

2021 – 2022 Program Year Annual Report



Presented at the June 26, 2022 Annual Congregational Meeting



Table of Contents

Moderator's Report.....	1
Annual Meeting 2022 Report from the Senior Pastor.....	2
Associate Pastor's Report.....	10
Together Again – Music Ministry During a Pandemic.....	12
Treasurer's Report.....	15
Program Committee Annual Report.....	19
Justice & Mission	
Fellowship	
Spiritual Life	
Worship Committee	
Christian Education	
Deputy Moderator of Trustees Report 2021-2022.....	23
Personnel	
Property	
Stewardship	
Financial Secretary	
Nominating Committee Report.....	27

Moderator's Report - Cathy Hansen July 2021- June 2022

Lessons learned in my first year as moderator:

1. Just because I say it or send it in an email, doesn't mean everyone heard or read what I said.
2. Just because I attempt transparency, doesn't mean I have achieved it.
3. Learning curves are my new normal.
4. PJs can sometimes be one-half of my meeting attire. 😊

If I had to pick a theme for this year it would be a tie between **returning, resilience and recovery**.

Returning to in-person meetings, services, gatherings, singing, praying, and just, well... churching seemed almost impossible to imagine, but we have returned. We are back. We are healthy. We are resilient. We are different. We are "hybrid", a word that has a new meaning and much more frequent use than before March 2020. And hybrid works. The new (to us) virtual meeting age was initially referred to as the Brady Bunch. (Does everybody even know who the Brady Bunch is?) It has become the new normal option for services, meetings, and gatherings. We now consider offering a Zoom/hybrid option as a standard format. We changed. Not only did we survive, but we also grew, and we are recovering and exceeding our expectations. I am continually amazed and blessed by the energy, efforts, passion, and goodness that comes from our pastors, leadership team, volunteers, and congregants who have committed to live faithfully, love limitlessly, and serve boldly, and who endeavor to be a community of God's radical inclusion and extravagant welcome to our fellow travelers on this journey of faith.

There are so many ways to learn about us and become a part of this family of faith we know as Friends Church. Here are a few ways to get to know the Friends family and for the Friends family to get to know you that I have learned over my 25 years or so at Friends

- stay connected by receiving our This Week at Friends, a weekly communication,
- be inspired by our Sunday worship services and become part of the Worship Team as a greeter, a lay leader, communion steward, or part of the music ministries
- stay enriched and engaged in your spiritual journey by trying one of the Sunday School classes
- find a small group by joining Peace Meals on 1st Thursdays, or the Linda Coats Book Club on 4th Thursdays
- participate in the various special offerings on Wednesday evenings
- stay hopeful by following and/or joining our fantastic youth group on their amazing journey

As moderator, I've learned how vital all of us are to our health and growth as a church and our community. We rely on all of us for the day-to-day functioning of our church. We have gifts, time, and/or talents that can be part of God's plan for this place and this time together at Friends Church. We see you. You are welcome here, no matter where you are on life's journey. Please read on in this Annual Report to learn more about who we are and how we, as a life-giving, vital part of the United Church of Christ, live out our faith together.

Blessings, gratitude, and peace to each one of you.

Annual Meeting 2022 Report from the Senior Pastor
Submitted by Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon

From the sermon, “Faithful Gardeners Needed,” preached on the Third Sunday in Lent, March 20, 2022:

Here’s a Lenten confession from your senior pastor. I’ve felt pretty impatient about things lately. This week, March 15th marked two years since the CDC announced the covid pandemic. That was a Sunday during Lent. I remember it like it was last week – Trent and me standing up here at the end of those services and saying, “We’re not going to gather for worship for two weeks and we’ll see what happens.” Little did we know. When I reflect on how things were before the pandemic, I get impatient. I get impatient about lower attendance when we were practically full every Sunday. I know that statistics say that since regathering, the national average of church attendance is only back to 67% of what it was pre-pandemic and that we’re really well off in spite of that, but I still get impatient. I know we wear masks for cooperative safety and I stand by it, but I get impatient with wearing them. I’m tired of not seeing people’s faces. I’m tired of missing people who might never come back to the physical space of church. I’m tired of wondering who might have come but won’t now. These are my anxious thoughts, and I get impatient. But what faith has taught me over the last two years is that church isn’t about numbers or immediate results. Church is a consistent journey back to the heart of God.

Looking over the last 12 months, I see a congregation that has remained faithful—faithful not just in its commitment to one another as a church, but faithful to the promises of God that lead us beside still waters as well as through low valleys. God’s promises are “for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope” (Jeremiah 29:11). These promises continue to encourage the faith of our congregation after a year of emerging from isolation into unfamiliarity.

By “unfamiliarity,” I mean everything from our worship practices being different in accordance with safety protocols, to several people moving away while more still are coming to the church and joining, to hybrid gatherings that bring us together in person and online, to the odd feeling of our church family reacquainting ourselves with one another in some cases and introducing ourselves to each other for the first time in others. As one of our AV techs Diego Rodriguez told me a few months ago when it became optional to wear masks in the worship services, after a while he felt like he recognized most of the people in the congregation with their masks on, but when the masks came off he felt like he didn’t know who those same people were anymore. These are the unfamiliar waters we have been navigating for the last 12 months, but God’s promises for peace and a future filled with hope are faithfully carrying us through them. This is a report of how the senior pastorate has been a part of that navigation from late-June of 2021 to mid-May of 2022.

Youth Ministry: The youth ministry is a group effort that would be impossible to do without help from church members (Tami Dudo; Christian Education Committee Chair Robin Miller; Sunday School teachers Ana-Luisa Ortiz-Martinez, Mo Bertrand, Lanette Schulte, and Mary Howell; Pastoral Intern Brooke Dooley; and parents). I continue to oversee this ministry for our young people. Since July, this has involved: planning and co-leading the summer 2021 mission trip; planning the summer 2022 mission trip; activating GroupMe and Remind apps to foster

communication with youth and parents respectively; coordinating the youth-led worship services; co-leading online youth group gatherings; coordinating and delegating in-person semi-weekly youth group gatherings; coordinating the youth group's involvement in the CROP Hunger Walk; hosting a gathering for youth and families at Casa De Leon; delegating responsibilities to Brooke Dooley for planning youth group activities, lessons, and outings; coordinating a calendar for meal provisions from parents for youth group dinners; getting youth involved in the hybrid Christmas pageant; weekly Youth Updates via email; the youth group's Christmas party; coordinating Capture the Flag at Jason Abbott's request; and being in prayer for our youth and adult volunteers constantly.

Brazos Valley Medical Debt Forgiveness (BVMDF): On the 2021 summer mission trip, our group of nine youth missionaries learned about the effects of medical debt on so many in America, and how some United Church of Christ congregations and Conferences have worked with the New York-based non-profit RIP Medical Debt to purchase debt portfolios for pennies on the dollar in order to then forgive that debt, thereby helping their neighbors in need break the cycle of poverty incurred by insurmountable debt. The youth decided they wanted to start up a campaign of their own, so I got to work initiating their vision. For my part, this involved: contacting the Reach Beyond Mission presenter who initially discussed this with the youth during their mission trip to inquire about starting our own campaign; communications with our South Central Conference minister and National UCC Officers to obtain more information and get whatever support would be available from the Conference and National UCC; and collaborating with Brooke Dooley to get our RIP Medical Debt webpage up and running. Brooke handled the lion's share of this work, communicating directly with RIP Medical Debt, working with our youth to get ideas for their page design, communicating those plans to Kenshi Westover for him to create a brilliant page for the group, and then maintaining communications with RIP Medical Debt when we exceeded our goal for donations again and again and again. As the youth group's medical debt forgiveness campaign was in its final weeks, I worked with Brooke, volunteers Tami Dudo and Mary Howell, and videographer Kenshi Westover to create a video with our youth where they explained the why, what, and how of RIP Medical Debt and their BVMDF campaign. Most of this was done on April 10; however, I also met one-on-one with two other youth on April 11 and 12 who could not be there that Sunday for their on-camera contributions. The video was shared on the youth group's Facebook page and accessed from there by local media. When the youth group's campaign reached its goal of raising \$40,000 and the goal was then raised to \$50,000, I was contacted by the National UCC for a meeting with them, UCC News, and RIP Medical Debt to discuss drawing attention to and celebrating BVMDF. With help from UCC News and RIP Medical Debt's media relations rep, I put together a press release about BVMDF and the Spring Fling event celebrating its conclusion. With help from Kathleen Witte Ninke, I pitched it to KBTX as an exclusive, and they covered it by attending our Easter services and running a story about it on the evening news, as well as a follow-up story about its progress on the 10 o'clock news, Apr. 23. I coordinated getting a couple of our youth on camera for that story. After the KBTX story aired on Easter Sunday evening, I shared the press release with other media outlets. It was picked up by KRHD News, who interviewed Brooke and I at Friends Church and ran the story on April 19. UCC News asked that I provide pictures of the Spring Fling event and give a quote about it so that they could run it as a [feature story](#). In total, the youth group raised \$51,109.62, enabling them to buy up and forgive some \$5.1 million in the Brazos Valley and throughout Texas.

ONA Celebration: I contributed to the 25th anniversary of Friends Church being an ONA congregation by 1) participating in a Zoom planning meeting, 2) writing opening remarks and questions for the ONA panel, 3) co-moderating the ONA panel with Trent in the 9am and 11am services, 4) promoting the festivities, and, of course, 5) participating in the ONA cookout, the Sunday services, and the fellowship lunch for our panelists and ONA celebrants afterwards.

Sunday School: I worked with the Christian Education Committee to bring back in-person Sunday School for the first time since March of 2020. This involved a meeting with parents to assess comfort levels with safety protocols for gathering indoors, most convenient times, and other concerns; seeking out Sunday School teachers; putting together a follow-up letter with Christian Ed Committee Chair Robin Miller to parents of children and youth, grades K-12, announcing the return date for Sunday School (9/26) and sharing the details about classrooms, teachers, and what to expect in terms of safety protocols; and then weekly communications with parents with reminders and updates about classes.

Christian Response to Christian Nationalism: A webinar from the Baptist Joint Committee in their series, “Christians Against Christian Nationalism,” directed me to a three-session curriculum for small groups on the topic. With Andrew McNeely, I co-led this offering on Tuesdays in September in hybrid format with Andrew facilitating online and me facilitating in person. This involved meetings with Andrew to plan classes, collaborative prep of each lesson, weekly updates and reminders emailed to participants, co-leadership of the classes themselves, and a follow-up survey submitted to the Baptist Joint Committee.

Wednesday Nights at Friends Church: Wednesday evening gatherings had not been offered since March of 2020. In August, the ministerial staff and I discussed the possibilities of space usage on Wednesday nights given the choir’s schedule. We determined that, with proper ventilation and our ongoing mask requirements at that time, we could safely offer the weekly Wednesday evening gatherings at 6:30pm in the double classroom in hybrid format. The midweek gatherings offered prayer and meditation, an interactive learning component, and communion. Brooke, Trent, and I co-led the midweek offerings through mid-December. The Delta and Omicron variants put Wednesday nights on hold until April 20, when Brooke and I began co-leading Confirmation Classes for Adults. This involved me putting together the lessons, preparing keynote presentations to guide the hybrid format, setting up the double classroom for in-person and online participation, co-facilitating the lessons, emailing reminders and updates to participants, and promoting.

Supervised Ministry with Brooke Dooley: In August, our Member-in-Discernment (of a call to ministry) and Pastoral Intern Brooke Dooley embarked on her final year of seminary, involving two semesters of supervised ministry in completion of the Master of Divinity degree. The program requires that students work for at least eight hours weekly in a field setting for supervised ministry, and that they have a supervisor throughout this process. From late-August to mid-May, I was honored to serve as Brooke’s supervisor. This work involved an online training for supervisors; two meetings with Brooke to go over our respective trainings (she attended one for students) and to establish a Covenant of Learning for the process (which is basically Brooke’s call agreement or contract); hour-long weekly meetings with Brooke to go over her

progress with the Covenant and provide mentorship in various areas of ministry at Friends Church; mid- and final-semester evaluations; communications with Brooke's Lay Training Committee (church members Kathy Langlotz, Nancy Bertsch, Trina Davis, Ronnie Holz); and collaborative ministry throughout the process involving worship services, youth ministry, evangelism and outreach, pastoral care, social justice, and more. It has been and continues to be a privilege to work alongside Brooke, especially at this particular time in her ministerial pursuits. Moving forward, I will work with the Committee on Ministry of the United Church of Christ's Heart of Texas Association and Brooke toward her hopeful ordination at the end of this year.

Trunk-or-Treat Event: Susan Fontaine and I worked with the City of College Station to get a special event permit to allow for a food truck to be onsite for our trunk-or-treating event on Oct. 30 in order to do a profit share benefitting Tiny Hope Village. Despite our best efforts, the City did not grant the request until the day before the event, forcing Wild Garlic, the food truck operated by Tanner Purdum, to cancel. Still, trunk-or-treating went well. Kathleen Witte Ninke helped me with promoting the event. Despite several in the congregation being unfamiliar with "trunk-or-treating," church members responded enthusiastically to the vision for this event, bringing 20 of their vehicles to our parking lot with candy in the trunk. Some of those cars were even decorated for Halloween. More than 130 children and youth attended, most of whom were not Friends Church kids. Now that we have seen what this event looks like and how it resonates with the community, I have high hopes for us making it even more elaborate and better promoted in October of this year.

Noonday Check-in & Prayer Times: Through the end of last year, I had continued to either facilitate the Monday Noonday Check-in & Prayer Time or find someone else to facilitate it in my absence. At the start of this year, I intentionally stepped away from this ministry, allowing for it to keep morphing into a lay-led small group, which it had become with a consistent core group of attendees. In their own discussions, the small group of faithful Noonday Check-in & Prayer Time attendees decided to sunset this ministry, feeling that it had served its purpose of keeping us connected through the pandemic's quarantine days and subsequent months of isolation.

Ginger Younts Funeral: A longtime frequent attendee of Friends Church who had been suffering from a degenerative disease for a few years, Ginger Younts, passed away in early December. She had requested that I do her funeral, and that the congregation sing the old hymn, "In the Garden." I had several phone conversations with Ginger's adult children and siblings to inform the eulogy. The service was held at the First Baptist Church of Bay City, where Ginger was originally from. With no pianist being available for the service, I learned her requested hymn on guitar and led the entire service. Thankfully, our dutiful Moderator, Cathy Hansen, went with me, driving us to and from the service. I also led the graveside service. Because Ginger was such a reserved person that very few people in the congregation knew, her service and my involvement in it went largely unnoticed by Friends Church, so I wanted to highlight this in my report.

Confirmation: In February, Confirmation 2022 officially started with classes for our seven confirmands, assignments for them and their adult mentors, and field trips to different local houses of worship. I am mostly in charge of Confirmation. So far this has involved: a Zoom

meeting with parents of potential confirmands to explain the process and answer questions; a meeting with the Christian Education Committee and Sunday School teachers to verify the schedule for weekly classes; helping parents match their confirmand with a mentor; planning and co-leading or delegating classes; weekly communications; follow-up correspondences from classes and field trips; working confirmands into worship leadership; and being in prayer for our confirmands, their mentors and parents throughout the process. This is my sixth Confirmation class to lead at Friends Church. I'm tremendously grateful to Brooke Dooley and our Sunday School teachers for their support and co-leadership. Confirmation will conclude on Children's Sabbath Sunday, October 16, 2022.

AllCreation Spring Equinox Edition: AllCreation.org is an online collective "committed to highlighting diverse voices, in hopes of a more balanced conversation, and one in which the dominant culture can listen to and learn from the wisdom of all people, the collective wisdom it will take to help humans be part of creation, nurture it, and continue to be nurtured by it." Its collection of essays, podcasts, video interviews, photography, artwork, and poetry is produced quarterly. In December, I was tasked with being the guest editor for their spring equinox edition. The theme was "dominionism," where we asked Christians and people of various faiths, "What does it mean to be a Christian [or insert faith tradition] and not be the center of the universe?" I asked contributors to look at the Creation story and our understanding of being granted dominion over the earth and all that is in it from a view that rejects anthropocentrism, the belief that human beings are the central or most important entity in the universe. While this guest editor task was not part of my official responsibilities as senior pastor of Friends Church, I saw it as an extension of our earth stewardship covenant and an opportunity for evangelism and outreach. It involved about 60 hours of my time. When the spring equinox edition was released in March, the executive editor, Chris Searles, appreciated the content so much that we decided to create the first-ever printed version of it, for which we enlisted help from our own Kenshi Westover. With the Social Justice Class' blessing, I invited Chris to lead their class on May 1, and to offer a brief explanation of AllCreation.org to the congregation. The printed version of the spring edition, to which our own Kelly Wellman and Toni Klemm contributed, were snatched up by church members after both services. I am grateful for having this opportunity as a guest editor and for the gifts of learning and spiritual growth it has given our congregation and many others.

Linda Coats: In December, I took three church members to visit Linda at the assisted living facility in Humble. On January 5, Linda's daughter-in-law, Katy, informed me that Linda was in "end stages" according to hospice. The next day, I went to see Linda and to meet with Katy. Katy granted me permission to share news about Linda's decline so that her death would not come as a shock. We also discussed various matters that Katy was being overwhelmed by: locating Linda's will, managing her home, dealing with interpersonal family conflicts, and having a celebration of life service for Linda at Friends Church. The next day, Jan. 6, I took Stacy, Glenn Thurman, and Rhoda Bertsch to see Linda one last time. On January 10, Katy contacted me before the sun came up with the news that Linda had died. I was not allowed to share that information publicly until Katy had informed the family, which was not done until that evening. I then shared the news of Linda's passing on our email prayer chain and social media platforms, and proceeded to work with Katy on various details. For example, this involved communicating with my dad, a lawyer, about what to do in the event that a will could not be located given that Linda has no legal heirs. I spoke with several people from Linda's past to

inform the eulogy. The staff and I planned and co-lead her service. So much more time, attention, and various details went into the process of saying goodbye to Linda, walking with her family in their grief, and gathering the community to celebrate her life, but I don't want to keep listing those tasks at the risk of it sounding obligatory. All the work poured into celebrating Linda Coats was a gift, and it was a group effort for which our church family should be proud. I know Linda would be.

Golden Ordination Anniversary: I was ordained into the Gospel ministry of Jesus Christ on January 20, 2002. I do not often celebrate my ordination anniversary, but when your 20th anniversary happens to be your golden anniversary, you have reason to celebrate. I wrote a note to the congregation thanking everyone who contributed to honoring that golden anniversary in the worship services on January 16, but I wanted to reiterate that gratitude here. I'm honored to have celebrated 20 years in ordained ministry with Friends Congregational Church.

Jubilee Fund: In late-March I communicated with Justice & Missions (J&M) Committee Chair Andrew McNeely to get a recommendation from his committee regarding a recipient of the first-ever disbursement from the Jubilee Fund. The J&M Committee recommended that Tiny Hope Village receive that disbursement on Easter Sunday, April 17.

Evangelism & Outreach: In the absence of an Evangelism & Outreach chair (Kathleen Witte Ninke had to vacate the position when her spouse Josh and she moved to Louisville in March), I assumed those responsibilities in the three months until a new chair would be voted in. These responsibilities have mostly involved maintaining the social media platforms of the church (the Facebook and Instagram pages of Friends Church and of the youth group, and the church's Twitter account); changing the church sign (coming up with the messages/announcements to put on it; soliciting, training, and coordinating schedules for volunteers); and managing the website (getting instructions to Michael Rangel and/or Lauren Vasselli for updates, changes, and edits).

Spring Fling, April 23: The Spring Fling was a vision I had since the Trunk-or-Treating event did not work out with a permit in time from the City of CS for a food truck to be onsite. With impeccable help from Susan Fontaine, we got that permit well in advance of the Spring Fling to allow for planning and promotion of the event. For my part this involved: announcing it via TW@F and the worship guides; creating a Facebook event; getting Kenshi Westover to create an image and short video promoting it; including details about the event in a press release shared with local media; changing the church sign to announce it; securing vendors to do a profit share at the event; soliciting musicians to play at the event from our youth; coordinating rehearsals for the live music; coordinating the sound system and help at the sound board; securing our awesome DJ, Eli Vasquez; and, setting up the event itself. Especially given that so many people in our congregation were out of town or had other plans, that it was the weekend after Easter, and that A&M Consolidated's prom conflicted with it, I was very concerned that no one would show up; but the turnout and engagement from all who attended exceeded my worried expectations. Here's hoping for Spring Fling II after Easter in 2023.

Other Pastoral tasks

- United Campus Ministry Board meetings
- Writing and coordinating content for *The Epistle*, the church's quarterly magazine

- Worship service and liturgy planning
- Helping church member relocate couple from motel to Twin City Mission
- Typing up prayers from Pray cards for weekly prayers and emailing (a task now handled by Kristin Harper typing them up, and Michael Rangel emailing them)
- Typing up information submitted on Welcome cards and emailing (a task now handled by Michael Rangel)
- Weekly follow-up with guest requests via the Welcome cards and online visitor forms
- Writing Midweek Message devotionals, emailed to the congregation at 11am on Wednesdays, and posted to church's Facebook page
- Pastoral care and counseling (in person, Zoom, phone, text)
- Preparing and leading Servant Leader Summits for all FCC leaders
- Leading weekly staff meetings
- Outdoor worship services planning, coordinating, delegating, co-leading, 12/5
- Longest Night Service: organized musicians and singers, co-led music rehearsal, coordinated set-up with Worship Committee, co-led service
- Quarterly Senior Pastoral Relations Team meetings
- Planned and co-led Ash Wednesday services, incorporating UCM and Friends Church college students into leadership of evening service, March 2
- Officiant for wedding, Plantersville, March 4
- Remarks and prayer at funeral reception for frequent guest, The Village, March 4
- Nominating committee meetings
- Shot and edited video short for "masks optional, but respected" announcement w/Brooke and Trent
- Funeral for Koby Fitzgerald (mom referred to me by church member), Apr. 16
- Home visits to church members
- Theology on Tap

Evangelism, Outreach, Community Involvement

- Monthly columns for The Eagle every third Saturday
- Texas Impact "Let My People Vote" program, training, rally, legislative visits and on-camera interview
- United Church of Christ's Heart of Texas Assoc. clergy and licensed lay ministers meetings
- Ordination service for Rev. Chelsea McCutchin, Austin, July 31
- Interviewed for dissertation re: allyship from community leaders, Aug. 30
- Introductory meeting w/new minister for UU of the Brazos Valley, Sept. 2
- Music in Interfaith Service of Remembrance for 20th Commemoration of 9/11, First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Sept. 7
- Bryan ISD Faith-based Leaders quarterly meetings
- Facilitated Friends Church table at LGBTQ+ Pride Center's Rainbow Resource Fair at Texas A&M's MSC, Sept. 16
- Introductory meeting w/new pastor of First Christian Church, Bryan, Sept. 22
- Light of Liberty Breakfast benefitting BIIN, American Pavilion at Veterans Park, Oct. 28
- Monthly column for The Eagle, Oct. 16

- Interview w/KDRH News re: comments made by Councilman Maloney in public forum, 10/21
- Served as clergy liaison (MC) for CROP Hunger Walk, Veterans Park, Nov. 7
- Remarks at Celebration of Life service for Paul Parrish, Driftwood, TX, Nov. 11
- Remarks at TDOR (Transgender Day of Remembrance) Vigil at Friends Church, Nov. 17
- UCM benefit, “An Evening w/Nadia Bolz-Weber,” Equine Complex Auditorium, Nov. 18
- Panelist for CORG (Confronting Our Racism Group) “Race & Faith” forum, Jan. 15
- Introductory meeting of Bryan ISD building naming committee, Jan. 21
- Panelist for Treehouse Lutherans program, “How to be a better ally,” Feb. 8
- BISD Maintenance and Transportation Building Naming Committee meeting, Feb. 10
- Organized and attended Pastors for Texas Children's “Coffee & Conversation about Public Education,” at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Feb. 15. [Find the story here.](#)
- Podcast interview of Imam Islam Mossaad for AllCreation.org Spring Equinox edition, Austin, Feb. 17
- The REACH Project luncheon, TAMU, Feb. 18
- Zoom interview of Dr. Norman Wirzba for AllCreation.org Spring Equinox edition, Austin, Feb. 18
- B-CS Habitat For Humanity Community Builders Breakfast, Feb. 23
- Podcast interview of UU Minister Erin Walter for AllCreation.org Spring Equinox edition, Bastrop, Feb. 24
- Delivered invocation at 21st Annual Brazos Valley African American History Museum’s Appreciation Event, Feb. 26
- Participated in peaceful protest of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine outside Russian Consulate, Houston, Feb. 27 (You can see some of our church members and me in this news coverage of the event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry5-seuP59U>.)
- Podcast interview of Rabbi Matt Rosenberg for AllCreation.org, March 1
- Participated in peaceful protest of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Rudder Plaza, TAMU, March 4
- Co-coordinated & facilitated Community Support and Info Sharing re: Mandatory Reporting of Trans Youth event at Friends Church, March 6
- Co-planned and participated (remarks, prayer, music leadership) in Prayer Service for Peace, St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, March 10
- Zoom meeting re: accreditation of Brite Divinity School’s supervised ministry program, March 16
- Guest lecturer for Religion & the Environment class at TAMU, Liberal Arts Bldg., Marh 24
- Allies Across Aggieland table for Friends Church at Rudder Plaza, May 30
- Guest speaker for Unitarian Universalist Church of the Brazos Valley noon speaker series on topic of dominionism, March 31
- Brazos County Health District open house event, Apr. 14
- Relocation Task Force meetings for concerned neighbors of residents having to move from trailer park, College Station City Hall, Apr. 14 and May 18
- Pastors for Texas Children panel and conversation, May 16

Associate Pastor's Report
Submitted by Pastor Trent Williams

One year ago on Pentecost Sunday, we gathered in the sanctuary for in-person worship for the first time in 14 months. It was a joyful moment, although tinged with the sadness of all that we had been through. Over this past year, we've re-adjusted and experienced renewal, living into the new realities of life in a post-Covid world.

Although much has shifted for us, we remain a community committed to our vision of living faithfully, loving limitlessly, and serving boldly. We have welcomed new members into our community, taken stands for justice in our community and world, gathered for fellowship opportunities, classes, and new groups. New leaders have taken on their roles, and our youth group took on the challenge of medical debt in our community, raising more than \$50,000 to help our neighbors in need.

My ministry over this past year has continued to be shaped by the move towards the duties and title of Executive Pastor, as I've continued working with the stewardship ministry, the finance committee, overseeing our endowment funds, and planning for the future. I've also taken on responsibilities in personnel, property, and continued working with our technology and digital ministry. We were able to hire an AV Tech, Diego Rodriguez, to help oversee our Sunday morning worship and livestreaming, and we converted our email system to the Google Workspace platform, giving a host of new tools to better coordinate the ministries of Friends Church.

I've also been blessed to continue working with the Spiritual Life team on inquiry classes, adult Sunday School, the revival of Peacemeal, and the new Linda Coats Book Club. This is an energetic team and I'm excited to see them continue to dream about ways to spiritually connect the members and friends of Friends Church. I've also enjoyed being able to once again facilitate the Morning Manna bible study class on Sunday mornings. We've explored such topics as the gospel of John and the variety of biblical translations. It is my hope as well to once again offer a short-term summer bible study series in July, so stay tuned for more details about that.

This year, we've also been blessed to welcome Brooke Dooley as our Pastoral Intern and a member of the staff team. We have had the opportunity to enhance our team partnership and plan meaningful worship services and spiritual development opportunities for our congregation.

I was blessed to be able to take one month of a three month sabbatical that you have afforded me after five years of service. I spent the month following Easter visiting seminary friends, family, and catching up on my fiction reading. I'm grateful for this time of renewal and looking forward to the two month block early next year when I anticipate being able to do more traveling.

In the wider church, I was elected last June to serve as the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ, and I've enjoyed the work of the conference over this past year. We welcomed our new conference minister, Rev. Phil Hodson, and I participated in the planning and coordinated the worship for this year's Annual

Meeting at Camp Allen. I look forward to the next year of service and then taking over as President of the Board.

Thank you once again for your faithfulness and commitment to the ministry and mission of Friends Church. It remains a deep joy to serve with you and among you, and I look forward to all that God has in store for us in the year ahead.

With hope,
Pastor Trent

Together Again – Music Ministry During a Pandemic
By Chris Hoffman, Director of Music Ministries

The COVID pandemic certainly made us all get creative and learn new skills, especially how to make music happen virtually while quarantining. While I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn new skills to make music happen, I think we can all agree that nothing beats the experience and the spiritual fulfillment of live music. After keeping a close eye on cases, vaccines, and rehearsal safety research, the Music Ministry at Friends Church was able to resume in-person activities in August of 2021.

The Chancel Choir was able to come together with a “Welcome Back” get-together on August 4th. The purpose of that was to watch our concert performance of Rutter’s “Requiem” at Carnegie Hall from February of 2020. COVID shut everything down shortly after we returned from that residency, so we were not able to view our performance together until well after a year. The next week, August 11th, we hit the ground running, singing in person again, and rehearsing anthems for Sunday services.

While continuing to follow the latest research, choir rehearsals took on a different layout. Each singer had to wear a specially designed singer’s mask. This mask was designed alongside the University of Colorado (Boulder) Aerosol Study related to musicians and actors, and is held out from the face, allowing the voice to not be muffled, and allow for optimal breathing – all while forming a very secure seal around the face. Rehearsal lengths were reduced to just 50 minutes, and the singers had to be spread out in the sanctuary during rehearsals. This resulted in some sacrifices. Shortened rehearsals meant that their director (yours truly) could not nitpick details as much, and therefore perhaps even more time was required for individual practice at home. Being spread out in the sanctuary presented challenges in listening to each other, and creating a homogeneous blend, but the most important thing was that we were back together, and singing together.

On a personal note, I was very grateful that every singer chose to get vaccinated and stay updated on their boosters. In fact, across many, many musical groups in America and around the world, one can see that musicians valued vaccinations, as we learned this was the best way to keep rehearsing and performing live – and no one was keen on having to go back to a completely virtual existence.

We continued to watch case numbers and vaccination rates in our area, looking for signs to get even closer to “normal.” Eventually, we were able to stay in the choir loft area during an entire service if members felt comfortable doing so (when we first came back to singing live during a service, the choir had to come up for their anthem, and go right back to their seats in the sanctuary, in order to minimize close contact). By April 3, we were able to move to a masks-optional policy, and we have been able to remain that way, as of the date of this report. All these precautions had to be taken, as singers were dubbed as “super spreaders” at the start of the pandemic, and the singing voice could project aerosols over 20 feet. AS a result, a completely different set of precautions had to be taken than what other musical groups had to follow.

Another advantage of coming together again to sing was the ability to present our two yearly Cantata/Masterwork services. The Christmas Cantata was once again live, and took place on December 9th. A newer Cantata, written by Joseph Martin, and appropriately titled “Let There Be Christmas,” was a joyous event of holiday music. Traditional carols, carols with newer texts, and original carols were performed, with the story of Jesus’ birth woven in-between. The Choir was able to be joined by a Consort Orchestra, consisting of piano, synthesizer, trumpets, trombones, percussion, flute, and clarinet.

The Good Friday service was just a little bit more special this year. After two years of waiting, the Choir was finally able to perform what they sang at Carnegie Hall – John Rutter’s “Requiem.” The original College Station performance was supposed to happen on Good Friday of 2020, but again, we all know what happened. For this performance, the Choir was joined by a Chamber Orchestra consisting of flute, oboe, cello, timpani, glockenspiel, harp, and organ. We were also able to beautifully blend various components of a Good Friday service around the movements of the Requiem.

The Handbell Choir was able to resume in-person rehearsals and performances as well. Rehearsals started off close to normal; the only difference was the requirement to ring in masks, but once the church moved to a masks-optional policy, the bells were able to do the same.

The bell schedule has changed a bit since before the pandemic. The bells used to ring during the Offertory on the second Sunday of the month. For the 2021-2022 year, they still rang during the second Sunday of the month, but now rang during the Choral Anthem spot of the service, known for them as the “Handbell Anthem.” This allowed the Choir to have one guaranteed Sunday off a month (which helped lighten their rehearsal load, since their rehearsal times had to be reduced, as previously mentioned).

A very special addition to the Handbell Choir’s offerings this year was a feature during Christmas Eve. For the first time in this group’s existence, the Handbell Choir presented a 30-minute mini-concert right before the Christmas Eve service. As a director/educator, I thought this was a great way to stretch the ringers’ musicianship. For those coming to the church that evening, it added to the spirituality of the evening.

There were only a couple obstacles that the bells had to face this year. Since this ensemble relies on one person per part (compared to the Chancel Choir, which has multiple singers per part), absences mean gaps in the music. Due to illnesses (COVID and otherwise), we had a couple rehearsals that had to be cancelled because half of the ensemble could not be present. Inclement weather (one snow/ice storm, and one tornado warning) resulted in two other cancelled rehearsals. Despite these obstacles, the bells had a wonderful year, and enjoyed the different ringing techniques they got to use for their various pieces.

A desire for the Handbell Choir is to add hand chimes to their bell set. This adds yet more depth and dimension to their playing. If you would like more information on how to financially help the group add these to the ensemble, please get in contact with me.

With all the offerings that the Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir provided for our services at Friends, there were still various services where they did not perform, so other musical offerings were able to be present during various services. Many thanks go to the various soloists, small ensembles, and praise band groups who contributed to several services throughout this past year. The goal is to try to have something for everyone with these musical offerings, depending on who is available. If you would like to add your musical gifts to any of these groups, please reach out to me, and I will help get you connected to the group(s) that are calling your name.

This year marks my 16th anniversary of serving at Friends. I feel blessed to work every week with talented musicians, who are all wonderful human beings. The past couple years have certainly presented unique challenges for us all, but I can't imagine going through these challenges with anyone else. Cheers to the years ahead!

Treasurer's Report
Theresa Walker, Treasurer

Friends Church began 2021 by passing a \$443,245.18 expenditure budget with revenue projections of \$434,644.52. The year ended with a net income surplus of \$17,189.16.

General Operating Funds

General funds are unrestricted and are used in the general operations of the church. In 2021, pledges, offerings, and miscellaneous income collected was \$419,939.18 which represented 96% of projected revenue. In 2021, operating expenses of \$402,750.02 represented 85% of projected expenditures.

2021 ended with a net income surplus of \$17,189.16. The surplus was primarily the result of delaying scheduled major repairs for 2021 due to the extensive repairs needed as a result of the ice storm and hail damage. These repairs were covered by insurance. Also, overall Program expenses were down due to COVID restrictions on group gatherings for most of the year. Below is a breakdown of 2021 Income and Expenses:

Income	Totals
Pledges	\$336,459.28
Offerings	\$ 82,385.46
Other Income	\$ 994.36
Total	\$419,939.18

Expenses	Totals
Administrative	\$ 84,657.96
Programs	\$ 16,725.15
Trustees	\$301,366.91
Total	\$402,750.02

Net Income Surplus	<u>\$ 17,189.16</u>
--------------------	---------------------

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are monies set aside for a particular purpose as a result of designated giving. Restricted fund balances are carried over from year to year. Insurance proceeds received for the ice storm and hail damage were set aside for the repair of the building. Below is a breakdown of 2021 Restricted Income and Disbursements:

Income	Totals
One Time Funds	\$ 10,744.62
Crisis Fund	\$ 375.00
Youth Mission Trip	\$ 2,045.00
Building Repair/Restoration	\$ 135,469.28
Accessibility Fund	\$ 5,000.00
Pastors Discretionary	\$ 600.00
Music Ministry	\$ 2,100.00
Redirect Stimulus	\$ 3,350.00

Mortgage Principal	\$ 8,105.00
Jubilee Fund	\$ 358.11
SCC Christmas Fund	\$ 2,370.00
SCC NIN	\$ 1,120.00
SCC OCWM	\$ 100.00
SCC OGHS	\$ 3,035.00
SCC Strengthen the Church	\$ 100.00
Total	\$ 174,872.01

Disbursements	Totals
One Time Fund	\$ 5,698.25
Crisis Fund	\$ 648.95
Music Ministry	\$ 1,124.06
Youth Mission Trip	\$ 2,689.24
Major Repairs	\$ 141,073.66
Accessibility Enhancement	\$ 5,420.00
Solar Panel	\$ 4,236.00
Mortgage Principal	\$ 17,572.50
FCCF Care Fund	\$ 1,100.00
Redirect Stimulus	\$ 4,755.84
SCC Christmas Fund	\$ 3,145.00
SCC NIN	\$ 1,120.00
SCC OCWM	\$ 100.00
SCC OGHS	\$ 3,035.00
SCC Strengthen the Church	\$ 100.00
Total	\$191,818.50

Other Restricted Funds

Throughout 2021, the congregation has financially supported many charities and causes. This support came through Crop Walk, Annual Dues, Redirected Stimulus funds, Love collections as well as other efforts. Below is a list of those charities and our financial support:

Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network	\$2,085.28
Brazos Church Pantry	\$ 500.00
Brazos Valley Food Bank	\$ 500.00
CWS Crop Walk	\$ 291.00
Family Promise of College Station	\$ 500.00
Heart of Texas Association	\$1,355.00
Tiny Hope Village	\$2,585.28
United Campus Ministry	\$1,759.96
Texas Impact	\$ 100.00
Back Bay Mission	\$ 250.00
Scotty's House	\$1,585.28

We also maintained our 5 for 5 status with the SCC. Our giving for 2021 was as follows:

Christmas Fund	\$ 3,145.00
Neighbors in Need	\$ 1,120.00
One Great Hour Sharing	\$ 3,035.00
Strengthen the Church	\$ 100.00
OCWM	\$ 5,350.00

Operating Reserves

The Reserves Account is Friend's Emergency Fund. Church Council authorized an additional \$37,500 to be added to existing \$50,000 reserves account during 2021. The additional funds came from prior years surplus. This fund was transferred to the United Church Fund. The balance as of April 30, 2022 was \$87,523.94.

Capital Funds

In 2021, Church Council authorized \$12,000 from prior years surplus to be applied directly to the mortgage principal. Designated giving during 2021 was \$7,920. The additional funds plus the required monthly mortgage payments of \$1,684.22 reduced the mortgage principal by \$40,468.46 during 2021. As of April 30, 2022, the mortgage balance was at \$65,837.20.

Investment Funds

Two new investment accounts were set up with United Church Fund. The church reserve account of \$87,500 was invested in a Cash Fund and \$60,000 of prior years surplus was invested in a Fixed and Equity Fund.

The Jubilee Fund with an initial investment of \$12,050 was invested in The UCC Cornerstone Fund in April 2017. These funds will earn interest, which will be given to a charitable cause every 7 years. At the end of year 49, the fund principal will be distributed to a charitable cause. Interest earned through the end of 2021 was \$1,119.98

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at treasurer@friends-ucc.org.

Church Snapshot
As of April 30, 2022

Outstanding Loans

Mortgage	\$ 65,837.20
----------	--------------

Available Funds

General Operating	\$ 82,220.11
Other Restricted	\$ 77,660.36
UCC Fund Cash Savings	\$ 87,523.94
UCC Fund Fixed/Equity	\$ 57,624.25
Jubilee Fund	<u>\$ 12,050.00</u>
Total	<u>\$ 317,078.66</u>

Note: There are two promissory notes held by the Local Church Ministries of the UCC. The amounts are approximately \$20,000.00 and \$86,293.00. We will only be required to repay these notes if we sell our land and building, leave the UCC, or no longer use the facility for our ministry. In 2021, we did not make a payment toward this commitment.

Program Committees Annual Reports 2022

Deputy Moderator: Jodie Robinson

We have slowly been coming out of pandemic hiding, which means our Program committees have picked up the pace in service and activity. I am so thankful for all these committees for their dedication to Friends and for the incredible hard work and love they put into all they do.

Justice and Missions Committee, Friends U.C.C.

Chair: Andrew McNeely

Members: Anne Wehrly, Mary Lin Howell, Pam Engler, Robin Miller, Marisa Winking, Jodie Robinson, Charity Stokes, Becky Burks

Standing Commitments:

- Brazos Church Pantry
 - 1st Saturday of every month
 - Friends volunteer numbers have been low in 2021
 - Likely due to continued COVID burnout, and vaccine anticipation
 - Board rep: Becky Burks
 - Financial commitment: \$500
- Family Promise
 - Family hosting suspended during COVID19 pandemic, restarted in 2022
 - Financial commitment: \$500
- Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network
 - Event and organization planning
 - Financial commitment: \$500
- Brazos Valley Food Bank
 - Annual Feast of Caring Financial commitment: \$500
- Homeless Advocacy
 - Financial commitment: \$1,300
- Crockett Elementary Support
 - Continued efforts to support students and teachers
 - Financial commitment: variable, usually <\$100
- Friends/ Peace Lutheran Food Drop (primary advocate: Anne Wehrly)
 - Friday afternoons in Peace Lutheran Parking lot
 - 18 regulars, half of which come from Friends
- Motel food delivery for homeless
 - 15 volunteers have been involved in the past
 - Charity Stokes and Marissa Winking taking over coordination and planning, under JMC umbrella and funds

Fellowship 2021- 2022 Annual Report

Chair: Brian Blake

- June Celebration of 25 years being an ONA Congregation
- September hosted the back to Sunday School breakfast with breakfast tacos
- October the kitchen returned to being fully functional
- Supplied lunch for leadership visioning workshop
- Supplied snacks for the Annual Dream Budget Congregational meeting
- November hosted a churchwide Thanksgiving Dinner at Stephen Beachy Pavilion in Central Park
- At some point in the Fall Coffee made a return
- Christmas Cantata reception in the double classroom
- April Easter Brunch and Egg Hunt returned to the sanctuary
- Supported youth group celebration to RIP Medical Debt
- June ONA celebration will return as an annual event.

Spiritual life Committee

Chair: Becky Burks

Members: Jodie Robinson, Linda Fitzwater, Cathy Hansen, Laura Wimberley, Lanette Schulte, Associate Pastor Trent Williams (ex-officio).

The Spiritual life Committee, in cooperation with the Associate Pastor, assists and co-coordinates spiritual growth opportunities for individuals, small groups, families, communal settings and with the wider church community.

Activities and events are as follows:

Individual Devotional Opportunities - Seasonal Devotionals, including Advent and Lent were provided. Advent devotionals were written and published by and for the congregation and Spiritual life purchased and provided a devotional for Lent. Also, the Labyrinth is open daily behind the church.

Small Group Opportunities - Adult Sunday School Classes (Morning Manna and Social Justice) continue; Online Monday and Friday Check-In groups were active during the COVID pandemic; and, with the decline of the COVID pandemic, Spiritual life has recently started a new group, the Linda Coats Book Club, which is focusing on reading "banned books" the first year. Additionally, a previous event has been revived, Peacemeal, on the 1st Thursday evening each month. Wednesday night small group has recently begun with an Adult Confirmation Class series. And Theology on Tap will begin again on Thursday, May 12th, 2022.

Communal Opportunities - Inquiry Classes for those wanting to know more about or to become members of Friends Congregational UCC were held in December and March.

Family Opportunities - Talks are underway regarding reviving the All Church Retreat to Slumber Falls Camp in New Braunfels, Texas in 2022.

Worship Committee

Chair: Ryan Womack

Members: Andy Ambrus, Maggie Gartner, Anne Nichols, Wolfgang Verdegaal (Banners), Chris Abbott (Banners), Patrick Redmill (Banners), Senior Pastor Dan De Leon (ex-officio), Associate Pastor Trent Williams (ex-officio), and Chris Hoffman (ex-officio).

The Worship Committee is responsible for coordinating with the ministerial staff in preparing all the details for regular and special worship services. The committee is tasked with making all the elements available for communion (including baking the bread); scheduling Greeters, Lay Leaders, and Communion Stewards for services; changing out liturgical cloths and banners appropriate for each season; keeping the altar candles ready for services; preparing the baptismal font and/or baptistry for services; providing special decorations for Advent, Christmas, and Easter; making sure the sanctuary or other worship spaces are prepared and welcoming for each service, including placement of chairs; and making sure that Welcome, Pray, Give envelopes, Note Cards, pens, and hymnals are easily accessible for our church family and guests. They also assist with arrangements for funerals, vigils, ordinations, and other special services.

Attendance records for 2021 - 2022:

Average attendances:

Sunday, 9:00 am service - 37 (In person 5/23/21 - 4/24/22)

Sunday, 11:00 am service - 86 (In person 5/23/21 - 4/24/22)

Longest Night - 31

Christmas Eve - No count (don't know what happened here)

Ash Wednesday (morning) - 10

Ash Wednesday (evening) - 59

Maundy Thursday - 31

Palm Sunday (9:00) - 28

Palm Sunday (11:00) - 114

Good Friday - 102

Easter (9:00) - 72

Easter (11:00) - 196

We are always looking for members of our church family who are interested in helping to make the worship experience even more welcoming and meaningful, and are willing to make the commitment to help make that possible.

Special thanks go to the coordinators of specific areas: Anne Nichols, Andy Ambrus, and Maggie Gartner for helping me out in this transition year. Also, for all their help with - Taking care of our banners' needs, candles, baptisms, new members, special Sundays, baking our communion bread, and for general help anytime I needed help! Also special thanks to Wolfgang Verdegaal, Chris Abbott, and Patrick Redmill - for hanging our upper banners through the year.

Christian Ed Annual Report

Chair: Robin Miller

Committee Members: Tami Dudo, Anne Wehrly, Doris Machinski, Annie Ortiz, Monique Bertrand, Mary Howell, Brooke Dooley, Lanette Schulte

The Christian Education Committee plans and provides Sunday School for our children and youth, community service projects, and youth group activities. This year we re-launched in-person Sunday School along with providing the following annual events:

- Back to school fellowship breakfast with special COVID precautions. We'll return to our traditional pancake breakfast this fall.
- Christmas Pageant
- Angel Tree Ornaments
- Easter Egg Hunt
- RIP Medical Debt, which raised over \$50,000 to pay off over \$5,000,000 in medical debt for our neighbors in the Brazos Valley and beyond. Our youth group's efforts have been highlighted in local media and national UCC publications, and they'll share their testimonies with the South Central Conference at the annual meeting on May 28th.
- Confirmation Class: Seven confirmands began their journey this spring, leading to a deeper understanding of their faith and their relationships with Christ, the church, and the greater community. Confirmation Sunday will be October 16, 2022.
- Youth Mission Trip: Our youth will travel to Albuquerque in July, where they will work with Reach Beyond Mission and learn about issues affecting immigrants and indigenous communities, community organizing, and the Puebla Cultural Center.

Deputy Moderator of Trustees Report 2021-2022

Bill Harper, Deputy Moderator of Trustees

Personnel

Michael Rangel, administrative assistant, will be increased from 27 to 30 hours a week and will move from a temporary staffing company to direct employment by Friends Church. A Personnel Handbook, created by Moderator Cathy Hansen, assisted in this transition.

Morgan Leopold, long-time childcare staff, has taken on additional duties assisting the Financial Secretary with recording donations.

The AV/Tech/Digital ministry has been formed and Pastor Trent has taken the leadership role in this area. Currently one person is paid to assist with the AV during church services.

Property

Chair: Susan Fontaine

This has been a busy year for Property mainly due to the recovery from the two large insurance claims. Here is an overall summary of the past year:

1. Freeze Claim - this took place in February 2021 and we just recently (April 2022) received almost the final payment for this loss. We have received a total of \$59,267.43. There is still a slight amount of potential depreciation we could receive in the future. We would only receive this if we do another repair. I plan to try again to get the back exterior door by the nursery repaired and am trying to find an exterior door similar to what we have now and a contractor willing to do the small job.
2. Hail Claim - this took place in April 2021 and the repairs were done in August. We have a completely new roof and the two HVAC units on the office side are brand new. We upgraded the quality of the roof which has a lifetime workmanship warranty and a lengthy materials warranty. We also opted for the new HVAC instead of repairing the old. Total payments from the insurance company for this loss is \$80,763.78. The total we paid out due to the improvements we opted for was \$91,176.12. We deferred the siding/window project for 2021 and used that budgeted \$20,000 for the improvements here and with the kitchen and flooring from the freeze claim.
3. Siding/Window Project - as mentioned above, we deferred that project during 2021 but is on the schedule for 2022. Schulte Roofing is going to be the General Contractor (GC) and will be using Eleazar and his crew to do the work as the subs. They did the upper front sanctuary windows so we know they do a good job. They are doing the 2 side walls in the "horseshoe" area behind the altar plus the back wall where the nursery exit door is located. This involves the replacement of 6 windows. The estimate for this work is \$23,000 and we have authorized them to proceed. Work should start in late May or early June when the windows arrive. After this is

completed, we still have the high wall directly behind the altar and two short high walls under the sanctuary roof eaves. The high wall will be much more expensive because a bucket will need to be rented by the contractor. My personal guess is that we could be looking at \$40,000 to finish this up. I plan to ask Schulte for a rough estimate prior to completing the budget for next year.

4. Fountain/Landscaping - Jill Cetina and Weihsueh Chiu worked on the repairs of the tile on the fountain and the embedded cross at the front of the church. They hired the contractors and worked with me on supervision of all of these contractors. They also hired a landscaper to do some major clean up and plantings including new lighting around the flower bed by the fountain. The entry area for our church has vastly improved due to their efforts! In addition, we have 5 teams that spread out the work of cleaning and filling the fountain each week. They include: Sally Manthei, Diane Simpson, Kim Witt, Lance Parr, Lanette and Rick Schulte, Anne Nichols, and David Manuel.

5. Sanctuary Light Fixtures - we have had the first fixture "burn out" in the sanctuary. It is located over the pulpit so it needs to be fixed. Unfortunately, these fixtures have built-in bulbs so the entire fixture has to be replaced and the manufacturer no longer makes the same size/design fixture. Lance Parr is using his skill to see if it can be repaired and is working with the manufacturer.

6. Church Insurance - we are a participant in the UCC Insurance Program (other denominations also share in this program). It is excellent insurance with a lot of very broad coverage. Unfortunately due to the two large claims, we were advised that our insurance would be non-renewed. I worked with the company and reviewed what we did to minimize our losses and we were able to convince them to maintain our insurance. We did have a 20% premium increase plus an increase in our deductible. I expect insurance costs to continue to increase due to the severe weather across the nation and the significant increase in building material costs. The insurance company also required us to install "water sensors" and "temperature sensors". These work on a cellular network and during the very short freeze we had this year, both Bill Harper and I received the automatic alerts that the temperatures in the church had dropped below the monitoring temperature. This will hopefully help us prevent any future freeze losses. The first year of monitoring has been paid by the insurance company but we will be expected to pick up the monitoring costs starting in December 2022.

7. Children's Playground - We had a team led by Anne Wehrly that worked on sprucing up the children's playground. New swings with new chains were purchased and Bruce Williams built handrails for the climbing structure to improve safety. We need to plan to continue improvement to make the playground more attractive and fun for our children.

Thanks to everyone that has helped maintain and beautify our church property.

Stewardship

This year, the theme of our stewardship campaign was, “For everyone born, a place at the table.” Based on the hymn by Shirley Erena Murray, the focus was on our mission of God’s extravagant welcome and radical inclusion. Even beyond that, church members were encouraged to seek out a place of service at God’s table as well, from reaching out to those who have felt excluded, to enlarging our “table” to make it more welcoming, to serving the bread of life at our table.

Thanks to the generosity of Friends Church, in 2021 pledges, offerings, and miscellaneous income for the operating budget totaled \$419,939.18, which was only 96% of our budgeted amount but still exceeded our expenses by \$17,189.16. Please refer to the treasurer’s report and financial secretary’s report for further details.

In addition, the Stewardship Team (Pastor Dan, Pastor Trent, and David Manuel) took steps to facilitate opportunities to those who pledged their time during the 2021 Stewardship drive. First, they organized their responses of willingness to serve with various ministries and provided this information to the appropriate leaders of these ministries. Second, on February 6, 2022, the church hosted a Stewardship Support Gathering for Friends to find out more about how they can get plugged into the various ministries at the church.

As Friends Church continues to grow, we look forward to continue providing Friends (new members and guests) places to serve at the table to provide God extravagant welcome and radical inclusion to all.

Financial Secretary’s Report

David Ford, Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary's primary duties are to:

- Collect, categorize, and prepare detailed data on all income to the church weekly from donations, etc. through the completion of a Cash and Checks spreadsheet form
- Prepare bank deposit, make the deposit, and pick up the bank deposit bag
- Communicate donation information to the Treasurer weekly based on the Cash and Checks spreadsheet form
- Enter weekly donations and other income into the online financial management system
- Deposit donations made via Venmo monthly
- Report Venmo donations to the Treasurer monthly
- Prepare the detailed giving report for the Treasurer monthly
- Respond to questions and requests by the Treasurer and other individuals about the above
- Participate as a member of the Finance Committee by attending meetings, etc.
- Train, as needed, others in performing the duties of the Financial Secretary
- Assist, as needed, in preparing annual giving reports and semi-annual pledge reports for individual congregation members.

Since becoming Financial Secretary the processes for accomplishing the above have changed in the following ways:

- Previously the Financial Secretary took the donations home and prepared the Cash and Checks spreadsheet form, prepared the deposit, and made that deposit alone. Now those things are done immediately after the 11:00 service in the church office with the assistance of another church officer.
- Previously there was no detailed giving report. Now there is.
- Previously the Financial Secretary did not document how the donation deposit activities were performed. The current Financial Secretary has documented those processes for improved operations and use by others.

Several of the actions to change how the Financial Secretary performs their duties listed above have been directed at increasing and improving the checks and balances that are appropriate for a financial organization that is the size of Friends UCC. Those considerations should be continued and additional improvements to financial operations made. Examples include the use of a safe for keeping donations (some of which are cash) when they are not in the immediate care of a church official, and improved rigor about who has access to the church's online financial system.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair: Brian Gilson (Congregational Representative)

Committee Members: Jacque Halverson (Congregational Representative), Kelly Wellman, Paula Verdegaal, Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon (ex officio)

Friends Church has weathered a global pandemic and is stronger than ever. Our church has grown and evolved even during this unprecedented time. We are blessed with our members who are willing to serve and equally as blessed with ones who were not able to make the commitment this year. As we move into the next phase of our church life, we're grateful for our church leaders. The individuals in the positions listed below will serve for two years.

Congregational Representative	Christine Gravelle
Treasurer	Theresa Walker
Deputy Moderator of Trustees	Kate Kiernat
Diversity & Inclusion Representative	Tami Dudo
Nurture Chair	Kristin Harper
Justice & Mission Chair	Martha Newsome
Worship Chair	Ryan Womack
Outreach and Evangelism	Kenshi Westover
Stewardship Chair	David Manuel
Personnel Chair	Wayne Hamman
Senior Pastoral Relations	Andy Smith
Associate Pastoral Relations	Lanette Schulte

ONE YEAR TERMS:

Youth Representative Trustees	Mac De Leon
Youth Representative Programs	Alejandro Hinojosa

The positions to be filled next year by the outgoing Congregational Representative and Nominating Committee are Vice Moderator, Deputy Moderator of Programs, Council Secretary, Congregational Representative, Property Chair, Financial Secretary, Spiritual Life Chair, Christian Education Chair, Fellowship Chair, Senior Pastoral Relations, and Executive Pastoral Relations.

Sincerely,
 Brian Gilson, on behalf of the Even Year Nominating Committee
 (Jacque Halverson, Kelly Wellman, Paula Verdegaal, Dan De Leon)