

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2000 E College Avenue, Normal, IL 61761



Sunday, February 4, 2024 Congregational Meeting
(Following the 10am service)



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF NORMAL

AGENDA

Sunday, February 4, 2024

Quorum Declared | Opening Prayer

Pastor Matt Wilcox

Budget Overview

Bob Beerup, Treasurer

Terms of Call for Senior Pastor, Matt Wilcox

Steve Yahnig, Personnel Committee

Terms of Call for Associate Pastor, Karol Schilling

Senior Pastor	2024	2023	Change from 2023
Salary	\$48,267	\$47,067	\$1,200
Housing	\$26,981	\$26,475	\$506
Professional Allowance	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$0
*Continuing Education	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$500
Pension & Medical	\$29,347	\$28,681	\$666
Self-Employment Tax	\$6,233	\$6,092	\$141
Dental & Vision	\$1,319	\$1,319	\$0
# Sabbatical	3 months every 6 years	3 months every 6 years	None

Associate Pastor	2024
Salary	\$4,100
Housing	\$30,000
Professional Allowance	\$2,000
*Continuing Education	\$1,000
Pension & Medical	\$15,910
Self-Employment Tax	\$2,825
Dental & Vision	\$1,319
# Sabbatical	3 months every 6 years

* Any excess of Continuing Education reimbursement allowance may be rolled over to subsequent years, with a maximum of 3 years rolled over.*

During the sabbatical, both salary and benefits are continued and a temporary pulpit supply or other arrangements will be provided in the pastor's absence. The pastor is required to stay on with the church for a period of 1 yr. following sabbatical and if not, must repay the benefits paid during the sabbatical, unless the 1 yr. period is not met due to death or disability.

Session Updates

Questions and Comments

Adjournment

Closing Prayer

Pastor Matt Wilcox

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor Matt Wilcox
Associate Pastor of Congregational Care & Compassion..... Chris Schilling
Associate Pastor of Discipleship Karol Schilling
Director of Music..... Philip Enge
Director of Family MinistryKelli Owens
Director of Playmates Preschool Robin Schaefer
Financial Coordinator Barb Lemmon
Facility Manager John Anderson
Administrative Assistant..... Anne Lunt
Childcare Coordinator Tristan Bishop
Audio/Visual Tech Engineer..... Tyler Gatto

TREASURERS

Treasurer Bob Beerup
Assistant Treasurer Mark Briggs

SESSION

Class of 2024 Christy Bartel, Dave Cobert, Tom Harms, Matt Litwiller
Class of 2025 Jessica Briggs, Aimee Ott, Todd Smith, Curt Trout
Class of 2026 Matt Blue, Angela Brant, Kirk Sampson, Dana Sutton

2024 Clerk of Session Sabrina Smith

DEACONS

Class of 2024 Dave Eaton, Teresa Herbert, Gloria Kelley, Caitlin Wilcox
Class of 2025 Nancy Annegers, Cyndy Diederich, Jenny Hoffman, Marilea White
Class of 2026 Mary Jo Hillyer, Mark MacDonald, Cody Walker, Sharry Zimmerman

SENIOR PASTOR

“Every time your name comes up in my prayers, I say, “Oh, thank you, God!” I keep hearing of the love and faith you have for the Master Jesus, which brims over to other believers. And I keep praying that this faith we hold in common keeps showing up in the good things we do, and that people recognize Christ in all of it. Friend, you have no idea how good your love makes me feel, doubly so when I see your hospitality to fellow believers.” - Philemon 1:4-7 (The Message)

This has been a remarkable year and one that has left me consistently in a state of excitement and gratitude. Serving as your Senior Pastor and the Head of Staff affords me precious opportunities to witness what God is doing through this church. Perhaps more so than any other year, I found myself regularly thanking God with a sense of awe for what has been happening within our family of faith here at First Pres.

One of my primary responsibilities as Senior Pastor is to lead and implement the vision and mission of our church. This ever-present and on-going work can be joyous and weighty. It can spark experiences of celebration and intentionally invite moments of necessary tension. All for one purpose: To assure that we are faithfully being the community of Christ-followers God is calling us to be. This is a work I am privileged to do with our session of elders, the individuals this congregation has nominated and elected. My focus and commitment to church vision, mission, and values has become one of the of richest and most compelling areas of emphasis for me personally. As I enter my second year of doctoral studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, I am leveraging much of my time allotted for study and exploration towards these realities and have already been encouraged to see this necessary work of discernment and discovery taking place here within our church.

Advocating for and serving alongside our staff has been a rich blessing. For the first time in several years, we have had a full staff. Pastors Karol and Chris Schilling joined us at the beginning of 2023 and Kelli Owens began her work as our Director of Family Ministry in May. Getting to know these three remarkable individuals and having the chance to see their love for God and the gifts the Holy Spirit has placed within them has been incredible. Every person on our staff has been a blessing to this congregation and a personal blessing to me. I have deeply enjoyed celebrating and encouraging these great servants of God and have been overjoyed to hear how God has used them in the lives of this congregation.

Preaching remains an area of ministry where I feel the most alive in my call. I find just as much joy as I do opportunity for humility as I regularly step behind the pulpit to offer what I pray are words of hope and conviction to those who join us for worship. I cannot express how life-giving it is for me to do the work of preaching, including the work of offering individual sermons and the process of planning the year-long preaching calendar. This year has been uniquely enriching for me as I have had more regular opportunities to hear and be inspired by the sermons offered by Pastors Karol and Chris.

In addition to the several committees and teams I serve on and support, and with a full staff this year, I have been able to engage in wider circles of ministry participation within our community, presbytery, and wider denomination. This includes ecumenical engagements, like the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, with other faith communities in the Bloomington-Normal community as well as new invitations to serve within the Presbytery of Great Rivers. Some of my work within the presbytery has already begun while other appointments are set to begin at the start of 2024. I am glad to participate in the broader, connectional church in several ways.

Every report in this document, both those containing thoughtful paragraphs and thorough spreadsheets, is an indication of the incredible passion and faithfulness of so many within our congregation. I have been fortunate to be able to be present with and advocate for many of these groups and initiatives contained within our annual report. I pray that you are filled with the same sense of excitement and anticipation that I am as I reflect upon this testament to the life, work, and witness of First Presbyterian Church of Normal in 2023.



Senior Pastor Matt Wilcox

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

As the Minister for Congregational Care and Compassion, I spent my first year enhancing the ways we provide compassionate care in our church and in our community while giving focus to improved care for the older adults at FPC.

In the past year, we have revamped our deacon ministry, educating, and training our deacons about their roles while also tasking them to connect with the members of their flock through routine check-ins. This has led FPC members to know they have someone who is there to provide care and support to them through their life journey.

Additionally, I began coordination of pastoral care support between myself, Pastor Karol, and Pastor Matt. This includes creating an on-call pastoral care calendar to handle pastoral care emergencies while also assigning routine pastoral care check-ins with our homebound members among the three of us.

This year, I also provided an eight-week grief workshop and a seminar about loss and grief. These have helped church members learn how to affirm their feelings about loss and grief while also how to seek emotional and spiritual care when they are experiencing loss. Next year, I am planning for more workshops geared to emotional and spiritual wellness for our church members.

It also has been a year of “JOY” at our church! This summer, we started a monthly lunch fellowship program called Just Older Youth (JOY) for older adults at FPC. Each month, we have been averaging about 40 older adults at each luncheon. These gatherings help older adults to connect and have fellowship with one another. We have been holding our JOY lunches primarily in the Great Hall. Starting in 2024, we hope to plan more exciting lunches, but also plan occasional field trips and excursions for older adults. I also have spent a lot of time this year connecting with leaders of different community organizations and other faith communities to explore potential ways we can partner in providing care to those in Bloomington-Normal starting next year.

I am truly appreciative of all the great ministry we have done together in 2023. And I look forward to seeing what God has in store for us in the future!



Associate Pastor of Congregational Care & Compassion
Chris Schilling

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

I am so grateful to the people of FPC, for welcoming Chris and me into our positions, and our family into your church family. It has been a whirlwind first year with many meet-and-greets, worship services, classes, visits, and meetings. Though I have gotten to know many of you at least by name, I still feel I have a long way to go. Thankfully, with patience and persistence, we can continue to meet, connect, and grow in faith together in the coming year.

Discipleship, the focus of my pastoral position, is a lifelong commitment for all Christians to both learning and teaching. I enjoy facilitating meaningful opportunities that meet the diverse needs and interests of our congregation. In my role, I work closely with the Adult Discipleship, First Steps, and Fellowship Committees to ensure we have a variety of engagement opportunities for those in our church family. I also have had occasional partnership opportunities with the Worship, Stewardship, and Mission Committees. In addition, I support the leaders of our small groups in their work of establishing and deepening connections among their participants. Over the course of the year, I was able to visit almost every small group at least once. I often participate in the Blessings Women's Ministry, especially with their leadership team, and I was even welcomed to the Men's Bible Breakfast Fellowship!

While our online platform Church Community Builder (CCB) was new to me here, as a staff member, I have found it very helpful in organizing events, sharing information, and contacting people. If you have been uncertain about how to use it, I encourage you to give it another try! One of my learnings in CCB was that as of April, 119 people were participating in one or more small groups (just over one-fourth of the congregation). That's great – and we'd love for that number to grow in the coming year.

Already one new group formed in the fall: Our First Rodeo includes six couples who became parents in the past two years (so named because we are new to the wild adventure of parenting!). Additionally, I organized a few gatherings of college students and young adults throughout the year, with some late-year momentum that could develop into a regular group in 2024.

I am pleased to be serving with my pastoral colleagues Matt and Chris, as well as the full staff, and the many dedicated members who volunteer to serve in a variety of roles and capacities. Together, we are the church, seeking to be a community that follows Jesus. Let us continue in our ongoing path of discipleship.



Associate Pastor of Discipleship
Karol Schilling

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Each year we give thanks for all the talented musicians in our congregation, without whom we would be the poorer, and this year is no exception. Being blessed by them is an understatement.

Resounding Joy! This is our resident quartet that brings us wonderful musical offerings periodically. Thanks to Barb Lemmon, violin; Sarah Jome, flute; Sara Garrett, cello; and Pat Warren, bassoon.

The Worship Band faithfully leads our 11am service during the program year and is also involved with our 10am summer service. Thank you to guitarists Rob Rice, Nathan Rice, Kurt Benckendorf, and Mike Casali, Bo Bobell on drums, and Julia White, song leader. Thank you also to substitutes Jacque Hansing, Ella Burrus, and Deanna Schoolcraft.

Chancel Choir leads our 8:30am worship with anthems, responses and hymns, Sept.-May. The choir continues to maintain a high level of musicianship week after week. Thank you for your faithful service and beautiful music. We welcomed new members to the choir, and on occasion, were blessed to have former RLT members join in, too.

Adult Handbells are back in full force with eight ringers, and our handbell choir played four times this year. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication.

Summer Sing – On Wednesday evenings during the summer, we had the opportunity to gather and to sing for fun: hymns, anthems, Broadway musical numbers, and more. This gives anyone who wants to sing the chance without being in choir. It also keeps our vocal instruments in good working order for the upcoming choir season. We even had a “Christmas in July” evening. On a few occasions, the weather was nice enough to sit on the patio around the fire.

Choir Retreat

In August, we had an abbreviated choir “boot camp” for any adult who wanted to re-energize the voice. We learned about good vocal health, proper breathing techniques, vowel production and consonant placement, how to prepare the musical score, and reading through the repertoire.

A brass quartet from a neighboring school helped usher in Advent and the resurgence of First Strings (thank you Barb Lemmon) began our Advent services with beautiful carols of the season. Thank you to all our vocal soloists and instrumentalists who add so much to the worship experience throughout the year, playing solos and obbligato parts on anthems.

Finally, thank you to pianist Rose Yahnig and organists Faye Bartley and Louis Jones for being such great help in playing services and accompanying anthems.

-Phil Enge

DIRECTOR OF FAMILY MINISTRY

The first time I noticed it was in May. Having come fresh from a depleting job as an insurance professional in an economically barren community, I knew what it was to white-knuckle my way through the day. And I knew what it was to bring stress home and subconsciously serve it up with dinner to my family. What I didn't know was how finding a job that suits me well, and to which I feel called, would change that. I discovered it in May. Coming home with energy in my step and passion in my tone, as thirsty to learn as I was to lead, humbled and excited – this became my (excuse the pun) new Normal. And I share that here, in an annual report, because what I didn't know before that I'm beginning to understand is the direct impact our personal mental health routines, our self-care priorities, and our alignment with a sense of meaning have on our ministry. Our ministry as a church, yes, but also our ministry within our families. I'm writing this to say thank you. Your integration of my gifts, wild ideas, mistakes, and especially my imperfect family into your community has been one of the greatest gifts of my life.

Born from deep gratitude, one of the first priorities in my time as Director of Family Ministry was to rewrite the directional language giving shape to both Children's and Student Ministries. Here's our WHY: First Presbyterian Church Student Ministry exists to support, enhance, and participate with the work of the Triune God in the lives of our young people. Specifically acknowledging the ongoing developmental process at play in the bodies, minds, and spiritual formation of middle and high school students, we creatively seek to evoke and collaborate around the questions and felt needs that are most alive for students during this leg of their journey. While this was written for and adapted to our church website specifically for our middle and high school students, its focus also applies to our Children's Ministry.

I would like to highlight and expound two parts of that WHY statement above as particularly potent in 2023. The first is the phrase "participate with the work of the Triune God." One of the things Pastor Matt and other staff members have been wonderful about is making sure I know it's okay to "make this your own". However, what I want to ensure I communicate this year is that the work of God in the lives of First Pres families didn't start with my arrival on the scene. A sensitivity to place, context, and relational backstory are as important as the confidence to begin something new. Therefore, part of the HOW I've tried to embody is the posture of yes, a leader; yes, a creative; yes, an innovator – but also that of a listener. Listening for how we can participate in a work bigger than ourselves.

The second phrase I would emphasize here is "creatively seek to evoke and collaborate around the questions and felt needs." It can be easy for Children's and Student Ministries to fall into preaching at, teaching to, and boldly instructing at the expense of relational and collaborative curiosity. Taking cues from Jesus, who told us to become like children, this phrase hints at an exploratory companionship rather than a dogmatic methodology of certitude. It speaks to the gentleness of evocative questions and the challenge of entering our own unknowns rather than hastily quenching those of the little ones with a hard and fast certainty.

These are the values and the vision for our Time With Children, Sunday School lessons, Kidz Worship, Kids of the Kingdom, Camp, and VBS programs. These WHYS provide shape for the WHATs of Youth Group events, service projects, Confirmation curriculum, fellowship celebrations, and Mission Trips. We can list these activities as connectional only as far as our spirit mirrors that of the relational complexity, imaginative empowerment, and playful vulnerability we experience in the Triune God with whom we participate. For more details about Family Ministry, contact Kelli Owens.

-Kelli Owens

FROM THE TREASURER

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023, AND FOR THE YEAR THEN ENDED

FINANCIAL POSITION

Our year-end financial position is strong. We remain debt-free and ended the year with \$692,550 in general fund cash and investments, an increase of \$129,687 from the beginning of the year.

The change in general fund cash and investments is summarized as follows:

	UNRESTRICTED OPERATING RESERVE	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED		TOTAL CASH AND INVESTMENTS
		PROPERTY AND VAN SAVINGS	OTHER RESTRICTED ACCOUNTS	
Balance, Beginning of Year	\$ 341,089	\$ 147,000	\$ 74,774	\$ 562,863
Receipts Over (Under)				
Expenses	84,065	12,000	1,642	97,707
Investment Market Gains	31,980	-	-	31,980
Balance, End of Year	\$ 457,134	\$ 159,000	\$ 76,416	\$ 692,550

The unrestricted operating reserve represents the amount available to pay routine operating budget expenses and amounts to about 6 1/2 months of budgeted 2024 operating expenses.

Our strong financial position allows us to respond to emerging opportunities, take unexpected expenses in stride, and withstand temporary cash flow fluctuations. It also affords the opportunity to generate some investment returns.

REVENUES AND EXPENSES

Contributions in support of our general operating budget exceeded budget by \$16,900 and exceeded the prior year's contributions by \$43,000. For the second consecutive year, total contributions grew by about 5% over the prior year.

Due to unpredictability, we didn't include any investment gains in the budget. Actual investment market gains for 2023 amounted to about \$32,000.

General expenses were about \$80,000 below budget. More than half the savings were related to salaries and benefits, mostly due to unfilled staff positions during the year. These savings aren't expected to continue in the future as we are now fully staffed. The remaining expense savings were scattered throughout all other categories.

The final bottom-line excess of revenues over expenses amounted to \$116,045 for 2023. This compares to a very small net loss in 2022, and an average net income of about \$27,000 over the last five years.

FROM THE TREASURER CONTINUED...

RESTRICTED ACCOUNTS

The restricted accounts represent a temporary parking spot for gifts designated for a specific purpose. During 2023, we received about \$27,000 in restricted contributions and spent about \$40,000 of restricted funds. Restricted receipts were spread throughout several accounts, with significant amounts received for memorial gifts and rummage sale proceeds. We transferred \$12,000 from the operating budget for our building and van savings accounts, \$4,000 from the operating budget for a future Habitat partial house sponsorship, and \$10,000 from the endowment account to apply to the sanctuary projector replacement project. Expenses from the restricted accounts included \$20,000 for the sanctuary projector replacement project, almost \$12,000 for distribution of rummage sale proceeds, and several smaller items. A summary of the activity in the restricted accounts is presented following the financial and budget summary.

2024 BUDGET

Session adopted a balanced budget for 2024. The projected revenue increase for 2024 over 2023 is less than our actual giving growth trends over the past few years. We don't include any investment income in the budget, although actual investment income for 2023 amounted to about \$32,000.

The expense side of the 2024 budget provides for an increase of slightly less than 3% over the 2023 budget. The budget provides for full staffing for the entire year. The only expense category with a significant increase from 2023 is Property, which includes such items as utilities, building and grounds maintenance, and technology expenses. The increase in the Property budget is primarily due to restoring technology expenses to previous levels following a one-year reduction in 2023, and to providing for some anticipated major repairs in building mechanical systems.

ENDOWMENT ACCOUNTS

In addition to the almost \$693,000 in general fund cash and investments, we had almost \$376,000 in invested endowment funds at December 31, 2023. Unrealized market gains on the endowment funds were just over \$46,000 in 2023. We deposited to the endowment accounts \$3,700 of proceeds from a bequest in 2023, and we distributed \$10,000 to general funds for the sanctuary projector project. Endowment assets are separate from the general fund assets, and the deposits and investment returns are separate from operating revenues and expenses.

-Bob Beerup

FINANCIAL SUMMARY SUBMITTED BY BOB BEERUP

Financial Summary
First Presbyterian Church
Year Ended December 31, 2023

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
Current Pledges	\$ 741,751	\$ 720,000	\$ 750,000
Unpledged Gifts	70,152	75,000	82,000
Reimbursements	7,049	7,495	6,465
Other Income	3,072	3,050	1,900
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER REVENUES	822,024	805,545	840,365
Missions	63,359	64,000	66,500
General Assembly Special Offerings	1,456	3,000	1,500
Per Capita	12,929	16,000	14,000
Worship and Music	7,694	11,200	11,625
Adult CE	2,854	3,000	3,000
Youth/Children CE	20,832	33,950	33,950
All Other Committees	7,950	9,600	10,250
Senior Pastor Salary and Benefits	116,048	115,634	118,931
Associate Pastor Salary and Benefits	95,250	104,172	100,367
Other Salaries and Benefits	199,749	237,839	236,942
Property	197,838	207,150	231,300
Capital Improvement Escrow	5,000	5,000	5,000
Van Replacement Escrow	7,000	7,000	7,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	737,959	817,545	840,365
NET CASH INCOME (LOSS)	84,065	(12,000)	-
Investment Income/Loss	31,980	-	-
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ 116,045	\$ (12,000)	\$ -

2024 BUDGET BY FUNCTION SUBMITTED BY BOB BEERUP

	TOTAL	MISSION & OUTREACH	WORSHIP & MUSIC	KIDS & STUDENT MINISTRIES	ADULT DISCIPLESHIP	CONGREGATIONAL CARE	OPERATIONS
REVENUES							
Current Pledges	\$ 750,000						
Unpledged Gifts	82,000						
Reimbursements	6,465						
Other Income	1,900						
Investment Gains	-						
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 840,365						
EXPENSES							
Missions	\$ 66,500	\$ 66,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Per Capita	14,000	14,000	-	-	-	-	-
General Assembly Special Offerings	1,500	1,500	-	-	-	-	-
Worship and Music	11,625	-	10,463	581	581	-	-
Youth/Children Christian Education	33,950	6,790	-	25,463	1,697	-	-
Adult Discipleship	3,000	-	-	-	3,000	-	-
All Other Committees	10,250	1,735	422	775	1,970	5,248	100
Senior Pastor Salary and Benefits	118,931	17,839	41,627	11,892	11,893	23,786	11,894
Associate Pastor Salary and Benefits	100,367	4,005	18,069	-	43,211	35,082	-
Other Salaries and Benefits	236,942	12,598	76,616	74,391	13,426	18,316	41,595
Property	231,300	1,900	32,395	24,610	16,655	18,240	137,500
Capital Improvement Escrow	5,000	-	-	-	-	-	5,000
Van Replacement Escrow	7,000	1,400	-	4,200	-	-	1,400
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 840,365	\$ 128,267	\$ 179,592	\$ 141,912	\$ 92,433	\$ 100,672	\$ 197,489

RESTRICTED ACCOUNT SUMMARY YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	BEGINNING BALANCE	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	ENDING BALANCE
Garden Fund	\$ 2,238	\$ 100	\$ 50	\$ 2,288
Green Team	2,995	-	400	2,595
Mathew 25 Memorial	4,755	542	1,344	3,953
Memorial Fund	13,370	14,115	19,900	7,585
Camp Scholarship	1,932	140	-	2,072
Youth Mission Fund	8,062	6,581	1,441	13,202
Children's Christmas Fund	3,507	192	1,000	2,699
Pastor CE Reserve	2,582	-	2,001	581
Church School Offering	907	-	-	907
Library Fund	248	-	-	248
Music fund	1,093	-	-	1,093
Music Fund - Organ Memorial	-	475	-	475
Flower Fund	799	1,449	1,065	1,183
JOY Senior Lunches	-	655	708	(53)
Habitat for Humanity	6,015	4,000	-	10,015
Peacemakers	3,376	-	-	3,376
Labyrinth Fund	254	-	-	254
New Mission Initiatives	7,000	-	-	7,000
Sheridan School Grant	183	217	150	250
Special Donations	1,583	11,852	11,852	1,583
Angel Fund	9,480	1,550	335	10,695
Grounds Fund	(105)	-	-	(105)
Local Missions	4,200	20	-	4,220
Miscellaneous	300	-	-	300
	<u>74,774</u>	<u>41,888</u>	<u>40,246</u>	<u>76,416</u>
Property improvement Escrow	140,000	5,000	-	145,000
Van Replacement Escrow	7,000	7,000	-	14,000
Playmates Payroll Clearing	-	113,867	113,867	-
TOTAL	<u>\$ 221,774</u>	<u>\$ 167,755</u>	<u>\$ 154,113</u>	<u>\$ 235,416</u>

STATISTICAL REPORT

Submitted by Sabrina Smith, Clerk of Session

Total Active Membership (January 1, 2023)		429
Gains for 2023		
Profession of faith		
17 and under	0	
18 and over	1	
Certificate	6	
<hr/>		
Total Gains	7	
Subtotal		436
Losses for 2023		
Certificate (transfer)	0	
Deaths	8	
Other (relocation, roll cleaning)	60	
<hr/>		
Total Losses	68	
Total Active Membership (December 31, 2023)		368

COMMITTEE REPORTS

(Arranged alphabetically)

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Adult Discipleship (AD) offered several in-person studies in 2023 and expanded offerings to provide some concurrent studies, as we had been able to do pre-Covid. We are actively seeking new committee members and have been blessed by the new ideas and energy from our Associate Pastor of Discipleship, Rev. Karol Schilling! Our current committee members include Kathy Mitchell, Dave Eaton, Todd S. Smith, Doug Schwalm, as well as Pastor Karol. We would like to thank Sheila Melzer for a brief stint on the committee and will welcome her back if her schedule changes. We also want to thank Elissa Bailey, Barb Lemmon, John Anderson, Pastor Matt, Pastor Chris, and all others who have helped out with the efforts in 2023 by leading a session or a study.

Our Spring term covered three studies, beginning with a Social Justice study led by the committee, and then we enjoyed the company of Chip Hardwick, a past minister from 2nd Pres. Bloomington, who virtually led our first study on “Crossbound”, written by Chip and led by Karol. We finished the semester by offering a study on 1 John, where Elissa helped the committee facilitate.

We were excited to test out a summer series featuring an LGBTQA+ study using material from “Changing our Mind” by David Gushee, which intersected nicely with our church’s new Affirmation & Inclusion statement. We anticipate continuing to offer a summer study based on the learnings of how this past year went.

Our Fall block of classes included a series of speakers jointly organized with the Mission, Peace and Justice Committee, where representatives of local missions were able to come in and speak to our congregation. The local partners were Faith in Action, Joy Care/Jobs Partnership, Mid-Central Illinois Community Action, Catalyst Ministries, Immigration Project, Boys and the Girls Club. Additionally, they included a visit from mission co-workers Bob and Kristi Rice. We then had two concurrent offerings, one on a study of Exodus, and another on Christian Mindfulness. We finished the year with a look at the Jesse Tree, led by Barb Lemmon and John Anderson).

We look forward to offering additional concurrent studies in the next year, as well as to continue to integrate themes from the sermon series and other topics, focused on our 5 main areas of Bible Study, Christian Living, Justice/Current Events, Theology, and Family/Marriage Studies.

Pastor Karol tracked attendance throughout the year, and though most weeks we average 15-20 attendees, we are pleased to report that 91 different people participated in a class at least once in 2023! We are always open to new and returning participants, even if only on occasion.

We also continue to track and discuss small groups and their needs, and we are excited about recent additional group formations. Pastor Karol has been spearheading these efforts and has additional information in her report.

Many thanks to session and all of our congregation for the support and excitement they bring to Adult Discipleship.

BLESSINGS WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Luke 1:45: "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her."

Blessings Women's Ministry has presented three video discussion formats entitled - "The Heart Of God", "Making Space," and "What Goes Around". These programs are from Live a Better Story Series. A Bible study entitled - "Speaking Wisely," that required reading scripture, questions and discussions, provided valuable lessons. Meetings were every 3-4 weeks and scheduled on Monday evenings from 6:15-7:15 at church. Attendance ranged from 12-25 women. There was no charge except for the book format.

The service projects collected items for the Baby Fold, Sheridan School in District 87, Fairview School in Unit 5, Catalyst Ministries, and Youth camp candy grams. We also socialized at Chicken Salad Chick and the Kickapoo Tearoom in Downs. All meeting times were concluded with prayer requests.

A Winter retreat was held at East Bay Camp, March 17 -18. Lori Bultemeier, Pastor at The Baby Fold was our camp speaker who spoke about the Bride of Christ in three sessions. A fee of \$50 per person was collected for 12 women.

The Women's Spring Gathering was held on Saturday, April 15. The program was entitled "The Confusing Marys of the New Testament." The presenters were Pastor Karol Schilling-Mary the mother of Jesus, Ann Lamkey-Mary Magdelene, and Irene DenBesten-Mary of Bethany. A continental breakfast was served. The service project was filling candy gram bags for our summer youth campers. Beautiful acapella voices of 38 women singing "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow" closed the joyous spring morning of fellowship.

The Annual Women's Christmas Gathering was held Saturday, December 9, 9-11:30am. Becky Mentzer presented a program entitled "The M & M's of Christmas" which guided us through the stressful times of the Christmas season. Carols were beautifully sung by the group of 50 women who attended. A continental breakfast was served. Gift cards were collected for Catalyst Ministries, an agency that helps trafficked women. Each woman received a copy of Julia White's Advent Devotional book from the BLESSINGS MINISTRY.

The BLESSINGS planning committee continues to involve new and more women to select Bible studies, service projects, and social events to serve God in His kingdom on earth.

-Irene Denbesten

DEACONS

The Board of Deacons had another productive year in 2023. One function of the Deacons is the preparation of communion elements, both for the first Sunday of each month as well as special occasions. This function had been chaired by Diana and Byron Blair.

The Deacons also hosted several funeral luncheons. This is a service much appreciated by family members and friends, and this year, it was chaired by Gloria Kelley.

Other outreach efforts the Deacons continue to provide are Safe Harbor meals once a month (chaired by Teresa Herbert), two Red Cross blood drives (Caitlin Wilcox), our Care and Share program (Joyce Moncelle-Kaye), and leading the collection of gifts at Christmas for Kemmerer Village (Jenny Hoffman). Vicki Terrinoni has ably served as Clerk of Deacons.

We also welcomed Chris Schilling as our new liaison and appreciate all he has done for us. One function that Chris has stressed is the importance of keeping in touch with our flocks.

Deacons serving in 2023 were Diana and Byron Blair, Joyce Kaye, Vicki Terrinoni, Dave Eaton, Teresa Herbert, Gloria Kelley, Caitlin Wilcox, Marilea White, Jenny Hoffman, Nancy Annegers, and Cyndy Diederich.

Outgoing Deacons in 2023 were Diana, Byron, Joyce, and Vicki. Incoming Deacons in the class of 2026 are Mary Jo Hillyer, Sharry Zimmerman, Mark McDonald, and Cody Walker.

Thanks to all the Deacons who served this year in anyway, helping with all the functions listed above.

Diana and Byron Blair, Moderators

FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Karol initiated a new committee, called the Fellowship Committee to provide food for events involving our entire church.

The committee first met in April and coordinated the following events in 2023:

- May - Retirement reception for Ann Lamkey
- July - Ice Cream Social and recognition of newer members
- September - Fall Kickoff Potluck
- November - Potluck in recognition of newly elected Elders, Deacons, and Nominating Committee members

Current committee members include Carmen Sampson, Kathy Patterson, Nancy Wolter, Caitlin Wilcox, Gloria Kelley, and Pastor Karol. Please contact one of us if you would like to be involved with fellowship events on either a regular or occasional basis.

-Gloria Kelley, Chair

FIRST STEPS

The First Steps committee coordinates efforts to warmly welcome guests to First Pres., which includes running our Welcome Center on Sunday mornings where a small gift is shared with those who stop by to fill out a Connection Card. The team also hosts First Steps, membership information classes held throughout the year. Current committee members include Christy Bartel (chairperson) and Teresa Herbert. After serving for several years, members Jenny Hoffman and Laura Meyer rolled off the committee this fall. The committee works very closely with Pastors Matt Wilcox and Karol Schilling.

This year, our team of volunteers that staff the Welcome Center grew significantly, for which we are thankful. They greeted many guests in person at our Welcome Center and contacted those who worshipped virtually and filled out Connection Cards online.

First Steps classes were held on April 23rd and October 15th. The First Steps team welcomed three people at the April class and seven at the October class and worked to help those who chose to join as members to connect their interests and talents to various First Pres. ministries and opportunities to serve.

The team celebrates all the new connections made this year and looks forward to opportunities in the new year.

-Christy Bartel

FUNERAL COORDINATOR

The Funeral Coordination team aided families, church staff, and deacons in preparing for and holding visitations and/or funerals for several church members: Kay Franz, Terry Tosh, Rebecca Bishop, and Dale Beerup. The Funeral Coordinator Team consists of Carol Kashian, Betsy Stout, Robin Seyller, and Barb Lemmon.

-Barb Lemmon

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

The Gifts and Memorials Committee receives and administers undesignated funds made by donations (outside of annual stewardship or other special campaigns) from members and friends of First Presbyterian Church. The Committee seeks to make wise use of gifts entrusted to God's Church. Items purchased with undesignated funds are generally limited to items of some permanence rather than consumable items. Careful consideration is made when requests are received as to how they will extend or improve the ministry of the church and be an ongoing tribute to the intention of Gifts and Memorials funding.

The Committee meets on an as-needed basis. This year, consideration has been given to the replacement of the sanctuary projector, which is used during the contemporary service. In conjunction with the Property Committee, funding has been secured.

-Gifts and Memorials Committee: Betsy Stout and Nancy Annegers Chairperson.

GREEN TEAM

First Pres. Green Team activities continued during 2023 with group members remaining active in meetings on Zoom and in-person with members of other faith communities, as part of the Bloomington-Normal Interfaith Green Team.

As in previous years, Green Team members presented the produce-sharing table at church on Sunday mornings during the late summer. The sharing table featured donated vegetables from several church members, as well as bouquets of fresh wildflowers. All monetary donations collected at the table supported the Fairview Angel Tree.

Representatives from the Green Team, Peace Garden team, and Family Ministries began plans for green-themed youth and family programs during 2024. Events include story strolls and nature-related activities for kids and families in the church gardens in conjunction with Earth Day and the changing seasons in spring, summer, fall, and winter.

The Green Team and Mission Committee each contributed \$400 from their budgets toward purchasing eight new trees to shade the Fairview Elementary School playground.

The Green Team and the Property Committee continue to discuss and explore the potential for a future solar array on church property.

-Eric and Sarah Jome

KNIT-CROCHET MINISTRY

Matthew 5:16b: "...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise God in heaven."

After this year's Artisan Sale, a member commented on what we do that really captured this verse. She wrote: You help to spread the light to those who need it. That fits our Knit-Crochet Ministry and we do it with joy in our hearts, as evidenced all year long, particularly in December when we start to make donations after our sale. Throughout the year we give handmade items to individuals, organizations, and our members who may need a prayer shawl or baby blanket. Once a year, our Ministry hosts a sale that allows others in the congregation who are using their art and crafting skills to join us to make items to be enjoyed by members and friends of the congregation. YWCA Stepping Stones Sexual Assault Crisis Center, an organization with the mission to help survivors and their families as they heal and build strong relationships, was selected to be our beneficiary. We made \$1,436 in generous donations. Many remaining items were also donated to YWCA for the families they serve. Alicia Whitworth, the YWCA Development Director, wrote: Thank you again for arranging for Stepping Stones to be the beneficiary! That's an incredibly generous amount that has been donated. I know that between staff and families, we have individuals in need of warm, creature comforts, and I think these will bring joy during a season that is difficult for so many.

In addition to this successful event and the many donations made to the YWCA, we made and donated four scarves to the Giving Fence, 20 hats and 20 scarves for Kemmerer Village, 15 hats for Sheridan School, 22 for Fairview School, 12 each for both hospitals' infant units. Neville House received a variety of things, including eight prayer shawls and children's items, as they have 4 young boys with moms there. More donations were made before Christmas, including afghans for nursing homes and hats, booties, and baby blankets for a local nonprofit baby shower.

While we knit or crochet on our own between gatherings, we also meet on the third Sunday of each month at 9:45am in the lower-level chapel. We welcome anyone interested to join us for an hour of knitting, crocheting, crafting, and being together. Please also let us know if you need a prayer shawl or baby blanket anytime during the year.

-Becky Mentzer, Chair

LEGACY GIVING

What is the First Presbyterian Church Endowment Fund?

- A separately held fund that is expected to grow and endure to generate earnings that:
 - Support unexpected challenges in the ongoing programs and facilities of FPC that could not have been anticipated or planned for through the regular annual budget and planning process
 - Respond to exceptional mission or outreach opportunities under the direction of Session

Functions of the Committee

- To be ambassadors of the concept of leaving a legacy to First Presbyterian Church
- To educate and motivate FPC membership to develop a theology of abundance and generosity
- Accept legacy gifts for the Endowment Fund and recommend to Session-specific uses of the Endowment Fund
- To educate the congregation about legacy giving through a variety of different platforms, including an annual emphasis on Legacy Sunday (May), testimonials during worship, providing relevant planned giving information throughout the year, personal contacts with members, and the development of marketing materials and resources
 - **Notable efforts in 2023:**
 - Partnered with local award-winning Estate Planning Attorney Chad A. Ritchie to host two free estate planning workshops. Two dates/times were available in January, which proved to be well received with approximately 50 attendees. This complimentary resource explained the basics of estate planning and helped those in attendance discover what type of plan may best suit their situation.
 - Encouraged the congregation to create and update wills on Legacy Sunday (May 7)
 - Added a new emphasis on the importance of proper estate planning during National Estate Planning Awareness Week (Oct. 16-22)
- More information and helpful resources are available on the church website

2023 Committee Members

Matt Johnson (Chair), Mark Briggs, Mary Jo Hillyer, Bob Hunt, Rob Mentzer, and Carole Ringer

MEMORIAL GARDEN

As 2023 commenced, the committee again thanked Carol Schranz for her unwavering support from the time before a formal Memorial Garden Committee was formed. Two new members joined us: Carol Morris and Joni Painter.

The 2023 year was calm. As noted last year, much is in place, with little major activity required. Encouragement and “sweat equity” from the Landscape Committee (Sara Garrett) and Master Gardener Joni Painter resulted in planting bulbs to enhance the large mulch area just to the right of the walkway into the Garden. We give kudos to Bill Schulz (another “adjunct” Master Gardener major assistant) for executing much-needed trimming of the redbud bush. And always kudos to John Wolter for watering when needed and giving consistent attention all season-long to those weeds that otherwise would take over.

One project yet to come to fruition is signage to explain the Christian symbols embedded in the natural setting of the Garden.

1. The Celtic Cross in the pavement in front of the columbarium wall represents our Christian heritage.
2. The three trees behind that central wall represent our triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Comforter.
3. The weeping maple to the left of the entrance to the wall represents Jesus’ tears at times of great sorrow.
4. The boulder to the right of that entrance represents the stone rolled away from Jesus’ grave.

As the committee reviewed its structure and activities, we recommended to Session that going forward, this committee function as a regular committee of Session. They agreed. (History: the campaign to create the Memorial Garden and finance the construction of the columbarium wall and foundations for two additional walls was intentionally outside the regular budget of the church.)

Note to congregation and friends: Have YOU considered your final resting place?

Submitted by Carole Ringer on behalf of Barb Lemmon, Carol Morris, Joni Painter, Jerry Ringer, and John Wolter.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP

This men's group meets weekly for fellowship, Bible study, prayer, and support. We began a thorough study of the Gospel of Luke in 2022 and completed it this past spring. In the summer months, we discussed the Books of James and 1 Peter. Since then, we've begun a review of selected chapters of Genesis. We also spent five weeks studying and sharing insights about the subject of Faith & Works. For that topic, we reviewed Biblical passages as well as applicable writings of Calvin, Luther, and statements in the PCUSA Book of Confessions.

In addition to focusing on Biblical content, we served a dinner at Safe Harbor in September. We place an emphasis on how we can apply Scripture passages to our lives. All our discussions begin with a sharing of our takeaways from the previous day's worship message. There is always a time to update each other about joys and concerns, accompanied by support and encouragement. A time of prayer concludes every meeting.

While laughter is not listed on our weekly agendas, this group has a lot of fun. The camaraderie is evident, the humor is ever-present, and celebrating and bemoaning the ups and downs of each other's favorite sports teams is a regular occurrence.

There is an open invitation for all interested men of the church to try out this group and attend as often as you can. It's a great way to continue your Sunday church experience into the week. We meet every Monday at 8 a.m. (except major holidays) for about 90 minutes in the meeting room of The Original Pancake House on Veterans Parkway in Normal. Whether you have a cup of coffee or a full breakfast, we invite you to be part of this valuable time together.

You can contact Rob Kelley at (309)532-8859 or rjkelley856@gmail.com for information.

-Rob Kelley

MISSION-PEACEMAKING-JUSTICE

Over the past year the Mission, Peacemaking and Justice Committee (MPJ) has continued to support our mission partners. These include our global mission partners, Bob and Kristi Rice and Jeff and Christi Boyd, as well as more than 20 national and local agencies. Our support has included both financial and hands-on support when appropriate.

In the spring we had our second annual BloNo Go, where we spent a morning working at mission partner sites which needed work done for them. In the fall we were able to celebrate the easing of COVID restrictions by working with Adult Discipleship to bring multiple local mission partners to speak of the work they do for our community. In partnership with the Knit-Crochet ministry we collected supplies for Center for Hope Ministries.

The Matthew 25 group, a subcommittee of MPJ, has been active through the past year as well. Their projects continue to include participating in the Adopt-A-Teacher Program at Sheridan School, the Hope Bags project in which many members of the church have helped fill and deliver food bags for the children at Cedar Ridge Elementary School, and the PASS after school program (Providing After School Safety) where we provide a group of elementary school children a safe space of learning, support, and fun at our church every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. In 2024 we hope to continue our outreach in the community, both locally and globally.

-Dave Cobert, Chair

PLAYMATES PRESCHOOL

Enrollment is good... we only have a couple of vacancies due to two families that have moved out of state. As always, enrollment for the new school year will begin in January. Enrollment for the 2023/24 school year will begin January 4th, and we will continue with ONLINE enrollment. This works well. Because we have great enrollment numbers, we are doing well financially. This year, we are spending more on supplies due to the economy (everything costs more!), but the preschool board has approved a tuition increase for the upcoming school year. It will align us with the other area preschool's rates.

The DCFS representative conducted our annual inspection in October (no concerns as we always pass with no problems.) It is a renewal year for our license (every three years) so the process this past year has been a little longer than the years that it is only the inspection. We do have a few things that John Anderson is working on (for the Fire Marshall's report/inspection) that the inspector wanted addressed. We have to install new electrical outlets in the classrooms and replace ceiling tiles. We also updated our fire drill log information that we keep when we conduct fire drills.

We have seven teachers currently employed this year; two teachers are full-time (Robin Schaefer and Kelli Merrill), and five are part-time teachers (Marian Schulz, Amber Meyers, Janel Morgan, Caitlin Wilcox and Karin Streily.) Marian is in her 22nd year here at Playmates. (She did take a leave of absence for two months to have her hip surgery.) Robin is on year 16 and Kelli is on year 18 of employment with us. Our new teachers, Janel Morgan and Caitlin Wilcox, have been wonderful additions to our staff.

The addition of a new bathroom door in one classroom has been very much appreciated and invaluable to the function of that room. The new security cameras are in, and the monitor installed in the classroom is in use the entire day. We are very excited for this additional security for our building. Preschool parents are always impressed with our preschool regarding security of the building (versus some other preschools.)

Robin Schaefer
Director, Playmates Preschool

PROPERTY

Members of the 2023 Property committee included: John Anderson, Darrin Hansing, Carol Kashian, Steve Lienhop, Don Peters, Becca Rice, Dave Seyller, Kurt Swearingen, Curt Trout, and Dave White.

We experienced multiple challenges this year with our HVAC system, that often required quick response to maintain a comfortable environment for everyone who relies on our facility. Our committee welcomed two new members this year, including Curt Trout (Session member), and Steve Lienhop. Steve joined us when he volunteered to cover for Property Manager - John Anderson, while John was recovering from surgery. Our committee relies on a dedicated group of volunteers to keep our grounds and facilities well cared for. This includes the Gardening sub-committee, who graciously share their knowledge and expertise, and toil many hours each week to provide us with beautiful surroundings. The Christmas Decorating sub-committee who share their talents to beautify our church each Advent season. In addition, we relied on 15 volunteers, who kept our property mowed and neatly trimmed.

Accomplishments for the year included:

- Painted three offices in the Office Suite
- Installed new ballasts in emergency lights in Basement
- Purchased a desktop printer for our Finance Coordinator
- Purchased and installed new refrigerator in Kitchenette
- Purchased a Christmas tree and decorations
- Made repairs to HVAC, Air-Handler systems
- Purchased and installed new sump-pump for elevator shaft
- Purchased and installed new Laser projector in Sanctuary
- Updated Facility Use policy and form
- Designed, printed, and installed new 3D room name/number signs

Ongoing planning for potential projects:

- Purchase and install new compressor for sprinkler system
- Purchase and install new controls for HVAC system
- Audio upgrade; Purchase and install new microphones for Sanctuary, move current mics to the Great Hall
- Purchase new mini-fridge for Nursery
- Paint Nursery
- Research improving acoustics in Great Hall, which may include a “Loop” system
- Staff laptop replacements (3-4)
- Technical Support contract renewal (currently with CDS)
- Network Infrastructure improvements (currently Stability IT Solutions)
- Livestream camera improvements
- Paint Reception Area
- Paint trim around exterior of church

-Dave Seyller

RUMMAGE SALE

This was the first year that Dana Sutton and I were co-chairs. The sale was held on Friday, October 6, 3-6pm and Saturday, October 7, 2023, 8am-noon and made a little over \$11,800. The sale was a great success and people were waiting in line for over 2 hours for our doors to open. The line was out to Hershey Road and people were parking in the Meijer parking lot!

Following are some highlights and changes from prior years.

- We moved the start time up on Friday to 3pm to avoid needing food to feed volunteers and avoid conflict with other activities on Friday night. However, the start time will be moved next year as the earlier starting time impacted child pick up from Playmates Preschool.
- This year we were able to borrow hanging clothes racks, baskets, bins, shoe racks, and sign stands from Second Presbyterian Church. They were very generous with allowing us to borrow whatever we needed. We will be doing this again in future years.
- The traffic flow was changed this year so that shoppers entered and exited from different doors. This change worked well.
- Outdoor yard signs were purchased this year and placed in church member's yards and around town in friend's yards. These are being retained to use for the future.
- In addition to church members, many donations were made by others in the community.
- Publicity was provided by Scott Miller on social media and on WJBC.
- We offered items for free to other charitable organizations the last hour of the sale.

This year the recipient of the proceeds was our mission partner, Center for Hope. Becky Mentzer and I delivered a check to them for \$9,869. They were extremely grateful and honored. Catalyst Ministries also received a check for \$1,000. Two organizations, Restore and Abundant Life, picked up the leftovers after the sale and were each given a check for \$250 for their time and for picking up items. The leftovers are sold in their thrift stores.

In addition to the checks provided, other benefits of the rummage sale are

- Providing goods to those in need and other charities whom we invite to shop at no charge. We are always looking for others to invite to shop at the end of the sale.
- Giving people an incentive to donate and clean out. We helped some members get unwanted items removed from their homes.
- Recycling items unwanted by some and desired by others.
- Donating leftover items to Habitat Restore and Abundant Life for their resale and thrift shop.
- Offering our church family a way to work together towards a common goal and have fun.

We had a great group of volunteers working during the donation week and during the sale. Key team members included Caitlin Wilcox and Jenny Hoffman in the children's room, Marilyn Long, who went above and beyond to organize the linens, Carmen Sampson, Rob and Becky Mentzer, Leslie Walker, Carol Morris for all the preplanning work and Ray Horney for all the donations and assistance in the garage. We will be looking for additional volunteers next year to provide more cashiers on Friday afternoon. Thanks to everyone on the team for their service and feedback to make next year's sale even better.

Thanks to everyone for donating, volunteering and shopping.

-Linda Sabick

STEWARDSHIP

March of 2023 saw the Stewardship Committee beginning with a focus on engagement, spending the summer encouraging each member of the congregation to “Find Your Fit”. A series of announcements, sermons, testimonies in worship, and committee consulting sessions were aimed at helping people understand ways they might engage in the ministries of First Pres. and take that step to try something new.

Through this campaign our stewardship committee had the chance to speak with many congregants and help them find their fit within the church, which ranged from new committee members to additional landscaping crew to interest in forming more small groups. There’s never a wrong time to try something new - don’t hesitate to reach out to any member of the committee to talk about opportunities to find your fit!

The committee shifted gears in July and began forming and organizing for the fall financial campaign. As usual we began with Bob Beerup sharing an excellent foundational assessment of our church’s current finances and related trends. The committee again worked across each core area of ministry in the church to understand their evolving budget needs and new ministry opportunities. Along the way we also validated the proportional distribution of funds across each sector of the budget.

This year our Stewardship Campaign was centered on the theme of “Love to tell the story” and how our ministries and experiences at First Pres. Normal are telling the stories of Jesus. This theme was integrated into an updated Narrative Budget, several testimony interviews in worship, and a sermon focused on our “stories”. We again had fun putting stickers on and serving delicious stewardship cookies on Commitment Sunday!

As of January 9, 2024, we have pledges amounting to 93% of our targeted pledge amount, with over 1/3 of families pledging to increase their pledge from 2023. It’s not too late to submit a 2024 pledge card through the church’s website or by mailing your pledge card into the church. Pledge cards are still available if you need one. We would like to thank the congregation for their response to our campaign, and we pray that we will all fulfill these pledges to the best of our ability.

This year’s Stewardship Committee included Pastor Karol Schilling, Nancy Annegers, Josh Hoffman, Matt Litwiller, Bob Beerup, Barb Lemmon, Pastor Matt Wilcox, and Mark MacDonald. I would like to thank the other members of the committee for their service throughout 2023 and their commitment to advancing the ministries of our church.

Matt Litwiller
Stewardship Committee

WORSHIP

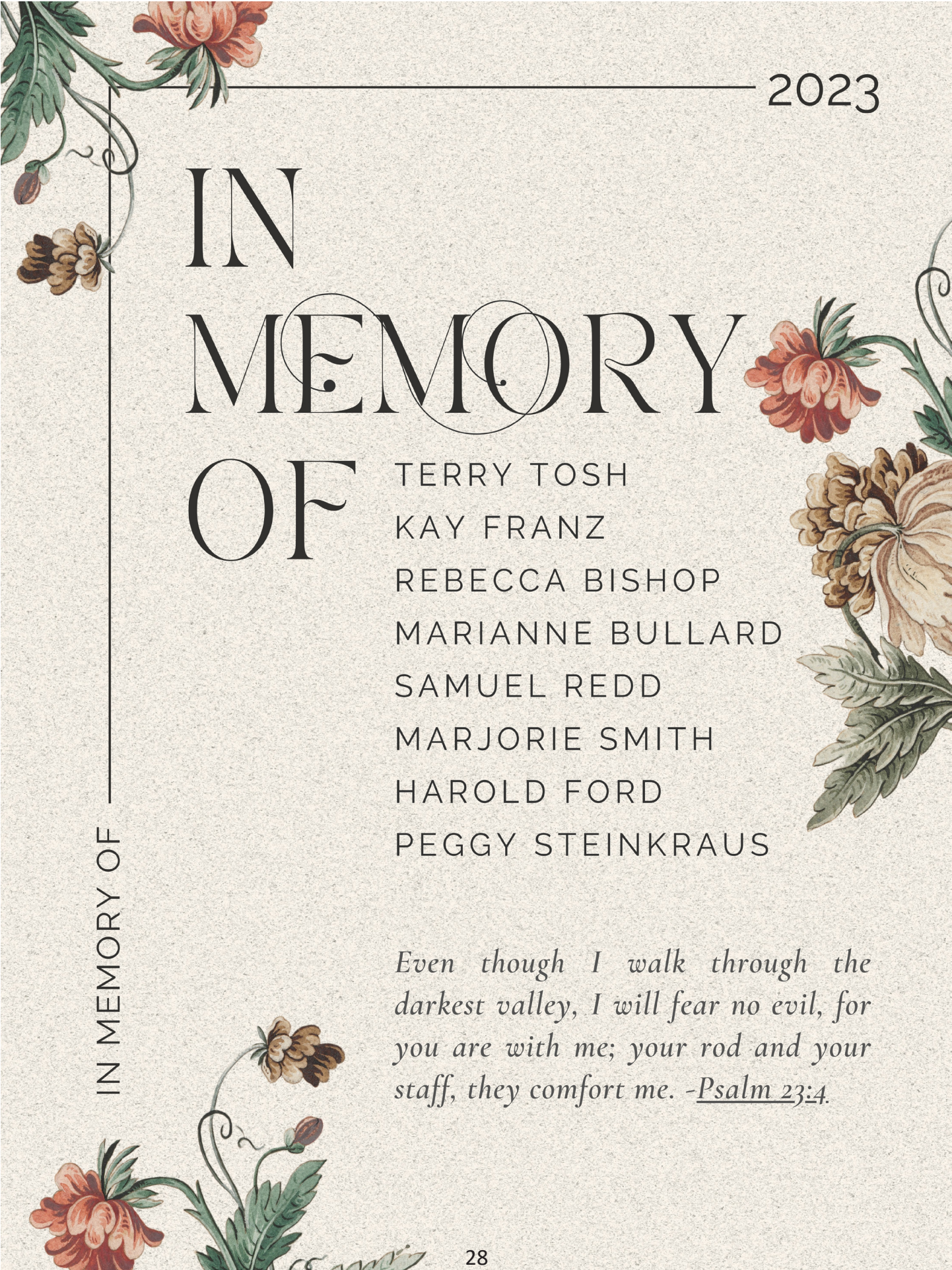
The worship committee continues to strive to provide the most meaningful and engaging worship experience at First Presbyterian Church. Our committee is comprised of individuals from varying aspects of the service, including music, technology, spiritual, and volunteer coordination. We welcomed new members this year and are grateful for their willingness to serve in this capacity.

Our work focuses on preparing and supporting special services, such as Ash Wednesday, Christmas, and Easter, as well as providing feedback on sermon series and potential activities that would grow our church family. This past year, we provided opportunities for volunteers such as ushers, liturgists, and communion servers. Additionally, we continue to think of creative ways to involve others in worship through flowers, special music, time with children and community events. Each member of our committee plays a valuable role in coordinating parts of the two services as well as managing the challenging job of recruiting and managing volunteers.

The work of the worship team has been greatly appreciated and I am deeply grateful for each individual's hard work to make all aspects of service run smoothly. In addition, the Praise team, including the dedicated members of the band and the tech team who show up every week to devote their time and efforts to make our worship service beautiful and accessible is an incredible blessing.

While much of the work takes place behind the scenes, our church family is fortunate to have members with a deep dedication to worship. The support and dedication of the Praise Team and Worship Committee is invaluable.

Julia White
Worship Committee Chair



2023

IN
MEMORY
OF

TERRY TOSH
KAY FRANZ
REBECCA BISHOP
MARIANNE BULLARD
SAMUEL REDD
MARJORIE SMITH
HAROLD FORD
PEGGY STEINKRAUS

IN MEMORY OF

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. -Psalm 23:4.

FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

2000 E College Avenue | Normal, IL | 61761

