



Annual Report

November 19, 2023

FOUR CORNERS COMMUNITY CHAPEL

200 ANGELL ROAD

CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND 02864

(401) 333-6171

OFFICE@FOURCORNERSCHAPEL.ORG

WWW.FOURCORNERSCHAPEL.ORG

Four Corners Community Chapel
Annual Meeting
November 19, 2023
Agenda

Call to Order

Quorum Count

Opening Prayer

Clerk's Report - Acceptance of 2022 Annual Meeting
Minutes, Special Meeting Minutes from 09/10/2023, and
Statistical Report pages 2 - 7

Moderator's Opening Remarks and Report page 8

Pastoral Message page 9

Diaconate Committee Report page 10

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Women's Group Report page 13

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New Business from the Membership

Memorial Service page 23

Benediction

Adjournment

Four Corners Community Chapel Annual Meeting

Date: 11/13/22

Location: 200 Angell Rd, Cumberland RI

Meeting called to order: 10:55

Quorum count: 36, attested by clerk

Opening Prayer: Given by Wade

Reporting:

- Nate Green, Moderator
- Katy Gabel, Clerk
- Deb Dennis, Deacons
- Cara Burns, Missions
- Greg Polite, Finance
- Michelle Casavant, Christian Ed
- Wade Richmond, At Large/Youth Group
- Marcia Green, At Large
- Jorge Almeida, Property

Absent: David Pierce, Pastor

Clerk's Report - Acceptance of 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes: Lynn motioned to accept, Wade seconded, motion passed

Statistics: 174 active members in 2022

Moderator's Opening Remarks and Report: written report. Have adapted to new ways of doing things throughout this new year, and we've all worked together. Looking forward to a busy and productive year ahead.

Motion to approve the below reports made by Carolyn Williamson, seconded by Marcia Green, motion passed.

- **Diaconate Committee Report:** written report, no additional comments
- **Missions Committee Report:** written report, no additional comments
- **Women's Group Report:** written report, no additional comments
- **Youth Ministry Report:** written report, no additional comments
- **Children's Ministry Coordinator Report:** written report, no additional comments
- **Property Committee Report:** written report, no additional comments

Finance Committee Report and Budget Presentation: written report.

Additional remarks by Greg Polite:

- Thanks to Bob Pielech and Ann Ward on finance for their help and support throughout this past year.
- No significant debt, and cash on hand is around \$236,000.
- With lingering COVID issues and inflation uncertainty, we've pared down the budget to the one presented.
- 2023 budget includes an approximate \$19,000 deficit, but we will hopefully close that gap. The Spring Fling event went really far to closing our 2022 deficit, and we're hoping to replicate that for 2023.

- Sustained giving will be the biggest source of income for this year.
- Wade motions to adopt the 2023 budget, Pam Gilson seconds.

Discussion of proposed budget:

Lorrie: Have we budgeted for RI Energy increases in oil & electric costs? **Jorge:** Yes, we increased the utilities budget by 50% in the proposed budget

Lynn:

- As reported, we have \$92,000 in sustaining giving but the budget is \$101,900. If we don't meet that we will have approximately a \$29,000 deficit rather than a \$19,000 deficit.
- Fundraising is budgeted at \$19,000, which is very ambitious. **Nate:** With two recycling events and the Spring Fling, this should be possible.

Greg: Purchase of 10-month CD at Navigant will also help offset expenses.

Motion to approve budget passes unanimously.

Nominating Report and Committee Rosters:

[Correction to 2022 Annual Report: Council Member at Large is only 2 slots, not 3]

- Council Member At Large, 1/1/23-12/31/23: Wade Richmond to stay on for 2023
- Council Member At Large, 1/1/23-12/31/23: Bill Caldwell to join for 2023
- UCC Delegate, 1/1/23-12/31/23: Annie Green to stay on for 2023
- UCC Delegate, 1/1/23-12/31/23: Rosina Guise to stay on for 2023
- UCC Delegate, 1/1/23-12/31/23: Carolyn Williamson to stay on for 2023
- Christian Ed Committee: Michelle Casavant to stay on for 2023

New Committee Members

- Sandy Fortin to join Finance for 2023
- Anne Ward would like to do the money counts only one Sunday a month (instead of every week). Nate Green, Cliff Choinere, and Matt Gilson will each take one Sunday a month.
- Amanda Choinere will join Deacons

New Business from Membership

- **Nate Green:** Capital campaign will be in the works in 2023 for parking lot fundraising.
- **Nate Green:** Exploring options to move our fiscal year to start on July 1st
- **Finance, written by David:** For many years had a Men's Group, haven't had one for some time. Finance makes a motion that this group should be dissolved, and all funds (existing and future) will go into a Chapel Scholarship Fund. There was confusion about who was responsible for dispersing the scholarship funds, but as there was no Men's Group meeting it fell to the Council. ***Motion made to dissolve the Men's Group (no second required as presented by a committee). Motion passes by majority.***
- **Wade Richmond:** 2022's Spring Fling was unbudgeted, but including our \$5,000 match we took in around \$13,000. The 2023 budget already includes \$10,000 to come from the Spring Fling, including the same anonymous \$5,000 match. Possibly add food trucks and sell tables for this year's Spring Fling. Wade is challenging the congregation to collectively come forward to "match the match" with another \$5,000. All of last year's volunteers and leadership from 2022 have agreed to stay on for 2023 Spring Fling.
- **Wade Richmond:** Let's think about ways we can increase our income, rather than just focusing on decreasing expenses.

- **Lynne Vaudry:** Can the parking lot side of the building be power-washed? **Arlen:** It's already done!
- **Pam Gilson:** What about the parsonage? **Nate:** We are discussing the future of that building and have many ideas. Look forward to figuring that out this year.

Pastor's Report: written report, no additional comments

In Memoriam 2022 and benediction: Given by Wade in David's absence.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:44. Lynn Vaudry motions to adjourn, Amanda Choinere seconded, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Katy Gabel, Clerk

Special Called Meeting for Parking Lot Renovation Proposal

Date: 09/10/23

Location: 4CCC

Meeting called to order at: 11:10 am

Council Attendees:

- Nate Green, Moderator
- Katy Gabel, Clerk
- Bob Pielech, Finance
- Rosina Guise, Missions
- Greg Polite, Treasurer
- Alexis Beck, At Large
- Jorge Almeida, Property
- Wade Richmond, At Large/Youth Group
- David Pierce, Pastor

Members in attendance: 48 members in attendance (36 needed for quorum)

Proposal recap given by Lynne Vaudry:

- Initial discussion of renovations done before COVID then put on hold
- Major renovation plan was initially ~\$200,000, which was deemed too expensive
- Plan was scaled back and most favorable bid from Toscan is ~\$80,000

Financial discussion given by Bob:

- Will pay from savings. Not asking that this be financed or funds raised.
- Finance asks only that we consider this spending when giving donations each week or month.

Motion made by Lynne to repave the parking lot at a cost of \$80,000, seconded by Wade.

Discussion:

- Leah Dau: Concerns about the scaled back plan. Not making the parking lot deeper and it will still be really tight. Will this fix the drainage/pothole issues on Angell Rd side? Could that side be made 2 lanes wide? Accessibility only on back parking lot side?
- Nate: Asphalt pricing is per square foot. We could add more later. The excavation of the playground and moving it: Contractor will cheat it a little into the embankment but it's very steep. Down the road we could still expand the parking lot and would not have to re-do what this proposal would complete. There's enough pitch that this should alleviate the water and pothole issues on the Angell Rd side. Existing ramp will be widened, will try to save the railing. Could potentially add another ramp to the front of the building later on. Making the Angell Rd side 2 lanes may not be possible since there's ledge and trees there, and could cost a lot more.
- Peg Crowell: Will there be a French drain on the Angell Rd side?
- Nate: No French drain going in, but asphalt will be higher so the water can run down to the road.
- Marcia Green: Plans for what goes on during renovation?
- Nate: Tentative schedule is to demo and do the forms the Friday of Columbus Day weekend (Dr. Day Care will be closed), Saturday pour the concrete. On Sunday the parking lot will be closed. Nate and volunteers will direct people to park on Angell Rd and at Navigant. Paving planned for Monday and Tuesday (Dr. Day Care will be closed). Striping done Wednesday, with the layout depending on final measurements.

- Rosina Guise: Can the space behind CVS still be used for parking?
- Nate: Yes, although it needs to be mowed.
- Dennis Aiken: Motion to amend the motion to allow Property to spend to up to \$90,000.
- Lynne: \$80,000 includes a contingency. Actual quote is \$65,900.
- Nate: Dumpster pad is likely a couple thousand extra.
- Walter Ducharme: What's included in the quote?
- Nate: 2" binder, 1.5" topcoat.
- Jane Erskine: Can we make it a 1-way in on Diamond Hill and make it 1-way out on Angell Rd?
- Nate: That's something that is being explored and the parking lot committee will discuss so it can be addressed before striping is done.

Motion to repave the parking lot at a cost of \$80,000 passed.

Meeting Adjourned: Motion to adjourn by Wade, seconded by Lynne. Adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Katy Gabel, Clerk

Four Corners Community Chapel Statistic Report – 2023

Active Members as of November 13, 2022 **174**

New Members in 2023 13

Received Confirmands 4

Transfer In 4

Profession of Faith 5

Total: **187**

Active Member Deductions - 2023

Deaths 1

Transfer Out 2

Total: **184**

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AS OF NOVEMBER 19, 2023 **184**

Pledging Families 56

Activity for 2023

Baptisms 7

Weddings 5

MODERATOR'S REPORT

Once again another year is coming to a close, and we look back at what we have accomplished and what we have ahead of us. The fun part about our Community is that there is absolutely always something that needs to get done – and on the other side of that accomplishment is a group of people who are grateful it got done; love to see the next project taken on; excited for the next generation to do what they did; happy to hear a new voice (if I had a dollar for everyone that told me how much they love hearing my daughter in the Choir, I think we'd have a fully balanced budget); and of course, happy to help and excited to teach.

When I was a little kid, I went to Nursery School here. We had footprints painted in the parking lot and that is where we had to walk to get from the Church building to the playground. As I got older, and continued to come to Church on Sundays, I watched, over the years, as those footprints faded more and more. One day, they were gone. Things change – and adapt, and we continue to change with them – adapt with them – try to make things better for the people around us. Instead of footprints, the kids today probably have actual adults accompanying them across the lot and not just thrown out there to follow the paint – I kid, I kid... we had adults too, I hope.

I love seeing folks downstairs filling easter eggs with candy, making sandwiches for the less fortunate, cooking breakfast so we can all truly break bread together. Spring flings and Youth group gatherings. Sunday School and Children's Choir rehearsal. A place to host our friends and ourselves. We can work hard on a project here or we can just come for the hour a week for a moment of peace. There is plenty of middle ground as well where we all have the opportunity to fully explore what we love and where we fit in. This place is another home for a lot of folks and thank you for making that possible for everyone.

We are recycling clothes. We are recycling electronics (if you haven't been to an electronic recycling event you need to sign up this year – it's a lot more fun than you would think – honestly). We are paving parking lots. Hanging lights, recovering railings, having fun.

One of my favorite parts of this past year were the times David was on Sabbatical. Sure, we missed him. The lack of his presence was a large hole on both Sunday mornings, and throughout the weeks. But we filled it. We came together as a community. We had the privilege of hearing ourselves speak on Sunday mornings; of leading ourselves in Worship. Perhaps we missed the gracefulness of past budgetary meetings as a Council where David would lead us, not just as folks trying to get a budget in front of the Congregation, but as stewards of this beautiful place. We missed his thought-provoking ideas and contributions. We missed his prayers. But, we filled in the gaps. We collaborated. We prayed. We came together and made it happen. We welcome David back as our mentor and teacher as we work together to change the pay structure so he can never go on Sabbatical again....! Just kidding – We are thankful for his support in getting his Sabbatical so well set up and a huge thank you to all the Deacons and members who stepped up to lead us in his well-deserved absence.

Overall, we had a “successful” year here at the Church. I'm not sure how we would measure what success is in a Church. More members? Yes. Finishing the year bringing in more money than budgeted? Yes. Getting some major improvements taken care of. Yes. Helping those in need. Yes. Having fun in fellowship, meaningful prayer in Worship and contributing to our community and taking care of each other. Amen.

Peace,

Nathan Green

PASTOR'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

I read once that in the years leading up to the Civil War, and then following it, the most influential and powerful voice in the country when it came to slavery was not the government. Nor was it individual politicians or abolitionists. It was the churches. The collective voice of a people who called themselves Christian and who said, slavery is right by us, or who said, it is a national sin that will not continue on our watch. Of course, not all churches were the same when it came to slavery, just as not all churches are the same today when it comes to a thousand questions and issues facing our world and how we shall live together.

Undoubtedly, this is why some churches choose to keep to the middle of the road, to avoid taking sides or raising opinion over things people can't seem to agree on anyway and are already fighting over. What's the use of entering the fray if you know you're going to get caught in the crosshairs, if your presence or voice may only add to the disharmony?

I suppose this is why we as churches rely so heavily on notions of love, friendship, and mercy. If we kill everyone who comes through the door with kindness, maybe we'll also kill off their unkindness without ever having to make a big fuss of things. It's a beautiful vision, and certainly one worth keeping at. But the truth is, kindness, like love itself, needs a voice, and only a clear voice will do. Father Richard Rohr reminds us,

"Christianity is a lifestyle—a way of being in the world that is simple, non-violent, shared, and loving. However, we made it into an established "religion" (and all that goes with that) and avoided the lifestyle change itself. One could be warlike, greedy, racist, selfish, and vain in most of Christian history, and still believe that Jesus is one's "personal Lord and Savior." The world has no time for such silliness anymore. The suffering on Earth is too great."

The suffering on Earth is too great. As if anyone needs to come to church to get this reminder. All you need do is flip on the morning news. And yet, I think this is one of the best reasons to come out to Four Corners on Sunday: to face the world and our lives are they are, insufferable at times, and to hear once again that we and all the world are meant for joy.

As you look through this year's Annual Report, I hope this is what you will see: that we are living witnesses to joy. Through our mission work and spending, we are not just providing money and donations to those who need food and clothing, we are working to create a world where everyone has access to their daily, basic needs. That's joy. When we get on the floor to listen to a story with our children in Sunday School, or offer them our lap to sit in, we aren't just putting on a good show for them and for us, we are proving the world can be safe and quiet. That's joy. When we take the time to visit someone who is sick or elderly (such a simple offering), we aren't just fulfilling our "Christian" duty, we are insisting upon the power of inclusion and compassion. That's joy. When we gather for worship by declaring all are welcome to come in and sing and pray and be blessed at the table and font, we aren't just keeping the doors open, we are staking a sign in the earth that reads, "We are friends to the hopeless, a voice of welcome to the forsaken."

Yes, after more than 7 years among you, I have come to see that you are God's joy to the world. And I give God thanks for you.

Rev. David Pierce

DIACONATE COMMITTEE

As the end of the year rapidly approaches, it is time to begin the process of highlighting our services for the year, as we work through the second part of Pastor David's sabbatical; as well as organist Vance Westgate's surgery & absence earlier this summer.

Our primary objective is to ensure the success of our weekly services. We successfully accomplished this by gathering the liturgists, lighting of the candles, opening & closing of the sanctuary, administering the weekly collections, collaborating with Vance to ensure there is a choir anthem and soloist, and providing the monthly communion.

Through our monthly Deacon Meetings, we regularly discuss opportunities to improve interest and participation in church services. Currently under discussion are resuming the hosting of fellowship coffee hours, providing visits (and follow up) to the sick, bringing in outside speakers, and attracting new membership.

As we look forward to 2024, we will continue to execute our core responsibilities and search out opportunities for further improvement & enrichment of our services.

Sincerely,
Mark Fortin
Head of Deacons

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee funds projects throughout the year focusing on three areas of need. This funding and assistance happens through two different means of funding:

- 1) we provide basic monetary support for ongoing areas of need in our community;
- 2) in addition, we provide opportunities for our congregational members to use their time, talents and treasures to address our neighbors' needs.

The three areas of need that the Missions Committee addresses are Food Insecurity, Social Justice and the Christmas Tag Tree Project.

Food Insecurity:

We have been involved with the Northern RI Food Pantry for many years as a very effective way to address food insecurity in our community. This is a need that has been growing and growing. This past year NRIFP increased food distribution from one to two monthly distributions. The number of families being served has risen to 600-700 at both distributions. Our initial response to this need this past year was to donate \$1000 from Missions Funds on a quarterly basis. We ended up donating \$1000 for the first quarter, and \$2000 for the remaining three quarters to reflect their greater need. In addition to this monetary donation of \$7000, congregational members have given weekly by bringing food staples identified by the Food Pantry as being in need to church on Sundays. These items are then delivered to the Food Pantry.

Before the Covid Pandemic, two other food insecurity projects that we participated in were the ecumenical Soup Kitchen at Park Place Congregational Church in Pawtucket and Mobile Loaves and Fishes food truck ministry. This year the Missions Committee has been evaluating new programs to replace these, as they were victims of Covid. The Committee is presently exploring Hope for the Homeless, also based in Pawtucket. Participation in this bagged lunch program might provide both the opportunity to use our Mission Funds and for congregational members to join us in preparing and delivering lunches to our unhoused neighbors.

Social Justice:

In 2023 Four Corners continued its support of Bellevue School in Haiti through the Haiti Task Force (UCC) with a \$1000 donation to be used for the "Egg a Day" program for students. There were repairs required for classrooms and student scholarships needed for the school, so the Committee gave permission to use previously sent, but not yet expended, funds for those needs. Plans for changes at the school have been hampered by the current political upheavals and violence in the country, but the school leadership has been able to keep the school running, providing an island of safety and support for the children it serves.

We continued our work with refugee resettlement in RI through Dorcas International Institute by supplying nine resettlement kits for arriving refugees this fall. These were assembled by Committee members and purchased with Missions money. Additionally, as a Lenten project, members of the congregation donated boxes of diapers for refugee families with infants and toddlers, and the Missions Committee delivered two pickup truckloads of diapers to Dorcas.

The clothing donation shed supplied by St. Pauly's Textiles continues to be a popular facility for the community to drop off usable second-hand clothing, which is then redistributed to places and people in need of it by the St. Pauly's group. This ministry helps us to be better stewards of the resources of our earth. The clothing shed was moved to a new location this year, and is very accessible to both church members and community. The church receives a small amount of money each month based on the number of bags that St. Pauly picks up.

A new social justice ministry in 2023 was to help support Winters Elementary School in Pawtucket with donations to its clothing closet, used to address clothing emergencies within the school and its families. Mission funds were used to buy clothing needs as identified by the school.

Christmas Tag Tree Project:

Twenty children from Adopt Rhode Island received 3 Christmas gifts each from members of the FCCC congregation. The wishes of the children were written on tags which were placed on a Christmas tree in the sanctuary the week before Thanksgiving. Many generous members took one or more of the tags and purchased the gifts, returning them to church two weeks later. The Missions Committee then transported the gifts to the Adopt Rhode Island office for them to distribute to the children in time for Christmas.

The Missions Committee plans to continue these ministries in 2024 and is always looking for new ways to serve our neighbors, both locally and globally. We welcome anyone from the congregation or community to join us in this mission, either as a member or as a participant in our hands-on activities. We also are grateful to everyone who contributes to the Missions Fund and work, either through pledged money or donations of time, treasures and talent. Needs continue to arise, often unexpectedly, and we work to address as many as we can.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosina Guise
Missions Chairperson

WOMEN'S GROUP

At the 'Spring Fling' we were able to sell "May Baskets" which enabled us to purchase diapers for Dorcus' fundraiser.

We continue along with the 'Busy Fingers' group at senior center to make blankets that are passed on to the homeless. We've lost count but more than 100 have been donated

We meet in Pastor David's office on Wednesdays from 12:30 to 2:30. Please stop by - we are a 'fun' group

Carolyn Williamson

YOUTH MINISTRY

Each time I prepare a report on the comings and goings of our Youth Ministry for our Annual Meeting, it seems impossible that yet another year has come and gone – but here we are again!

I'm happy to be able to report that the Chapel's Youth Ministry remains strong and healthy, highlighted this past year by our usual mixture of weekly meetings (September through June), special events/activities, and summer "mini-mission" event throughout Rhode Island. And while activities and events keep us busy and are joy-filled times, they are – after all – just activities and events. What brings us together and holds us together week after week, month after month, and year after year is the support and opportunities for growth that Four Corners Community Chapel has established and maintains for these INCREDIBLE young people!

Our Youth Ministry program continues to minister to both our own membership, as well as reaching into the surrounding communities ... from Attleboro, Cumberland, Lincoln, Woonsocket, Burrillville and even Providence! And, throughout our Youth Ministry's existence, we have seen many teens, and their families, join and become active members of the Chapel. As of September 2023, we are ministering to about 25 young people and their families on a weekly basis. Programmatically, our plans for 2024 are to continue to build upon what is "working well", while also looking for new opportunities to further develop the faith of our young people and more fully engage them in the life of the Chapel.

If you were to "drop in" on any of our weekly Youth Ministry meetings, not only would you see a room full of young people having a good time, but you'd also experience firsthand the empathy, trust, support, and love that they offer to each other and our wider world. It turns out that many of the challenges of life that we all deal with as adults are not that different from those that our young people face, as well! And it's clear, the young people that we serve through our Youth Ministry are actually just PEOPLE who happen to be young at the moment. Every week, these young lives leave our Youth Ministry meeting and venture back out into a world that can be a scary, lonely, overwhelming, and (sometimes) dark place. My silent prayer at the end of every Youth Ministry meeting is that we have – somehow – equipped them to get through whatever the week holds in store for them ... that they know they have a safe "landing spot" with us ... that they know we are here for them on all the days in between each Sunday, as well ... and that they know they are loved unconditionally by this Youth Ministry, this Chapel, and God!

A while back, I was challenged to create a "program statement" to lay out, in a page or two, just who we are, what do we do, how do we do it, and why do we do it. I would summarize the result of that effort as this ... **our Youth Ministry strives to engage young people by being culturally relevant, offer a "safe space" to explore our faith together, stay true to building strong relationships with each other and with God, and partner with families at every opportunity.** Oh – and we just happen to have a LOT of fun along the way, as well! The following is the "bottom line" of what was included in that "program statement":

"Our Youth Ministry program is marked by laughter and friendship, contemporary Christian music, games, activities, outreach and more. But of greater importance are the open Bibles and open hearts that form the foundation of every youth ministry meeting, Bible study or activity. God IS raising up and equipping an army of servants at Four Corners Community Chapel ... these particular ones just happen to range in age from 12 - 18 years old!"

In closing, and as I always try to do in these reports, I want to acknowledge the entire congregation for your continued and generous support and prayers!! But I'd also like to take this opportunity to offer a few additional HUGE and special "Thank You's!!" ...

- ✓ to Kevin Perry, Cliff Choiniere, and Abby Brakenwagen – you're always there when we need you, you've helped to ensure our meetings run smoothly, you continue to develop meaningful relationships with all of our young people, and we simply could NOT do any of this without you!
- ✓ to Pastor David, Annie Green, and Abby Brakenwagen – we could NOT have pulled off yet another inspiring, fulfilling, and FUN mini-mission experience this past summer without your participation and guidance!
- ✓ to the entire Parents' Group - all of you ALWAYS come through for us! Whether it's with transportation, providing food, event coordination, or anything else ... your love and commitment to seeing this Youth Ministry truly THRIVE is amazing!
- ✓ to the young people in our Youth Ministry ... the opportunity to work with the caring, dedicated, and talented young people of this Youth Ministry continues to be one of the greatest blessings in my life. Week in and week out, these faithful and faith-filled young people have given back to me more than I can possibly offer them ... and, in the process, have taught me more about God's truly unconditional love for each of us than I could have experienced any other way. So, to the Chapel's "Groupies", all I can say is "THANK YOU!!" for letting me be part of your lives ... I love you ALL!
- ✓ and, to my wife, Diane ... "more!" 😊

As we look with hope and faith toward 2024, I ask you to continue to pray for our Young People and their families. I remain absolutely confident that the Lord has GREAT things still instore for Four Corners Community Chapel and our Youth Ministry program, and I can't wait to see what the year ahead brings us!

G. L. Y. (all) A. S. D. I !!!

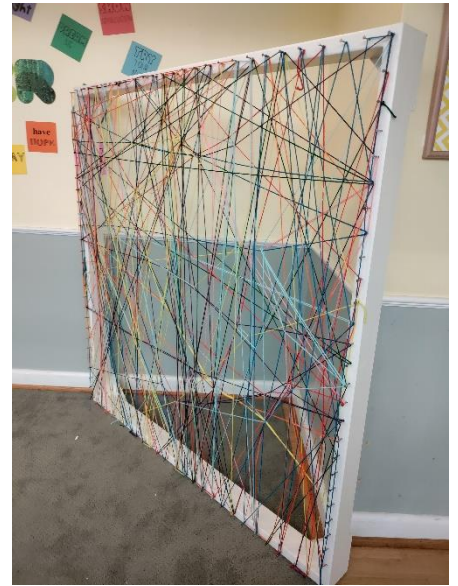


Wade Richmond
Youth Director

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

It's hard to believe that December of 2023 will mark five years that I have served at Four Corners. It has been a wonderful privilege to be in this position and have the opportunity to watch all of the children learn and grow in faith within this community.

For the 2022-2023 year, we had an average of 8.5 children gather for Sunday School each week which was the same average as the year prior. We saw 21 different children participate in the program. Our year concluded in June with an amazingly beautiful intergenerational service. The entire congregation was invited into Fellowship Hall to worship with wonder, led by the children. We created a beautiful piece of string art which was inspired by prayer and the art is currently displayed in the sanctuary. This celebration was everything I wished it would be and I hope to see us worship like this again.



During the summer we gathered for Worship Workshop for five weeks. We utilized a curriculum called *Some Assembly Required* where we used Legos every week as we discovered why it can be important to follow directions, why we need a solid foundation to build upon and how Jesus can be a bridge in our relationship with God. The kids had a lot of fun building creatively and spending time together.

For the 2023-2024 school year, there are currently 12 children in grades K-5 registered for Sunday School representing 8 different families. In the first four weeks of the year there was an average of 5.5 children participating. For the second year, we are using the *Celebrate Wonder* curriculum. Utilizing the same curriculum allows the children to know what to expect each time we gather and helps them feel increasingly comfortable asking big questions, engaging in discussions and truly opening up to wonder. Some weeks, there are questions that I can't answer and must be left to wonder about because we simply don't know things such as "how long was



God in heaven before creating the world?"

We plan do more hands-on activities to show how we can make a difference in our community such as blankets to be donated to the animal shelter.

One of my hopes for this year is to have more adults in the congregation step up to volunteer with the children. I truly appreciate the incredible pool of volunteers we do have and I encourage everyone to consider volunteering even if it is only for one week. I promise Another hope is to create more family fellowship opportunities such as last years' excursion to enjoy the Christmas lights at La Salette Shrine. I plan to offer this opportunity again as well as additional occasions in 2024.

Once again, I thank you for the opportunity to continue serving Four Corners!

Amanda Iocco
Children's Ministry Coordinator

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

“Our mission is to serve as stewards of our buildings and grounds and to preserve and maintain the integrity of our real property.”

This year we have been active in maintaining our property and grounds, including some unanticipated repairs along with routine maintenance items. These include:

- Upgrading our fire suppression systems to meet state requirements
- Replacing our domestic water heater due to the breakdown of our existing one
- Making upgrades to our heating system to meet state requirements
- Stripping and waxing of our flooring, including Fellowship Hall, the kitchen and hallways
- Upgrading thermostats in the sanctuary to programmable wi-fi thermostats to reduce energy costs
- Upgrading a failing circuit breaker servicing the sanctuary
- Addressing a plumbing leak in the parsonage.
- Build frame to support AC unit in sanctuary
- Relocate dumpsters to comply with fire ordinance
- Repainting of the Lee Room

Manny’s Landscape has continued to service our church grounds well over the course of the year, including the removal of some dead trees which posed a hazard to the building. We will continue to rely upon P & R Landscaping for snow removal this winter. Due to cost increases and service concerns, we ended our relationships with our fire alarm testing vendor, our fire equipment vendor and our fire suppression vendor in favor of placing all services with one company specializing in all three areas. We’ve already begun to see benefits from coordinating these services. We continue to evaluate all maintenance contracts throughout the year including disposal, fire alarm testing and suppression systems, elevator and janitorial services.

While utility costs are always a concern for our Committee, we are particularly mindful of anticipated rate increases which we will likely face as we approach the winter months. The committee plans to upgrade the remaining thermostats throughout our building in an effort to control energy costs. In the year ahead, we intend to thoughtfully manage the needs of our chapel given the challenging economic climate we are currently facing.

While consisting of only three individuals in 2023, the Property Committee has managed a number of important initiatives this year, and we are proud of the work that has been accomplished. As we face the year ahead, **we are actively seeking additional volunteers** to offer their time and talents to support the chapel. If you are interested or would like to learn more, please reach out to Joe, Arlen or Jorge.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Craveiro, Arlen Dau and Jorge Almeida

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee, in conjunction with our Treasurer, is responsible for managing the Church finances under provisions established by the By-Laws and the Council. The Finance Committee is also responsible for ensuring that the Chapel exercises its best efforts for Stewardship and Fundraising goals. Its final task is to work in coordination with the Treasurer to create the annual budget that is being presented today for your approval.

To accomplish our mission, we worked closely with our Administrator to review monthly financial information as it related to our budget. We also worked with the monthly data to produce reports that all committees could use to manage their committee's finances.

While the 2023 year started out with a deficit spending plan, it looks like most of that deficit has been eliminated. Through some aggressive fundraising and expense management, the planned deficit is on track to be eliminated.

For 2024, we have worked to create the proposed budget. Once again, the spending needs of the congregation have presented many challenges. While it is difficult to forecast where giving is going to be at, it is equally challenging to forecast all our expenses to match up the two for a balanced budget. On the expense side, all line items were reviewed for justification going forward. These include, but are not limited to, all operating expenses, as well as payroll expenses. On the revenue side, we combine current sustained giving numbers with non-pledged and fundraising income to provide as clear a prediction as possible.

Taking all of this information, along with input from the Council, and various revisions, the 2024 Budget is included herein for your approval. While no one, including the Finance Committee, likes a deficit budget, we support this one. We have good reason to be optimistic.

2024 SUMMARY BUDGET

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Operating Income | | |
| Contributions-General | Nonpledged | \$ 30,326.00 |
| | Pledged | <u>\$105,976.00</u> |
| Total Contributions-General | | \$136,302.00 |
| Total Fundraising | | \$ 19,000.00 |
| Rental Income | | \$ 81,072.00 |
| All Other Income | | <u>\$ 10,500.00</u> |
| Total Operating Income | | \$246,874.00 |
| Operating Expenses | | |
| Administration | | \$152,339.00 |
| Education | | \$ 17,762.00 |
| Facilities | | \$ 69,550.00 |
| Worship and Music | | \$ 18,200.00 |
| UCC Proportional Giving | | <u>\$ 2,000.00</u> |
| Total Operating Expenses | | \$259,851.00 |
| Excess of Expenses over Income | | <u><u>\$ 12,977.00</u></u> |

2024 Nominating Report

| Position | Name | Term Began (Jan. 1) | Term Ends (Dec. 31) |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Moderator | Nate Green | 2022 | 2024 |
| Treasurer | Dan Stevenson | 2024 | 2024 |
| Clerk | Katy Gabel | 2022 | 2024 |
| Council Member at Large | Wade Richmond | 2024 | 2024 |
| Council Member at Large | Alexis Pike | 2024 | 2024 |
| | | | |
| Other Positions | Name | Term Began (Jan. 1) | Term Ends (Dec. 31) |
| UCC Delegate | Annie Green | 2024 | 2024 |
| UCC Delegate | Rosina Guise | 2024 | 2024 |
| UCC Delegate | Carolyn Williamson | 2024 | 2024 |

2024 Committees

| Position | Name |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Christian Education | Name |
| Christian Education | Michelle Casavant |
| | |
| Deacons Committee | Name |
| Deacons | Cara Burns |
| Deacons | Deb Dennis |
| Deacons | Mark Fortin |
| Deacons | Matthew Gilson |
| Deacons | Annie Green |
| Deacons | Rosina Guise |
| Deacons | Open |
| Deacons | Open |
| | |
| Missions Committee | Name |
| Missions | Heather Almeida |
| Missions | Ginny Avenia |
| Missions | Phil Avenia |
| Missions | Cara Burns |
| Missions | Lea Dau |
| Missions | Annie Green |
| Missions | Nancy Gobeille |
| Missions | Rosina Guise |
| Missions | Becky Plasse |
| Missions | Marie Quinn |
| Missions | Open |
| Missions | Open |
| Missions | Open |
| | |
| Property Committee | Name |
| Property Committee | Jorge Almeida |
| Property Committee | Arlen Dau |
| Property Committee | Open |
| Property Committee | Open |
| | |
| Finance Committee | Name |
| Finance Committee | Robert Pielech |
| Finance Committee | Ann Ward |
| Finance Committee | Sandy Fortin |



IN MEMORIAM



2023

The following individuals passed away this year.
Some were members of this community--all were loved by us.
We remember each with hearts full of gratitude.

Lisa Beach

Rev. Kenneth Boyle

Dorothy Callahan

Joan D'Adamo

Jonathan Evenick

Brian Ezovski

Rick Garnham

Helen Hill

Ruth Kane

"If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." -- Romans 14:8