our Committee has continued to work on communications internally and externally with the Staff and special communication team. All of these efforts will lead to the **Evanston's first transitional shelter dedicated to women**, opening in 2020.
- **Soup Kitchen:** During a difficult time of transition for our hosting every Thursday of the Inerfaith Action Soup Kitchen, Tina Kalil stepped-up as Temporary Volunteer Coordinator and helped organize the efforts of both the Cooking and Dining Room teams. She was

assisted greatly by the dedicated help of long-time Soup Kitchen volunteer Tom Scott. Through their tireless work and the work of Phyllis Bird leading our Cooking teams along with the regular volunteers on both the Dining Room and Cooking teams, the Soup Kitchen continue to run seamlessly in 2019, **allowing us to serve approximately 80-90 guests each week of the year.**

- **Bundled Blessings:** What a great year! We distributed **over 240,000 diapers and pull ups in 2019** through 11 local service agencies **to an average of 440 children each month** (475 in Dec 2019). **A 21% increase over 2018.**

Bottoms Up was a huge success not only for the money we were able to raise, but for the community building that was enjoyed by all who attended. We were able to double our donations over our 2018 event to \$25,500. Thank you to all who made this possible.

We continued to purchase diapers in bulk through the National Diaper Bank Networks program through Huggies for a huge cost savings. We ordered three times in 2019 for a total of 158,800 diapers unloaded from the Northwestern University loading dock and delivered to our pantry by a team of 15 volunteers!

We brought in several unique groups, both church and community based, to bundle diapers for us each month. We are also excited to report that the number of donors was up 34% over 2018, and that 49, or 38%, of those donors were non church members. We continue to be so grateful for the on going support of this congregation, generous donations, both financially and in kind through our community barrels and diaper drives, a local community group—Diaper Duty—who collects pull ups and diapers for us (over 20,000 collected in 2019), and the incredible success of our 3rd annual fundraiser, Bottoms Up which was moved to Five & Dime for the first time. Look for a repeat on Nov 22, 2020!!

- **Star Tree:** 2019 was the **22nd year of the partnership with Y.O.U.** This was our most ambitious year with **198 stars** representing children and youth ages new born to 20, and **76 families**. The Star Tree Team included Bev Otey, Tina Kalil, Sookee Carrigan, Nancy Brown, Mari Leonard, Linda McCracken, Alex Rea, Josh Will and Debbie Zimmerman. We look forward to another great year for the 2020 Star Tree.
- **Interfaith Action Emergency Overnight Shelter:** Once again, FUMC hosted the Interfaith Emergency Shelter for 3 weeks in December. FUMC filled **42 volunteer shifts** as part of our hosting duties. And this work allowed us to give shelter to **between 38-40 guests each night** while hosting.
- **Sunday Sack Lunch Ministry:** This ministry continues to provide 40 lunches every week to Connections for the Homeless. Deb Hays continues to coordinate the shopping and lunch making. Connections volunteers are now picking-up the lunches weekly for distribution at Hilda's Place. Lunches are made during fellowship hour in the Great Hall after service each Sunday and new volunteers are always welcome to join-in.
- **First Friday Lunch Ministry:** Those participating in this ministry make and serve lunch 12 times a year. A morning shift of 5 volunteers makes 80 sack lunches the first Friday of each month at FUMC. The lunches are then taken to First Congregational Church House where a 2<sup>nd</sup> shift of 5 FUMC volunteers serves the lunches to 55-60 guests and

mingle with those guests who stay and eat. There are 8-10 regular volunteers and more volunteers are always welcome.

- **Refugee Committee:** Pam Kendall continued to lead the efforts of the Refugee Committee in 2019. The group continues to extend support to 2 families. One of the families is relocating to Indiana, but the FUMC support will continue over the next year to help them with their transition. Money was received from the Stewardship Campaign which will help the work of the Committee moving forward.
- **Alternative Christmas:** Diane and Bart Bartelt once again worked to coordinate our Alternative Christmas giving campaign during Advent. Through their efforts, **\$2305 was raised to support Soup Kitchen, Heifer International, UMCOR and Curt's Café.**
- **Missionary Helen Roberts-Evans:** In 2019, FUMC continued its support of **Liberian Missionary Helen Roberts-Evans with an allocation of \$2500.**
- **Pennies for Poverty:** Toward the end of 2019, the Committee agreed to change the name of this important source of missional funding to Change for Change. And in 2019, **\$1,000 was raised for the Evanston Work Ethic (WE) Program.**
- **Habitat for Humanity:** **\$3750 was raised for Habitat for Humanity** to support a Build Day adult mission work event that will take place in early 2020.
- **Night Ministry:** Stephanie Clemson and Tina Kalil helped lead **two teams with a total of 12 volunteers serving meals on two different nights to a total of approximately 200 guests** during FUMC's first partnership with the Night Ministry. It was a very positive experience for all involved, and we will look to continue this partnership with future nights of service.

## **Fellowship Committee**

### **Greta Connor, chair**

The Fellowship Committee groups have continued robust growth this year. Fellowship groups increasingly utilize the church's database, Realm, as a way to connect and communicate. This has proved effective in streamlining how we notify members of upcoming events and reach out to new folks. An important new addition to the list of fellowship groups this year is *Rainbow Connection*. The process involved in forming this group required particular sensitivity. It was vital that the group would formalize itself from within the LGBTQIA+ community. The group named itself in the fall of 2019 and is 25 members strong.

The Fellowship Committee also hosted the church-wide event that is the Chili Cook-off. 19 different kinds of chili and cornbread to taste and three "judges" awarding each chef with a variety of fun certificates - everyone was a winner. It was a well attended event held directly after the Sunday worship service.

### **Fellowship Groups offered:**

**Rainbow Connection:** People who identify with the LGBTQIA+ Community are invited to join *Rainbow Connection*. This group is multi-generational, multi-racial, and members have vast religious backgrounds and familial structures. Social events are held quarterly. Educational opportunities are provided periodically.

**Couples Salon** – A mix of couples around middle age who share their lives and potluck Saturday dinners. They meet 4-6 times a year at the home of a member who provides the main course (often assisted by co-hosts). New couples are always welcome!

**Friends at First** - A group of active adults, who are retired or semi-retired, volunteering, traveling, and/or taking care of grandchildren! This active group has toured the Dawes Mansion and the Botanic Gardens, and attended musical concerts! They always extend the fun with food and conversation!

**Parents & Play** – Parents & Play meets on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the month from 9:30-11:00 a.m. with childcare in the nursery. This group is for parents with kids of all ages and focuses on topics around parenting in today's busy world.

**Coffee, Conversations, and Friends-** This group gathers together for coffee, breakfast, and informal conversation on a range of topics including books, current events, restaurants, grandchildren, places to visit... no matter what's on the table, we are all ears. Come join the conversation at 10:00 a.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month at the Golden Olympic Café at 1608 Chicago Ave.

**First Hands** - Adults of all ages gather once a month for fellowship with a purpose! This group has fun while assisting with service projects. In the last year, this group packed diapers for Bundled Blessings, packed food at the Chicago Food Depository, sang Christmas carols at Westminster Care Facility, and handed out water for Race Against Hate.

**Single or Solo-** Adults who are single (or solo for the day) and still young at heart enjoy outings with a cultural focus. Past activities included Stained Glass and Time Museum tour, Ravinia lawn seats, and a French-themed Brunch! Let's enjoy culture together!

**Turntable for 8** – This revolving group of adults enjoys dinner with groups of eight or less in a hosts home. Singles or couples of all ages are encouraged to attend and occasionally host!

**First Feet:** This walking group of all paces meets every Saturday morning at the corner of Hinman and Church for an hour walk on the lakefront – usually followed by coffee at Peets!

**First Flicks** - Movie lovers meet the second Thursday of the month at 7:30PM in Glenna Hall to discuss and share reactions about a current movie. People of all ages are welcome. Come as you are and when you can.

**Fighting Methodists Softball team** - Play in the Evanston softball league every Monday evening this spring with a coed team of caring, fun-loving adults who can teach anyone to catch a ball!

**Men's Breakfast** – Men of various ages gather for breakfast on the second Thursday of each month for informal conversation and fellowship.

**Limitless** - This group of adults enjoys bowling nights, beach picnics, an Oscars viewing party, and Tuesday night trivia. The age range and life stage is "limitless". All ages, singles, and couples welcome.

**Moms Night Out** - Gather with moms of any age for snacks and socializing. Come as you are after work, the gym, or gardening to connect with moms at various hosts' homes. Meet on Thursday evenings once a month.

# **Total Child Preschool and Child Care Center**

## **Annual Report 2019**

Total Child continues to enjoy a strong position both financially and in terms of the quality of care and education offered.

Total Child's full-day program is at capacity and our waiting lists continue to be long for the upcoming program year. Our part-day program is not fully enrolled so plans are being made to increase visibility of this program to boost enrollment for 2020-2021.

We started the school year off without a director as Beth Ruppe left in September 2019 to get back into teaching in the classroom for CPS. Our fall director search went well but unfortunately did not end with a new hire. The board decided to put the search on hold through the winter months and start back up in March. We are hopeful the right person will come along and join our special community before summer.

First Church continues to have strong representation on Total Child's Board. Church members who serve on the Board are Deb Hayes (chair), Brian Starr (treasurer), and Don Baker (member-at-large). We thank these church members for their dedication to both the church and Total Child.

Total Child has been able once again to give a significant amount of financial assistance to families, thanks to a grant, church support and generous donations from school families. We are currently committed to over \$20,000 in assistance and have additional funds available if more need arises. Total Child shares First Church's mission of inclusiveness and our financial assistance program allows us to support families who would not otherwise be able to afford our program.

Once again we would like to thank the church for supporting quality early childhood education. Our home in First Church allows us to provide a high quality, nurturing program, hire and retain highly qualified teachers, and deliver a developmentally appropriate curriculum to all children, regardless of ability to pay. We are proud of Total Child and appreciate the opportunity to challenge and support our students as they learn, grow, and develop into the next generation of caring, competent adults.

## **Archives Committee**

### **Report for Annual Report 2019**

Work by the Archives Committee continues in several areas:

- Documents are being sorted, categorized and placed in acid-free folders
- Events and people in old photos are being identified.
- Finding tools, including a list of topics and a shelf list, continue to be developed to aid in adding and retrieving materials.
- The archives are also the repository of records of marriages, baptisms, deaths, etc. We receive and respond to requests for copies of membership documents or affirmation that earlier generations of family members were members of the church.
- Files have been created for all those who have ashes interred in the Memorial Garden or had a funeral service at the church. The files include service bulletins, photographs, and even some audio records.
- Digitization of Tittle's sermons is complete.
- Work in underway to update the church symbolism booklet and create other brief handouts, e.g., a time-line history of the church.
- A one-page handout on history and architecture was developed for Open House Chicago, which First Church participated in for the first time in 2019.
- Cate took a 6-week course on archiving methods and practice with the archivist at the Chautauqua Institution in the summer of 2019.
- Patty and Cate continue to represent First Church at quarterly meetings of the church archivists from then other Evanston churches, the Evanston History Center, and the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. This group provides a valuable exchange of information and mutual support.

Co-chairs, Cate Whitcomb and Patty Baker with members: Marcia Epting, Bruce Greene, Mitchell Jackson, Janet Lutz, Laura Mills, Joann Rea, John Rea, and Christine Webler.

## **Earth Care Committee Activities 2019**

The committee was not active during 2019, but reorganized in December, with Nancy Landrum as the new chair. A plan of action for 2020 was approved at that meeting involving multiple small task groups and initial commitments from 9 different individuals.

The Earth Care Committee is a task-force of the Social Justice Committee with no appointed members. Its work depends on interested volunteers. A current contact list of past participants and others expressing interest in the group's work numbers more than 20.

Phyllis Bird

Past Convener

## **University Christian Ministry**

The University Christian Ministry, a First Church Affiliate Program co-sponsored by the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church USA and led by long-time director Julie Mitchell, continues its strong ecumenical, reconciling tradition as the most progressive student religious group at Northwestern. Over many years, UCM has been a reliable steward of its annual budget of \$160,000, including substantial yearly support from the Northern Illinois Conference and monitoring board presence from both First Church and Garrett Theological Seminary. With its welcoming facility on the NU campus, UCM serves several dozen students in regular programs related to worship, Bible study, and social justice. In short, UCM provides a safe haven in the higher education setting for student community, exploration, and action. One of the topics for discussion in 2019 was the restrictive outcome of the Special General Conference in St. Louis; not surprisingly, a result of that discussion was a powerful reinforcement of the inclusive values which UCM has historically affirmed.

# **Administrative Committee Reports**

## **Church Council**

### **Marion Clemens, Chair**

The Church Council of First Church was created to act as a unifying governance group. It connects the pastoral and professional staff members with the lay leadership, to help guide the ministries of the congregation in accordance with the Strategic Plan. Church Council works with the Senior Pastor to develop the Strategic Plan, and then helps roll out the Plan to lay leadership committees by assigning a liaison to key committees. Church Council strives to improve communication, facilitate decision-making, and maintain transparency, across all ministries.

Current Church Council members are:

- Grant Bailey, Steve Betzner, Will Borders, Marion Clemens (chair), Allison Greer (co-chair), Pam Kendall, Daniel Maerklin, Steve Prout, and Constance Williams.

Members served as liaisons to the following First Church committees in 2019:

- Children's Council, Fellowship, Finance, Membership, Mission & Outreach, Pastoral Advisory Team, Staff-Parish Relations, and the Board of Trustees.

2019 was the final year of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. At the September 28<sup>th</sup> Leadership Retreat each staff member and committee chair celebrated an accomplishment that supported the Plan. In 2020 the strategic focus will be on increasing spiritual vitality, while Church Council works to develop a new strategic plan for the next 4 years, beginning in 2021.

Church Council's accomplishments and key decisions of 2019 include the following:

- Conducting a security review of the entire building, including access procedures for outreach programs like The Total Child Center and the Soup Kitchen. Several of the recommendations of the security consultant, which included installing additional lighting and new security cameras, were paid for and implemented by the Board of Trustees.
- Suggesting Pastor Grace form a new, dedicated, advisory committee to help navigate the complex issues facing First Church after the 2019 Special Session of General Conference passed the Traditional Plan. The result was the Pastoral Advisory Team (PAT).
- A unanimous re-affirmation of the 2015 resolution by Church Council to allow use of First Church buildings and grounds for same gender weddings, and to affirm First Church as a Reconciling Congregation, in a letter sent to all church members in December.
- Approving the proposal from Mission & Outreach to create a transitional shelter at First Church for homeless women, in conjunction with and to be operated by Connections for the Homeless, which operates Hilda's Place at Lake Street Church.
- Approving \$6000 from the Honor & Memorial Fund, to cover the honorarium for Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, author of our One Church, One Book selection for Advent. Dr. Levine taught an all-church Sunday School class and preached at the Dec. 8th Worship Service.

## **Board of Trustees**

### **William Brown, Chair**

2019 included large and small facilities repair and improvement projects completed under the direction of the Board of Trustees. A brief description of that work follows:

#### The Church Building

- Sanctuary Sound System

Repairs and upgrades were made to the speaker system suspended at the ceiling of the Sanctuary. Besides work that improved the quality of the sound, a new, safe system for lowering and raising the speaker array was created. The system should now serve well for many years.

- Second floor carpet replacement

The carpeting on the landings and hallway of the Total Child Center was replaced over the winter break. Before the new carpet could be installed, asbestos abatement and encapsulation had to occur for the existing subfloor. All work was successfully completed in the time allotted for the school's holiday break.

- Office for Pastor Bonny

An office has been created for Pastor Bonny in the space just west of Tittle Chapel in the area that was the original office. A clerestory window system matching existing in the area was installed to provide auditory privacy of the space as well as a ceiling fan and office furniture.

- General Building Maintenance and Repair

Major plumbing work was conducted on the two lift stations that pump the building's waste to the city sewers. The work included replacement of the system's submersible pumps, repair of the control systems, and pumping out of the residue in the reservoirs. With this work complete, these critical systems should function reliably for many years to come.

Other work included roof leak repair and painting of damaged areas as well as other areas in need of painting. A complete redo and upgrade of all internal signage at the Church is in the planning stages now, and will be installed in 2020.

#### Women's Transitional Shelter

A new and exciting project that started in 2019 is the planning phase for an overnight Women's Transitional Shelter to be housed in the basement of the church. The Shelter will be staffed by Connections for the Homeless, a not-for-profit who have successfully operated an overnight Men's Shelter for many years at the Lake Street Church.

The program will use Rooms M and N, and one of the basement women's bathrooms. Client's will enter through an existing entrance on the west side alley. Room M will serve as a dormitory and Room N will be used as a staff office. If all goes according to plan, the Shelter should be functional by late spring.

### 1141 Asbury Parsonage

A major project completed at this parsonage was a new driveway with associated stone retaining wall. The badly-deteriorated existing drive was removed and replaced with a realigned and wider driveway with proper structural support on its west side. Landscape restoration to the area around the driveway will occur in spring 2020. Additionally, a much-needed gutter was installed on the north side of the house.

### 828 Asbury Parsonage

Maintenance and repair items were performed at this parsonage including interior painting, storm window replacement and the replacement of kitchen appliances.

A variety of large and small projects are planned for the three church properties, and will be managed throughout 2020 by the Board of Trustees.

## **Board of Trustees--Investment Committee**

### **Geoff Renk, Chair**

Since 1999, the Board of Trustees has required that the Church's endowment be managed by an investment advisory firm, in accordance with the principles and procedures contained in the Trustees' Statement of Investment Policy. The Policy Statement charges the Investment Committee with ensuring that the investment advisor adheres to the policies stipulated in that statement and with evaluating the investment performance of the advisor.

Wespath Investments ("Wespath"), a general agency of the United Methodist Church, has been managing the endowment since June, 2017. Wespath replaced William Blair & Company, which had managed the endowment since 1999.

The principal reason for changing advisors and selecting Wespath was to align the endowment's investments with the United Methodist Social Principles. With \$25 billion of assets under management, Wespath is the largest faith-based money manager in the United States and is among the one-hundred largest pension fund managers. All Wespath's investment offerings are guided by the Social Principles and incorporate sustainable investment practices focused on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors. Wespath has long been a leader in sustainable investing and has successfully influenced corporate practices and promoted government policies with regard to ESG factors.

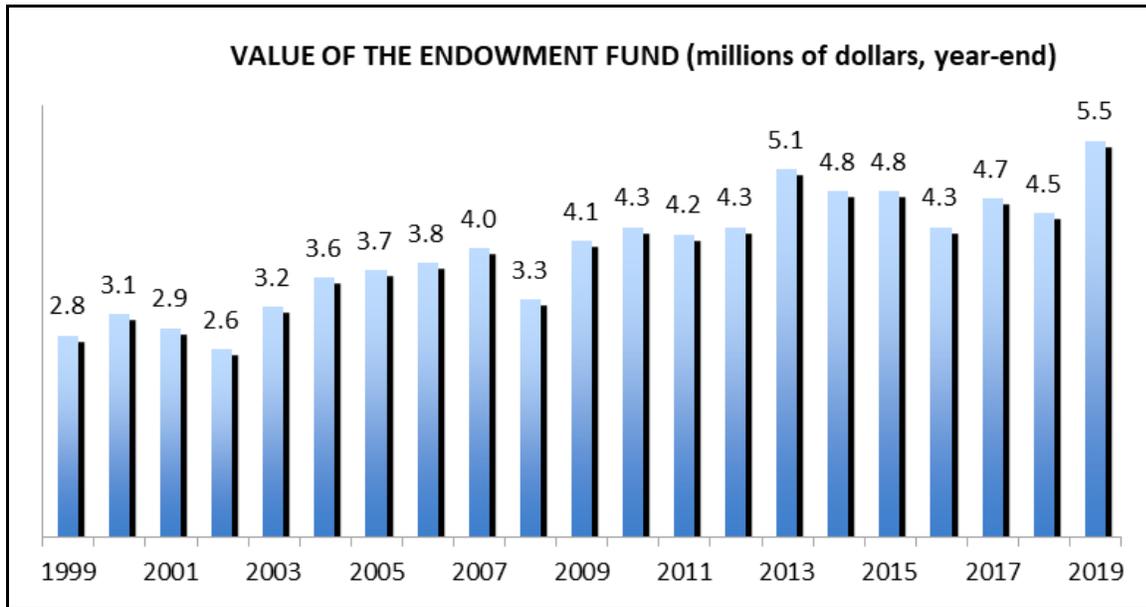
Also important in the selection of Wespath was its record of equity and fixed-income returns, which have been consistent with broad market indexes over the past 20 years. In addition, its investment expenses, which reduce our gross returns, are lower than of the previous manager.

As of December 31, 2019, assets in the endowment fund stood at \$5.5 million, up from \$4.5 million at the end of 2018. The total return on the endowment's portfolio was 22.0% for the year, which is above our blended benchmark return of 21.7%. There were no withdrawals during 2019 from the assets invested at Wespath, although there will be some in 2020, to

reimburse the Church’s operating fund for incurred repairs, maintenance, capital improvements and other authorized expenditures.

As of December 31, 2019, 52 percent of the fund’s assets were invested in U.S stocks, 10 percent in international stocks, and 38 percent in intermediate bonds. This allocation is consistent with the allowable asset allocation ranges stipulated in the Statement of Investment Policy. In January, 2020, these investments were automatically re-balanced to match the target allocations (50% domestic equities, 10% international equities and 40% fixed income), an annual policy requirement.

The follow chart reflects the market value of the investment assets in the endowment portfolio as of the end of each year.



Current Investment Committee Members: Eric Alonso, Nancy Braund-Boruch, Phil Crihfield, Geoff Renk, KarenYoung and John Rea. Current Ex-Officio Members: Grace Imathiu, Steve Betzner, Scott Freeman, Bill Brown and Tom Snider.

## Stewardship Committee

### 2020 Theme: Three Simple Rules: Do No Harm, Do Good, Stay in Love with God

The stewardship theme for this year highlighted the ongoing work of the church in putting love into action. Each week’s focus was on one of the rules: (1) Do No Harm; (2) Do Good; and (3) Stay in Love with God. The theme was presented in a variety of ways, following on the 2019 campaign design:

- High degree of worship involvement, including a special order of worship, a special litany, and special sermon topics.

- Special bulletin inserts for each week of the campaign explaining each sub-theme.
- Weekly testimony during worship from a committee member.
- More visibility of campaign committee members through worship leadership, listing in bulletin inserts and campaign announcements.
- More use of social media and electronic media to convey the campaign message.
- Additional outreach to non-pledging households.

At this time 218 households have pledged a total of \$1,078,476. As this is short of the Church's 2020 budget of \$1,242,053, the Finance Committee has asked the ministry areas and programs of the church to operate with a 0% increase from their 2019 budgets. We hope to receive a number of additional pledges to raise the pledge total. A special finance meeting will be held Feb. 5, and the budget will be presented to the congregation for voting at the Church Conference Feb. 9.

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee:

Catherine Cerra and Mike McGuire, Co-Chairs

Committee members: Todd Bowen, Becky Eberhart, Jim Hagedorn, Linda MacCracken, James Ogunbola, Clayton Root, Rebecca Smith, Ed Webler

## **Retired Clergy Reports**

### **2019 Annual Report of Pastoral Activity**

#### **R. Preston Price**

Wonderful and rewarding responsibilities with our grandchildren remain the primary focus of each week. It is an honor and deep pleasure to be with these teenagers! We are very proud of all our five grandchildren — two are in college, two in high school, and one in middle school. They are, of course, exceptional!

Following my stroke in December 2017, I continue in physical therapy. I have had weekly appointments with a very gifted therapist who is helping me with subtle but important improvements in function. Together, we are learning the limitless possibilities for continuing growth and improvement.

#### **Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church**

I have completed my third full calendar year as Clerk of the Judicial Council.

A mid-quadrennium change in leadership of the Judicial Council resulted in a new Secretary being elected with whom I work on a regular basis.

#### **California-Pacific Annual Conference**

I was able to attend the June session of the Cal-Pac Annual Conference. It was a great reunion that was deeply emotional.

I continue to assist with the Memorial Service. I edit all the biographical statements of clergy and clergy spouses. I also arrange for a family member or someone close to the deceased to represent the family at the Service.

I continue to support several Conference clergy persons who seek advice and counsel.

This year I also served as Parliamentarian and assisted the new Conference Secretary, Bob Rhodes, in his role. The changes in focus for the conference session means that the work of the parliamentarian is much less needed than in previous years. However, I hope I bring some value to the leadership of the Conference in this role.

My Charge Conference membership remains with San Diego: Hope United Methodist Church where I was founding pastor.

### **Northern-Illinois Annual Conference**

I have assisted the Superintendent, Brittany Isaac, by presiding at one charge conference with very extraordinary circumstances.

Jean and I have very much enjoyed our continuing involvement with Evanston: First United Methodist Church. I have met individually with several staff members and currently am participating in a Progressive Reading Group. I have been asked by the pastor, Grace Imathiu, to preside at communion and provide resources to several groups.

### **Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary**

I continue to teach in the Course of Study offered by the Seminary. The course is titled: "Congregational Care." It is a "hybrid course" with much of the work being done online throughout the year followed by five days of four-hour classes. It is very encouraging to assist dedicated pastors from many states as they continue their education.

### **Other Arenas**

Our family financial giving is a form of ministry. There are 15 "spiritual legacy churches" to which we donate each year. We also support: Boston University School of Theology; UMC -related Southwestern College; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; the church we attend; and every other church whose worship service we attend throughout the year. We also offer financial support to Steppenwolf Theater, to various political causes (of course, not claiming charitable deductions with the IRS), and other worthy organizations.

Ordained ministry continues to be rewarding and challenging!