

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF WILMETTE

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Dear Friends.

In one of my favorite poems by Mary Oliver, she writes, “Let me keep my mind on what matters, which is my work/which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished.” I’ve always been struck by Oliver’s unconventional vocation: “mostly standing still and learning to be astonished.” There is no pretense here. There is no busyness. There is simply humility and gratitude and attention, hard-won wisdom that recognizes one’s place in the family of things. This is what matters most, says Oliver.

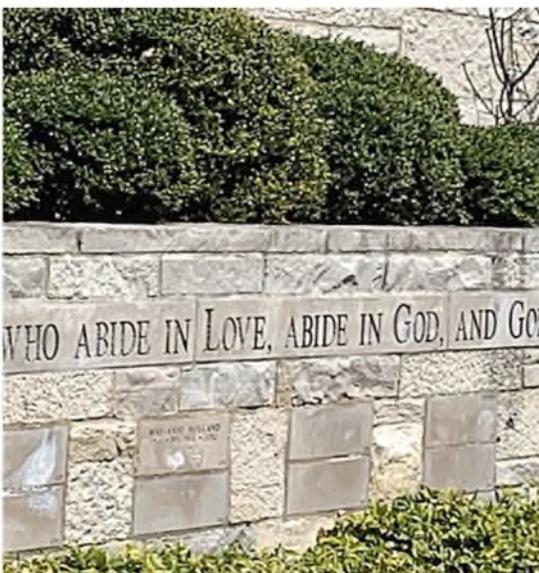
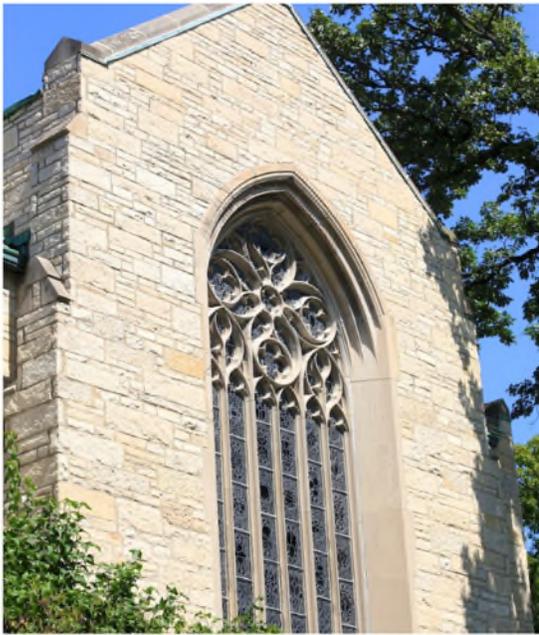
One of the reasons I’m drawn to this poem is because it jostles me awake every time I read it. I really like being busy, since it makes me feel important. Which means I’m often lousy at “standing still.” I sometimes get caught up in the downward spirals that dominate the evening news. Which means I’m often unpracticed in the art of “astonishment.”

Why “standstill”? Why “learn to be astonished”? There is so much to do! In the church, we have sometimes put the cart before the horse. To put mission before worship, when only worship can catalyze mission. To place loving others above being loved by God, when only being loved by God can propel us to love others. But we do this to our own peril. When we “standstill” in worship, we can’t help but be sent out in mission. When we “learn to be astonished” by God’s love, we can’t help but show that same love to everyone we meet.

Friends, it’s a time to “standstill” and “learn to be astonished” by all that God has done among us in the past year. There will be time to get busy, again, and to lean into what 2022 holds for us, but right now let’s marvel at the goodness of God to us at First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette in our 110th year of ministry together.

I am profoundly grateful for the resilience, wisdom, and love you’ve demonstrated in the past year. Despite year two of a global pandemic, with its widespread grief and loss, you embodied Christ’s love for neighbor and stranger alike.

Continued on page two



I am grateful for worship services held (whether outdoor, in-person or virtual); for small groups gathered; for meals shared; for mission partners supported; for racial justice work pursued; for children, youth and adults formed in their faith; for songs lifted up; for prayers of lament and joy and compassion; for baptisms, weddings and funerals; for experiments in technology and new models of leadership.

Let me end by offering my deepest thanks for your support as I went on medical leave at the end of the year to recover from depression. I am so grateful to be back among you and to be feeling so much better.

A special thanks to our gifted church leaders: our Elders, Deacons and staff. They are amazing to work with and learn from! And thanks to all of you, our dear members and friends, for all you are and for all you do to make First Pres Wilmette a strong and vibrant witness to the love of God at the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Greenleaf. You are making a difference. You are blessing the world. You are sharing God's light and life and love. Thanks be to God!

With gratitude and lots of hope,



Rev. Jeff Lehn

## **Grow Together Worship Together**

- **Clerks Report**  
Page 4-5
- **Ministry Group Reports**  
Pages 6-13
- **Operating Budget**  
Page 14
- **Endowment Fund Report**  
Page 15



## **Laura Sherwood, Interim Associate Pastor for Transitional Discovery**

All that unfolded in 2021, planned and unplanned, was also amid the needs created by the pandemic as we shifted from online/recorded services only to in-person livestream worship at the end of April. Adaptation to previous ways of planning worship and programming was a constant need as we entered the summer, then fall, then winter when we faced another spike in covid numbers. The grace and creativity of the staff along with the flexibility and encouragement of the session and congregation made another covid-challenged year a time that also brought forth many gifts of the spirit.

In my Annual Report last year, I closed with an eye toward 2021, expecting to have many opportunities to work with all of you on reflection and discernment for the “What’s Next” for your Associate Pastor position as part of the “What’s Next” for the congregation as a whole. I encouraged everyone to participate in as many ways as possible with safety amid the ongoing pandemic always in mind.

Now, looking back on 2021, I am amazed at all the effort and participation of the congregation to engage in discussions, dialogue, and imagining what God’s vision is for your ministry. We had strong participation for the July Conversation groups which provided helpful insight into how our members and friends have experienced the pandemic, how it affected spirituality, and how it has shone a light on what’s important and what we need to focus on moving ahead. The information from the Conversation Groups helped develop the Congregational Survey which was shared at the end of the summer. The combination of these two methods of inviting input helped the Session with needed decisions for the Associate Pastor position and insight for continued leadership of our programming, ministry, and mission. I have included the main insights/major themes at the end of this report.

As we moved into fall, my contract was renewed for an additional year, still at  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, with a shift of major focus from Discovery to the areas felt to be most important for the next Associate: Congregational Connections, Children and Youth ministry; Pastoral Care, and Mission. Toward the end of the year, it was a great privilege to work the Interim Head of Staff, Rev. Nancy Dolan, in support of Pastor Jeff’s medical leave. It was also very moving to me as a person of faith to witness the prayerful and practical support of Pastor Jeff and his family by the staff, Session, and congregation. It remains my privilege to serve in ministry with all of you in 2022 as you search for the next installed Associate Pastor and continue your journey of faith to serve God with clarity of purpose, openness to God’s spirit, and compassion for all of God’s people.

In Christ’s Peace,  
Pastor Laura (“PL” for short)

### **Major Themes from July Conversation Groups, supported by August Congregational Survey findings:**

- Craving connection with each other in the Church.
- Desire for more/revived involvement/higher profile in the community.
- Strengthen and prioritize children and youth programming, including parent connection.
- Continue/encourage increased involvement of members and member families in worship.
- Hybrid worship is here to stay, we need to create community between online and in-person.
- Desire for more effective/personal communication within and from the Church.
- Develop more opportunities for members to connect for fellowship and support.
- Longing for practical/personal understanding of the Mission Statement.

## **SESSION REPORT** by Carol Korak, Clerk of Session

The governance and spiritual oversight of every Presbyterian church rests with a board of officers known as the Session. Those officers, known as Ruling Elders, are nominated by a committee of the congregation, and are elected by the Congregation at an Annual Meeting held in the spring.

Our Session has sixteen ruling elders who serve terms of three years. These elders are divided into three classes, with one-third of the elders retiring every year. Our bylaws also provide for two youth elders, to serve for a term of one year, and who has the same authority and responsibility as his or her colleagues.

Every Session has two officers: The Moderator, who is the senior pastor of the church, and the Clerk, who is elected annually by the Session. The Clerk is responsible for keeping the minutes of Session and Congregational Meetings, church registers, and handles other administrative tasks on behalf of the Session.

Following is a list of Elders currently serving on Session, the committee on which they serve, and the year in which their current term of office expires:

Brian Hughes, Personnel Support, 2024  
Iris Boaz, Adult Faith Formation, 2022  
Scott Morris, Finance, Budget, & Operations, 2022  
Jeff Miller, Building & Grounds, 2023  
Sal Karottki, Youth & Family, 2023  
John Hairston, Giving, 2023  
Betsy Crosswhite, Communications, 2022  
Jennifer Holt, Mission, 2022  
Rick Baer, Membership, 2022  
Jane Rankin, Personnel Support, 2023  
Susan Eby, Finance, Budget, & Operations, 2022  
Stephanie Phelan, Fellowship, 2022  
Tammy Walker, Children's Ministry, 2022  
Greg Michel, Communications, 2024  
Steve Reinhart, Strategic Planning, 2024  
Guyneth Sharp, Worship, Music & Arts, 2024  
Adam Panzica, Youth & Family, 2022

### **We celebrated four baptisms:**

Abigail Linnihan, March 20, 2021  
Vesper Nadine Karottki, May 2, 2021  
Noah Richard Lehn, June 20, 2021  
Grant Graham, August 22, 2021

### **Ten of our youth were confirmed May 16, 2021**

Ainsley Flintz  
Gillian Haro  
Pierce Hedstrom  
Zoe Hedstrom  
Lukas Henderson  
Addison Lundgren  
Clark Lundgren  
Kate Todd  
Daphne Traynor  
Rhett Zimmer

### **We celebrated the lives of those who no longer walk with us:**

William Templemeyer, February 26, 2021  
Nancy Kaatz, May 25, 2021  
Marge Brumitt, September 11, 2021  
Shirley Lahr, November 7, 2021

<b>Demographic Report 2021</b>	<b>Christian Education Enrollment by Age</b>
<b>January 1, 2021 through January 31, 2021</b>	Birth – 3 9
<b><u>Active Members 1/1/2021</u></b>	Age 4 4
<b>544</b>	Kindergarten 2
<b><u>Membership Gains</u></b>	Grade 1 8
Profession or Reaffirmation of Faith	Grade 2 3
17 and under 10	Grade 3 5
18 and over 5	Grade 4 6
Certificate of transfer 0	Grade 5 7
<b><u>Membership Losses</u></b>	Grade 6 6
Certificate of transfer 0	Grade 7 8
Deaths 4	Grade 8 3
Deleted (any reason) 68	Grade 9 12
<b><u>Active Membership 12/31/2021</u></b>	Grade 10 10
<b>487</b>	Grade 11 7
<b><u>Baptisms</u></b>	Grade 12 6
Presented by others 1	<b>Average weekly Attendance</b>
At Confirmation 0	Indoor 27
Other 0	Outdoor 29
	Video 83

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY GROUP

The Adult Faith Formation Committee assists with developing programs, seminars and educational experiences that encourage and deepen our appreciation of the Bible, our Presbyterian beliefs and our life as followers of Christ. The Adult Faith Formation Committee supports weekly Adult studies, small groups and retreats throughout the church program year.

### AFF Committee Members:

- David Bennett
- Iris Boaz (chair)
- Jeff Lehn (staff)
- Sharon Panzica
- Bill Sharp
- Sue Sklansky (staff)

### 20201 AFF

- In 2021 the theme of the January Women's Retreat was Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting led by Rev. Holly Whitcomb.
- Some small groups continued meeting via Zoom after the pandemic caused in-person meetings to cease.

### Some of the Sunday morning studies in 2021 were:

- January, "My view of the Pandemic" featuring some of our mission partners,
- February - April, Amy-Jill Levine's book, "Entering the Passion of Jesus"
- April - May, "Teach us to Pray; The Lord's Prayer in the early Church and Today,"
- June - August, "Love is the Way," Rev. Michal Curry,
- September - November, The Beatitudes.

## BOARD OF DEACONS

The deacons faced another challenging year, given the concern for COVID with our elderly members. There are currently 12 deacons (and 2 youth deacons), serving 45 people (most are church members, with a few that had been regular visitors). We lost five of our care partners this past year, which is always hard on their deacon if a relationship had been established over 3 years. 2021 allowed for more in-person visitation over 2020 due to seniors getting early vaccines and boosters.

### *fpcw* Deacons

Wendy Lundgren, Moderator

Grainne Bailey

Nancy and Sam Bennett

Bob Brown

Jane Brumitt

Nan Scott

Julie Fogarty

Greg Korak

Addison Lundgren

Amy Miller

Jenn Mullman

Mercy Ndung'u

George Vandervoort

### Touchpoints for 2021:

- Deacon newsletters were sent to care partners offering online activities while in isolation, such as free concerts, live bird watching, art museums virtual tours, etc.
- Valentines delivered
- Easter plants delivered
- Spring/Summer vaccines allowed us to visit in-person in most retirement communities!
- Fall mums delivered
- Advent books delivered
- Christmas plants and cookies delivered

New for 2022! The pandemic heightened the need for church members to gather in new ways to experience "community." This need is no different for our seniors, so this spring we will bring back the tradition of hosting Teas annually for our larger groups of residents in retirement communities.

## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS MINISTRY GROUP

The Buildings & Grounds Committee of Session provides oversight of all our church's physical facilities to ensure that we can support the programs that are critical to our church mission to Experience God, Grow Disciples, and Transform Lives. The Committee oversees all Church facilities including the Main Building and Sanctuary, Chapel Garden, Manse, Garages, Playground, Parking Areas, and all Grounds. In addition to maintenance and operation of all facilities the Committee is responsible for planning and executing long term capital improvement projects. Buildings and Grounds works closely with FBO, but also interfaces with other committees to support Worship, Fellowship, Education, and Mission.

### Committee Members:

Chair: Jeff Miller, Greg Korak, Joyce Knauff, Carl Brown, Dorothy Ballantine, Pete Holtermann, Pastor Jeff Lehn

### Accomplishments:

The pandemic continued to significantly reduce activity and use of FPCW's facilities in 2021. In-person worship resumed in the late Spring of 2021 and use of the facilities increased in early Fall. Unfortunately, late Fall and early Winter saw an increase in infections in Cook County reducing in-person meetings and use of the facilities. The Buildings and Grounds Committee met each month of 2021, below is a brief summary of accomplishments.

- Completed minor repairs and maintenance to Boiler, Elevator, and Roof
- Completed annual inspections of Fire Alarm, Elevator, and Kitchen Exhaust Hood
- Installed a new secure Mailbox at rear entrance
- Replaced one commercial Refrigerator in kitchen
- Improved FPCW IT Network with new switches, firewall, and wireless access points
- Hired roofing consultant to prepare bid documents for roof parapet repair

### Upcoming Projects and Initiatives:

- Bid and execute roof parapet repair at rear of Sanctuary
- Upgrade Internet Service and expand wireless access throughout building
- Pursue new wireless security access control at rear entrance
- Upgrade and improve Sanctuary Lighting
- Replace hydraulic elevator oil
- Sealcoat and restripe parking lot
- Replace (2) Redbud trees

## CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Children and Family Ministry members: Lindley Traynor (staff), Tammy Walker (elder), Rachel Brown, Mark SooHoo, Kate White

- Due to the pandemic, meeting in person at *fpcw* was on hold for kids for much of 2021.
- Instead, from January-September Lindley collaborated with Peggy and Scott to create family worship videos each week called "Stories and Songs." Lindley created videos using various visual media, such as hand-drawn illustrations, wooden play people, and shadow puppets, and voiceover narration and occasional sound effects. The videos told stories from the Bible, explained various theological concepts, and shared spiritual practice ideas that families could try at home.
- Once a month throughout the summer Lindley, Peggy and Scott collaborated on an outdoor VBS experience. The kids explored Psalm 23 through music, games, collaborative art, and ASL, and enjoyed dinner (and ice cream!) together in the fellowship garden with families. The children's fiber art project from June, entitled "Green Pastures, Still Waters," can be seen hanging in the Chapel.
- In mid-September the children began meeting in person on Sunday mornings for Children's Chapel. The children began in worship with the whole congregation, and after sharing the peace, moved to either the manse backyard or the chapel for a special time of music, prayer, and hearing the Word.
- September also brought the launch of Midweek Meetup, a Wednesday afternoon music, game, craft, and fellowship time for kids ages PreK-6<sup>th</sup> grade, followed each week by a church family dinner.
- Instead of a live Nativity pageant, Lindley produced a video pageant, shot at Gillson Park starring the kids of Midweek Meetup, which "premiered" in worship on the third Sunday of Advent.
- Kindergarteners were given story Bibles in January and current third graders received Bibles in October.

Because of Lindley's creativity, energy, and flexibility, FPCW provided meaningful and impactful programs for the children of our church, despite the challenges of navigating the pandemic. Peggy Massello did an excellent job incorporating the music and Scott McElhenie added his talents in helping with the videos.

Thank you Lindley, Peggy, and Scott for the loving care you showed to our children.

## COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY GROUP

The Communications Committee of Session enhances communications with our dynamic congregation to grow in faith together. The committee develops and maintains mechanisms and systems to communicate with our congregation and the community at large to keep them informed and engaged in fpcw activities.

Committee Members:

Betsy Crosswhite, Madeline Weston, Sue Skylansky

On-going projects and Communication systems management include:

- FPCW logo/image re-design
- FPCW website re-design
- FPCW/My Church app/Realm
- Weekly E-news (Tuesday, *Daily Bread*) and Announcements via Constant Contact email
- Common Life section of the weekly church service bulletin
- Social Media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube & Twitter
- Outdoor lawn banners
- Welcome screens in Lobby and Lounge
- Indoor/outdoor signage
- Bulletin Boards
- Various program flyers (Singers & Ringers, Stock the Shelves, etc.)
- Editing and producing weekly online worship videos.
- Management of video/camera system to “live feed” worship and other services to the membership.

Future Goals/Projects:

- Continually audit effectiveness and use of current communication vehicles.
- Streamline communication through various channels for greater consistency.
- Build a training manual and rotating team of church members trained on the use of video live-stream system.

## FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY GROUP

Hopefully we are putting Covid in the rearview mirror and can begin to come together safely with one another again. While we are grateful for the technology that allowed us to watch the Worship service or participate in a small group or ministry meeting, it is a medium not well suited for fellowship. We had a few opportunities to gather outside for ice cream socials and BBQs – we found food draws a nice crowd.

Fellowship’s purpose is to draw us together as a community centered in Christ. And as our congregational survey showed, we have a hunger not just to gather, but to gather as an intergenerational community. So, we are looking for opportunities to meet the needs of young and older alike. We understand people are busy and schedules fill fast so, we will be establishing a monthly pattern of activities to meet fellowship needs. Some of the suggestions have been game night, movie night, cooking lessons, broom ball, service project and gathering around a campfire. We are also looking to partner with other ministries to broaden our reach.

The Fellowship Ministry is called to give care, companionship and a welcoming community to one another, and the outside world. There are many opportunities to serve on the Fellowship Ministry team – large and small, one time or ongoing. We welcome any volunteer who would like to be in service to one another, and a presence in the community.

## **FINANCE, BUDGET & OPERATIONS MINISTRY GROUP**

The Finance, Budget and Operations Committee of Session is charged with oversight of the financial and operational health through the faithful stewardship of our church's financial assets including the endowment, the operating fund and restricted funds. This committee also assumes responsibility for audit, legal affairs, insurance, information technology, and recommendations on capital expenditures. In addition, FBO is responsible for considering and projecting the long-term financial and capital needs of the congregation.

### **Who's on the committee:**

Susan Eby and Scott Morris (co-chairs), Rev. Jeff Lehn, Marvin Behm (Treasurer), Bonnie Wehrenberg, Bruce Lyon, Jeff Miller, Stephanie Rupp, Erich Kirr, and John Hairston

### **2021 accomplishments/future goals:**

- Continuing to improve FPCW's financial reserves and refining budget process ahead of hiring a full-time Associate Pastor
- Work with other FPCW committees to develop additional revenue sources to bolster our allocation of funds to Mission partners

## **GIVING MINISTRY GROUP**

The Giving Committee of Session is charged with ensuring that the church's financial needs are met by inviting members and friends into the ministries of stewardship and giving. This ministry group works closely with the Senior Pastor and FBO. Together, the financial needs of the congregation are discerned, and strategies for meeting those needs are developed. The Giving Committee engages the congregation in the annual Stewardship Campaign, and develops and coordinates with other capital or endowment fundraising as discerned and needed. The Giving Committee considers, celebrates, and appreciates all the ways God makes us into a giving people.

Thank you for your ongoing generosity to the life and ministry of our church! Every gift of every size matters. We could not do it without you.

### **Outcomes:**

- Engaged and committed members and friends of our church who give generously
- Annual giving campaigns resulting in pledge commitments meeting the budget goals for the year
- Annual collections of pledges consistent with budget expectations
- Other ad hoc campaigns or programs throughout the year to secure funding for targeted programs or capital needs

### **Committee Members:**

John Hairston, Dan Johnson, Amy McJoynt and Rev. Jeff Lehn (along with ad hoc participation of Finance Manager, Marvin Behm, and FBO)

### **2021 Accomplishments/2022 Plans:**

- Our church continues to be remarkably faithful and generous in its support of the ministries to which we believe God has called us. In 2021, we received 112 pledges for a total of \$798,000 (average pledge of \$7,125). Thank you!
- We ended 2021 achieving nearly 98% of our budgeted donations, a heartening amount, even with the pandemic's ongoing economic impact and our non-pledge giving being lower due to part of the year not having in-person services. Combined with our savings on expenses, this allowed us to end the year with a modest deficit of \$6,340.
- The 2022 stewardship campaign ended with 117 pledges received for a total of \$812,649

## MEMBERSHIP MINISTRY GROUP

The Membership Committee of Session is charged with developing the membership of First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette by reaching out to non-members and supporting them as they make the transition to participation and full membership in FPCW. Guided by our vision/mission statement to Experience God, Grow Disciples, Transform Lives, the committee seeks to support the engagement of all our visitors and members in worship, faith formation, mission and care. The committee works closely with Senior Pastor, Jeff Lehn and staff on new member hospitality, and with several other committees on member engagement. Success is measured by the care given to visitors, potential members, and new members and their subsequent involvement in and support of our common mission.

## ORGANIZATION

The committee is composed of one or more Session members, Director of Congregational Care & Engagement Sue Sklansky as the staff liaison, as well as a number of other church members. The Session member appointed as Chair by Senior Pastor Jeff Lehn for the 2020-2021 program year is Rick Baer, who can be reached at [rickbaer2112@gmail.com](mailto:rickbaer2112@gmail.com) or by calling the church office at 847-256-3010.

## ACTIVITIES

Develops the membership of First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette by:

- Welcoming visitors during worship and providing further outreach
- Hosting classes for prospective members
- Integrating new members into our common life
- Celebrating membership anniversaries.

The Membership Committee has not met since 2020 due to the COVID pandemic because the church was not meeting in person and the church's priorities were focused on existing members. As the church begins to re-open, we will reconvene membership committee meetings to determine ways to find new members. In 2020 the church reviewed membership rolls to determine if inactive members should be kept or removed on membership rolls. Based on this evaluation, the church membership today is 487 people.

## MISSION MINISTRY GROUP

The Mission Committee actively engages the congregation in joining God's work of love, justice, healing, and reconciliation in the world. As Christians, we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world which invites us to "be mission" rather than "do mission," with the first being transformational and relational and the second being transactional. Responsibilities include directing our church's financial contributions to mission partners and developing opportunities for church member involvement in mission activities.

2021 members: Mary Watt and Jenni Holt (co-chairs), Amy Miller, Anita Thies, Bob Bobesink, Kara Hughes, Nancy Freeman, Rick Drake, Greg Korak, Jennifer Christensen, and Pastor Laura Sherwood as staff liaison.

In response to the ongoing pandemic in 2021, the mission committee focused on those mission partners who relieve poverty, homelessness, and hunger locally and worldwide while maintaining our support of partners working in mental health, education, domestic violence, and refugee relief:

### Poverty, Homelessness, & Hunger Mission Partners:

- Connections for the Homeless
- Family Promise
- Interfaith Action
- The Boulevard
- Sarah's Circle
- New Life Baptist
- Family Matters
- C24/7
- Curt's Café
- Mary Lou's Place

### Worldwide Mission

- Malawi
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

### Refugee

- Stock the Shelves
- Refugee Relief

Additionally in 2021, the committee funded three new organizations. These partners were selected because of their focus on mental health and their commitment to racial justice and equity:

- Learning Bridge Early Education Center,
- Women Initiating New Directions (WIND),
- Chicago Adventure Therapy

*Mission Ministry continues on the next page*

## Mission Ministry continued

Highlights of 2021 activities include:

- **Providing meals** to homeless residents at Connections for the Homeless shelters in Evanston that adhered to COVID 19 protocols and allowed congregation to safely serve this population. Our support of Interfaith Action additionally made an impact on combating homelessness.
- **Month-long hosting of Family Promise families** by providing temporary shelter and meals in a safe, non-contact method while still utilizing our church property to serve.
- **Holiday Giving Tree** where members of FPCW provide gifts for children and adults who are served by some of our mission partners. This year this was accomplished with a hybrid approach to collecting gifts with online and church drop off along with several wrapping events.
- During a time of change (staffing and hardship) for our partner church, the Katawa congregation of the **Central Church of Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Malawi**, we continued our financial support in the expansion of their school and library.
- Our relationship with the **New Life Baptist Church** grew this past year, as members of our congregation and committee traveled to their church, toured their homeless shelter, and learned more about their community outreach during COVID. Pastor Jeff preached to their congregation one Sunday which provided further connection between our two congregations.



## PERSONNEL SUPPORT MINISTRY GROUP

The Committee is charged with ensuring that fpcw's staff and staffing structure adequately support our ministry and operational needs. It works with the Senior Pastor/Head of Staff and is guided by our congregation's mission and vision statements. The committee provides oversight for annual performance reviews and any interim feedback for staff, develops and implements personnel policies, develops and oversees the annual personnel budget and the hiring of non-clergy staff.

### Committee Members:

Brian Hughes (co-chair)

Carolyn Holtermann

Dan Johnson

Emily Karottki (through October, 2021)

Jane Rankin (co-chair)

Rev. Jeff Lehn (staff liaison)

### 2021 Committee Accomplishments

- The Personnel Support Ministry (PSM) group considered options for a second pastoral position and after discussion with Session, recommended searching for an installed, full-time assistant or associate pastor in a continuing (non-term) position.
- The PSM group worked with Pastor Jeff Lehn on arrangements for his medical leave beginning in December, including hiring the Rev. Nancy Dolan and working with Pastor Nancy and Pastor Laura to clarify their activities and roles. PSM hosted a question-and-answer session for members of the congregation about Pastor Jeff's leave.
- The PSM Group worked with Pastor Jeff to reduce the number of weekly committee meetings that he attends, recommending that he limit his attendance to those meetings at which his presence is needed.
- Interim Associate Pastor Laura Sherwood's contract was extended for an additional year. With her input and consideration of the congregation's needs, her duties were modified to focus on youth and family ministry and pastoral care.
- The PSM group hired a contractor to film and edit the livestreams of Sunday worship and special services.
- Beginning in 2021 and going forward, continuing staff will undergo background checks every five years. Formerly, only newly hired staff were subject to background checks.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) of Session is charged with encouraging and supporting church leaders in their efforts to discern and plan for future activities. This committee helps the staff and committees to identify opportunities and to incorporate our church's vision, goals, and objectives in their planning. The committee works closely with Senior Pastor Jeff Lehn, staff, and all committees to ensure that our church has a comprehensive and planful approach to carrying out our stated mission and vision as a congregation.

In 2021, the committee membership included:

- Rick Baer\*
- Jennifer Christensen\*
- Craig Hutson
- Frank Panzica
- Pastor Jeff Lehn\*
- Jim Lyman
- Steve Reinhart (chair)\*
- Sue Sklansky (staff member)\*

*\*members continuing into 2022*

In 2021, the primary focus of the SPC was engaging church and committee leadership – along with the congregation – to discern how FPCW can continue to serve our congregation and community as we emerge from the pandemic. In keeping with its overall planning role, the committee has planned, supported, and/or assisted with the following efforts during the past year:

- Session retreat in early June
- Conversation groups in July & August
- Congregational survey in August and September
- Survey analysis, which yielded detailed reports (including comments) for committees and a summary report for all members of the congregation
- Continued assessment, review, and guidance of Covid protocols as the Delta and Omicron waves of the Covid pandemic impacted our staff and members

Looking to the future, SPC will collaborate with other committees to align the discernment results with committee- and Session-led activities and programs that will help reengage members and attract participation from the community.

## WORSHIP, MUSIC, & THE ARTS MINISTRY GROUP

The Worship, Music, and the Arts Committee (WMA) plays a major role in how our congregation experiences God by supporting and enhancing the worship life of our church. As the heart of our life together, we seek to engage in inspiring worship guided by the Reformed Tradition, while incorporating a variety of musical and liturgical elements that create a vibrant and engaging worship experience. The committee works closely with our Director of Worship and Music, Peggy Massello, and Pastor Jeff Lehn. Committee Members include:

- Bill Bishop
- Kevin McJoynt - Ushers
- Linda Malstrom - Flowers
- Stephanie Phelan - Decorations/Fellowship
- Amy Russell - Paraments
- Guyneth Sharp, Chair

2021, like 2020, was a challenging year. The celebratory events before Covid were curtailed in the interests of the health and well-being of our church family. Our goal was to make church safe and inviting. We are deeply grateful to Peggy Massello, who in the midst of unimaginable challenges due to the pandemic, continued to comfort, inspire, and uplift us through her musical expertise and creativity. Peggy, Lindley Traynor, and Scott McElhenie also pre-recorded "Songs and Stories" each Sunday for Family Worship. Peggy and Madeline Weston creatively scheduled Liturgists of various ages, groupings (such as families), and locations. Our worship services remained all virtual until April 4th, Easter Sunday, when we also worshiped briefly in the Fellowship Garden. On April 25th, we were joyfully in person in the Sanctuary and live stream! A special thank you to John Phelan for initiating our live stream and continuing his faithful management of our sound system. We enjoyed summer services in the Fellowship Garden, traditional summer beach services, a wonderful First Festival celebration on September 12th to kick-off a new church year, and outdoor worship well into October. Advent marked the joyful return of our Lessons and Carols service and the Wassail Party. We celebrated Christmas Eve with 2 services, 4:00 and 9:00pm.

The WMA Committee:

- Oversees Ushers, Liturgists, and Communion
- Decorates the sanctuary and church during each liturgical season
- Assists in the development of special worship services
- Organizes the First Festival event in September Supports Lenten season worship with soup suppers before Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday services.
- Provides flowers for Advent, Easter, special services, and various other occasions
- Displays photography and artwork for the enjoyment of members and visitors

## YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY GROUP

The Youth and Family Ministries Committee (YFMC) reconstituted with new committee members in 2021-22. Given the prior year's experience where the pandemic made it difficult to meet in-person, YFMC focused on creating consistency and regularity in the Tower program (high school), as well as weekly fellowship for middle schoolers and events for 5th- and 6th-grade youth.

After Tower orientation in the fall, parents and students were provided an annual calendar of meetings and events. COVID case rate increases and the rise in the omicron variant delayed or paused several meetings/events, but in general Tower has continued to meet and hold events throughout the year. The Tower program has consistently met on Sunday evenings (with only minor COVID-generated pauses) and has also had meals together after each meeting. The Tower program has generally involved 10 or more students, which is a significant increase over last year's weekly participation levels. The students have been following the journeys of the Apostle Paul throughout the year and have engaged in discussions on this during Tower meetings. The students planned and participated in a fall lock-in, a winter progressive dinner, a Super Bowl party, a winter trampoline party, and multiple ideation sessions concerning the summer work trip. The Tower youth selected and presented multiple ideas for a work trip location, leading the YFMC to approve the summer work trip to Ronceverte, West Virginia (July 31-August 6). The Tower youth are now planning the spring benefit dinner to raise funds for the summer work trip.

For 7th and 8th graders, Paster Laura (along with Amy Lyon) has launched and is leading a two-track weekly fellowship program, which includes a confirmation track for the 8th-grade youth. With a short pause due to the omicron variant, the weekly fellowship sessions have begun, and the kids are learning and experiencing fellowship together.

For 5th and 6th graders, YFMC approved moving to an event-based model for the year, rather than a weekly fellowship model. An example of a recent event was the Souper Bowl of Caring, where our younger youth raised over \$1,000 for local food ministries! Pastor Laura also spearheaded integrating our younger youth into Sunday worship with a "Light Bearer" program in 2021 that has now transitioned to a full Acolyte program for 2022. In addition, Mid-week Meet-up and Children's Chapel was re-launched in 2021-22, allowing fpcw's younger youth to participate in these multi-age programs.

YFMC has been focused on re-launching and stabilizing the youth programs after the pandemic-generated delays in 2020, and with God's help and the boundless energy and hopefulness of fpcw's students, we will continue to grow these programs and – most importantly – the faith of our youth.

<b>Church Operating Budget</b>	<b>2021 Annual Actual</b>	<b>2021 Annual Budget</b>	<b>Percent of 2021 Budget</b>
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Available for Expenditure:

Pledge and Other Contribution Receipts	\$828,295	\$848,100	97.7%
Other Income	3,366	2,880	116.9%
Endowment Support	85,284	85,284	100.0%
	\$916,945	\$936,264	97.9%

Expenses:

Personnel	\$570,362	\$570,013	100.1%
General (incl per-capita expense of \$19,764)	28,845	31,044	92.9%
Christian Education	8,047	8,525	94.4%
Worship & Music (inc. First Festival*)	16,670	12,075	138.0%
Membership	1,100	2,850	38.6%
Communications	4,440	4,750	93.5%
Stewardship / Online Giving Fees	5,060	6,650	76.1%
Office & Insurance	54,862	51,867	105.8%
Buildings & Grounds	101,619	116,210	87.4%
Mission**	114,280	114,280	100.0%
Endowment Loan Repayment	18,000	18,000	100.0%
	\$923,285	\$936,264	98.6%

Difference: (\$6,340) \$0

Note\* - COVID costs have driven the rental cost of tents and children's inflatables much higher

Note\*\* - fpcw gave an additional \$75,500 to local mission partners in 2021 paid from PPP funds.

## 2021 ENDOWMENT FUND REPORT

In 2021, the total investment return for the endowment fund was approximately 14%, as stock market returns were strong, but bond market returns suffered from interest rates bouncing up from historic lows. As endowment funds are permanent gifts that only the income from the gift can generally be spent, the annual support generated by the *ffcw* endowment fund continues to be set at 5.5% of a rolling average (past 12 quarters) of the individual sub-funds' value.

In 2021, the support given to the church's ministry was \$89,094. Of this total, \$85,284 was general support for operations and missions (from the sub-funds of the endowment including the Cook, Rutherford, Pell, Hughey and Steiner gifts), and \$3,810 was put into Music funds (from the sub-funds including the Turner, Leck, Gillum and Neuhaus gifts) to be used for special music needs.

<b>Total Endowment Fund balance as of December 31, 2020</b>	<b>\$ 2,017,162.51</b>
Bequests and Gifts Received	\$ 0
Interest and Dividends	\$ 30,672.05
Market Returns	\$ 253,742.31
Support to Church (in 2021 budget)	\$ (89,094.00)
<b>Total Endowment Fund balance as of December 31, 2021</b>	<b>\$ <u>2,212,482.87</u></b>

### History of Endowment and Fund Descriptions

The Session created the Endowment of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette on March 5, 1979. The purpose of the Endowment is to encourage gifts and bequests from members and friends to be used by the church for its work in the name of Christ, both in Wilmette and wherever need exists and to receive and manage such gifts excluding funds raise for normal operating and budgetary purposes.

Most of the funds in the Endowment participate in the annual contribution to the church budget (both operations and mission). That contribution is determined at the end of September each year prior to the next year's budget (rolling average of 5.5% of the total value of the funds during the previous 12 quarters).

The **Cook/Rutherford Fund** resulted from bequests given by Thelma and Alan Cook (in 1979) and Richard Rutherford (in 2000 and 2001). It supports both mission and church operations.

The **Church Operating Fund** was established by Stanley Hughey with a gift in 1989 and has been added to in subsequent by members of the congregation. It supports church operations.

The **Pell Family Fund** was established by Wilbur Pell in 1989 and has been added to over the years. It also supports church operations.

The **Turner-Leck-Gillum Fund** was combined (three separate funds into one) in 2002 because all three families who created the funds designated them to support music programs over and above the church budget.

The **Neuhaus Music Fund** was established in 1998 in member of Margaret (Peggy) Neuhaus. It was created to promote the ministry of music as an expression of our love of God – among members, staff and the Presbytery of Chicago. It funds special music over and above the church budget.

The **Montgomery and Lucile C. May Scholarship Fund** was created in 1971 in memory of Montgomery May. Mr. May's father and grandfather had been Presbyterian ministers. Mrs. May established the fund to further the education of an individuals going into the ministry or studying in the field of Christian education.

The **Ann J. Curry Fund** was established in 1998 with a gift in memory of Ann Curry. The purpose of the fund is to support biblical studies, with an emphasis on supporting teachers.

The **Margaret and Fred F. Schwenn Fund** was established in 1984. The fund is to be used to further nurturing and pastoral care activities within the church, including the training of lay leaders.

The **Anne M. Steiner Memorial Fund** was established in 1996 from remaining funds given by members of the congregation to assist the Steiner family at the time of Anne's untimely death. The fund's focus is mission and ministries to which youth are committed.

The **James Steiner Youth Fund** was established in 2009 as part of the capital campaign that year to support a staff youth ministry position. It is named in honor of former Associate Pastor, Jim Steiner, who our church served for over 20 years and primarily worked with youth. This fund supports a youth position still today.

## FPCW SESSION

### Class of 2022

Irris Boaz	Adult Faith Formation Ministry group
Scott Morris	Finance, Budget, & Operations Ministry Group
Betsy Crosswhite	Communications Ministry Group
Jennifer Holt	Mission Ministry Group
Rick Baer	Membership Ministry group
Stephanie Phelan	Fellowship Ministry Group
Adam Panzica	Youth & Family Ministry Group
Susan Eby	Finance, Budget, & Operations Ministry group
Tammy Walker	Children & Family Ministry Group

### Class of 2023

Jeff Miller	Building & Grounds Ministry group
Sal Karottki,	Youth & Family Ministry group
John Hairston	Giving Ministry Group
Jane Rankin	Personnel Support Ministry Group

### Class of 2024

Brian Hughes	Personnel Support Ministry Group
Steve Reinhart	Strategic Planning Ministry group
Guyneth Sharp	Worship, Music & Arts Ministry group



### INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

Gathered by the grace of Jesus Christ, we are a vibrant and supportive Christian family whose welcoming spirit reflects God's love for all people. We invite participation in all aspects of our church life by persons of every race, language, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, economic or marital status, or faith background. *fpcw* is a member of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, a broad-based, national group of clergy and lay leaders working for a church that is simultaneously faithful, just, and whole.