

FOUNTAIN STREET CHURCH

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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# DIRECTORY

Board Chair	Amy Preston
Vice Chair	Kristen Loch
Treasurer	Tim Creamer
Secretary	Katie Mitchell
Member at Large	Jon Spalding
Board Member	Cele Badgerow
Board Member	Steve DePolo
Board Member	Matt Huizing
Board Member	Shellie Jeffries
Board Member	Geoffrey Kempter
Board Member	Tony Lanninga
Board Member	Kristin Mayer
Board Member	James Taylor
Board Member	John Willette
Board Member	George Zuiderveen



# VISION

We strive to be a vibrant church community that challenges individuals to craft their own spiritual journeys and to engage in creative and responsive action in the world.

# MISSION

We support the creative tension between intellect and spirit, science and faith, individual and community, tradition and change, challenging us to honor our legacy by embracing the future.

# CORE VALUES

We value the spirit of inquiry which respects the religious, humanist, and spiritual teachings from many wisdom traditions.

We value the direct experience of the mystery that moves us to engage in the never-ending search for universal truths that free the mind.

We value the active practice of love and justice in human relationships which validate the worth and dignity of each human being, inspiring us to deepen our commitment to deeds over creed, calling us to grow the soul.

We value community founded on the purposeful inclusion of all, in the service of others within the church and beyond, connecting and empowering us to change the world.

# FROM THE GOVERNING BOARD CHAIR

## AMY PRESTON

*The collective wisdom of a group of Fountain Streeters is far superior to that of a single person.*

As we reflect on the events of 2023, we share with you an overview of accomplishments and strides we have made as a community, along with challenges with face going forward. The dedication and spirit of Fountain Street has fueled a momentum that defines our church.

### *New Senior Minister*

For the second year in a row, we started this year, without a called Senior Minister. However, in mid-January, the Senior Minister Search Committee informed the Governing Board that they had selected Rev Christopher Roe as their recommendation to the Membership for Senior Minister. In the span of 26 days, a Special Meeting of the Membership was called, ballots mailed, contract negotiated, contract signed, ballots counted, and a Membership meeting held on February 12, 2023, at which time Rev Christopher Roe was introduced as the Senior Minister of Fountain Street Church, having received over 98% of the Membership votes cast.

### *Ministerial and Staff Support*

As Rev Christopher assumed the responsibilities of Senior Minister, he made decisions implementing his ministerial and administrative visions. Members of the Governing Board's Finance Committee spent numerous days and hours assisting in the assembly, organization, and restructuring of many church accounting procedures and practices, implementing existing, under-utilized church resources and technologies, while also contributing to the overall modernization of church office processes.

### *Oversight Committee*

The Oversight Committee continued its productive nature from 2022 into 2023, reviewing and presenting both additional policy changes this year, while also conducting its review of the Fountain Street Church ByLaws. Policies addressed this year by the Governing Board included cash reserve limits, purchasing authorities and limits, service group designated fund usage, and financial information transparency. The Governing Board approved and has presented to the Membership for vote at this year's Annual Meeting two proposed Bylaw changes: the first modifying the number of members on the Governing Board from fifteen (15) to nine (9); and, the second allowing for electronic notice and voting options, in addition to current mail and written procedures.

# FROM THE GOVERNING BOARD CHAIR

## AMY PRESTON

### *Bell Tower Maintenance/Restoration*

As we appreciate our progress, it is important to acknowledge challenges that lie ahead. In 2019, the Bell Tower Committee was formed, comprised of Fountain Street Church members experienced and knowledgeable in construction and maintenance challenges, to address concerns with the Bell Tower structure. After evaluating options, Owen Ames Kimball (OAK) contractors and Quinn Evans architects were retained to evaluate the needs of the Bell Tower. In December 2022, the final on-site inspections of the Bell Tower were concluded. Anticipating a quote for Bell Tower needs and repairs would be delivered in March/April 2023, at the March 2023 FSC Governing Board Meeting, the Governing Board established a committee to work closely with the Foundation Board and a liaison to the Governing Board for the purposes of fundraising for bell tower work. The Governing Board reached out to FSC Members for interest in chairing and/or participating on such a committee. At that time, the feedback the Governing Board received was that until we received a quote for Bell Tower repairs, such that a reliable fundraising goal could be established, committing to such a committee was premature. Despite persistent follow-up, the quote for Bell Tower repairs was not received until late June 2023 and at a cost of \$2,298,675.00.

Many churches have bell towers. Many bell towers have maintenance and repairs needs. Maintenance and repairs needs for bell towers tend to be costly. And decisions to incur costly expenditures have the possibility of being divisive in communities. Being aware of such, early in 2023, the Governing Board held a congregant workshop addressing healthy ways of communicating and reaching consensus. However, receiving the Bell Tower quote mid-summer complicated efforts to engage the congregation in a healthy evaluation and discussion. The Governing Board and Foundation Boards held a joint meeting in July 2023 to discuss the quote and ways to proceed. OAK was also informed that we would not be making a decision on the quote until we had the opportunity to discuss with the congregation, which would not practically be available until our 2023/2024 church year commenced in September 2023. With any maintenance or repairs not beginning at the earliest until winter weather ceased in the Spring of 2024, OAK was amiable to the timeline, though concerned with possible scheduling conflicts that might arise before a decision was made. In the meantime, drone inspection of the Bell Tower continues to occur after weather events.

# FROM THE GOVERNING BOARD CHAIR

## AMY PRESTON

At a Special Governing Board meeting on October 29, 2023, the Governing Board authorized the signing of the quote received from OAK, understanding it does not commit Fountain Street Church to a timeframe for commencing the Bell Tower project, nor for the scope of the project, in that it could be reduced/expanded/delayed. The Governing Board also directed that quotes for a Fountain Street Church campus-wide Facilities Assessment be obtained to consider obtaining such to identify future repair/restoration needs campus-wide and quotes for Feasibility Studies to likewise consider determining internal and external fundraising probabilities.

### *Onward*

As more and more churches close, downsize, or fall into disrepair, it is clear that the challenges we face are not dissimilar to the challenges many others face. But with the collaborative strength of our congregation, we can face these challenges head-on. Together, we can turn these challenges into opportunities and continue to build a stronger, more compassionate community. In the spirit of unity and shared purpose, we invite each member and congregant to contribute their unique gifts and talents as we navigate the path ahead.

On behalf of the Fountain Street Church Governing Board of Trustees, thank you for allowing us to serve Fountain Street Church this year. We express our deepest gratitude to each member and congregant of Fountain Street Church for their dedication, support, and commitment, and eagerly anticipate the journey ahead.

Amy Preston, Chair

Kristen Loch, Vice Chair

Tim Creamer, Treasurer

Katie Mitchell, Secretary

J Spalding Wall, Member at Large

Steve de Polo, Matthew Huizing, Geoffrey Kempter, Kristin Mayer, James Taylor, John Willette, George Zuiderveen, Shellie Jeffries, Cele Badgerow, Tony Lanninga

# MINUTES

FROM THE  
2022 ANNUAL  
MEETING





# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Amy Preston, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:25pm

Amy acknowledged that we've chosen to meet in the Social Hall, which for now we will call the "Member Hall." This is a better setup for doing the meeting virtually and in person. Thank you, Kayle, for helping make it happen!

## **Final Collection of Ballots**

Amy called for any outstanding ballots for the Governing and Foundation Board elections. Kristen Loch, John Willette, and Tim Creamer are overseeing the election. They will announce, but I think we know the results as the election was uncontested.

## **Governing Board Remarks**

Amy began with thank yous, because this is not an afterthought. We've accomplished so much with a significantly reduced staff since one or two years ago. She also explained that the Gov. Bd. began including "FSC Thank Yous" at our monthly meetings to thank people and groups who do so much but don't always get recognition. Today, we're thanking:

- Rev. Christopher. He has so many gifts that we couldn't do without
- Church staff, administrative, ministerial and AV
- Rev. Greta Jo and Lydia, though they no longer work at FSC
- The Gov. Bd., because it isn't easy... maybe easier than being on the Senior Minister Search Committee (that got a good natured laugh)
- Members and congregants, because that's what this is all about

Amy stated that she's not going to repeat everything in the Gov. Bd. Annual Report that went out, but please do read the PDF that was sent via email (ask for a hard copy if you need one).

Then Amy said that her first inkling that things were "off" or different at FSC was at one of her first Officers' meetings. There was a long discussion that went nowhere. Suddenly Rev. Fred Wooden asked "have you thought about this?" whatever "this" may have been at the time.

Suddenly, everything made total sense.

# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Couple years later... the Gov. Board was going round and round, taking forever and getting nowhere. Will Gallmeyer suddenly raised his hand, said something brilliant and it made SO MUCH SENSE.

The collective wisdom of a group of Fountain Streeters is far superior to the ideas of any one Fountain Streeter.

The main job of the Officers is to set the agenda for board meetings and then also other business that comes up between meetings. Sometimes we wonder what the board is going to do about things. It's kind of fun.

Recently the board had two firm sides on some issue or another. Someone called for a vote. We took the vote with a modified motion and it passed unanimously. COLLECTIVE WISDOM is better than any one individual.

The special ingredient is that we don't just talk, we listen. So we're able to evolve.

We face significant challenges here. The Bell tower. The building itself. The Senior Minister search. Education programs and Sunday services that need to be more welcoming. Lots of heavy issues.

But we had a congregant workshop this past monday with 90 people participating. Afterward, we all knew that no single person is going to walk in and be our savior. Not a minister or a member. Collectively, WE will be our savior.

It's hard to make memories over Zoom, but now that we're back in person there is a new energy, and a willingness to do things a little differently. Like having a meeting in the Social Hall. As Rev. Christopher says - we have to get messy.

Memories make us. Things like dancing at the Halloween Hop, stuffing envelopes, etc. Let's make some more in 2023. Let's grow into our savior role. Let's be FSC.

Also, please pledge. (Another good natured laugh) :)

# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

## **Clergy Remarks**

Rev. Christopher Roe asked that we take a moment to reflect on those who have passed in the last year or two.

This year we made a stride... not always knowing where we're going. We found opportunities to hold vigils for Ukraine, Patrick Lyoya, Roe v Wade being overturned, etc. Members are making it happen. Members are picking up on what is needed.

Now we're coming together as a group, making our mission known to this community.

Rev. Christopher extended a thank you to the staff. He trusts all of them and they have fun. Thank you to the board, the committees, the choir, Chaplain Margi... My heart is full. Soon we will know where we're going together.

## **Motions to Approve Meeting Minutes**

Tim Creamer moved to accept the minutes of the 2021 Annual Membership Meeting. Kirsten Lundeen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ruth Stein moved to accept the minutes from the Special Membership Meeting in May 2022. Julie Johnson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **FSC Foundation Board Report**

Nancy Ayres spoke for herself and on behalf of TJ Norris as co-chairs.

Many don't know about the Foundation Board. It has nine members and raises money to maintain the building and fund seven different support groups (music, Choice Fund, etc). Every year, the Foundation gives 5% of its funds to support the building.

In 2022 the Foundation grew \$216K. The goal is to get to \$10 million, and currently we're at \$3.98 million.

# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Nancy explained the three tiers to join the Foundation:

- Give a donation directly
- Remember FSC in your will
- Purchase a memorial tile

Trying to raise awareness with quarterly Foundation newsletters. We held an annual event in October in the Social Hall as a time to thank members and get new ones. We also had a half day planning session in September to find new ways to hit the goal.

Nancy shared slides on the big screen that showed growth but then losses because of the stock market. Fortunately, it's going back up a little bit.

Only 26% of FSC members are currently Foundation members, so we have a long way to go. If you're not a member, we encourage you to become one. The goal for 2023 is to speak to all congregants about growing the Foundation.

## **Financial Report and Presentation of 2023 Budget**

Win Irwin sent a thank you to the Finance Committee, who provides oversight for FSC's financials and offers reports and recommendations.

Win gave an overview of how we went into the year and where we are now, and credited the staff for staying under budget. Heat and electricity have been over budget because of Samaritas using the third floor. We didn't know how to budget for that, and they aren't using the space anymore. Our Unrestricted Cash Reserve at the end of September was \$152,403.

## **Draft Budget for 2023**

### Income

- We have a budget of \$726,500.
- It is based on 2022 pledge budget.
- Other income budgets are based on past results, however, there are significant opportunities to increase rental income and supplementary 'stewardship' income.

# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

## Expense

- We have budgeted at our current staffing level, with the exception of an additional half time Assistant Minister. Exactly what our staffing will look like for 2023 is unclear at this time, however, we felt we needed to add to the budget to address unmet needs of the church.
- This budget includes both the 9:30 and 11am services.
- This budget does not include the rental of our 3rd and 4th floors.

## Net Income

- We are budgeting a net deficit of \$32,603.

We did get two PPP loans to help through Covid times, but we can't keep having deficits because the PPP loans won't be a regular thing.

This is a draft that we ask you to approve. Certain things are not known (healthcare costs, for example), so the Gov. Bd. will approve a final budget in 2023.

Win moved to adopt the presented 2023 budget. Tim Creamer seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Win reminded us to please pledge! It's online and has had good responses. We're one-third of the way there.

Finally, we had a money wall at the Halloween Hop. People would give us money and then we'd give an envelope with MAYbe a prize. Or maybe just a thank you note. Now the leftovers are \$10 each. Please take one!

## **Election Results**

Amy said we know everyone's hungry, so here are the election results:

Tony Lanning and Cele Badgerow are newly elected Governing Board members. James Taylor and Shellie Jeffries will begin their second terms. Jon Spalding begins his own first term (he was finishing Chip Wall's term).

Charlie Gallmeyer will begin his second term on the Foundation Board.

# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

## Congregant Comments

Nancy Ayres asked about the election, and if we have to take the vote when it's unopposed. Amy says yes, according to the Bylaws. The Oversight Committee is looking at two avenues:

1. Electronic voting to reduce costs
2. Changing the requirements of how many names have to be on the slate and Gov. Bd.

It was especially tough this time because nine people are already on the Senior Minister Search Committee. We also had some GB resignations.

Bob Cooper suggested having a list of things we need to pay for, which may encourage people to give a little faster. Great idea!

Amy said that being on the board at a time when we don't have a called Senior Minister is tough. Thank you to the GB members. It's not easy. Thankfully, we like each other 😊

On that note, the Gov. Bd. has term limits, so we have sad moments when people leave. People have become such good friends. We're losing two very gracious and wise FSCers - Brad Miller and Win Irwin. (Win recently played hooky for an Officer's meeting and we felt like kids.)

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Geoff Kempter and Micheal seconded. Motion passes unanimously and the meeting adjourns at 1:11pm.

# FINANCIAL REPORTS 2023



# FINANCIAL REPORT

## TIM CREAMER

Jan-Sept FSC 2023 Income Statement					
	SEPTEMBER		2023 YTD		
	Budget	over/under Budget	Actual	Budget	over/under Budget
<b>Income</b>					
Total Other Income	\$5,233	\$4,946	\$11,319	\$47,100	-\$35,781
Plate/Contribution Income			\$0	\$0	\$0
Contributions of Record	\$4,167	-\$2,063	\$28,250	\$37,500	-\$9,250
Cash Plate	\$2,083	-\$318	\$21,268	\$18,750	\$2,518
Total Plate/Contribution of Record Income	\$6,250	\$2,381	\$49,520	\$56,250	-\$6,730
Pledge Income					
Total Pledge Income	\$46,975	-\$3,530	\$474,515	\$422,775	\$51,740
Rental Income					
Total Rental Income	\$4,583	\$4,813	\$25,237	\$41,250	\$16,012
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$63,042</b>	<b>-\$15,671</b>	<b>\$513,219</b>	<b>\$504,334</b>	<b>\$8,885</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Total Administration	\$19,017	\$5,264	\$154,008	\$171,155	-\$17,147
Properties Expenses					
Total Maintenance & Repairs	\$4,741	\$5,877	\$65,741	\$42,672	\$23,069
Staffing - Properties					
Total Staffing - Properties	\$5,643	\$910	\$56,969	\$50,782	\$6,187
Utilities					
Total Utilities	\$8,283	-\$7,217	\$58,398	\$74,549	-\$16,151
Total Properties Expenses	\$18,667	-\$430	\$181,109	\$168,004	\$13,105
Total Worship Staff	\$19,183	\$4,851	\$165,279	\$172,650	-\$7,371
Total Worship & Music	\$20,648	\$4,256	\$180,092	\$185,831	-\$5,739
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$62,735</b>	<b>-\$2,371</b>	<b>\$554,648</b>	<b>\$564,616</b>	<b>-\$9,968</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>\$307</b>	<b>-\$13,300</b>	<b>\$5,942</b>	<b>\$2,759</b>	<b>\$3,182</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$307</b>	<b>-\$13,300</b>	<b>\$5,942</b>	<b>\$2,759</b>	<b>\$3,183</b>



# PROPOSED BUDGET - INCOME

## TIM CREAMER

**Proposed Budget** - See this page for income and next page for expenses

### Income

This budget proposal includes the same amount of what is now called annual giving (pledge income, contributions of record and plate income) as the 2023 budget adopted by the Governing Board at the beginning of this year. It also includes the same amounts for event rentals and the auction that Paul Arnold organizes every year.

We did not include any amount in the budget for wedding rental income. With the tower situation being up in the air we cannot count on that income. We did account for the Samaritas rental of the upper floors as we have a lease with them for the coming year. This year we will be using part of the Foundation distribution to pay for the utilities, which the Foundation Agreement allows.

Fountain Street Church 2024 Proposed Budget	
<b>Income</b>	
Other Income	
01-42200 Auction(MH)	\$5,000.00
01-42300 Special Fundraisers(MH)	
01-42400 Interest(MH)	
Stock Gain/Loss	
01-42500 Miscellaneous(MH)	
Transfer from Properties	\$100,000.00
Total Other Income	
Plate/Contribution Income	
01-40100 Contributions of Record(MH)	\$50,000.00
01-40200 Cash Plate (MH)	\$25,000.00
Total Plate/Contribution Income	
Pledge Income	
01-40000 Pledge Income(MH)	\$570,000.00
01-40500 Special Appeals(MH)	\$0.00
01-43250 Credit Card Fees(MH)	-\$4,000.00
01-43260 Bank Fees(MH)	
Total Pledge Income	
Rental Income	
01-41000 Wedding Rentals(LR/MH)	\$0.00
01-41005 Wedding - Expenses(LR/MH)	
01-41100 Event Rentals(LR/MH)	\$30,000.00
01-41105 Event - Expenses(LR/MH)	
01-41200 Other Rental Income (MH/LR)	\$33,000.00
01-41205 Other Event Expenses (MH/LR)	
Total Rental Income	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$809,000.00</b>

# PROPOSED BUDGET - EXPENSES

## TIM CREAMER

### **Expenses**

This budget includes all current staff members at their current rates of pay. This includes the Director of Youth and Families, who started in the late summer, for the full year. The staff responsibilities have shifted among them since the start of the year but we are planning on the staff remaining in place for the coming year. The section leaders on the choir will also be funded for the year. The FSC Choir has agreed to help offset some of those costs so we can keep them as part of our choir. There are other costs, such as health insurance and snowplowing, among others, that we don't know what they will be at this point. We used a 10% increase in these costs until we can get actual costs for the coming year. Once we know these costs we may have to make some adjustments.

<b>Expenses</b>		
Administration		
Administration Expenses		
<b>Total Administration Expenses</b>		<b>\$37,500.00</b>
Administration Staffing		
<b>Total Administration Staffing</b>		<b>\$147,730.00</b>
Leadership & Training		
<b>Total Leadership &amp; Training</b>		<b>\$23,000.00</b>
<b>Total Administration</b>		
Education & Parish		
Education Programs		
<b>Total Education Staffing</b>		<b>\$47,250.00</b>
<b>Total Education Programs</b>		<b>\$20,000.00</b>
<b>Total Education &amp; Parish</b>		<b>\$67,250.00</b>
Properties Expenses		
Maintenance & Repairs		
<b>Total Maintenance &amp; Repairs</b>		<b>\$55,910.00</b>
Staffing - Properties		
<b>Total Staffing - Properties</b>		<b>\$81,410.00</b>
Utilities		
<b>Total Utilities</b>		<b>\$108,900.00</b>
<b>Total Properties Expenses</b>		<b>\$190,310.00</b>
Worship & Music		
<b>Total Worship &amp; Music Expenses</b>		<b>\$18,000.00</b>
Worship Staff		
<b>Total Worship Staff</b>		<b>\$262,750.00</b>
<b>Total Worship &amp; Music</b>		<b>\$280,750.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$802,450.00</b>
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>\$6,550.00</b>

# FOUNDATION REPORT 2023



# FROM THE FSC FOUNDATION

## NANCY AYRES & BOB CHAPLA

The FSC Foundation oversees the invested funds which are used to help maintain and improve the church building, and also provides resources for seven designated funds within the church. The board oversees the investment policy and practices for the trust fund and promotes planned giving through the Liberal Legacy Society. No funds from the Foundation support basic operations or staffing.

With the bell tower situation being a main concern for the church this past year, many questions have arisen as to what role the Foundation should play if it is decided to move forward with the repairs. The Foundation board takes its role in overseeing the current \$3.8m trust fund very seriously. The balance between maintaining the building while not seriously depleting the trust fund has been discussed by the Foundation board many times this year. It was decided by the board at a meeting in October that if the Governing Board elects to move forward with the repairs, the Foundation would offer a dollar for dollar matching grant on the roughly \$1.6m yet to be raised. The Second Century Campaign would be tasked with raising \$800,000 and the Foundation board would match that with up to \$800,000 from the trust. The Foundation board felt this struck a good balance between caretaking of the building and caretaking of the trust fund.

The Foundations long term overall goal is to increase the endowment fund balance to \$10m. The following is a summary of our achievements this calendar year:

### **Goal 1:** Continue to connect with current donors and recruit new donors

- 1) 100% of Foundation Board Members are either Annual or Lifetime members and many are also Estate members.
- 2) Held annual fall reception for all congregants to raise awareness of the Foundation and its work.

### **Goal 2:** Continue Communication Plan to Increase Visibility of FSC Foundation

- 1) Quarterly e- newsletters are sent via link to all congregants
- 2) Regular contributions to The Beat

# FROM THE FSC FOUNDATION

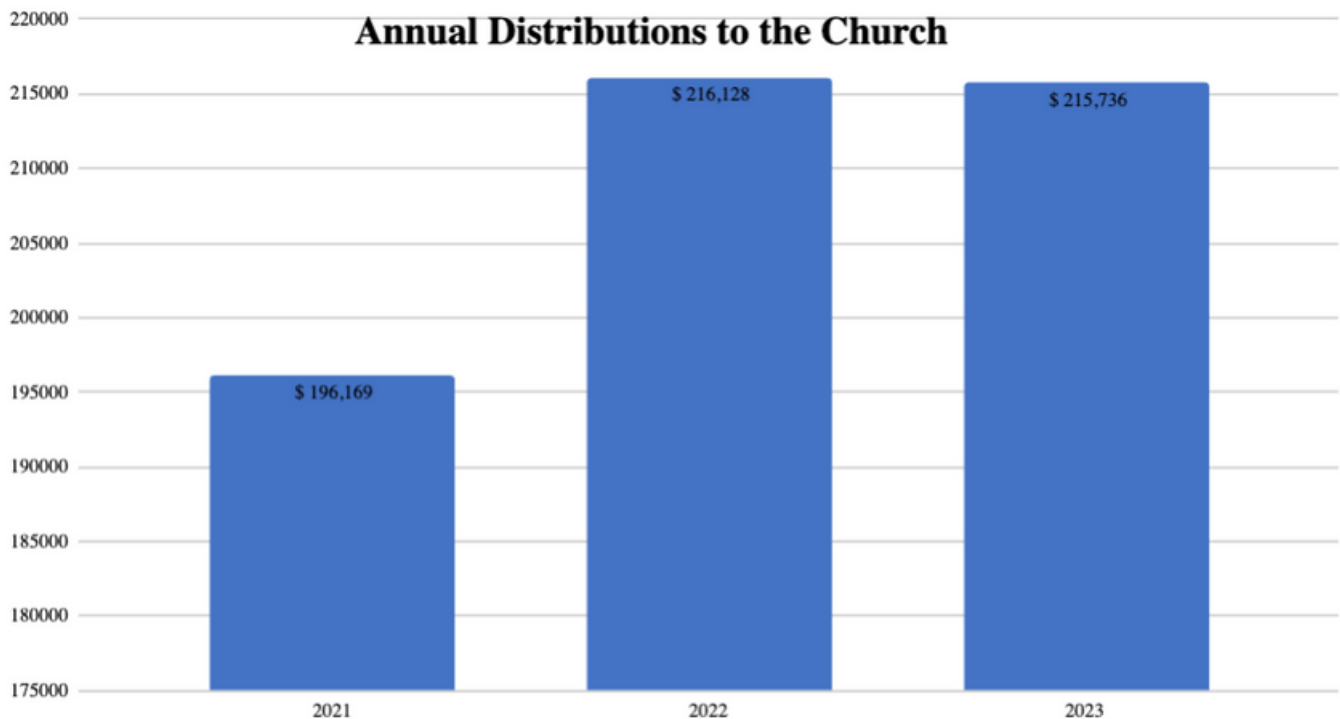
## NANCY AYRES & BOB CHAPLA

**Goal 3:** Coordinate Foundation efforts with appropriate FSC staff and Lay Leadership

- 1) The Foundation Co-Chairs meet quarterly with the Governing Board Chair and Vice Chair
- 2) A Governing Board member serves as a liaison on the Foundation Board
- 3) The Senior Minister is a regular participant in the Foundations monthly board meetings

### **5% Annual Transfer for Programs, Activities and Building Improvements**

The Foundation transfers 5% of its average three year balance to the church budget. This money is critical to the church's financial stability and frees up monies that can now be devoted to operations and programming of the church. If the Foundation can grow the Endowment balance to \$10m, that would equate to \$500,000 per year that could be used for programming, social action, maintenance and other needs of the church.

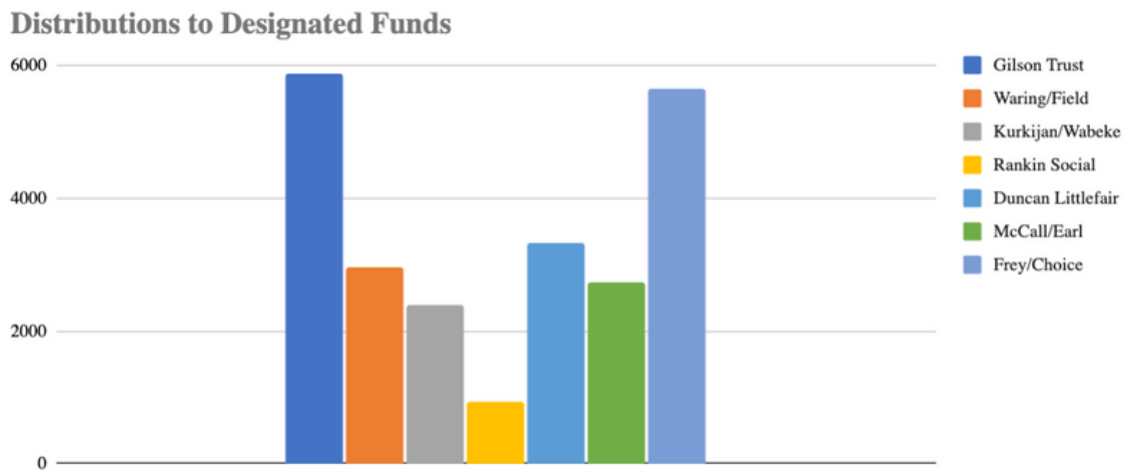


# FROM THE FSC FOUNDATION

## NANCY AYRES & BOB CHAPLA

### Designated Funds

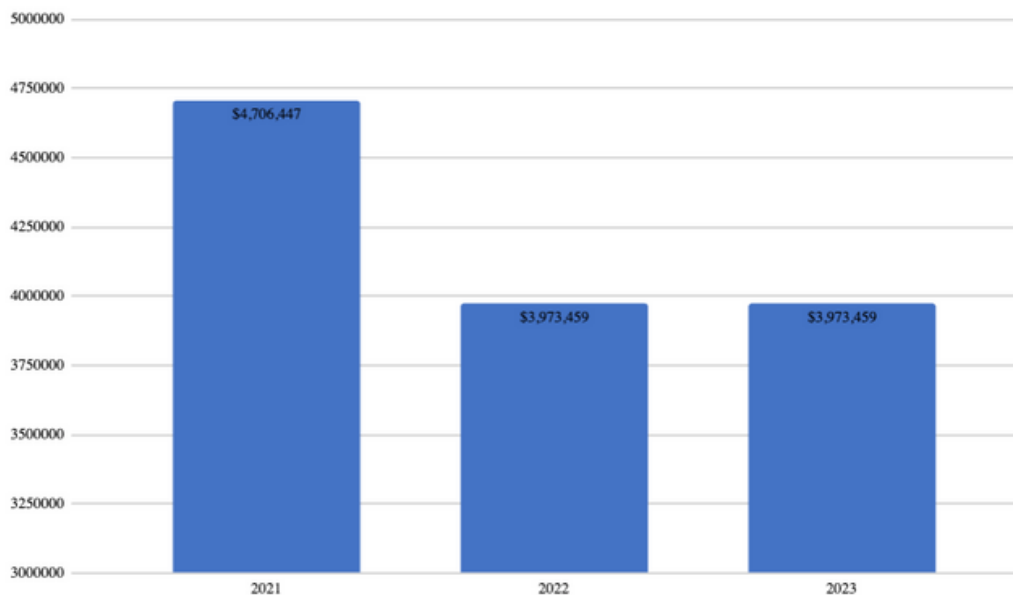
There are currently seven specially designated funds that have been established over the years by donors interested in providing funds for specific purposes. The remainder of the annual allotment has been designated for building improvements and repairs. For 2023, the allotment was designated as follows:



### Long Term Focus and Growth

Growing the Endowment Fund is crucial to the Foundations ability to help meet the needs of the church in the long term. Below are the fund balances the previous three years.

**Investment Year End Balances**



# FROM THE FSC FOUNDATION

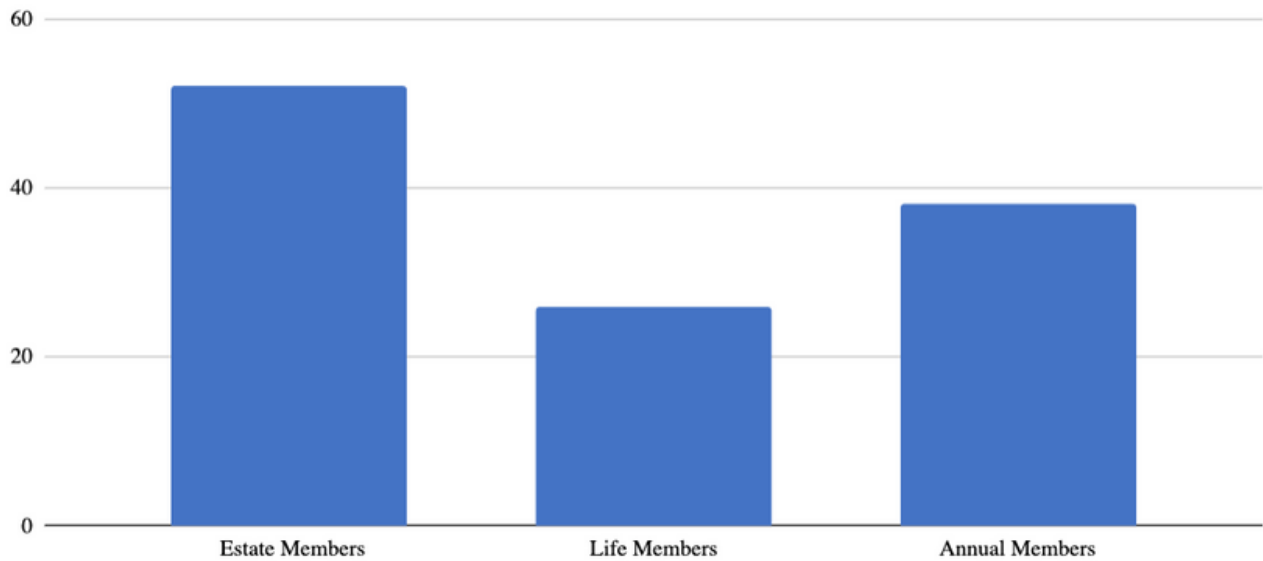
## NANCY AYRES & BOB CHAPLA

### Liberal Legacy Society

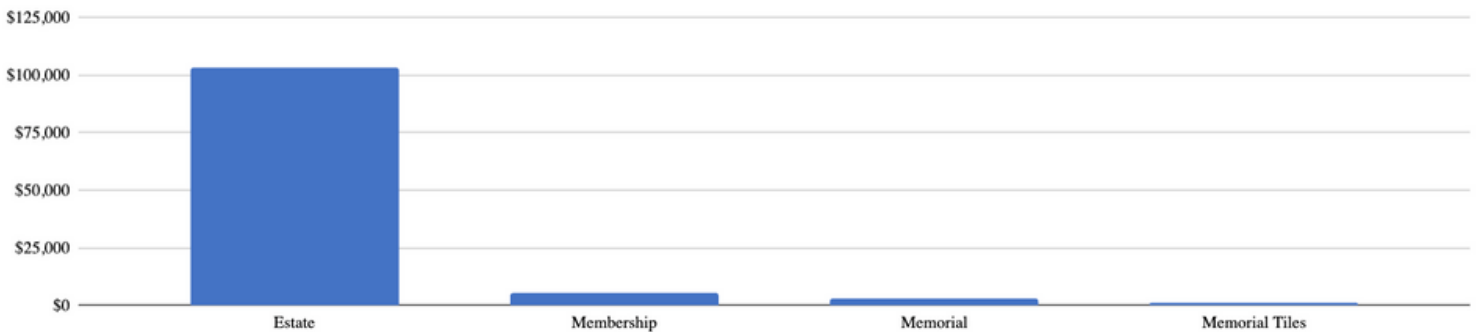
A way to contribute and commit to the sustained future of FSC. Annual membership requires a minimum donation of \$100 per year or Lifetime membership for a \$5000 donation (one time donation or cumulative over time).

Estate Members designate FSC Foundation in their estate plan, or as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy. Funds raised from the sale of Memorial Tiles are another way the Foundation raises money.

### LLS Membership



### Gifts to the Foundation



# FROM THE FSC FOUNDATION

## NANCY AYRES & BOB CHAPLA

### **Fountain Street Church Foundation Annual Event**

The purpose of the Annual Event is to thank current donors, share information about the work of the Foundation, and ultimately attract new donors. Eighty congregants and board members met in the early evening hours of October 10, 2023 to socialize, sip wine, eat tasty appetizers and talk about about the work of the Foundation. Midwest Capital Advisors, the wealth management company who oversees the Foundations endowment fund, gave an update for those in attendance. A second presentation by congregant and Estate Attorney, Marilyn Lankfer, was directed towards the topic of “leaving a legacy” . Marilyn shared information on how to include FSC in your will or trust and ultimately assist the church in the future. We thank all those in attendance and hope to continue to grow this event in the future.

### **Fountain Street Church Foundation Board Members**

Bob Chapla(co-chair)  
Nancy Ayres (co-chair)  
Bill Brunner ( secretary)  
Liz Bullock  
Patrick Eaman  
Todd Fettig  
Charlie Gallmeyer  
TJ Norris  
Chris VanAntwerp

The Foundation Board wishes to sincerely thank all Liberal Legacy Members and other contributors to the Foundation and welcomes all congregants to consider membership in this important society.



# STAFF REPORT 2023



# STAFF REPORT

## FSC STAFF

Dear Friends -

2023 was a monumental year of change, growth, new beginnings, and collective flourishing. As we eagerly look forward to our collective “becoming,” it is helpful to name the ongoing reorganizations and institutional shifts that have taken place over the course of 2023.

For the purpose of clarity and thoughtfulness, it is helpful to recognize that throughout 2023 our collective ministries began moving towards five “focus” areas:

- Arts and Worship
- Spiritual Life and Learning
- Membership and Belonging
- Social Justice and Outreach
- Administration and Operations

Each of these areas has a longstanding presence in our ministries, and moving into 2024 it is our goal that each of these areas will become more and more lay-empowered, with staff support providing a backbone to their goals and objectives.

As we look ahead to what could be, should be, and must be in 2024 and beyond, we would like to take this opportunity to also recognize and celebrate the remarkable happenings in 2023 in each of these ministry areas as they relate to these five evolving “pillars” of our Fountain Street Church identity.

### **ARTS AND WORSHIP**

2023 was a profound year of growth, accomplishment, and flourishing in both the arts and worship areas of our church. **THE ART COMMITTEE** once again provided a dynamic sense of energy and cultural vitality to our church that we could not have experienced without their steadfast commitment to the arts in our community. Through their ongoing efforts with exhibits in the Keeler Lounge, their work with ArtPrize, the Advent, Christmas, and Easter programs, and their work archiving and preserving our permanent collections, the Social Justice Film Series, and the Arts and Architecture Tour, the Art Committee provided our church with a well-rounded and powerfully supported arts program that we are profoundly grateful for.

2023 was also a year in which growth and vitality were experienced in the worshipping life of our church, be it in the 9:30am Chapel Gatherings, the 11:00am Sanctuary

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Gatherings, or the many special vigils and community gatherings that were offered throughout the year. In all three areas we saw attendance and participation begin to surpass those figures of pre-covid worship at Fountain Street Church, and we anticipate this trend to continue as we invest in the worshiping life of our church.

In keeping with its clergy-supported but lay-lead tradition, the 9:30am Chapel Gathering continued throughout 2023, with the addition of a dedicated musician in the fall. With the steadfast help of John Willette and many others, the gathering has grown into a dynamic, loving, and supportive community of folks seeking the wholeness of living together and supporting one another along the journey.

The 11:00am Sanctuary Gathering also saw continued growth both in attendance and engagement as well as depth and quality. As the choir grew throughout 2023 and our range of special musicians and speakers took on diverse and dynamic shifts, it was a rich year of learning, caring, and growing together.

One area of major pride and celebration this year was **THE FOUNTAIN STREET CHURCH CHOIR**, which has experienced tremendous growth and flourishing in a relatively short amount of time. With the ongoing leadership of our Choir Director, Austin McWilliams, a settled and talented accompanist, Todd Wilkie, and the addition of four paid section leaders, the Fountain Street Church Choir has become a beloved and celebrated backbone of our 11:00am gatherings. In addition, they have become a profound part of the broader West Michigan arts and culture community after the powerfully successful and moving Spring Oratorio performance of “Considering Matthew Shepard.” With over \$15,000 raised, 50+ singers, countless musicians, and nearly 900 people in attendance, the 2023 Spring Oratorio was a sobering reminder of just how important our presence is in the West Michigan community, particularly when our arts and culture presence weaves together with the social justice issues of our time.

The summer of 2023 saw the final season of the Summer Speakers Series, curated, supported, and implemented by **THE RELIGIOUS SERVICES COMMITTEE**. This monumental undertaking by just these three lay-leaders brought with it eleven speakers, four guest musicians, and a host of memories, laughs, and insights gleaned from our very own members and friends. It was a profound experience for all who participated and we are grateful for the many years of work, focus, and commitment from the Religious Services Committee and especially for this year’s monumental series.

We’re happy to announce significant technological upgrades at Fountain Street Church, enriching our community experience. Our transition to Open Source software enhances

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flexibility, aligning our tech seamlessly with organizational needs. Meticulous efforts have improved audio quality in key areas like the Sanctuary, Chapel, and Social Hall, contributing to an overall better experience.

Additionally, a strategic investment in upgrading aging production equipment ensures long-lasting high-definition streaming capabilities, underscoring our commitment to cutting-edge technology and enduring functionality.

In addition to all of these wonderful worship experiences, we were proud to be the host of many community-wide gatherings, from the MLK Gathering in January, to the Peace for Ukraine Vigil in February, to the Holy Thursday Dinner in April all the way to the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service in November - it has been and continues to be clear that we are cathedral home to all seeking refuge, support, compassion, and Hope in our times and in our community.

### **SPIRITUAL LIFE AND LEARNING**

The educational and learning activities of our community also saw a great deal of change, growth, and transformation over the course of 2023. After our Interim Children and Youth Programs Director shepherded the 2022/23 program year to a conclusion in May, we hired Joe Puscas as our new Director of Youth and Family Programs. In this role Joe stewards not only the learning life for children and youth in our community but also the family life of our church, with a renewed focus on intergenerational learning opportunities across the lifespan of our congregation. Our programs for youth and children on Sundays are staffed by eight paid staff as well as a few, dedicated volunteers.

2023 also brought with it the continued commitment to quality, evidence-based sex-education offered both by Planned Parenthood at Fountain Street Church as well as our own Our Whole Lives (OWL) program. In pursuit of a world with greater access to reproductive health and sexual justice, our sex-education programs continue to be a vital part of this endeavor.

Over the past year we also saw a renewed interest in “one-off” adult learning opportunities. From book groups to anti-oppression cohorts to support circles on death, grief, and spiritual practice, it was a rich year for spiritual life and learning opportunities as adults. As we set our sights on 2024, the development of a continuous “adult learning” program will become a cornerstone to this arm of our ministry, and we are grateful for all who have stepped up and offered their support, interest, and capacity for this shared endeavor.

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### MEMBERSHIP AND BELONGING

To date we have seen 24 new members join our community in 2023, and we anticipate many more “signing the book” after they have made their way through our newly developed new-members program. After hiring Rev. Jody Betten as our Interim Consulting Minister in May to help us with such projects, we are pleased to be rolling out a new-member program that is peer-based, lay-lead, and clergy supported. In addition to this newly developed program, 2023 has brought with it a newly formed Young Adults Circle that has rapidly grown in size and engagement, as well as the newly invigorated Family Village (formerly the Parents Circle.) Both of these re-births are a testament to the energy and hope that has been building over the course of 2023 and we look forward to finding creative and dynamic ways to support both of these vital areas in 2024.

Another major cornerstone of Membership and Belonging is of course the “belonging” aspect, which requires care, connection, and compassion. Two such ways that this is supported and achieved is through the work of our **BEFRIENDER MINISTRY**, as well as our **COMMUNITY LIFE TEAM** - both of whom we are profoundly grateful to have in our ministries.

This year the BeFriender Ministry has been a powerful asset to the staff and community alike, as they have continued to offer support, mutual care, and beloved community to a growing group of over 50 individuals. Through careful training and ongoing continuing education, our BeFriender cohort has continued to be a vital and imperative part of our congregation, and it is our hope and prayer that anyone in need of this resource in our congregation will reach out to our staff or a BeFriender and take advantage of this.

The Community Life Team was also a powerful resource in our church this year as they continued to realign and recalibrate themselves towards being an agent for continued growth in the “belonging” aspect of Fountain Street Church. As we have pivoted towards a community of “belonging” and “belovedness” over the past year, it was the Community Life Team that served as the backbone to many of these endeavors, from the enormous potlucks to the joyfull “Fifth Sunday Breakfast Church Gatherings.” And as our new membership program takes root and matures, it is the Community Life Team that is also supporting much of the work of its flourishing, especially as we move into 2024. We are so grateful for the ways in which the Community Life Team continues to support the familiar traditions of our church like the “Hanging of the Greens,” while also imagining new ways of doing their work that support the continued flourishing of our organization.

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Speaking of flourishing and vitality, there's a very good chance that if the energy and momentum you've experienced over the course of 2023 isn't in part due to the Community Life Team, it is because it is the direct result of **THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**. 2023 saw countless events sponsored by the Women's Association, and even more behind the scenes work than you can imagine. From memorial service luncheons to cleaning and maintenance of our kitchen resources to the joyous luncheons and receptions of the past year to International Women's Day Service to multiple learning opportunities about who they are and what they do, the Women's Association provided a vital network of support, care, and connection bridging our past to our future with good food, lots of laughs, grit, and determination for what "could be" in our church, and we are humbled in gratitude for it.

Our Ushers and Greeters also play a key role in helping folks experience belonging here on a Sunday morning, especially those who are new or visiting. These individuals help direct new families to child care, provide access to our spaces as well as plenty of introductory information to help people feel comfortable and welcome. Ushers also have a key role in the safety of those gathered on any given Sunday, overseeing fire drills - planned or unplanned - and other emergency procedures.

There are so many ways to find belonging here at Fountain Street. All are always welcome to check out the groups listed above or the Build Guild, Kayak Club, Pride Group, Singles Group, FSC Gardeners, Church Tour Guides, Archives Committee, or join the Poetry Group for their weekly meeting. We are grateful for so many ways that people can connect within our community!

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE AND OUTREACH**

We saw a tremendous amount of re-imagining, re-calibration, and re-generation in the social justice movement within and beyond our church this year. Even more specifically, **THE SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM** has undergone a massive amount of transformation this year as they reimagined for themselves not only their new name, but also a new mission, vision, and chart of work. This work will ultimately lead to a renewed focus of purpose, goals, and objectives for the Team that will ultimately benefit our organization as well as our broader community.

Over the course of 2023 The Social Justice Team saw new members joining, a renewed interest from beyond our church, and opportunities for collaboration not engaged before. Through our work with Together West Michigan we were able to not only include many of our members in this collective work, but also many of our areas of focus

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for grants, justice work, and learning opportunities as outlined by Together West Michigan.

Additionally the Social Justice Team was able to support many organizations that aligned with our church's areas of interest, including STEM Greenhouse, the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus, the Grand Rapids Pride Center, the Grand Rapids Trans Foundation, the LGBTQ Healthcare Consortium, Ransom Towers Food Pantry, Together West Michigan, Family Promise, Home Repair Services, and many other organizations. These grants, partnerships, and offerings were made possible by the generosity of your gifts collected in our weekly offering plate contributions.

Another profound area of Social Justice and Outreach in our community is of course **THE CHOICE FUND**, which has continued to see an increase in need, capacity, funding, and expenses. Following the dramatic reversal of Roe in 2022 and the ongoing turbulence of access to reproductive care in the United States, Michigan and the Fountain Street Church Choice Fund have seen a swell of need and, subsequently, financial requests to provide abortion care. While the Fund has historically funded abortions in West Michigan, the landscape of abortion access changed yet again this year with the closing of the Heritage Clinic, which has led to many individuals from our own community having to seek care elsewhere in the state. As a result, the Choice Fund has pivoted and now offers funds to individuals in need at any clinic in Michigan.

As you can imagine, this has become a profoundly taxing time on our Fund. Through October of this year, the Choice Fund has given nearly \$53,000 to 856 Michiganders in grants ranging from \$50 to \$350. Donations as well as fundraisers, like the September Cornhole Tournament, continue to support this Fund and help offset these requests. However, the total income to the fund this year has been \$34,383. It is clear that we will need to be proactive and strategic about our fund so that we can continue to offer these vital services to our community in pursuit of a safer, healthier, and more just reproductive landscape.

Some other ways that we have participated in social justice and outreach as a community in 2023 are through our involvement with the Citizens' Climate Lobby via the Climate Justice Team, our work with Family Promise, providing occasional but regular volunteer staffing for their overnight locations where unhoused families with children stay, and Breakfast Cafe at St. Marks, where a small group periodically serves hot breakfast to the unhoused community.

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### ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION

The area of Administration and Operation shares a certain degree of overlap with the Governing bodies of the church, particularly in areas of properties, budget, and finance. Beyond these areas, the “ministry” side of our church saw a great deal of change, transition, growth, and flourishing in 2023.

One of the most notable areas of change in the administrative and operational aspects of Fountain Street Church was of course the staff team, who have coalesced into a dynamic, loving, fun, and committed cohort, who are committed to the health, well-being, and flourishing of our congregation.

In 2023 we saw a great deal of repositioning and hiring to adequately support the five outlined pillars of our ministry, while also respecting a fiscally responsible budget for 2023 and beyond. As a result, we now have a staffing structure that consists of:

- Rev. Christopher Roe - Senior Minister
- Rev. Jody Betten - Interim Consulting Minister
- Margi Derks Peterson - Chaplain
- Joe Puscas - Director of Youth and Families
- Austin McWilliams - Choir Director
- Todd Wilkie - Choir Accompanist
- Laurie Rikekrs - Director of Business and Finance
- Kayle Clements - Director of Events and Programs
- Jamie McDaniels - Director of Facilities and Maintenance
- Katie Bush - Church Administrator
- Darius Moore - Custodian

Under this structure the staff is able to support the growing areas of ministry we wish to nurture into 2024 while also leaving room for growth in lay-involvement. Additionally, areas once served by committees like the Properties Committee have been transitioned to oversight of the Governing Board under the Finance Committee. These repositioning opportunities allow for the staff to focus on areas of ministry and for the Governing Board to steward areas of fiscal and structural care.



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### **LOOKING AHEAD**

Looking forward to 2024, we are hopeful that the five areas outlined in this year's report will be fleshed into a larger model called the "Ministry Board," in which members of the congregation in fact hold empowered positions in each of the areas in pursuit of a more "congregationally lead" ministry at Fountain Street Church. With the staff in place to support such an endeavor and the continued growth of all of our programs over the past year, we believe that we are well positioned to begin a new chapter of lay-leadership and member-driven ministries; a chapter that we hope each and every one of you will discern being part of in pursuit of the church that we know could be, should be, and must be.

**With gratitude for all who made 2023 the year it was, with hope for the coming year as we work together, and with love for each of you,**

**The Staff of Fountain Street Church**