

First Congregational Church UCC



2011 Annual Report

*First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
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First Congregational Church Long Range Plan 2011-14

Goal 1

Nurture the spiritual welfare of the congregation, magnify its public witness to the Gospel through word and sacrament, and welcome people of all ages, races, nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, mental and physical abilities, socioeconomic levels and political and theological backgrounds to our Christian community. Do this through corporate worship and personal spiritual practices, supported by programs, ministries, and fellowship groups marked by excellence: music, art, proclamation, teaching, mentoring.

Goal 2

Provide dynamic and engaging programs reflective of members' interests and their theological and spiritual needs. Develop offerings that enhance the multiple learning strategies for all but particularly for children and youth.

Goal 3

Maintain and expand the role of First Congregational Church as a beacon of social justice and mercy that creatively responds to the myriad needs of a wide variety of missions in our church, our community and in the broader world.

Goal 4

Work to sustain an internal environment of love and concern that nurtures and welcomes all of our members and visitors.

Goal 5

Engage both staff and members to take actions to increase membership by 10% during each year of this long-range plan as well as be intentional in efforts to increase our diversity, spiritual growth, and varied educational opportunities.

Goal 6

Capitalize on the faith, creativity, skills, and intelligence of our membership to produce a governing structure synchronized in communication and consensus of effort; a structure that allows every member the opportunity to "worship, work, and serve" together in the leadership and life of the church. Celebrate our United Church of Christ (UCC) identity, and revitalize our engagement with the denomination.

Goal 7

Build and maintain a strong and on-going stewardship program that cares for God's creation and ensures that the financial needs and vision of the church are met each year.

Goal 8

Encourage, invest and disburse endowment funds and special gifts as directed by donors, Ohio law, and the needs and vision of the church.

Goal 9

Develop a vision of improvements to our current church facility and of future property development that encompasses the collective view of members and meets evolving needs and opportunities that support the varied ministries of the church.

Staff Directory

Rev. Timothy Ahrens, senior minister, ext. 13, tahrens@first-church.org

Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson, associate minister, ext. 21, jwilson@first-church.org

James E. Bobb, minister of music, ext. 12, jbobb@first-church.org

Mark S. Williams, Christian education director, ext. 15, mwilliams@first-church.org

Sharon Leidheiser, business administrator, ext. 11, sleidheiser@first-church.org

Marty Worth, program manager, ext. 14, mworth@first-church.org

Denny Mahoney, office manager, ext. 17, dmahoney@first-church.org

Tom Luff, building manager, ext.22, tluff@first-church.org

2011 Statistics

Births - 15

	Date of Birth		
Eddie Myki-Teayghan Anderson	5/4	Rachel Wilson & Nathan Rodriguez*	5/14
Catherine Sophia Baird	1/20	Lindsey Weiker & Adam Giere*	5/21
Bianca Diane Catenacci	12/15	Stephanie Hill & Ryan Montgomery	6/11
Gabrielle Elizabeth Collins	5/19	Linda Bozik & Raul Zendejas*	6/18
Xavier Mitchell Dean	11/29	Mallory Meeks & Matt DeLucas	6/18
Jonah Ewing	2/8	Jennifer Stadlander & Dustin Klare	7/1
Hudson Kingsley Fleurant	6/10	Aimee LeCron & Curtis Hallstrom	7/23
Elizabeth Janette Hamilton	5/3	Lindsey Franklin & Maneesh Mehra	7/30
Lily Grace Henderson	9/2	Cara Pizzurro & Michael Rosenberg	7/30
William James Holton	4/14	Kristin Sanders & Kenneth Pietsch	8/6
Isabella Mikayla Kirker	8/1	Katelyn Carr & Christopher DeLong	8/13
Quinn Sophia Leidheiser	1/4	Christina Wetterman & Brian Holt*	8/13
Maynard Charles Paulus	10/24	Elise Faith & Stephen Cribb*	8/27
Charlotte Dorinda White	8/19	LaTeia Hennes & Stephen Kern	9/10
Fraylee Ann Williams	8/10	Julie Stratton & Ryan Tirey	9/10
		Corinne Parker & Stephen Menches	9/17
		Lyndsey Wilcox & Jordan Egelhoff	10/8
		Gwen Brady & Sam Fung	10/8
		Laura Wilson & Joseph Robey	10/29
		Paige Sikora & Jason Braun	11/12
		Sarah Fesler & Ryan Baker	12/10
		IlonaLazdane-Sika & Brian Thomas*	12/10

Baptisms – 20

	Date of Baptism		
Benjamin Allen (OC)	11/23		
Jack Allen (OC)	11/23		
Catherine Baird	8/28		
Sean Breedlove	9/25		
Elin Chambers	5/29		
Karen Clay (A)	9/25		
Gabrielle Collins	11/27		
Mark Ellison Jr.	6/26		
Hudson Fleurant	9/18		
Elizabeth Hamilton	11/13		
William Holton	10/29		
Danielle Howard (A)	9/25		
Isabella Kirker	10/9		
Kenley Neverman	2/20		
Kennedy Thompson	2/13		
Henry Walton	9/18		
Joseph Walton	9/18		
Harper Weaver	6/26		
Thalia Weygandt	5/8		
Brennan Wilson (OC)	9/25		

(A) = Adults (OC) = Older Children

Weddings – 24

	Date		
Lisa Bongiorno & Scott Phillips	4/9		
Rebecca Korb & Jason Varey	4/9		
		New Members –	Date Joined
		29 Adults, 9 Children	
		Jennifer Okezie-Watts	3/13
		Moriah Okezie-Watts (c)	3/13
		Jeff Faryman	3/13
		Sheila Faryman	3/13
		Jacob Faryman (c)	3/13
		David Temple	3/13
		Jonathan Frank	5/15
		Vic Jennette	5/15
		Karen Mozingo	5/15
		AnnaSofia Severson (c)	5/15
		Mars Robinson	5/15
		Jessica Underwood	5/15
		Barbara Cunningham (A)	9/25
		Andrea Rower	9/25
		Nicholas Bruckelmyer	9/25
		Karen Clay	9/25
		Steven Anderson	9/25
		Victor Campbell	9/25
		Allison Lowery Palmer	9/25
		Lyss Palmer (C)	9/25
		Alex Palmer (C)	9/25

* Member Wedding

Josh Hollar	9/25
Rachel Lithgo	9/25
Lynn Wallich	9/25
Malinda Breedlove-Wilson	9/25
Brennan Wilson (C)	9/25
Danielle Howard	9/25
Sean Breedlove (C)	9/25
Michelle Caster	9/25
Rev. Earl Fritz	9/25
Pauline Fritz	9/25
Janice Cook	12/18
S. Ronald Cook	12/18
Kim Hopcraft	12/18
Michael Hopcraft	12/18
Dylan Hopcraft (C)	12/18
Cassidy Hopcraft (C)	12/18
William Catus	12/18

(A) = Associate (C) = Child

Deaths – 3	Date
Arthur Vorys	2/5
Julia Hadley	5/24

Harry Campbell 6/20

Transfer of Membership – 10
 Doug and Peggy Buck
 Cindy Burnell
 Mike Deemer and Vanessa Cotere
 Joe and Rhonda Daniels
 Catrina and Jim Drotleff
 Ken Frederick

Beginning Membership.....956
Additions.....29
Deaths.....3
Transfers.....10

Ending Membership.....972

Officer Reports

Moderator's Annual Report

By David Holt, Moderator

There are so many good works being done in our church, I encourage every member to take the time to read through this entire annual report. Here are the things that I wish to highlight:

1+1 in '11

Church Council endorsed the "1+1 in '11" initiative proposed by Rev. Ahrens to challenge every member to commit themselves to participate in one fellowship or study opportunity plus one mission or justice opportunity in 2011. Although this initiative didn't blossom as much as we would have liked, we did have success as many members grew in their participation in the life of the church beyond Sunday worship.

Most notably in:

- small groups during Lent
- bible study and adult education programs
- hands on work at Gladden Community House
- fresh produce giveaways in conjunction with the Mid-Ohio Foodbank

While you read through this annual report booklet, in addition to noting the good works being done, take note of where you personally feel called to participate in new ways in 2012 and reach out to staff or lay leaders to make your interests known.

Long-Range Plan

Many, many hours went into developing our Long-Range Plan which was approved by the congregation in September. Thank you to all who participated in the listening sessions and submitted input. The goals, strategies, and action steps identified in the Long-Range Plan area great road map for church leadership to follow during the next three years and many areas are already in progress. The goals adopted by the congregation can be found on the inside cover of this annual report. Plans are being made for a mid-year progress report to the congregation to occur this spring.

One of the questions that arose within the LRP committee was "what do we want the church to look like after we have achieved our stated goals?" My answers are that we want:

- higher attendance in our worship services,
- more young people involved in our youth ministry,
- more young adults, families, and children who call this their church home,
- more adults engaged in our programs,
- more small groups for fellowship, study, and service,
- increased opportunities for volunteer work and leadership,
- enhanced engagement with the wider church,
- greater diversity in our leadership and membership,
- higher giving of time, talent, and treasure,
- to be known for our traditions of excellence, our works of justice and mercy, and our warm welcome to all, and
- to be a vibrant Christian community filled with joy and love.

In the motion to approve the Long-Range Plan goals, the congregation also agreed to support the various efforts to achieve the goals of the Long-Range Plan. Again, I invite you to think about and act upon those parts of the plan that inspire you the most. The full plan can be found on our website: www.first-church.org

The Future's Broadening Way - Capital Campaign

As you know, in addition to our annual stewardship campaign to raise pledges and gifts to support our annual operations, we are currently in the midst of a multi-year capital campaign to raise funds for major capital projects and mission support.

The Future's Broadening Way campaign has reached over \$3.3 million in pledges towards our essential goal of almost \$4.8 million. As of December 31st, we have already received over \$1.6 million in funds (almost half of the current campaign total) and we have already put \$1.2 million of these funds to work towards achieving the goals of the campaign. The fruits of the campaign have so far included:

- Monthly mortgage payments for the west lot
- \$200,000 additional principal payment to reduce mortgage interest
- Initial steps to integrate the west lot into our original church property
- North parking lot and play area resurfacing
- Parish hall chair lift
- Sanctuary lighting repair
- Sanctuary sound system assessment (in preparation for a new sound system)
- Minor restroom upgrades
- Exterior /mortar assessment and initial critical repairs
- Contribution to UCC Central Southeast Association -Widening the Circle (new church starts fund)
- Contribution to Deep Griha Society in Pune, India (founded by First Church friends Rev. and Dr. Onawale)

Specific project requests to implement the capital campaign goals are brought forward from House & Grounds, the Property Planning Group, the Missions Commission, Executive Committee and staff to the Implementation Committee which forwards expenditure recommendations to Church Council.

The exterior stonework and mortar assessment performed by The Durable Restoration Company has outlined repair needs that need to be addressed over the next ten years; the estimated cost of these repairs is \$1 million. The most immediate of these repairs will be addressed by our current capital campaign funds while the House and Grounds Committee, the Trustees, and the Church Council will continue to work in the coming years on these needed repairs and will work to identify the necessary financial resources to complete them.

We still welcome and seek new capital campaign gifts and pledges, if you would like additional information about the campaign or to make a gift, please contact Bev Cook or Sharon Leidheiser.

PPG

As an outgrowth of both the Long-Range Plan and the Capital Campaign, the Property Planning Group was formed to develop recommendations and coordinate activities involving:

- Immediate improvements and intermediate plans for the west lot
- Pursuing projects and goals for the west lot that are consistent with the capital campaign and the long-range plan
- Developing a master conceptual plan for the entire church property
- Engaging with campus neighbors and community officials regarding downtown development plans and projects that impact the church
-

Plans are being made to hold congregational information sessions concerning neighborhood development projects and the conceptual site plan.

Bethlehem on Broad Street (BOBS)

A new charter was approved to guide planning and decision making for BOBS. It authorizes both a First Church BOBS Committee and an ecumenical BOBS Advisory Board to work together to ensure the future success of this Christmas mission that is both a great ecumenical and inter-faith project and a hallmark mission for our congregation.

Salary Study

A salary study was completed and approved by church council in November. This salary study was first called for by church council in January 2007; it had several failed starts, and was then once again called for following the annual meeting of January in 2010. Janine Wilson and Judy Smith first began researching survey data resources in 2010, with intermittent work throughout 2010 resulting in completion

of the study in 2011. The Personnel committee then began to analyze the findings of the survey study and developed policy recommendations that were then reviewed, revised, and approved by the Executive Committee and Church Council.

In short, we firmly believe that First Church is a leadership church and should be paying our staff at "median plus" levels. Yet, the survey data shows that the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Minister of Music, Director of Children's Education, and Program Manager are currently paid well below median levels for similar positions at comparable churches. In order to rectify this situation, church council has authorized an appeal to the congregation for revisions to giving in order to raise an additional \$55,000 for 2012. The appeal calls for these not to be onetime gifts but rather sustainable increases to current giving levels by our members.

Summary

I have enjoyed my term as moderator very much. I find it personally fulfilling and joyful to serve our church. I thank all church council members and all of the numerous members who serve on committees and boards for their dedication. I give special thanks to the executive committee for their leadership throughout the year. This has been the second year in which we have operated under our latest constitutional revision that provides for elect and assistant positions for the Moderator, Treasurer, Secretary, and the Commissioner positions; I think this has proven to give us even broader input to our decisions and strengthens our continuity from year to year.

I give extra special thanks to John Deliman and Wayne Piper for their hard work on the Long –Range Plan, to Rev. Janine Wilson, Judy Smith, Chris Glaros, Scott Warrick, Sandy Bennett, and Neal Brower for their work on the Salary Study, to all the members of the Implementation Committee and Property Planning Group for their work and dedication, and to Tom Worley who wears several hats and has been a great contributor to many efforts this year including: parking lot agreements with CCAD, property tax exemption request for the west lot, small business health care tax credit, and a successful request to include our sidewalk along Cleveland Avenue in city development plans.

Administration Commissioner Annual Report

By Sandra W. Bennett, Commissioner

The Administration Commissioner is responsible for five committees at First Church: Budget & Finance, Personnel, Stewardship, Technology, and Safe Church. The commissioner, with staff support, appoints members to fill out the Personnel, Stewardship, and Technology committees. Once established, the Commissioner shepherds the committees, providing assistance to the chair and guidance on communication and action reports to Council and other committees. The commissioner also provides counsel to staff on administrative matters and represents First Congregational Church at meetings of the UCC conference.

During 2011, the Administration Commissioner attended 9 Budget & Finance Committee meetings, 19 Personnel meetings, 2 Stewardship meetings (Neal Brower, Administration Commissioner Elect attended the rest of those meetings and provided leadership to the committee and chair.), 5 Technology meetings, and 2 Safe Church meetings. In addition to the committee meetings were 12 Church Council meetings, 1 Executive Committee meeting, 15 meetings with staff as Administration Commissioner, and 4 meetings with the UCC conference.

Below are the individual annual reports from the committees within the Administration Commission. It was a full and productive year and the challenge is now turned over to Neal Brower, Administration Commissioner for 2012. Good luck, Neal.

Deacons Annual Report

By Mary Weaver, Senior Deacon

The 2011 deacons were: Ruth Allred (2013), Nancy Braverman (2013), Mark Brown (2014), Bert Cook (2014), Cindy Deliman (2013), Harry Guynn (2012), Martha Huey (2012), Betty Johnson (2014), Marilyn Minter (2014), Pat Patterson (2013), Bill Wagner (2014), Elaine Warren (2013), Charlie Weaver (2012), Mary Weaver (2012) and Missy Zimmerman (2012). Reverend Ahrens served as our clergy liaison for this year.

We were very pleased to have a full roster of Deacons for the whole year, which has not been true for the past few years. This allowed the Deacons to accomplish many tasks that otherwise might not have been possible. Additionally, the Deacons were very enthusiastic about their responsibilities and worked very hard to fulfill them.

The Deacons are charged by the Constitution, with assisting the ministers in the "spiritual direction of the church including pastoral care, worship, celebration of the sacraments and other special services." The Deacons continued to support the ministry of the church through serving at both worship services each Sunday, including the commissioning of Jackie Dean. The Deacons represented the congregation for new member orientations and the reception of new members during Sunday services. The Deacons also hosted memorial services and other special services. The Deacons continued to deliver the flowers from the worship services to shut-ins and others in need of support from their church family. Thank you to Elaine Warren who took the lead as coordinator for memorial and funeral services. Thank you also to Sarah Reed for her continued support of the Sacristy committee, including preparation of the communion elements.

Deacons continued to support special services during the Holy Week and Christmas seasons. During Holy Week, deacons hosted the Maundy Thursday dinner and the Service of Tenebrae. Three services were held on Easter Sunday, including a sunrise service in front of the Art Museum. During Christmas, Deacons assisted with special services, including Lessons and Carols and two Christmas Eve services.

The Deacons met with and took In Care, Jess Peacock and Abby Salak as they seek ordained ministry through the United Church of Christ.

In support of pastoral care of the congregation, the Deacons worked with the Senior Minister to contact members on the roster who are not currently active in the life of the church. The goal of the project was to reach out to these members and let them know they were missed. Contact was made with over 100 church members.

Thank you to Cindy Deliman for her hard work in support of the acolyte program during 2011. Thank you also to Gerry Worth and Bill Wagner who have worked with the usher program during 2011.

I am very grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication of the 2011 deacons. They were always willing to step in and help wherever they were needed. It was a joy to serve with you. Being a deacon has been a very meaningful experience for me. Thank you to everyone who has guided and supported me throughout my term as a deacon.

Trustees Annual Report

By Sheldon Taft, Trustees Chair

In 2011, the Board of Trustees included Joyce Canfield and Christopher Washington (terms expiring January 2012), Randy Hoffman and Sue Cook (terms expiring January 2013), Lissa Wade and Tom Worley (terms expiring January 2014), Meredith Knueve and Sheldon Taft (terms expiring January 2015), and David Holt, moderator. Rev. Tim Ahrens, senior minister, serves as advisor and staff liaison.

The trustees elected Sheldon Taft as their chair and Tom Worley as vice-chair. It also appointed Bill Johannes as their treasurer and Meredith Knueve as their secretary and legal counsel. Sharon Leidheiser, the church's business administrator, assists Bill Johannes by maintaining the trust and endowment accounts administered by the trustees. W.E. Davis Insurance Agency, under the management of John Koetz, handles trustees' responsibilities for the church's property and liability

insurance needs; and Manning and Napier Advisors, under the management of Kevin Kale, guides the trustees' investment responsibilities. The custodian of the trustees' investments is the Huntington Trust Company, under the management of Carolyn McDavid.

The chairman of the trustees also serves on the Executive Committee and the Church Council. However, in order to maintain his independence for participating in any trustee discussions, he normally abstains from votes by those bodies on matters that might depend on trustee discretionary funding.

During 2011, bequests and gifts to the trust and endowment funds were \$96,306.99, including a generous insurance policy gift by one member, a bequest from the estate of Julia Hadley, three cemetery plots, and several other designated gifts. The funds receiving gifts included Undesignated Benefit of the Church, Building Endowment, Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Fund, Jackie Owen Fund, Barnard Music Fund, Knight Perry Fund and the Pastor's Fund.

Currently, the trustees appropriate more than \$130,000 a year to help meet the needs of the church; this is after investment advisory and custodian fees totaling \$17,123.12. Consistent with Ohio law, the trustees' annual expenses and contributions for the benefit of the church equal 5% of its most recent, 12 quarter, rolling average value. During 2011, the trustees reviewed and affirmed its 5% annual expenses and contributions standard.

In 2011, the trustees contributed to the church over \$80,000 from unrestricted funds and over \$50,000 from restricted funds. Unrestricted fund distributions included \$40,000 to the church's budget, \$19,400 for major repairs (as requested), \$21,189 for insurance premiums and \$615 for miscellaneous. Restricted fund distributions included \$1,000 from the Flower Fund, \$10,500 for church support, \$2,875 from the Barnard and Owen music funds (as requested), \$4,363 from the Alma Keeler Youth Fund Fund (as requested), \$9,700 from the Pastor's Fund, \$12,600 from the Good Samaritan Fund, \$1,241 from the White Youth Endowment (as requested), \$4,660 from Mission Endowment (as requested), \$2,050 from the Gearhart Remembrance Fund and \$4,283 from other endowment funds

While Manning & Napier continues to serve as the trustees' investment advisor, the trustees assure protection and security of their funds by maintaining actual custody of investments with the Huntington Trust Company. The net investment return on trustees' funds for 2011 was a negative 2.4%, after deducting advisor's and custodian fees and distributions to the church. As of the end of December 31, 2011, the market value of all trust and endowment funds was \$3,330,699. As of the end of 2011, these funds were invested 2% in cash, 49% in equities, 9% in fixed income, 19% in equity mutual funds and 21% in fixed income mutual funds. By trustee policy, no more than 70% of funds may be invested in equities (both individual securities and mutual funds).

During 2011, the trustees participated in the church's Long Range Plan process. Goals were identified and work initiated to assess trustee funds, develop a plan for improving communications with church members and create a brochure outlining the church's trust and endowment funds.

The trustees' legal counsel, Meredith Knueve, was completing plans to file on behalf of the church an application for exemption from real estate taxes on the church's recently acquired Byers lot. If approved, the exemption would relieve the church of real estate taxes on the Byers lot effective January 1, 2011. A decision is expected within two years.

The trustees have been active in relating to downtown and Discovery District development issues affecting the church. The church's recent acquisition of the former Byers lot at East Broad Street and Cleveland Avenue has increased the church's role in these local development issues. Vice-Chair Tom Worley has participated in the Creative Campus development affecting First Church, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus College of Art & Design, and Columbus State. As chair of the church's Property Planning Group, Tom also is guiding efforts to assure that the church's integration of the Byers lot with the

church's historic property is consistent with the church's long-term needs and plans and with the activities of its immediate neighbors - the Columbus Museum of Art and the Columbus College of Art & Design.

The trustees are grateful to Treasurer Bill Johannes, Secretary and Legal Counsel Meredith Knueve and Business Administrator Sharon Leidheiser for their efforts in supporting the trustees' mission for First Church. The trustees also thank the many church members whose gifts of long-term funds for the church's trusts and endowments in 2011 and prior years have helped the church to meet the financial needs and missions of First Church and the United Church of Christ throughout Columbus and elsewhere. Please consider becoming a part of this valuable group, whose long-term gifts help to assure the future of First Church.

Treasurer and Budget and Finance Committee Annual Report

By Jim Fewlass, Treasurer

Staff and commissions of First Congregational Church were frugally vigilant during 2011. As a result, the surplus for the year is \$42,587.51.

Rentals for use of the building more nearly reflected expenses of utilities, supplies and security required for those users. The number of weddings significantly increased over 2010. Savings were realized for 2011 in the areas of house and grounds, office costs, deacons and education. Please note that savings in education were garnered from the fact that the director of Christian education was on leave for part of 2011.

More funds were spent for church school, pre-teen, youth and adults in 2011 than in 2010. While benefits have increased, staff salaries have not increased in the past three years. The Gracious Giving program in 2011 to supplement the annual pledges exceeded its \$12,000 goal by \$1,576. Beyond and above the pledges to the operating budget, members gave \$90,398.60 to missions through Sunday loose offerings and designated gifts.

Thank you active members of the Budget and Finance Committee – Sandy Bennett, Cindy Conn, Wally Giffen, Sharon Leidheiser, Bruce Panek, Melissa Prendergast, Janine Wilson, Tom Worley and Gerald Worth.

2012 Budget

Challenging Stewardship are the words that best describe the operating budget for 2012. The following increases were submitted to Council for a challenge 2012 budget. The balanced budget the congregation is asked to adopt contains none of these increases.

- The Compensation Study that calls for increases in salaries to “median plus” would increase the compensation lines in the budget for 2012 by about \$58,000. This includes salaries and benefits.
- Mission Commission recommended an increase to 8.5% from the pledges to the operating budget for Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) for the United Church of Christ. They also recommended a study during 2012 to help our congregation understand the function and needs of OCWM. This would result in an increase of \$12,000.
- Modest increases in program budget requests would result in an increase to the operating budget of approximately \$22,000. Some of this increase is a reflection of money that has been spent out of pocket and not reimbursed to individuals. These moneys and increased program needs are included in the \$22,000.
- Total increase in the 2012 operating budget would be \$92,000.
- The Stewardship Committee has done a superb job of placing our personal stewardship goals in front of us. Pledges to the operating budget for 2012 now stand at \$552,957. The number of pledges in 2012 has increased by 20 from 2011.

- In addition, during 2012 First Church will need to begin a 10-year program of \$1,000,000 for renewal of our building.

Meeting the stewardship challenge as a congregation will assure our continued worship, education and mission life.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

MINUTES FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2011

TO CONSIDER THE LONG-RANGE PLAN

Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson opened the meeting with a prayer.

David Holt called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

- meeting called to consider the Long-Range Plan, which Church Council has recommended and brought forward.
- the motion was read:

Whereas:

- *the last long-range plan for the church was approved in 2005,*
- *in 2010 Church Council formed a Long-Range Planning Committee (LRP) with responsibilities to solicit ideas from the congregation and create a long-range plan for the church,*
- *during 2011 the LRP collected input from the congregation, and*

- *the LRP, Church Council, and church staff worked collaboratively to produce this long-range plan reflecting congregational input and containing goals, strategies, and action steps to engage the congregation and strengthen our church,*

Therefore be it resolved that the congregation:

- *approves the ten goals contained in the long-range plan,*
- *will support the church staff and each other in efforts to achieve the goals through our individual involvement and participation,*
- *authorizes church council to adopt, update, and revise the strategies and action steps throughout the three-year implementation period in order to best achieve the long-range plan goals, and*
- *charges church council and staff to provide at least semi-annual progress reports to the congregation.*

Wayne Piper, who served as a volunteer consultant for the long-range plan, described the process:

- more than 200 people provided input
- the LRP collected the data into ten goals, which were further detailed with strategies and possible action steps
- plan is a way of looking forward in faith

David Holt opened the floor to questions and discussion:

Goal 3 was questioned and whether the wording should be changed from “Justice and Mercy” to “Missions Outreach”

Question of lack of substance in the plan and whether it was too watered down. The speaker felt that there was a lack of specifics regarding children, for example, and hiring a young adult minister

Response from David Holt—Members are invited to find their own places of passion and bring them to the committees and commissions responsible for those items. The action steps in the plan are “organic” and will be further developed as we pursue the goals. Members should also bring their concerns to the appropriate committee, and we will add additional action steps as we are called to.

Concern with the church building itself and whether there should be stronger wording about improving our facilities. Question of whether this was not also part of the capital campaign.

Response from Tom Worley—Church improvements are part of a larger plan for the development of all our properties and are addressed in goal #9. The capital campaign plan for the west lot is being folded into a site plan for the entire church property, which has not been re-drawn since the north parking lot was purchased. Ideas concerning how to fund future development are also being explored.

Question about the steps listed as already “in progress” and whether items like that should be included in the plan

Response from David Holt—There are other steps that will be taken. Some steps are listed as “in progress” because over the time of putting the plan together we started to address some items. Everything did not just stop to wait for the plan to be settled. For some of the suggestions from the congregation, it just made sense not to just listen, but to start acting on the items. For example, some of the building improvements are already in process.

Comment from one speaker that he was very impressed with the plan and that it is a great framework for action. The card that each of us was asked to complete gives us real opportunities for action.

Question of who will own the revisions and updates of the plan

Response from David Holt—Church Council and the staff will own it, and the congregation as well. The next step will be for Council to ask each committee to assess how they fit into the plan and assess the implementation. The congregation will receive a report about our progress with the plan at least twice a year.

The members of the LRP who were present were sitting in the chancel. David Holt introduced them.

The congregation voted by voice. There were about 4 votes against the long-range plan; the great majority of members voted for it.

Members were asked to complete and turn in the cards listing actions they want to commit to.

Rev. Tim Ahrens introduced Rev. Forest Hoppe. He also welcomed new members who had just joined that morning, and he noted that they were able to vote and participate in the meeting. He thanked the people who were especially instrumental to completing the long-range plan: Wayne Piper, John Deliman (who had to be absent), David Holt, and staff members—Jamie Bobb, Janine Wilson, Marty Worth, Mark Williams and Tom Luff.

Jamie Bobb led us in singing Hymn 555, “Now Thank We All our God”.

Rev. Tim Ahrens gave the final blessing.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Smith, Secretary

Staff Reports

Senior Minister's Annual Report

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

Dear Members and Friends of The First Congregational Church, UCC, Columbus, Ohio,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Jesus Christ our Savior as we begin the 160th year of our congregation's life together in the heart of Columbus, in this the 200th year of the city's existence!

2011 was a great year for our congregation! Coming out of a year in which we purchased the 1.61 acres on the corner of Cleveland Avenue and Broad Street, through our Capital Campaign, "The Future's Broadening Way," we set our eyes to planning our future together.

LONG RANGE PLAN - Under the leadership of John Deliman, chairperson, and Wayne Piper, consultant, a committee of 20 set to work on listening to our members thoughts, concerns, ideas, dreams and visions for the future. Throughout the spring, more than 200 people answered a series of questions beginning with "*Where is God leading us next?*" Members shared in small groups, emails, website responses, phone calls, one-on-one conversations, and through writing and returning questionnaires. Throughout the summer the committee, the staff, and church leaders shaped and formed what became our Long Range Plan for 2011-2014. In great detail, the plan provides a roadmap through the coming years. Now, we must follow the map and move boldly forward into a new day of service to Christ on the corner of Cleveland and Broad. A huge thanksgiving must be extended to Wayne, John and our moderator, David Holt, for their leadership throughout this process.

SALARY STUDY – In addition, we completed the salary study that was commissioned by congregational mandate at our 2010 congregational meeting. The study was comprehensive in every way. On November 21, 2011, the Personnel Committee, under the leadership of chairperson Chris Glaros, and with the support of Commissioner Sandy Bennett and committee members, Scott Warrick and Neal Brower presented their findings to the Church Council. Based on size of congregation, worship attendance and geographical location, we discovered that our staff is significantly underpaid. The professional staff is around 11% below median income. The support staff is at or above median income and one member of our staff is significantly below median. Here are the words of the Personnel Committee and sub-committee:

There appears to be no clear design or goal for salary progression; those recently hired are above or closer to the median than longer term staff; several staff salaries (Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Minister of Music and the Director of Christian Education) are below median; the Business and Office Administrators are above the median; the Building Manager is at median; the Program Manger receives less than one dollar more per hour more than custodial staff, however the job description for this position is a higher responsibility level.

To address this gap, the Personnel Committee brought six recommendations that were unanimously approved by Church Council. The recommendations are found elsewhere in this annual report. I would like to give a special thanks to Judy Smith and Rev. Janine Wilson for their leadership, time and efforts in this important study. I would like to thank Church Council and the Congregation for responding so well.

Here are some other 2011 highlights:

- *Wonderful Stewardship – for 2011 and 2012!* Although our pledged dollars were down significantly in 2011, we exceeded our goal for the year! Thanks be to God (and you)! We are still gathering and counting 2012 pledges and commitments, but it appears that we are back on track to increase our giving in 2012. Thanks to Brian Cave, Kent Rambo, and their committee of 12 great leaders!

- *Fifteen babies were born into our church this past year and we baptized 20!* This is a mini-baby boom! We baptized a great number of infants and others! We had 20 baptisms in 2012 - 14 babies, 1 pre-teen,

3 teens, and 2 adults in 2011. We had 23 baptisms eight years ago – but this was our second greatest number since I have served as your pastor. We welcomed 29 new adult members and their nine children in 2011. Thanks be to God! With these new members, we are nearing the 1,000 mark in our church's membership rolls!

- *We had three deaths this year* – Art Vorys, Harry Campbell and Julia Hadley. Thanks be to God for the lives of three amazing Christians. I presided over all three of the memorial services for our loved ones who passed to eternal life (Harry Campbell's service was held at Friendship Village of Dublin). The three deaths were our smallest number of deaths in 50 years.

- *We had 24 weddings*. I performed 15 weddings. We received over \$40,000 for the church our ministry of marriage. We have about 30 planned for 2012.

- *Preaching and leadership of worship* - I preached 41 Sundays and participated in worship 47 Sundays. Each week I preach two services. I also returned to Cleveland in May and preached at my first church, Bethany United Church of Christ. I preached in August at Trinity UCC, Columbus, in support of Pastor Norman Moxley's sabbatical.

- *Commissioned Ministers and Seminarians* - On November 13, we commissioned Jacqueline Stith Dean into our Commissioned Ministry for Spiritual Direction and Formation. It was a glorious service of celebration and praise of God. On January 15, 2012, we will commission Thomas Brownfield as our Commissioned Minister for Social Justice. Both positions are new to our church. In addition, Jackie is one of a handful of spiritual directors in our denomination. Believe it or not, Tom is the first commissioned social justice minister we have anywhere in the UCC. We also have four students in seminary right now. Heather Giffen is in her third year at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, Minn.; Abby Salak and Jess Peacock are in their second year at METHESCO in Delaware, Ohio. Matt Goetz is in his first year at Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo..

- *Lay Leaders' Award for 2011* - We celebrated Wally and Sarah Giffen on November 20 as we presented our 2011 Lay Leadership Award to them for their outstanding work in church. Thanks Wally and Sarah!

- *Staff* - 2011 was the year we also added a wonderful new staff member, Thomas Luff. Tom was hired in June and started in July following the sudden resignation and departure of Bill Beckett in late May. Mark Williams returned to work in 2011 following his battle with cancer in 2010. We also added two student seminarians to the mix – Abby Salak and Jess Peacock joined us –working with youth, pastoral care, and social justice ministries.

The staff is working well together as we enter this new year. With the Long Range Plan guiding our steps and each of working goals, we are moving forward with excitement and hope. Special thanks goes out to Rev. Janine Wilson, James E. Bobb, Mark Williams, Sharon Leidheiser, Denny Mahoney, Marty Worth and Tom Luff who have served us faithfully and well throughout 2011! They produce a program, mission, ministry and care for people and the structures of this church which are tops in the heart of our city.

I also would like to thank our custodians - Frank Walls, Kelvin Murphy and William Lee – a team who has worked together for a number of years now. Thanks to Otto Edwards for his continued good work on Security. Thanks to our nursery staff: Rosemary Pawandiwa, Nikki Boop, and Chinyere Neusom. Also, thanks to our choir section leaders: Janet Axt, Kevin Cubick, Leo Welch, Lissa Wade and Pam Welsh-Huggins. Each man and woman, who cares for our building, cares for our littlest children and sings to the glory of God makes a huge difference in our life together.

- *Our Moderator* - A special thanks goes to David Holt as our 2011 moderator. David has provided tremendous leadership to First Church for a number of years. He is everywhere present – in the financial work of the church, as treasurer, mission leader and so much more. This year as moderator, I was so pleased with his collegial and kind way of drawing all people together to solve problems and meet the needs of the congregation. David worked really hard on the bringing the Long Range Plan and the salary

study before the Church Council and the Congregation. Thanks David for all your great work this year and for many before...and to follow!

-*Great Lay Leaders step forward!* - Many other dynamic and exceptional leaders stepped forward in 2011 to offer their gifts and talents. Please read their reports to find out more about their ministry areas. Thanks to all who served Christ at First Church in commissions, committees, in homeless shelters and youth groups and many more ways and places in 2011! Thank you to all the volunteers that serve in the office, in our building and caring for our grounds and throughout our church's life.

- *We experienced overall gains in 2011.* We welcomed 29 new members in our church family in 2011 and they brought nine children in our life together. With our largest Confirmation class during my time with you, 13 in 2012, I am excited by the energy, intelligence, and joy that is streaming into our life together. This is a fantastic group of teenagers. We should all be very proud of them as they approach their confirmation day on May 20.

-*MISSION:1 and more Mission* - Our Good Samaritan Fund had more dollars in 2011 – thanks to the generosity of our congregation and the support of the Good Samaritan Fund. Over \$43,000 were shared with the poor of Columbus through this fund. Thanks Marty Worth for your leadership! Overall, we received \$98,000 in 2011 for our missions at home and abroad. We added several projects in 2011 which increased mission awareness and participation in the congregation – including the hands-on fresh produce give-away in August and October, the July work done at Gladden Community House, and our increased participation in the Mid-Ohio Food Bank programs and mission. In November, we joined in the denomination program – Mission:1 through which we gave huge support with canned goods (694 items) and dollars – over \$3,000 to food and hunger efforts at home and in East Africa.

- *BREAD* - We had 90 people at the BREAD Nehemiah Assembly in May representing our congregation at Vet's Memorial. This number was down by 60 people from 2010. With the great leadership of BREAD provided by Priss Endo in the past few years, and with Priss and Shun now living in North Carolina, our BREAD team is rebuilding in 2012. The new BREAD issue for 2012 will be jobs.

- *Small Groups* – Lenten Small Groups started up again this year and over 110 people participated. A new plan is being set in place for the 2012.

- *Teaching* - I continued to co-teach Confirmation and new members classes. I also teach the Wednesday book study and other short term classes.

- *Social Justice Witness for Peace and Justice* - I spoke five times at the Statehouse on Senate Bill 5/Issue 2 – affecting the collective bargaining rights for public workers. In April, I offered a prayer by Dr. Edwin Goodwin at the occasion of President Lincoln lying in state as his body was returned to Springfield, Illinois, following his April 1865 assassination. In October, I spoke at Greenlawn Cemetery on the life and legacy of Dr. Washington Gladden. I appeared 16 times on TV, radio and in newspaper articles – relating to Egypt, We Believe Ohio, which restarted in 2011 in response to health care concerns, policies affecting the poor in Ohio, Senate Bill 5, and Issue 2, and the death of Dr. Fred Shuttlesworth. My thoughts on Egypt also put me in the *Christian Science Monitor* in February. In August, the *National Catholic Reporter* carried an essay I wrote on Catherine of Siena as a model for peacemaking. I had a featured editorial in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* on faith and labor over Labor Day weekend. In November, I was interviewed and my reflections appeared on-line in *Columbus Monthly* magazine as they featured Columbus sharing thoughts on what we must address in Columbus in the coming years. I said: health care, hunger and homelessness. My complete answers are on the magazine web site. Following the election in November, I was quoted the *Washington Post* in an article by Dr. Susan Thistlewaite. The Faith and Values section of the *Columbus Dispatch* removed my blog from Spain, Israel, Palestine and Egypt in the fall of 2011. It can be found on our web site. I continue to serve on the board of directors for Faith in Public Life in Washington, D.C., and serve the Central Southeast Association on the Nominations Committee. I have also served in a consulting role for the city's 200th birthday celebration.

- *Community Award presented by Teenagers* – On September 11, 2011, I was presented by the Interfaith Action Movement of Youth with their “Columbus Excellence Award” for “Interfaith Leadership and Social Justice.” It was a great honor to be chosen by young Jews, Muslims and Christians for such an honor. In December, I spoke to the Socratic Society at Worthington Kilbourne High School at their awards ceremony. It was special for me, because Kendra Worley and Andrew Smith were both recipients of this award that day.

- *Dr. Gladden featured in WOSU “Downtown” Production* - In November, I was interviewed for one hour by WOS, which is featuring Dr. Gladden and First Church in the final “Neighborhoods” section on Downtown and Franklinton. There will be an unveiling of the film in early February at a special event at COSI. I continue to lift up Gladden’s name as a small group presented him to receive the Great Ohioans award – presented to several Ohioans each year. The process is ongoing.

2011 was a significant year in my personal life and my family’s life. On June 17th, in Hilton Head, S.C., our oldest son, Luke, married Kirsten Roche. They have moved to Chapel Hill, N.C., where Luke is working with the University of North Carolina and Kirsten is teaching high school biology. I returned from the 2010 sabbatical to find plenty of work to be done at home and in the church. In 2011, I didn’t simply stay at home. I traveled to Tampa, Fla., twice, once to attend the UCC Senior Ministers Conference in January and again in late June to attend the UCC General Synod as chaperone with our daughter Sarah, our General Synod delegate. In August, I became an associate with the Dominican Sisters of Peace in Columbus. I also was in Birmingham, Ala., twice to say goodbye to my friend Rev. Dr. Fred Shuttlesworth (June) and then to eulogize him at his home-going celebration October 22-24. On the second trip, I was blessed with an anonymous gift to cover the costs of the trip. I also traveled to Chicago to meet with the president and former president of Chicago Theological Seminary (September) to plan my doctor of ministry degree program. Other trips (for fun!) took me to Green Bay, Wis., and a Packers football game for Susan’s and my 26th anniversary and to Lakeside, Ohio. I also was honored to be one of the Adult leaders on this summer’s Mission Trip to Sunset Shores in Vermilion, Ohio.

I look forward to 2012. January 24, 2011 will mark the beginning of my 13th year as your senior minister. This year, I will begin working on my doctor of ministry degree at Chicago Theological Seminary in Chicago. I will begin with a distance learning course in February and go to Chicago for a week of study in late August. I have five sessions on campus across 2½ years. By the grace of God, I will finish with the degree in June 2015. I am excited to finally take on this degree program whose emphasis will be in “public theology.” I ask for your prayers and support on this effort.

As we head into 2012, I share this continuing observation as your pastor: As we have grown through ten years, in members and program – but I am still one person. We have only two pastors on staff and six other full-time staff people in a church that has virtually doubled in size. The critical issue for 2012 is how well we can organize for care of the congregation in which all of us are fully engaged. This staff is too small to do it all. Your hands, your hearts, your care will help us minister effectively. Please respond to opportunities to serve.

Finally and wonderfully significant in our history and life together....

2012 is the 160th Birthday of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio. On September 26, 1852, 42 abolitionist Christians founded Third Presbyterian Church. In 1856, we changed our name to First Congregational Church of Columbus. Our current name was embraced when we voted to join the United Church of Christ in 1961. For 160 years in the heart of the capital city, we have faithfully served Christ. Our 42 adult members have grown to over 1,000 adult members. *We have goals for the future to grow by 10% more in the next three years. Let’s get growing!* To grow like this will take every man, woman and child of our church bringing new folks and spreading the love of God in Christ Jesus to a city waiting for good news from Christians of Good Will. God has richly blessed us through the years. We have ministered and cared for tens of thousands of people in Columbus and far beyond this city and region. Thanks be to God!

May our steps forward “far down the future’s broadening way” expand our vision of faithful service for First Church and spread our wings for mission and ministry. I pray that “*together*” we may serve Christ in this next decade of this new millennium.

God has given us a vision for the future. Let’s live into it!

Yours in Christ’s love,
Rev. Tim

Associate Minister’s Annual Report

By the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson, Associate Minister

It’s been a fun year. First Church is always bringing new life into multiple areas at once. As staff support to the Senior Minister, Personnel, Church Growth, Parish Life, Budget and Finance, Nominating, House and Grounds, Good Samaritan program, Executive and Council, things are never boring. In addition to attending well over fifty meetings this year, I also had the opportunity to welcome twenty-nine new members and their children; to serve as a member of the UCC Southeast Association Church Vitality Committee and participate in one of our ecumenical links, the Spirituality Network (located just across from our church library), serving on their board. All combined, my work area brings me into contact with a wide range of groups, ages and stages of people and ministries. Here are a few of this year’s highlights:

Administration & Program

I thoroughly enjoy working with such a competent and caring staff. It makes my role as supervisor one of listening, exchanging ideas and assisting in establishing links to groups and persons as needed. This year some of my work included:

- Supervision for four of our staff plus supporting Mark and Tom as needed in their work with nursery and custodial staff. This year we also welcomed Chinyere to our nursery care staff!
- Supervising two seminary interns – discussing their work and vision and working in union with Mark and Rev. Tim as they work hand in hand with the Interns in their areas as well;
- And the completion of the Compensation Study Report with Dr. Judy Smith, with continued revising with the Personnel Committee, Executive Committee and Council.

Parish Life

Jackie Dean/Parish Life did a great job this year co-opting and coordinating a fine cast of members, friends and family who provided us with congregational fellowship and meals year-round. My involvement included overview and calendar planning with Jackie and assisting with:

- Easter brunch; Summer Picnic; Summer event at the Ballpark; Spring-Summer Parents/Grandparents of Preschoolers; as well as equipping Lenten Small Group Study with booklets and leadership support and the Hanging of the Greens;
- Ohio Foodbank Produce Markets came to life out of requests of young adults and others who sought to engage in hands on ministries that build community and the tenacity of Bruce Panek/Mission to find the kind of ministry- match we were seeking. This opportunity quickly became very popular, a nice bridge between multiple staff, parish life, mission, and young, old and in between ages of members and community!

Come join us on the Parish Life Commission or make time to sign up to help with fellowship opportunities this year – it’s a great way to build faith and relationships. Cori Rowley and Catherine Kennedy are the new Commissioner and Commissioner-elect. We look forward to the familiar joys of fellowship this year as well as providing new opportunities, including at least three young adult–focused opportunities for friendship-building and service.

Building and Grounds

Wally Giffen, Charlie Weaver, Bill Wirsching, and their able team of volunteers have all done great work keeping the building and grounds up to speed. They have faced several big issues and have been busy planning and implementing in an on-going fashion. This year we all had to say goodbye to Bill Beckett as

he moved south. Life in a large church is always a series of comings and goings, so soon after his departure Wally Giffen and I engaged in multiple interviews, followed by staff interviews with candidates and then the joy of welcoming Tom Luff to our staff. Tom adapted well and brings a good heart, creativity and sharp mind to us. He is a great addition to both our staff and his program area. If you have an interest in offering a few hours of care to the building or the grounds there are always multiple opportunities throughout the year. You're helping hands will be welcomed -- give Tom Luff a call.

Church Growth

Melissa Prendergast has also been busy doing great ministry. Her team discusses ways to spread the gospel and grow Christ's church here on Cleveland and Broad. Church Growth and I worked together to:

- Implement four new member's classes plus a few individual sessions;
- Assist in increasing First Church's presence in the community - tending a welcome table on Gay Street and at OSU;
- Welcome several CCAD and OSU students at 9 and 11 am worship;
- Equip the commission by providing educational information for discussion, themes and ideas, such as church growth trends, training opportunities and emerging use of social media;
- Create a plan for a stronger link in 2012 with Parish Life (both teams will meet together for beginning of our meetings, then break apart for separate tasks);
- Initiate the new Church Growth data base -Church Windows. (It is under construction and soon will provide information to all Commissioners which will increase our ability to match your gifts and skills with the needs of the world and the work of First Church.) We will be creating a new pictorial directory through this data base as well;
- And I've enjoyed working on our new website design with Rob O'Leary, Cori and Ben Rowley. Make sure you visit: www.first-church.org, facebook and twitter – then pass the link to your neighbors and friends -- let's grow First Church together!

We look forward to an exciting new Church Growth marketing plan for 2012 and expanding our team by adding five new people to the Commission. If you would like to be one of the newcomers to this fun group, please contact Melissa Prendergast, myself, Catherine Cunningham, Abby Salak or Deb Thompson.

May God bless each of you as we celebrate God's love together in 2012!

With joy,

Rev. Janine

Christian Education Director Annual Report

By Mark S. Williams, Christian Education Director

As I begin to write this report I realize that I will be celebrating five years with First Church as your Director of Christian Education. This, along with past years, has been an incredible year of learning and growth for me personally and for our church. It was wonderful to return on January 24, 2011, from medical leave with great understanding, patience, kindness and prayers from the congregation and staff. The year started with a great Youth Sunday, Pancake Dinner, Youth Cabaret, growth in our adult, youth and children's ministries and a wonderful Spring Retreat at Temple Hills.

There are so many to thank for their hard work in this ministry. First Church had the most children and youth attend church camp this summer in many recent years, the Youth traveled to Sunset Shores Retreat Center in Vermilion for their mission trip; many took on the role as a teacher or facilitator for adults, youth and children ministries. All the education committees worked hard to provide curriculum that was challenging and enlightening for our faith journey. I am grateful to our Education Commissioners Pris Endo and Tanya Miller for their leadership. Also, thank you to the teachers, committees/ leaders, Youth Leaders for all their hard work and dedication. The long range plan for Christian formation has given our committees a great "road map" in the work of our ministry.

The fall and winter activities continued with great success. Our theme "Faith and Life" incorporated two opportunities for adult education on Sunday mornings and colorful "gears" for our children to use to build a "faith machine" down the education wing hallway. We also welcomed Chinyere Nuesom to our nursery staff. The Christmas play and dinner was enjoyed by nearly 200 people. I must say thank you to the staff who gives such support and compassion that is displayed each and every day. I am so blessed to work with such a great group of people.

And finally to the congregation: Thank you for your continued support, prayers, emails, and notes given to me and my partner Tim as we continue this journey of healing. I continue to feel God's love through each of you. First Church is such a great place to worship, learn, grow and experience God's love.

Program Manager Annual Report

By Marty Worth, Program Manager

In addition to administering the Good Samaritan Fund (see Good Samaritan Fund report), I continued my responsibilities of supporting Sunday and special worship services by attending worship planning meetings, securing liturgists, supporting the acolyte program by emailing schedules and reminders to the participants, producing bulletins and scripts for each participant, keeping the flower schedule.

With the help of a team of volunteers as music librarians, the music library is maintained and the practices of the Choir and Choral Society are prepared for. Planning and producing the concert series brochure, mailing and receiving donations and producing programs for each concert are part of my work for the music department. I provide financial reports to the Music Committee regarding the music budget and designated funds. Supporting the Minister of Music vision and follow up of all aspects of the music ministry are my responsibility.

The highlight of 2011 was the choir trip to Washington August 11 – 14. My job was to arrange all the details and logistics of the trip. The plans started in the summer of 2010 when we sent an audition CD to the National Cathedral, hoping to be chosen as a summer guest choir. We sang two morning worship services and an Evensong service on Sunday, which allowed us to spend two days at the cathedral. It was an inspiring and spiritual experience for us all, one that we will not forget. What a magnificent cathedral dedicated to the glory of God! We were profoundly saddened when 2 weeks later so much damage was done by the earthquake on the east coast. The choir sent a donation to the restoration fund and was quite honored when that donation was recognized in the Cathedral magazine dedicated to the earthquake damage and the support received from around the world. (You can read about it on the music bulletin board outside the office.)

Throughout the year, I support the Director of Christian Education and the Associate Minister on various projects as needed. Accessing the church database to retrieve specific information for them is one of the skills useful to their work.

In addition to my normal responsibilities, I served as a worship participant when needed.

In general, as program manager, my job is to facilitate the planning and implementation of the ministries of First Church in collaboration with the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Minister of Music and the Director of Christian Education. It makes for very busy days and sometimes long hours, but there has not been a day when I was not happy and blessed to be a part of the ministry of First Church which had played such an important part in my faith journey from my childhood to adulthood. Returning home after so many years away has been a blessing.

Building Manager Annual Report

By Tom Luff, Building Manager

In 2011, the church saw a number of repairs and improvements due to the hard work and diligence of Bill Beckett, our previous Building Manager. He was highly organized, productive and resourceful and his efforts continue to benefit the church.

In my five months on the job, I have come to recognize this place as not only sacred to its congregants, but also an integral part of Columbus' faith community and the fabric of the downtown landscape and culture. For that reason, we have a responsibility to ensure that it does not fall into disrepair or lose its prominence. While that responsibility weighs heavily on each of us, I feel particularly burdened as the Building Manager.

When I was hired, I was very fortunate to have the wisdom and guidance of Wallace Giffen to help light the way. His professional background and his institutional knowledge of the building are priceless assets to the church and its community. Along with Mr. Giffen, the other members of the House and Grounds committee and I have worked hard to assess and meet the physical needs of the church so that it can best provide for the spiritual needs of those who depend upon it. While the building, as a whole, is solid, there are components that have suffered from age and, in some cases, neglect.

We have several larger ongoing projects that will help to solidify the basic structure of the building. One of those projects began earlier this year when Durable Restoration was hired to do a comprehensive masonry assessment (including mortar, stonework, roofing and drainage.) Their report highlighted five key areas in need of remedy:

- 1) The northwest wall on the 2nd story of the Parish House;
- 2) The octagonal chimney that houses the main flue from the boiler;
- 3) The copper drainage system needs repaired and in some cases, modified to address chronic water infiltration.
- 4) Re-pointing or tuck- pointing (mortar repair).
- 5) Steel window/ lintel repair.

While each of these areas require attention and have significant costs associated with them, we do not have to do them all at once. The first phase will be carried out by Durable Restoration and will address drainage issues, including replacement or repair of conductorheads, modification of scuppers and minor copperwork. This phase is currently underway and will continue into 2012.

Subsequent phases will be addressed after a bidding process determines which contractors will best serve the church's needs. In addition to the structural repairs, we will continue the ongoing renovation of the Education Wing, which includes paint, carpeting and window repair. This project has benefitted from the hard work of Jim Kyle and others, for which we are grateful.

Other repairs and improvements in 2011 included:

- New air compressor installed for pneumatic air system
- Sanctuary re-lamping completed
- Lower Level Men's Restroom renovation complete
- Basement Ladies' Restroom renovation complete
- Installed new thermostat control on 2nd Floor drinking fountain
- Completed Electrical, Plumbing, & HVAC parts storage room
- Completed Tool room and Bulb storage room
- Installed secondary supply tank for Pneumatic system
- Cleaned out steam storage tank for boilers
- Phase 1 of stained glass replacement completed in Education wing
- Installed new lighting in Basement Boiler Room
- New chair lift installed
- Built new cart to transport candle sticks to Sanctuary
- Installed new time-clock for 9th street door light
- Refinished Parish Hall floor

- Repaired Parish Hall dining table and lectern
- Installed Parish Hall sound system
- Repaired sanctuary light controller
- Implemented recycling program and reduced waste costs

Minister of Music Annual Report

By James E. Bobb, Music Minister

Our choirs are the backbone of music ministry, supporting and inspiring our most vital musical expression: the voice of the congregation raised in worship.

Treble Choir 2011

Jensan Allred	Samantha Myers	Peter Spofforth
Alyssa Batchelor	Erin Murray	Adam Wade
Courtney Batchelor	Mia Provenzano	Cameron Wade
Allison Fulford	Emma Rau	Victoria Washington
Miriam Myers	Joe Spofforth	

Teen Choir 2011

Sarah Ahrens	Katie Gies	Joe Spofforth
Ben Allred	Emma Henderson	Cameron Wade
Sean Breedlove	Allison Lange	Emma Welsh-Huggins
Steven Deliman	Anna Rhoads	Thomas Welsh-Huggins

These groups have also worked on the musical *Moses and the Freedom Fanatics*, which was previewed October 30. Both groups currently rehearse during the 9 a.m. hour on Sunday mornings, which is a challenge. It is only with the assistance of Pam Welsh-Huggins, along with Lissa Wade, John Deliman and Cindy Deliman that we are able to rehearse the Treble and Teen Choirs during the same hour. With such a large age range, the 9 a.m. rehearsal hour takes on something of a one-room-school-house approach. To appropriately meet the potential of singers in grades 2 through 12, we should ultimately develop 3 to 4 age-specific ensembles.

The First Church Ringers rehearse on Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m. Our ensemble calls for 12 ringers. We are fortunate to have two or three “floaters” who enjoy the challenge of changing positions, and this gives us a lot more flexibility in the ensemble to deal with occasional absences.

First Church Ringers 2011

Janet Axt	Mary Dey Fewlass	Carol Gallagher
Dene Barnard	Sarah Frank	Jean Lebold
Brianna Burkett	Carl Gelfius	Josh Lebold
Jane Chavers	Greg Halbe	Fran Panek
Cindy Deliman	Carol Hussey	

The First Church Choir made a marvelous pilgrimage to sing at the National Cathedral (Episcopal) in Washington, D.C. On Sunday, August 14, we sang the two Sunday morning Eucharist services and the afternoon Evensong service in the soaring Gothic arches of this national landmark. Every moment of our time was awe-inspiring, humbling, and transcendent. I was thrilled with our music-making and grateful for the opportunity to be the only non-Episcopal choir to sing there this year.

The First Church Choir is the busiest ensemble of our music ministry, singing each Sunday at 11 a.m. worship, leading the Choral Society in two concerts and offering our Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols to the year's largest single gathering in the nave in addition to those listening all over Ohio and beyond via WOSU-FM and internet streaming. Some singers return to sing Compline once each month. A key to this ensemble's stability is the fine staff of soloist/section leaders: Janet Axt, Kevin Cubick, Lissa Wade, Leo Welsh, and Pam Welsh-Huggins, Lissa Wade. In addition to their harmonious music-making, this group enjoys a harmonious and welcoming network of fellowship and spiritual support. It is truly a large "small group ministry."

First Church Choir 2011

Janet Axt
Jonathan Bethke
Cari Brackett
Neal Brower
Brianna Burkett
Jane Chavers
Margaret Cipriani
Kevin Cubick
Candace Cummings
John Deliman
Julie DeLong
Justin DeWolfe
Allison Ellenberger
Marcy Essig
Sarah Garbe
Carl Gelfius
Keith Gochnour
Jim Griffin
Greg Halbe
Janette Hoffman
Kim Garrison Hopcraft
Cheryl Hoskinson
Carol Hussey
Bill Johannes
Bill Lange
Nancy Loy
Ben Mizer
Pavan Peter
Susan Pusecker
Rick Sayre
David Stang
Tom Stewart
Jan Wade
Lissa Wade
Sharon Walquist
Shannon Washington
Rick Welch
Leo Welsh
Pam Welsh-Huggins
Ben Wiant
Bill Wirsching
Marty Worth

First Church offers two concert series. Tuesdays at First was offered on four consecutive Tuesdays in the spring and four consecutive Tuesdays in the fall. Midday half hour concerts are followed by homemade lunch. Artists in March included pianist Barbara Sahr, organ students from the Capital University Organ Literature class, and sopranos Lissa Wade and Pamela Welsh-Huggins. In October, soprano Kristin Jarvis appeared. I played one of the March recitals and in October I performed Bach's *Clavier Übung III* in three Tuesday recitals. A key element in the Tuesdays at First series is the homemade lunch offered for a modest (\$5) donation and prepared by a dedicated kitchen team led by Gerry Worth. In 2012, we will offer First Tuesdays, a new series offering the same fare, a 30-minute recital at 12:15 p.m. followed by homemade lunch (\$5 donation), but on a new schedule – the first Tuesday of each month, beginning January 3.

The Congregational Concerts series has been a cultural mainstay of Columbus since the installation of the Beckerath organ in 1972. In the 2011, we presented a diverse program of artists. Handbells Columbus performed on February 27. The March 27 First Church Choral Society concert of English music was dedicated the memory of Jim Allen (1932-2011), a long-time Choral Society member and supporter. Organist Robert Bates performed on May 1. The 2011-2012 season features several collaborations. On September 25, oboist Steve Secan and organist G. Dene Barnard headlined a program of artists performing French Chamber Music, including flutist Randall Hester, bassoonist Christopher Weait, and harpsichordist James Bobb. On October 23, the First Church Choir offered Evensong, a near-replica of the liturgy the ensemble sang at the National Cathedral on August 14. The Ohio Capital Winds, under the direction of Catherine Hope-Cunningham, performed on November 20, and were joined by the First Church Choral Society. Christmas Lessons and Carols on December 18 was the last and most heavily attended event on the series in 2011. These concerts are not supported by the church budget and would not be possible without the gracious support of over 100 individuals and families.

We have the unusual privilege and responsibility to be stewards of exceptional musical instruments. Our original 1931 Kimball organ, created through a gift of Alice Robbins Martin and restored through a gift of Jean MacNevin, and our 1972 von Beckerath organ are both masterpieces of their genre. We are blessed that their care is in such capable hands as Mike Herzog and his fine team at Peeble-Herzog, Inc. Benjamin Wiant takes wonderful care of our numerous pianos, including the exquisite sanctuary Steinway owned by the Columbus Chamber Music Society. David Stang oversees the care of the Bechtel harpsichord and its moves to the Southern Theatre and other places for Pro Musica concerts.

Jane Chavers, Cindy Deliman, and Tom Stewart played piano for the 9 a.m. service through most of the year. I played that service for much of the summer. Many volunteer musicians lent their time and talent to music ministry over the summer: Pamela Welsh-Huggins, Kevin Cubick, The OSU Men's Glee Club Alumni directed by Jim Gallagher, Emma Henderson, Gayle Henderson, Justin De Wolfe, Kevin Ayres, Katelyn Hoffman, Margaret Cipriani, Janet Axt, Diana McCullough, Cari Brackett, Allison Ellenberger, and Bill McCabe.

I am grateful to the many musical and organizational volunteers who contribute to music ministry in many musical and clerical ways. Marty Worth coordinates the many volunteers who assist with the choir library. The Music Committee and its chair, Tom Stewart, John Deliman, Commissioner of Music Arts and Heritage and his Commissioner-Elect Jim Gallagher, have all been gracious partners in ministry. Bill Lange was indispensable in leading the tech crew for the Christmas Drama of the Nativity and in grooming new folks to that team; and Pam Welsh-Huggins' help with make-up and costuming is greatly appreciated.

It is a great blessing to work each day along-side such a fine staff and with so many dedicated volunteers. I am grateful for the many opportunities for ministry here at First Church.

Business Administrator Annual Report

By Sharon Leidheiser, Business Administrator

The year 2011 may have been one to forget for most Americans with the bad economy and the terrible weather that cost billions of dollars, but at First Church we managed to get some new things completed, even if they are what I call "baby steps."

Here are a few of the things the church changed in the area of communication and networking:

1. **Installed wireless routers** so church meetings could be conducted by using the internet for research or for contacting those unable to attend.
2. **Upgraded church software** to track members and visitors more effectively.
3. **Replaced broken phones for FREE!** Through a donation from a company that was upgrading their phone system and we could use their gently used phones.

My long-range goals:

1. Build community awareness about First Church missions through schools, organizations and businesses around the church, such as CCAD, Columbus State University, Franklin University, Columbus Museum of Art and Columbus Chamber of Commerce.
2. Establish new systems to help members, visitors and church staff communicate effectively through technology and creative resources such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype, etc.
3. Find additional ways to save the church money through grants, discounted programs and other resources.

I wish to thank all the volunteers who work endless hours to make sure the church looks good and projects are completed. In particular, those working in the areas of finance and operations: Bobby Carrington, Nell Cole, Cindy Conn, Bev and Bert Cook, Jim and Mary Day Fewlass, Carol Gallagher, Martha Huey, Betty Johnson, Chuck Kelley, Jim Kyle, Joan Lebold, John Matchett, Karen Monroe, Gleva Stephens and Tom Worley. You donate so much to First Church by volunteering; the staff would not know what to do without you. Bless all of you!

In April 2012, I will be with First Church 10 years as the Business Administrator. Many times it's been a challenge. But it also has been an uplifting experience. I will continue to strive to improve communications and information systems, while striving to cut costs where possible and increase revenue so we may all do God's work.

Interns Annual Report

By Abby Salak, First Church Intern

This first half of my internship working with youth and congregational care here at First Church has been an amazing experience. I've had the opportunity to work with the amazing teens in our congregation, to learn first-hand the practicalities of working in a church, as well as meet and listen to some of our oldest members.

Jess Peacock and I spent time planning activities and experiences for our senior high youth through our youth group, known as Sonreir. Sonreir met weekly for fun, conversation, and education. We discussed current events, shared our interests, and explored our faith and lives through movies. In addition to weekly meetings, we participated in a 9/11 memorial with the Columbus interfaith group I AM Youth. We walked as a group in CROP Walk and spent time together at the Columbus Zoo for Halloween. The senior high came together with the Middle School to help wrap gifts and write Christmas cards for Bethlehem on Broad Street.

I traveled to Temple Hills for the Fall Youth Event; I had the opportunity to meet with pastors and other youth leaders from all over Ohio. It was a wonderful time of growth and fellowship. As a new youth leader

and seminary student, it was inspirational and educational to talk with people who have been in ministry with youth for many years.

The practical and everyday side of the church is not something that one learns in seminary, so having the chance to ask questions and learn from the pastors and staff here has been an amazingly enriching opportunity. I have learned more about church life, congregants, education and care through my conversations and work with First Church than I believe I could learn in all my time at seminary.

Congregational care has manifested in two different ways. I created, with Rev. Wilson, an Advent meditations Facebook page. The idea was to post Advent meditations throughout the season and engage the congregation in conversation. It was a new idea and we hope to try it again in the season of Lent. I also had the opportunity to travel with Rev. Ahrens to visit some of the older members of our church. This aspect of congregational care; visits with shut-ins and older members; is important and something I am so grateful to have a chance to experience first hand.

These visits with Rev. Ahrens were just the beginning. I plan to continue visits on my own through the winter and spring. As part of my internship with congregational care, I am also planning to work with the congregation in creating a community of people interested in assisting, visiting, and getting to know those members who cannot make it to worship on a regular basis.

This internship has been such a wonderful opportunity to explore varying aspects of ministry- from youth to the every day to shut-ins. First hand experience cannot be replaced by classroom learning and I am happy to have had the chance to dive right in through this internship. I look forward to all that we can do together in 2012!

Thank you, again, First Church, for this opportunity.

God bless and be with you,
Abby

*Committee and
Program Reports*

Long-Range Planning Committee Annual Report

John Deliman, Chair, Wayne Piper, Consultant

Early in 2011, the church council of First Congregational Church Columbus, Ohio started the process to develop a long-range plan to guide us through 2014. Every effort was made to form a committee representative of the congregation. Twenty thoughtful, caring, and devoted individuals formed this group. With the outstanding patience and expertise of our consultant Wayne Piper, we set forth to listen.

Starting with the question "Where is God Calling Us Next?" the committee developed these five questions to open dialogue with the congregation:

1. What brought you to First Church?
2. What keeps you coming back to First Congregational Church?
3. What are you passionate about in terms of the mission and ministry of this congregation?"
4. What would enhance your experience of this place and this group of people in the next 3-5 years?"
5. With the West Lot now owned by First Church, what are some hopes that you have for developing this property for mission and ministry in the future?"

Numerous listening sessions were held over a six-week period. Existing committees and groups within the congregation were visited, questionnaires were sent out by email, visits and phone calls were made, and social media such as Facebook was used to reach out to as many First Church family members as possible. Over two hundred members gave us their input. We listened and we learned a lot!

All congregational responses were compiled and studied by the LRP committee. Wayne Piper presented a number of templates and formats. The committee agreed that the format should be organized into nine specific sections that cover the various ministry areas that are the identity of First Church. Clearly stated goals and strategies were developed. Church staff and various committee members worked during July to "fine tune" strategies and develop possible action steps to assist with implementation of this plan. As with any long-range plan, the action steps will evolve, with additions, deletions, and revisions occurring throughout the life of this plan. A draft of the plan was completed by the end of July.

The LRP committee met August 1st to review this draft and compare it to the compilation of responses received from the congregation in March and April. Throughout the month of August, church council, commissioners, and various committee chairs were asked to proof and refine the draft. LRP committee members were sent all draft revisions for their review. The committee met twice in August, continuing to check revisions against the compiled congregational responses from last spring. Nancy Braverman lent her professional editing skills to "polish" the document, for which we are grateful!

On August 29, 2011, at a special meeting of the church council and the LRP committee, church council accepted the Long-Range Plan. The date of September 25th was set for a special congregational meeting to seek congregational approval.

A lot of very hard work went into the development of our Long-Range Plan. I am deeply grateful to the following people: our consultant Wayne Piper; every member of the committee; Rev. Tim Ahrens, Rev. Janine Wilson, Jamie Bobb, Mark Williams, and all of our incredibly dedicated church staff; moderator David Holt; and all members of First Church who took the time to give us your input. Your concerns and thoughts guided the LRP committee during every step of the process.

Respectfully submitted,

John Deliman
Chair, Long-Range Planning Committee

OVERVIEW OF THE 2011 LONG-RANGE PLANNING PROCESS

The long-range plan accepted by the congregation on September 25, 2011 represented the culmination of many hours of work by committee members and church staff and reflected the input of more than 200 members of the congregation.

The process used in 2011 was fairly simple and straightforward in its approach.

- **Assemble**
 - Assemble a committee of members who are willing to work through the process and who reflect the diversity of the membership.
 - Orient those members to the planning process and make them aware of their charge and responsibilities.
 - Keep the number of meetings to a minimum while keeping lines of communication open via e-mail and telephone conversations.
 - Set a timeline for the completion of the project.
- **Listen**
 - Determine the best way to gather congregational input and proceed.
 - Scheduled 'sit-down' listening sessions
 - Printed survey
 - One-on-one interviews
 - Emphasize the importance to the members of their participation in providing input for the plan.
 - Ask open-ended questions (determined in advance by the long-range planning committee) and, if data is gathered through listening sessions, scribe responses carefully.
- **Compile**
 - Compile and share with the full committee all congregational input received.
 - Sort the data into categories that will serve as the 'bones' of the long-range plan. (See attached brochure and/or plan for the nine areas of concentration for 2011-2014.)
- **Draft**
 - Delegate responsibility for drafting the plan being certain to engage staff in writing. This is essential to the plan's success in that staff will, for the most part, be either doing the work outlined in the plan or guiding the work of committees in reaching the plan's goals.
- **Refine**
 - Provide a draft copy of the plan for the long-range planning committee. Schedule a meeting at which the plan will be reviewed and suggestions for additions/corrections/input made and noted.
- **Approve**
 - Provide the revised copy of the draft to Council, gain their input, and ask that they recommend approval of the plan by the congregation.
 - Schedule a congregational meeting and vote on acceptance of the plan.
- **Implement**
 - Keep the plan in the collective consciousness of the congregation, the council and the staff through quarterly, or at the very least, semi-annual review.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS

It is always important to remember that planning is about the future. While that may seem self-evident, it's a perspective that can sometimes be easily lost in the arduous work of the process itself. The success of future planning efforts will in no small part depend upon the thoughtful implementation of the current plan. Everyone involved in the work of our congregation needs to remember that once the planning process is completed and the plan committed to print and approved, the 'real' work has only just begun.

Council members, committee members, and staff should all be prepared to give the strategies outlined in the plan high priority as they work together over the next three years. Implementation, continued constructive conversation, and thoughtful and creative ways to attain goals should be thoughtfully

integrated into everyone's regular work. Successes should not only be celebrated but trumpeted. Setbacks should not only be expected but thoughtfully overcome and forward movement be a continuous and joyful effort.

Wayne Piper,
Project Consultant, Long-Range Planning Committee

Stewardship Committee Annual Report

By Brian Cave, Co-Chair

Mission Statement: *Stewardship is a life principle. How we live our lives as givers and receivers of God's gift of love and how we give and receive such love to one another and Earth is stewardship. At First Church, Stewardship is truly the giving and receiving of the time, talents, and treasures of all our members and friends.*

2011 Stewardship Theme: "God's Wondrous Gifts." This year we are trying new ways to grow our faith as stewards. We thought about this in scriptures. The committee mailed ten weekly postcards with scriptures about God and our relationship to God. Each Monday night during the ten week period Rev. Tim Ahrens hosted a virtual bible study to discuss and analyze the weekly scripture. We focused on striking the right balance between bringing stewardship to First Church by social media, mailings, and face to face interaction. Our goal as a committee is to make stewardship truly a year round event at First Church.

Service was given by:

1. Co-Chair - Brian Cave
2. Year Long Steward - Kent Shimeall
3. Master of Tasks - Mary Day Fewlass
4. Steward of Hospitality - Jim Griffen
5. Techno Steward/Co-chair - Kent Rambo
6. Publicity and Brochure Steward – Cori Rowley
7. Great Giving Steward - Paul Leidheiser, Jr.
8. Fun and Speaker's Bureau Leader - Matt Meyers
9. Follow-up Calls - John Matchett
10. Cindy Conn, Assistant Treasurer, in charge of logging in/tracking commitments
11. Neal Brower, Administration Commission-Elect, ex-officio
12. Sandy Bennett, Administration Commissioner, ex-officio
13. Rev. Tim Ahrens, Sr. Minister, Ex-officio

Safe Church Committee Annual Report

By Sandra W. Bennett, Administration Commissioner

Safe Church Policies and Handbook have been in development for several years. The items to be done in 2011 to finish the project were to:

- * Write a policy on Anti-Harassment;
- * Write a policy on Crisis Preparedness
- * Create a Table of Contents

Those tasks have been completed and the whole document will be presented to Church Council in January 2012.

Missions Committee Annual Report

By Fran Panek, Missions Chair

Accomplishments of the Missions Committee 2011:

- 1 – Expanded range of the Capital Campaign to include support for the Widening Circle of God's Love by providing a percentage of the receipts to new church starts in the Central Southeast Ohio Association.
- 2 – Provided Mission Endowments to Catalyst for new computers; Cara Texler for a photo printer which allowed her to document her time in Lesotho with families caring for children who were born with the HIV virus; Susan Sitler to help provide shoes for toddlers in local special needs preschool group; The Downtowners Campus Ministry to help fund their winter retreat at Tempel Hills in early 2012.
- 3 – Sent a group of volunteers to Gladden Community Center for weeding and planting of perennials in July as part of the 1+1 in 11 initiative at First Church
- 4 – Supported Associate membership of Rosario Vincenzi and the Italian Children's Mission in Naples, including the organization as an active, ongoing Mission partner
- 5 – Hosted a photo exhibit by Cara Texler of her Lesotho families in South Africa during an adult education session in May. Photos remained on display in the Parish Hall throughout the Columbus Arts Festival.
- 6 – Worked with the LRP Committee to re-define and re-structure Missions in light of recommendations of the congregation and LRP. Implementation of this expansion will begin in 2012.
- 7 – Hosted a reception for Neela Onawale in September/October to stimulate interest in Deep Griha on a wider basis in our congregation. Dinner with Church Council and Sunday reception following worship in Parish Hall with Neela and members of Deep Griha USA garnered additional support for children living in Pune under the care of Deep Griha and its affiliates there. Several different groups within the church have expressed interest in supporting one or more children in addition to the four we have sponsored for the past 4 years.
- 8 – In collaboration with BOBS Committee, developed Levels of Structure for BOBS and its committees to include both First Church and community support from a wide variety of ecumenical sources.
- 9 – Sponsored two fresh produce giveaways to families in need (August & October). In conjunction with the Mid Ohio Food Bank, we distributed several hundred pounds of fresh produce to families in east and north Columbus, Delaware, and pantries at Broad St Presbyterian, Gladden, Open Hand, and Faith Mission. Plans are to resume distribution of fresh produce again in the spring of 2012.
- 10 – Sponsored two separate food collections during November. Collection I was in conjunction with the UCC Mission I initiative & Youth Ministry Food Campaign. All non-perishable items collected during the Mission I drive were shared with Broad Street Presbyterian Church Pantry, Gladden Community Center, & The Open Hand food pantry. In addition, cash donations for Neighbors in Need and East Africa Famine relief were collected as a part of the nationwide efforts of Mission I that took place during the first twelve days of November. The second collection was a continuation of our annual Thanksgiving food drive, which we have done for the past five years. In addition to the above, we plan to gather non-perishable food items on the third Sunday of every month to assist the pantries in helping families throughout the city.
- 11 - We have begun to work with the YWCA on how we might help with Columbus's homeless women shelter overflow problem. Volunteers are needed to provide night watch for women and children being housed in various facilities, sack lunches, and laundry assistance. Recently the former site of the Mid Ohio Food Bank on W. Mound was made available to house women and families, but now that building has been sold and the new owner has stated that space will be available only through March of 2012. That puts a really critical issue on the table for the year ahead.

11 – Added three new members to the Missions Committee – Pamela Greene, Tom Brownfield, and Mary Ann Goetz.

Church Growth Committee Annual Report

By Melissa Prendergast, Commissioner

The Church Growth Commission began 2011 with only two members, led by Associate Minister the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson. Thus, our first order of business was to rebuild the team so that we could focus on building our church community. I am thrilled to say that the Church Growth team is heading into 2012 with five bright and committed First Church members and a few more potential commission members!

In 2011, the Church Growth Commission focused efforts on identifying community groups that have not been the primary focus of our outreach in the recent past: college students, new homeowners in zip codes adjacent to downtown, and the GLBT community. We also began to evaluate and enhance the ways in which we reach out and welcome prospective new First Church members.

In September 2011, Catherine Hope-Cunningham, Abby Salak, Rev. Wilson, and myself represented First Church at the Ohio State University's Fall Involvement Fair. There was no charge to us to participate, and we had a table of our own amongst other religious groups. We talked with several OSU students, including our own Jordan Knerr who had just started her first year in the undergraduate program. Some of the students expressed interest in joining us in worship as well as the possibility of forming a campus group.

Also in September, Rev. Wilson and I set up a table with lemonade and a few UCC materials and sat at the northeast corner of our parking lot and greeted the new CCAD students who were prepping to begin their exciting first year. Participating in those events helped us to realize that we needed First Church signage, and with the help of Catherine and Rev. Wilson, we designed and obtained both a banner and a tablecloth for events such as the involvement fair at OSU, which we definitely plan on doing again in 2012. Other events the new First Church signage will be featured in include 2012 Pride Weekend, and other community festivals and events.

With the help of Jim Fewlass, who provides us with the weekly new homeowner listing from the Columbus Dispatch, we have begun to send welcoming cards with our worship times and events to homeowners in the neighboring zip codes. In 2012, Church Growth Commissioner-Elect Deborah Thompson will bring her talents to the table and will create a marketing plan for First Church--a very exciting prospect that will help the Church Growth Commission begin to achieve the goals and strategies set out in the newly adopted Long Range Plan.

This year, Deb Thompson and Rev. Wilson worked out an amazing deal with WOSU for advertising during the Advent season that also includes many other opportunities to advertise First Church at WOSU-sponsored events throughout the upcoming year. In addition, Rev. Wilson and Abby Salak have been writing daily Advent devotionals that are then posted to Facebook.

Last but certainly not least, we are looking forward to an updated new member class format for 2012 and already have prospective new members signed up to attend one of the four scheduled classes! Watch the weekly bulletin and parish news for more information on those opportunities to welcome and get to know our newest additions to the First Church family. This year, we were able to purchase and upload a new computer database for cataloging our new members' gifts, skills, and talents so that we get the right members to the right committees and commissions. Finally, for 2012, we look forward to revamping the Church directory by adding member photos.

And because we can never offer too extravagant a welcome, I want again to encourage everyone to seek out and extend God's love to our 29 adults and 9 children who joined First Church in 2011

Music, Arts and Heritage Committees Annual Report

John Deliman, Commissioner

MUSIC

This has been a busy and rewarding year in the musical life of First Church. The music program continues to thrive under the leadership of our Minister of Music Jamie Bobb and the leadership of Tom Stewart as chair of the Music Committee. Our concert series continues to bring nationally acclaimed artists to Columbus. The Tuesday Recital series offers outstanding lunchtime musical offerings to the downtown area. Sunday worship is enriched by our outstanding First Church Choir, Handbell Choir, Teen Choir, and Treble Choir. Growth in the Teen and Treble Choirs has been evident this year, both in participation and quality. The First Church Choir's trip to sing at the National Cathedral in Washington D. C. has to be one of the top highlights of the year. In an effort to "be green" and reduce the number of pages in this annual report, I refer you to the Minister of Music report for details of all that transpired musically in 2011.

ARTS

Submitted by Interim Chair Deborah M. Anderson

Under the leadership of Allen Baker, the committee completed a mission statement after recognizing for many years that a statement was needed.

Arts Committee Mission Statement: The First Congregational Church Art Committee was established in 1949. Our mission is to provide the church body with guidance and direction regarding the appearance of the church building, its equipment and adornments. The Committee will review all matters pertaining to endowment gifts, financial and or physical, that may affect the aesthetics of the building. They shall be reviewed with regard to artistic quality, function, appropriate placement and historic relevance. Careful consideration will be given to both spiritual and historic importance. Our primary objective is the preservation of the architectural and design integrity of our magnificent structure, to the glory of God, the benefit of our church family and the community we seek to serve.

The committee hopes that the lay leaders and staff of First Church will welcome committee members assisting them, rather than impeding their plans.

Exhibitions: Rick Sayre continues to loan to the church some of his photographs, which hang in the large conference. A new piece to the walls of that room is a pencil drawing by Ralph Fanning, the first Art Committee Chairperson. The church has a collection of Fanning watercolors accumulated over the last 60-plus years. From late May through the end of the Arts festival (first weekend in June) the photographs of Cara Wexler were exhibited in the Parish Hall. She was a medical student at Ohio State University when she went to intern in Lesotho, and returned with photographs of patients and villagers. This fall the counted cross-stitch works of Frieda Bennett, of Upper Arlington, were exhibited in the Parish Hall.

Church Parlor: The redecoration and refurbishing of the Parlor was essentially completed over the years of 2009-2010, under the leadership of Allen Baker and by the gifts of Twink Starr and Allen Baker. With the addition of a permanent round table and wall pieces, the room will be complete.

HERITAGE

The Remembrance Committee, Sarah Garbe, chair, was active this year funding various grant requests. Grant highlights include church growth, Gladden House, seminary students, and a portion of the new sound system for the Parish Hall.

Rick Sayre has continued to organize our church Archives, utilizing a new computer program.

House and Grounds Committee Annual Report

By Wally Giffen, Chair

In May of 2011 we said goodbye to Building Manager Bill Beckett. We are grateful for his year of sharing his experience and skills as a contractor who has built churches. A couple months later we said hello to new building manager, Tom Luff. Tom has a degree in environmental science and experience in home remodeling.

- Facility Improvements, Major Repairs & Capital Projects—Executed
 - Parish hall west emergency exit outside enclosure door installed [maj. repairs]
 - Panic hardware installed at doorway to west parking lot from narthex [cap. campaign]
 - New wheelchair lift into parish hall [cap. campaign]
 - Upgrade to more efficient lighting in choir rooms, church business office and large conference room [Sacred Earth Com. Funds]
 - Redecoration and upgrades to various parish house restrooms [cap. campaign]
 - Choir risers removed from (code violation) storage in west stairwell to orderly racks back stage
 - Restoration and repair of sanctuary high ceiling lights and lowering systems over the chancel steps area [cap. campaign]
 - Installing a PA system in the parish hall for first service and stage sound reinforcement [various funding sources]
- Facility Improvements—In Planning and Design
 - We have engaged an acoustics engineer who specializes in designing high clarity sound systems for cathedrals—his report on a system for the spoken word in our sanctuary is awaited [cap. campaign]
 - Design work is complete for reducing the excessive lighting levels in the west parking lot. (This was originally lit to sell cars after dark.) With an expected AEP rebate the electrical savings alone will pay for the new ballasts and lamps in half a year.
 - Design work is complete and bids received for undergrounding the electric wiring for lighting along the east side of the west parking lot, along with eliminating visually distracting poles and pipes. [cap. campaign]
 - A request for proposals is being drafted to abate asbestos and replace the 50-year old boilers in the sub-basement. Work to be done in 2012. [cap. campaign]
 - Other capital campaign funded repairs are under consideration such as stained glass window repairs and thermal improvements.

Concerns

As 2011 draws to a close we are looking at major dollars needed for presently unfunded repairs.

- The cement block “garage-mahal,” that stores lawn mowers and other outdoor equipment, needs as much as \$12,000 [presently unfunded] to replace a roof in 2012.
- A recent study of the exterior stonework on our 1930 building has identified over \$1 million of recommended repairs to be done over the next 10 years.

The Committee

Mark Brown, Nancy Burba, Paul Flocken, Wally Giffen (Commissioner), Jim Griffin, Cheryl Hoskinson, Bruce Panek, Rick Sayre, Charlie Weaver (Commissioner Elect), Bill Wirsching (Chair) [Ex Officio: Bill Beckett and later Tom Luff as building managers.

Property Planning Group Annual Report

By Tom Worley

As the church considers its property development in relation to neighboring institutions, Council established an ad-hoc committee to lead the church's efforts in property planning, design, and community engagement. The new committee began its work in July of this year and was given the name of the Property Planning Group. The following describes its charge:

The Property Planning Group is responsible for developing recommendations and coordinating activities involving:

- **Near term improvements and intermediate plans for the west lot;**
- **Developing a master plan for the entire church property;**
- **Pursuing projects and goals for the west lot that are consistent with the capital campaign and long range plan;**
- **Engaging campus neighbors and community officials regarding downtown development projects that impact the church's property, programs, and members.**

Group members include: David Holt, Sheldon Taft, Tom Worley, Charlie Weaver, Wally Giffen, Larry Walquist, Catherine Hope Cunningham, Pavan Peter, Rick Sayre, Bill Wagner and Rev. Tim Ahrens. We are fortunate that our group so far includes two structural architects, two landscape architects, and one mechanical/electrical engineer who are volunteering their time and expertise for this initiative.

The first assignment for the group was to review the suggestions from the congregation regarding the future use of the church's property including the newly acquired west lot. The Long Range Planning Committee forwarded to the Property Planning Group the suggestions that it received from members who attended planning sessions or responded to questionnaires. Based upon this review, the group recommended to Council and the congregation specific goals and action items for property development to be included in the church's long range plan. Council and the congregation adopted the proposed goals to initiate specific improvements in the west lot in the near future and to develop a comprehensive conceptual site plan for all of the church's property by January 2012.

The group's second assignment is to create a proposed conceptual site plan. The intention is to establish a plan for the use of the church's property that can be used as a guide for future development for the next 10 to 20 years. The property utilization plan is to designate specific tracks of land for specific purposes. It becomes a collection of footprints for future development by determining the best location for parking, green space, building additions, playground, fencing, dumpsters, signage, outdoor lighting, electrical connections, storm water drainage, and storage.

A major component of the group's responsibilities is community engagement. The church agreed to join the Art Museum, CCAD, State Auto, and Columbus State Community College in promoting a neighborhood development project described as Creative Campus. This project is part of a newly approved downtown plan for the immediate area surrounding the church. The plan envisions that the streets, sidewalks, and landscaping in the public areas of the initial 4-block area are to have a common or complementing design. The City of Columbus has approved \$1.5 million for developing and administering the eventual \$10 million project - all funded by the city's public services capital budget. It calls for the reconstruction of Gay St. and 9th St. with construction to begin by the spring of 2014. Based upon the Property Planning Group's efforts, the church is now invited to all city planning sessions for the project. In addition, the group was successful in advocating for the inclusion of west lot sidewalk reconstruction along Cleveland Ave. as part of the proposed scope of the first phase of the Creative Campus project.

Groups members are assigned to stay in contact with our neighboring institutions as they embark upon new construction. The Art Museum has begun construction of a new staging area for dropping off children's and large tour groups. This new event area is located across from our 9th Street entrance. The Art Museum received a \$650,000 grant from the city's parks and recreation department to fund the

designated entrance for children's and tour groups. The Museum soon will begin construction of a new addition, new public entrance, improved parking, and a relocated sculpture garden at a development cost exceeding \$40 million. CCAD is updating its master plan and intends to construct additional student housing on its property in the near future. The Museum, CCAD, and State Auto are exploring the potential of constructing a parking garage at the northeast corner of Long and Washington in conjunction with the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation. Columbus State Community College hopes to establish a new property master plan by early 2012.

It seems that our church's goal to establish its own conceptual site plan in early 2012 aligns well with the efforts of our neighboring institutions as well as the City of Columbus. In 2012, the Property Planning Group will schedule information sessions for members of the congregation regarding downtown development issues and the proposed church property conceptual site plan. Once the plan is approved, the group will seek grants when possible to fund or supplement funding of specific projects. Additionally, the group will help with drafting actual designs or construction for approved projects.

CATALYST Annual Report

By Heather Biggers, Founder and Chair

CATALYST is the relationship between the residents from various downtown communities in Kingston, Jamaica, the Parents of Inner City Kids (PICK), Grace and Staff, a corporate foundation, and First Congregational Church. CATALYST's primary goal is to help educate youth from these impoverished and violent communities. CATALYST strives to be a culturally appropriate and competent mission relationship. CATALYST activities are available to any student who uses the Learning Centre of Central Kingston, (LICK), the Grace and Staff home work centre.

Note: LICK is situated in a what is called a garrison community. Jamaican garrisons are violent, impoverished and are controlled by "drug dons". To learn more about these communities do an internet search on Jamaican garrisons.

Typically over thirty CATALYST students receive assistance with secondary school fees. During 2011 the number dropped to twenty – for a **good** reason, over a dozen of our students are now enrolled in higher education, mostly in Jamaica. Our students are now studying at UTECH, The University of the West Indies, the Caribbean Maritime Institute and are in certificate and vocational programs. CATALYST provides some post secondary assistance to CATALYST students, mostly through purchasing text books and covering laboratory fees. It is a tremendous success to have so many of our CATALYST students in college. Our students have been very creative and inventive in planning their post secondary education. We always tell them "You must have a Plan A, a Plan B, a Plan C..." These students will create a Plan Z if necessary. They are focused and driven.

What's Next

2012 will be very exciting as we will have many new seventh graders entering the CATALYST program. *This is our third generation.*

A Big Thank You!

Impoverished communities in Jamaica often suffer from a technology lag. Residents may have access to computers, but the computers are severely out of date and of little use educationally. The Grace and Staff Foundation submitted a proposal for 6 new computers for the LICK Centre. The Church Council graciously funded the proposal. **Thank you!**

ACTIVITY AND EVENTS FOR 2011:

SAT Study Groups: Over dozen CATALYST or LICK students have either taken the PSAT or the SAT.

Photo Club: The photo club began in 2006 to provide CATALYST students with a needed extracurricular activity. Every year students work with professional photographers. We have some of the students'

Team CATALYST: Heather Biggers, Duan Cannon and Amy Wagner

Good Samaritan Fund Annual Report

By Marty Worth, Program Manager

Every year becomes more challenging for the Good Samaritan Fund. Requests for assistance increased greatly. Several months we had close to 200 requests. It is very difficult to say, "I'm sorry, but we can't help you today". The support of the congregation on Good Sam Mission Sunday offerings is inspiring to me and the Good Sam volunteers. Coupled with the congregation's support and the trustees quarterly contributions from the Good Samaritan Endowment Fund of approximately \$3,100, we have helped close to 600 people.

As the community has become aware of the Good Samaritan Fund over the years, our cooperation with case workers from various agencies has expanded. We have worked with 40 agencies this year alone. These agencies work with the homeless, people who are trying to rebuild their lives, veterans, the working poor, traumatic brain injury, unemployed workers, etc.

Our volunteer Good Sam staff continues to help with setting up appointments, to help the office staff answer phones the first days of the month when requests come in, picking up the voice mail requests, returning phone calls to set up appointments and entering the names into the spreadsheet. We make an attempt to return every phone request, even when the answer is no.

I thank Betty Johnson, Abby Salak, Rhonda Poirier, John Martin, Jane Carter, Marilyn Minter, Joan Lebold, Jim Griffin, Mary Day Fewlass, Carol Gallagher, Bobby Carrington and Otto Edwards for their dedication to the mission of the Good Samaritan Fund. I thank CCAD for giving Otto Edwards time off from his job to spend several hours attending to Good Samaritan Day. I am thankful for church staff members Sharon Leidheiser and Denny Mahoney and their staff of office volunteers for their gracious manner of explaining how Good Sam works to daily calls asking for help.

Donations of toiletries by members of the congregation have meant so much as our clients "shop in our little store" on Good Sam day. We hope contributions of such items will continue.

2012 will be even more challenging but nevertheless rewarding, as we endeavor to serve those in need who come to our door. Know that every dollar that comes in to the Good Samaritan Fund goes out the door in aid the very next Good Sam day. Thank you for your support of the Good Samaritan Fund.

Bethlehem on Broad Street Annual Report

By Arlene Reynolds, Coordinator

Our yearly ecumenical fellowship once more gathered together to celebrate the birth of Christ at the Bethlehem on Board Street events. Started 26 years ago in response to a single request for dinner on Christmas Day at the St. Lawrence Haven, BOBS has expanded to several thousand guests each year through the efforts of churches of different denominations, different faiths and organizations on and off Broad Street.

Particularly true in today's troubled economy as we move into the coldest part of the year, there are many families and individuals with deep and immediate needs for hospitality, food and clothing. On Saturday, December 3, 2011, food, gently used clothes, toiletries, toys and school supplies were distributed by Project Hope Clothing Ministry to the grandparents taking care of grand-children at the McKendree United

Methodist Church. Mary Day and Jim Fewlass assisted Sandy Holley with this project.

Trinity, King Avenue, Maple Grove, Asbury North, Broad Street and Church of the Messiah, Joan of Arc and Westerville United Methodist Churches and Trinity Baptist Church gathered and assembled the 1,200 boxes at their own churches and then delivered them to Broad Street United Methodist Church for distribution on Saturday, December 17. Also gift certificates for perishable foods were given out this year. The Downtowners, the student ministry of the downtown colleges, law school and nursing schools, were active in volunteering by welcoming the guests, entertaining the children and assisting Santa and the photographers. During the next week we coordinated taking out 40 food boxes to the homebound.

On Christmas Day, many guests arrived early at First Church and were greeted with coffee, cocoa and donuts in the tent outside the church. Robyn and Summer Petras, Jane Carter and Bob Monahan were the First Church volunteers in the tent. Mike Petras took many pictures during the day. After the doors opened at 8:30 a.m., the Revs. Herb and Mary Anne Goetz during the day greeted 728 homeless and needy individuals and families. There was enthusiastic, spontaneous carol singing, followed by a beautiful service. Then the worship team and choir, under Pastors Tim Ahrens and Janine Wilson, celebrated Christmas worship.

Many musical groups and individuals entertained during the day. The care dogs were very special. Children had activities to make under the guidance of Lori Buehler and her daughters, Anna-Rose and Emily Cooke. There was lots of hospitality, with many caring listener-hosts, who had been organized by Matthew Goetz. volunteered Children had their pictures taken with Santa before sitting down to a bountiful dinner. Gifts and free telephone calls finished out the party

I know that among the 300 volunteers at all the events there were many other First Church members who should be thanked. We especially need to thank Becky Taft for coordinating the volunteers and with the guests' transportation. David Holt is our treasurer and buyer of all our food and supplies. Also thanks to Nancy Burba, Jim Kyle and Bill Wirsching, who oversaw the kitchen, while the Tim Farquhar family cleaned up. Bob Flocken, here from Florida, Paul Flocken and Paul Fischel assisted the coordinator, Arlene Reynolds. Otto Edwards was in charge of security. Dawn George, Francille and John Firebaugh, and Martha Huey wrapped gifts. As Sam Lebold, along with his family members, drove to pick up and take home our guests, his wife, Jean, and members Joan and Keene Lebold and several other family members welcomed guests. Bill Johannes arranged for and transported the beautiful poinsettias from Straders. Richard Mason and Jim Griffen helped with transportation. We are especially grateful for the custodial services of William Lee and staff support of Tim Luff and his family.

Many people have said that this was the very best BOBS. Its success depended much on the planning committee's efforts. We welcome anyone who would like to help next year. First Church's Bethlehem on Broad Street's Advisory/Executive Committee members are: Arlene Reynolds, Becky Taft, Nancy Burba, David Holt, Paul Flocken, Herb and Mary Anne Goetz, Jim Griffen, Jim and Mary Day Fewlass and Bill Wirsching.

Nominating Committee Annual Report

By Melody Leidheiser, Chair

The Nominating Committee met beginning early this year to reflect upon the strengths of our congregation and potential lay leaders. With thoughtful consideration, we present our slate of 2012 officers, commissioners, deacons and council members.

Thank you to the dedicated committee members who spent much time, prayerful deliberation and interaction with members for the many positions. Those members were: Melody Leidheiser, Sue Cook,

Nancy Loy, Tom Stewart, Charlie Weaver, Gerry Worth and the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson, associate minister.

We applaud those who have risen to accept the challenge of service for 2012 and respect those who have prayerfully declined to serve at this time. This year's slate of officers:

Moderator
Gerry Worth
Vice Moderator – Sarah Reed

Treasurer
Cindy Conn
Assistant

Secretary
Bev Cook
Assistant - Jim Griffen

Administration Commissioner
Neal Brower
Elect

Church Growth Commissioner
Melissa Prendergast
Elect – Deb Thompson

Education Commissioner
Tanya Miller
Elect – Deana Armstrong

House and Grounds Chair
Charlie Weaver
Elect – Rick Sayre

Missions Commissioner
Bruce Panek
Elect – Matt Allen

Music, Arts and Heritage Commissioner
Jim Gallagher
Elect – Greg Halbe

Parish Life Chair
Cori Rowley
Elect – Katherine Kennedy

Youth at Large Council Member

Member at Large
Lisa Morris

Trustees
Christopher Washington
Judy Smith

Deacon (5)

Chris Farquar
John Matchett
Matt Myers
Craig Clay

1 year term
Sarah Giffen

Parish Life Committee Annual Report

By Jacquelyn Dean, Commissioner

The Parish Life Committee supports the community at First Congregational Church by organizing and facilitating activities that promote the integration and fellowship of the parishioners.

During 2011, the committee functioned under the guidance of Jacquelyn Dean (Parish Life Commissioner), the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson (staff) and a host of extraordinary volunteers. A very special "thank you" goes to Bruce and Fran Panek, Jennifer Okezie-Watts, Anne and Gerry Hudson, Jim Griffin, Rick Sayre, my grandchildren and all those who came when asked and worked tirelessly.

The year's activities included the annual Easter brunch, summer church picnic, co-ed softball, the Harvest Party, hanging of the greens, the women's retreat, Christmas cookie mission, congregational dinner and the Christmas play.

Sacred Earth Committee Annual Report

By Jim Griffin, Chair

First Church's Sacred Earth Committee had full year of programs and events to promote environmental issues in 2011.

Throughout the year, the committee sold free trade coffee, cocoa and tea during coffee hour following services in Parish Hall. In February, we hosted a dinner and a showing of the movie *Black Gold*, an in-depth look at the world of coffee and global trade. As part of Earth Day, Sacred Earth gave away pine tree seedlings after worship. Our mission offering went to support the Ohio ASPCA.

Once again we planted, weeded, and harvested a community garden located on the west side of the Education Wing. Despite a late start due to heavy precipitation, we were able to provide additional produce for our Faith Mission dinners from our garden! The committee was thrilled to learn that our new building manager, Tom Luff, has a background in environmental studies. To further our recycling efforts, Sacred Earth provided funding to purchase three large blue recycling bins for use in the church.

The committee sent letters to new members to share information about Sacred Earth and invited them to our meetings. In addition, we spearheaded a building audit as part of our ongoing stewardship efforts. Finally, the committee sold our very popular holiday gift baskets in December. In 2012, Sacred Earth will sponsor its second rummage sale to benefit "green efforts" at First Church.

First Congregational Church
Minutes of the Congregational Annual Meeting
January 30, 2011

Call to order: Melody Leidheiser 11:05 a.m. Melody opened the meeting by asking all to read the Statement of Faith printed at the top of the agenda.

A quorum was determined by Steve Sterrett, acting as parliamentarian.

Opening prayer was led by Rev. Tim Ahrens.

Approval of 2010 Minutes: Motion to approve was made by Gary Leidheiser, seconded by Kathy Brownfield. Passed by voice vote.

Moderator's Report: Melody thanked all 2010 Council and Executive Committee members and noted she enjoyed working with everyone and meeting new participants on the Council. Her written report was submitted as a part of the Congregational 2010 Annual Report.

Senior Minister's Report: Rev. Ahrens thanked Melody for her hard work and dedication, during the past two years as Moderator. He also thanked the staff and the church council for their parts in management of the Church. He noted his suggestion for each member in 2011 is to use the "1 + 1 in 11" plan, meaning each member should engage in 1 new form of study and participate in 1 new mission effort. His written report is contained in the 2010 Annual Report.

Associate Minister's report: Rev. Wilson reminded the congregation that she is nearing her one year anniversary with the church. She expressed her happiness in her role and also her joy in working with Rev. Ahrens and the staff. She shared some new plans for the 18-35 age group. Her written report is contained in the 2010 Annual Report.

Trustees Report: Tom Worley referred everyone to pages 11-12 and pages 56-59 of the Annual Report to read and review the written report as well as the financial report. He thanked all who served on the Board of Trustees, particularly Meredith Knueve, secretary and legal counsel and Bill Johannes, treasurer. Tom briefly discussed the decision of the Board of Trustees to give \$500,000 to the Capital Campaign of the \$1,000,000 requested. He pointed out that this was 25% of the available unrestricted funds and was in keeping with previous capital campaign donations.

Treasurer's Report – David Holt reported that the past two years had been quite difficult in terms of managing the church budget. He informed the congregation that all cuts that could be made had been, without cutting staff or entire programs. The resulting budget still shows a \$12,000 deficit and David explained the plan "Gracious Giving" that was designed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Church Council. It is a final attempt to raise the additional \$12,000 needed to balance the 2011 budget. Should this amount not be raised by the end of March, further cuts will be made.

Frank Cook moved that the congregation affirm the 2011 operating budget, as presented, while preserving Church Council's constitutional responsibility for determining the operating budget, raising the necessary funds, and making necessary adjustments to the budget throughout the year. Motion was seconded by Jim Fewlass. All approved with voice vote.

Capital Campaign Report: Tom Stewart reported that 200 individuals and households had pledged to date. Currently the pledges stand at \$3,300,000 and pledges are still being received. Payments to date, exceed \$1 million mark. The campaign officially ends 12/31/2013. In February, the Continuity Committee will begin their follow-up role, with Bev Cook as Chair.

Capital Campaign Financials: David Holt reported that actual payments received are about \$1,200,000 and of that amount \$800,000 has been spent. He pointed out that many anticipated costs have actually come in less than expected. He wanted to thank House and Grounds Committee for all their work, Bill Beckett for his expert skill, and a special thanks to Wally Giffen for his many hours and valuable experience. David explained the role of the Long Range Planning and Vision Team, which is currently being formed.

Revision to Capital Campaign Mission Allocation: Tom Brownfield explained his varied role in the "Widening the Circle of Love" campaign from sitting on Missions Commission, to being a member of Council and also being on the Central Southeast Ohio Assn. Committee for this new church starts campaign. He referred all congregants to the handout entitled "Widening the Circle – UCC New Church Initiative". He then moved to reallocate the capital campaign's mission component from 40% for the mission endowment fund to 20% for the mission endowment fund and 20% for Widening the Circle of Love (for new church starts) as recommended by Church Council. Motion seconded by Tom Worley.

Rev. Forrest Hoppe and Rev. Deb Click shared their personal experiences with the 3 new churches involved and also answered questions of the congregation to the best of their abilities.

A voice vote was taken and all were in favor.

Nominating Committee Recommendation and Motion: Nancy Loy presented the following nominations for 2011 elected positions and moved for approval:

Officers:

Moderator - David Holt
Moderator Elect – Gerry Worth

Treasurer – Jim Fewlass
Assistant Treasurer - Cindy Conn

Secretary – Judy Smith
Assistant Secretary – Bev Cook

Commissioners:

Administration – Sandy Bennett
Administration Elect – Neal Brower
Church Growth – Pamela Greene
Church Growth Elect – Melissa Prendergast
Education – Priss Endo
Education Elect – Tanya Miller
House and Grounds – Wally Giffen
House and Grounds Elect – Charlie Weaver
Missions – Fran Panek
Missions Elect – Bruce Panek
Music, Arts and Heritage – John Deliman

Music, Arts and Heritage Elect – Jim Gallagher
Parish Life – Jackie Dean
Parish Life Elect – Abby Cave

Council Members
Youth at Large – Emma Welsh-Huggins
At Large Council Member – Tom Brownfield
Nominating Chair – Melody Leidheiser

Trustees
Full term expiring 1/15 - Meredith Kneuve –
Sheldon Taft
Vacancy expiring 1/12 – Christopher
Washington

Deacons
Vacancy expiring 1/12 – Missy Zimmerman
Vacancy expiring 1/13 – Pat Patterson
Full term expiring 1/14 –
Betty Johnson, Bert Cook, Marilyn Minter, Mark
Brown, Bill Wagner
Tom Worley seconded – all passed with voice
vote.

Other business: Janice White addressed the leadership with a suggestion that the Lay Leadership Awards Committee get on track with their planning so this event is handled in a more efficient and timely manner.

It was suggested that the Annual reports and all financials be prepared and distributed one week prior to the meeting in order that people have a chance to review budgets, etc. before they are asked for a vote. Melody Leidheiser noted that it might be possible to get them on the website prior to the meeting.

Rev. Janine Wilson closed the meeting with prayer.

The congregation then sang the hymn "The Spirit Sends Us Forth To Serve".

Adjournment: 12:15 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Trish Bishop
Secretary

Financial Reports

	A	B	C	D
1	TRUSTEES CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2011			
2			Unrestricted funds	Restricted
3			Funds	Funds
4		Fund balances at beginning of year (at market)	1,811,175.77	1,634,823.13
5	Cash receipts:			
6		Interest and dividends from investments	38,912.58	34,562.28
7		Net realized gains on investments	45,679.16	40,572.38
8	Contributions made to:			
9		Jackie Owen Memorial Music Fund		3,250.00
10		Barnard Music Fund		315.00
11		Starr-Wingfield Furnishing Fund		2,400.00
12		Endowment-Building		25.00
13		Knight Perry Fund		235.00
14		Pastor's Fund		3,735.00
15		Buel Family Fund		100.00
16		Reserve for Major Repairs	3,198.32	
17		Undesignated	88,196.99	
18				
19		TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS	175,987.05	85,194.66
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25	Cash disbursements for:			
26		Annual insurance premium	21,189.00	
27		Church budget support	40,000.00	
28		Major repairs	19,400.00	
29		Miscellaneous	615.31	
30		Youth (Alma Keeler)		4,363.32
31		Adult Guild Library		345.16
32		Flower Fund		1,000.00
33		Church budget (from memorial endowments)		10,500.00
34		Jackie Owen Memorial Music Fund		2,350.00
35		Barnard Music Fund		525.00
36		Mission Endowment Fund gifts and grants		4,660.00
37		Dorinda K. White Endowment Fund		1,240.97
38		Martin/MacNevin Organ Fund repairs		3,542.25
39		Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Fund		395.85
40		Senior Minister (from the Pastor's Fund)		9,700.00
41		Gearhart Remembrance Fund		2,050.00
42		Good Samaritan Fund		12,600.00
43	Fees:			
44		Investment Advisory Fee- Manning & Napier	6,817.58	5,961.46
45		Trustee Fees- Huntington Nat'l Bank	1,817.41	1,589.18
46		Miscellaneous	500.15	437.34
47				
48		TOTAL CASH DISBURSEMENTS	90,339.44	61,260.54
49				
50		Excess of receipts over disbursements	85,647.61	23,934.12
51				
52		Unrealized gains on investments	(123,557.32)	(101,334.76)
53		Fund balances at end of year (at market)	1,773,266.06	1,557,422.49

	A	B	D	E
1		TRUSTEES BALANCE SHEET as of December 31, 2011		
2		ASSETS (1)		
3		5/3 Checking account	\$5,386.63	
4		Investment portfolio (at market)	\$3,325,301.92	
6		TOTAL ASSETS		\$3,330,688.55
7		LIABILITIES		\$0.00
8		CAPITAL		
9		UNRESTRICTED FUNDS		
10		Designated funds:		
11		Reserve-Organ repairs	\$1,207.89	
12		Reserve for Major Repairs	\$3,058.31	
13		Undesignated funds (2)	\$1,768,999.86	
14		TOTAL UNRESTRICTED FUNDS (at market)		\$1,773,266.06
15				
16		RESTRICTED FUNDS		
17		Arts:		\$194,621.02
18		Flower Endowment Funds	\$23,374.43	
19		Barnard Music Fund	\$31,489.10	
20		Jackie Owen Memorial Music Fund	\$131,639.17	
21		Endowment- Music and Arts	\$8,118.32	
22				
23		Building:		\$184,597.88
24		Gladden Fund	\$100,000.00	
25		Comstock Fund	\$27,000.00	
26		Schumacher Fund	\$23,000.00	
27		Endowment- Building	\$31,035.07	
28		Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Endowment Fund	\$3,562.81	
29		Education:		\$147,276.44
30		Endowment- Education	\$7,739.41	
31		Keeler Youth Fund	\$105,775.44	
32		Adult Guild Library	\$14,359.96	
33		Dorinda K. White Endowment Fund	\$19,401.63	
34				
35		Social Concerns:		\$418,255.86
36		Good Samaritan Fund	\$286,687.49	
37		Knight-Perry Fund	\$2,475.96	
38		Endowment- Social Concerns	\$5,723.91	
39		Endowment- Mission	\$119,645.94	
40		Endowment- Gladden Lecture	\$3,722.56	
41				
42		Memorial Gifts for Church Support:		\$238,896.11
43		McElroy- Wright Fund	\$97,603.48	
44		Endowment- Church Support	\$85,524.03	
45		Paul C. Leidheiser Sr. Fund	\$30,081.26	
46		Buel Family Fund	\$24,478.33	
47		Bill and Natalie Wright Fund	\$1,209.01	
48		Gearhart Remembrance Fund	\$50,588.62	
49		Pastor's Fund	\$186,832.83	
50		Martin/MacNevin Fund	\$136,353.73	
51				
52		TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS (at market)		\$1,557,422.49
53				
54		TOTAL CAPITAL		\$3,330,688.55
55		Notes:		
56		1. The assets do not include the cost or donated value of the sanctuary,		
57		organs, stained glass windows, equipment, furniture, tapestries and other Church property.		
58		2. The Undesignated Funds include Gladden, Jeffrey, Lum, Vandergriff, Waller, Williams funds.		

	A	B	C	D
1		TRUSTEES DISBURSEMENT BUDGET FOR 2012		
2				
3			From Unrestricted	From Restricted
4			Funds	Funds
5				
6		Spending limit (5% of 3 yr. quarterly avg market value of funds)	\$93,600.00	\$68,366.00
7				
8		Disbursements to First Congregational Church (paid quarterly)		
9		From the Unrestricted Funds		
10		for support of the annual church budget	\$40,000.00	
11		From Leidheiser, Buel, McElroy-Wright, Wright, Church Support Endowments		
12		for support of the annual church budget		\$10,500.00
13		From Flower Endowment Funds for flowers		\$1,000.00
14		Good Samaritan Fund		\$12,600.00
15				
16		Disbursements to First Congregational Church (paid upon request)		
17		From the Owen and Barnard Endowment Funds for Music		\$7,000.00
18		From Endowment Funds for Major Repairs	\$20,000.00	
19		From Restricted Endowment Funds for specified purposes		\$8,659.00
20		Gearhart Remembrance Fund as recommended by the Remembrance Committee		\$2,300.00
21		From Alma Keeler Fund (for youth)		\$4,600.00
22		From Mission Endowment		\$5,200.00
23		From Dorinda K. White Endowment Fund		\$1,223.00
24		Other disbursements		
25		From the Pastor's Fund to the Senior Minister		\$8,100.00
26		From each Fund for Investment Advisory Fees	\$9,800.00	\$7,184.00
27		From Unrestricted Funds for insurance coverage	\$21,200.00	
28		From Unrestricted Funds for miscellaneous projects	\$2,600.00	
29				
30				
31		Estimated disbursements for 2012 (as of 12/31/11)	\$93,600.00	\$68,366.00
32				
33		Remaining funds available for disbursement during 2012	\$0.00	\$0.00
34				
35				
36				

Gifts to Endowment and other Funds were made during 2011 by the following:

The Estate of Julia Hadley	Jane Werum	Jim Kyle
Michael Clark	Donald Dunn	Martha Huey
Patricia Patterson	Joan Stanton	John and Betsy Zahn
Kevin Ayres	Nancy S. Williams	Peter Moore & Shaw Mumford
William Owen	Mr. and Mrs. David Ghose	David and Ardis Holt
Dr. Thomas Veregge	Shannon and Christopher Washington	Rupert D. "Twink" Starr SEC Branch Members
Deborah Anderson	Mark Williams	Paul and Judy Huckleberry
Gleva Stephens	Ernest Coachman	
Paul and Cathryn Montoya	Lissa and Drew Wade	
Mr. and Mrs. Chris Glaros		

Endowment and other Funds were used for the following purposes during 2011:

Support for the Church budget	Adult Library books
Support for Church programs and administration	Repairs to the heating and air-conditioning system, fire dampers, emergency lighting, stained glass, refrigerators, downspouts
Good Samaritan Fund distributions for those in need	Flowers for sanctuary and church grounds Ministerial coaching/consulting
Insurance for the church building and contents	Special musicians for worship
Maintenance of Martin-MacNevin and Beckerath organs	New washing machine
Mission Committee donations	Confirmand materials and communications
Parish Hall sound system	Service award
Summer camp grants	Spring retreat and General Synod grants