



*Our Church exists to  
introduce people to Jesus  
Christ and to train those  
who already know Him.*



# 164<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REPORT - 2023

## First Congregational Church of Allegan

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# AGENDA OF THE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

First Congregational Church - Allegan, Michigan  
Sunday January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

- I. Call to Order
  - a. Mark Lovett, Church Moderator
  
- II. Opening Prayer
  - a. Pastor Greg Carlson
  
- III. Review & Acceptance of October Quarterly Meeting
  
- IV. Reports from Church Leadership & Committee Chairs
  - a. Moderator - Mark Lovett
  - b. Church Clerk - Elaine Cochran
  - c. Pastor - Todd Wagner & Greg Carlson
  - d. Trustees Report - Margaret Brown
  - e. Diaconate - Todd Wagner
  - f. Christian Education - Sue Belden
  - g. Missions Committee - Joanie Townsend
  - h. Memorials Committee - Joanie Townsend
  - i. Congregational Kitchen - Carrie Lovett
  - j. Music Committee - Elaine Cochran
  - k. Women's Fellowship - President Theresa Prolo
  - l. Women's Fellowship Treasurer - Julie DeHaan
  - m. Church Financial Secretary - Theresa Prolo
  - n. Church Financial Report - Julie DeHaan
  - o. Treasurer's Report & Budget - Julie DeHaan
  
- V. Old Business
  
- VI. New Business
  
- VII. Adjournment

# MODERATOR'S REPORT

Mark Lovett



The Moderator has served the church in several ways this past year. First, he has presided over the annual and three quarterly meetings held in 2022. Second, he has attended the newly resurrected Council meetings. And third, has been a member of the Pastoral Search Committee.

Although this Moderator resigned at the last quarterly meeting, several members asked me to remain for another year to aid in the search for a new pastor. I will remain if so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

*MARK LOVETT*

Mark Lovett

January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

***We would like to thank Mark for his many years of faithful service to our church as our Moderator.***

# CHURCH CLERK'S REPORT

Elaine Cochran



These are the vital statistics from 2022 as recorded by the clerk for the January 2023 annual meeting.

## Vital Statistics for year 2022 -

<b>Births:</b>	<b>None reported</b>	
<b>Baptisms/Dedications:</b>	Faith Brown baptized	6/2022
<b>Deaths:</b>	Donald Lucas	3/11/2022
	James Richardson	6/10/2022
	Elaine Viening	8/31/2022
	Steve Thompson	12/10/2022
<b>Marriages:</b>	Breanna Brown/Kalob Fuerst	7/30/2022
<b>New Members:</b>	<b>None reported</b>	
<b>Transfer of Membership:</b>	Scott/Karen Ehrich	
<b>Meetings held in 2022:</b>	Annual meeting on 1/30/22.	
	Quarterly meetings on 5/15/22, 7/31/22 & 10/23/22.	

Respectfully submitted,

*Elaine Cochran*

Elaine Cochran



# PASTOR'S REPORT



## Part 1 – Todd Wagner

When I first learned that Cory Klein was resigning as pastor of the First Congregational Church, I knew much work would need to be done. As the chair of the board of Deacons, much responsibility was soon placed on my shoulders. Not only did I have to consider how to lead the spiritual leaders of this church, but I also needed to consider how to lead an entire congregation through a time of pastoral transition. Though this wasn't my first pastoral transition, it was my first time being responsible for the spiritual well-being of an entire church.

As the office of the pastor became vacant, it became abundantly clear how much work needed to be done. While I traversed new territory, I was not alone in my endeavors. I was encouraged by my fellow deacons, along with many of my brothers and sisters in Christ at this church. But God was my greatest encouragement. He had called me to ministry, but I didn't know what He had in mind. I am reminded of God's words in the book of Joshua when He appointed Joshua to become the leader of the Israelites after the death of Moses. Throughout the first several verses, God repeatedly tells Joshua to be courageous and not to be afraid. In **Joshua 1:9** God says, "***Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go***". Though many responsibilities landed on my doorstep, I knew God was with me in every step I took. Yet I must confess, there were times of doubt along the way.

While I may not have held the official office or title of pastor at First Congregational Church, I made every effort to fulfill the duties of this office. You could say I became the "interim to the interim". Over the year, I was blessed to work with Pastor David Balicki and the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference who provided me with abundant guidance and support. I was invited to and attended pastoral meetings and gatherings hosted by the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference where I was able to network with fellow 4C churches and their pastors. This spring, our church will host the annual 4C meeting.

I attended local pastoral meetings made up of different churches within our community, discussing matters facing the Church and supporting pastors in prayer. I was able to represent First Congregational Church and brainstorm ideas on how our local churches could collaboratively reach out to the community, especially our youth. I endeavored to attend meetings of the Allegan Ministerial Association (AMA) to stay abreast of what was going on within the Allegan community. One of the biggest problems we face as a Church is an increasing need to serve others, both physically and spiritually. Resources are scarce within our county and even more scarce within the ministerium.

Each week, I maintained office hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to ensure that those who needed anything could come to the church and be taken care of. I strived to make sure important announcements were made, the weekly schedule of events was posted, and prayer warriors were informed of those in need of prayer. There may have been a mistake or two made along the way.

Another role of the pastor is to minister to people through prayer. Each week, prayer requests were gathered, and I made every effort to attend prayer meetings with the prayer team. After much prayer and consideration, I went out on a limb and decided not only to share our joys and concerns with the faithful few who attend prayer groups but to also include all the saints in our church. Scripture is clear that there is power in prayer. **James 5:13-19** tells us of the prayer of faith, and we (meaning all believers), should pray for one another. Since then, I believe this has become successful, and I've been afforded the privilege to know that many prayers were answered. In time, I delegated pastoral responsibility of the prayer team to Deacon Joanie Townsend, who has done a remarkable job leading Wednesday's prayer group.

Finally, I would like to report on the preaching and teaching within the First Congregational Church. My goal was to ensure that Bible-based, sound doctrine was preached from our pulpit. Throughout the year, with the support of the Diaconate, our pulpit was filled with a core group of pastors who faithfully preached God's word directly from the Bible. On occasion, Deacon Rick Allen and I have been allowed to do the same. This is an opportunity that brings me great joy and I can only pray that messages were well received.

We started 2022 on shaky ground, not knowing how things would turn out once our pastor left. Church attendance at the beginning of the year averaged 32 people on a given Sunday morning. In April, we witnessed our attendance increase, maintaining an average between 45 & 50 people. As fall approached, attendance began to decline to an average of 35 in August, September, and October, only to increase to an average attendance of 40-45 in November and December. In addition, we continue to live stream and record our services averaging 7-10 viewers every Sunday. It has also become a blessing to our shut-ins who faithfully "tune in" to worship with the body of Christ despite the fact they cannot be here in person.

While I may not have officially held the office of pastor for the First Congregational Church, it has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve this church and its saints this last year. I am grateful for the opportunity afforded me by God to serve Him by serving everyone here. Whether I hold the title of pastor or deacon, it does not matter. Like the apostle Paul, I am simply a disciple and servant of Jesus Christ, nothing more – nothing less.

Humbly in Christ

*Todd Wagner*

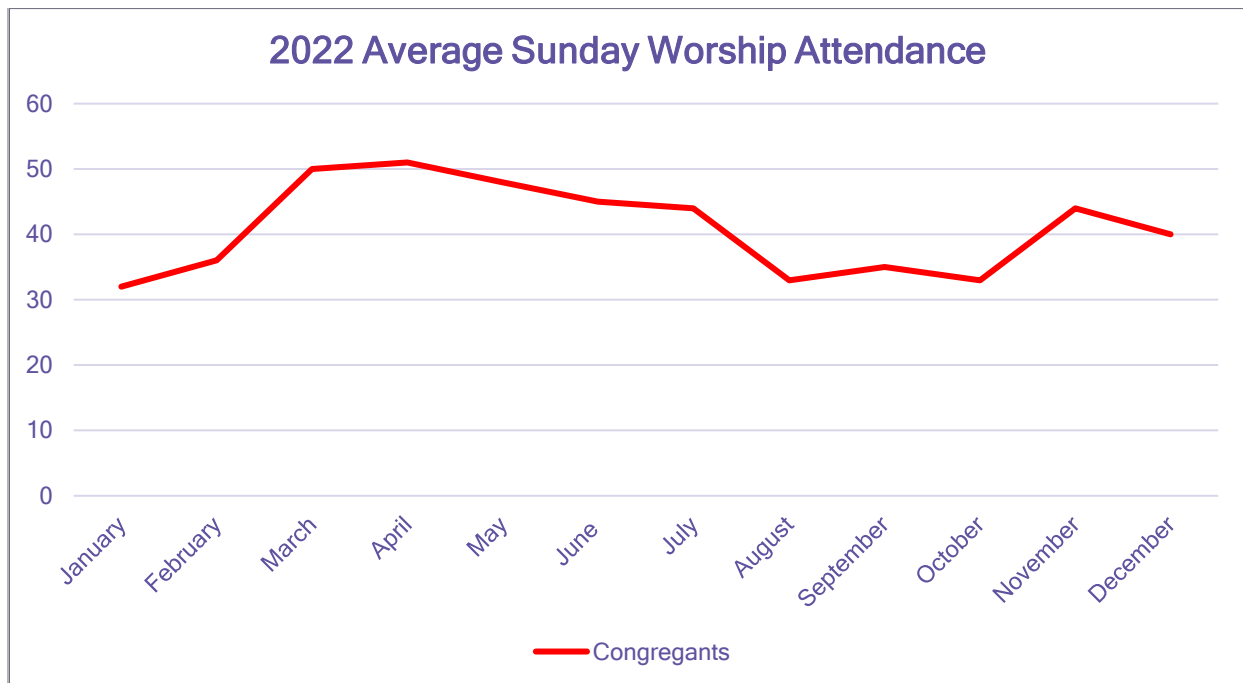
Todd Wagner, Deacon

***“Be shepherds of God’s Flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be, not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve”. 1 Peter 5:2***





## First Congregational Church 2022 Attendance Report



*“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching”. Hebrews 10:25*



# PASTOR'S REPORT

## Part 2 – Pastor Greg Carlson



After I met you in May and arrived in December 2022 as your Interim Pastor, I have been full of joy at God's leading me to you. As Paul wrote to the Philippians in chapter one, "I am grateful for your partnership in the gospel. Every time I think of you, I give thanks for you." You have already meant so much to me.

I have also been deeply impressed by the commitment of the people of First Congregational Church to Jesus Christ. Ralph P. Martin said, "The sign of our professed love for the gospel is the measure of sacrifice we make in order to help its progress." The Philippian Christians were sacrificial partners with Paul in the gospel ministry and enjoyed a special relationship with him.

There are special bonds formed between those who minister together. We are not just sitting back, applauding the work that is being done, but are actual partners in the ministry. I have heartfelt appreciation for each one. When our time together ends, Lord willing, we will be full of memories of how God has used us in significant ways.

Much can be accomplished in a church during a transition between settled pastors. Confusion, grief, or anger over the previous pastor's leaving can be dealt with in a biblically healthy way. Fear of the future can be quelled with steady shepherding. A church can grow in conflict resolution skills. Individuals often step up and grow in responsibilities in which they had not previously engaged. The congregation can be encouraged in seeing its strengths. And you can enjoy an increased ministry to one another.

I could not be more pleased to be alongside the deacons in providing care for the flock with in-home or telephone visits. The church family as a whole has been thoughtful in caring for one another. Some of the folks who are not attending in-person services because of health considerations have appreciated having the morning service delivered to them via the Internet. My teaching ministry is designed to encourage the church to draw even closer to the Lord and to accomplish certain goals discussed with the Diaconate.

All this is happening by God's grace. I believe what is occurring in the church will help the people embrace a new settled pastor and move ahead confidently in bringing people into life-transforming relationships with God and one another through Jesus Christ.

Thank you for the privilege,

Greg Carlson

# TRUSTEES' REPORT

Margaret Brown - Chair



First Congregational Church - Board of Trustees  
Annual Report Respectfully Submitted by – Margaret Brown, Chair January 22, 2023

The First Congregational Church Board of Trustees began 2022 with Todd Wagner serving as chair, Jan Lovejoy, Ted DeHaan, Mark Lovett and Margaret Brown as members. With a current vacancy on the board left unfilled, we felt at the start of the year we would maintain with five members serving. Within the first quarter of the year, we received word of Pastor Cory's new calling to serve in Oxford which brought new challenges. Todd notified the board he would be stepping down as Trustee Chair; he would be filling the role of the Diaconate Chair (which additionally leads him to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee). Mark is currently serving as the Moderator, therefore serving as Chair was not an option. Leaving us in need of a Chair for the Trustees, after discussion and voting at the board level, Margaret moved into the Chair position of the Trustees starting with the April meeting. Currently, one vacancy remains.

The board is prayerfully hopeful that God would lead an individual to us who would be willing to serve the church and share their gifts in overseeing the finances and property of the church. Until such time, the board remains diligent in fulfilling their duties as holders of trust the property of the First Congregational Church, its finances, and our employees.

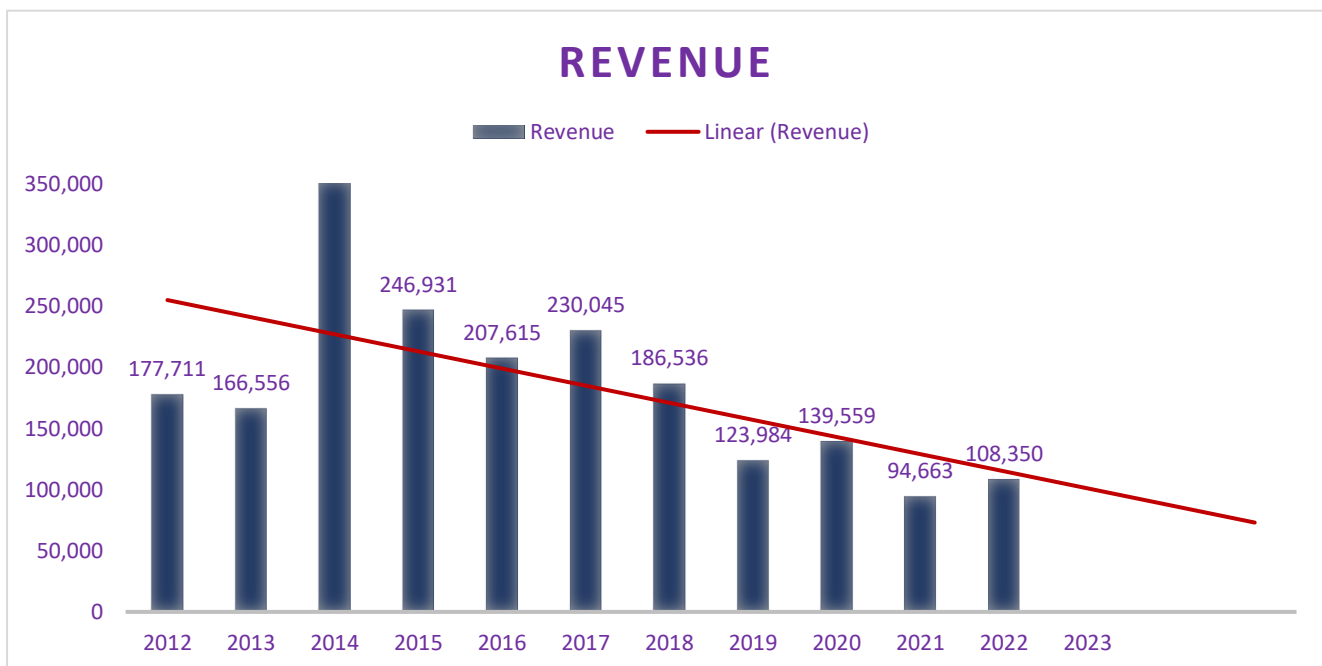
Over the last year, the board has remained busy with various projects and tasks concerning the First Congregational Church. There are many items this board has been involved in. Below highlights some of the more significant items that this board has worked on during each quarter:

1. First Quarter Activities:
  - a. Transition of roles, Todd to chair Diaconate, Margaret to chair Trustees
  - b. Preparation of vacancy of the Pastor
2. Second Quarter Activities:
  - a. Interim Pastor selection process was established
  - b. Need for covering of Church Secretary
  - c. Began evaluation of church secretary role and identifying anticipated needs of the future.
  - d. Office materials and church cleaning supplies inventory list and cost assessment
  - e. Fence installation – 42 North completed a survey to properly identify where property lines are. The quote for fencing was \$6,200 – tabled at this time.
3. Third Quarter Activities:
  - a. Ongoing coverage of Church Secretary
  - b. Parsonage repair list
  - c. Kitchen estimate received
  - d. Sought out bids for work at church and parsonage, with no follow up by individuals – please pray for the work ahead regarding this.

#### 4. Fourth Quarter Activities:

- a. Established Benevolence Fund – replacing the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund
- b. Updated role to be Administrative Assistant versus Church Secretary, met with Leah in November sharing new job description. Shared we would be seeking candidate for this role. Leah offered to assist with transition if needed.
- c. Coverage for Jackie from November-December, and as needed – Thankful for Roxanne Fox who willingly stepped in.
- d. Interim Pastor Selection process completed
- e. Front steps of church repaired
- f. Church Sound System updates
- g. Grant application of Kitchen updates and repairs submitted, sadly it was declined. We will keep this on our list of items to address, God willing, in 2023.

Below is a snapshot of the last ten years here at First Congregational Church regarding our financial status of revenues received by the friends and people of this church. God is good always, and 2022 shows upward turn of our financials (an increase of approximately \$13,687). We remain encouraged by the faithful support of the works taking place here at FCC. We recognize that while 2021 was a challenging year for our church, throughout 2022 we were able to overcome many challenges with the dedication and commitment of our church family, their generous giving of not only monetary donations, but the many gifts and talents within our congregation.



The Board of Trustees is fully committed to the work ahead of us and are prayerful that as we move forward through 2023, we will grow this church in every way possible according to God’s will. It is our prayer that God guides us in this endeavor. As we close the books to 2022, let us look forward to the year ahead in 2023 knowing God will be done, regardless of the challenges that may lie ahead.

## Your current Board of Trustees with term dates:

Board member	Term Serving/Ending
Mark Lovett	Ending Jan 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2024
Ted DeHaan	Ending Jan 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2024
Todd Wagner	Ending Jan 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2025
Margaret Brown - Chair	Ending Jan 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2025
Jan Lovejoy	Ending Jan 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2026
(Vacant position)	Ending Jan 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2026

We look forward to where God guides us in this new year of 2023. Please continue to pray for our recognized needs within our church facilities:

1. External needs including ramp, chimney, fencing and siding
2. Parsonage updates
3. Kitchen repairs and updates
4. Need for Administrative Assistant candidates

Prayerfully submitted,

*Margaret Brown, Chair*

Margaret Brown, Chair Board of Trustees



# DIACONATE REPORT

**Todd Wagner – Chair**



Throughout 2022, the Diaconate faced several tasks and challenges arising from the resignation of pastor Klein from the First Congregational Church. However, Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that God has set a time for everything under the sun, and there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy his work. Last year was not a time to be fearful or to remain idle. It was a time to work, and that is what your deacons did.

Beginning in January, Brian Hess and Dennis Wells completed their terms and stepped down from their leadership roles as deacons after years of faithful service to God and their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. In February, the diaconate reorganized, and deacons were assigned to small flocks of congregants. Todd Wagner was elected as chair of the board and Amy Hansen was elected vice chair during the March meeting. In April the deacons began laying out the work that would follow with the pending absence of a full-time pastor.

The mission of the diaconate was to ensure that the spiritual needs of the church and its members did not fall adrift. Short and long-term goals were established to fill the pulpit with servants of Christ who were grounded in biblical teaching & sound doctrine. For the short term, a temporary pulpit supply was utilized and limited to four persons to maintain consistency in the pulpit. This consisted of our 4-C's area Pastor David Balicki, Former F.C.C. Pastor Barry Lucas, Pastor Greg Carlson, and the chair of deacons Todd Wagner. Deacon Rick Allen along with Pastor Jamey Nichols, and Pastor Michael Brown also helped fill our pulpit as guests of First Congregational Church.

For the long term, the deacons focused on the process of searching for and hiring an intentional-interim pastor for this church. Deacons began holding joint meetings with the church council and the members at large appointed to the pastoral search committee. The meetings began in April and continued over the year until a decision was reached in late November to call an intentional interim pastor. This process was not taken lightly. The deacons and others involved sought sound godly guidance from Pastor David Balicki, our state representative with the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (4C's). We explored available options for this church and began investigating two noteworthy resources that could not only supply us with an intentional-interim pastor but also meet the needs of the First Congregational Church.

These resources consisted of both Interim Pastor Ministries (IPM) and Interim Ministries Incorporated-Serving Other Servants (IMI/SOS). Both resources had much to offer this church. After prayerful consideration, it was clear that IMI/SOS was the direction we should pursue, leading us to call Pastor Greg Carlson to begin his ministry with us in December. Though this amount of work was time-consuming and demanding, due diligence was given to the task. I am grateful for the faithful members of this church who faithfully participated in this endeavor with all their hearts and spirit. I am also thankful for the people of this church for their prayers and support. Thank you!

While this may seem to have been the focus of the diaconate for 2022, it was only part of the work that was done. As chair of the board of deacons, I wanted to engage in training to help equip our deacons with their spiritual tasks of leadership. The deacons began a training series on Spiritual Discipline, a critical aspect for every Christian. Deacons study Donald Whitney's book on Spiritual Discipline and discuss the reading during monthly meetings.

In April, the deacons approved a special Easter service where spiritual inventories were provided to everyone at Sunday service. These inventories, completed by the congregation, were nailed to the cross to encourage believers in Christ Jesus and His saving grace. In May, a special Mother's Day service was held with Deacon Rick Allen delivering a wonderful message honoring our mother figures. The deacons planned a special recognition for Father's Day also. During a special Sunday service in May, all our graduating high school seniors were honored. Each received a student study Bible, and a small meal and cake celebration was held after worship in the fellowship hall. Our graduates for 2022 were Ally Brown, Carter Wagner, Jeremy & Josh Hansen, Kyle Strong, Tyler Kammerad & Brown's foreign exchange student, Martin Minn.

In June, the deacons brought in a special guest from the Western Day's ministry to speak on behalf of this ministry and its impact on people here in our community. In July, the deacons prepared for our annual church service & picnic. Due to inclement weather, the deacons improvised, and our picnic moved from Little John Lake Park to the church. The 2023 outdoor service will be held on Sunday, July 30th. After learning that the Allen's had family that safely escaped the war in Ukraine and made it to the U.S., a special love offering was collected and presented to them at our annual church picnic to help them start their new life here in the states.

The deacons also worked with Christian Education on community outreach and approved our first annual "Trunk-O-Treat" event. We had volunteers who interacted with approximately 411 people who all received information and personal invitations to our church. In November, the deacons approved and supported our annual hymn-sing. Elaine Cochran and Pastor Carlson organized a joyful time of song and praise, bringing people throughout the community to our church, after which the deacons hosted a dessert reception. Finally, with the close of 2022 swiftly approaching, the deacons prepared for Advent. Christmas caroling was December's evangelistic outreach focus, topped off by the lighting of the FCC Christmas Tree.

Finally, the deacons continue to visit with our homebound members, provide and share the sacraments, pray with and for those who ask, and pray over those they tend to. We continue to reach out to those who have been absent to encourage them back into the fold of Christ's Church. As Paul tells us in *2 Thessalonians 3:13*, "***As for you brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good***". We continue to pray that God will guide and lead us so we can continue to serve Him and this church faithfully.

Humbly serving in Christ,

*Todd Wagner*

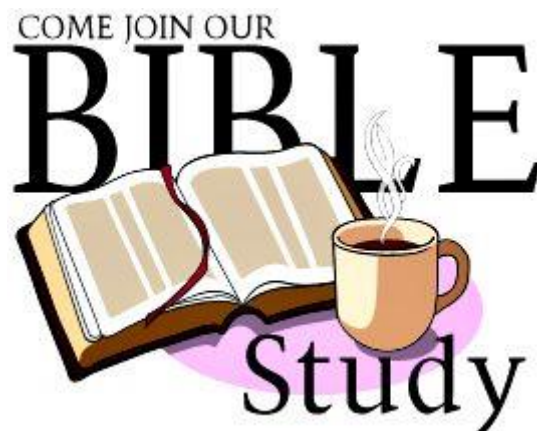
Todd Wagner, Chair  
Board of Deacons

“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

John 12:26

## Board of Deacons

Deacon	Contact	Term
Rick Allen	269-838-9915 <a href="mailto:ricka77@yahoo.com">ricka77@yahoo.com</a>	Ends 2023
Sue Belden	269-806-8993 <a href="mailto:sueellenbelden@gmail.com">sueellenbelden@gmail.com</a>	Ends 2023
Jeff Brown	269-262-5376 <a href="mailto:jrb.enterprises@charter.net">jrb.enterprises@charter.net</a>	Ends 2025
Amy Hansen	269-490-1845 <a href="mailto:rahansen5@gmail.com">rahansen5@gmail.com</a>	Ends 2023
Jeff Polonowski	269-370-7106 <a href="mailto:jpolonow@gmail.com">jpolonow@gmail.com</a>	Ends 2023
Joanie Townsend	269-204-8977 <a href="mailto:joanie.townsend@gmail.com">joanie.townsend@gmail.com</a>	Ends 2025
Todd Wagner - chair	616-218-2604 <a href="mailto:scubacop178@gmail.com">scubacop178@gmail.com</a>	Ends 2023





# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT



**Sue Belden – Chair**

January, 2022, we began looking into the possibility of sponsoring a “STAY-CATION”... possibly a Hawaiian theme, possibly renting the Aquatic Center at the Allegan High School. Good things come to those who wait upon the Lord! His timing is perfect! God willing, we will continue to work on securing another date for the pool party fun but are excited to enjoy a Luau next Sunday!

Monthly we reported and discussed about how our Word of God classes were progressing along with our Acolytes and Friends and Awake Groups. We were diligent in bringing God’s word to all youth no matter how many were in attendance throughout the school season.

We worked to bring our church family together outside of our building, to grow in fellowship and encourage each other in our walk with the Lord. In May we were able to sponsor such an outing by renting the bowling alley. We really had a “bowling ball!” The place was packed with old friends and new friends of all ages. We enjoyed sub sandwiches and goodies from the snack bar while throwing strikes and spares. Yes, there were gutter balls, but we still had a good time.

Bringing Gods word to life in our daily lives we encouraged our students to give to our collection parking meter. Thanks to our kids and parents we filled it to the top. During our prayer and thanksgiving time it was agreed that we would give our collection to the Ukrainian people. We all rejoiced with the Allen’s that Olgas family was able to escape Ukraine and come to Allegan. Our collection parking meter added \$178.78 to the Love Offering given from our church family. Over \$2000 was presented to Olgas Ukrainian family to help them get settled. Praise God for giving our kids the heart to help those in need.

Our Board agreed to again work with The River Church and Christ Community Church to sponsor our VBS in July. “Hay Day” was a wonderful three-day event and we all grew in greater friendship with Jesus. Our First Congregational Church family stepped up and filled so many needed positions with smiles on their faces and the joy of the Lord in their hearts.

Our board worked hard to engage families. We know we need to think outside of the box to encourage families to bring their families to church. Because we end our Word of God classes in June and since our nursery is not staffed at this time, our board members agreed to step up during the summer months to have two individuals in the nursery on an “as needed” basis and an area for young children

during worship while the parents hear the message. If you might be willing to volunteer to help during the summer months on this “as needed” basis, please see Mrs. B.

Continuing to plan events to bring our church family and friends together to grow in the Lord the AMAZING RACE TO JESUS was born. No matter the weather, we raced around the Allegan County Fair with five groups of kids and adults (over 40 of us) figuring out the clues from one station to the next ending at the historical church. We sang, prayed, and rejoiced in a wonderful day!

We started our Word of God classes with amazing, wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ ready and willing to step in to teach our youth. We are small in numbers but are hopeful that as our church begins a new season of pastoral leadership, we’ll experience growth. Nothing would make me happier than the possibility of planting God’s word in more and more children.

Along with the Diaconate, TRUNK N TREAT was great fun to be a part of and we look forward to next year! We sure put our popcorn popper through its paces and are planning for more.

As the year progressed, we continued to look for a program for our teens. The Holy Spirit led us to a Bible Study by Chip Ingram called “Why I Believe: Straight Answers to Honest Questions about God, the Bible and Christianity. We chose to wait until after the Christmas season and begin this program in January 2023. We pray that our youth and their families will be encouraged to engage in this study.

January 2023, a new year, a new beginning. Please pray for our families and encourage them in their walk with the Lord. Please pray for opportunities to reach out to other families, the community and encourage them to join in fellowship. Be the hands and feet of our loving Lord Jesus Christ. Let the children come unto Him.

*Sue Belden*

Sue Belden, Chair

Board of Christian Education



# MISSIONS BOARD REPORT

Joanie Townsend – Chair



January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

## **WILL AND JULIA DICKERSON IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY:**

Will and Julia faced several challenges in 2022. In January Will was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He had a radical prostatectomy in February. It was successful. His PSA scores have been good. Julia, who is a nurse by profession took care of him in his convalescence. The situation at the public high school where he teaches has been difficult. The government forbid the unions to strike. The principal of the school, who Will described as a wonderful educator retired at the end of the school year, fed up with politics. In February, Ukraine was invaded by Russia. Many people fled to Hungary. The missionaries, including Will and Julia have taken people in. In March, Julia went home to North Carolina, to care for her father, who had a stroke. Her mother fell and broke her hip, so Julia was in NC until Will arrived in June. By then her father was in a nursing home and her mother could get around independently. They went to Maine and Vermont to visit Will's family. While they were there, they moved Will's Dad, who has dementia, to a new facility which is better equipped to handle his needs. September had its high and lows. Will's daughter and husband in Nashville, adopted a high needs baby. Their 3 children are thrilled with the new little brother. In October, Will once again had surgery. This time for a hernia. He recovered well from it. Julia also had some health problems in the Fall. She had MOHS surgery for squamous cell carcinoma on her foot. She has also been diagnosed with deteriorating vision. Nevertheless, she is getting more involved with the MOPS ministry at their church. Will and Julia continue to have groups of students to their apartment for pizza, a film and discussion. In December, he showed *It's a Wonderful Life* and this led to a discussion on redemption.

**JOHN AND TRICIA FRASER IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY:** 2022 was a busy and challenging year for the Fraser family. They celebrated their arrival in Budapest 20 years ago! Jonathan wasn't born yet! They had Covid in January/February. Tricia had the worst case, but her colleagues at the International Christian School of Budapest (ICSB) were able to cover her responsibilities. December's newsletter from them was reprinted in *The Allegan Congregationalist*. The newsletter shows pictures of the ICSB library renovation, which Tricia led. It is an amazing transformation of an underused upper level of the library into a student friendly space. Tricia talks about effects of the Ukrainian war on the region: inflation, rising cost of utilities, basic food shortages. They were expecting Hannah and Matthew to come to Budapest for Christmas. Hannah will graduate in the spring from Houghton College in NY with a teaching degree. Matthew is looking for summer internships. Jonathan is a busy high school student. John is serving as team leader for TeachBeyond. He is looking for opportunities in apologetics. He asks for prayers that God would open doors for him.

**ED AND VALERIE JOHNSON IN PAUPUA, INDONESIA:** If you read the newsletter from Ed in the January Allegan Congregationalist, this will be a brief synopsis. They are praying that 2023 will be the year that the entire Bible will be available in the Momuna tribal language. They are rejoicing that two local Diuwe men are attending college. Valerie continues to teach four high school classes at Hillcrest School. I believe that is the school where their daughters, Marissa, and Moriah, attend.

They were able to spend Christmas with their daughter, Hannah and her family who are doing language study on another Indonesian island and considering ministry opportunities in Paupau. In September, World Team Asia held a zoom meeting for all who are interested in the work they are doing. Dennis Wells attended. He said that they explained all the positions that are available if anyone wants to explore them further.

In 2022 we were able to send \$3,000 to each of our missionary groups. Thank you so much for your generosity which made this giving possible. Please continue to pray for our missionaries.

Thank you.

*Joanie Townsend*

Joanie Townsend, Chair  
Dennis Wells  
Jan Lovejoy



John and Tricia Fraser



Will & Julia Dickerson

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## MEMORIALS REPORT

### Joanie Townsend – Chair

No memorials were received in 2022.

The memorial fund has a balance of \$4,396.00.

The memorial plaque will be updated with the names of the deceased: Steve Thompson and Gloria Lane

Joanie Townsend, Memorials Chair



**First Congregational Church  
Financial Treasurer's Report to Missions  
Financial Year 2022**

	Debits	Credits	Balance
Beginning Balance			\$1,575.51
January Contributions		\$716.00	\$2,291.51
Expenses			\$2,291.51
February Contributions		\$640.00	\$2,931.51
Expenses			\$2,931.51
March Contributions		\$1,170.00	\$4,101.51
Expenses	\$2,800.00		\$1,301.51
April Contributions		\$582.00	\$1,883.51
Expenses			\$1,883.51
May Contributions		\$615.00	\$2,498.51
Expenses			\$2,498.51
June Contributions		\$930.00	\$3,428.51
Expenses	\$2,400.00		\$1,028.51
July Contributions		\$677.50	\$1,706.01
Expenses			\$1,706.01
August Contributions		\$280.00	\$1,986.01
Expenses			\$1,986.01
September Contributions		\$380.00	\$2,366.01
Expenses	\$2,700.00		-\$333.99
October Contributions		\$1,135.00	\$801.01
Expenses			\$801.01
November Contributions		\$385.00	\$1,186.01
Expenses			\$1,186.01
December Contributions		\$1,010.00	\$2,196.01
Expenses	\$1,200.00		\$996.01
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$9,100.00</b>	<b>\$8,520.50</b>	<b>\$996.01</b>

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Julie DeHaan**

# CONGREGATIONAL KITCHEN



## Carole Lovett – Chair

The kitchen continues to serve 450 - 500 take-out meals every Thursday evening. The kitchen under, Pat Ryan's leadership, has dedicated cooks and servers. This summer the kitchen was the recipient of two warmers donated by Perrigo. The warmers are a welcome addition and have streamlined the work done on Thursday evenings.

Our backpack program offers 400 Allegan Public School students 2 days' worth of sustainable food to help the children who qualify, thru the weekend. It is being managed by 4 dedicated women. Liz Schwelkert, Sue Richardson, Cathy Rapa, and Sandi Horwath. They are doing a fabulous job.

The warehouse continues to receive 2 -3 trucks of food every Thursday. There too we have a dedicated group of men and women who come weekly to lift, sort, clean, and catalog the items that come in for distribution on Friday. The pantries who come to pick up the food on Fridays are realizing an uptick in clients and are grateful for the food they can pick up from us. We currently have 31 pantries in our roster, 19 of which come weekly.

We are currently looking for a new grant writer. I would like to thank Elsie Jones for all the work she has done in this area for the past 5 years. Elsie gave notice and will be leaving this position as well as resigning from the board in July. Well done, Elsie. We are also looking for someone who has the talent to organize and run fundraisers for the Congregational Kitchen.

This past year we were faced with costly truck repairs, furnace replacement, and mortgage challenges. Throughout it all, we can see God's hand as He directs this, His Mission We are blessed to have so many dedicated workers who believe in reaching out and helping those who are in need. We could not do what is done on a weekly basis without the fabulous volunteers.

We covet your prayers and support. Pray that the Lord gives us the strength to align our desires with His so that we can continue to make a difference here in Allegan and that we can continue to answer the call to help those in the communities around us. Above all, we continue to point out to all who hear that this mission was begun for and continues to bring glory to God.

Our current board members are:

Susan Lucas, Phil Siegler, Elsie Jones, Pat Ryan, Terry Johnson, Pam Johnson, myself.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Carrie Lovett*

Carrie Lovett



# MUSIC COMMITTEE REPORT

Elaine Cochran – Chair



The Music Committee has 2 active members currently, Elaine Cochran and Phil Siegler. Phil plays the piano for worship services as he is able, and we thoroughly enjoy his gifts. We are blessed to have Ruth Wiersma from Delton play for us 2 times per month, and we continue to be grateful in her faithfulness in using her gifts here. Susan Thiele from Allegan United Methodist fills in almost every month as she can, and we are grateful for her talent also. We do have recorded music or videos with printed lyrics that we utilize to facilitate congregational singing and we also sing acapella when appropriate. Since Pastor Greg Carlson has joined our congregation as interim pastor, he uses his musical gifts on the piano and organ, both along with scheduled pianists and on his own if necessary. There was an inquiry previously noted in our minutes, a gentleman was requesting to be our principal organist for every service. The stipend he was requiring was cost prohibitive, and his playing would negate anyone else using their gifts here, as he was not comfortable with pianists playing along with his organ music. We have formed a Lovely Ladies Choir, though we are open to any gentlemen also, that present music in the worship service as able.

The singers in our congregation were invited to join the Methodist church and other willing choir singers to take part in the Carols by Candlelight service this year at the Methodist church. We had several adults participate in that event. Elaine continues to lead most of the singing for our services. This committee is grateful for the technical savvy it requires to use other methods within the service, because that savvy does not come from these committee members; we are also grateful for the funds to pay our non-member accompanists and pray that will continue.

In Christ's service,

*Elaine Cochran*

Elaine Cochran





# WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Theresa Prolo – Chair



We met regularly on the first Monday of every month. We decided to change our meeting night to the second Monday of every month at 5:30.

We have continued to cover coffee hours as usual. We have hosted some funerals. The loss of those loved ones has saddened us very much. It gives us great pleasure that we were to resume our normal activities. We were able to meet with our secret sisters and hold our ladies' banquet and our fall bazaar/vendor show. We would like to say thank you very much to everyone who has helped us.

We couldn't do our Christmas baskets for the families as we always have in the past due to unforeseen circumstances, but we were able to provide monetary help with all the donations given by our generous church family.

We are continuing our secret sister program and planning many other great activities for the upcoming year such as our spring plant sale, Ladies' banquet, an activities night and snacks in February, and many more fun times.

Once again, I cannot express enough gratitude and appreciation to all the ladies who have graciously given their time and talents to accomplish all that we have done. There are no words that can thank them enough.

Many thanks to God for his loving guidance in all that we do.

Respectfully submitted,

*Theresa Prolo*

Theresa Prolo, President

**Our slate of officers are as follows:**

President- Theresa Prolo

Vice –President- Erica Quinones

Treasurer- Julie DeHaan

Vice Treasurer- Terri Misner

Sercetary - vacant

Devotions- Joanie Townsend

House chair- Monthly Hostess

# WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP TREASURER

Julie DeHaan

## FCC Women's Fellowship



As of 12/31/22

### Treasurer's Report

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According to the Women's Fellowship Bylaws, "the purpose of the Women's Fellowship shall be to encourage the women of the congregation in a relationship of worship, service, education, and giving to support programs of the church as it serves the cause of Christ in the community and throughout the world."

Income for 2022 was \$3,296.92. Our fall bazaar returned after a two-year hiatus with net profit of \$1,439.76. Annual expenses equaled \$4,495.99. Specific accounting is as follows:

#### Worship:

- \$190.65 Fellowship Hour Snacks
- \$914.30 Programming

#### Service:

- \$2,183.07 Luncheons

#### Giving:

- \$147.97 Personnel Gifts
- \$760 Love Inc + Adopt A Family program

Fund balance as of 12/31/21: **\$5,578.97.**

Respectfully submitted by:

*Julie DeHaan*

Julie DeHann

Women's Fellowship Treasurer

# FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Theresa Prolo



Everything has been going well. Each Sunday, our gifts and offerings are collected and counted after service. During special circumstances when counting cannot be completed, collections are secured and locked and are counted the next day.

Jeff Polonowski has been instrumental with helping collect, sort, and verify our offerings assuring the counting process. Offerings are documented on a tabulation sheet and earmarked to the fund designated. In Jeff's absence, the trustees have stepped in to help verify counting.

Theresa Prolo  
Financial Secretary

*Your gifts and offerings support many moving parts of God's Church to further His mission.*

*“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver”.            2 Corinthians 9:7*

# FINANCIAL REPORT

Julie DeHaan – Treasurer



## First Congregational Church Financial Treasurer's Report January 2023

The accompanying fund balance and abbreviated statement of income and expenses detail the direction of the finances of the church as of December 31, 2022.

May our work reflect the beauty of Christ and His gospel to our world,

Julie DeHaan, Financial Treasurer

### First Congregational Church Statement of Funds on Deposit – Dec. 31, 2022

Checking:	\$ 10,222.65
Savings:	\$ 123,859.69
	General Fund: \$ 106,939.95
	Mission Fund: \$ 996.01
	Memorial Fund: \$ 4,396.00
	Maintenance Fund \$ 4,829.79
	Benevolent Fund \$ 1,751.00
	Christian Ed Fund: \$ <u>4,946.94</u>
Total Funds on Deposit:	\$ 134,082.34
Investment Fund Balance:	<u>\$ 104,800.44</u>
TOTAL Fund Balance:	\$ 238,882.78

# TREASURER'S REPORT

Julie DeHaan – Treasurer



## First Congregational Church of Allegan Proposed Budget for 2023

	<u>Actual 2022</u>	<b>Proposed 2023 Budget</b>
<b>General Income</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
<b>General Fund</b>	79,908	90,000
<b>Special Contribution</b>	5,310	
<b>Total General Income</b>	<u>85,218</u>	<u>90,000</u>
<b>Designated Income</b>		
<b>Christian Ed Income</b>	250	
<b>Memorial Fund Income</b>	0	
<b>Building Fund</b>	2,180	
<b>General Missions &amp; Mission Designations</b>	8,521	
<b>Congregational Kitchen Income</b>	12,041	
<b>Women's Fellowship</b>	446	
<b>Designated Income</b>	<u>23,438</u>	
<b>Total Income</b>	<u><u>108,656</u></u>	<u><u>90,000</u></u>
<b>General Fund Expense</b>		
<b>Total Payroll</b>	26,958	18,310
<b>Contracted Labor (Pulpit Supply)</b>	6,461	44,745
<b>Building Expenses: General</b>	2,864	2,500
<b>Parsonage Expenses: Utilities</b>	2,556	2,000
<b>Church Utilities</b>	16,287	14,135
<b>Insurance Expense</b>	6,705	7,000
<b>Office Expense</b>	414	1,000
<b>Diaconate Expenses</b>	0	750
<b>Music Expense</b>	2,290	2,500
<b>Program Subscriptions</b>	360	835
<b>Other Expenses</b>	2,153	2,000
<b>Total General Fund Expense</b>	<u>67,048</u>	<u>95,774</u>

<b>Designated Fund Expense</b>		
<b>Cong. Kitchen Contribution</b>	12,041	
<b>General Missionary &amp; Designations</b>	12,833	
<b>Christian Ed</b>	1,026	
<b>Women's Fellowship</b>	446	
<b>Memorial</b>	64	
<b>Special Projects:</b>		
<b>Sound System</b>	8,100	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total Designated Fund Expense</b>	<b>34,510</b>	<b>0</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>101,558</b>	<b>95,774</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><i>Net Revenue Over Expenses</i></b>	<b>7,097</b>	<b>-5,774</b>

# F.C.C. LEADERSHIP 2023

## Members of Boards & Committees

<b>Interim Pastor – Greg Carlson</b>	269-673-5289
Administrative Asst. – <b>open</b>	269-673-3139
Moderator – Mark Lovett	269-941-3640
Church Clerk – Elaine Cochran	269-719-6575
Treasurer – Julie DeHaan	269-673-4071
Financial Secretary – Theresa Prolo	269-650-2037



### BOARD OF DEACONS:

Rick Allen	269-838-9915
Sue Belden	269-806-8993
Jeff Brown	269-262-5376
Amy Hansen	269-490-1845
Jeff Polonowski	269-370-7106
Joanie Townsend	269-204-8977
Todd Wagner – chair	616-218-2604

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Margaret Brown – Chair	269-615-5172
Ted DeHaan	616-844-8106
Mark Lovett	269-941-3640
Jan Lovejoy	269-680-6574
Todd Wagner	616-218-2604

### MISSIONS & BENEVOLENCES:

Jan Lovejoy	269-680-6574
Joanie Townsend – Chair	269-204-8977
Dennis Wells	269-286-5519

### MEMORIAL COMMITTEE:

Margaret Brown	269-615-5172
Elaine Cochran	269-719-6575
Joanie Townsend	269-204-8977

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

Sue Belden – Chair	269-806-8993
Jeff Brown	269-262-5376
Ted DeHaan	616-844-8106
Amy Hansen	269-490-1845
Elsie Jones	267-673-6008
Lisa Letts	269-492-5139
Erica Quiñones	616-272-9707
Holly Wagner	269-806-6411

### MUSIC COMMITTEE:

Elaine Cochran	269-719-6575
Phil Siegler	269-650-4455

### WOMENS FELLOWSHIP:

Julie DeHaan	269-673-4071
Terri Misner	269-762-0043
Theresa Prolo – Pres.	269-650-2037
Erica Quiñones	616-272-9707
Joanie Townsend	269-204-8977

### CONGREGATIONAL KITCHEN:

Carrie Lovett – Director	269-512-2214
Pat Ryan	269-512-0857



# IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

## Upcoming Events @ F.C.C.

- Adult Sunday & Bible Study is every Sunday from 9:00 - 10:00 in the lounge
- Sunday Worship services begin at 10:30 am. Our hearts are filled with joy when you're here!
  - Communion is every third Sunday of the month.
- The 2023 Quarterly Meetings are scheduled for:
  - April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023
  - July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023
  - October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- The Annual Gathering of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference will be held here at First Congregational Church:
  - May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023
  - 8:30 am - 2:00 pm
  - All congregants are welcomed and encouraged to attend.
- The F.C.C. Annual Outdoor Service & Church Picnic is scheduled for:
  - Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023
  - Littlejohn Lake County Park - 3540 113<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Trunk-N-Treat
  - October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023
  - F.C.C. Parking Lot

*“The LORD bless you, and keep you;*

*The LORD make His face shine on you,  
And be gracious to you;*

*The LORD lift up His countenance on you,  
And give you peace”.*

*Numbers 6:24-26*