

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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2023 Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda

Phil Owen, Moderator
Rev. Frank Baldwin, Parliamentarian

11:50am Call to Order	Phil Owen (Moderator)
Opening Prayer	Rev. Brigitta Remole
Establishment of Quorum	Moderators
Vote to Accept the 2023 Annual Report	
Vote to Approve Minutes from January 30, 2022, Annual Meeting	
Presentation of 2023 Budget	Bruce Bishop
Vote on 2023 Budget	
Recognition of 2022 Volunteers	Phil Owen
Election of 2023 Church Council and Nominating Committee	
Recognition of Outgoing Leaders and Welcome of New Leaders	Paris Hancock
Incoming Moderator Message	Paris Hancock
Closing Prayer	Rev. Brigitta Remole
Adjourn	

2022 Proposed Budget

	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Budget
Total Income	750,597.00	719,577.00	706,761.85
Budgeted Investment Transfers	145,107.00	54,386.95	113,614.79
Total expenses	895,704.00	773,963.95	820,376.64

Budget Line	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Proposed
4000 Giving	203,900.00	151,683.05	136,900.00
4200 Designated Gifts	8,114.00	14,380.00	9,600.00
4300 Building Income	420,500.00	413,883.00	431,240.00
4400 Grants	112,383.00	118,823.85	125,021.85
4500 In Kind Donations	0.00	256.03	0.00
4600 Church Sponsored Activities	5,700.00	20,545.51	5,000.00
4700 Interest Income	0.00	5.66	0.00
Total Income	750,597.00	719,576.62	706,761.85

Budget Line	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Proposed
6000 Community Core Ministry	68,397.00	62,729.33	62,447.00
6050 General Worship	18,200.00	6,486.96	18,400.00
6070 Christian Education	19,000.00	2,198.82	5,700.00
6200 Peace-Making Core Ministry	16,253.00	15,267.87	21,629.00
6300 Hospitality Core Ministry	13,501.00	32,401.58	12,100.00
6500 Ministerial	214,624.00	189,829.16	143,042.64
6600 Personnel Expenses	264,680.00	214,945.37	278,520.00
6650 Business Operations Expense	3,500.00	2,451.07	3,500.00
6700 Building and Rental Expenses	12,000.00	7,357.82	7,000.00
6800 Building/Facility Expenses	86,100.00	79,193.37	94,904.00
6850 Annex Expenses	46,984.00	45,365.10	31,200.00
6900 Office Expenses	32,800.00	27,222.31	31,200.00
6950 Other General Expenses	93,115.00	82,911.54	89,400.00
6960 Dues and Subscriptions	6,550.00	5,603.65	6,550.00
Total expenses	895,704.00	773,963.95	820,376.64
9000 Budgeted Investment Transfers	145,107.00	54,386.95	113,614.79

2021 Annual Meeting Minutes

Minutes from Annual Meeting on January 30th, 2022

The meeting was called to order on Zoom by Moderator Margaret Baldwin at 11:53am. Frank Baldwin served as Parliamentarian. Margaret Baldwin opened with a prayer. A quorum was established with counts by Frank Baldwin and Phil Owen. The 2021 Annual Report was accepted.

MINUTES

The minutes from the Annual Meeting of 1/24/2022 were presented. Leslie Sorenson-Jolink moved that the minutes be approved, and Andrea Heid seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The membership voted and approved the minutes unanimously.


The minutes from the Congregation Meeting of 6/27/2021 were presented. Dorothy Coombs moved that the minutes be approved, and Paris Hancock seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The membership voted and approved the minutes unanimously.

BUDGET

The Council presented the 2022 budget to the Annual Meeting. Ann Muir discussed the background work of the budget process pointing out a few important differences from the 2022 budget. [The details of the 2022 budget were discussed at length in the Budget Forum held on January 16th, 2022 where members had the opportunity to ask detailed questions.] Ann thanked the Budget Committee, the Financial Oversight Committee, and the Council for their excellent work on the budget process.

There was a question from Rachel Stevens about adding Bienvenidos Quilts as a budget line item. The money noted in a line item in the balance sheet under Bienvenidos Quilts records the donations given to the Quilt group, but there is no line item in the present budget as it draws no funds from FCUCC at this time. That question will be taken up by the FOC and Church Council. The 2022 budget was voted on and approved unanimously.

THANK YOU TO VOLUNTEERS



Moderator Margaret Baldwin thanked the outgoing Treasurer, Edward Eggleston and the council members who had served in 2021: Phil Owen, Daniel Russo, Jack Allman, Kathy Sheibly, and Christina Hellums.

RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS IN 2021

Core Ministry Facilitator: Community, Nan Wagner.

Hospitality Volunteers: ArtReach Gallery, Dr. Sheldon Hurst, Curator.

Peacemaking Volunteers: Immigrant Welcoming Team: Bruce Bishop, Daniel Hunter, Rachel Stevens, Frank Baldwin, Paris Hancock, Susan Rogers, Ann Muir.

Soul Box Project: Nanci Tangeman, and the many folders of boxes.

Potluck in the Park: Ron & Cheryl Clevenger, Ted Heid, Paris Hancock Egan, Kevin Egan, Alice & Scott Forsythe, Kathy Sheibley, Dean Sigler.


Homeless Outreach: Barbara Bennett, and many donors.

Bienvenidos Quilts: Rachel Stevens, Ann Laskey, Ann Muir, Susan Adcock, Susan Rogers, Judy Bishop, Ruth Abbott, Karen Hurst, Elaine Molskness, Paris Hancock, Bunny Oliver.

Transition Projects: Jim McPartland, Tim Pollard, Ann Muir, Paul & Susan Adcock.

Community Volunteers:

- **Worship Team** - Julie Blanchard, Frank Baldwin, Bill Cunitz, Jack Allman, Margaret Baldwin, Bunny Oliver, Gwen Pierce, and others periodically.
- **Art and Soul Fest** – Nanci Tangeman, Dr. Sheldon Hurst, Tom Corbett, Barbara Bennet, Lindsay Fulmer, Christina Hellums, Paris Hancock.
- **Called to Care:** Ann Laskey (chair), Rev. Bill Cunitz, Al Horn, Susan Adcock, Janine Vaughan, Alice Forsythe, Patty Hammond, Ruth Abbott, Gary Vaughan, Phil Oliver, Avena Ward.
- **Prayer Chain:** Susan Adcock.
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** Susan Adcock, Judy Bishop, Dorothy Coombs, Patty Bonney, Nan Wagner, and others.
- **Eve’s Circle:** Alice Forsythe, Nanci Tangeman, Judy Bishop, Paris Hancock, Ariel Henry.

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- **Book Club:** Ann Muir.
 - **Safety Team:** Sarah Vasquez, Linnea Roy, Al Horn.
 - **Ushers & Greeters:** Julie Blanchard.

COUNCIL-RELATED COMMITTEES & TEAMS

- **Budget Committee:** Ann Muir, Phil Owen, Edward Eggleston.
- **Financial Oversight Committee:** Belinda Moos, Edward Eggleston, Ted Heid, Bill Cunitz.
- **Stewardship Committee:** Al Horn, Ann Muir, Phil Owen, Susan Rogers, Dorothy Slater, with special contributions from Layne Young & Ross Runkle.

ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS & NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The slate of nominees was presented by the Nomination Committee, asking for a vote on the full slate.

Slate of Nominees for the 2022 Church Council:

- Margaret Baldwin, Past Moderator
- Phil Owen, Moderator
- Paris Hancock, Vice Moderator
- Ann Muir, Secretary – Treasurer
- Members at Large:
 - Jack Allman – Abraham, 2 years
 - Christina Hellums, 1 year
 - Margaret Oethinger, 1 year

Slate of Nominees for the 2022 Nominating Committee:

- Susan Adcock, 2 years
- Barbara Bennett, 2 years
- Cheryl Clevenger, 2 years
- Ann Laskey, 2 years

The Membership voted in the full slates of both the Church Council and the Nominating Committee for 2022 unanimously.



Margaret Baldwin then turned the meeting over to the newly elected Moderator, Phil Owen, at 12:47pm.

Moderator, Phil Owen thanked those who were leaving their volunteer and elected positions, welcoming those who were newly elected. Phil reminded the congregation that we had seen significant changes in 2020 and 2021, but that more changes are still yet to come. We live in a changing culture, and we must move forward knowing that. He invited us to dream and dream big, to not be afraid of change, asking always, “What is the essence of our life together? What is God calling us to become?”

Our pastor, Eric Elnes, thanked Margaret Baldwin for her excellent leadership during the past year and presented, via a photo, a gift of a Soleri Bell from Arcosanti, Arizona.

Moderator Phil Owen adjourned the meeting at 1:05pm, and Pastor Eric Elnes offered a closing prayer.

Submitted by Ann Muir on February 5th, 2022.

SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR 2023

Church Council:

- **Continuing Officers:**
 - Paris Hancock, Moderator
 - Phil Owen, Past Moderator
- **To Be Voted on by the Congregation:**
 - Bill Cunitz, Vice – Moderator
 - Bruce Bishop, Treasurer
 - Paul Adcock, Member at Large (3 Year Term, '25)
 - Christina Hellums, Member at Large (2 Year Term, '24)
 - Nanci Tangeman, Member at Large (1 Year Term, '23)

Nominating Committee 2023:

- **Continuing Members:**
 - Susan Adcock, '23
 - Barbara Bennett, '23
- **To Be Voted on by the Congregation:**

- Ann Laskey, '24
- Cheryl Clevenger, '25

RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS 2022

Outgoing Council Members: Jack Allman – Abraham, Margaret Baldwin, Kathy Sheibley

Nominating Committee: Susan Adcock, Cheryl Clevenger, Ann Laskey


Hospitality Volunteers: ArtReach Gallery – Dr. Sheldon Hurst (Curator and Director), Tom Corbett, Lindsay Fulmer, Andrea Heid, Robert Olsen, Dean Sigler.

Peacemaking Volunteers:

- **Immigrant Welcoming Team:** Frank Baldwin, Bruce Bishop, Paris Hancock, Daniel Hunter, Susan Rogers, Kathy Sheibley, Rachel Stevens.
- **Potluck in the Park:** Ron & Cheryl Clevenger, Alice & Scott Forsythe, Paris Hancock & Kevin Egan, Ted & Andrea Heid, Kathy Sheibley, Dean Sigler.
- **Bienvenidos Quilts:** Susan Adcock, Ruth Abbot, Judy Bishop, Christina Hellums, Karen Hurst, Ann Laskey, Elaine Molskness, Ann Muir, Susan Rogers, Kathy Sheibley, Rachel Stevens, Janine Vaughan.
- **Transition Projects:** Paul & Susan Adcock, Jim McPartland, Tim Pollard.

Community Volunteers:

- **Worship Team:** Jack Allman, Frank Baldwin, Margaret Baldwin, Julie Blanchard, Bill Cunitz, Bunny Oliver, and others periodically.
- **Retreat Planners:** Paris Hancock, Susan Rogers, Gary & Janine Vaughan.
- **Called to Care:** Ruth Abbott, Susan Adcock, Bill Cunitz, Alice Forsythe, Patty Hammond, Al Horn, Ann Laskey, Phil Oliver, Gary Vaughan, Janine Vaughan, Avena Ward.
- **Prayer Chain:** Susan Adcock, plus over 50 participants.
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** Susan Adcock, Judy Bishop, Donna Clatworthy, Janine Vaughan.
- **Eve's Circle:** Judy Bishop, Alice Forsythe, Paris Hancock, Ariel Henry, Nanci Tangeman, plus many others.
- **Ushers & Greeters:**
 - Coordinator: Julie Blanchard

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- Greeters: Al Horn & Jim McPartland
 - Ushers: Debb Chapman, Cheryl Clevenger, Ron Clevenger, Bill Cunitz, Margaret Oethinger, Emily Rampton, Kathy Sheibley, Belinda Moos

Council – Related Committees & Teams:

- **Budget Committee:** Ted Heid, Phil Owen, Rev. Brigitta Remole, Keith Powell
- **Financial Oversight Committee:** Bruce Bishop, Bill Cunitz, Ted Heid, Belinda Moos.
- **Stewardship Committee:** Bruce Bishop, Kevin Egan, Paris Hancock, Rev. Brigitta Remole.
- **Personnel Committee:** Paris Hancock, Ted Heid, Al Horn, Susan Rogers.

Ad Hoc Groups:

- **Retreat Planning Team:** Paris Hancock, Susan Rogers, Gary and Janine Vaughn
- **Guest Preachers March through July:** Rev. Frank Baldwin, Margaret Baldwin, Bruce Bishop, Rev. Bill Cunitz, Grant Edwards, Rev. Dr. Sheldon Hurst, Rev. Dr. Ann Muir, Rev. Bunny Oliver, Phil Owen, Rev. Patricia Ross, pastor emerita, Gary Vaughn, Rev. Avena Ward. Special thanks to our guest speaker coordinator, Rev. Bunny Oliver.

Treasurer's Report

BRUCE BISHOP

In mid-November, Council appointed me as treasurer for the remainder of Ann Muir's term through March. Thanks to Ann for her dedicated service to the church through most of 2022.

In addition to serving on the Council, the treasurer chairs both the Budget Committee and the Financial Oversight Committee. During the fall, I also had the privilege to serve on the Stewardship Committee led by Vice-Moderator Paris Hancock. All three committees ably carried out their responsibilities, whether to keep track of church finances or to help chart our future financial well-being.

2022 has been a challenging year financially. Despite all the internal and external challenges, we've faced, the church is—almost miraculously—in good financial condition. Much of the credit for this goes to committee members Belinda Moos, Bill Cunitz, and Ted Heid, and to Council leaders (Phil Owen, Paris Hancock, and Margaret Baldwin), each of whom has gone far “above and beyond” their normal responsibilities. Special appreciation is also due (in alphabetical order) to Andre Cordes, April Alexander, Brigitta Remole, Ian Rocker, and Keith Powell, our current, *very* professional staffers. It takes a village, and the church is blessed by having one right in the heart of downtown Portland.

Specifics about church finances are contained in separate sections of the annual report. One of my priorities, for at least the first quarter of 2023, is to keep the congregation informed about church finances. I plan to post monthly financial updates on the website for members and invite your questions and comments about all things financial, either in person, by phone, or by email.

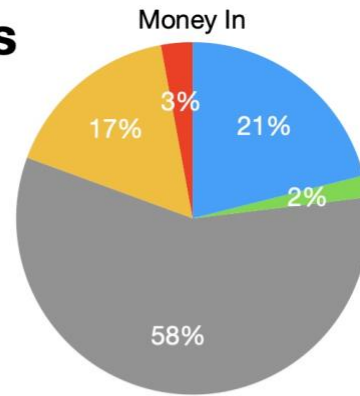
To further complement Belinda's FOC report, I'm adding a pie chart depicting our income and expenses in 2022. This will give readers the opportunity to choose whether they prefer to slice the financial information verbally, spreadsheeted, or visually. You're welcome to enjoy all three approaches, of course, à la mode'ish!

Finally, thank you for the opportunity to lead the church's financial affairs into 2023.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

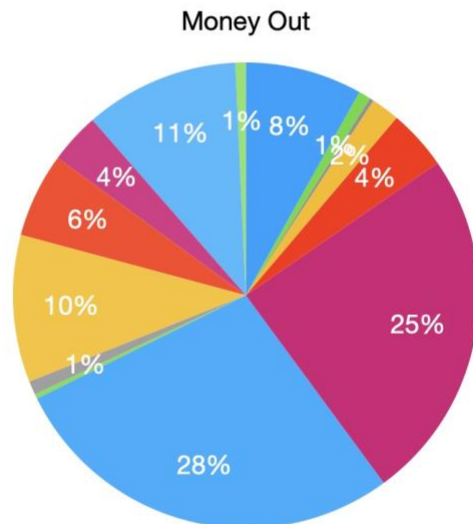
FCCP 2022 Income/Expenses

Money In	
Giving (Pledges and Donations)	\$151,683
Designated Gifts	\$14,380
Building Lease Income	\$413,883
Grants	\$118,824
Other Income (including Church Sponsored Activities)	\$20,808
Total income	\$719,578



- Giving (Pledges and Donations)
- Other Income (including CSA)
- Designated Gifts
- Building Lease Income
- Grants

Money Out	
Community Core Ministry	\$62,729
General Worship	\$6,487
Christian Education	\$2,199
Peace-Making Core Ministry	\$15,268
Hospitality Core Ministry	\$32,402
Ministerial	\$189,829
Personnel	\$214,945
Business Operations Expense	\$2,451
Building and Rental Expenses	\$7,358
Building/Facility Expenses	\$79,193
Annex Expenses	\$45,365
Office Expenses	\$27,222
Other General Expenses	\$82,912
Dues and Subscriptions	\$5,604
Total expenses	\$773,964



- Community Core Ministry
- General Worship
- Christian Education
- Peace-Making Core Ministry
- Hospitality Core Ministry
- Ministerial
- Personnel
- Business Operations Expense
- Building and Rental Expenses
- Building/Facility Expenses
- Annex Expenses
- Office Expenses
- Other General Expenses
- Dues and Subscriptions

Income minus expenses	
Investment Funds Transfer	-\$54,386

Minister's Report

REV. BRIGITTA REMOLE

Greetings, Church!


I began work at FCC on August 1st, 2022 following the wise leadership of Rev. Dr. Janet Parker as your two-month Bridge Pastor. In my assessment, the church benefited greatly from Rev. Parker's presence given her knowledge and history with this faith community as your former interim pastor.

Because of the specific nature of the church's situation, it was determined that a designated term pastor was required. To that end, in consultation with the Church Council, three tasks were identified for my six-month contract.

1. To assist the congregation in working through the abrupt departure of the settled pastor.
2. To help the congregation identify what is "the main thing" at FCC- it's reason for being.
3. To explore how the "main thing" gets expressed.

A review of current membership, energy, and financial capacity also required the reshaping of staffing positions. Re-alignment with the current needs and values of the congregation led to the consolidation of two positions (Communications and Events) as well as the introduction of healthcare benefits for 30-hour employees. As a result, we welcomed April Alexander and Ian Rocker to the team.

Hands on outreach continued with ArtReach, Bienvenidos Quilters, and Potluck in the Park. The 'Free Fridge' porch pilot project was tried and ultimately retired as it became a magnet for illegal activity. I commend the church's willingness to experiment and try new things. Not everything will succeed but that should not deter the church from the essential creative and sometimes risky work needed for outreach. Thanks to the efforts of Bruce Bishop, the year was capped off with the good news that the congregation was awarded a grant from Team Global H.O.P.E. to provide English language instruction to Afghan refugees.



One important feature of FCC's future vitality rests on leaning into its identity as a hybrid "virtual" and "in-person" congregation. There was a steep learning curve last fall as we determined the limits as well as the capacities of both the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall spaces. In addition to physical upgrades, we now have professional sound support and media support. The church is now positioned for richer connection and creativity.

Because worship continues to be a primary means for community, I introduced to worship series by "A Sanctified Art" to nurture these relationships: (1). *I've Been Meaning to Ask* and (2). *From Generation to Generation*. I appreciate the congregation's openness and will continue to foster this type of connection by having worship in the Fellowship Hall on the 2nd Sunday of every month.

The pandemic coupled with the pastoral leadership crisis made caring and support a challenge. I was pleasantly surprised to discover the strong healthy ministries of *Called to Care*, the *Prayer Chain*, and the *Focus and Reflect Group*. The congregation is indeed blessed with the caring leadership of Ann Laskey, Susan Adcock, and Avena Ward. I am also deeply indebted to the ongoing guidance and creativity of the worship team.

The many months of steady leadership by the Council, Personnel, the Financial Oversight Committee as well as many talented members has provided stability. The engagement of members and friends now brings the church to the present moment.

At the individual level, there is consensus about feeling "done", "relieved", but also "sad" regarding the departure of the settled pastor. The sense is that the church is still "recovering" as well as that it is "ready to move on".

The "main thing" at FCC is overwhelmingly caring and connection to God and others.

How that caring and connection gets expressed is the path before us for 2023. To that end, I am pleased to be able to continue my work with you throughout the coming year.

With hope,

Rev. Brigitta Remole



Moderator's Report

A CONGREGATIONAL Year

PHIL OWEN

I suppose every out-going moderator of Portland First Congregational UCC feels the same way, but, it's been a wild ride!


Before getting into the litany of things that happened in 2022, I have a little news.

As has been announced, long-time member Phil Grubaugh passed away a few months ago. A few weeks after we received news of his death, we heard that he had remembered FCUCC in his will with a fairly large bequest. Although we do not know what the total of the gift will be, we have received the first installment in a check for \$40,000. This gift is unrestricted. We are grateful for Phil's long participation in FCUCC, his life of faith, and for his generosity.

2022 saw more than our share of usual congregational ups and downs. The bright spot – and maybe the primary saving grace – is the ability for us to act in a very Congregational manner. That is, whatever the challenge, there was a group of folks who took it up and took care of it.

First off: our Personnel challenge. We saw an almost complete change in our staff. But the newly re-formed Personnel Committee jumped into action. Going far beyond what they expected to do when they angereed to serve on the committee, they did exit interviews, rethought the needs of the front office, rewrote job descriptions, advertised the openings, and began hiring. All of this while remembering to treat our employees well. As I said once months ago, if you see any of the members of this committee (they are listed elsewhere) or any of their spouses or family members, please thank them! It is because of them that our front office and other support staff are in place and up to snuff.

As that was in process, I got a call from our Conference Minister saying Rev. Elnes was taking sudden medical leave due to a mental health emergency. I only had to make a few Zoom calls and we had assembled a group to plan and lead the Sunday worship services and to cover pastoral counseling and visitation. This continued for about 12 weeks, with



dedicated folks coming up with creative responses to potentially crushing challenges. Again, their names are listed elsewhere in the Annual Report.

A smaller group, but just as dedicated, got through the business of negotiating Rev. Elnes' final leave, salary, and property settlements. This took a surprising amount of time to read and understand the Call Agreement and relevant regulations. I am ever so grateful to Ted Heid, Bill Cunitz, Ann Muir, Bruce Bishop, as well as Pastor Brigitta, Conference Minister Tyler Connoley and our Business Manager, Keith Powell for their willingness to help with this rather Byzantine process. I'm hopeful that, in accordance with my sense of the congregation's general mood, we will have closed this chapter of the church's life soon after the annual meeting.

During the summer, I was took about eight weeks and went to Albania, but things did not slow down. The Council, under the leadership of Vice Moderator Paris Hancock and Past Moderator Margaret Baldwin, searched for and hired Rev. Brigitta Remole as our Designated Term Pastor. Pastor Brigitta was in place before I returned, and her steady hand on our collective tiller has been a blessing.

Besides these personnel changes, I should mention one other issue which is a sore spot in our collective experience: The front portico.

Our front porch – our face to the city – is a source of pride for the congregation and of interest for anyone interested in architecture. It has also been a place of shelter for some of the unhoused in our neighborhood. Historically, we have welcomed the unhoused to take advantage of this facility. This has, unfortunately, had to change over the last year. Three related decisions were taken in 2022.

Last spring, after consultation with staff and some congregation members, we asked the folks who had been camping on the sidewalk to move. This was an effort to keep the area clear.

Later in the spring, we invited Portland Free Fridge and Flash Grub to place a refrigerator on the porch as a way to support the food insecure in our area. This did see some success, but after repeated abuse of the refrigerator, we decided it was best to remove it. I am sure the removal of the fridge was a blow to some of our neighbors.



Recently, Council made the decision to install a fence -- blocking use of the portico by random folks.

None of these decisions were made lightly. They came in response to the changing situation in downtown Portland. The number of unhoused people is increasing; the abuse of the portico was increasing – including the setting of fires; the types of drugs being used by people on the portico has changed – causing folks to be more belligerent than before.

But these decisions also carry with them the need for us, as a congregation, to re-examine our values. To look at our desires to help those around us who may be unhoused or in other ways hurting. How are we to reflect God's love into the world around us? What other kinds of resources do we have to share?

How can we look again at these questions and come with new, creative, mold-breaking responses? This will be our challenge for 2023. We are a responsive, resilient, creative congregation. I know we can find ways to answer this challenge.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as moderator of this vital and exciting congregation. I thank you all for the opportunity to serve.



Stewardship Team Report

PARIS HANCOCK

The 2022 Stewardship Campaign was led by a small, tight group. Our theme was *From Bread and Cup to Faith and Giving*. After meeting together, our goal was to build and deepen community within First Congregational whilst also asking members for their support by pledging.

We planned a series of activities during and after worship service to serve this purpose, such as congregational conversations, celebratory after-church meals, a guest speaker, and focused sermons by Rev. Brigitta Remole.

Our guest speaker was Steve Duin, columnist for The Oregonian who spoke about *place*. Rev. Brigitta Remole followed up with a sermon about *this place* and why people should feel encouraged to pledge First Congregational, a place where we feel loved, valued, and seen.

As of November 28th, 2022, 41 households pledged a total of \$97,160.

Our projection in the budget for next was for \$125,000.



Personnel Committee Report

TED HEID

Personnel Committee Members:

- Paris Hancock
- Ted Heid (Chair)
- Al Horn
- Susan Rogers

This was the year to reestablish the Personnel Committee. With the resignation of our long-term Business Manager and the medical leave of our Pastor, there was much to do in a very short period. The committee members brought a wide range of employment and human resources skills, experience, and knowledge both in the church and in the outside workplace.

Our focus was to bring a Business Manager on board who had experience and demonstrated leadership skills in this challenging work environment. Before we could hire someone, we needed to review, edit, and outline the job descriptions, as well as the personnel policies and the employee handbook. The steps prior to hiring an employee included defining the position, interviewing, reference checks, selection, working within the budget, compressing and determining the needs of the church office in this time of uncertainty due to the pandemic, and the changes in workplace structure such as Zoom and YouTube.

The framework of the staff, and the needs of the organization were evolving as well. Those part time employees needed mentoring and support from the Personnel Committee members. This was an opportunity to really delve into the workings of the organization, identifying areas such as ArtReach, event planning, newsletter, tenants, communication needs of the congregation, and the day to day challenges of our church home.

Many changes have occurred during this past year, and we strive to continue to support and be available to staff and the minister, while being responsible to the Council and Church members.



Business Manager's Report

KEITH POWELL

Emerging from the confines of the pandemic has been challenging. However, these challenges have proven the mettle of the people known as First Congregational United Church of Christ. Together, you have braved the storm, and like Peter of old, have learned to walk upon the waves while fixing your eyes of faith upon the Christ.

I could take time to recount the challenges that have come our way. Instead, let's look ahead. Let's "forget the things that are behind and press forward to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."


The business office is here to support and administer the resources of this congregation. Under the able and visionary guidance of our Pastor, Rev. Brigitta Remole, and our Council, this office makes certain all the pieces are in place to achieve goals, capitalize on resources, and expand the influence of FCUCC.

In 2022 we have seen a change in administrative style and philosophy, said goodbye to staff and welcomed new team members. Most notably, our staffing model has changed. We have moved from an emphasis on part-time, mostly remote staff to full-time on-site staff.

This allows us the ability to "get the job done" in a timely fashion and have access to one another for real-time, face-to-face conversations that improve our ability to respond to the needs of the congregation.

This move also increases a sense of ownership among the staff and will help us to maintain consistent, long-term staff who can grow in their positions.

Every former staff member has made invaluable contributions to the life and work of FCUCC. We celebrate those who have worked so hard, and did so with love and a heart of service:

- 
- Cara Roethe, Business Manager
 - Steve Eggers, Facilities Manager
 - Vonnie Murphy, interim Business Manager and Events Manager
 - Amelia Ralston-Okabayashi. Communications and Media Manager

We also celebrate those who are with us now:

- Andre Cordes, Accounting
- April Alexander, Office and Communications Manager
- Ian Rocker, Facilities Manager
- Thea Kuznick, Sunday Support Staff, and ArtReach Gallery Attendant
- Maureen Hullett, Sunday Support Staff, Event Staff, and Facility Care
- Keelin Sullivan, Childcare
- Erin Mella, Childcare

FACILITIES

Thanks to our former facilities manager Steve Eggers, we have also improved how we handle the security of the facility. We entered into a contract with Securitas to provide monitoring and personnel for security, sand-blasted and sealed the porch, and completed a much-needed installation of protective plexiglass over most of the windows.

Ian Rocker, our new full-time facilities manager is engaging in a step-by-step plan to improve the spaces of FCUCC. Over the next few weeks, we will be cleaning out, cleaning up, and making certain that everything has a proper place. Ian is also trained to assist/run the Sunday virtual service and assist Pastor with the display of the Sunday PowerPoint announcements.

Ian will also serve as a production manager for events booked through out office.



COMMUNICATIONS

Our virtual services have been the most challenging. Within the past few weeks, once we found the right people and installed the right equipment (both of which were investments that we believe will offer a high rate of return), the congregation's user experience has improved, although we will continue to seek to improve as we can. The next step is to reach out to the broader community with this option. We see the virtual service as "the new front door" for those exploring faith and engagement within a local church. We do not want the virtual service to replace the in-person services. This only produces consumers, not community.

April and Pastor have been focused on improving communications with a streamlined presentation of THIS SUNDAY and THIS WEEK.


April has proven to be a problem-solver, very intuitive to the needs of the people, and fully committed to the mission and vision of FCUCC. We are blessed to have her with us for the journey.

EVENTS

Over the years, FCUCC has been a focal point for performances and celebrations. 2022 was no different. Several events stand out: The Krishna Das Concert (about 550 attended), The Portland book Festival (around 2400 people attended throughout the day), and the Bridgetown Bluegrass Festival (around 250 people attended). More events were held, but these stand out.

Our gratitude and thanks to Vonnie Murphy for aligning all the puzzle pieces for our valued guests.

As Vonnie moves from an official staff position, she will continue to book and manage events as a contractor for FCUCC. Her relationship with the long-standing clientele, keen hospitality, and artistic sensibilities will carry us forward into 2023 and beyond!



In 2022 we saw several key events hosted by FCUCC including, but not limited to, the Portland Book Festival, Krishna Das Concert, Aurora Chorus, PSU Choir, and Bridgetown Bluegrass Festival. These events brought an estimated 4,000 – 5,000 persons through the doors of FCUCC and allowed us the opportunity to showcase our approach to professional hospitality and event production.

This year brought us a total of \$36,282.48 in revenue with expenses for staffing and event support being \$28,255.72. The event department was profitable for us and did generate additional revenue.

With this in mind, we will continue to provide a place for people to gather and celebrate the arts, life, spirituality, and community. If you would be interested in helping at events, please contact us in the office.

GOALS FOR 2023

Social Media


- Working alongside Pastor Brigitta and FCUCC leadership, April and I will craft a consistent social media posting calendar for our Facebook and Instagram accounts. My goal is to post twice per week per account.

Events

- We will continue to work with our past clients to engage them for 2023. We will also be hosting a wedding vendors reception as an introduction/re-introduction to FCUCC as a premier place for a wedding ceremony.

Development

- The historic presence of First Congregational in Portland, and our drive to be actively involved in social justice, immigration, and progressive spiritual life opens doors of opportunity to cultivate dynamic partnerships with Foundations and



private donors to increase our endowments and enlarge our programs that will impact every age group within our community and beyond.

Facilities

- At this time, our main building is in excellent condition pertaining to it's structural soundness. However, it would be a goal in 2023 to improve the cleanliness and appearance of this downtown jewel.
- Security continues to be a concern, and the Facilities Manager and Business Manager are diligently aware of how important a sense of safety will be as we continue to pursue in-person attendance on Sundays.

Communication and Marketing (websites)

- Virtual Services will never go away. The ability to stream the Sunday service from the FCUCC sanctuary will be a "front door" where seekers can engage with our message and find a spiritual home. Our goal is flawless consistency. To that end, we will continue to improve our equipment, staffing, and training.
- We will also be engaging in a complete overhaul of the main website, the events site, and ArtReach site will be improved in proper order.
- Pastor Brigitta's leadership has dramatically improved THIS SUNDAY and THIS WEEK digital newsletters. We will keep this new format and be open to hearing from you on how we can better communicate important news to you.



Music Program Report

GRANT EDWARDS, MUSIC DIRECTOR & ORGANIST


Last year's report ended with these words: "as we dare look towards a new season of hope and renewal." As it so happens, that is a pretty good summary of our music program in 2022, though "recovery" (from the worst of the pandemic) would be an even more succinct wrap-up.

2022 saw no new lockdowns, and subsequent variants of the coronavirus proved to be weaker than the latest vaccines, allowing our choral program to proceed "normally", if at a smaller scale, and allowing regular "live" worship services (with fewer attendees, naturally), with masking optional instead of mandated. Masks were still a necessary precaution earlier in the year, but by September most singers were happy not to wear them, and it was notable how the choir's sound got brighter and more intelligible as a result.

Unfortunately (yet, fortunately!) we will never know how much illness we staved off through our abundance of caution and sacrifice of many mundane conveniences. But Christ was surely with us in all our efforts, nevertheless.

In 2019 we had 22 in the choir roster, and I have photos of the Locus Iste Concert Choir showing as many as 40 singers. For reasons unique to individuals, and ultimately catalyzed by the coronavirus, Chancel Choir membership declined, and we now have 14 full-time choir members, and 2 part-time members (and the Locus Iste Choir is no longer active). We gained one new member this year.

Fretting about numbers is unwarranted in one respect, in that our choir membership is a wild positive outlier when compared to national statistics. The men outnumber the women (on some days it has been 2 to 1), which is the opposite problem of most American choirs, and we have the delightful dilemma of asking the trebles to sing out rather than suppress their power (all too common).




One rule of thumb is that the size of a church choir *on a festival Sunday* (i.e., Easter) should be, on average, 10% of the membership of an entire congregation. With about 15 members, we have twice the ratio- and that's just on a normal Sunday. Furthermore, the typical skill level and vocal range of our singers is almost unheard of among church choirs. On December 11, for example, we presented Paul Mans' "E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come," (notorious for its extremes in pitch and dynamics) with extraordinary blend, intonation, and expression. Generally, a much larger group is required to have the critical mass necessary to successfully perform such a masterwork. Nevertheless, attendance is a major concern soon. One singer's absence is easily noticed in each section. This fall saw an extraordinarily bad cold and flu season, and attendance- though no one's fault- was particularly disappointing (though, to be clear, people were doing the *right* thing by staying home and not infecting others).

Despite all this, the chancel choir did (finally) present Benjamin Britten's cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb* during worship on October 18th, 2022. This was originally scheduled for May 2020, then postponed till May 2022, only to have the Director (me) contract Covid two weeks prior to the performance. The rescheduling to October was nearly postponed again for lack of a capable and available accompanist for this notoriously difficult cantata, but organist Debra Huddleston (of First Presbyterian, Woodburn, where I was coincidentally Music Director from 1992-1995) saved the day. Though church attendance that Sunday was quite low- typical of seemingly all churches post-lockdown- the choir and soloists (our 4 in-house section leaders) could not have been in better form. The excellent recording of this event will continue to serve as testament to our collective musicianship, resilience, and faith.

A major reason our chancel choir can be so successful with such small numbers is the continued presence and solid leadership of our quartet of professional section leaders: soprano Sheryl Wood, alto Elizabeth Winship, tenor Avesta Mirashrafi, and bass-baritone (and tenor soloist, as well as flautist) Greg McMahan.

Volunteer members consistently applaud their role in setting the high standards and support that we have come to appreciate and expect. As a result, morale of the choir remains high despite two years of pandemic-related disarray and loss. All four singers




clearly demonstrate a level of commitment and responsibility that bodes well for the stability of our ensemble in the foreseeable future.

Other highlights in the life of our Chancel Choir this year:

- **Video Recordings:** At the beginning of the year, we were still recording anthems since services were still mostly online. Saturday, March 5th, 2022, the choir recorded one anthem for each Sunday in Lent, as well as some short responses and hymns. Despite our audiovisual technicians (and eventually our Senior Minister) resigning shortly before the session, the result is a series of video performances (created and edited by yours truly) with very high-quality sound that we can continue to use for outreach. Thanks to our good friend Marek Harris for stepping in to assist with tech, logistics, and moral support.
- **Easter:** Mary Rowell's string group returned to accompany us in several movements of Handel's Messiah. Kevin and Connor Egan played trumpets, and Christopher Wicks of Silverton joined us as guest organist. Due to a last-minute gift from artist Randall Vemer, oboist Victoria Rasz supplemented the ensemble and was soloist for the entire Concerto in B minor by Marcello.
- **Chopin Recital:** One of the missions of our music program is to aid in the advancement of young and aspiring musicians in the surrounding community. On April 2nd, 2022, we sponsored the Senior Recital of Joseph Kennedy, a piano student of Kina Muir, in which he programmed many highly virtuosic works by Chopin. He has since become a piano major at the University of Oregon under a full scholarship.
- **Composition Recital:** On Monday, November 14th, 2022, the Portland Chapter of the American Guild of Organists co-sponsored a two-hour concert of works and arrangements of Grant Edwards, who was honored with being the first in what will be an ongoing series of concerts by local composers. He programmed a wide range of original choral, solo vocal, and instrumental music (piano, organ, handbell tree), including several movements of the oratorio *Letters from Emily*. The entire Chancel Choir participated. The evening concluded with a performance of Grant's transcription of *Carnival of the Animals* with Malek Harris on piano, and Judith Ford narrating.

- Christmas: Snow threatened to cancel our in-house Candlelight Service a 3rd year in a row, and sudden Covid cases yet again reduced our numbers, but temperatures warmed just in time to allow scheduled plans. We had a small choir of 3 sopranos, 2 altos, 3 tenors, and 2 basses (which is one more singer than last Christmas eve) but congregational attendance was considerably larger than expected.
- Additional Staff Musicians: In addition to Phoebe Gildea, who has filled in as a substitute section leader in the past, we also heard Miriam Sheehan, Della Simone, and Chance Longhorn, all members of PSU Chamber Choir. Kina Muir joined us as a substitute instrumentalist (piano/cello) in my (few) absences, as did Bill Crane of Portland Piano Company (as we go way back).
- Vocal Solos: In addition to one full anthem the choir offers every Sunday, the section leaders have resumed our long-standing tradition of offering a vocal solo most Sundays, in rotation, either as special music illustrating the day's scripture or message, or during the offertory.
- New Music: This year we learned to love a few new pieces that have become de facto "theme songs" of our church:
 - The hymn "Covenant of Grace" (set to the tune O WALY WALY)
 - The Ghanian song "Woyaya" ("We are going...Heaven knows where we are going")
 - The bluegrass "We're All in This Thing Together", the latter two in arrangements by Grant.
 - We also heard more jazz offerings by than usual this summer, including the gospel standard "Operator", and when Della Simone (a jazz major) joined us for 6 weeks while Liz Winship was performing at an opera academy in Italy (congratulations, Liz!)
- We were saddened by the deaths of three members very close to us this year:
 - In January, Pat Kerwin, who sang tenor for many years, passed away.
 - In June, Sister Paula Nielsen, the Trans Evangelist who sang bass with us for a time, passed away.
 - In April, Roger Paulson, our jazz director for many years, passed away. Thankfully, Roger was able to record a swan song album, *Duo Muse*, with another friend of the congregation, bassist Laurent Nickel, just last year.
- Sound Technology: Without it, we would never be able to do what we did during the era of "social distancing". In two years, it has become clear that a church that



does not embrace modern social media technology is destined for irrelevance. However, technology has also been a thorn in our side, as we often lack the right equipment or adequate staff. At the onset of 2023 we finally seem to have built something that works in both the sanctuary and fellowship hall, and on Zoom, thanks to the knowledge and efforts of new staff members and things we learned through sheer trial and error.

- Where do we go from here? I am hoping that this congregation will even more fully embrace our long-standing reputation as a “fine arts church”, given our historic connection to the Center for the Performing Arts and ongoing high-quality music program.
- I would explore more collaborations with the ArtReach Gallery and incorporate visual art as well as poetry and may even dance (movement, anyhow) into the musical offerings. Though the audience may be smaller than for more commercial genres (but not necessarily), regular Classical (i.e., “serious” or “art” music) is in fact beyond the reach of most congregations.
- Our tradition of incorporating the finest music into worship-drawn from a very wide range of cultures and eras, at that-fills a real spiritual need in the souls of many who would feel great loss and longing otherwise.
- I also hope that as we continue to open our doors (ever wider, perhaps) additional lovers of choral singing might stumble into our choir. But passivity only goes so far- increased visibility of our musicians online and even the occasional paid promotion through the media might be to our advantage (remembering outreach as per the Great Commission).
- My most exciting goal this year is to resurrect, in some form, the “Mystic Meditation” services we held only four times last year. Dreamed up by Pastor Eric as a music-based, tri-faith, contemplative experience (and inspired by the Compline Masses at St. Mark’s, Seattle), these services were unquestionably the most aesthetically compelling in my career thus far.
- I really do believe that if we do this right, fifty years from now this tradition-in-waiting will evolve into something truly glorious, a new channel for the Holy Spirit right here, improbably, in the South Park Blocks, right under the midst of the most “unchurched” city in the country.



Ushers & Greeters Report

JULIE BLANCHARD

Ushers and Greeters welcomed worshippers to the service and assisted as appropriate. Since we have returned to the sanctuary, the following people serve as Greeters on the front “porch” and Ushers.

Greeters: Al Horn & Jim McPartland

Ushers: Ron Clevenger, Cheryl Clevenger, Kathy Sheibley, Margaret Oethinger, Debb Chapman, Bill Cunitz, Emily Rampton, Belinda Moos (alternate).

Please let Julie Blanchard, Usher Coordinator, know if you would like to join us, generally one Sunday per month. Contact us at communications@uccportland.org.



Called to Care

ANN LASKEY

Our Call to Care team is committed to outreach to any of our members and friends of the church who are unable to attend church, and to those experiencing loss, trauma, or illness. In other words, those in need of care. We coordinate with our pastor in our outreach. We meet by Zoom on the first Wednesday of each month and communicate as needed by email and phone.

Our support includes in-person visits, cards, notes, and phone calls. We deliver poinsettias in December and lilies or other spring flowers at Easter to our shut-ins.

Rev. Avena Ward is our chaplain, and Rev. Brigitta Remole attends our meetings as we coordinate our various types of outreaches together. Ann Laskey is Coordinator of the group.

Members currently include: Rev. Avena Ward, Susan Adcock, Rev. Bill Cunitz, Al Horn, and Janine Vaughan. Thank you all for your amazing dedication.

Our thanks to Alice Forsythe for several years of service, and to Patty Hammond who has served as coordinator and member for MANY years. Patty continues to offer personal visits, as well.

We are grateful for Ruth Abbott, Rev. Gary Vaughan, and Rev. Phil Oliver who offer continued support to our team's outreach.

Additional from Susan Adcock: The email Prayer Chain has sent 78 messages out to over 50 prayer chain members between January 1st and November 28th, 2022.



Eve's Circle

PARIS HANCOCK

Eve's Circle continues to be a vibrant group meeting together for fellowship and fun on the fourth Saturday of the month. This past year was kicked off with a "Dream Workshop" led by Janine Vaughan and Avena Ward.

Our February visit to the Portland Art Museum to see the Frieda Kahlo exhibit and subsequent discussion was led by Elaine Molskness and was followed in March by a workshop on mental health presented by Dr. Dawn Menken.

April saw our annual "Eve's Reads" meeting hosted by Lou Sevetson.

May brought our retreat to Camp Adams followed by a July picnic and brainstorming session.

In October we traveled to the Aurora Colony Museum, but we must admit that the highlight was lunch at Ted and Andrea's beautiful house in Aurora!

November brought the annual "Undies the Tree" clothes drive and White Elephant Gift Exchange. As you can see, the year was full eclectic and wonderful Eve's events.

Thank you to those who stepped up and provided leadership this year.

Church Walks: Exploring Together by Food

NANCI TANGEMAN

This year's church walks were a true group effort, with many leaders stepping up. There was a gap in planning due to the coordinator's knee injury. Still, we completed five of the six walks scheduled, including:

- January: Grant Park, Irvington, and Alameda led by Margaret & Frank Baldwin.
- February: Forest Park (cancelled).
- March: Climbing a volcano at Mt. Tabor, led by Nanci Tangeman.
- April: Multnomah Village, led by Jessica Kelsey (her first walk and she led it!).
- August: Blumenauer Bridge, led by Nanci Tangeman with help from Larry Long.
- September: Mid-Century Portland and the Halprin Fountains led by Bob Olsen.





ArtReach Gallery Report

REV. DR. SHELDON HURST


Mission Statement: To affirm the inter-relatedness of the creative arts with the spiritual life of our church in community.

Goals Related to Mission & Vision:

- Write a History of the Arts at First Congregational Church. A history that goes back to 1875. A history that includes a variety of artistic forms. Keep the history up to date.
- Affirm a new vision for experiencing the creative spirit in our place. An integrative approach to the creative arts and the church. Expression of the whole person in search of new understandings, insights, and ideas.
- Commit to curated exhibitions in our gallery. Generate exhibitions with specific focus. Establish ways to interpret the art. Develop programs related to the exhibitions.
- Develop programs that integrate the creative arts in the life of the community. Receptions for the artists. Curator's events, and other programs that integrate art with the life of the church.

SUMMARY for 2022:

- COVID did not stop us!
- 8 exhibitions held
- 6 books published
- 29 artists showcased
- 1 book signing held
- 1 concert: a fundraiser for Voices of Venezuela in Oregon
- 9 educational events including the Oliver Lecture featuring Dr. Jody Olsen, past director of the Peace Corps.



This was an unusual year for the Art Reach Gallery as we pursued ways to persist in our post-Covid era. Showing art is a matter of consideration: we consider the world the artist has created and we consider the context of our gallery. The first exhibition MUS/ART considered the theme of healing, while weaving together visual, musical, and poetic art forms.


The second exhibition SEPARATIONS considered the social effects of governmental policies and their effect on the lives of migrating people, whether in 19th Century Ireland or in the contemporary experience of peoples at the southern border of the USA.

The third exhibition forced on peacemaking by examining the role of Peace Corps on the global stage.

The fourth exhibition was actually three, each with its own artist but in some way they all deal with meditation: in abstract geometric colored shapes, in organic drawings of mountains, and in the faces and objects of migrating peoples. The continuation of the book publishing part of our educational program has continued in a very effective way. Five new books each correspond to themes addressed in Art, Poetry, and Spirituality. They serve as catalogues for a particular exhibition and as a means for the reader to reflect on the significance of the art in relation to a personal, social, physical, or spiritual aspect of life. In some way, they are extensions of the exhibitions, serving as reminders and as continued opportunities for consideration in years to come.

Our programming has been a very important part of our educational outreach. We had a fundraiser for Venezuela, we extended the exhibition in visits to another location in Portland, and to Aspen, Colorado. Artists have been affirmed in Curator's Events and public speaking performances have added to our outreach to the public.

The most extensive effort was put forth in our work with The Museum of the Peace Corps Experience. *Posting Peace* framed the Oliver Lecture with Dr. Jodie Olsen, former Peace Corps Director. Carol Spahn, the present Peace Corps Director and the film *Towering Task* and its director were a key part of the exhibition program. We were privileged to have over 400 visitors to this show.



Our concluding show for the year included two artists from India with an emphasis on meditation. Finally, we sponsored a book signing for Diana LoMeiHng, whose *Breathing Tao* exhibition at ArtReach Gallery became a book by the same title. Dr. Hurst interviewed her and wrote the introductory essay.

Jessie Song has served as an intern for the Gallery during this past year. She is a student at St. Mary's Academy. Last summer, she participated in a pre-college program at Cornell University in New York. She is the daughter of Song Heng who exhibited his photographs in May/June 2019.

In 2016 the gallery adopted a mission and a list of goals, listed at the beginning of this report. In the coming years we will review them and discover ways that we might transition into a new vision for the gallery.

The ArtReach Committee consists of Tom Corbett, Lindsay Fulmer, Andrea Heid, Dr. Sheldon Hurst, Robert Olsen, and Dean Sigler.

2022 EXHIBITIONS & EDUCATION

ArtReach Gallery at First Congregational UCC Portland, Oregon

January 6th – March 26th, 2022
(COVID)

Portraits of 38 Musicians with Instruments Artist's Journey through Focal Dystonia.

Main & Chapel Galleries

Theme: Music & Art, Realism, Haling in Personal Story

Reception: January 6th with music by subjects of paintings education.

Curator's Event, Recital: March 4th at 7:00pm Inés Voglar Belgique, violin from Venezuela, Oregon Symphony Bruce Neswick, Organ, from Trinity Episcopal in Portland.

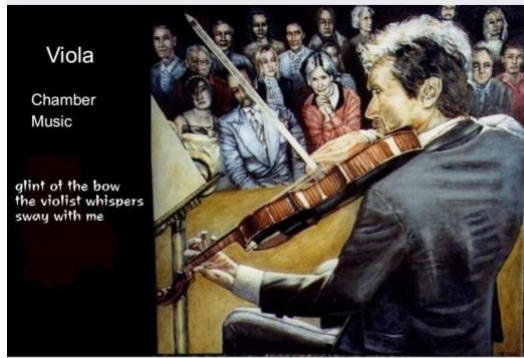
\$1,500.00 raise for Venezuela's Voice in Oregon.

Book: MusArt Paintings by Randall Vemer

Poems by Christina Chin (from Malaysia)

Introduction and edited by Sheldon Hurst.

This exhibition also travelled to Terwilliger Plaza where it was an exhibition for three months, and to Aspen, Colorado for a two week stint. Randall Vemer and Sheldon Hurst made presentations regarding the show as well.



April 17th – June 28th, 2022
SEPARATIONS: DRAWINGS BY JAMES G. TODD, JR.
Main & Chapel Galleries. (COVID relax)
The Southern Border: 9 drawings
Ireland: The Potato Famine: 20 drawings



James G. Todd, Jr. *Ireland*

Curator's Event: Saturday, May 21st at 10:00am

Conversation with James Todd, Artist & John Holbrook, Poet
Book: ***SEPARATIONS: Drawings by James G. Todd, Jr.***
Poems by Martín Espada, James Holbrook, Natalie Scenter-Zapico, Javier Zamora
Introduction, edited by Sheldon Hurst
Chapel Gallery: German Art Today, Selections from 8 Artists
Theme: Contemporary Art, International, Creative Process



July 10th – October 16th, 2022

POSTING PEACE: Peace Corps Posters 1961 – 2022

An exhibition by ArtReach Gallery Museum of Peace Corps Experience

Reception: Saturday, July 9th, 5:00pm – 8:00pm

Oliver Lecture: Sunday, September 18th at 3:30pm



Dr. Jody Olsen, Peace Corps Director, 2018 – 2021

“Managing Global Health Emergency” Reception

Lecture/Reception: October 16th, 3:00pm – 6:00pm

Towering Task: The Story of the Peace Corps

Discussion with the film director, Alana DeJoseph

Book: *Posting Peace: Peace Corps Posters 1961 – 2022*

An Exhibition by ArtReach Gallery and Museum of Peace Corps Experience

Introduction by Sheldon Hurst

Poems by Denise Levertov and Anne Neelon

Histories of Peace Corps/Museum of Peace Corps, Patricia Wand

Theme: International Relations Peacemaking

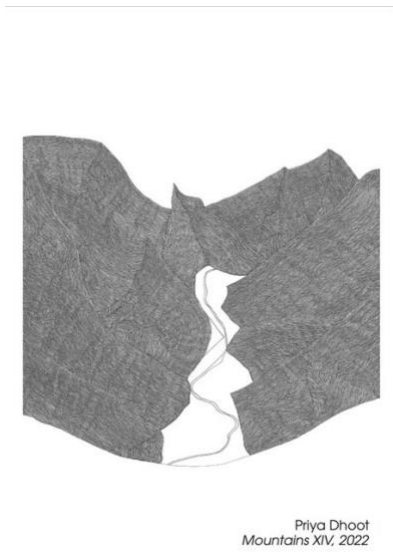
History and Church member involvement in Peace Corps

November 6th, 2022 – January 8th, 2023

MOUNTAINS: The Power of Imagination: Drawings by Priya Dhoot

Education: Book, *The Power of Imagination. Drawings by Priya Dhoot*, Introduction by Sheldon Hurst and Poem by Robinson Jeffers.

Themes: Contemporary Art Meditation, International Relations.



POETRY AND ART SERIES Edited by Dr. Sheldon Hurst

Each book corresponds to a curated exhibition at ArtReach Gallery. The series is chosen and edited by Sheldon Hurst who has worked with the artists and poets to ensure a

correspondence of word and image that encourages imaginative response of the one who reads and sees.

An attempt has been made to include artists in various parts of the world, emphasizing the value of language and cultural exchange. The cost of printing books is covered by artists and donations. Books are free to church members, and donations are accepted.

November 6th, 2022 – January 8th, 2023

SAMADHI: The Journey Within: Art by Neerja Chandna Peters

Brihad Upanashad, translated by Eknath Eswaran
Introduction by Sheldon Hurst

November 3rd, 2022, 5:30pm – 8:30pm Book Group Discussion
November 27th, 2022, 9:30am Meditation through Christmas

Themes: Contemporary Art
Meditation
International Relations



TO BEAR WITNESS: I AM MY STORY: Jim Lommasson & Sankar Raman

Chapel Gallery Presentation on Friday, November 12th 2022 at 7:00pm.

I Am My Story

Theme: Immigration,
Community Building

December 4th, 2022 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Book Signing for *Breathing Tao: Art by Diana LoMeiHng*

Theme: Religious Dialogue

Community Building

ArtReach Gallery Exhibitions in 2022

- MusArt: Paintings by Randall Vemer
 - Poems: Christina Chin and essay: “Mark the Music” by Dr. W. Sheldon Hurst
- Breathing Tao: Paintings by Diana LoMeiHng
 - Chapters from *Taoteching by Lao-Tzu*, Translated by Red Pine.
 - Essay: “For All Beginnings: Breathing Tao” by Dr. W. Sheldon Hurs, and Interview: Artist and Curator
- Separations: Drawings by James G. Todd, Jr.
 - Introduction: Dr. W. Sheldon Hurst and essay: “Patterns of Migration” by James G. Todd, Jr. Poems by Martín Espada, James Holbrook, Natalie Scenters-Zapico, Javier Zamora
- ***Posting Peace: Peace Corps Posters 1961 – 2022 An Exhibition by ArtReach Gallery and Museum of Peace Corps Experience***
 - Introduction: Posting Peace, by Dr. W. Sheldon Hurst, poems by Denise Levertov & Anne Neelon
 - Histories of Peace Corps & Museum of Peace Corps by Patricia Wand
- ***Mountains: The Power of Imagination***
 - Drawings by Priya Dhoot, introduction: Dr. W. Sheldon Hurst
 - Poem: Robinson Jeffers
- ***Samadhi: The Journey Within***
 - Drawings and Paintings by Neerja Chadna Peters
 - Introduction: Dr. W. Sheldon Hurst
 - Brihad Upanishad, translated by Eknath Eswaran



Peace Making Core Ministry Report

Art & Soul: Hard Work Finally Pays Off

BARBARA BENNETT

After many weeks of zoom meetings of the Art/Grant team, we finally succeeded in getting a grant to benefit members of the houseless community.

After many meetings of how/where/when, we agreed on the Art & Soul Fest in and outside of our church for September 2021, and then had to cancel due to the pandemic. In a last attempt to utilize the \$2500 grant funds from nwnw.org, Dana Lynn Louis of Gather/Make/Shelter brought up using it for their promotion and participation in the Pride Event, 2022 for the artistic homeless people. We were also able to redirect the \$2,000 donation from Joanne and Tom Heaviland earmarked for the Art & Soul Fest.

It was a fun and successful event. I wish you could have seen how long and hard the houseless came together at GMS with awesome staff members, Martie and Cat, to design the outfits they wore in the Pride Fashion Show. And those houseless that worked on their artwork.

There were lots of bling-bling and colorful clothes donated that were the basis of each outfit worn and modeled at the event. This whole process of preparation and organizing took a lot of hours working together. This experience for the involved houseless gave them purpose, confidence, a positive goal, and an honorarium for participation.

We had a role in this and I've learned a lot myself. We did it through a pandemic and then much uncertainty in our church spiritual leadership. I'm glad the grant process is over. I'm glad that we as a church are moving on despite our struggles.

We helped several people at a difficult time in their lives. We helped Dana and Gather/Make/Shelter with their ongoing help and guidance for the houseless. We helped to bring awareness to the community that attended the Pride event to witness the artistic skills and growth of people that are houseless.



Transition Projects Report

JIM MCPARTLAND

Participants: Tim Pollard, Susan & Paul Adcock, Jim McPartland

Unfortunately, Transitions Project has not responded regarding our ability to continue the meal ministry. I am sure that COVID-19 is still a concern and restrictions to those who enter the premises remain high. However, I am sure that we can start a new MINISTRY.

I am suggesting, rather than Transitions Project I (TPI), we create a new outreach called "A WALK IN THE PARK". Volunteers can prepare box or bag lunches on Saturday, and we can walk 2 miles from PSU to Burnside and back on Sunday after service, feeding those in need. We can also ask Barbara Bennett to join us as we make personal hygiene care bags for our friends at TPI or Jean's Place. We will need the supplies and a CADILLAC wagon and folks with good walking shoes.

Whatever we are as a congregation decide, we will always need the love and support of everyone who pledges, supports, visits, and attends services in this magnificent building. I would love to incorporate this with our monthly walks, with EVE'S Circle Undies Project, with Potluck in the Park, etc. I LOVE BEING A PART OF THIS WONDERFUL CHURCH!

With love and thanks to our fabulous staff, to all who pledge, to all who volunteer and serve, to the people who have become some of my best friends... I am a better person today than I was in 2008. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.



Potluck in the Park Report

CHERYL & RON CLEVINGER

For the past 25 years, our church has been participating in feeding the homeless and hungry every Sunday afternoon. This year, 2022, was no exception.

Rain or shine, 52 weeks a year, our church has provided beverages (procure, prepare, deliver, and serve) to about 300 to 600 hungry and homeless persons in downtown Portland. Potluck begins at noon Sunday in the North Park Blocks and Glisan St. about a half block from the old downtown post office.

Additionally, on Christmas morning our church also participates in helping feed about 1,500 to 2,000 persons in the Portland Museum Annex across the street from the church.

We do this with volunteers. We have four teams. Each team is responsible for one week per month. A huge thank you to each team leader and helpers as this task could not be done without the help of our very special volunteers. We start the prep around 10:45am and about an hour later deliver 20 to 35 gallons of beverages and prepare for serving. The meal starts at 12:00pm. Serving takes about 2+ hours. We return to the church, clean the serving containers, etc. and are generally done by 3:00pm.

A huge thanks to our 2022 team leaders including Ted Heid, Paris Hancock, Kevin Egan, Kathy Sheibley, Ron & Cheryl Clevenger, and a big additional thank you to Alice & Scott Forsythe who for years served as one of our teams but found that they could not continue. We hope to replace Alice & Scott with a few volunteers with an SUV or large car to help with one Sunday per month.

Finally, if you are curious about Potluck, one of our teams would welcome you to volunteer for a few hours on a Sunday afternoon. It is safe (there is security present) and definitely meaningful for anyone to gain an understanding and meaning of what it's like to be homeless and hungry. Contact Ron & Cheryl Clevenger (communications@uccportland.org) for volunteering information.



Immigrant Welcoming Report

BRUCE BISHOP

The Portland First Immigrant Welcoming Congregation group has continued its efforts to put our church's 2019 declaration into action. At that time, we pledged to welcome strangers and support immigrants through connections, education, advocacy, and accompaniment.

This year, we have also donated church funds and clothing to support Ukrainian refugees, Central American asylum-seekers, and other immigrant communities in the Portland metropolitan area.


Several of us regularly volunteer at bimonthly food distributions through the Immigrant Mutual Aid Coalition (IMAC), which serves approximately 300, mostly Hispanic, families with culturally preferred fresh foods, dry goods, and personal hygiene supplies.

Throughout the year, we have followed national and local immigration policies and practices and added our voices to those of other faith and immigrant-support groups on issues such as DACA, legal services for asylum-seekers, and state "sanctuary" policies.

Just before Thanksgiving, we applied for a grant from the national UCC office to sponsor English language tutoring sessions throughout 2023 for a group of women who are refugees from Afghanistan, living in S.E. Portland.

This project is being undertaken in cooperation with IMAC and Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ORTESOL). The grant was approved in early December, and the tutoring sessions will begin early in 2023. Portland First will be the fiscal intermediary for the grant throughout the year.

Finally, we continue to host monthly Zoom meetings with the other immigrant Welcoming UCC churches in Oregon and SW Washington. A concerted effort among the Cedar Hills, Hillsboro, and Lake Oswego UCC churches was also successful in receiving a UCC Booster



grant, which will help to support the accompaniment work of the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMIJ). Without UCC support, these local church ministries would not have been possible.

We are pleased that our sanctuary has been used as a venue for “The Immigrant Story”, a Portland based project that includes music and stories about immigrants from around the world; and we appreciate the immigrant related exhibits hosted at The ArtReach Gallery during the year.

During 2022, church members have personally delivered over 60 quilts crafted by church members through Bienvenidos Quilts to family shelters in Tucson, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora. Overall, about 400 quilts have been sent to the border.

Bienvenidos Quilts


RACHEL STEVENS

The point of course is not just the quilts; they are simply the strategy by which we can tell the children and families at the southern border that they are welcomed, honored, and loved.

The life of Bienvenidos Quilts has been a beautiful whirlwind since its birth in March of 2021. Here are a few highlights from 2022:

- Over 400 quilts have now been sent to the southern border. About half of these have gone to Casa Alitas in Tucson, Arizona. The other half have gone to Green Valley Samaritans who deliver the quilts to smaller shelters, including Casa de la Misericordia across the border in Nogales, Mexico, where people wait to be allowed to cross into the US for their scheduled hearings. Rita Dencks is one of the women who brings quilts to Casa de la Misericordia on her regular volunteer days. She tells us:
 - “Some of your gorgeous quilts were delivered directly to the migrant children... I let them pick the ones that they liked, and they were so happy! They were wearing them on their heads, they were running around, and keep in mind it was 98 degrees, but that didn’t stop them. They were just super excited! I wanted to let you know what a difference you and all your helpers have made in the lives of so many little children that arrive at the Nogales, Mexico border, homeless with hardly any possessions and total desperation.”
 - Rita Dencks has also sent us photos of the kids with their quilts. It’s always a delight and surprise to see which quilts the kiddos choose. Unfortunately, we cannot share these photos here because they must be kept off the internet. Many of the migrants are trying to escape gangs, traffickers, drug cartels, etc. Facial recognition software makes it easy for these nasty characters to track down the people whom they pursue. We respect the necessity for this pictorial silence. Occasionally, photos come to us that can be shared because the face is not shown.

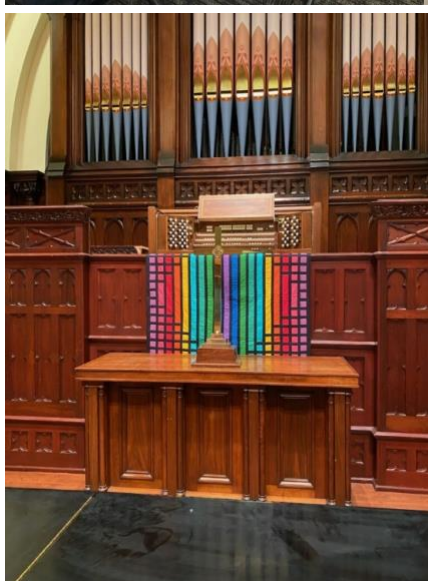
- We count our blessings when someone like Susan Rogers offers to bring quilts to Arizona for us. It costs approximately \$100 to ship an IKEA bag filled with quilts, so special personal deliveries save us money. They also help to make direct connections. Bruce & Judy Bishop delivered lots of quilts to the Green Valley Samaritans in January. A batch went to Casa Alitas in April with Hanna Swan (cousin of Rachel Stevens). Susan Rogers and her daughter brought a double batch to Casa Alitas in October.
- This year, we have also had the chance to meet some of the quilters when they visited us, or we connected over Zoom. Rev. Lisa Gaston, from Edwards Congregational UCC in Davenport, Iowa, visited us in April. During one of our Quilting Mondays, she whipped together some adorable nine-patches, and these were incorporated into a quilt that Susan Adcock made.
- On Monday, November 28th, 2022, we held our first Zoom meeting with quilters outside of our own First Crew. We met Ellen Broms and Pam Bigelow from Sacramento. We enjoyed tracking the word-of-mouth chain that let Ellen and Pam know about Bienvenidos Quilts. That zoom session was also attended by Rita Dencks who shared her stories about delivering the quilts plus a quilter who has become especially dear to us, Pete Levins. Pete is probably the most prolific of all our quilters. Every few weeks, Ruth Abbott (his cousin) brings a package with Pete's most recent batch. We love the precision, creativity, and joy in every quilt. We are especially happy about his focus on making quilts for boys.
- Pete also sent us three larger quilts for fundraising purposes. One of those quilts is the Rainbow Quilt that you see behind the altar almost all year, except during the Advent Season. An anonymous donor made it possible for the Bienvenidos First Crew to donate the quilt to First Congregational, intended to honor the vast range of contributions that folks in the LGBTQ community give to First Congregational. Pete visited First Congregational in July for the dedication of the quilt in conjunction with one of our quilt displays. Altogether, the quilts that Pete made added \$1300 to the Bienvenidos Quilts account. We used these funds primarily for shipping quilts to Arizona.
- Speaking of donations, we were delighted to discover that the donor of a large IKEA storage unit was none other than Rabbi Bryan and his wife Jane Mayer. You will probably remember Rabbi Bryan who presented ROTB (religion out of the box)



presentations for our congregation in 2021. Steve Eggers kindly schlepped the big storage unit from the Hollywood District to the fabric room at First Congregational.

- One of our quilters, Daryl Sanchez in Santa Cruz, California, suggested that we- since we don't have a website yet- ought to put together a newsletter. In August, we sent our first newsletter to all our quilters (now in seven states). We also made copies available to the congregation after Sunday service and in the Fellowship Hall.
- We are very pleased to hear that Rev. Brigitta Remole has now given the go ahead to begin developing that website. This is SO important! In this century, anyone who wants information about anything begins by searching the internet. If Bienvenidos Quilts doesn't show up in that search, we don't seem legitimate or even to exist at all.
- We're especially grateful to two of our congregants who have stepped forward for a couple of very important Bienvenidos Quilts projects. Nanci Tangeman will take on developing postcard-sized information pieces that we can use in multiple ways. (Of course, these cards can't happen before we have the necessary website.) Fabric stores such as Bolt and Pioneer Quilts are keen to make these cards available to their customers, and we're confident that other stores will be equally enthusiastic. We can also distribute these cards to church and quilting groups-locally at first and then throughout the country.
- Keeping track of all the quilts, over 400 so far, can be a tad challenging. Until a month ago, we used pieces of paper attached to each quilt to track their status, and these were put into binders when the quilts left our hands. Christina Hellums has now developed a spreadsheet so we can keep track of quilts more coherently, and she will be able to merge photographs of the quilts with the data in the spreadsheet.
- These last three things- spreadsheet, website, and info cards-put us in a position to spread the word about Bienvenidos Quilts.
- When this project was placed in our hands and hearts, we were given two words to guide us: The first is trust; the second is also trust. We trust that Bienvenidos Quilts will have grown significantly by the next time we prepare an annual report. We are grateful to First Congregational as FCUCC has brought to us.

- This year your First Crew has included Ann Laskey, Ann Muir, Susan Adcock, Susan Rogers, Karen Hurst, Elaine Molskness, Judy Bishop, Janine Vaughan, Ruth Abbott, Christina Hellums, Nanci Tangeman, and Rachel Stevens.
- We're grateful for the assistance of Dr. Sheldon Hurst, Patrick Fitzgerald, Bruce Bishop, Paul Adcock, Ted Molskness, and Joseph Walder. This project would not have succeeded without assistance from the members of the First Congregational Staff. Thank you! Some of us sew, but everyone makes important contributions.





Membership Statistics

Membership AS OF JANUARY 2023: 155

Members Received in 2022: 1

Members Removed by Request in 2022: 0

Members and Friends who Passed in 2022:

Pat Kerwin

Rev. Norman Bengel

Larry Rogers

Roger Paulson

Megan Walth

Sister Paula Nielson

Mary Maxwell

Phil Grubaugh

Patty Bonney



History of Senior Pastors

Rev. Horace Lyman, DD (1851 – 1854)

Rev. P.B. Chamberlain (1855 – 1862)

Rev. G. H. Atkinson, DD (1863 – 1872)

Rev. J.D. Eaton (1873 – 1876)

Rev. J.A. Cruzan (1877 – 1881)

Rev. Frederick R. Marvin, MD, DD (1882 – 1885)

Rev. T. Eaton Clapp, DD (1886 – 1894)

Rev. George R. Wallace, DD (1894 – 1896)

Rev. A.W. Ackerman, DD (1896 – 1902)

Rev. Elwin L. House, DD (1902 – 1906)

Rev. Luther R. Dyott, DD (1907 – 1917)

Rev. W.T. McElveen, PhD (1919 – 1923)

Rev. Clement G. Clarke (1923 – 1928)

Rev. Raymond B. Walker, DD (1929 – 1959)

Rev. Royald Caldwell, DD (1960 – 1970)

Rev. Lincoln Y. Reed, DD (1971 – 1986)

Rev. John Rogers, DD (1987 – 1994)

Rev. Patricia S. Ross, DMin (1996 – 2008)

Rev. Anton DeWet, DMin (2010 – 2013)

Rev. Michael Ellick (2014 – 2018)

Rev. Eric Elnes, PhD (2020 – 2022)



History of Moderators

Harold Cake (1960)

George Geist (1961)

Reginald Titus (1962)

Robert Dressler (1963)

Dwight Schwab (1964)

George Culbertson (1965)

Egbert Oliver (1966)

George Woodworth (1967)

Keith Sime (1968)

George Smith (1969)

Calvin Van Pelt (1970)

Winthrop Wells (1971)

George Casterline (1972)

Robert Jack (1973)

Laura Lusk (1974)

Leonard Garmire (1975)

Howard Campbell (1976)

Polly Casterline (1977)

David Johnson (1978)



Elmer Moke (1979)

Shelly Reece (1980)

Dawn Dressler (1981)

Ron Zahler (1982)

Margaret Shafer (1983)

Ron Stites (1984)

Julie Blanchard (1985)

Megan Walth (1986)

Ervin Hummel (1987)

Marcia Yeater (1988)

Scott Tetrick (1989)

D'Anne Gilmore (1990)

Charles Knapp (1991)

Marguerite Oliver (1992)

Charles Hinkle (1993)

Cathy Tinker (1994)

Bruce White (1995 – 1997)

Becky Kock (1997 – 1998)

Julie Blanchard (1998 – 2000)

Ted Liljeholm (2000 – 2001)



Bob Groves (2001 – 2002)

Carol Lynch (2002 – 2003)

Tim Pollard (2003 – 2005)

Elaine Molskness (2005 – 2006)

Carl Toland (2006 – 2008)

Debbie Knudsom (2008 – 2009)

Alan Koch (2009 – 2010)

Ellen Bradley (2010 – 2012)

Richard Moody (2012)

Julie Young (2013)

Ann Laskey (2014)

Ross Runkel (2015)

Al Horn (2016)

Peace Young (2017)

Sarah Vasquez (2018)

Anne Sullivan (2019)

Daniel Russo (2020)

Margaret Baldwin (2021)

Philip Owen (2022)



Contact List

Designated Term Minister: Rev. Brigitta Remole

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- Office: (503) 228 – 7219 ext. 104

Pastor Emerita: Rev. Dr. Patricia Ross

Moderator: Phil Owen

- moderator@uccportland.org

Music Director/Organist: Grant Edwards

- uccmusic@comcast.net

Section Leaders:

Greg McMahon, Avesta Mirashafri, Elizabeth Winship, Sheryl Wood

ArtReach Gallery Curator: Dr. Sheldon Hurst

- communications@uccportland.org

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- (503) 228 – 7219 ext. 106

Accounting: Andre Cordes

- accounts@uccportland.org

Office and Communications Manager: April Alexander

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