

Annual Report 2022



***Presented at the 148th Annual Meeting
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**First Church
Berkeley UCC**

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Church Officers

Moderator

HOPE HILTON

Our church fell apart, so we're rebuilding it, but funnier."

This past February, we set out to follow the theme, "Home By Another Way."

Poetically, our theme drew from the story of the Wise Ones in the Gospel, who found a way back home that supported a safe upbringing for the Christ child, instead of preserving unjust power for the Empire. Our theme also drew from the teachings of the El Tamarindo farming community in Colombia, who after many years of being displaced for the export of construction materials for rampant US tract house development, used the very last of their resources for a Children's Day (and goodbye) Party in 2016.

Practically, our task this year, was to advance the rebuilding of our structures and traditions, in a way that accounted for our community's vast needs and resources, while maintaining our identity as a multigenerational progressive Christian church. This was a spiritual exercise, disguised as material decisions. With the scope and impact of our church, each of our decisions can bring glory to God, but they can also preserve unjust power or displace farming communities. Our decisions, about



our church, inevitably affect the whole world. So, while our basic requirement this year was to move toward rebuilding our house, our call was to discern how to make a home in a way that brings glory to God and love to the body of Christ.

In summary, this year has been a thousand small decisions for us, deciding how to rebuild with our current needs and resources, and in doing so, we have done it with phenomenal love, integrity, and limberness. We have embraced the tasks that have to be done, and we have done so with laughter, crying, and parties. Not only are we finding our way home, but we are doing so with joy in our hearts.

Or in other words, as Caleb recently said from the Amen Corner: "Our church fell apart, so we're rebuilding it, but funnier!"



Moderator Elect

JEANNE STRAUSS

My greatest joy in serving as Moderator Elect has been the opportunity to work closely with our Moderator,



Hope Hilton, and with Pastor Molly, as we've shared our thoughts and feelings about the life of our church throughout the year, while also preparing for each month's Church Council meeting. Along with Pastor Kelly, Pastor Hannah, and all our wonderful lay leaders, we are truly blessed with a compassionate, strong, intelligent, spirit-filled leadership team.

From February through July, I chaired the Search Committee that led to the Call of our new Minister for Youth, Young Adults, and Emerging Ministries, Rev. Hannah Turner. We received many applications and conducted a three-phase video interview process with our top candidates. Many thanks go to Search Committee members Adrian Antonio, David Beausoleil, Carmen Baskette, Joey Gottbrath, and Lorenzo Llanillo. A major highlight of my year was engaging in the phone call with Hannah to offer her the Call, which she enthusiastically accepted!

As our head delegate to the NCNC-UCC and the Bay Association (also now Moderator of the BA), I was grateful to attend the NCNC-UCC Annual Gathering in person again, sharing news and ideas with folx from all over northern California and Nevada, after

two years of online-only events. One of our actions was to adopt the Range of Light Resolution, which supports the creation of a National Monument to protect the largest interconnected wilderness in the contiguous United States, preserving federal lands between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks. The resolution will be brought to General Synod this summer, calling for the national UCC to join this growing movement. Many thanks to Richard Brabham for also continuing to serve as a delegate to the wider church.

Our church leadership team has been considering whether the current requirement of electing at least eight members to each ministry team still makes sense for the ways we're functioning today. Smaller groups of "official" ministry/committee members, supported by larger, flexible "auxiliaries" in carrying out plans, may be more effective moving forward. Stay tuned for more on this as we discern next steps!





Clerk

LINDA SAWYER

The Clerk of the church is responsible for keeping the records of church business



and taking minutes at Council and Congregational meetings. Highlights from 2022 are summarized here.

In February, Council approved the clergy housing allowance, which is provided in lieu of providing housing for the ministers. The allowance is approved annually. Council also appointed the Personnel Committee, which according to the bylaws is appointed by Council.

In April, the Council approved moving forward with the feasibility study and capital campaign and contracting with the Enrichment Group.

In July, the Congregation voted to call Hannah Turner to serve as our Minister for Youth, Young Adults, & Emerging Ministries to guide the spiritual formation of the individuals, congregation, and community

within and around First Church, and to lead beloved Christian community for us.

In September, Council approved two motions:

- A motion to affirm the work that the Affordable Housing Project Committee has been doing, with East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) selected as the developer following a request for proposals.
- A motion to authorize the Blue Fire Committee to proceed with construction of the new building. Several items (not currently included) can be added back in if more money is raised (full kitchen, built-in screens).

In November, Council approved a motion to affirm the work of the capital campaign, recruit leadership, and enact a capital campaign beginning in January.

In December, the Council approved a motion to present the 2023 budget to the Congregation for a vote.



Membership

Members Received 2022

Affirmation/

Reaffirmation

Adrian Antonio
Christopher Batson
Jonathan Bradshaw
Kathleen Cooney
Jennifer Nixon
Martha Reilly Vognar

Associate Member

Frances Falling

Associate Member to Member

Susan Webb

Confirmation/Adult Baptism

Zhekun Luo

Friend

Kimberly Dell Griffith
Mack Griffith
Kiera Manion-Fischer

Letter of Transfer

Michael Clulow
Christine Gregg
Doris Lynch
Chuck Monroe
Laura Monroe
Vanessa Reed
Susan Shome
Hannah Turner

Reinstatement

Karen & Jennifer Fisher
Barbara Clevenger

Child Blessing

Philip Falling

Members Lost in 2022

Associate Member or Friend (Moved Out of State or Dropped)

Sara Fread

Became Inactive

Merrell Brzeczek
Jim Bloom
Joe Vega
Lisa Vega
Ryan Walls

Joined Another Church

Eji Atlaw

Requested Inactive Status

none

Transfer of Membership

Rachel Bauman
Anita Jackson
Derek Kimball
Kit Novotny
Amy Smith

Withdrew at Their Own Request

Laszlo Bonnyay
Linda Elsdon
Ron Elsdon
Christine Hodges
Kevin Knickerbocher
Julia Kocs
Steven Randall

In Memoriam

Genie Provencio (1/12/2022)
Jerri Ricca (2/20/2022)
Norma Harrison (5/23/2022)
Ora (6/22/2022) & Kurt Huth
Marylou Solovay (9/29/2022)
Dick Hafner (11/17/2022)

Six-Year Membership Report

GAINS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
By Baptism/Confession	1	2	0	0	0	0
By Confirmation/Adult Baptism	0	7	0	0	6	1
By Affirmation/ Reaffirmation of Faith	10	9	10	16	0	6
By Letter of Transfer	4	9	1	1	3	8
By Reinstatement	0	2	2	1	1	3
Assoc. or Friend to Full Membership	0	1	0	0	0	1
Friend	1	0	0	3	2	3
Voted in by CF&I	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	16	30	13	21	12	22
Associate Member Received	4	1	2	3	1	1
Total Gains	20	31	15	24	13	23
LOSSES	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
By Death	-5	-6	-4	-10	-5	-7
By Letter of Transfer	-6	-4	-3	-7	-3	-5
Joined Other Church/Withdrew at Own Request/Requested Inactive Status	-5	-3	-6	-7	-6	-8
Placed on Inactive	-35	-9	-10	-18	-9	-5
Membership Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Member or Friend Dropped	-3	0	-5	-1	-1	-1
Total Losses	-54	-22	-28	-43	-24	-26
Audit Correction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Gain / Loss	-34	9	-13	-19	-11	-3
Membership at Year End	401	410	397	378	367	364
Average Weekly Attendance by Month	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	168	205	155	166	141	101
February	176	197	181	163	136	137
March	193	228	170	154	124	173
April	227	242	338	151	145	214
May	191	191	164	155	121*	138*
June	195	149	151	152	109*	127*
July	178	156	157	173	114*	134
August	166	144	147	160	120*	135*
September	185	174	153	161	94*	153
October	234	170	145	134	149	191*
November	187	184	162	133	147	140
December	333	361	340	224	231	226

2022 attendance for Jan. - Feb. 6 webcast only; Feb. 13 through year end, attendance includes both webcast & in-person participation.

2021 attendance for Jan.- Oct. 3 reflect Sunday morning "live" views on Facebook, YouTube & Vimeo. The numbers reflect **single viewers only** and don't account for multiple viewers per screen, so these numbers are **lower** than the actual number of viewers. Oct. 10 through December numbers reflect webcast viewers as well as in-person attendance. Some months (*asterisk) include in-person "Lawn Church" worship attendance.

Ministries

Adult Education Ministry

WILLEM VANDEKAMP, CHAIR

Adult Education has a long history at First Church and the Adult Education Ministry is serving the congregation in upholding and organizing the continued learning in our church.



We started somewhat in a vacuum after the chair in 2021 had stepped down. Willem VandeKamp then took the lead, setting the agenda and leading the monthly meetings, and after a few months committed to be the chair for 2022. None of the members felt they were in a position, mainly due to work commitments, to be the delegate to Church Council, and we appreciate Rev. Kelly Colwell maintained and supported the mutual communication.

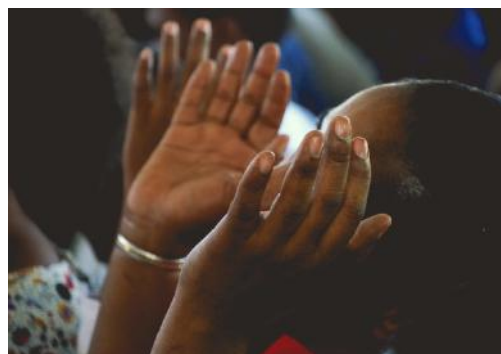
A significant portion of the work of the Adult Education Ministry is organizing Learning hours, held in Loper Chapel, after the Sunday worship service. We covered various topics, with inviting speakers from outside First Church, having representatives of organizations receiving the Sunday offering do a presentation, and with members of our church leading us in learning. Here is a list - in random and

incomplete order of importance - of some of the topics we learned about: prayer (Prayer Team), food waste reduction (Green Team), justice in jails, mindful self-compassion (Mental Health & Disability Ministry Team), queer and trans Biblical studies, architecture, the hybrid church, queer poetry, and our homeless neighbors.

Some other learning events were: worship services with guest preachers who presented a Learning Hour after the service, a series about the Gospels, book clubs, and Bible study. Plans for 2023 include: a two-session Learning Hour about end-of-life issues (March), and at a later date a Saturday morning Adult Education Retreat to promote congregation-wide continued learning, which can help us to grow as a church in spirituality, welcoming, and social engagement.

We conducted our monthly meetings via Zoom, and we appreciate the collaboration with Louise Halsey (publicity) and Kit Dunbar (room reservation).

The members of the ministry in 2022 were: Christina Hutchins, Jim Alnas-Benson, Mack Griffith, Mary Haake, Zhekun Luo, Rev. Kelly Colwell as staff liaison, and Willem VandeKamp as chair.



Care, Fellowship, & Invitation Ministry

SUSAN GREEF & ALAN MILLER, CO-CHAIRS

The Ministry of Care, Fellowship, and Invitation (CF&I) provides ministry to promote a welcoming and inviting presence for all who cross the threshold of our church, and to provide acts of hospitality and care for the First Church community and beyond.



Since there is no longer a separate team of Greeters, our Welcome Table has evolved into two stations; one at each door, where we greet folks every Sunday morning and provide friendly and appreciative welcome, answers to questions, and materials to enhance spiritual growth, in addition to nametags and face masks.

Additional CF&I activities again include coordinating our dedicated team of After Party Soup Makers, Meal Train coordination and assisting with community gatherings.

We continued to hold our monthly meetings virtually where we supported one another and developed creative ways to continue to offer hospitality to our community.



We anticipate that need for flexibility and creativity will continue as we enter a new year of exploring fresh and exciting ways of “doing church.” The efforts, optimism, and support of our ministry members help ease the anxiety of these extraordinary times, and have reinforced our dedication to hospitality, whatever form it takes! Thanks to members Pat Pratt, Helen Walsh, Andy Young, Kate Lucchese, Kenji Oshima, Susan Webb, Carmen Baskette and staff members, Louise Halsey and Kathy Helliesen.



Families, Children, & Youth Ministry

JULIA MADORE, CHAIR

The Families, Children & Youth (FamChY) Ministry at First Church is devoted to building fellowship and



connection among families in our congregation, to supporting families in the challenges of raising children today, and to nurturing the faith formation of children and youth (and parents). We support the ministry with developing ways to include and welcome children and youth into worship while supporting parents in this post-Sunday School era.

Coming out of the pandemic in 2022 we launched first the "Prayground," an all-ages where parents could leave their children during worship. This transitioned to the "Amen Corner," a dedicated family space in the back corner where families can sit in pews and worship together and kids can enjoy a dedicated play space stocked with toys and books to play quietly, gently supervised by FamChY members and other adults. The sitting and/or play is broken up with the opportunity to come down front for the "Children's Moment" to engage with the Ministry Team with Bible stories, interactive play, laughter and prayer. Our church community is stronger and children feel more connected when they can be included in our worship. Stay tuned.

We have been blessed over the last few years with a growing family community! FamChY will continue to engage with the

ministry team to build worship and support options for our families.

Some of the highlights from 2022 included:

- Mardi Gras Celebration and Feast with the burying of the Hallelujah banner;
- Palm Sunday with giant puppets and a Hosanna parade around our neighborhood;
- Easter Sunday!
- Monthly summer Sunday "Lawn Church" services;
- Annual Summer Work Camp for our Youth;
- Family Retreat - First Annual - in the redwoods attended by over 30 family members;
- Back-to-School Fall Festival;
- Second annual "Trunk or Treat" after All Soul's Day lawn worship with ghost stories;
- Youth Lock-in with a sister church in Danville;
- Advent Craft Fair with hot cider and cookies + family Christmas carol singing;
- All-Ages Christmas Eve Service. Our kiddos dressed up like angels, shepherds, and farm animals, sang carols and reenacted the Nativity Story. Each child could take home a homemade ornament kit.

We are so thankful to Carolyn Ash, longtime Families' and Children Program Director, and Birtukan Beyenssa, longtime nursery caregiver, for their years of love and outstanding service as they retire from these roles and continue in our congregation to serve in other ways.

Many thanks to our FamChY Ministry members: Rick Ayer, Julia Madore (chair),

Jim Marrone, Louise Specht, ,
Pam VandeKamp & Becky Wright.

We are looking forward to 2023 and new
ways to share the light of God with our
Families, Children, and Youth!



Justice & Service Ministry

STEVE SPIELMAN, CHAIR

The Justice & Service (J&S) Ministry has the joyous task of connecting great nonprofit organizations to our generous congregation.



Throughout the year, we select charities to receive the weekly offering plate funds, and invite a representative to talk about their work during the Invitation to the Offering.

With help from many in the congregation, J&S organized two Service as Worship events in 2022. January's was pushed online, due to a COVID-19 outbreak, but plenty of folks showed up for letter writing and organizing future volunteer activities. We had a great turnout for the August service as well. And in December, the congregation stepped up to donate goods and money for the Christmas Eve Bags, which members helped assemble and distribute to unhoused people in the area.

J&S voted for our church to join the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails

(ICJJ). This group of several faith communities is focused on improving the conditions at the Santa Rita Jail, where humans are too often not treated with the dignity one would hope to be granted by a civilized society. ICJJ organizes demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns to raise awareness.

Thank you to Ministry members Phil Adams, Nori Kobayashi, Maureen Prochaska, Craig Pratt, Cindy Au, Doris Lynch, and Susan Aberg. And we appreciated the guidance from our staff representative Rev. Molly Baskette.



Justice & Service Account Summary

Benevolences (partial) in 2022

Collection Plate 2022

<u>Month</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Total</u>
January	Ethiopian Village Schools	\$4,336
February	Casa San Jose orphanage	\$3,148
3/6–4/10 (Lent)	Bethlehem Lutheran Church, New Orleans	\$4,819
4/15 (Good Friday)	UCC Ukraine Appeal	\$2,460
4/17 (Easter)	Youth Spirit Artworks	\$1,810
4/24, 5/1, 5/8	CEID (Center for Early Intervention on Deafness)	\$2,311
5/15, 5/22, 5/29	Mental Health Network of UCC	\$4,025
June	Puente De La Costa Sur	\$2,839
July	Women's Daytime Drop-in Center	\$3,991
August	Soccer Without Borders	\$2,990
September	Dorothy Day House	\$3,222
10/2, 10/9, 10/16, 10/30	Portal Writing Workshop	pending
10/23	NCNC-UCC Seminarians Fund	pending
November	Berkeley Food Pantry	pending
12/4, 12/11, 12/18	BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency)	pending
12/24, 12/25	Young Lives Matter Foundation	pending
12/24, 12/25	East Bay Sanctuary Covenant	pending
	Collection Plate Total (Jan. – Sept. only)	\$35,951



Mental Health & Disability Ministry Team

REV. KELLY COLWELL, STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

Led by a strong new steering committee comprised of Charlotte Russell, Helen Walsh, and Cathie Winks, the Mental Health and Disability Ministry Team continues to thrive. Under their leadership, the team continued to meet by Zoom each month to support the congregation's commitment to being a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged (WISE) Congregation for Mental Health. Meetings served not only as space for planning and decision-making but also as a space for deep sharing and mutual support among members.

Several important initiatives took place this year. First, acknowledging that mental health and disability intersect in important ways, the team made the decision to add disability to its purview this year, renaming

itself the Mental Health and Disability Ministry Team. The team also supported Nancy DeNero and Judy Huston's offering of a Mindful Self-Compassion course in the fall, which involved 18 participants and was deeply impactful. A final important initiative was increasing our library offerings, particularly in the area of children's and youth books, and returning to a monthly schedule of bringing the library to the congregation during the After Party. The team looks forward to working in the coming year to support the congregation's ongoing learning and growth as a WISE congregation, and investigating the process of gaining the UCC's Accessible to All (A2A) designation as well.



Green Ministry Team

MARTA BLACK, CHAIR

During 2022, the Green Team continued to present practical solutions to Climate Change, as well as ways we can be stewards of the earth.



We listed *Green Tips* regularly in the *Carillon*, hosted a monthly Abundance Table with shared extra garden produce, and handed out sustainable paper and dishwashing products, such as bamboo toilet paper and plastic-free dishwashing pods. We also provided a fun remedy for recycling tin foil

from chocolate kisses, and during December, we hosted a table with creative alternatives to wrapping paper.

We hosted a viewing of the film, “Youth V Gov,” as well as a presentation on sustainable food, and invited conversation and dialogue. We also held an “EV Expo,” with members bringing their electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids, standing by to answer questions about the benefits of driving EVs.

We continue to hold meetings online, the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm.

We look forward to hosting an Earth Week event in 2023, with supportive ideas from Interfaith, Power, and Light, and will explore other possible educational presentations as well.



Prayer Team

WILLEM VANDEKAMP, COORDINATOR

In 2020, just after the Covid epidemic forced the congregation to go online, a Prayer Team ministry was



established at First Congregational Church Berkeley. This was initiated by Emerging Leader Emily Carduff. We started with four people, some others joined us, some left us, and we are now with four: Jonell Lucas, Beryl Lee Heuermann, Marta Black, and Willem VandeKamp (coordinator). We have continued to meet online via Zoom, every other Monday night.

We receive the prayer requests and concerns from the Sunday worship services, from our clergy and congregational care program manager, and via the email address prayers@fccb.org. Based on this information we maintain a running prayer list, which gets updated once a week, and is being used in our bi-weekly team meetings and by the church staff in their weekly meetings. Some of these prayers are also shared with the congregation in the *Carillon* under "Tree of Life." The purpose of this is

not only to share these concerns and joyful events with our church community, but also to involve you as a congregation in praying for each other.

The format of our meetings is: a check-in, a review of the list with prayer concerns and prayer updates, including what is reason for thanksgiving, and a time of praying with one another as a team. The team decided to put the meetings on hold for 6 weeks in January and February 2023 to participate in the 6-session learning event about prayer, while maintaining the prayer list and continuing our regular prayers during that time.

Since 2022 the Prayer Team is a team ministry within the Worship and Spiritual Life Ministry at First Church.

The team invites you to join them in 2023. We also encourage you to use the prayer request cards in the sanctuary pews and/or sharing prayer concerns via the email address prayers@fccb.org.

We are thankful to God who speaks to us through the Bible and invites us as followers of Jesus to respond in prayer.



Stewardship, Finance, & Administration Ministry

NICK KUKULAN, CHAIR

Year 2022 saw the resumption of many outside users' enjoyment of our facilities. This increased rental income boosted our



income more than budgeted. Personnel expenses were also lower than budgeted. Based on January financial updates, we forecast that 2022 will have a budget surplus which will be added to the Council Contingency fund to balance future deficit budgets. With the departure of Kit Dunbar, our business manager in December, our Treasurer Moe Wright does not anticipate that we will have a finalized 2022 financial report for this Annual Report. More time will be needed to complete this.

The Stewardship, Finance & Administration Ministry (SFA) continued the plan initiated in 2021 that includes representatives of Endowment and Investment who served on the ministry. The intention is to support the activities of the Endowment committee which has done some great work these past two years; and to have the Investment committee keep SFA advised on the endowment funds invested with United Church Funds.

Finance

Please note these figures are based on January 2023 reporting, they are intended to give an overview of our sources of income and expenses.

Income Sources as % of budget:

*Sustained giving & all contributions – 56%

*Facilities Use – 36 %

*Endowment Income & Draw – 8%

Expense Categories as % of budget:

*Personnel – 69%

*Ministry Programs – 5%

*Administration – 5%

*Church Plant – 15%

*Budgeted Benevolences – 6%

Administration

SFA looks after “Buildings and Grounds” maintenance and projects. In July Bruce McNaught our facilities manager retired. Bruce took great care of our facilities for over 20 years and kept SFA advised on repairs and projects to be considered for funding. A combination of staff, outside services, and volunteers are covering many areas of Bruce’s work.

SFA manages endowment funds designated for projects on the campus. This year four projects were completed using this source of funds totaling \$21,000: One, the Hall of Entrance bathroom was upgraded and improved. Two, all outside entrances trims and doors were painted prior to the September start of the EBSB school year. Three, extensive tree trimming was completed in October. Four, new LED security light fixtures were installed on Durant House in December.

SFA members: Diana Graham, Becky Smith, Nathan Hood, Nancy Campbell, Bob Helliesen, Nick Kukulán.

Endowment members: Amy Hiestand, Charles Taylor

Investment members: Nathan Hood, Bob Helliesen, Nick Kukulán

Treasurer: Moe Wright

Staff: Kit Dunbar and Molly Baskette.



Worship & Spiritual Life Ministry

JULIE GREER, CHAIR

The Worship & Spiritual Life Ministry (the Deacons) supports the spiritual life of the church. We enthusiastically pursue the vision statement's call to "grow in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ" and "to provide a diversity of open but distinctly Christian, creative and liberating worship forms to nourish the spiritual lives of the current community and reach new seekers."



One way is through communion, which has morphed dramatically during COVID times. This year we went from a hybrid Zoom/in-person model for chancel communion, to being fully in-person. Monthly all-church communion began the year with the elements being taken outdoors. Fall 2022 saw us moving to wholly (holy!) indoor monthly communion. Special thanks to Rev. Nancy DeNero for organizing our chancel communion celebrants, as well as the celebrants and volunteer servers who generously give of their time and talent. Shout out to Stan Boghosian for keeping us well supplied with juice, gluten-free crackers, and bread.

This year the Deacons offered Spiritual Reflection Groups during Lent and Advent. Special thanks to Kerrie Hein for organizing and leading those groups, as well as our team of volunteer leaders. These small groups provided wonderful connection for those who wished to go deeper during those seasons.

The Deacons also conducted Operation Love Notes, helping folks to send cards to those of our community who could use some encouragement and connection. This year we also paired with the Justice & Service Ministry to offer Operation Love Notes as part of our Service-as-Worship Sundays. Thank you, Craig Pratt, for making this happen!

"Operation Love Notes" (OLN) is a quarterly responsibility of the Deacons. In the past, we provided materials at the After Party for note-writing by those in attendance. With the shift to virtual After Parties, we wrote the notes ourselves, then shifted to organizing the note-writing via online means. After a return in December to in-person writing during the After Party, we'll again adapt if needed.

The Worship & Spiritual Life Ministry includes Julie Greer (chair), Stan Boghosian, Kerrie Hein, Carolyn Thiessen, and Rev. Nancy DeNero. Rev. Kelly Colwell is our amazing staff liaison.



Committees

Blue Fire Committee

LORENZO LLANILLO, COMMITTEE MEMBER

With the work of receiving the city's planning department approval completed in 2021, the Blue Fire Committee began the detailed work of acquiring a building permit. With each step towards construction the committee worked closely with the design team to refine the design of a constructible building to meet all the code requirements that will allow the city to permit a contractor to build our Community Hall.

During this phase of the design process the committee began meeting with the architects and contractors to conduct multiple rounds of value engineering (the process of reducing costs through eliminating scope or details). The process includes closely scrutinizing fee bids from our contractors as well as separating the congregations needs from wants. Items that



the committee determined are needs but seemed to come at great premium were re-evaluated and re-bid. The results of the process were provided as a basis for our request to the church to conduct a capital campaign to supplement the funds that formed our budget provided by the insurance company and legal actions. The Church approved the capital campaign effort, and the committee moved forward with established "needs" assumptions. The architects submitted drawings representing these needs and the Building Permit was approved on November 11, 2022.

With permit in hand the Construction phase began with a ceremony on site. Although we welcome rain, the weather adds delays to construction. The contractor team continues to move forward with necessary administrative activities and actual construction work when weather permits. We look forward to a late summer/early fall opening of the Community Hall.

The Blue Fire Committee members are: Leonard Ash, Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch,



Kara Korbel Chinula, Lorenzo Llanillo, Scott
Sporte, Moe Wright & Molly Baskette.



Covenant & Discernment Committee

KELLY COLWELL, STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

The Covenant & Discernment Committee is under the oversight of the Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Life. Our primary task is to support and oversee members who are seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ (UCC).



We hope that our members-in-discernment participate in a wide variety of congregational experiences and are given a First Church member to be their mentor. We support them during their process of discernment as they seek ordination and their call to ministry. Our current member-in-discernment is Emily Carduff, who is away working towards her M. Div. degree in Chicago.

First Church also forms and maintains three and four-way covenants with church members who are currently ordained ministers in the UCC and are called to positions other than parish ministries. The partners in a three-way covenant are the ordained person, the local church, and the Bay Association of the UCC. Four-way covenants include a calling body, usually the person's employer. Molly Baskette, Kelly Colwell, and Hannah Turner are in a three-way covenant with us--we entered that covenant with Hannah this year. Those

continuing in a four-way covenant are: Cindy Au, Chaplain with Sutter Care, and Larry Titus, Chaplain at John Muir Hospital.

This year, we recognized the end of several four-way covenants. We blessed Amy Smith as she moved across the country and established a congregational home there for her chaplaincy work. We celebrated Robert Russell's retirement from the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences at Graduate Theological Union. We celebrated Ben Bigney's move to Maine and his new congregational home there. And we marked the end of Diane Weible's call as our Conference Minister. We also entered into a new four-way covenant with Nicole Naffaa, serving as the Senior Director of Development at Pacific School of Religion.

We hope to meet with all members in covenant with First Church at least once a year and we are currently looking at ways to increase their involvement/connection with our community and ways we can be more supportive of them in their respective ministries. We are also looking to build relationships with retired ministers and those not in covenant with us who are members of our congregation.

Members of the Discernment and Call Committee this year were Carmelle Knudsen, Jim Alnas-Benson, Mollyanne Brewer, Cindy Au, and Gene Buttrill. Kelly Colwell served as ministerial staff representative.

Investment Committee

NICK KUKULAN, CHAIR

Thanks to the generous gifts of FCCB members over the years, we have endowment funds that provide support for our annual budget, maintenance of our church plant, and support of specific ministries to which endowment funds were specified. Gifts to the endowment are greatly appreciated and welcomed

Our endowment investments continue with the United Church Funds. Our investment policy has not changed for the past years:

- To maintain an asset allocation of 65% in equity funds and 35% in bond funds. This provides diversification and stability through the ups and downs of markets
- To re-balance the funds to maintain this asset allocation on a monthly basis
- To invest in socially responsible principles established by the United Church Funds.

The 2022 Investment results were dramatically different from 2021. In 2022 both equity and bond markets declined and most balanced portfolios saw declines of 20-25%. Typically bonds provide stability during downturns of the stock market, but this year both major investment categories declined. Our total portfolio declined 17.31% compared to 12/31/2021.

The General Endowment finished the year with a market value of \$3,035,445, a decrease of \$677 thousand from the 12/31/2021 value.

The Housing Endowment ended the year with a value of \$583,173, a decrease of \$121 thousand from 12/31/2021.

To put the Combined Endowment Funds values in perspective:

12/31/2022	\$3,618,617
12/31/2021	\$4,376,244
12/31/2020	\$3,998,077
12/31/2019	\$3,387,080
12/31/2018	\$2,915,898

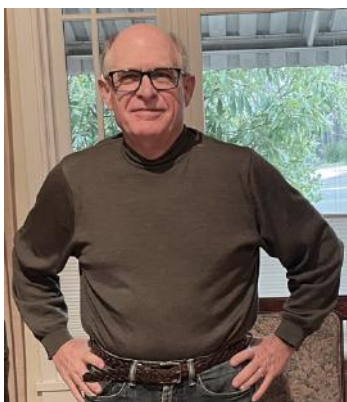
Members of the committee for 2022: Nick Kukuluan, Nathan Hood, Bob Helliesen and Moe Wright, Treasurer.



Endowment Committee

AMY HIESTAND & CHARLES TAYLOR, CO-CHAIRS

First Church members and friends have made generous legacy gifts to the church over its nearly 150 years. The church has an established Endowment and uses the interest from these gifts to provide support for the church's annual operating budget, maintenance of our church plant, and specific ministries and programs to which the endowment funds are specified. **Gifts made to the Endowment at First Church Berkeley have ensured, and will continue to ensure, the sustainability of our church's ministry and mission for generations to come.**



In January 2023, the congregation will be asked to approve a recommendation from the Endowment Committee, approving the use of the Special Endowment draw from the General Endowment Draw to support the 2023 and 2024 church operating budgets. This "special endowment draw" to support the operating budget represents 45% of the annual draw made from the General Endowment Fund (another 45% of the annual draw from the General Fund goes towards the church's Building and Grounds fund, and the remaining 10% of the draw is available for endowment administration). In addition, funds are distributed from the donor-designated

endowments to support the church's operating budget.

In 2022, the church received a gift to the Endowment from John (Randy) and Karen Summers in loving memory of their son, Henry Francis Summers. Also in 2022, the church received a bequest from the estate of Dr. Dolly McCall for the McCall Lectures Endowment Fund, which was established after the passing of Dr. Oswald W.S. McCall, Senior Minister from 1922 to 1939. We are so grateful for the faith and generosity that these saints in our church community entrusted in First Congregational Church of Berkeley.

The Endowment Committee has engaged in these activities during the past year:

- Hosting a Legacy Circle luncheon in May 2022 attended by over 20 participants honoring current and prospective members of the Legacy Circle
- Continuing to solidify the administrative infrastructure of and further digitizing information on the endowment records
- Creating a "virtual" Book of Remembrance to capture names of members who have left funds for the endowment through their wills and bequests
- Developing policies and procedures to help in the committee's work
- Writing thank you letters to the families and representatives of those who left bequests to the church in the last year
- Posting the **Endowment Program Overview** document completed in November 2021 to the church's

website (check it out in the planned giving section!)

- Drafting a new brochure on the Legacy Circle for current and prospective donors
- Authorized use of Endowment administrative funds to pay for dedicated short-term administrative assistance in the church office to maintain and update endowment records.

Legacy Circle

First Church Berkeley's Legacy Circle includes individuals in our church community who have named First Church Berkeley in their planned giving through their wills or trusts, retirement funds or life insurance beneficiary designation, and/or other



resources or assets to be distributed after their deaths. These important legacy gifts contribute to our church's long-term financial sustainability for generations to come. Planned gifts are added to First Church Berkeley's Endowment and are prudently invested by the church's Investment Committee. We are extremely grateful for the faith and generosity of the Legacy Circle members. More information on how to become a member of the Legacy Circle may be found on the church's website.

2022 Legacy Circle Members: Molly and Peter Baskette; Richard Brabham, Mollyanne Brewer (Maremaa); Michael Casendino and Amy Hiestand; Bob and Kathy Helliesen; Robert and Bonnie Hester; Hope Hilton; Robin and David Kempster; Carmelle Knudsen; Lewis Perry; Phil Porter; Boyard and Ann Rowe; Rebecca Smith; Bruce and Susan Stangeland; Charles Taylor and Alice Clark; John and Helen Wadman; Morris and Rebecca Wright; Anonymous

The Endowment Committee wishes to express appreciation to Milton Fujii for his many years leading the Endowment Committee, and for the ongoing active involvement of Church Treasurer Moe Wright and Business Manager Kit Dunbar in supporting the Endowment Committee's efforts.



Committee of Involvement

LEONARD ASH, CHAIR

The Committee of Involvement (COI) has responsibility for nominating the elected officers of the Church, the at-large members of the Council of the Congregation, members of the Governing Boards of our six

Ministries, the Long Range Planning Committee, the Investment Committee, and the Pastoral Search Committees.



The COI consists of the Church Clerk, the six immediate past chairpersons of Ministries and the immediate past Moderator, five at-large members, the Senior Minister, and such other members of the Church staff as the Senior Minister may designate.

There are always opportunities to become more involved in the life of First Church - even in 2023. Please contact me if you would like to learn more.

Committee members who participated include: Leonard Ash, Molly Baskette, Kelly Colwell, Louise Halsey, Kathy Helliesen, Nick Kukulan, Linda Sawyer, Jeanne Strauss, and Sara Woods.

Personnel Committee

KERRIE HEIN, CHAIR

In 2022 the Personnel Committee strengthened staff processes and spearheaded the reorganization of the church business office. We supported staff by

developing and administering a timeline and process for annual reviews; conducting a 360 annual review for our senior minister, Reverend Molly Baskette; completing exit interviews with staff members who left FCCB; reviewing pastors' 80%-time job descriptions; reviewing and updating employee folders; reviewing and approving the Personnel budget; and approving a



sabbatical for Derek pending congregational approval for the budget.

The loss of two key staff members this year, Bruce McNaught (physical plant) and Kit Dunbar (business manager) compelled us to evaluate the organization of the church business office, which was providing reception, bookkeeping, stewardship and endowment accounting, facilities management, event management, and business management. An ad hoc business office reorganization steering committee was created which has included: Moe Wright, Nick Kukulan, Rev. Kelly Colwell, Derek Tam, Nathan Hood, Kerrie Hein, and Mike Casendino. This committee has developed and hired three new positions: (1) Bookkeeper, Sharlet Gilbert; (2) Event Coordinator, Leah Walz; and (3) Weekend and Evening Coordinator, Kathy So. With bookkeeping and event coordination

separated from the business manager's position, the business manager's position has been reduced to 80% time. ***We are currently taking applications for the new business manager.*** The steering committee will provide additional oversight to Reverend Kelly's supervision of these new hires until their probationary periods have passed.



Members of the Personnel Committee in 2022 were Kerrie Hein, Rev. Molly Baskette, Kara Korbel-Chinula, Elizabeth Driver-Bucholtz, and Mike Casendino.



Officers, Ministry, & Committee Members for 2023

OFFICERS	(terms end Jan. 2024)	(terms end Jan. 2025)	Council Rep.
Moderator	Jeanne Strauss		Jeanne Strauss
Moderator Elect	Steve Spielman		Steve Spielman
Clerk	Linda Sawyer		Linda Sawyer
Treasurer	Moe Wright		Moe Wright
Council at Large (no specified term)			
	Mike Clulow	Laura Monroe	
	Kathleen Cooney	Kathryn Stambaugh	
MINISTRIES	(terms end Jan. 2024)	(terms end Jan. 2025)	Council Rep.
Care, Fellowship, & Invitation (CFI), <i>Susan Greef, Chair</i>			
	Carmen Baskette	Susan Greef	Susan Greef
	Kate Lucchese	Kenji Oshima	
	Susan Webb	Vanessa Reed	
		Chuck Webb	
Adult Education, <i>Mack Griffith, Chair</i>			
	Mary Haake	Jim Alnas-Benson	Willem VandeKamp
		Mack Griffith	
		Zhekun Luo	
		Bob Stumpf	
		Willem VandeKamp	
Families, Children, & Youth (FamChY), <i>Pam VandeKamp, Chair</i>			
	Dorothy Block	Jim Marrone	Pam VandeKamp
		Katie Nnadi	
		Matt Reed	
		Pam VandeKamp	
Justice & Service, <i>Maureen Prochaska, Chair</i>			
	Craig Pratt	Winnie Boyle	Maureen Prochaska
		Doris Lynch	
		Maureen Prochaska	
Stewardship, Finance, & Administration (SFA), <i>Nick Kukulan, Chair</i>			
	Diana Graham	Chris Batson	Nick Kukulan
	Becky Smith	Nancy Campbell	
		Bob Helliesen	
		Nick Kukulan	
		Eunice Kwon	
		Jennifer Nixon	

Officers, Ministry, & Committee Members for 2023

MINISTRIES	(terms end Jan. 2024)	(terms end Jan. 2025)	Council Rep.
Worship & Spiritual Life (Deacons), <i>Julie Greer, Chair</i>			
	Kerrie Hein	Stan Boghosian	Julie Greer
	Carolyn Thiessen	Arin Dahl	
		Nancy DeNero	
		Julie Greer	
COMMITTEES*			
Long Range Planning, <i>Hope Hilton, Chair</i>		Investment <i>Nick Kukulan, Chair</i>	
Megan Bates		Bob Helliesen	
Madeleine Canavese		Nathan Hood	
Hope Hilton		Nick Kukulan	
Kara Korbelt-Chinula			
Steve Spielman			
Jeanne Strauss			
Sara Woods			
DELEGATES (no specified terms)		COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL*	
Richard Brabham		Personnel	
Hope Hilton		Christine Gregg	
Steve Spielman		Kerrie Hein	
Jeanne Strauss		Kara Korbelt-Chinula	
		Endowment	
		Vacant	

Staff

Senior Minister

REV. MOLLY BASKETTE

Our 2022 Moderator, Hope Hilton, chose as her theme for the year “Home By Another Way.” If there’s a coda to that mantra, it might be “we’re getting there!”

Since I came to First Church Berkeley, we have been on several epic and entwined journeys: the fire, affordable housing, a global pandemic. It feels like we made real progress on all of them this past year. Home is on the visible horizon.



We had in-person Christmas Eve worship in December 2021 only to have to go all-remote again due to the Omicron surge in January. We came back together in time for last year’s annual meeting, but our numbers took a hit after the initial happy surge at being back together, and it was a long slow recovery from there. Mirroring trends throughout most churches, it was very challenging through the spring and summer to find enough people to meet the basic functions of worship and church life.

Then in late summer and early fall we held a couple of great in-person events: a family retreat and an All-Church Retreat to St. Dorothy’s Rest in Occidental, as well as a blowout celebration of Carolyn Ash’s ministry at FCCB. These helped knit us together again. Each week now we are

blessed with the happy burble of children playing in our Amen Corner, both those new to us as well as those who suddenly grew up during the pandemic. We have some fantastic, committed new members and friends. Energy and life is pouring back into our physical community. We continue to offer robust online-only and hybrid offerings for the folks in our community who can’t come in person due to health or distance.

This summer we finally took down the smoking ruin that was Pilgrim Hall, and shortly after the 6-year anniversary of the Great Fire of 2016, we broke ground for our new community building! Our architects and other community partners were in attendance; our elders and children turned over soil and danced as we prayed thanksgiving for this moment. We honored the land and the indigenous people who had long been stewards and residents of it, and got excited for all that will be possible when the building is completed early in 2024, which will also be the year of our 150th anniversary.

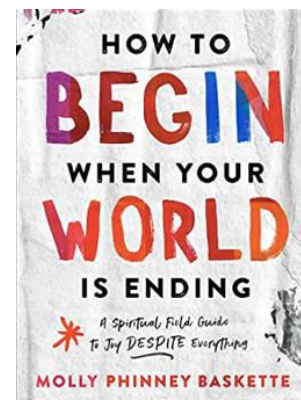
Aware that this past year’s runaway inflation and supply chain issues had added 20% to the cost of our modest new building, we undertook a feasibility study for a capital campaign to determine the carrying capacity of the congregation to meet the delta between our insurance payout and the true cost to rebuild. Working with consultant Marc Rieke, who interviewed a number of committed givers at the church, we have determined that with heart and

will we can raise between \$750,000 and \$1.5m. \$750,000 will help us get over the finish line for the most basic build to code. \$1.2m will get us basic enhancements: such as a wired-in AV system, a kitchen we can actually cook in, and a stonework labyrinth in the outdoor worship/program space. With even more of a commitment from our community, we can add other features that will serve our wider community for a century to come. The capital campaign will run from late January-mid-May. Save the date of **Wednesday, May 10** for our Capital Campaign celebration gala!

We are also making incredible strides in our plan to put affordable housing on the north end of campus, at the opposite end from the new community building. After putting out a request for qualifications that met our criteria and values, the Affordable Housing Team interviewed 4 local developers. It was a tough choice between exceptional developers, but we have contracted with EBALDC, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, to design, find funding and build low-income housing on our site, one iteration of our commitment to aid in ending homelessness in the East Bay as well as part of our long-term financial health strategy. EBALDC builds beautiful things, and we are very excited to work with them. We should have a Memorandum of Understanding in hand within a few months, and by summer have a clear understanding of the most suitable approach to the project, after which EBALDC will get to work to put together a funding package, which could take up to a couple of years.

This fall I had a new baby: a book baby! My new book, *How to Begin When Your World is Ending: A Spiritual Field Guide to Joy Despite Everything*, was published by

Broadleaf Books. We had a fabulous Disco Book Launch in our sanctuary: Marvin K. White emceed, my friend the atheist & actor Aisha Tyler interviewed me, we drank bubbly things and boogied



on the chancel to DJ'd music and disco lights! Thank you all for supporting me in so many ways: particularly by buying, reading, gifting and writing online reviews of the book, to help it find as many people who need it as possible. If you haven't yet read it: check out Chapter 15, Church on Fire, a paean to my love for you and all we have survived so far, together. It's my hope and prayer that this book will not only give people solace at difficult times in their lives, but help them find their way to a church like ours—or even our church! —even though they may not have been open to that experience previously.

We've experienced more than the usual amount of transition and change in our staffing structure this past year. In August we hired Hannah Turner (and ordained and installed her in October!) as our minister for Youth, Young Adult & Emerging Ministries. Hannah has been a bright light and brings great energy and ideas, as well as experience in the evangelical tradition which gives us greater "cross-cultural competence" between the progressive mainline and the evangelical and exvangelical movement of seekers.

With Hannah's arrival, I moved from full-time (which was hovering about 55 hours/week for the last many years) to 80% time. Rev. Kelly, Rev. Hannah and I are all

working at 80% time, which gives us balance and parity—allowing us all time for rest, time with family, time for professional development and the pursuit of other passions so we don't have to join the large number of pastors who have left parish ministry as a result of the stress of the pandemic.

Other staff transitions rocked our collective life in the church: in July, Bruce McNaught retired after nearly 25 years as our site coordinator. We will miss his dry humor and deep arcane knowledge and quirk of every inch of our physical campus. In August, Carolyn stepped out of her role as Director of Family Ministry after 8 years of teaching and leading our congregation with creativity and steadfast love. She helped us weather countless adaptations in our community life with cheer, hustle and aplomb. I'm so glad she and all of the Ashes are deeply rooted members of our community, and that we still get to benefit from their faith and friendship! Finally, Kit Dunbar stepped down as business manager after nearly 8 years of trying to tame the many-headed hydra that is the business end of our church. We (and the squirrels!) will miss her warmth and deep care as she discerns what is next.

We have made a couple of great new hires for admin, bookings and event hosting roles, and still have some sorting-out to do to be fully staffed. And of course, the legacy staff is made up of dedicated people who are a joy to work with every day: Amare, Louise, Derek, Kelly, Liz, Amar & now Hannah.

As we figure out the most sensible staff configuration—as well as the one that will fit our church budget—I am immensely grateful to the many church members who

consistently go above and beyond to keep our church healthy and running well. I want to call out a few people in particular. Our Moderator Hope Hilton and Moderator-Elect Jeanne Strauss have stepped into a variety of roles as needed with grace and a positive spirit for years; very present through the good times and the hard times. And I am deeply grateful to Moe Wright and Nick Kukulan for their attention to our finances, operations and physical plant. Moe has been our church treasurer for more years than even he can count, as well as running the day-to-day buildout of our new building. Given his experience as a builder and the many longstanding relationships of goodwill he has developed over decades with both contractors and the City of Berkeley, he has saved us a lot of money and a LOT of headaches. Builds of this complexity and magnitude have exhausted other faith communities. Thank you Moe for keeping us humming along! Likewise Nick deserves our undying gratitude: he has personally managed a number of small projects on our campus like our Hall of Entrance bathroom upgrade to literally picking up trash and sweeping up leaves. Nick has kept us on task with financial systems and budgeting process, shepherded our relationship with our primary tenant, East Bay School for Boys, and is all-in when it comes to madcap joy, like wearing sheep ears on Christmas Eve.

I also want to laud the members of the Pastoral Care Team, who have increased the capacity of our pastoral staff through a global pandemic that has dealt a serious blow to the health and mental health of humans in general and our congregation in particular. They have bottomless empathy, skill in knowing just when to call/text/visit, and spiritual maturity in knowing just what

to say (or not to say), and they have helped many of us through these trying times. In alphabetical order they are: Rev. Kelly Colwell, Louise Halsey, Kathy Helliesen, Robin Kempster (who also serves as our parish nurse and staff photographer!), Annis Kukulan, Rev. Hannah Turner (and me). And thanks to all of you– (prayer team, choir members, and many others!) who take care of one another so beautifully even though you are not serving in an official capacity! You are the ties that bind our hearts in Christian love.

This Christmas Eve was one of my favorites on record: the church was fuller than it has been in a long time, and people really sang out. I was blessed looking at so many of your faces in the crowd, knowing all you have been through this year.

My favorite moments in the service were those involving our youngest worship leader. When Baby Jesus, aka Catalina, cried on cue when she was “born,” and was delivered safely to her mother’s arms by Charlotte, Ann and Birtukan—then when her

father lifted her above his head in a Lion King moment and the congregation broke into spontaneous cheers and applause—and still later when she fell asleep in her mother’s arms during Silent Night, one naked baby arm flung over her head in wild abandon and trust, as we surrounded her and sang her a lullaby. I felt then that God really was with us. And will remain.

Christlove,
Molly



Minister for Digital, Hybrid & Beloved Community

REV. KELLY COLWELL

This has been the year that COVID finally came home to our congregation in a real way. We started the year with one more online annual



meeting, but it wasn't until spring that we started to truly get reports of multiple households in our church down with COVID. A few of us have long-lasting symptoms, but most of us have been blessed by a return to full health. I had COVID twice in summer and am hoping it'll be a while before my third go-round!

It has also been the year that we truly started to learn to live with COVID, figuring out ways that we can keep each other as safe and as connected as possible while still living into our church's mission, not waiting for some post-COVID future but getting back to business. We returned to in-person services in February and haven't looked back. We're striving to keep the lessons we've learned alive, though—we meet online regularly, saving in-person meetings for bonding and togetherness.

My focus this year has been on building a vibrant hybrid and digital community, helping newcomers get connected, and rebuilding some of our young adult energy in this new phase. We have continued to try to hold events outside of Sunday mornings that are easy to invite friends to, and we've

met new community members at each of them. We kept the month of June for all queer preachers again this year, welcoming preachers of diverse races, sexualities, and genders to our pulpit. We danced to music from Encanto at Easter, marked Juneteeth with a service of lament and appreciation, offered support to Cal students during finals for both semester by handing out cookies and hugs, blessed backpacks, pets, babies, and each other. In other words, we practiced our faith this year. I'm so grateful to be on this journey with this faithful community.

Much of my focus this year has been on administration and organization. I was honored to support our search process for a new Minister for Youth, Young Adults, and Emerging Ministries, welcoming Hannah Turner for a candidating weekend in July and into her role in August while Molly was using the last of her sabbatical time. We have had significant staff turnover in the office this year, including the retirement of Bruce McNaught and the departure of our Business Manager Kit Dunbar in December. Working with Kerrie Hein and the personnel committee to help define and fill roles has been both a pleasure and a significant task.

I continue to provide staff support to the Ministries of Adult Education, Worship and Spiritual Life, and Mental Health and Disability. Adult Education is having some serious and much-needed conversation about their scope and purpose while continuing to offer learning hours on a variety of topics and patterns. Worship and Spiritual Life has built opportunities for

congregation members to deepen their spirituality, as well as continuing to offer chancel communion and send love notes to the congregation. Mental Health added Disability to their scope this year and have worked hard to offer the congregation opportunities for support and learning. In the 20% of my time that isn't church-related, I defended my dissertation in February and was awarded my Ph.D. in

May, the culmination of the past six years of work investigating what God is calling us to in this season. The packed learning hour in the fall where I shared my research felt like a real affirmation of my dual vocation to the church and the academy. In this learned congregation, I can bring my full self. Thanks be to God for the match we have and the journey we're on together!



Minister for Youth, Young Adults & Emerging Ministries

REV. HANNAH TURNER

I am beyond blessed to have my first call be with you, First Church Berkeley. This has been, by



far, the wildest year of my life. Considering I received my first call, ordination, installation, moved (twice) and got married, things have been a bit chaotic.

Nevertheless, you all have been beyond gracious in my missing thoughts, forgetting keys, and slow email responses. But we have done some great work together in the last 6 months.

We have committed to a regular youth program with an emphasis on consistency and community. Depending on the various events that we have had, like ugly sweater Christmas decorating, a Lock In with local(ish) congregation UCC Danville, and All-Church Retreat, numbers range from having 3-20 kids participate. I am hopeful that in the next year with the consistency of Sunday meetings, camps, spiritual development programs, and fun events, we will grow. An old youth mentor of mine reminded me that we are in it for the long haul when it comes to youth ministry. I am especially grateful for my youth leaders who jumped in with my leadership and the members interested in becoming youth leaders in the next year.

Learning of this church's rich history in its support of Cal Berkeley has been very important to me. The question became, how can we support the students of

Berkeley as well as the surrounding Young Adults in our area. I accompanied Rev. Kelly and Julie Greer in one of our regular traditions serving the Berkeley students Cookies at Cal during finals. We encountered a few students asking what organization we were with and upon learning we were a church, informed us they were looking for a church community. I am excited to explore what else I can do to partner with Cal Berkeley.

Rev. Kelly and I have put on a monthly supper where young adults (ages from 18-35+) come together to enjoy (usually) soup and other treats others brought. This continues to be a very relaxed and informal gathering and creates opportunities for spinoff events, like the upcoming Paint and Sip with Bob Ross or a spring hike planned by one of the members.

The third part of my job title, Minister for...Emerging Ministries, leaves an open opportunity for what the Holy Spirit is doing next. I have spent the last several months actually asking the Holy Spirit what that looks like. I am not entirely confident I have it figured out yet. We are seeing a trend with millennial and younger generations leaving the Evangelical Church. But why? I hope to think of or create a space where Ex-vangelicals can still worship with a loving and open community. With careful discernment, mentorship by Rev. Molly, and a leading of the Holy Spirit, I hope to see some part of this take shape this coming year.

I pray for us both, Church, that we may continue to be a people who are eager to learn and eager to shift to what the Holy

Spirit is moving in our community. May the coming year bring us opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus, taking every

opportunity to live into the overwhelming love of God.



Director of Music

DEREK TAM

It has been another whirlwind year for the music program here at First Church!



beat (pun intended)!

First of all, I want to express my perpetual gratitude for the tireless efforts of my dear colleagues and

friends, organist Elizabeth Forsyth and multi-instrumentalist Amar Khalsa. I am astounded every week by the breadth and depth of their musicianship, and the way they model faith and wisdom. There are few other people I could imagine jumping from Bach to boogie with, frequently within the span of a single service!

I have also been profoundly moved by the continued dedication of our Sanctuary Choir. While every rehearsal is full of intense work, so many moments are suffused with joy and beauty. It's also been a joy to welcome so many new choir members and to create new bonds of community with them. I have also been happy to get back to making music with our Gospel Choir as well.

I also want to take some time to thank our other standing music groups. From Songs of the Soul, led by Linda Crebbin-Coates, to Uke-atastrophe, led by Kate Lucchese, we are blessed

with so many dedicated musicians. I also warmly hold special moments—among many—such as Nicole Naffaa's heart-wrenching "Gethsemane" on Palm Sunday, our rousing Encanto dance party on Easter Sunday, Brittany Walker-Pettigrew's tear-inducing "This Land is Your Land" in the fall, and Julie Greer and Albin Renauer's tender "Cry of a Tiny Babe" on Christmas Eve. It is also fun to bring some of our music out to UC Berkeley; as an example, students got a treat during spring finals when Stan Boghosian and his friend Lew treated them to some great outdoor music!

We are also very lucky to have so many amazing musical guests join us in worship. From the San Francisco Girls Chorus and the Piedmont-East Bay Children's Choir, to the gospel stylings of Benja Mertz and the improvisational flourishes of David Worm and his friends (both in Sunday worship and now monthly through CircleSing), we are treated to an embarrassment of riches.

Finally, I want to lift up our amazing concert series, Resonance, as well as the many outside musical groups that call us home as well. It's always surprising to me when folks from as far away as Belgium ask about the rebuilding, and a testament to the wide reach of our musical programs.

Here's to a music-filled 2023 as well, full of bells ringing (hint hint, the bell choir is back, and you are welcome to join)!



Business Manager

KIT DUNBAR

2022 a year in review
Haiku...nope, scratch that!
While I may have many talents, writing an annual report in Haiku is not one of them. I'll recap the year chronologically instead:



- January 2022 saw a spike in COVID which closed the doors to our beloved campus reminiscent of 2020 and most of 2021.
- February and March: as COVID numbers dropped, concerts and musical events started to return to the Sanctuary.
- April and May: saw the changes to the church parking lot in preparation for the demolition of Pilgrim Hall and the preparation for the building of the new Community Building. We enjoyed celebrating the return of graduations for the Graduate Theological Union and Pacific School of Religion.
- June: concluded another school year for East Bay School for the Boys and the signing of the renewal of their lease.
- July: was not only the retirement for Bruce McNaught our Facilities Manager of 20 plus years but the return of Amare's annual vacation time in Ethiopia. Both the Deckers and members of SF & A stepped up to help ensure Sunday morning

facilities would continue to be warmly welcoming. A million thanks especially to Moe and Nick for their organizational help during that time.

- August: on a personal note, my Mom turned 90 and I spent a lovely couple of weeks with her and my family back in New England. Also the hiring of Hannah Turner as our Minister for Youth, Young Adults and Emerging Ministries.
- September and October: saw the return of many outside groups and events happening on campus almost as robustly as they had been before the pandemic! We also welcomed Leah Walz as our part-time Administrative Assistant to help with billings for outside groups as well as tasks for Kelly, Louise and Derek. Leah has been a wonderful addition to our staff!
- November: was punctuated by Stewardship and budget preparation.
- December: as 2022 came to an end, so did my time at First Church Berkeley. Thank you all for the wonderful blessing in church and I look forward to seeing you around Berkeley.



Congregational Care Program Manager

LOUISE HALSEY

We began 2022 with a return to gathering virtually as Omicron continued its spread. Fortunately after holding our 147th



Annual Meeting remotely on Feb. 6, we were back to offering in-person worship again Feb. 13. What a whirlwind we've been navigating – with such a longing to be together in-person for all the events/milestones we mark in our church lives together and also in our personal lives.

Our in-person worship attendance numbers increased through the spring with Easter in April and Rev. Kelly's installation in May. We experienced some expected dipping in attendance during the summer months as folks took a break or traveled, though there was an uptick for Rev. Hannah's candidating weekend in mid-July. Our virtual worship numbers have remained steady throughout the year – averaging between 40 to 55 screens on any given Sunday! Thanks to our Chat Pastor Geoffrey Gaskins for interacting in that space with grace and a loving pastoral presence.

With taking on the task of preparing our weekly newsletter the *Carillon* with the accompanying Sunday Worship Guide that many of you receive in your inboxes every week, I've appreciated learning and working

with new programs (WordPress, MailChimp & Canva) to help support our communications.

Programmatically, I've enjoyed supporting and co-leading sessions as part of our Summer Small Groups and in particular two ongoing small groups that continue to explore compassionate communication. I especially delighted in working with Jeanne Strauss and our staff in organizing the September All-Church Retreat at a new venue to us - St. Dorothy's Rest near Occidental, CA.

Being part of our pastoral care team remains one of my cherished roles. I get to be present with church members as we hold together the inevitable challenges and heartbreaks that is the reality of being alive. And, I also get to celebrate and amplify the joyful moments and milestones of our members' daily lives.

When reflecting on the "work" I do for the church, as is the practice of writing a yearly Annual Report, I come back basically to the same themes and feelings, slightly nuanced and markedly deepened: the reality of navigating nearly constant change and the gratitude I experience in working collaboratively and creatively with an amazingly gifted and caring clergy & staff as we serve our beloved church family. It's an honor and privilege, and I look forward to what lies ahead as we eventually occupy our new community building in 2024! Onward with love.



New Member Coordinator

KATHY HELLIESEN (VOLUNTEER)

W^e
joyfully
welcomed
18 New
Members
into the life
of First
Church



Berkeley in 2022. A heartfelt welcome to Mike, Vanessa, Chuck, Laura, Hannah, Adrian, Chris, Jennifer, Frances, Doris, Kiera, Martha, Susan, Jonathan, Kathleen,

Kimberly, Matt and Christine. Our community is enriched by your presence.

We were able to hold the three Discover First Church classes in person, and met together for crepe-making and community building by sharing our spiritual stories. Our newest members are already singing in the choir, serving on committees and ministries and baking cookies, serving soup and cutting cakes!

Many thanks to Revs. Molly and Kelly for leading the classes, and to Louise Halsey for her support.





Parish Nurse

ROBIN KEMPSTER (VOLUNTEER)

The focus of Parish Nurse activities revolve around supporting individuals and families with health challenges, directing them to local health resources, and being a listening presence during trying times. As a member of the Pastoral Care

Team, it has been an honor to be part of the web of congregation care at First Church Berkeley. I look forward to continuing to be the Parish Nurse in the coming year.



Chat Pastor

GEOFFREY GASKINS (VOLUNTEER)

How do we worship when we can't gather? That's been an anxiety shared by worship leaders everywhere during COVID



lockdowns. In fact, lots of churches have disappeared in the last few years. First Church Berkeley ministers and worship leaders have embraced this challenge with innovative remote worship services reaching not only our First Church family but broadcasting our brand of compassionate, radically inclusive Christianity to a wider audience. (Don't think we were expecting that!)

Lockdown or no lockdown, remote worship is here to stay! It'll be an important platform for Progressive Christian prophets, like ours, to speak in the Spirit of Jesus to a world that appears to have lost its mind, and its heart.

We're still learning how to 'do church' remotely. Our online community is growing, both in numbers and in soul. We are First Churchties, members of other churches and of no churches. We're growing a distinct First Church identity, engaging each other in real-time, and supporting the values and dreams that make First Church — all of First Church — a uniquely precious body of Christ.

Some stats you might find interesting:

- Number of 2022 worship livestream views: 20,641
- Viewers over 65yo: 90.8%; 45-54yo: 9.2% (Hmmm...)
- Female participants : 63(ish)%; male: 36(ish)%
- US viewers from: California, Massachusetts, Ohio, Kansas, North Carolina, and Vermont.
- International viewers from: Indonesia, Italy, Canada, Pakistan, and Switzerland. (Live streams have been translated into Italian, Spanish, and Korean.) Not tons of folks (... yet!), but enough to be recognized by YouTube's algorithm!

We're getting better and more creative at remote worship, finding new ways of being God with skin on (Baskette) together — indoors and outdoors. It's exciting, and I am privileged and blessed to be traveling this road with you, blessed community!



Other Ministries

Affordable Housing Committee

SCOTT SPORTE & DAN LEAVERTON, CO-CHAIRS

The Affordable Housing Committee completed its participation in the Alameda County Housing Development Capacity Building Program, a program designed to support churches and other religious organizations as they explore the feasibility of affordable housing development. We joined seven other churches around the East Bay through a yearlong process of discernment and shared learning. The program was funded by Alameda County and the San Francisco Foundation and administered by Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Bay Area.

Through its participation in this program, First Church received a small grant to cover the cost of a third party consultant to help guide us through the process of setting goals, determining feasibility and ultimately soliciting proposals from affordable housing developers to begin the multi-year process of constructing housing on the northwest corner of our parking lot.

Our consultant guided us through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process that

solicited proposals from affordable housing developers throughout the greater Bay Area. We received several responses to our RFQ and selected East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC), a nonprofit affordable housing development organization with deep experience in East Bay communities. Their proposal demonstrated a commitment to equity and diversity, recognized the advantages of developing affordable housing on our campus, and showed a clear understanding of partnership. We are excited to be working with EBALDC and expect to have many updates during 2023 as they begin their process.

Committee members are Molly Baskette, Alice Clark, Sophia DeWitt, Lorenzo Llanillo, Dan Leaverton (co-chair) and Scott Sporte (co-chair). We gratefully thank Brian Hauck for his service as he departed the committee during 2022 to focus on other responsibilities.



Ministry Partners

Berkeley Pilgrimage Foundation

ROD MACKENZIE, BOARD PRESIDENT

The Berkeley Pilgrimage Foundation (BPF) is a private foundation affiliated with First Church that supports housing, healthcare, and related services for seniors and people with disabilities in and around Berkeley.

This year due to the continued COVID situation and limited Board participation, we agreed to continue to fund organizations we had funded in the past rather than seeking out new grant opportunities. We are hoping to do new outreach for the 2023 grant cycle. We made nine grants totaling \$175,000 which included two organizations receiving the second year of their two year grants. Our grants for 2022 were as follows:

1. Black Wealth Builders' Fund: \$15,000
2. St. Mary's Center: \$20,000
3. Alameda County Care Alliance: \$20,000
4. Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services: \$20,000

5. Lifelong Medical Care, Independent Seniors Fund: \$25,000 (2 year)
6. East Oakland Collective: \$25,000 (2 year)
7. Rebuilding Together East Bay North: \$15,000
8. African American Wellness Project: \$15,000
9. J-Sei: \$20,000

We gratefully will add Helen Walsh to our Board for 2023. Other continuing board members are Sophia DeWitt, Jacki Dennis, Amy Hiestand, Janet McDonald, and Rod MacKenzie.

How to Get Involved

We are always looking for new board and committee members! If you think you might want to volunteer with the Foundation, please reach out to Rod MacKenzie (rod.mackenzie@gmail.com) or any of the board members listed above. We'd love to hear from you!



East Bay School for Boys

CHRISTOPHER CANSECO, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & STORYTELLING

2022 has been a year of renewal and celebration. We are extremely grateful to FCCB for your flexibility and willingness to share spaces during this time.

We are also extremely grateful for the assistance with the upkeep of our facilities. We are grateful to continue our partnership with FCCB as we head into a new year of self- growth and healing.



Pacific School of Religion

REV. NICOLE NAFFAA, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

First Church has had a strong relationship with Pacific School of Religion (PSR) throughout its history. Several PSR students and alumnx have served our community in a variety of ways, as staff and ministry interns. Several First Church members have served on PSR's Board of Trustees and various committees. First Church has also hosted many of their significant events and conferences such as graduation and the Earl Lectures Series.

In recent years, PSR has transformed its campus into an intergenerational learning community, renting some of its campus to Berkwood Hedge Middle School and UC Berkeley's Fung Institute for Engineering Leadership. It continues to transform theological education to make it more accessible, affordable, and impactful. It is the first seminary to develop a "stackable" curriculum which offers students greater flexibility and relevant credentials.

In September, PSR received a \$5 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to equip a diverse new generation of spiritually rooted leaders with the tools they need to transform their communities. This grant will help fund PSR's new educational ecosystem which will enhance its leading-edge



graduate programs through an online platform that will connect emerging leaders — from inner cities and rural areas, from congregations and social movements — to each other and to educational resources often not accessible to them.

PSR's mission is to prepare a diverse cadre of spiritually rooted leaders with the vision, resilience, and skill to create a world where all can thrive. Grounded in the rigorous study and faithful practice of progressive Christian faith, PSR partners with students of all backgrounds to deepen their spirituality and enhance their capacity to lead in transformative ways. Connected to a broad network of religious, educational, not-for-profit, and private sector organizations—with a particular commitment to the wisdom of historically marginalized communities—PSR offers an education that is marked by innovation, reflection, and excellence.



Capital Fund Campaign

Campaign Chair

SARA WOODS

For the past six years, our congregation has been engaged in planning for rebuilding our primary community facility. Many of you have participated in committees,



litigation teams, congregational presentations and votes, and listening circles to discern and help us all move forward. In the fall of 2022, our Council authorized a Feasibility Study in anticipation of a capital fund campaign to fund a portion of the rebuilding effort. We contracted with The Enrichment Group to work with Marc Rieke as our campaign consultant. He partnered with our church to gather information from a variety of member households that helped us to prepare for our capital fund campaign which has just launched on January 22, 2023.

Our Capital Campaign Consultant, Marc Rieke from The Enrichment Group, joined us to present the results of our Feasibility Study to the congregation on November 13, 2022. The results of the study indicated that our congregation has a capacity for generous giving to our church, a wealth of leadership within the congregation for the campaign, and a high level of awareness for the need to rebuild our primary programming building for ourselves and community use. The congregation also helped prioritize enhancements to the building with the fully functional kitchen

cooking kitchen and an integrated audio-visual package being the top two priorities, respectively.

Based on the insight provided by the congregation, Church Council voted on November 15, 2022 to affirm the formation of the Capital Campaign, to endeavor to recruit a leadership team and to perform our Capital Campaign in Winter/Spring 2023.

This is an exciting endeavor to ensure that our new community building is completed for the use of our congregation and our community now and for years to come. I hope everyone will participate in some way with the Capital Campaign this year. We are building the vision and opportunity of this work and celebration together. We will living our **Build. Gather. Grow. Campaign** both spiritually and physically throughout the campaign. We are so blessed to be together in this time. If you have an interest in a role in the Capital Campaign, please reach out to Sara Woods, the campaign chair - capitalcampaign@fccb.org



Financial Reports

Treasurer

MOE WRIGHT

The year 2022 was another good year for our church in terms of the operating



budget. We ended the year with a surplus even as we had planned for a possible deficit. However, our administration had challenges during the year. We lost both our Facilities Manager,

Bruce McNaught, at mid-year and in December, our Business Manager, Kit Dunbar, resigned. As a result, you will find a reduced number of financial reports that usually accompanies this Treasurer report. The operating results with an approved budget for 2023 is provided in the annual report, but the balance sheet, fund activity and stewardship statistics are missing. We have a good crew, led by bookkeeper Sharlet Gilbert, filling in and getting caught up and we expect to hire a new Business Manager in the near future.

In summary, the operating budget results show strong revenue from all sources. On the income side, fulfilled commitments were \$604,817 only slightly less than the budgeted \$617,000 and other contributions exceeded budget by \$4,825. The facilities use was very good with a big bump in the revenue produced by sanctuary rentals. The total revenue of \$404,694 exceeded budget by \$72,444. On the expense side, total expenses were \$107,008 less than budget. All spending categories were underspent. The combination of increased income and underspending resulted in a surplus of

\$58,847. This will be carried over to the Council Contingency Fund. This fund is the accumulation of money that is the result of previous surpluses. The current balance as of 12/31/2022 is \$171,819.

In other areas of the financial life of the church, the endowment lost value this year. (see the Investment Committee report). The church receives 5% of the total value of the endowment every year and this amount goes into the designated use of each endowment fund. The majority of the money goes to fund the operating budget, music, lectures, plant maintenance, and interns.

The Congregation had authorized the use of the council contingency fund to balance the 2021 budget, however, income from all sources came in higher than expected and expenses were lower than expected so the use of the contingency funds was not necessary. Even without the contingency funds, the operating budget produced a small surplus of \$13,139.

Finally, the rebuilding of our community hall is finally under way. We have secured all permits and have a construction contract to build a new building that will house our fellowship hall, offices, classrooms and meeting rooms. The payment for the base building cost will be augmented by the capital campaign and we may add some extra features that the Congregation has indicated as priorities.

All in all, this year has been a good year of support and growth for the church as we come out of a debilitating pandemic. We

have continue to have strong support from our membership as well as a return of community events in our sanctuary. The

church has managed expenses well and the result is another budget surplus for 2022.

First Congregational Church of Berkeley
Operating Results for 2022 and 2023 Budget

	Actual 2022	Budget 2022	Difference	Budget 2023
RECEIPTS				
CONTRIBUTIONS				
COMMITMENTS & CONTRIBUTIONS				
Commitments-current	\$604,817.52	617,000	12,182	566,500
Commitments-for last year	3,775.00	2,000	(1,775)	2,000
Extra Gifts fr Givers	1,446.00	2,000	554	2,000
Contributions	14,419.00	9,000	(5,419)	9,000
Online donation fees/disc	3,185.02	5,000	1,815	5,000
Subtotal Contributions	627,643	635,000	7,357	584,500
FACILITIES USE				
East Bay School for Boys	225,114.00	246,250	21,136	287,254
EBSB Reimbursements	0.00	11,000	11,000	30,000
Douglas Parking	10,721.94	0	(10,722)	10,000
Room Use, Others	168,858.51	75,000	(93,859)	150,000
Subtotal Facilities Use	404,694	332,250	(72,444)	477,254
TRANS FROM OTHER FUNDS				
Endow-Nelson	5,142	5,142	0	5,142
Endow-Univ Min	55,311	55,311	0	55,311
Emerging Leaders	0	8,577	8,577	8,007
Music Fund	5,870	5,870	0	5,870
Special Endowment	26,661	26,661	0	26,661
Subtotal Trans From Other	92,984	101,561	8,577	100,991
OTHER INCOME				
Council Contingency	0	104,671	104,671	120,726
Transitional Tasks			0	
Subtotal Other Income	0	104,671	104,671	120,726
TOTAL INCOME	1,125,321	1,173,482	48,161	1,283,471

	Actual 2022	Budget 2022	Difference	Budget 2023
DISBURSEMENTS				
OPERATING EXPENSES				
PERSONNEL				
MINISTERIAL	\$292,140.97	285,392	(6,749)	359,752
EMERGING LEADERS	0.00	3,055	3,055	8,007
MUSIC MINISTRY	120,790.66	118,177	(2,614)	124,978
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF	184,751.14	203,873	19,122	220,881
CHURCH PLANT STAFF	107,500.02	128,038	20,538	120,380
EDUCATION STAFF	7,501.73	11,262	3,760	0
CHILDCARE STAFF	184.26	5,395	5,211	8,798
BENE.SRVC.STAFF TRN.CONT.	14,654.97	25,500	10,845	33,655
Subtotal Personnel	727,524	780,692	53,168	876,451
MINISTRY EXPENSE				
MUSIC	13,352.65	17,700	4,347	17,700
WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL LIFE	11,183.04	9,450	(1,733)	9,450
CHURCH SCHOOL	467.96	2,250	1,782	2,250
FAM CH Y	3,525.24	3,510	(15)	3,510
ADULT EDUCATION	738.70	3,510	2,771	3,510
CARE & FELLOW	7,026.30	12,600	5,574	12,600
MEDIA	2,580.15	10,350	7,770	10,350
PARISH NURSE	37.03	1,800	1,763	1,800
UNIVERSITY/YOUNG ADULT	1,645.51	7,200	5,554	7,200
STWRDSHP/FINANCE/ADMIN	0	0	0	
CHURCH COUNCIL	17,079	4,500	(12,579)	4,500
Subtotal Ministry Expense	57,635	72,870	15,235	72,870
ADMINISTRATION				
Postage	962.61	2,000	1,037	2,000
EQUIPMENT	36,177.97	40,000	3,822	40,000
OFFICE SUPPLIES	2,420.75	4,000	1,579	4,000
BANKING + ACH FEES	9,811.51	12,500	2,688	12,500
Subtotal Administration	49,373	58,500	9,127	58,500
CHURCH PLANT				
UTILITIES	67,180.32	65,000	(2,180)	72,000
PLANT SUPPLIES	5,377.85	5,000	(378)	5,000
PLANT MAINTENANCE	16,242.16	35,000	18,758	35,000
INSURANCE/TAXES	76,159.58	88,220	12,060	100,500
Subtotal Church Plant	164,960	193,220	28,260	212,500
Subtotal Operating Expense	999,492	1,105,282	105,790	1,220,321
BENEVOLENCE, BUDGETED				
UCC Share (OCWM)	60,482	61,700	1,218	56,650
OTHER BENEVOLENCES	6,500	6,500	0	6,500
Subtotal Benevolence, Bud	66,982	68,200	1,218	63,150
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,066,474	1,173,482	107,008	1,283,471
EXCESS INCOME\EXPENSES	58,847	0	(58,847)	0

Statements

A Seeker's Statement

Finding a home in God's wilderness, we seek to savor God
and magnify the longings of Jesus. We dare to be uncertain.
Practicing compassion and awakening conscience,
we bear hope for a suffering world.
In this Spirit, we honor one another in beloved community.

Long Range Planning Committee, Fall 2003

Mission Statement

To bring ourselves and others to God,
and to develop within us spiritual maturity so that we may be equipped for ministry
in our lives and for mission in the world.

To celebrate the Good News
of God's inclusive love for all people.

We are called to be a community of faith that invites spiritual transformation through
the power of love, affirmation and inclusion;
to come to know ourselves as whole and healed;
to embrace our unique gifts;
and to act out of gratitude to help create a world of love, justice and harmony.

With God's love, following the teachings of Jesus, we recognize and celebrate the diversity of
paths that will fulfill a vision of love and justice for all the world.

We are called to be a growing and inspired community, a beacon in the East Bay,
renewing, reaching out, rejoicing. *January 2002*

Open and Affirming Statement

We, as a diverse body of believers seeking to live in the light and image of God in Christ, do
affirm:

- that every person has worth as a special and unique creation made in God's image;
- that in the Spirit of love, openness, and inclusiveness we welcome persons of every sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, nationality, ability and age to participate fully in all aspects of the Church's life and ministry;
- that as agents of reconciliation and wholeness we embrace justice and seek to support all who suffer discrimination or who are disenfranchised from the religious community;
- that in light of the gospel we will continue to comprehend and appreciate more fully our differences and gifts;
- that through grace our love for God and neighbor may flourish.

This ONA statement was originally passed by vote of the Congregation on April 2, 1995. It was amended (April 19, 2015) to include the phrases "gender identity" (referring to one's innermost core concept of self which can include male, female, a blend of both or neither, and many

more) and “gender expression” (referring to the ways in which one expresses gender identity to others).

WISE Congregation for Mental Health

Affirming our faith in a God who loves and is embodied among all persons, and affirming our tradition as a welcoming congregation, First Congregational Church of Berkeley is a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged (WISE) Congregation for Mental Health.

- We *welcome* people with mental health challenges and those who love them.
- We *include* those with mental health challenges in the life, work, and leadership of the congregation.
- We *support* people with mental health challenges and those who love them.
- We *engage* with other organizations at the intersection of mental health and spirituality.

We care about the whole person: body, heart, mind, and soul, and we claim the deep and constant movement of God’s Holy Spirit seeking to bring us fullness of life. All are beloved by God, and when one has a mental health challenge, one has a right to be known in one’s fullness. Likewise, those among us with mental health challenges have gifts to offer our faith community, and the community is called to receive them.

(passed by vote of the Congregation on February 3, 2019)

Vision Statement

We are a community that values radical inclusion and artful worship, where belonging is more important than belief, and joy is a guiding principle. We are a restorative sanctuary for the suffering and weary, a space for creative and contemplative ritual, and a hub for transformative moral action on the justice issues of our day.

Guided by these values, God calls us to:

- Grow in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ
- Provide a diversity of open but distinctly Christian, creative and liberating worship forms to nourish the spiritual lives of the current community and reach new seekers
- Follow Jesus’s urging to minister to the “least of these” [Matthew 25] by addressing our region’s most visible and urgent human needs: ending homelessness in the East Bay, and its intersecting justice issues

Vision Elaboration

- **Grow in intimacy as the weird and wonderful Body of Christ**
First Church fosters extravagant welcome, connection/community and compassion. We are called to grow in love with one another, a foundation for living out the teachings of Jesus in the wider world. To do so, we will facilitate small groups, intergenerational engagement, and community spiritual practices that will bond and bind us together.

- Provide a diversity of open but distinctly Christian, creative and liberating worship forms to nourish the spiritual lives of the current community and reach new seekers**
 Less than 3% of Berkeley identifies as main-line Protestant. That leaves many folks unaware of or uninitiated into the richness of our progressive Christian faith. The UCC Constitution affirms “the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship.” We will experiment with new forms of worship to go deeper on our own spiritual journeys, attract new-comers who may have been hurt or excluded by other Christian churches, and pique the interest of those who have never considered Christianity a viable option. The worship experiments may include, but not be limited to:
 - Worship days and times outside of Sunday morning
 - Virtual/digital worship and spiritual formation
 - Lay-led and participatory worship experiences
 - Outdoor worship
 - Services geared toward multiple generations/learning styles
 - Contemplative worship
 - Cross-cultural worship, and
 - Spiritual formation on retreat
- Follow Jesus’s urging to minister to the “least of these” [Matthew 25] by addressing our region’s most visible and urgent human needs: ending homelessness in the East Bay, and its intersecting justice issues**
 The suffering of homeless people is evident on our streets every day. Countless more suffer housing insecurity in less visible ways. We are moved by the teachings of Jesus to respond with love, compassion and generosity. We will join with the wider community (faith communities, non-profit organizations, and government agencies) to educate, advocate, and take action to prevent homelessness, to reduce the suffering it causes, and to restore individuals and families to safe, permanent, dignified shelter.
September 2019

Sanctuary Movement Pledge

The Church Council voted in June 2017 to sign the National Sanctuary Movement Pledge and formally establish itself as a Sanctuary Congregation.

National Sanctuary Movement Pledge

We pledge to resist any policy proposals to target and deport millions of undocumented immigrants and discriminate against marginalized communities. We will open our congregations and communities as sanctuary spaces for those targeted by hate, and work alongside our friends, families and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people.