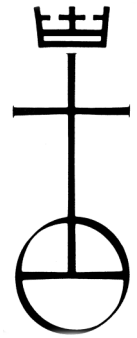

Union Congregational United Church of Christ



Annual Report for 2023

188th Annual Meeting



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Our Annual Meeting Sunday, January 28, 2024

The 188th Annual Meeting of
Union Congregational United Church of Christ
will convene immediately following worship on Sunday, January 28.

- Reports will be received, retiring Ministry chairs and vice-chairs will be recognized, elections will be held for new leaders of our congregation.
- The 2024 budget will be proposed, discussed and adopted.
- We will vote to renew our membership in JOSHUA for 2024.

On the Cover

In the summer of 2023, Union Church's Membership and Inreach Ministry asked members and friends to submit artwork that could be printed on T-shirts. Two designs were chosen: "Dragon" by Jade Hatton and "Footprints" by Achim Seifert.

To showcase their work, Union's Annual Report for 2023 boasts two covers—dragon or footprints—depending on the copy you picked up. Having more than one cover for the same annual report is likely a first in the long history of Union Church.

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UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Green Bay, Wisconsin

188th Annual Meeting
Convening in the sanctuary following the Worship Service
Sunday, January 28, 2024

NOTE: Please review the reports in this booklet *prior* to the Annual Meeting.

Call to Order and Approval of Agenda	Tim Harder Moderator
Constituting Prayer and Memorial Moments	Bridget Flad Daniels Senior Minister
Declaration of Quorum	Gail Hohenstein, Clerk
Opening Remarks	Moderator, Senior Minister
Approval of Minutes	Moderator
Annual Reports: Highlights, Questions	Ministry Chairs
Presentation of the Proposed 2024 Budget	Sandy Polarek, Treasurer
JOSHUA Membership for 2024	Steve Hartman, JOSHUA Liaison
Recognition: Retiring Ministry Chairs and Officers	Moderator
Nominating Committee Report	Sandy Polarek, Nominating Committee Chair
Litany for Commissioning: New Members of Common Ministry and Committees	Moderator, Senior Minister, Congregation
Other Business	Moderator
Benediction	Senior Minister

— The Clerk's Report —

The minutes of the monthly meetings of the Common Ministry have been recorded and approved. Copies of the minutes have been filed in the Minutes book in the main office and posted on the bulletin board across from the office and on the Church website for public access.

The minutes of the 187th Annual Meeting of January 29, 2023 have been reviewed by the Common Ministry and are included in this Annual Report for approval at the 188th Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Hohenstein, Clerk

MINUTES OF THE 187th ANNUAL MEETING January 29, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: The 187th Annual Meeting of Union Congregational United Church of Christ of Green Bay, Wisconsin was called to order by Moderator Tim Harder at 11:31 a.m. Motion to approve the agenda was approved. (Motion Jeff Larson/Second Jammie VerGiesen)

CONSTITUTING PRAYER AND MEMORIAL MOMENTS: Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels led the congregation in prayer that included the following members who died this past year:

Trevor Hohenstein Thie	James Clay Bowley	Ann Henke Fahres
Russell L. Mueller Jr.	Annette Louise Hamilton	Judy Kay Sharp
Rosalie Anne Shier	Dar Saladino-Blair	Gerald Eugene Kalkofen

and, in addition, friend of the congregation, Christopher Nikolai.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM: According to the Constitution, as amended, a quorum consists of 6% of the active membership of the congregation. As of December 31, 2022, Union Congregational United Church of Christ had 529 active members. Clerk Gail Hohenstein declared that by visual observation the necessary quorum to conduct business was present.

OPENING REMARKS: Moderator Harder welcomed all to the 187th Union Congregational Annual Meeting. He thanked Dr. Michael Lukens for acting as Parliamentarian. He then reflected on how Union thrived the last three years despite the pandemic. He related how all the ministries and volunteers worked to keep Union worshipping and keeping the Christ Spirit dominant in our lives. He thanked the members and friends of Union who continue to contribute their time and talent to Union. He also encouraged everyone to consider how they can be involved in Union's ministries.

Pastor Flad Daniels observed that 2022 was a year of transition, with relocations and deaths of a number of long-time members. As recently as January 2022 we encouraged online worship again. A joy is that we have a confirmation class this year with a remarkable group of confirmands. 2022 was also a year of substantial staff transition, with Christopher's death and the hiring of Andrew Verhulst, and the resignation of Seong Graham and the hiring of Haley Steele. Pastor Bridget is excited that

Haley has some ideas to expand our music ministry and how it reaches out into the wider world. She gave thanks for all those who make worship possible, including Ray Thompson, Haley Steele, the folks who offer Children's Moments, and the nursery staff. She expressed that the Blessing Box is a phenomenon unto itself. She did not anticipate it would become a food pantry fully stocked three times each week, and expressed appreciation for all those who make this happen. She noted that the Church's finances are going strong, supporting the infrastructure to continue vital ministries, including the potential Capital Campaign. She expressed thanks to the officers of the Church.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the 186th Annual Meeting were approved as written in the Annual Report (Motion Kathy Baldwin/Second Christie Reese).

ANNUAL REPORTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND QUESTIONS:

EDUCATION

No report.

MEMBERSHIP AND INREACH

Denise Olson highlighted that 17 new members joined over the past year. We have been able to re-start social events such as after church coffee hour, Wednesday night Youth Group dinners, Priscilla Circle and the Women's Advent Event.

OUTREACH

Christie Reese reported that Outreach Ministry has been very active this year and encouraged folks interested in working for social justice to join them. The Ministry is always open for new projects/passions to support in Green Bay, the United States and the world.

WORSHIP

Betty Bienash thanked all who in so many ways contribute to services. She echoed Pastor Flad Daniels' recollection that we began the year encouraging folks to worship from home, and then we ended the year with the first live Christmas pageant since 2019, and have welcomed the choir and bell choir back. We have grown and united together in the sanctuary but also continued the streamed services, and thanked everyone for their support.

STEWARDSHIP

David Thie reminded us that the Stewardship Ministry oversees the financial needs and facilities of the church. Important 2022 milestones include the return to in-person events and services, the tragedy of losing Christopher Nikolai, kicking off the Capital Campaign feasibility evaluation, a new bookkeeping system, and the hiring of Andrew Verhulst as Maintenance Technician in October. He gave special mention to the church staff, especially Katrina Catteruccia for streamlining bookkeeping, Bill Johnson for his continued contribution to building maintenance, Les Van Vonderen and Peggy Welsh for cultivating generosity through the pledge campaign, Kathy Seifert for heading up the garden committee, and Cathy Putman for her contribution in renovating the Biblical Garden. Also, thanks to the Stewardship Ministry members.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

Paco Espinosa encouraged members to use the Gifts & Memorials funds and spread word that they are available for organizations that support the community and share in the Church's mission.

2023 BUDGET:

Treasurer Sandy Polarek distributed the proposed 2023 budget and reported as follows:

Because we have maintained and increased giving and have been good stewards of our funds, we did not have to use as much of our reserves as planned, and noted we still have \$44,670 in reserve (after using about \$5,000) as of the end of 2022. She expressed thanks to Katrina for her assistance as well as Church Windows. Sandy highlighted some of the changes from the 2022 budget, and noted that pledge income is getting closer to that budgeted. The primary increases in expenses were utilities, internet and postage, as well as salary increases. She noted the removal of the associate pastor position, which has been offset by more responsibility for the music director, added funds for once-a-month pulpit supply, and funds for Bridget to retain very part-time staff when needed. Ministries' budgets stayed about the same.

The 2023 budget was approved as proposed (Motion Sandy Polarek/Second Gloria Kaminecki).

JOSHUA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2023: Jeff Gibson highlighted a few aspects of JOSHUA's activities and future plans. He thanked the congregation for having him as the Church's representative on the JOSHUA Board for the last 4 years. He pointed out that JOSHUA had difficulty fundraising during the pandemic. It is looking to increase the sustaining memberships in the organization, and he encouraged church members to consider making a financial contribution. He noted that JOSHUA, along with WISDOM, is organizing a Madison action day in April and invited church members to join them. He moved that Union continue to support JOSHUA with a \$1,000 membership for 2023. Jan Davis seconded the motion and it was approved.

BYLAW REVISIONS: Moderator Harder provided brief explanations for the proposed bylaw changes, and the following changes were approved (revisions noted):

Article II Section 1:

The Pastor, with consultation with the Personnel Committee and with privilege of consultation with any appropriate Officer, Ministry, or the Common Ministry, will engage or discharge, when necessary, all paid church personnel including (but not limited to) all Assistant Pastors, pastoral, program, music, administrative, financial and secretarial staff, sextons and housekeepers, with the exception of Associate Pastors; subject to Section 22 21 (Common Ministry approves salaries).

(Motion Heather Collins/Second Denise Olson)

Article II Section 21:

The Common Ministry shall consist of the Pastors, other members of the pastoral staff, the Chairpersons of each Ministry or in their absence the Vice-Chair of such Ministry, the Moderator (who chairs the Ministry), the Vice Moderator, the Clerk and the Treasurer.

(Motion Heather Collins/Second Jammie VerGiesen)

Article III Section 22:

The Nominating Committee shall recommend for approval of Common Ministry, individuals for Chair, Vice Chair, or Officer ~~fill by appointment~~ Chair or Vice Chair, vacancies that occur at times other than the expiration of a term.

(Motion Heather Collins/Second Gail Carels)

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: Mary Hemminger moved that Union Church conduct a Capital Campaign beginning in 2023 as presented at the Annual Meeting. She noted that, as presented in the Feasibility Study brochure and listening sessions, there are a number of renovations and upgrades that are being considered to expand our mission and outreach capabilities, including maintenance projects (church hall west roof replacement, elevator maintenance and replacement of the boiler compressor and circulator pump), technology upgrades to our Wi-Fi capabilities and sanctuary sound system, renovations to the lower-level space to enhance our mission and outreach, as well as direct support for outreach funding, and additional projects, including a solar installation, a Stewardship maintenance fund, air conditioning in specific areas of the church, and chancel updates. She reminded us that other than some non-discretionary maintenance items, the proposed projects have not yet been prioritized, and that once the campaign is completed, Common Ministry will bring project recommendations back to the congregation to determine which projects can be funded. She also reported that a church-wide feasibility study was completed and showed strong support, and Common Ministry recommended conducting the Capital Campaign.

After a second by Christie Reese, the motion was approved.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING MINISTRY MEMBERS

Retiring (or taking other roles) ministries and chairs and vice-chairs were thanked for their service:

Paco Espinosa	Gifts & Memorials
Nicole Kinjerski	Vice-Chair, Membership & Inreach
Betty Bienash	Chair, Worship
Zoé Harkoff	Vice-Chair, Worship

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Sandy Polarek gave the Nominating Committee report. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Sandy moved the following nominees be elected for two-year terms.

Tim Harder	Moderator
Gail Hohenstein	Clerk
Jammie VerGiesen	Chair, Outreach
Christie Reese	Vice-Chair, Outreach
Kathy Baldwin	Co-Chair, Gifts & Memorials
Jessica Lundgren	Vice-Chair, Membership & Inreach
Zoé Harkoff	Chair, Worship
Betty Bienash	Vice-Chair, Worship

and that the following nominees be elected for the terms set forth below:

Kris Vespia	Pastoral Relations Committee—4 years
Cheryl Myers	Personnel Committee—3 years
Wendy Woodward	Delegate, Ecumenical Partnership for Housing—1 year
Steve Hartman	JOSHUA Liaison
Communications Coordinators	Ruth Homrighaus and Mary Ann Hudson

No nominations were made from the floor. After a second by Tony Baldwin, the motion was approved.

COMMISSIONING NEW MEMBERS OF COMMON MINISTRY AND COMMITTEES

Moderator Harder introduced newly elected members of Common Ministry and Committees and a Litany for Commissioning of the new members was conducted.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

BENEDICTION

Bruce Shafer moved and Denise Olson seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was approved. Pastor Flad Daniels gave the benediction. The meeting was adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail A. Hohenstein

Clerk

— Moderator —

My, we are a generous congregation.

We are all used to yearly pledging to support our small but hard-working staff and to keep the lights on, but sometimes that isn't enough. Every now and then, the building needs repairs, improvements or updates, and then a capital campaign is necessary. In this year's capital campaign, we had some immediate needs, like replacing malfunctioning doors and old roofs, but also some aspirational goals. The capital campaign gave us the chance to look beyond our own needs and raise funds for various ministries we find meaningful. In addition, we hoped to raise enough to move forward with the solar project which has been the topic of discussion for a several years now. We entered the campaign with some trepidation, wondering if the congregation would be able to support both the needed repairs and the aspirational goals. Happily, under the leadership of Pastor Bridget and Barbara McClure Lukens and a great team consisting of Ed Tucker, Lou Norsetter, Deb Rose, Mary Hemminger, Jeff Gibson, Jeff Carels, Union met the challenge of Building for Faith in Action.

We shouldn't be surprised.

Every year, the Wisconsin Conference publishes information on how much UCC churches give to causes outside of their church. On average, Wisconsin UCC churches give 3.5% of their budget to support outside organizations. Union tends to give around 10%. We give to hunger ministries ranging from our Blessing Box and homeless shelter meals, to Heifer International. We support justice organizations such as JOSHUA through our budget and We All Rise African American Resource Center through Gifts and Memorials grants and our royalties for the Spirituals offering. When there is a natural disaster, we are known for our response. We support large causes such as the four UCC wide collections, and small ones such as the Parson's Purse. I haven't covered all our giving, but the point is, when there is a need, Union delivers.

And we give more so much more than dollars.

Union members are active in many ministries both within and outside the church. We have members active in addressing systemic social issues through organizations such as JOSHUA. Many members support Union with through involvement in Education, Worship, Stewardship, Membership, and Gifts and Memorials Ministries. Many help to meet community needs through myriad services supported by our Outreach Ministry, not the least of which being On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic which is housed in our building. If that isn't enough, ask around and you'll find many Union folk involved in a wide array of community service outside of Union. If you're looking for a way to donate time to a worthy cause, just ask a few people at coffee hour for ideas. You'll be impressed.

And speaking of generous, I want to Pastor Bridget for her generous pastoral support of Union members while still juggling the many day to day demands of church administration. I continue to be amazed by her passion and commitment to both Union, and the world at large.

So yes, after 188 years, we are still a generous congregation. May we continue to be so in the years to come, as we look forward to celebrating our congregation's 200th anniversary. It's a tradition well worth keeping.

Peace,

Dr. Tim Harder, Moderator

— Pastoral Annual Report 2023 —

Love In Action

With a new quarterback in town, some might imagine that my title is referencing the Packers, but the truth of the matter is that Union puts Love into Action even more profoundly than the Green and Gold. Union: Love in Action was our stewardship theme this fall, and I love how succinctly it names who our congregation is and what we're about. Love in Action is the throughline that connects our church's ministries.

We hit the ground running with a festive New Year's Day worship service in the church hall which featured serving one another Communion around the tables, lively jazz music arranged by Sam Stranz, and a delicious potluck brunch. In January, Haley Steele transitioned her position from Interim Director of Music to a more settled capacity, after which she set to work enhancing and expanding our already strong music ministry. The Chancel Choir has gained some voices, continues to grow, and contributes more to our worship than they ever could imagine. The jazz combo returned for two meaningful Sunday services, one to celebrate Earth Day and another to celebrate Independence Day. The creativity and fresh perspective they bring every time they lead worship is a true gift. Haley also wrote and received a grant from the Catalyst Fund of the Wisconsin Conference UCC for an evening of jazz and fellowship which we dubbed a "Fill Your Cup Evening of Jazz," inviting the staffs of the local social service organizations Union partners with. Union members brought treats, led crafts, and Cupcake Couture provided cookies to decorate as we offered thanks to our many outreach partners for the love they put into action in the wider community. That same week, our music ministry was at it again, as they invited the congregation to go Christmas caroling. We visited homes of some members as well as some care facilities. Many remarked that this was one of their most impactful activities this holiday season. Our congregation loves to put love into action.

In conjunction with the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Worship Ministry initiated our first Royalties for the Spirituals offering, raising \$839 which we gifted to We All Rise African American Resource Center. We initiated this as part of the congregation's continued anti-racism efforts. As an artform, Negro Spirituals were originally created by enslaved Africans in America and are their unacknowledged intellectual property. This offering, which Worship Ministry intends to continue, is a small yet tangible way of acknowledging our indebtedness for this music as we journey toward racial justice and healing together. This, too, is what love in action looks like.

Lent saw the church hall turned into an art gallery, as we hosted an installation called Divine Ambiguity by a Sheboygan artist, Toril Fisher. I preached about how Fisher depicted the figures in her paintings with gold leaf halos behind their heads, inspiring us to remember that these figures, all plucked from the news, are all beloved by God and radiate divine light and love. The people in the paintings became our guests for the Lenten season, as we ate and prayed and learned and spent time in fellowship. A generous donor then gifted the church with five prints from the exhibit, which now hang across from the church office. They are a stunning reminder of our call to put love into action, not just for ourselves, but for all.

One of the highlights of ministry for me is the opportunity to lead the Confirmation process. This year we had four youth and an adult gather weekly throughout the school year to learn and grow and process the Christian tradition for themselves, as they were deciding whether to affirm the baptismal promises their parents made on their behalf years ago. We had lively discussions, never having enough time to fully

engage any one topic; I reminded the group week after week that this is okay, because the Confirmation process should leave us hungry for more. The love that this congregation showers on our children and youth is a wonder to behold. All four of the teens who began the process decided to be Confirmed, and they were joined by another teen whose Confirmation process was cut short by COVID in 2020. In the summer, we celebrated Baptism with the adult who prepared with us.

Parson's Purse — 2023

Beginning Balance	\$3,570.83
Donations	\$4,830.78
Disbursements	\$4,206.09
Ending Balance	\$4,195.52

*rent, transportation, medical, food, utilities, insurance

A tremendous amount of time and energy went into the Building for Faith In Action Capital Campaign we undertook this spring. Led by Barbara McClure-Lukens, a team composed of Mary Hemminger, Deb Rose, Ed Tucker, Lou Norsetter, Jeff Gibson, Jeff Carels, Tim Harder, and I met throughout the late winter and spring. Common Ministry approved securing the James Company to steer our efforts, and their wisdom and guidance was a tremendous asset. Our members pledged \$572,000 to the campaign over three years from 94 households. As of December, we have received \$174,000 of those pledges, or 31.5%. The James Company tells us that is a healthy place to be at this stage. Because of your generosity, we will be able to undertake all of the proposed projects. Thanks be to you, and thanks be to God! Your gifts have already allowed us to replace the Mayflower doors which were in significant disrepair, have tuckpointing done in the courtyard to shore up the deteriorating masonry, and disburse \$5,000 to Outreach Ministry to further Union's mission in the community. The spring will see work on the west church hall roof, Wi-Fi improvements, improvements to make the sanctuary more hospitable to people with mobility issues, and more. Along with these projects, the Capital Campaign was truly a spirit-raiser as well. The core team did a phenomenal job of telling the story of who Union is and what we've been about over the years and connecting that to who God is calling us to be in this season of our church's life. All of this is yet another manifestation of how Union puts Love into Action in all that we do.

June was a busy month for us! Along with the capital campaign, we participated in the third annual ecumenical Imago Dei Pride worship service and potluck at Green Isle Park, and later that month joined with our friends at We All Rise African American Resource Center to sponsor the free community meal as part of their Juneteenth celebration. Union volunteers hosted a booth at the celebration and helped with clean up. To quote Cornell West, "Justice is what love looks like in public."

Because we had such wonderful testimonies in worship about what Union means to our members during the Capital Campaign, the Generosity Team suggested that we do something different for our fall budget pledge campaign. Since our theme was Union: Love in Action, someone suggested we hold a "season of love in action," and I ran with it. In addition to all of our typical fall offerings, I lined up different opportunities to put our love into action every Sunday after worship throughout the month of October. From a training on how to have impactful conversations about difficult topics, to our Heifer Living Gift Market, to learning about our Ties to Mexico ministry, to inviting former Union Member Sherry Warren to share the work she is now doing as the Minister for Women's and Gender Justice with the national setting of the United Church of Christ, to an opportunity to write a hymn about the ministry of Union Church, this season offered numerous ways to put love into action.

Of course, this report is just a snapshot of the life of Union Congregational United Church of Christ. In many instances, I really think that the programs and events that we organize are really merely vehicles for you to come together, and that THAT is where the true ministry happens, that's what the actual love in action is. The real love in action is conversation over cups of coffee, it's ah-ha moments as we

are learning and discussing. Real love in action is accompanying someone to a 12 step meeting. It's parents feeling supported in their efforts to raise good humans inspired by the teachings of Jesus. It's encountering someone in need and not hesitating to respond to that need. It's confronting our own attitudes and behaviors that we didn't even realize contribute to systemic injustice, and knowing that our fellow church members are on a similar journey. The programming and events that we organize are really platforms for all of this love in action to occur.

We're less than a full month into 2024, and already there is so much love and action happening in and among our congregation. My prayer for the coming year is that we will all continue to have the wisdom and courage to allow the unfathomable love of the divine to flow through us into the world God loves so much.

In Joyful Hope,
Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels
Senior Minister

2023 Wisconsin Conference UCC — Year in Review —

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all ... while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

—Titus 2:11-13

I greet you in the joyful spirit of Epiphany. The words of Titus remind us that between the grace of God that came to Bethlehem in the birth of Jesus and the full manifestation of God’s glory on Earth, we in the United Church of Christ are called to bear witness to the love of Christ every day.

The love of Christ is faithful in every generation. Four years after COVID-19 radically changed our lives, congregations still are adjusting to new realities. Many have faced significant declines and are enduring the anxiety that accompanies concerns about sustainability. Yet most have embraced new technologies, and nearly all congregations can point to bright spots of ministry that have unleashed new energy. COVID affected the wider church as well. In early 2023, we made the painful decision to sell the Trost Center in DeForest and shift the Conference offices to Daycholah Center on Green Lake, enabling a closer partnership with United Church Camps Inc. and providing UCCI with a financial boost.

The love of Christ is courageous in the face of challenges. Our associate conference ministers – the Revs. Jane Anderson, Rachel Bauman and Michael Jones – continue to guide congregations through the search process at a time when the candidate pool is small, and the number of part-time pastorates is increasing. We consider every creative pastoral option and use the leadership and ministry skills courses of the Damascus Project to train future pastoral leaders. The Rev. Dr. Stephanie Perdew, director of the Damascus Project, secured a \$500,000 Lilly Endowment grant that – over the next five years – will widen our pool of learners through expanded course offerings at very reasonable costs. The Damascus Project is the shared educational ministry of the Minnesota and Wisconsin conferences.

The love of Christ demands justice for the oppressed. The justice working groups and Supportive Ministries Team continue to provide resources for local congregations and a collective voice supporting the poor and marginalized. The Damascus Project introduced an implicit bias course, part of our emphasis on anti-racism training. One of our newer working groups – Older Adult Ministries – has produced significant resources for local churches that seek to cultivate deeper connections with seniors. The Creation Care Team, the Immigration Justice Work Group and the Alliance for Justice, which focuses on honoring indigenous peoples, are empowering local congregations with resources to advance these vital ministries.

The love of Christ brings generosity to the world. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the 210 UCC congregations of the Wisconsin Conference remain remarkably generous. Your support through Our Church’s Wider Mission provides three-quarters of the Conference budget and all sorts of resourcing, training and programs, and an incredible global mission outreach. We are deeply grateful to all those who have made commitments to the Leadership Forward Campaign. Already, Leadership Forward has received pledges totaling \$1 million. In addition, the Wisconsin Foundation UCC now holds investments of roughly \$17 million on behalf of several congregations and the Conference. The Foundation provides an ideal opportunity for your congregation to achieve excellent financial returns through socially responsible investments.

The love of Christ builds beloved community. In our wider Conference life, we are asking this question: “How can we better connect, resource and support each other, as local churches, pastors and lay leaders?” The question has prompted us to rethink church governance structures and to imagine new forms of collaboration. Meanwhile, the staff continues to cultivate care and connection with one another and to build relationships throughout the Conference. At the beginning of 2023 we welcomed ACM Michael Jones and just recently introduced our newest staff member, Carla Myers, who succeeds Susan Taylor as office coordinator. Though Sue is mostly retired, we’re happy that she has agreed to work a few hours a week to coordinate the search-and-call process.

Submitted with a grateful heart in the love of Christ,
The Rev. Franz Rigert
Conference Minister

— Education Ministry —

The Education Ministry aims to support and coordinate the planning and administration of Christian education, in keeping with our church's values and purpose, for Union Church's members and friends. The ministry's offerings are meant to serve all people, from the youngest among us through adulthood. We would not be able to do this without the support and assistance of the congregation, and we are grateful to all those who've participated over the past year!

For our youngest congregants, we coordinate the Children's Moments offered during each week's service. We would like to thank Brittany Malone, Ed Tucker, Cheryl Myers, Joann Broskey, Christie Reese, Heather Collins, Haley Steele, Lou Norsetter, and Meg Gleason, all of whom offered Children's Moments in 2023, as well as Pastor Bridget, who picked up our slack any time we didn't have a volunteer. We'd like to thank Nancy Gibson and Heather Collins for their work managing and maintaining the Playground this year, Deb Rose and Kathy Seifert for helping to keep it fully stocked and seasonal, and the families who used the Playground for keeping it neat and orderly every week. We are also grateful to Marilyn Halgrimson, Melissa Stepp, and Amy Richards, who will be joining the Playground crew in 2024. Thank you to Jenna Stevens, London Graham, Jenna Carrao, and Natalie Knight for staffing the nursery each Sunday.

For our grade-school-aged youth, in 4K through 8th grade, the Education Ministry offers Faith Formation classes on Sunday mornings. We would especially like to thank Nancy Gibson and Lou Ann Norsetter for their ongoing work managing curriculum and scheduling teachers, aides, and substitutes for the Faith Formation classrooms. In addition, we would like to thank both the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school year teachers, aides, and substitutes who have volunteered in our Faith Formation classrooms, including, but not limited to, Betty Bienash, Gail Carels, Jeff Carels, Anna Gallagher, Nancy Gibson, Tim Harder, Eric Harkoff, Betty Hartman, Amanda Hatton, Keira Heffernan, Karen Hogan, Lisa Krueger, Karen Ludolph, Lou Norsetter, Sindy Oakley, Sandy Polarek, Christie Reese, Amy Richards, Zach Seibel, Julie Thiel, and Ed Tucker. Thank you also to the parents, grandparents, extended families, friends, and friends who are like family who have put so much time and effort into making sure that our youth get to church and participate in Faith Formation on Sunday mornings. Another thank you goes to Cathy Putman, our librarian, who continues to work with Faith Formation teachers to make sure that they have the resources they need, and that the church's library serves them well, as well as to Melissa Heffernan, Aygul Garryeva, and Haley Steele, who have made sure that Union's musical ministry reaches our youth. We would also like to thank Pastor Bridget and those who've assisted her, including Heather Collins and Tim Harder, for adding a Sunday morning education option for our high school youth. We have many people to thank in this group, and that's a direct reflection of how much work goes into facilitating Christian education for some of our youngest congregants – we are so grateful for Union's commitment to our youth!

For our middle and high school youth, we would like to thank all those who've been advisors and substitutes to the Youth Group for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years, including Marty Berry, Kathleen Caylor, Heather Collins, Julia Delvaux, Tim Harder, Benny Rieth, Leah Seibel, Jenna Stevens, and Sherry Warren. We would also like to thank those who have provided meals for our youth on Wednesday nights, including Cathy Putman, Luc Richards, Amy Anderson and Jane Posvic, Les Van Vonderen and Peggy Welsh. We all know that teenagers come hungry, and the fellowship that you facilitate by providing delicious meals is well appreciated. Thank you to all those who've transported our youth to and from church on Wednesday evenings and made youth group a priority for your

families and households. In a world with no shortage of commitments, your ongoing commitment to Union Church and the fellowship of our youth is a blessing! On a personal note, I would also like to thank all of those youth who participate in our two Wednesday nights together each month – it has been such a source of joy for me to be able to return to YCA over and over again in the nearly 20 years since I was a member, and now to be able to bring my daughter with me to show her what she has to look forward to as she grows up at Union. I want all of you to know how very sincere I am when I tell you that I enjoy your personalities and your company!

One of the biggest changes we've seen, starting with the fall 2023 semester, is the return of regularly scheduled adult education offerings during the nine o'clock hour on Sunday mornings. We would like to thank Sue Whittemore for coordinating the return of these offerings and getting our programming up and running! Thank you also to the team who helped Sue coordinate our offerings, and to those members and friends of Union Church who've presented content for us. We owe an ongoing thank you to Julie Harder as well, whose Seminary Secrets classes continue to be a hallmark of Union's adult education offerings!

Last, thank you to the members of the Education Ministry, including Heather Collins, Nancy Gibson, Amanda Hatton, Helen Krueger, Lou Norsetter, and Benny Rieth. I would like to offer a personal thank you to Nancy Gibson, who has truly gone above and beyond in helping me become comfortable with leading the Education Ministry and has made my transition as smooth as possible.

As always, the Education Ministry welcomes new volunteers, new ideas, and new voices, anywhere you think you might fit. If you'd like to join us in any capacity, please contact Beth Lyman Piontek at (920) 217-3564 or beth.e.lyman@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Lyman Piontek

Faith Formation Leaders — 2023-2024 School Year

Christian Education at Union Church could not be achieved without the help of our Education Ministry members and many volunteers. Thank you!

Sunday Faith Formation Leaders

4K – 1st and 2nd – 4th Grades

Teachers: Karen Hogan, Nancy Gibson, Christie Reese, Amy Richards

Assistants: Amanda Hatton, Zach Seibel, Julie Thiel

Substitutes: Sandy Polarek

5th Grade and Up

Teachers: Lou Ann Norsetter, Ed Tucker

Assistants: Betty Bienash, Betty Hartman, Gail Carels, Jeff Carels

High School

Teacher: Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels

Assistants: Heather Collins, Tim Harder

PF and YCA: Heather Collins, Tim Harder, Jenna Stevens, Benny Rieth, Marty Berry, Beth Piontek

Librarian: Cathy Putman

Adult Education: Julie Harder

Nursery: Jenna Stevens, London Graham, Jenna Carrao, Natalie Knight

Youth Music Director: Melissa Heffernan

The Peg Jaeger Church Library

In 2023 the church library added 81 books to the collection, building in specific areas. We purchased titles in Black theology and the Black church, Indigenous spirituality, religion and culture, and in eco-theology while weeding out some of the library's older books.

The aim is to hold about 1,800 books. Of that total, about 10% of our books are adult fiction, about 25% are children's titles, and 42% are religion including both adult and children's. We track these statistics through our free online cataloging web application called LibraryThing. Union's catalog can be accessed on any computer at <https://www.librarything.com/catalog/UnionCongUCC>.

After three years of pandemic uncertainty, the Used Book Sale was revived in May. Donations included several new and desirable adult books, including fiction, which were added to the library. As part of the sale, some of the picture books left behind by Mayflower Nursery School were sold with the proceeds supporting Outreach efforts.

In a bit of redecorating, the library is now home to two large nature photographs taken by Tina Bechtel at Moon Beach.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Putman, Librarian

— Membership and Inreach Ministry —

Mission

The mission of the Membership and Inreach Ministry is to welcome new members into our church and to make current members and visitors feel welcome and connected. We do this by greeting before worship and facilitating the integration of new members into our church family. We give jars of cookie mix as a welcome gift to church visitors. We organize opportunities for socialization, fellowship, and care for members of Union Church. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this ministry.

Membership Ministry Meetings

We are always looking for more people to help with our new member and current member events. Membership Ministry meets at 5 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month.

New Members

In 2023, Union Church welcomed 12 new members.

Social

Church Picnic: This year the annual Church Picnic was held in conjunction with the Building for Faith in Action Campaign. Under the guidance of Deb Rose, the church hall was decorated to resemble an old fashioned country picnic including checkered tablecloths, a lemonade stand, and even plastic ants! Deb and her team created games and activities, and Biebel's catered the meal.

Reunion Sunday: Our Reunion Sunday potluck continued the tradition of Scott Daniels providing smoked pulled pork and members bringing sides and desserts to share.

Annual Meeting Potluck: Yearly after the Annual Meeting.

Fellowship

Retreat: An annual retreat takes place at Moon Beach camp near Eagle River, Wisconsin. Our theme in 2023 was "Belonging."

Wednesday Night Suppers: Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday during the school year coinciding with our youth programs.

Women's Advent Event: An annual event for the women of the church to experience a moment of quiet and reflection before the busy holiday season. Our 2023 theme was "Woman Divine."

Groups

Men's Fellowship Breakfasts: This group meets monthly on the first Wednesday of the month for food and fellowship at Denny's on Oneida and is convened by Ed Tucker.

Ladies Lunch Bunch: This group meets regularly for food and fellowship and is convened by Jean Smithback and/or Sue Zanzig.

Care

Visitation Ministry: The ministry provides outreach to congregants. By visiting regularly, we hope to nurture the spirits of our members and provide a means for them to maintain a strong connection to our church community.

Memorial Reception Ministry: Provided receptions before or after funerals held at Union Church.

This ministry is convened by Heather Collins.

Baby Afghans and Prayer Shawl Ministry: Members knitted or crocheted shawls that were given to persons who were ill, during crisis, or who had suffered a loss. Members knitted or crocheted afghans as a gift to babies/young children at Baptism. Thank you, knitters and crocheters!

Card Ministry: Provides an opportunity for everyone to join in sending cards to our shut-ins and church family with special concerns each month on Communion Sunday. This ministry is convened by Glen Verstegen.

Cooks Who Care Ministry: Provides meals for our church family members during times when a prepared meal is helpful. Thank you to Joni Delwiche and Joan Dudek for taking on the role as coordinators for this ministry.

First Friends Ministry: First Friends match a new member's household with a current member's household to welcome them to our church family and encourage them to participate in activities.

We invite anyone that would like to join our dedicated group.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Olson, chair

Jessica Lundgren and Libby Sievert, co-chairs

Women's Fellowship

Over 80 women gathered for reflection and community in the church hall on Monday, December 4, for the Women's Advent Reflection: "Woman Divine." The designated organizations for table donations were On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic and Ties to Mexico.

Our thanks to our readers, Joann Broskey, Kathy Baldwin, Sue Tucker, and Cheryl Myers, and to our Ladies Ensemble, violinist Taylor Giorgio, and pianist Elaine Moss. A big shout out to Union's outstanding music director Haley Steele for the wonderful music and help with this event. Thank you to Pat Shafer and Tina Bechtel for their words regarding donations. Thanks to Pastor Bridget for the opening prayer. Thanks to the gentlemen who provided behind-the-scenes support, especially Ed Tucker. Thank you to everyone who hosted a table or attended. You made the event a success.

Denise Olson

Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship meets at 7 a.m. on the first Wednesday of the month for breakfast at Denny's on South Oneida in Ashwaubenon. This breakfast is open to all at Union Church who identify as male. The meeting is free flowing, which allows those attending to depart whenever needed due to work or volunteer commitments.

At breakfast, we share our joys, our concerns, our recent travels and occasionally even discuss our feelings about politics. If you have never joined us for breakfast, please try it once this year.

Ed Tucker

Priscilla Circle

Priscilla Circle is open to all the women of the church. We usually meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month, excluding December and the summer months. We may not meet in January or February depending on the weather. Our meetings are announced in "Still Speaking."

The circle meets for dessert at 1 p.m. followed by a short business meeting, devotions, and a program. We hear the joys and concerns of church members and review activities in the church.

- In January 2023, we enjoyed seeing each other once again after the holiday "break." We welcomed a few new members and shared news about ourselves. Carolyn O'Brien spoke to us about Family Services which is a not-for-profit agency that serves individuals and families who need counseling help. Family Services also offers parenting programs, sexual assault advocacy, and youth mentoring.
- In February, Barbara McClure-Lukens talked about the trip that she and her husband, Michael, took to Berlin and showed photos of the trip.
- March offered us the opportunity of seeing photos once again from the trip that Lou Norsetter and Betty Bienash took to Greece.
- In April, Gail Carels talked about the assistance that she and her husband, Jeff, have given to Afghan refugees in the community.
- Our May meeting featured Stacie Christian who shared her knowledge about antiques and collectibles which interested many of us who own or may wish to own some of those items.
- Our September meeting was canceled due to a memorial service in the sanctuary.
- In October, Pat Shafer told us about the classes that she and others teach in the On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic. It was gratifying to learn of the success of the programs for students who have dyslexia and the help that the clinic offers their families.
- Jeff Gibson spoke to us in November about the work that he and others do through JOSHUA which is a faith-based agency in the Green Bay-De Pere area. JOSHUA has four areas of focus: criminal justice, immigration, environmental justice, and housing.

We thank Nancy Gibson for calling members monthly and keeping us in touch with members' concerns. We are grateful for the dedication of Sue Whittemore as she seeks out and secures interesting speakers and programs for the circle. Thanks, too, to our hostesses who provide snacks and beverages and to those who offer devotions from time to time.

New members are always welcome. Join us in the English Room on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Helen Krueger

— Outreach Ministry —

Outreach Vision: Offer opportunities and equip church members to participate in community and service volunteer work and to engage in current moral and ethical issues.

Outreach 2023 Focus: Continually ask what we are doing to support racial and social justice in our community.

Blessing Box

The Blessing Box continues to serve a need in the neighborhood surrounding Union and with all the wonderful support, we have continued to provide this service through 2023. The food drives (approximately 1/2 of items) and monetary donations continue to help fill the box to capacity 3 times a week. \$4,695 was donated in 2023 and \$4,439 was spent leaving a balance at year-end of \$3,092.

Mary Hemminger continues to manage the inventory, purchasing and organizing while the team of Marty Barry, Mary Boeselager, Joni Delwiche, Claudia Doelger, Larry Kabat and Cathy Valk stock the box.

Through a grant from philanthropic organization P.E.O., new cabinets were installed to allow better organization and more storage. The Blessing Box was a Giving Tree and Reverse Advent Calendar recipient in 2023.

Souper Cooks

This long-time effort through the Outreach Ministry continued in person in 2023. We now serve every time we prepare a meal. \$1,955 was donated (including funds from the rummage sale) in 2023 and \$1,695 was spent with a year-end balance of \$1,537. Marty Barry continues to lead this effort. Because of increased diners at NEW Community Shelter, the amount of food we prepare has increased. Due to increased meals and inflation, the monthly expenditures have continued to increase.

In-Kind Giving

The following amounts were collected for the offerings promoted by the national United Church of Christ throughout the year:

One Great Hour of Sharing -----	\$1,689
Strengthen the Church -----	\$883
Neighbors In Need-----	\$1,448
Christmas Fund-----	\$1,837

Immigrant Advocacy

A group of women lead by Gail Carels and Heather Collins has continued to offer their time to help transport Afghan women and other immigrant populations to literacy classes. Union joined the emergency resource network for Migration Advocacy of Brown County to help with emergency needs when immigrants are sent to Green Bay with no support and hosted an informational meeting at Union in November.

EPH and JOSHUA

Wendy Woodward has been marvelous as Union's liaison with EPH. There remains \$5,612 in the Jubilee House repair fund. The church continued its tradition of funding the annual membership of JOSHUA through the church budget. Steve Hartman represented Union on the JOSHUA board in 2023.

Other Fund-Raising Activities

In May, we had our annual rummage sale and raised nearly \$989.

Union's Heifer Living Gift Market welcomed live reindeer for the first time this year and raised a total of \$7,487.73. Thank you to everyone who contributed, organized, and staffed the event, especially Heather Collins for her leadership. We were able to send in \$5,042 of that total during a 5X matching period at Heifer, and so our gift will result in \$27,655.73 worth of donations toward global poverty elimination.

Other Activities

- The Love Life Diaper Drive had good participation in 2023.
- We sponsored five organizations: Dr. Rosa Minoka-Hill School, On The Mark Dyslexia Clinic, The Blessing Box, The Brain Center and We All Rise, for our three Christmas Giving Trees.
- The Blessing Box was our reverse calendar recipient.
- On the Mark Dyslexia clinic continues to flourish on the church's lower level thanks to the leadership of Pat Shafer and the dedication of numerous volunteers and staff. Not only is the church deeply grateful to the clinic for the life-changing work they do, we are also grateful for their gift of \$8,000 to offset the expense of housing the clinic.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a wonderful team of dedicated and hard-working individuals. As is our tradition at Union UCC, the congregation was generous with their time, talent and treasure with all these important Outreach activities. The Outreach Ministry is very thankful for all of you, and we look forward to continuing to bring Christ into our community.

Respectfully submitted,
Jammie VerGiesen and Christie Reese, co-chairs

2023 Outreach Summary

NON-BUDGETED OUTREACH		
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$	1,689
Neighbors in Need	\$	1,448
Christmas Fund	\$	1,837
Strengthen the Church	\$	884
Heifer International	\$	7,488
Parson's Purse	\$	5,538
Housing/Homeless	\$	1,531
Blessing Box	\$	4,695
Souper Cooks	\$	1,955
Royalties from the Spirituals	\$	839
George's Secret Elves	\$	500
Gifts & Memorials Outreach Grants	\$	11,000
Total Non-Budgeted	\$	39,404

JOSHUA — Justice Organization Sharing Hope United for Action

JOSHUA is an interfaith social justice organization. We are a grassroots and non-profit 501(c)(3), focusing our work in the Brown County region of Wisconsin. We aim to capitalize on the amazing possibilities for faith communities when they join together to overcome divisions and stand united for action around common values of justice. In an effort to build effectiveness on justice issues, the board has revised and streamlined the bylaws to include more local faith groups.

JOSHUA currently has four task forces: Transformational Justice (formerly Criminal Justice Reform), Housing initiatives in Brown County, Environmental Justice, and Immigration Justice. These groups meet at West Side Moravian Church and via Zoom. JOSHUA also has an active Religious Leaders' Caucus which Pastor Bridget chairs.

The **Transformational Justice Task Force** is looking at an alternative vision for the Green Bay Correctional Institution. Our group is made up of formerly incarcerated individuals, family, friends, and loved ones of those incarcerated, and allies. The group has also been working with the Green Bay Police Department on gun violence interruption. This group meets every fourth Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. (live and via Zoom). This year, members have joined with other WISDOM members to further reforms at the state level by working together to encourage bipartisan support of actions that can improve community-based alternatives to incarceration and improve the chances of the successful transition of those being released from incarceration back into their communities. Recently JOSHUA has held rallies calling for reduction or closure of the Green Bay Correctional Institution. This includes coordination with many agencies and groups including WISDOM, the state-wide community organization working for justice. Efforts have expanded working with formerly incarcerated people calling for more humane treatment of prisoners and the DOULA Project advocating on behalf of women who give birth while in prison.

The **Environmental Justice Task Force** is continuing to support community composting projects and how our community can better support more sustainable lawn and gardening initiatives.

The **Immigration Justice Task Force** is just beginning to be formed. During 2023, the task force worked to support driver permits for local green card holders and undocumented workers.

- JOSHUA continues to provide training, build partnerships in the community, increase its membership, and remain a respected, peaceful advocate in Brown County.
- JOSHUA encourages congregations and justice-minded individuals to financially support the cause of justice in Green Bay and the rest of Wisconsin. If you are interested, please visit www.joshua4justice.org and click the DONATE button.
- JOSHUA depends on help from many different avenues. Fortunately, Union Church is one of the churches that financially commits to JOSHUA each year. JOSHUA would like to see that commitment continue.
- The Religious Leaders' Caucus holds prayer vigils at sites of violent deaths in the community. Invitations to these vigils are shared on the church's and JOSHUA's Facebook page.

The JOSHUA board recently hired a very capable Community Organizer, Sarah Williams. For more information, visit our Facebook page at JOSHUA-Green Bay, or at www.joshua4justice.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Hartman, JOSHUA liaison

Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH)

Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH) continues to fill a much-needed gap in Green Bay's battle against homelessness. By providing both transitional housing and long-term supportive housing, EPH gives families in the community residential stability so that they can address challenges to their housing and safety such as mental health concerns, debt and poor credit, and income insecurity.

Some of the highlights of 2023 include:

- The addition of Life Church, Unchurch, and Westside Moravian Church to the now 19 church partners who support EPH.
- The purchase and renovation of three new homes; adding to our available resource pool.
- Serving a total of 57 families and 162 children with transitional and long-term supportive housing.
- Hiring a new volunteer coordinator, Lacy Hansen, who sends out weekly emails with immediate needs for help. If you would like to be added to this email list you can sign up at: <https://ephgb.org/contact/>. Mention that you would like to be added to the weekly volunteer email list.

Union Congregational's continued support of Ecumenical Partnership for Housing through financial gifts and volunteerism upholds the church's mission of making the Christ Spirit dominant in our lives. I am proud to represent Union Congregational in this important endeavor that truly meets people wherever they are on life's journey.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Woodward

— Worship Ministry —

Worship Ministry's role is to provide "support, coordination, and vision-keeping in the planning and administration of worship, rites, sacraments and music" (Constitution and Bylaws of Union Church).

The Worship Ministry team in 2023 included Zoé Harkoff (Chair & Communion Coordinator) Betty Bienash (Vice Chair), Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels (Senior Minister), Haley Steele (Music Director), Tim Harder (Moderator), Gail Hohenstein (coordinator of readers), and Glen Verstegen (coordinator of ushers).

Worship services at Union were available both through streaming services via Facebook Live and YouTube and in-person in the church sanctuary.

The worship services at Union are only possible because of the support and efforts of so many people within our church family. While we may miss naming some people who have contributed to our worship services, the Worship Ministry team wants to express gratitude to as many as we possibly can.

- Streaming our services to those who wish to access them when not able to participate in-person would not be possible without our AV team. The AV team included Jeff Gibson, Eric Harkoff, Zoé Harkoff, Clay Reese, Christian Reese, Sam Stranz, Haley Steele, Dan Hatton, Michael Stepp, and Paco Espinosa. In August, the team met to discuss how the work of the AV committee enhanced belonging for church members. Eric Harkoff assumed the role of AV Coordinator and worked with Haley Steele, Sam Stranz, and other members to make some much-needed enhancements and changes to the audio-visual systems in place.
- We appreciate the work of the ushers who have been coordinated by Glen Verstegen. The ushers were Joyce Anderson, Mary Boeselager, Marty Briggs, Jeff Carels, Tim Dantoin, Larry Heath, Gail Hohenstein, Bill Johnson, Larry Kabat, Jeff Larson, Tom Martin, Barbara McClure-Lukens, Carter Reese, Christian Reese, Clay Reese, Deb Rose, Larry Rose, Bruce Shafer, Pat Shafer, Jim Smithback, David Thie, Glen Verstegen and Weston Wiltse.
- In the fall, "virtual ushers" were put in place to welcome people viewing the streaming service online, and provide bulletins and technical assistance as needed. Thank you to Gail Hohenstein for her assistance in this role.
- Zoé Harkoff organized the preparation of Communion. Communion was served through a combination of passing the elements through the pews and offering pre-sealed Communion packets at the entrances. The Communion packets are also available to those who participate in the Visitation Ministry. We appreciate all who have volunteered to serve Communion, including Kathy Baldwin, Tony Baldwin, Betty Bienash (coordinator of Communion servers), Heather Collins, Carter Reese, Barbara McClure-Lukens, Elizabeth Delvaux, Jeff Gibson, Betty Hartman, Steve Hartman, Phil Hauck, Gail Hohenstein, Christian Reese, Bruce Shafer, Pat Shafer, and David Thie. Most excitingly, the church sexton located the missing and all-but-forgotten Communion tablecloths!
- To start off 2023, Betty Bienash of the Worship Ministry helped to orchestrate our Sanctuary Angels committee, a group that assumed weekly duties to clean and arrange the envelopes and

cards in the pews and other tasks to keep the sanctuary tidy. Betty Hartman, Betty Bienash, Heather Collins, Kathy Baldwin, Zoé Harkoff, and Grace Harkoff assisted with these duties.

- Gail Hohenstein organized the readers for our church services, including special services, and we have appreciated being able to listen to the many readers who read the scripture during services throughout the year.
- We appreciate the efforts of all who work to enhance the beauty of the sanctuary throughout the year. Kathy Seifert arranged the flowers for Easter, Ben VerGiesen decorated the sanctuary for Christmas, and many members assisted in erecting the Christmas tree and the stable for the Christmas Pageant. Achim Seifert and Bill Johnson worked together to coordinate the planning and building of a series of movable platforms to aid in musical coordination among the choir, the organ console, and the space on and off the chancel.
- Music, of course, is an integral part of the worship services at Union. Under the guidance of Haley Steele, Music Director, Ray Thompson, church organist, Linda Cook, Director of Bell Choir, and Melissa Heffernan, Children's Music Director, we continue to worship through the beautiful music they provide. We appreciate the wonderful music offered by the Chancel Choir, the Bell Choir, the cantors, and the soloists throughout the year. We also welcomed Aygul Garryeva, a student music intern, to work with Haley and shadow her in the rhythms of church music leadership and coordination.

Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels continues to provide meaningful, creative services throughout the church year.

- Martin Luther King Jr. weekend yielded a spiritual offering / royalties collection for We All Rise.
- In February, Union featured an art exhibit in the church hall titled "Divine Ambiguity" by artist Toril Fisher. The exhibit featured a series of Byzantine-style icons of modern social issues.
- The season of Lent included an Ash Wednesday service, a Palm Sunday service, a Maundy Thursday service in the church hall with an agape meal of soup and bread (with Communion elements), a Good Friday Tenebrae Service of Shadows. We concluded Lent on Easter Sunday with two services; 8 a.m. in the chapel with Communion and a service in the sanctuary featuring a brass quintet, with Easter brunch in between the services in the church hall.
- January, April, July, and December brought jazz services to the sanctuary to celebrate Earth Day, Independence Day, and culminated in a special "Fill Your Cup" jazz outreach for community caregivers. This event was funded in part by a Catalyst grant from the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, as well as by an anonymous donor. A special thank you to Sam Stranz for his oversight and musicianship with all things related to jazz music at Union.
- In October, Heifer Sunday welcomed animals into our sanctuary during Children's Moments, followed by a Living Gift Market in the courtyard which raised funds for Heifer International. Heather Collins organized the Living Gift Market, and Jammie VerGiesen once again organized our animal guests.

- Memorial Sunday was an especially meaningful service, during which we celebrated the lives of those who were connected to Union and who passed away during 2023. Once again, we invited the congregation to bring mementos of their loved ones to create an altar of remembrance, or ofrenda, for the service.
- In December, the Women's Advent Event took place in the church hall with a women's vocal ensemble offering and guest musical collaborators, Dr. Taylor Giorgio and Ms. Elaine Moss. Also in December, three teams of carolers visited several members of the congregation and community living facilities, share seasonal songs, and cheer. These efforts were coordinated by Kathy Baldwin, Elizabeth Delvaux, and Haley Steele as members of the music ministry.
- Christmas Pageant Sunday welcomed a live pageant consisting of children and adults to Union once again. The pageant was directed by Heather Collins and Christie Reese, and the costumes and props were organized by Gail Carels and Bev Lathrop.
- The Christmas Eve services began with the Service for All Ages at 10:00 a.m., which included an extended children's story time and concluded with the traditional Christmas Eve Service at 8:00 p.m., which was preceded by 30 minutes of beautiful musical offerings coordinated by Haley Steele and accompanied by Ray Thompson.

Worship Ministry continues to support Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels in creating meaningful worship services. The services would not be possible without the support and involvement of our extended Union congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Zoé Harkoff, chair

— Stewardship Ministry —

*Union's purpose is to strive to do the will of God,
and to make the Christ spirit dominant in our lives and in all human relations.
Our church celebrates God's love by...
Creating a safe harbor for all,
Serving each at their point of need, and
Promoting personal and societal transformation*

Stewardship Ministry is responsible for providing support, coordination, and vision keeping in the planning and administration of stewardship of our church resources in the areas of Operating Income, Building and Maintenance, and Capital Campaign.

Building and Maintenance

Building maintenance and cleaning remain top priorities during our Capital Campaign at Union. We continue to consider ways to navigate staffing, building usage, and capital priorities in a cost-conscious and practical manner to maintain a welcoming environment for all who use our building.

We wished Maintenance Tech Andrew Verhulst well in October as he left Union for another position. We are currently interviewing candidates for the Maintenance Tech position. In the absence of a Maintenance Tech, we extend our gratitude to Tim Dantoin and Melissa and Michael Stepp for their assistance in opening/closing the church on Sundays and to all who helped with snow removal.

Accounting

Katrina Catteruccia with Advantage Bookkeeping continues to streamline bookkeeping as our financial secretary. Budgeting and financial reports are in the capable hands of our Treasurer, Sandy Polarek.

Space Force

On The Mark Dyslexia Clinic and Suzuki Music Academy of Green Bay continue to utilize space in our building.

We continue to seek an occupant for our nonprofit incubator space. Pastor Bridget provides leadership to this team which is also dedicated to finding and attracting the right mission-aligned tenants for our building spaces.

Generosity Committee

The Generosity Committee has focused on ways to cultivate generosity in our community. Thoughtful communication throughout the year and leadership of our annual pledge campaign are their most significant contributions. Les Van Vonderen, Peggy Welsh, Emily Smith, Jeff Gibson, Jeff Carels, Tim Harder, and Pastor Bridget have led this effort.

Green Energy Task Force

Through the Capital Campaign, a solar installation is now prioritized for funding. We are reengaging contractors for bids and planning in the coming months.

Garden Committee

The Garden Committee organizes volunteers for all regular maintenance of the gardens through the

seasons. Kathy Seifert has been leading the efforts for regular maintenance of the gardens and grounds. We thank all the loyal volunteers who assisted the Garden Angels (formerly the Wednesday Weeders and Saturday Snippers), annual planters, mulch providers and spreaders, and garden plot adopters. The focus includes watering, plant replacement, and mulching.

Garden Revision Committee

Cathy Putman has made dramatic progress in the renovation of the Biblical Gardens. Excitement builds in the coming year as planning comes to fruition. Special emphasis is being placed on removing invasive plants and finding native plants to promote eco-diversity and reduce maintenance in our garden areas.

Capital Campaign Projects

The Capital Campaign is well under way and we are meeting our fundraising objectives. We have already replaced the main entrance to the Mayflower Wing and finished a tuckpointing project covering overdue masonry maintenance.

Membership

Stewardship Ministry members this year included Sandy Polarek (treasurer), Jason Ferry (vice-chair), Clay Reese (chair), Tony Baldwin, Bill Johnson, David Thie, and Jeff Gibson. Thanks to all the members for stepping up to the challenge of taking leadership roles in the Capital Campaign projects. Thanks also to Pastor Bridget, Tim Harder, and the church office staff for their support, participation, and assistance with the Stewardship Ministry activities over the past year. The year 2024 will be marked by the revitalization of our Church as our Capital Campaign projects are realized and a new Maintenance Technician is in place.

Respectfully,
Clay Reese, chair

— Memorial Garden —

The Memorial Garden was established in 2001 to provide a peaceful and attractive place for crypts to inter the cremated remains of Union Church members and friends. The Garden also provides a site for memorial plaques to honor and remember church members and friends.

The Garden is located outside the southwest corner of the church building and can be entered from the sidewalk on the south side of the church building or from the parking lot behind the church. The Garden has terraced landscaping with in-ground crypts in the upper level. There are single crypts for individuals and companion crypts for couples. Wall plaques are attached to the south wall of the church overlooking the Garden. There are now 32 crypts and 33 wall plaques in the Garden.

Crypts can be purchased at the time of death or before death to reduce final arrangement decisions for the surviving family. Purchasing a crypt is ideal for an individual or a couple who do not have a family burial plot in a cemetery or have not purchased space in a mausoleum.

The Garden has an endowment fund that is invested in the United Church Foundation. A portion of the proceeds from each sale of crypts or wall plaques is invested in the Foundation. Earnings from the Foundation can be used for the maintenance of the Garden. The Memorial Garden Fund at UCF has an end-of-2023 balance of \$82,456 and a cash-on-hand balance of \$2,609.

Pastor Bridget has established an annual tradition on Memorial Day weekend. At the conclusion of the Sunday church service in the sanctuary, the congregation is invited to convene in the Memorial Garden for the final hymn. For church members who have never seen the Memorial Garden, this is an opportunity to do so.

The Memorial Garden Trustees again extend a thank you to the Riopelle and Meng families for providing funding for the summer landscaping and maintenance in the Garden. These two families do this in memory of Katie Small and Dr. and Mrs. Hitch, whose ashes are interred in the Garden. They are the parents of Ginny Riopelle and Inky Meng.

The Garden Trustees invite and encourage church members to visit the Garden and to consider purchasing a crypt or wall plaque for themselves or for a family member.

Phil Hauck, who died in October of 2023, was an originator of the Memorial Garden concept in 2000 and he served as a Garden trustee from then until his death. Phil was involved in every crypt and wall plaque that is now in the Garden. It was Phil's idea to establish the Garden Foundation, which he liked to call a "perpetuity" fund. The appearance and stature of the Garden today is a memorial to Phil's vision.

Garden Trustees:

Bob Fahres and Jeff Zahn

— Nominating Committee —

The Nominating Committee presents the following nominees* for officers of the church, chairperson and vice-chair of the church ministries, elected members of committees, and the elected representative to Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH) and JOSHUA. Each has responded to the call to serve in leadership positions of our church's lay ministry. If elected, these nominees begin their service upon the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, January 28, 2024. Thank you to all who have served as our church's elected leaders and to those who continue to serve with their time and talents to ensure the ongoing ministry of Union Church. Thank you also to Heather Collins and Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels who assisted me.

*** indicates a person nominated for election**

Officers

Moderator	Tim Harder (2nd term, 1 year remaining)	Clerk	Gail Hohenstein (7th term, 1 year)
Vice-Moderator	*Clay Reese (1st term, 2 years)	Treasurer	*Sandy Polarek (2nd term, 2 years)

Ministries and Committees

Education

Chair *Beth Lyman Piontek (1st term, 2 years)
Vice-Chair *Amy Richards (1st term, 2 years)

Gifts and Memorials

Co-Chair Kathy Baldwin (1st term, 1 year)
Co-Chair *Mike Stepp (1st term, 2 years)

Membership and Inreach

Chair *Denise Olson (3rd term, 2 years)
Vice-Chair Jessica Lundgren (1st term, 1 year)

Pastoral Relations Committee (4-year term)

Bill Johnson (1 year)
Elizabeth Delvaux (2 years)
Kris Vespia (3 years)
*Heather Collins (4 years)

Nominating Committee

Chair Sandy Polarek (2nd term, 1 year)

Outreach

Chair Jammie VerGiesen (1st term, 1 year)
Vice-Chair Christie Reese (2nd term, 1 year)

Stewardship

Chair
Vice-Chair *Jason Ferry (2nd term, 2 years)

Worship

Chair Zoé Harkoff (1st term, 1 year)
Vice-Chair Betty Bienash (1st term, 1 year)

Personnel Committee (3-year term)

Ryan Rieth (3 years)
Cheryl Myers (2 years)
Julie Tetzlaff (1 year)

Memorial Garden Trustees

Chair *David Thie
 *Larry Rose

Other Positions

Delegate, Ecumenical Partnership for Housing

*Wendy Woodward (2nd term, 2 years)

JOSHUA Liaison

*Steve Hartman

Communications Coordinators

*Ruth Homrighaus and Mary Ann Hudson

Respectively submitted by the Nominating Committee,
Sandy Polarek (chair)



Membership Statistical Report for 2023

ACTIVE MEMBERS ADMITTED (17):

By Reception:

1. **Marilyn Halgrimson** – May 7
2. **Betty Hartman** – May 7
3. **Steve Hartman** – May 7
4. **Emily Lakatos** – May 7
5. **Steve Lakatos** – May 7
6. **Libby Sievert** – May 7
7. **Melissa Stepp** – May 7
8. **Michael Stepp** – May 7
9. **Ryan Van Handel** – November 12
10. **Madeline Marquardt** – November 12
11. **Michael Janowicz** – November 12
12. **Janeen Hudzinski** – November 12

By Confirmation:

1. **Olivia Elizabeth Delvaux** – May 21
2. **Sydney Jade Hatton** – May 21
3. **Keira Marie Heffernan** – May 21
4. **Seth Mac Kinnon Logerquist** – May 21
5. **Carter Davis Reese** – May 21

ACTIVE MEMBERS REMOVED (13):

By Death:

1. ***Betty Ann Ross** – 93 – died November 14, 2022; Betty to be buried in the family plot in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, in June 2024 according to her daughter, Mary Janney.
2. **Carol Bickford Bush** – 96 – died January 6; memorial service at Old St. Joseph Church, in De Pere, Wisconsin, on February 12.
3. **James Lawrence Wise** – 84 – died April 30; memorial service at Union Church on May 12. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
4. **Douglas Duane Huss** – 67 – died July 27; memorial service at Union Church on August 2. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
5. **Thomas Allen Peterson** – 74 – died August 28; memorial service at Union Church on September 26. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
6. **Philip Christian Hauck** – 80 – died October 5; memorial service at Union Church on October 10. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
7. **Richard A. Miller** – 77 – died November 4; memorial service at Lewin Funeral Home, in Fremont, Wisconsin, on November 11.
8. **Mary Walden** – 88 – died November 27; celebration of life to be held in March 2024.

* Union Church was made aware of Betty's death after our Annual Report for 2022 was published in January 2023.

** Rev. Steve Hartman presided over a memorial service for Ronald Nikolai on July 22, 2023. Ronald was the father of the late Christopher Nikolai who was Union Church's sexton for 15 months from March 2021 through May 2022.

By Transfer:

There were
no transfers in 2023.

By Member Request:

1. **Steve Seitzer**
2. **Vashni Seitzer**
3. **Zachary Krueger**
4. **JoHanna Beal**
5. **Mark Jones**

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Active Membership: December 31, 2022: **529**

Members added to Active Roll:

By reception	12
By confirmation	5
By reactivation	0
TOTAL ADDED	17

Members removed from Active Roll:

By death	8
By transfer	0
By member request	5
By placing on Inactive Roll	0
TOTAL REMOVED	13

Active Membership: December 31, 2023: **533**

BAPTISMS: Infants and Children

1. **Lucca Lazzari Nelson** – born June 27, 2022 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized March 12 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Jean Nelson and Stephanie Lazzari Nelson
2. **Luisa Giuseppa Galati** – born October 18, 2022 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized March 19 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Sarah Marie Galati and Luigi Galati
3. **John Lewis Lakatos** – born September 9, 2020 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized August 6 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Emily and Steve Lakatos
4. **Emily Corinne Lakatos** – born July 26, 2023 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized August 6 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Emily and Steve Lakatos

BAPTISM: Adult

1. **Jon Wayne Boldt**
Baptized July 23 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.

MEMBER MARRIAGES

1. **Maren Wachter and Corey Lemke** at Union Church on September 23.
Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
2. **Dorothy Williams and Melinda Gerrits** at Union Church on October 31.
Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.

Membership and Attendance Data for the Last 20 Years

<u>Year</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Avg. Attendance</u>	<u>Easter</u>	<u>Christmas Eve</u>
2023	533	105	246	322
2022	529	³ 76	135	232
2021	529	² 61		186
2020	534	¹ 131		
2019	545	121	277	303
2018	528	128	260	357
2017	530	136	291	410
2016	525	135	238	361
2015 ^{CM}	521	138	305	372
2014	555	139	316	387
2013 ^{CM}	550	149	318	346
2012	567	183	329	397
2011	539	184	329	359
2010 ^{CM}	528	204	402	357
2009 ^{CM}	580	207	367	310
2008	592	212	330	342
2007	581	208	452	310
2006	559	220	348	360
2005 ^{CM}	521	219	329	360
2004	642	222	313	360

^{CM} membership rolls reviewed by Common Ministry

- 1 attendance average based on the 10 in-person Sunday worship services held in the sanctuary from January 5 through March 8. No in-person worship took place in the sanctuary after March 8, 2020 through the end of the year.
- 2 attendance average based on the 28 in-person Sunday worship services held in the sanctuary from June 13 through the end of 2021. The attendance figure listed does not reflect numbers for those who streamed our worship services online.
- 3 does not include attendance for the seven weeks (Jan. 9 through Feb. 20) during which members were encouraged to stream our worship service rather than attend in person.

Financials

**for
2023**

Union Congregational United Church of Christ Balance Sheet

December 31, 2023

Assets

Cash

Associated Bank Checking	\$ 74,557	
Associated Bank Money Market	\$ 432,084	
Total Cash		\$ 506,641

Gifts and Endowments

UCF: Killoran Scholarship Fund	\$ 77,544	
UCF: General Gifts/Endowments	\$ 81,132	
UCF: Memorial Garden	\$ 82,456	
UCF: Cora Nelson	\$ 320,198	
UCF: Bagby Theological	\$ 11,684	
Associated Trust: Distributions & Donations	\$ 41,224	
Associated Trust: Principal & Earnings	\$ 539,693	
Total Gifts and Endowments		\$ 1,153,931

Condo Loans Receivable - Waitzmann Funds	\$ 84,465
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Total Assets	<u>\$ 1,745,037</u>
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Liabilities and Fund Balances

Prepaid Pledges	\$ 38,610
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General Fund Balance	\$ 68,660
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Gifts and Memorial Funds

Principal & Earnings Fund	\$ 539,693	
Distributions & Donations Fund	\$ 41,224	
General Gifts/Endowments	\$ 84,938	
Cora Nelson/Outreach	\$ 320,198	
Killoran Scholarship Fund	\$ 77,544	
Memorial Garden Fund	\$ 82,456	
Bagby Theological Fund	\$ 11,684	
Total Gifts and Memorial Funds		\$ 1,157,737

Other Funds

Waitzmann Condo Loans	\$ 84,465	
Technology Replacement Fund	\$ 7,966	
Sabbatical Fund	\$ 16,945	
General Fund	\$ 68,660	
Specific Giving Fund	\$ 143,649	
Women's Ministry Fund	\$ 2,465	
Outreach Fund	\$ 1,919	
Blessing Box Fund	\$ 3,093	
Souper Cooks Fund	\$ 1,537	
Jubilee House Fund	\$ 5,612	
Hurley Fund	\$ 4,790	
Total Other Funds		<u>\$ 341,102</u>

Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	<u>\$ 1,606,110</u>
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Year 2023 Treasurer's Report

INCOME	2023 Budget	2023 Actual
Pledge Income	\$ 360,000	\$ 335,290
One-time Gifts	\$ 10,000	\$ 400
Non-Pledge Income	\$ 55,000	\$ 51,080
Loose Offering	\$ 3,000	\$ 4,901
Church School	\$ 100	\$ -
Prior Year Pledges	\$ 5,000	\$ 500
Investment Income	\$ 50	\$ 79
Room Rentals	\$ 10,000	\$ 11,344
Fundraisers	\$ 4,500	\$ 6,757
Total Operating Income	\$ 447,650	\$ 410,351
PROGRAM EXPENSE		
Worship Ministry	\$ 8,300	\$ 7,312
Education Ministry	\$ 6,365	\$ 7,090
Membership Ministry	\$ 3,275	\$ 943
Outreach Ministry	\$ 15,600	\$ 14,559
Stewardship Ministry	\$ 900	\$ 34
Total Program Expense	\$ 34,440	\$ 29,938
GENERAL EXPENSE		
Pastor Staff Expense	\$ 141,812	\$ 142,398
Lay Staff Expense	\$ 166,960	\$ 151,590
Facilities	\$ 40,150	\$ 35,776
Administrative Expense	\$ 77,400	\$ 86,156
Total General Expense	\$ 426,322	\$ 415,920
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 460,762	\$ 445,858
NET INCOME (Operating Income Less Expenditures)	\$ (13,112)	\$ (35,507)

*A proposed 2024 budget will be presented at the Annual Meeting.

Building for Faith in Action Capital Campaign Finances

Beginning Balance	\$8,085
Campaign Consultant Grant	\$36,000
Contributions and Grants Received*	\$215,034
Expenditures	\$52,492
12-13-2023 Balance	\$211,627

*This amounts to 37% of the \$572,000 pledged by 94 households.

Gifts and Memorials Ministry

Union Congregational United Church of Christ has a long, rich history of giving in meaningful ways to support and advance efforts in the Green Bay community. Our committee is committed to building on this foundation of work and to taking great care of the gifts given.

The Gifts and Memorials Ministry was established by amendment to the church bylaws in January 2007, although this work was done many decades prior. The Ministry has two sub-parts: the Distribution Recommendation and Review Committee and the Asset Management Committee.

As background, the following is the G&M purpose:

The Gifts and Memorials Ministry “exists to promote and steward charitable contributions for non-operating budget purposes, with particular emphasis on projects initiated and supported by Church members that advance the local community, sustain the Church’s physical resources, or support or encourage other initiatives that further the Church’s mission. The Ministry is intended to complement, but not replace or compete with the Church’s annual, planned, or special giving.”

In 2023, Kathy Baldwin became chair of Distribution, and Daniel Pagel stepped down as the chair of Asset Management. We hope to have that position filled soon. We are grateful for the continued and valued commitment of Gail Carels, Sue Whittemore, Kristi Zahn, Paco Espinosa, Daniel Pagel, and Nicole Polarek. We welcomed the addition of Michael Stepp to the Ministry.

In 2023, after due diligence using the guiding principles for distribution, the Ministry recommended the following disbursements (\$44,500 in total) that Common Ministry approved.

- \$36,000 for the Capital Campaign consultant.
- \$2,500 for the Juneteenth Celebration hosted by We All Rise.
- 6,000 for generators to the Ukraine through the Bacon Family Trust.

We are working on three more requests that we hope to have granted in January.

The Ministry takes great care of the gifts given to our church to support vital work in our community and the world. With the help of our members, it is our pleasure to take a leadership role in service to our community while honoring the legacy of our members.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Baldwin
Co-Chair of Gifts and Memorials Ministry

Total Gifts & Memorials Fund Activity 2023

Beginning Balance 1/01/2023:	983,921
Plus Total Income and Additions:	2,537
Less Grants:	(47,000)
Investment Gain/Loss:	132,017
Equals Ending Balance 12/31/2023:	1,071,475

Income and Additions to Gifts and Memorials Funds :

Memorial gifts	\$ 2,537
	<u>\$ 2,537</u>

Expenses and Distributions from Gifts and Memorials Funds:

In-Reach/Program

Grant for Capital Campaign Consultant:	\$ 36,000
	<u>\$ 36,000</u>

Outreach

Killoran scholarships	\$ 2,500
Bacaon Family Foundation	\$ 6,000
We All Rise	\$ 2,500
	<u>\$ -</u>
	<u>\$ 11,000</u>

Total Expenses and Distributions	<u>\$ 47,000</u>
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Our Church Staff

(as of December 31, 2023)

Senior Minister Bridget M. Flad Daniels
Administrative Assistant Eric Goska
Financial Secretary Katrina Catteruccia
Music Director Haley Steele
Organist Ray Thompson
Handbell Ensemble Director Linda Cook
Youth Music Director Melissa Heffernan
Librarian Cathy Putman
Audio Coordinator Eric Harkoff
Nursery Attendants:
Jenna Stevens, London Graham, and Jenna Carrao

Office Phone (920) 437-9266

Church Office (Eric Goska) office@unionucc.com
Financial Secretary (Katrina Catteruccia) finance@unionucc.com
Pastor Bridget bridget@unionucc.com

Visit our website at www.unionucc.com
