
Union Congregational United Church of Christ



Annual Report for 2024

189th Annual Meeting



Celebrating Pride on the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost—June 30, 2024

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Union Congregational United Church of Christ 25 Years Open and Affirming

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1999

GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE D-4

An open-door policy

Union Congregational votes to welcome gays

By JEAN PEERENBOOM
PRESS-GAZETTE

Last month, members of Union Congregational Church, 716 S. Madison St., joined the ranks of a select group. They became one of only 5 percent of United Church of Christ churches to be "open and affirming."

This means that not only does the church accept homosexuals as full voting members of the congregation, but also affirms that "they are people like any other of God's children and should have no discrimination because of sexual orientation," said member Phil Hauck.

In another vote, the congregation approved allowing ministers of the church to hold Services of Commitment for same-sex couples within the church building.

The Rev. Charles Mize explained, "In terms of open and affirming to people being homosexual, we look at 'orientation' not 'practice.' As in heterosexual relationships, there are different ways to practice. What we expect for same-gender couples is what we expect for heterosexual couples; a committed relationship that is expected to last a lifetime."

The vote was long in coming, said Mize. The process dates to 1985 when the General Synod of the United Church of Christ asked all congregations to consider becoming "open and affirming" of all people who are homosexual.

"In our denomination," he explained, "each congregation is



"The bigger story for us is the kind of spirit expressed by the congregation. There was a strong sense of God's spirit at work ..."

— The Rev. Charles Mize,
pastor, Union Congregational

independent. We live in covenant with each other, but there is no higher authority such as a bishop." Therefore, each church sets its own policy. At this point, only 325 of the more than 6,000 congregations have adopted the policy, he said.

"This congregation has been

trying to respond to that call since the early 1990s. It's an issue we have talked about and prayed about. In large part, it is not a new story for us. We've been working at this in various ways for seven or eight years," Mize said.

The matter was raised in 1996 when a lesbian couple requested a Service of Commitment in the church. "That pushed us in a more particular fashion," he said. "But three years ago we decided we were not ready for that in our church building.

Members were surveyed and the results showed the congregation was too divided to take a vote. "It was too emotional, too divisive to deal with," the pastor said. "The whole church is important and some decisions it's just not time to make."

In January, the members moved that the congregation take the votes necessary to take steps to vote at the next annual meeting, which would have been January, 2000. However, later in the year, it was decided that it should be dealt with at a separate meeting, set for Oct. 24.

During the year, educational meetings and discussions were held to acquaint people with the issues and to air concerns. It was decided that passage would require a two-thirds vote rather than a majority. The subject was divided into eight motions and all passed with 75 percent or more.

"The bigger story for us," said Mize, "is the kind of spirit expressed by the congregation.

There was a strong sense of God's spirit at work in the congregation. People were leaving the sanctuary with tears in their eyes ... I had several people tell me they didn't vote the way they thought they would. The voted as God's spirit directed."

Al Loomer, a member of the congregation and a past moderator, said the process and the vote made him "feel very good. I was afraid that whichever side won might give a cheer at the end. But that didn't happen. Everyone went away relaxed and happy."

He feared the divisiveness of the issue would cause problems, as it did in the 1960s when the church voted to merge with the United Church of Christ. "The last time we had such a divisive type thing, we lost one-third of our congregation," Loomer said. After that vote in 1964, some members broke away and started another Congregational church.

Moderator Helen Krueger said she was pleased with the congregation's response and the way members handled themselves during the meeting. "I was also pleased that the outcome was so overwhelming in response (with more than 75 percent). It was a long process ... in study for a long time. Three years ago we decided to wait, but now we were ready and I think the outcome shows that.

"I don't expect much in repercussions. I feel the congregation is together on this. It solidifies how we feel about welcoming all people," she said.

"The issue of the relationship of homosexuality and Christian faith at Union had been with us for a number of years. We had studied, shared workshops and classes, debated, and prayed continually. Our concern and study culminated in the special called congregational meeting on Sunday, October 24, 1999. It was a momentous day as we carefully aired our thoughts once again. Following a prepared document and three primary motions, we voted overwhelmingly that we would truly be an open church with no discrimination or exclusion of persons who believe in God and wish to worship with us."

—Moderator Helen Krueger as written in *Union Church's Annual Report for 1999*



Our Annual Meeting Sunday, January 26, 2025

The 189th Annual Meeting of
Union Congregational United Church of Christ
will convene immediately following worship on Sunday, January 26.

- Reports will be received, retiring Ministry chairs and vice-chairs will be recognized, elections will be held for new leaders of our congregation.
- The 2025 budget will be proposed, discussed and adopted.
- We will vote to renew our membership in JOSHUA for 2025.

On the Cover

Union celebrated Pride during worship on June 30, 2024. Union member Kathleen Caylor took the photo.

A Union First

This year, for the first time, our Annual Report covers will be printed in one of five different colors: pastel pink, flamingo pink, greige, light cyan, or turquoise.

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**UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Green Bay, Wisconsin**

**189th Annual Meeting
Convening in the sanctuary following the Worship Service
Sunday, January 26, 2025**

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 2025 Budget	Sandy Polarek, Treasurer
JOSHUA Membership for 2025	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 188th Annual Meeting of January 28, 2024 have been reviewed by the Common Ministry and are included in this Annual Report for approval at the 189th Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Hohenstein, Clerk

MINUTES OF THE 188th ANNUAL MEETING January 28, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: The 188th Annual Meeting of Union Congregational United Church of Christ of Green Bay, Wisconsin was called to order by Moderator Tim Harder at 11:10 a.m. Motion to approve the agenda was approved. (Motion by Heather Collins/Second by Denise Olson)

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

Betty Ann Ross*	Douglas Duane Huss	Richard A. Miller
Carol Bickford Bush	Thomas Allen Peterson	Mary Walden
James Lawrence Wise	Philip Christian Hauck	

*Betty Ann Ross died November 14, 2022. Union Church was made aware of her death after our Annual Report of 2022 was published in January 2023.

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 533 active members. Clerk Gail Hohenstein declared that by visual observation the necessary quorum to conduct business (in excess of 32 participants) was present.

OPENING REMARKS: Moderator Harder welcomed all to the 188th annual meeting, noting we are just 12 years away from the congregation’s 200th anniversary. Dr. Michael Lukens was thanked for acting as Parliamentarian. He thanked Barbara McClure-Lukens and the Capital Campaign committee for the successful Capital Campaign. He also thanked the many people who care for the interior and exterior of the church building. He went on to thank Common Ministry and members of the church’s Ministries for putting God’s love in action in the past year. Finally, he thanked Pastor Bridget for her diligence and the loving care she brings to Union.

Senior Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels began by expressing that it is an honor to serve Union. She continued, saying that 2023 was a year of significant transition, with several deaths and moves of long-time and active members, several staff transitions including Andrew Verhulst’s November resignation

and the hire of Brad Dorin to replace him as Sexton in January, 2024. Also, the role of Music Director Haley Steele was expanded to include more programming responsibilities, both within worship and other offerings, which has resulted in renewed energy and spirit in this ministry. She gave thanks to all who continue to make the Christ Spirit dominant in our lives, especially Glen Versteegen who has stepped down as head usher after five years and Tim Dantoin who is taking up that baton, and to Kathy Seifert for creating wreaths, watering our Easter flowers and Christmas poinsettias, creating the luminaria for Christmas Eve, and so much more. A very special thanks goes to Ray Thompson, our organist for over 18 years who will retire February 11. She shared gratitude for the Education Ministry, the teachers, aides, advisors, children, youth, parents, cooks, and all who seek to pass on the faith, especially Helen Krueger who is stepping off of Education Ministry, which she has served off and on for close to 60 years! The Blessing Box is a phenomenon in and of itself, and special thanks were expressed to Mary Hemminger, Claudia Doelger, Marty Berry, Larry Kabat and Cathy Valk, Mary Boeselager, Joni Delwiche, and more for restocking it 3-4 times a week, as well as the Congregation members who provide resources for it. Also, much gratitude for the Stewardship Ministry, including Bill Johnson, who takes on more projects that one can keep track of, Jim Smithback for painting, and Marty Thiel for refurbishing the radiator covers here in the sanctuary and a number of other projects. She shared a huge thanks to all for the success of our Building for Faith in Action Capital Campaign. The actual campaign numbers are shown in the Annual Report, but the spirit of this church was truly magnified by this campaign. We celebrated our truly remarkable history and are positioning ourselves for a vibrant and vital future. For that she is enormously grateful, especially to the core team, which was led by Barbara McClure-Lukens and included Lou Norsetter, Ed Tucker, Mary Hemminger, Jeff Carels, Jeff Gibson, Deb Rose, Tim Harder, and herself. Last, she thanked the Church Officers who have done much behind the scenes.

Looking ahead, she noted that we have a powerful exhibit called “The F-Word” coming to the church hall in March and will be partnering with St. Norbert College and JOSHUA to bring Louisa Hext of the Forgiveness Project to share with us about that exhibit. Also, several excellent guest preachers are lined up, including Rev. Kari Parker, the Executive Director of the WI Council of Churches and Rev. Daniel Cooperrider who will celebrate Earth Day with us, sharing from his book “Speak With the Earth and It Will Teach You,” and more. Also, four St. Norbert College students are slated to be “embedded” with the congregation for a couple of months this spring as they study anti-racism and explore how to engage that topic with a congregation.

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

ANNUAL REPORTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND QUESTIONS:

EDUCATION: Beth Piontek reported that adult education offerings have returned to the 9:00 a.m. hour on Sunday mornings in addition to the excellent Wednesday evening offerings Julie Harder continues to share. Thanks to Sue Whittemore for organizing the Sunday morning sessions. It is exciting that the middle and high school youth groups have experienced excellent growth this past year, and the church is grateful to the youth and families who make this a priority, as well as to those who have served as advisors and prepared meals. And a special thank you to Helen Krueger for her 60 years of service to Union’s Education Ministry.

MEMBERSHIP AND INREACH: Denise Olson shared that 17 new members were welcomed into the Church last year, and many of them have already gotten involved in Church activities. Inreach organizes a number of events like the potluck today. They are always looking for new folks to join.

OUTREACH: As the new Chair of the Outreach Ministry, Jammie VerGiesen was surprised at how much outreach this church does. He is thankful for all the help and guidance of co-chair Christie Reese. Outreach Ministry is the practice of looking beyond oneself to the people around us, and sharing the love of Christ as we serve and connect with our community. By meeting the needs within our communities, we display God's love and offer up an invitation to get to know the Love of God through our church. Scripture is full of outreach examples where there was a need, and God's people became resourceful. There's the story of the crowd being fed by five loaves and two fish (Matthew 14). There's the time a group of friends figured out how to open up a roof to get their friend to Jesus (Mark 2). Throughout history, God has used the unlikely, the common, the unexpected. We serve a God that is resourceful. And we reflect God's image when we are resourceful. No single congregation can provide every type of outreach ministry, but we here at Union are working on it! Jammie's goal in 2024 is to continue to grow our outreach ministries until they are some of the most deliberate and effective church-led programs in our community. He would like to work with the Education Ministry to strengthen outreach within our youth program as well. He encouraged us all to continue to consider our gifts, your talents, ideas, skills, and how those might be contributed to our current outreach ministries, or to start something new! The Outreach Ministry is always open to new members, so please consider joining us. He is grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a wonderful team of dedicated and hard-working individuals! Our Outreach Ministry is very strong and he is thankful for all as he looks forward to continuing to bring Christ into our community.

WORSHIP: Zoe Harkoff shared that Union's Worship Ministry serves as a conduit of God's love in action, bringing together many spiritual experiences for our congregation inside the church and extending beyond these physical walls. Continued livestream access ensures that the divine message reaches our broader audience, embracing those who may not be able to attend in person. With warm hospitality, ushers (both here and virtual) guide worshippers into the sanctuary, fostering an atmosphere of belonging. A list of ushers who served in 2023 can be found in the written report. Some names inadvertently omitted were Amy Anderson, Jon Boldt, Marty and Julie Thiel, and Jon Wiltse. Communion organization and service allow for a sacred moment of connection between God and believers. The thoughtful preparation of the sanctuary, orchestrated by dedicated volunteers, creates a holy space where divine love can be encountered. Readers share scripture, while music and art, carefully curated, elevate the worship experience. See the full written report for all the ways music and art were used in 2023 to show God's love in action. Special dates such as Heifer Sunday and Christmas Pageant Sunday bring young and old, wild and domesticated, together, emphasizing God's love of all creatures. Worship also occurred outside of Sunday service, facilitated through many intentional events, and fostered community and mutual support among worshippers. Again, see the report for these events which nourished our souls and sometimes even our bodies, reinforcing the truth that God's love is both spiritual and practical. Union's Worship Ministry is a testament to the multifaceted nature of God's love, reaching hearts through diverse avenues.

STEWARDSHIP: Clay Reese expressed that the Stewardship Ministry is an important contributor to the sustainability of Union, managing the financial and physical resources of our congregation. New participation in and contributions to the Ministry are always welcomed. Highlights from this year are related to the capital campaign and include tuckpointing, door replacement, and the roof project. In his final year as Chair, he gave thanks for Jason Ferry as vice-chair, Bill Johnson who has kept the building standing, Tony Baldwin's expertise especially on finishes, David Thie for his (almost) eternal knowledge, Kathy Seifert who prioritized grounds, Cathy Putman's vision and thought leadership for our future, Jeff Gibson's thoroughness in everything he does, Sandy Polarek for her oversight as

Treasurer, and Bridget Flad Daniels who does everything we ask and succeeds when we fall short. Lastly, he thanked all of the members and staff that help us clean and maintain our building, as well as the complaints, requests, praise, work, and leadership of many others over the past 4 years.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS: Kathy Baldwin reminded us that the Gifts and Memorials Ministry is entrusted with the careful investment and disbursement of memorial gifts made to the Church. She recognized the contributions of Phil Enscoe and Lloyd Schaefer, who are concluding their terms with the Ministry. She also reminded the Congregation of the opportunities to remember the Church in our estate planning.

2023 BUDGET: Treasurer Sandy Polarek distributed the proposed 2023 budget (attached). She thanked the Congregation for its generosity in this year which has been challenging for the Church budget because people have been so generous in the Capital Campaign. We did not receive the amount pledged but expenses were lower so we ended the year able to fulfill all obligations. The 2024 budget is lower as some have lowered or not pledged this year. Some non-pledgers have pledged, so non-pledge income may be reduced. Expenses, including insurance, salaries, supplies and security continue to increase. Katrina Catteruccia, our financial secretary, has been very good at monitoring expenses and helping to keep them on track. Sandy expressed gratitude for Katrina's skills and concern for all of the Church's finances. Sandy expressed confidence that we will be able to manage income and expenses this year because (1) we still have over \$44,000 in the reserve account, (2) we are a generous congregation which steps up when we see a need, and (3) the Church officers have committed to meet to analyze and suggest ways to address our structural deficit for the long term. In response to a question, Sandy said the current budget does not reflect any potential savings from the solar project, as it is not known when it will be completed. Pastor Flad Daniels commented that the Capital Campaign has done quite well, but it will be helpful for the congregation to balance their Capital Campaign and operating income contributions so that we are not only able to replace the roof but to also keep the lights on. Last, Sandy requested that when making payments to the Church, it would be very helpful to be clear whether the payment is for the Capital Campaign or operating income. The proposed budget was approved as presented. (Motion Sandy Polarek/Second Jeff Gibson)

JOSHUA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022: Steve Hartman expressed thanks for being allowed to serve as the JOSHUA liaison. He shared it has been a busy year, with a new community organizer, work to raise awareness about crowded prison conditions and challenging the prison lockdowns, at times involving contact with our Madison legislators. He reminded us of the vigils which are conducted by the religious leaders group (chaired by our Pastor Flad Daniels) to reclaim an area that has been de-securitized by gun violence. The motion to include a \$1,000 membership fee in the Church budget was approved. (Motion Steve Hartman/Second Gail Carels)

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING MINISTRY MEMBERS:

Retiring members of Ministries and Chairs and Vice-Chairs were thanked for their service:

Heather Collins	Vice Moderator
Dan Pagel	Co-Chair, Gifts & Memorials
Clay Reese	Chair, Stewardship
Michael Vinson	Pastoral Relations
Bob Fahres	Memorial Garden Trustee

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:

Clay Reese	Vice Moderator
Sandy Polarek	Treasurer
Beth Lyman Piontek	Chair, Education
Amy Richards	Vice Chair, Education
Mike Stepp	Co-Chair, Gifts & Memorials
Jason Ferry	Vice Chair, Stewardship
Denise Olson	Chair, Membership & Outreach

and that the following nominees be elected as set forth below:

Heather Collins	Pastoral Relations, 4 years
Ryan Rieth	Personnel Committee, 3 years
David Thie	Chair, Memorial Garden Trustee
Larry Rose	Vice Chair, Memorial Garden Trustee
Wendy Woodward	Ecumenical Partnership for Housing Delegate
Steve Hartman	JOSHUA Liaison
Ruth Homrighaus and Mary Ann Hudson	Communications Coordinators

No nominations were made from the floor. After a second by Jammie VerGiesen, 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: Pastor Flad Daniels called special attention to the Church's gratitude for Phil Hauck and his significant work for the Memorial Garden. The Church has much gratitude for the legacy that will live on for decades and centuries.

BENEDICTION: Julie Macier moved and Kathy Baldwin seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was approved. Pastor Flad Daniels gave the benediction. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail A. Hohenstein, Clerk

— Moderator —

I love Union.

I don't know how many times I've said that to Pastor Bridget in the last several years, but it is often and heartfelt. It usually comes after a message or action taken by Union that I find particularly meaningful. As Bonhoeffer said, "the church must speak out for those who cannot speak," and I hear those prophetic voices on a regular basis at Union. Often these come from Pastor Bridget, but also from many other involved members. Our participation in JOSHUA is a tangible example, and I thank those who are active participants in JOSHUA's ministry.

Bonhoeffer also said "Mere waiting and looking on is not Christian behavior. Christians are called to compassion and action." The recent pledge campaign theme "Because of YOU, Union changes lives" wasn't merely aspirational. From the Blessing Box outside our door, to Ties to Mexico, to grants for local homeless shelters, Outreach Ministry, Gifts and Memorials, and a multitude of Union members, we are taking action to care for others. Bonhoeffer also said, "The church is the church only when it exists for others." I think we qualify as a church.

I also love the tradition of education and intellectual curiosity at Union where the questions are more important than the answers. Where we are encouraged to listen for the Still Speaking God to find the right answers for today. What first attracted me to Union was that I do not have to park my brain at the door when I come into church. I am very grateful for the many members that regularly engage in our Education Ministry and in meaningful discussions at Union.

A vibrant healthy community is also essential for our personal growth. It is the way we inspire each other to be involved in meaningful service. I thank our Worship and Membership Ministries for providing opportunities for the community to gather, which is so essential to the church and for us personally. And I also lift up thanks to our Stewardship Ministry and all those who tirelessly work to maintain the church building and to raise the money needed to maintain the building and staff.

With all that I love about Union, Union is not without its challenges, and supporting both our staff and our beautiful but aging building is one of the biggest. It would be easy to ask everyone to give more to the church. I'm going to ask for something more difficult. I'd like to ask everyone to spread the word about all that Union does. Invite friends to lend a hand with one of our ministries. Invite them to worship. Spread the word on social media about Union's activities and generous support of social initiatives. Along with our own personal generosity, by growing our Union community we can continue our history of existing for others, of being a real church. May we always be a real church and, as Bonhoeffer said, always "comfort the troubled, and trouble the comfortable."

Peace,
Dr. Tim Harder
Moderator

— Pastoral Annual Report 2024 —

Because of YOU, Union Church changes lives.

Even though Epiphany 2025 marks my 18th ordination anniversary, I've now been in full-time ministry 27 years. In that time, I've gotten to know the scriptures, the people of God, and myself better. Part of that learning has included the power and importance of taking notes along the way. Have you seen people on the internet commenting, "Post a picture or it didn't happen"? Well, for me, the joke should be "Add it to a Google Doc, or it didn't happen." So, current me is deeply grateful to January 2024 Bridget for starting a list of all of the tremendous things this congregation did in 2024.

As I look back on my list, a compilation of ministries and events and activities that go above and beyond those which our standing Ministries do on an ongoing basis, our fall Stewardship theme weaves its way throughout - Because of YOU Union Church changes lives.

Month by Month:

In January, we joined with We All Rise African American Resource Center to organize a Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Unfortunately, a blizzard substantially curtailed the event, forcing us and We All Rise to reschedule the planned home repairs and food drives. It wasn't the spirited gathering of people from across the community gathered in Dr. King's name that had been envisioned by Union member and lead organizer, Wendy Woodward, but the service and outreach that was done on later dates was still much needed and much appreciated.

Also in January, we welcomed Larry Potter, the head of security at Bellin College, who led an ALICE training for us. ALICE, which stands for Alert, Lock Down, Inform, Counter, Evacuate, is an important, albeit horrifying reality in our current age. Potter also consulted with Stewardship Ministry about safety, and that Ministry continues to work to engage best practices. At the end of the year, Union would promote a toy drive initiated by member Nicole Polarek to support the survivors at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison following the tragedy there.

January also brought the announcement of the retirement of Ray Thompson, who had been our organist for over 18 years. Ray's organ shoes are not easily filled, though we are deeply grateful to David Hassel for stepping into the interim role as an Organist Search Advisory Team, or OSAT, has been seeking Ray's successor. Thanks are also due to Haley Steele for her work with David, coordinating a comprehensive Music Survey to discern the congregation's thoughts and priorities for our music ministry, and the expertise she lends to the OSAT which is composed of Tracy Klickman, Zoe James, Emily Lakatos, Jade Hatton, Jeff Gibson, Tim Harder, Haley, and me. To date, we have not identified the right candidate, but we remain optimistic.

In February we brought in a powerful exhibit called The F Word, a compelling display of 27 massive panels cloth panels with photographs and stories from the Forgiveness Project. The Forgiveness Project collects and shares real stories of transformation to help others transform the pain and trauma in their own lives. This provided our theme for both worship throughout the season of Lent as well as for our Lenten Movie series.

Forgiveness remained our theme in March as Rev. Keri Parker, UCC minister and Executive Director of the WI Council of Churches, joined us to explore the prospect of forgiveness on a cultural level and indigenous justice.

Another UCC minister joined us in April. Rev. Daniel Cooperrider, author of “Speak with the Earth and It Will Teach You: A Field Guide to the Bible” led us in Adult Education as well as worship for Earth Day. Rev. Cooperrider’s insights and gentle spirit continue to bring inspiration as a cadre of volunteers, under the indefatigable leadership of Cathy Putman, have been transforming the overgrown Biblical Garden into a native pollinator habitat. Not only has Cathy put in countless hours in the garden, she has secured numerous grants to underwrite the project and has been a tireless advocate and educator along the way.

Parson’s Purse — 2024

Beginning Balance	\$4,195.52
Donations	\$3,467.31
Disbursements	\$5,900.00
Ending Balance	\$1,762.83

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

In late April, I took my week of continuing education when I was invited to participate in a powerful workshop focused on mitigating political violence in the 2024 election in Wisconsin. One of only two clergy in a group of 25 participants, we both learned the tactics of non-violence as well as strategized how each of us in our roles could help the election to be free, fair, and non-violent. I shared my learnings in sermons, with colleagues including the JOSHUA Spiritual Leaders Caucus (which I continue to co-chair), and served as a poll chaplain at the request of WIVEC (the Wisconsin Interfaith Voter Engagement Campaign). The idea of poll chaplains is to provide a calm, non-anxious presence on voting day, particularly at polls where violence or voter intimidation is foreseen.

May culminated the semester I spent advising five St. Norbert College students in the practical component of their course on Black Theology. The students studied Union’s history and current practice around race relations and a packed house gathered with them in adult education to hear more about their learnings and encouragement, both about Union and Black Theology.

For 23 nights this May, the Safe Overnight Parking Program of the Wise Women Gathering Place called Union’s north parking lot home while the lot where the program normally operates was repaved. Not only was it an honor to be able to provide this hospitality, it also gave our church members an in-your-face reason to learn and talk about housing insecurity and poverty. It truly helped us to flex our faith muscles. My one big regret is that we didn’t facilitate opportunities for Union folks and our guests to interact.

Throughout the spring, we joined with JOSHUA to undertake a BIG READ of Adam Russel Taylor’s “A More Perfect Union,” a book by the current President and Editor in Chief of Sojourner’s about the scourge of White Christian Nationalism and what a faithful response might look like. I was even able to secure Rev. Taylor to Zoom with us as a capstone to this important conversation.

Much of July was spent overseeing various projects funded by our Capital Campaign which will be detailed elsewhere. Early August began with an electrical fire in one of the Mayflower classrooms. Thanks to the quick action of the On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic tutors and staff, the fire was contained to the one classroom. Our insurance company did cover the cost of the damages (minus the deductible, of course), and thanks to the labor of our custodian Brad Dorin, OTM Executive Director Pat Shafer, and the OTM Board, tutoring was able to be moved to other parts of the building for the remainder of the summer session. Abundant thanks, too, to Stewardship Ministry, our crackerjack painting crew, and once again Brad Dorin for getting the room into workable order in time for Faith Formation and OTM tutoring to resume in September.

Knowing that support from our spiritual communities can be so deeply critical to our mental health, our September All Church Retreat at Moon Beach launched our work to become a WISE congregation. WISE stands for Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaging. Thanks to Christie Reese for facilitating a Mental Health First Aid for Teens workshop, and for committing to shepherding the congregation in our next steps as we seek to do well by one another's mental health.

As part of our ongoing celebration of justice and the arts, Union Member and artist Tom Friese installed his "Amigos" series in the church hall this fall. The installation, inspired by the notion that we are all one people, included "black and white signify our current lack of compassion and understanding for our southern neighbors, red – blood shed while seeking a better life, blue – a sky filled with hope, and yellow – tomorrow's sunrise." It was a fitting backdrop as we wrapped up our Ties to Mexico Ministry. Initiated in 2023 by Tina Bechtel, Ties provided a way for Union members to tangibly extend our love and resources to refugees at the U.S.-Mexico border. While changes at our partner church in Arizona have brought this ministry to a conclusion, church leaders have their eyes and ears open, watching for new ways we can live our commitment to be an immigrant welcoming community as we continue to strive to love our neighbors as ourselves.

This report would not be complete without a robust and heartfelt message of thanks for the service of our outgoing Moderator, Dr. Tim Harder. For the last four years, Tim has served the congregation with insight, wisdom, and measure. His listening ear, discerning eye, and keen mind have been deeply appreciated, both in Ministry meetings and as I have sought him for counsel and perspective. He concluded his final Common Ministry meeting by reminding us that one of the Fruits of the Spirit is joy. Tim, you have brought joy to congregational leadership and to my ministry; know of our deep gratitude.

This is merely a snapshot of the truly remarkable and profound ministry our congregation has undertaken in the last year. So very often, these reports don't even touch on the places where true grace abounds – births and deaths, baptisms and weddings, relationships forged, forgiveness offered, health sought. Through it all, I can say without reservation that Union truly changes lives through our love of God, neighbor, and self. It is an honor to serve a congregation that so vibrantly makes the Christ Spirit dominant in our lives and in all human relations.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels
Senior Minister

— Wisconsin Conference UCC Year 2024 in Review —



“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice.” Isaiah 60: 1 and 5

I write this year-end Wisconsin Conference UCC summary on Epiphany Day and send it with prayers of light and love to you and your congregation. This day happens to coincide with the certification of Electoral College votes and the formal election of the next president of the United States. Four years ago, our Capitol was under siege by people seeking to undermine a free and fair election. This year we pray that the peace of Epiphany will abide. Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, this year coincides with the holiday commemorating the life and work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In true UCC spirit, I invite you to pray for the dignity, equality and basic human rights of all who are marginalized or poor or feel unwelcome in this country.

The Epiphany season is about Christ’s incarnation through the way we embody the teachings of Jesus. The role of the wider United Church of Christ is to resource, equip and support local churches in this vital ministry of incarnation. We do this in myriad ways, from guiding the Search and Call process and facilitating pastoral authorization, care and oversight; to our Damascus Project coursework and the training we offer on “best practices” for the church; to faith formation retreats and the many justice working groups that are eager to support your church’s local efforts.

Sixteen months ago, the Conference Board of Directors and staff met in a retreat setting to begin conversations about the restructuring of our Conference life. Those discussions were an acknowledgment of the challenges inherent in maintaining two midlevel judicatories – the associations and Conference – in a Conference less than half the size of our founding membership in 1962. We wondered if unburdening ourselves of the many committee slots in the current structure might allow us to redeploy volunteer time and talent according to people’s passions.

Throughout our conversations with stakeholders two ideas stood out like bright epiphanies – first, our desire to nurture UCC **relationships beyond the local church**, and second, our desire to **collaborate in the sharing of ministry ideas and resources**. This reframed the question about structural change from *What are we letting go of?* to *What are we living into?* Last fall, after several listening sessions and in consultation with Association leaders, the Board and staff recommended that we dissolve our four Associations at the Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting in June. We have scheduled additional conversations in each Association in late February and early March for the purpose of sharing more details and illustrating the ways in which we might connect and support one another for greater ministry impact.

So far, we have nearly completed the proposal for a unified Committee on Ministry with regional representation. We appreciated the generous mission and scholarship support provided by the Associations and have made provisions for continuing them. We have drafted a new framework for membership dues and are preparing to streamline Association finance ledgers. And we have created a

graphic that explains the Conference-wide resource web by showing the connections among our many resource hubs and active working groups. Imagine all the innovative ideas that will surface!

I feel the heart of this beloved Conference rejoicing at the advances we made in 2024:

- We launched a new website. Check it out at wcucc.org.
- We offered several marketing resources around the theme “Where God Is Still Speaking.”
- We made progress on the Leadership Forward campaign, with more than \$1.1 million pledged.
- We expanded Damascus Project course offerings and added an online Confirmation program.
- We created a volunteer Legacy Team that will accompany churches in closing decisions.
- We challenged our congregations to surface 20 new potential pastors over two years.
- We continued to strengthen our partnership with United Church Camps Inc.
- We advanced our anti-racism training through a course taken by Board and staff in the fall.

Joyfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Franz Rigert". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

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 Hendrix Malone, Ed Tucker, Cheryl Myers, Shawn Malone, Heather Collins, Haley Steele, Lou Norsetter, and Megan Gleason, all of whom offered Children's Moments in 2024, 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 for her work managing and maintaining the Prayground this year; Nancy Gibson, Deb Rose, Kathy Seifert, Marilyn Halgrimson, Melissa Stepp, and Amy Richards for helping to keep it fully stocked and seasonal, and the families who used the Prayground for keeping it neat and orderly every week. Thank you to Jenna Stevens, London Graham, Jenna Carrao, Natalie Knight, Katelyn Mertens, and Alexis Heins for staffing the nursery each Sunday.

For our grade-school-aged youth, in 4K through 7th 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 work managing curriculum and scheduling teachers, aides, and substitutes for the Faith Formation classrooms. In addition, we would like to thank both the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school year teachers, aides, and substitutes who have volunteered in our Faith Formation classrooms, including, but not limited to, Betty Bienash, Gail Carels, Nancy Gibson, Tim Harder, Eric Harkoff, Betty Hartman, Amanda Hatton, Karen Hogan, Lou Ann Norsetter, Sandy Polarek, Christie Reese, Amy Richards, Zach Seibel, Julie Thiel, Ed Tucker, Jammie VerGiesen, and Clay Reese. A special thank you is offered to Amy Richards who has created and is coordinating a monthly offering referred to as "Station Rotations," which allows the Faith Formation participants of all ages to come together to participate in a variety of activities around a spiritual and/or societal theme. This offering has been very well-received by our youth and offers them an additional opportunity to build community with one another – and with other adults – outside of their usual cohorts. 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 Haley Steele and Megan Jodar 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 the Sunday morning education option offered to our high school youth during the 2023-2024 school year and the confirmation class being offered during 2024-2025. 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 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, including Marty Berry, Heather Collins, Tim Harder, Benny Rieth, Jenna Stevens, Megan Gleason, Jammie VerGiesen, Luc Richards, Ward Bacon, Denise Olson, and Eric Harkoff. Thanks to the commitment of our advisors, we have been able to offer separate programming for our 6th – 8th grade and 8th – 12th grade youth during the 2024-2025 school year, as is needed with more youth at both the older and younger ends of the age groups. With the groups separated, we are referring to the younger group (6th – 8th grades) as

Helping Others, Prayer, and Encouragement (H.O.P.E.) and the older group (8th – 12th grades) as Just Older Youth (J.O.Y.), with the intent of aligning the names of our groups with the Union's purpose and with our intentions for the values we'd like to impart to our young people.

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, and 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!

We thank Pastor Bridget for her work coordinating the adult education offerings that usually occur on the first and third Sundays of each month, as well as those members and friends of Union Church who've presented content for us. We owe an ongoing thank you to Julie Harder whose Seminary Secrets classes continue to be a hallmark of Union's adult education offerings, as well as to Ed Tucker who has begun offering a Christian Disciplines study group after church on the fourth Sunday of each month!

Last, thank you to the members of the Education Ministry, including Heather Collins, Nancy Gibson, Amanda Hatton, Lou Ann Norsetter, Benny Rieth, and Amy Richards. Your commitment has been invaluable to me, and to Union Church!

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, Education Ministry vice-chair

Faith Formation Leaders — 2024-2025 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 – 2nd and 3rd – 5th Grades

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

Assistants: **Amanda Hatton, Zach Seibel, Julie Thiel**

Substitute: **Sandy Polarek**

6th — 7th Grade:

Teachers: **Jammie VerGiesen, Clay Reese**

Assistants: **Betty Bienash, Betty Hartman, Gail Carels, Jeff Carels, Ed Tucker**

Confirmation

Teacher: **Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels**

Assistants: **Heather Collins, Beth Lyman Piontek**

H.O.P.E. and J.O.Y.: **Megan Gleason, Jammie VerGiesen, Heather Collins, Luc Richards, Ward Bacon, Denise Olson, Eric Harkoff, Beth Lyman Piontek**

Librarian: **Cathy Putman**

Adult Education: **Julie Harder, Ed Tucker, Michael Lukens**

Nursery: **Jenna Stevens, London Graham, Katelyn Mertens, Alexis Heins**

Youth Music Coordination: **Megan Jodar**

The Peg Jaeger Church Library

In 2024 the church library added 64 books to the collection, most published within the last ten years. This precipitated a reduction of a similar number of older books.

The aim is to hold about 1,800 books with only classic titles older than twenty years. Of that total, about 13% of our books are fiction, about 27% are children's titles, and 63% 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>.

A large portion of our circulation is to the elementary church school rooms. We provide picture books to supplement the lesson. Our large collection of easy and more sophisticated picture books was paired with lectionary readings several years ago and is a good resource for this use.

The May Used Book Sale afforded the collection several new fiction titles which were warmly received by the congregation. Half of the proceeds were used for library supplies and the other half went to Outreach.

In addition to Tina Bechtel's nature photographs, we have two Tom Friese abstract acrylics on longer term loan on the library walls.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Putman, Librarian

— Membership 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 2024, Union Church welcomed 8 new members.

Social

Church Picnic: Potluck lunch for the Church Picnic was held in the church courtyard accompanied by outdoor worship.

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 event that takes place at Moon Beach camp near Eagle River, Wisconsin. At our 2024 retreat, we launched our plans to become a W.I.S.E. congregation that seeks mental wellness as Pastor Bridget led us around the theme of “The Gifts of Imperfection” by Brene Brown.

Wednesday Night Suppers: Every other week during the school year for 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. See page 19 for a report of this event.

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 for food and fellowship and is convened by 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.

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. Thank you to Traci Briggs and Emily Lakatos for being part of this ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Olson, chair
Jessica Lundgren and Libby Sievert, co-chairs

Women's Fellowship

Over 70 women gathered for reflection and community in the church hall on Monday, December 2, for the Women's Advent Reflection: "Christmas Around the World." The program was written by my wife, Cheryl L. Myers. The designated organization for table donations was On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic for which we raised over \$400.

Our thanks to our readers: Jessica Lundgren, Barb McClure-Lukens, Sue Tucker, and Beth Lyman Piontek; and to our Ladies Ensemble, Violinist Taylor Giorgio, and pianist Elaine Moss. A big shout out to Unions outstanding music director Haley Steele for the wonderful music and help with this event. Thank you to Pat Shafer for her update and selfless work to make On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic so successful. Thanks to Pastor Bridget for the opening prayer. Thanks to the gentlemen who provided behind-the-scenes support, especially Ed Tucker for coordinating those efforts. 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 other 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, 2024, Sandy Polarek spoke about books that she had read and enjoyed recently. Sandy included books that her grandchildren had enjoyed and that might interest other young readers
- In February, Sue Tucker told us about a trip that she and her husband, Ed, had recently experienced. They traveled by river cruise visiting the Balkan Peninsula.
- Our March meeting featured Mary Hemminger who spoke about Union's Blessing Box. Volunteers accept donations from church members including non-perishable food products and paper products which can be accessed by neighbors who need them.
- In April, Betty Hartman shared photos and told us about a river cruise that she and her husband, Steve, enjoyed along the Danube River.
- At our May meeting, Stacie Christian spoke about antiques that members might own or wish to own. She answered questions from those present.
- In September, Steve Hartman informed us about White Christian Nationalism and answered numerous questions about that movement.
- At our October meeting, Lou Ann Norsetter showed photos and told us about her trip "Cruising Down the Rhine."
- In November, for our last gathering of 2024, Sandy Polarek once again reviewed books she had enjoyed. Other participants followed with their favorites from recent reading.

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 2024 Focus: Continually ask what we are doing to support racial and social justice in our community.

Outreach Communication Project

Union Church has a long history of living our faith by serving our neighbors near and far. Mary Hemminger and Deb Rose organized and created information center kiosks with take-home cards, a bulletin board, and a page on the church website for everyone to learn about the various outreach programs and how to participate in the Outreach Ministry. Thank you both so much for your dedication and hard work to create and maintain this communication center!

Blessing Box

The Blessing Box Ministry continues to grow! What began as a local neighborhood outreach, now serves folks in need throughout Brown County.

The Union Church community generously supports the Blessing Box through monthly food drives and monetary donations. Outreach Ministry's goal for the Blessing Box is to share 300 items per week (15,000+ items per year). That goal was met in 2024, through a combination of 1,200+ food drive donations plus \$4,643 in items purchased with monetary donations. The addition of the Produce Pantry from July to September added fresh garden produce for those in need. Our Produce Pantry and Band Concert food drives also provided items to share in 2024 as did Blessing Box participation in the 2024 Giving Tree.

The Blessing Box Team includes Marty Barry, Mary Boeselager, Claudia Doelger and Joni Delwiche, who stock the box three times per week year-round. Mary Hemminger manages inventory to make sure we have items on hand to meet restock goals, and coordinates team communication. Larry Kabat, Cathy Valk, and Jon and Isabelle Boldt assist with our summertime evening food drives. Many thanks to Achim Seifert for the construction of the bins as well as maintenance repairs to the Blessing Box.

Souper Cooks

This long-time effort through the Outreach Ministry continued in person in 2024. We now serve every time we prepare a meal. \$1,972 was donated (including funds from the rummage sale) in 2024 and \$1,280 was spent with a year-end balance of \$2,229. 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 -----	\$1,599
Strengthen the Church -----	\$580
Neighbors In Need-----	\$761
Christmas Fund-----	\$1,535

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 in 2023 to help with emergency needs when immigrants are sent to Green Bay with no support. The program has been managing well.

EPH and JOSHUA

Wendy Woodward continued as Union’s liaison with EPH. Wendy, thank you for your time, dedication, and service as our liaison with EPH. Your efforts made meaningful impact and we are grateful for the care and commitment you have shown in this role. As you step down, please know that your contributions have been deeply appreciated, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors. There remains \$5,750 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 2024.

Ties to Mexico

The Ties to Mexico program was initiated by Tina Bechtel as a short-term project to provide resources to refugees on the U.S./Mexico border. The support for this project was tremendous and the contributions to the project were robust throughout the year. A total of 137 blankets were completed by this fall and sent to the Black Mountain UCC in Scottsdale, Arizona for distribution. We wrapped up this ministry in the fall and are grateful to all who participated.

Neighbor Works

Union UCC partnered with John Kershek on this endeavor with Neighbor Works. This organization offers grants for first-time home buyers to help with home renovations and repairs. Several volunteers from Union worked with John to manage repairs, etc. for another member of Union UCC. We look forward to continuing this partnership into the future.

2024 Outreach Summary

NON-BUDGETED OUTREACH

One Great Hour of Sharing	\$ 1,599
Neighbors in Need	\$ 761
Christmas Fund	\$ 1,535
Strengthen the Church	\$ 580
Heifer International	\$ 5,150
Parson’s Purse	\$ 5,368
Housing/Homeless	\$ 1,099
Blessing Box	\$ 4,644
Souper Cooks	\$ 1,281
<u>Gifts & Memorials Outreach Grants</u>	<u>\$ 51,820</u>
Total Non-Budgeted	\$ 73,836

Other Fund-Raising Activities

In May, we had our annual rummage sale and raised nearly \$1,041. These funds support our Outreach initiatives. This year our living gift market for Heifer Sunday raised a total of \$5,150; meaning another Ark was donated by the church for 2024. There was a financial donation match that doubled our support of this program this year as well.

End-of-the-Year Activities

The Love Life Diaper Drive had good participation in 2024. We sponsored five organizations—Dr. Rosa Minoka-Hill School, On The Mark Dyslexia Clinic, The Blessing Box, The Brain Center and We All Rise—with our Christmas Giving Trees.

I remain 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

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 has four task forces: Transformational Justice, Housing initiatives in Brown County, Environmental Justice, and Immigration Justice. These groups meet at various participating churches and via Zoom. JOSHUA also has an active Religious Leaders' Caucus which Pastor Bridget co-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 prayer vigils on the 23rd of each month, challenging the use of extensive solitary confinement and lock-downs at 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 now locally engaged in response to threats of extensive deportation of undocumented workers in Wisconsin. JOSHUA continues 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, Amber Edwards, who is assisted by Caitlyn Haynes, JOSHUA Coordinator.

To learn more, 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 2024 include:

- The addition of First United Church of Christ, Oakbrook Church, and St. John's Lutheran Church in Suamico to the now 22 church partners who support EPH.
- Two families moved from homelessness to home ownership with another family set to close on their home in early 2025
- Serving a total of 53 families and 147 children with transitional and long-term supportive housing.
- Helping 43 families (including 135 children) at risk of losing their housing in the community avoid experiencing homelessness through our eviction prevention program.

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 2024 included Zoe James (Chair & Communion Coordinator) Betty Bienash (Vice Chair and coordinator of Sanctuary Angels), Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels (Senior Minister), Haley Steele (Music Director), Tim Harder (Moderator), Gail Hohenstein (coordinator of readers), and Tim Dantoin (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 Eric Harkoff (AV Coordinator), Jeff Gibson, Zoe James, Noah Harkoff, Clay Reese, Christian Reese, Sam Stranz, Haley Steele, Dan Hatton, Michael Stepp, and Paco Espinosa, along with music interns, Zeke Fietsch-Huber. The team worked diligently throughout the year continuing with much-needed enhancements to sound, camera, and network equipment.

We appreciate the work of the ushers who have been coordinated by Tim Dantoin. In early 2024, Glen Verstegen stepped down from his duties as Lead Usher and Worship Ministry is very appreciative of his service. 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 Jon Boldt.

Virtual ushers continue 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.

Zoe James, along with Noah 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 have participated 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, Christie and Clay Reese, Carter Reese, Barbara McClure-Lukens, Betty Hartman, Steve Hartman, Gail Hohenstein, Christian Reese, Jeff Carels, Gail Carels, Ed Tucker, Sue Tucker, Sandy Polarek, and David Thie.

Betty Bienash of the Worship Ministry orchestrates our Sanctuary Angels committee, who assumed weekly duties to keep the sanctuary tidy and arrange the envelopes and cards in the pews. Betty Hartman, Betty Bienash, Heather Collins, Kathy Baldwin, Zoe James, and Noah 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 Baldwin for arranging the flowers for Easter, Kathleen Caylor for installing our magnificent PRIDE rainbow over the altar in June, Ben VerGiesen for decorating the sanctuary for Christmas, Kathy Seifert for the altar enhancements, wreaths, and so much more at Christmas and beyond, and for the many members who assisted in erecting the Christmas tree and the stable for the Christmas pageant.

Music, of course, is an integral part of the worship services at Union. Under the guidance of Haley Steele, Music Director, David Hassel, interim organist, Elaine Moss, interim pianist, Phil Klickman, and Linda Cook, Director of Bell Choir, 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 have had more young people doing music pieces this year. Aygul Garryeva, a student music intern, continued to work with Haley and shadowed her in the rhythms of church music leadership and coordination. Excitingly, Haley applied for and Union was granted funds to expand the student internships and strengthen our existing programming efforts while connecting with community universities. Interns Zeke Fietsch-Huber, Megan Jodar, and Caleb Hale worked alongside Haley as a result of this generous campus ministry grant from the WI Conference UCC.

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, Ray Thompson retired from his position as organist after more than 18 years with Union, and the Worship Ministry is grateful for his years of dedication. An organist search committee was formed with leadership from Pastor Bridget and insight and guidance from Haley Steele. Members include Jeff Gibson, Tim Harder, Tracy Klickman, Emily Lakatos, Jade Hatton, and Zoe James.

Also in February, Union featured work through The Forgiveness Project, in an exhibit titled The F Word, Stories of Forgiveness. The pieces featured a collection of stories and photos and focused on forgiveness in acts of atrocity.

In March, Haley and other church leaders conducted listening sessions in the chapel to assess the congregation's perception of current musical offerings and explore the future of Union music.

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 (w/Communion elements), and 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 10 a.m. service in the sanctuary featuring a brass quintet.

January, April, July, October, and December brought jazz services to the sanctuary. A special thank you to Sam Stranz for his oversight and musicianship with all things related to jazz music at Union.

Our annual church picnic was held in June in the church courtyard. The congregation enjoyed a potluck style picnic after Pastor Bridget's sermon al fresco

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 2024. 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 ladies' annual Advent event took place in the church hall.

Christmas Pageant Sunday welcomed 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, Bev Lathrop, and Amanda Hatton.

The Christmas Eve services began with family service at 3:00 p.m. 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 Elaine Moss. Two caroling groups visited the county facility, NEW Perspectives, Bellevue Assisted Living, and several private homes to spread Christmas cheer to our members who were not able to attend in person.

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 James, 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

The Union building and grounds continued to be a key area of focus in 2024 for the Stewardship Ministry. We ensured that Union's facilities meet all member needs and provide a safe and functional space not only for worship but all the outreach activities. Some of the highlights for our ministry in 2024 include:

- Onboarded the new Maintenance Technician, Brad Dorin. Brad has been instrumental in organizing and facilitating many of the projects put forth by Stewardship throughout 2024.
- Installed new compressor motors for building heating system to enable more energy efficient and stable heat distribution.
- Shortened church pews to allow for additional accessible seating in the sanctuary. Improved accessibility access to the Bible Garden.
- Recalibrated building thermostats to optimize energy efficiency.
- Replaced lighting fixtures with more energy efficient LED lamps as needed.
- Remediated Mayflower classroom fire damage.
- Implemented new building locking and safety procedures.

Capital Campaign Projects

The Capital Campaign was an overwhelming success. Campaign funding allowed Stewardship Ministry to execute numerous renovation and sustainability projects in 2024 including the following:

- Church Roof Repairs—Completed roof replacement for the West Church Hall roof shingles and the Mayflower Hall roof membrane.
- Solar Array—Implemented a 18.1KW solar array on the Mayflower Hall roof. This array is projected to offset over a quarter of the church's annual energy usage and is aligned with Union's mission to achieve a more sustainable energy footprint. Special thank you to Achim Seifert and Mark Smith for all the consultation and management that made the solar array project a reality.
- Wireless Infrastructure—The wireless network for the church was completely revamped allowing for broader wireless coverage throughout the church and classroom facilities. This enables more seamless access and connectivity for our member and outreach activities that take place throughout the church. Thank you to Jeff Gibson for his leadership in this initiative.
- Carport Repairs—Completed the roof replacement of the lower church carport as well as repairs to the underside caused by rain damage in early 2024.
- Elevator Refurbishment—Replaced end-of-life sensors.

In accordance with the Capital Campaign strategy, the following projects are in the planning phase for 2025:

- Sanctuary Painting
- Lower-level restroom renovations
- Mayflower classroom renovations
- Organist office renovations
- Audio and Visual System repairs
- Sanctuary door refinishing

Accounting

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

Green Energy Task Force

Through numerous projects in 2024 Stewardship has enabled key energy efficiency and sustainability efforts for the church. In addition to the installation of an 18.1KW solar array, the committee has put into place many additional cost and energy saving measures such as LED Lamp replacements, thermostat recalibrations, and installation of new compressor motors for the church heating system. We continue to look for new and innovative opportunities that will make Union more environmentally sound.

Garden Committee

Cathy Putman, along with many church volunteers, continues to transform and create a thriving and sustainable space in the Biblical Garden. Cathy and the team have worked to gather grants from Wild One's and the Wisconsin Conference Creation Care to restore bird habits to the property, control invasive species, and promote the planting of native plants and shrubs. Kathy Seifert and a wonderful flock of additional volunteers continue to transform and maintain the rest of our gardens.

Membership

Stewardship Ministry members this year included Sandy Polarek (Treasurer), Jason Ferry (Chair), Tim Dantoin (Co-chair), Tony Baldwin, Bill Johnson, Jeff Gibson, and David Thie. Thank you to all the volunteers that have worked diligently to make each of the building and ground and Capital Campaign projects such a success in 2024. 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. Stewardship Ministry looks forward to another incredible year full of revitalizing projects at Union Congregational.

Respectfully,
Jason Ferry, Chair
Tim Dantoin, Co-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 34 wall plaques in the Garden.

Crypts and plaques 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-2024 balance of \$90,090 and a cash-on-hand balance of \$3,239.

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 Committee again extends 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 Committee invites and encourages church members to visit the Garden and to consider purchasing a crypt or wall plaque for themselves or for a family member.

The year 2024 has been one of transition in the Memorial Garden Committee membership. As we reported in our 2023 report, 2023 marked the passing of Phil Hauck, who was a founding member of and the visionary leader of the Memorial Garden Committee. At the January 2024 Annual Meeting, David Thie was elected to serve as Chairperson of the Committee. Also in January 2024, Bob Fahres announced his retirement from the Committee. We thank Bob for his many years of service. Larry Rose has joined the Committee this year, and Jeff Zahn continued on as a Committee member.

For the Memorial Garden Committee,
David Thie, Chair

— 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 26, 2025. 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 *Heather Collins (1st term, 2 year remaining) **Clerk** *Gail Hohenstein (8th term, 2 years)
Vice-Moderator Clay Reese (1st term, 1 year) **Treasurer** Sandy Polarek (2nd term, 1 year)

Ministries and Committees

Education

Chair Beth Lyman Piontek (1st term, 1 year)
Vice-Chair Amy Richards (1st term, 1 year)

Gifts and Memorials

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

Membership

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

Pastoral Relations Committee (4-year term)

Elizabeth Delvaux (1 year)
Kris Vespia (2 years)
*Tim Harder (3 years)
*Kathy Seifert (4 years)

Nominating Committee

Chair *Tim Harder (1st term, 2 years)

Outreach

Chair *Jammie VerGiesen (2nd term, 2 years)
Vice-Chair *Luc Richards (1st term, 2 years)

Stewardship

Chair Jason Ferry (1st term, 1 year)
Vice-Chair Tim Dantoin (1st term, 1 year)

Worship

Chair *Zoé James (2nd term, 2 years)
Vice-Chair *Betty Bienash (2nd term, 2 years)

Personnel Committee (3-year term)

*Nicole Polarek (3 years)
Ryan Rieth (2 years)
Cheryl Myers (1 year)

Memorial Garden Trustees

Chair David Thie
Larry Rose

Other Positions

Delegate, Ecumenical Partnership for Housing

*Barbara McClure-Lukens

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 2024

ACTIVE MEMBERS ADMITTED (8):

By Reception:

1. **Kim Gilbert** – May 19
2. **Judy Keneklis** – May 19
3. **Paul Miller** – May 19
4. **Rebecca Miller** – May 19
5. **Clare Ryan** – May 19
6. **Carol Tilkens** – May 19
7. **Brad Gebben** – October 27
8. **Annaliese Waggoner** – October 27

ACTIVE MEMBERS REMOVED (10):

By Death:

1. **Charles “Chuck” Krueger** – 83 – died February 19, 2024; memorial service at Union Church on March 3. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
2. **Lonald “Lonnie” Allen Johnson** – 75 – died March 16; memorial service at Union Church on April 20. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
3. **Samuel Nicholas Holland** – 26 – died March 28; memorial service at Union Church on April 9. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
4. **John David Shier** – 89 – died May 16; memorial service at Union Church on August 24. Rev. Dr. Charles Mize officiating.
5. **James “Jim” Hardie** – 64 – died May 23; memorial service at Knollwood Mausoleum on July 23. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
6. **Kenneth “Ken” R. Divoky** – 75 – died July 13; memorial service at Union Church on July 31. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
7. **Vern Lanoue** – 83 – died August 20. In accordance with Vern’s wishes, no funeral services were held.
8. **Scott Mertens** – 67 – died November 2; a celebration of life was held at Newcomer Cremations, Funerals & Receptions on November 16. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
9. **Beverly Jean Hunsberger** – 97 – died December 1.

By Member Request:

1. **Gregory Gardner**

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Active Membership: December 31, 2023:	533
Members added to Active Roll:	
By reception	8
By confirmation	0
By reactivation.....	0
TOTAL ADDED	8
Members removed from Active Roll:	
By death.....	9
By transfer	0
By member request.....	1
By placing on Inactive Roll.....	0
TOTAL REMOVED	10
Active Membership: December 31, 2024:	531

BAPTISMS: Infants and Children

1. **Espen Lindsey Johann Burkart-LaBar** – born January 1, 2023 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized March 17 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Britney and Caitlin Burkart-LaBar
2. **Solstice Eve LaMalfa** – born December 20, 2022 in Marinette, WI.
Baptized June 23 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Alexa and Anthony LaMalfa
3. **Everly Rose Larson** – born April 5, 2024 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized August 25 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Katelyn Rose and Spencer Elliott Larson

MEMBER MARRIAGES

1. **Jonathon Boldt and Isabelle Wauters** at Union Church on July 20.
Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
2. **Ryan Van Handel and Madeline Marquardt** at Union Church on October 4.
Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.

NON-MEMBER MARRIAGE BY OUR PASTOR

1. **Katrina Sue Kozar and Nicholas J. Free** on July 12 at Wallace, Michigan.
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>
2024	531	101	185	293
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

^{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
2024**

Union Congregational United Church of Christ Balance Sheet
December 31, 2024

Assets

Cash			
Associated Bank Checking	\$	105,228	
Associated Bank Money Market	\$	418,344	
Cash	\$	523,572	
Other Cash			
Associated Bank Parson's Purse	\$	1,763	
Associated Bank Waitzmann	\$	1,165	
Other Cash	\$	2,928	
Total Cash	\$	526,500	
Gifts and Endowments			
UCF: Killoran Scholarship Fund	\$	82,698	
UCF: General Gifts/Endowments	\$	88,644	
UCF: Cora Nelson	\$	323,290	
UCF: Bagby Theological	\$	10,982	
Associated Trust: Distributions & Donations	\$	23,843	
Associated Trust: Principal & Earnings	\$	594,825	
Total Gifts and Endowments	\$	1,124,281	
Memorial Garden			
UCF: Memorial Garden	\$	90,090	
Total Gifts and Endowments	\$	90,090	
Condo Loans Receivable - Waitzmann Funds	\$	84,465	
Total Assets			\$ 1,825,336
<u>Liabilities and Fund Balances</u>			
Prepaid 2025 Pledges	\$	37,359	
General Fund Balance	\$	45,355	
General Reserve Operating Funds	\$	44,706	
Total Operating Fund	\$	90,061	
Gifts and Memorial Funds			
Principal & Earnings Fund	\$	594,825	
Distributions & Donations Fund	\$	23,843	
General Gifts/Endowments	\$	88,644	
Cora Nelson/Outreach	\$	323,290	
Killoran Scholarship Fund	\$	82,698	
Memorial Garden Fund	\$	90,090	
Bagby Theological Fund	\$	10,982	
Total Gifts and Memorial Funds	\$	1,214,371	
Waitzmann Condo Loans	\$	84,465	
Total Net Fixed Funds	\$	84,465	
Total Net Fixed Funds	\$		1,298,836
Other Funds			
Technology Replacement Fund	\$	9,958	
Sabbatical Fund	\$	18,325	
Capital Campaign Fund	\$	228,202	
Designated Giving Fund	\$	114,689	
Women's Ministry Fund	\$	2,465	
Outreach Funds	\$	6,821	
Blessing Box Fund	\$	2,621	
Souper Cooks Fund	\$	2,229	
Jubilee House Fund	\$	5,751	
Memorial Garden Care	\$	3,239	
Parsons Purse Fund	\$	1,764	
Waitzmann Condo Fund	\$	1,013	
Education Ministry Fund*	\$	(485)	
Total Other Funds	\$	396,592	
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances			\$ 1,785,489

*Negative balance reflects registration fees collected for workshop in 2025.

**Year 2024
Treasurer's
Report**

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual
INCOME		
	2024 Budget	2024 Actual
Pledge Income	\$ 350,000	\$ 362,739
One-time Gifts	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,989
Non-Pledge Income	\$ 45,000	\$ 48,536
Loose Offering	\$ 5,000	\$ 6,013
Prior Year Pledges	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,900
Investment Income	\$ 100	\$ 576
Room Rentals	\$ 12,000	\$ 11,790
Christmas Tree Fundraiser	\$ 3,000	\$ 4,950
Other Fundraiser	\$ -	\$ (1,404)
Total Operating Income	\$ 420,600	\$ 439,089
PROGRAM EXPENSE		
Worship Ministry	\$ 8,950	\$ 8,152
Education Ministry	\$ 7,115	\$ 6,848
Membership Ministry	\$ 2,875	\$ 3,327
Outreach Ministry	\$ 15,600	\$ 15,380
Stewardship Ministry	\$ 900	\$ 748
Total Program Expense	\$ 35,440	\$ 34,455
GENERAL EXPENSE		
Pastoral Staff Expense	\$ 147,753	\$ 147,653
Lay Staff Expense	\$ 168,172	\$ 153,538
Facilities	\$ 38,900	\$ 38,414
Administrative Expense	\$ 87,850	\$ 84,240
Total General Expense	\$ 442,675	\$ 423,845
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 478,115	\$ 458,300
NET INCOME (Operating Income Less Expenditures)	\$ (57,515)	\$ (19,211)

A proposed 2025 budget will be presented at the Annual Meeting.

Building for Faith in Action Capital Campaign Finances	
Balance as of 1/1/2024	\$215,287
Contributions and Grants Received	\$226,310
Expenditures	\$223,396
Balance as of 12/31/2024	\$218,201
<p>*The \$437,769 received through the campaign to date represents 76.5% of the \$572,000 pledged by 94 households. See the Stewardship Ministry report for a list of completed and upcoming projects.</p>	

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 2024, Michael Stepp became chair of Asset Management. We are grateful for the continued and valued commitment of Kathy Baldwin, Gail Carels, Paco Espinoza, Dan Pagel, Nicole Polarek, Mike Stepp, Sue Whittemore, Larry Rose and Kristi Zahn.

In 2024, after due diligence using the guiding principles for distribution, the Ministry recommended the following disbursements (48,105.03 in total) that Common Ministry approved.

- \$1,405.03 to We all Rise for the Green Bay Martin Luther King Day of Service
- \$1,200 for the F Word Project installation in Union Hall
- \$10,000 for the Wisconsin Conference Leadership Forward Initiatives
- \$3,000 to Green Bay Sail and Paddle for their Adventures in Sailing Summer Program
- \$10,000 to Stewardship Ministry to cover the deductible for the fire damage in the Mayflower Classroom
- \$12,500 to the Wise Women Gathering Place to operate the Safe Place Parking Program for one month
- \$10,000 to We All Rise African American Resource Center to assist with infrastructure needs at the Men’s Transitional Living Facility, All Seasons Transformation to help offset some of the costs for repairs at the facility.

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

**Union Congregational United Church of Christ Balance Sheet
 Gifts & Endowments Financial Annual Report 2024**

Beginning Balance 1/01/2024:	1,071,475
Total Income and Additions:	2,490
Grants:	(51,820)
Investment Gain/Loss:	102,136
Ending Balance 12/31/2024:	<u>1,124,281</u>

Income and Additions to Gifts and Memorials Funds :

Memorial gifts	<u>\$ 2,490</u>
	<u>\$ 2,490</u>

Expenses and Distributions from Gifts and Memorials and Other Endowment Funds:

Gifts and Memorials Ministry Inreach/Program Grants:

The F-Word Art Exhibit	<u>\$ 1,200</u>
	<u>\$ 1,200</u>

Gifts and Memorials Outreach Grants:

Green Bay Sail & Paddle Adventures In Sailing	\$ 3,000
WI Conference UCC Leadership Forwarded Initiatives	\$ 10,000
Wise Women Gathering Place Safe Parking	\$ 12,500
We All Rise African American Resource Center	\$ 10,000
MLK Day of Service	\$ 1,405
All Seasons Transformation Housing	<u>\$ 10,000</u>
	<u>\$ 46,905</u>

Killoran Scholarship Fund:*

Scholarships	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
	<u>\$ 2,000</u>

Bagby Theological Fund:*

The Forgiveness Project Speaker and Program	\$ 1,507
Earth Day Speaker and Celebration	<u>\$ 208</u>
	<u>\$ 1,715</u>

Total Expenses and Distributions	<u>\$ 51,820</u>
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* The Killoran Scholarship Fund and Bagby Theological Fund are administered separately from Gifts and Memorials Ministry.

Our Church Staff

(as of December 31, 2024)

Senior Minister Bridget M. Flad Daniels
Administrative Assistant Eric Goska
Financial Secretary Katrina Catteruccia
Music Director Haley Steele
Interim Pianist David Hassel
Handbell Ensemble Director Linda Cook
Librarian Cathy Putman
AV Coordinator..... Eric Harkoff

Nursery Attendants:

Jenna Stevens, London Graham, Katelyn Mertens

Student Music Interns:

Megan Jodar, Zeke Fietsch-Huber, Caleb Hale

Office Phone (920) 437-9266

Church Office (Eric Goska)..... office@unionucc.com
Financial Secretary (Katrina Catteruccia) finance@unionucc.com
Sexton (Brad Dorin)..... sexton@unionucc.com
Music Director (Haley Steele) music@unionucc.com
Pastor Bridget..... bridget@unionucc.com

Visit our website at www.unionucc.com
