

Kent Organ

Interim Lead Pastor

Leah Fowler

Associate Pastor

Rob Leveridge

Associate Pastor

Marylen Marty-Gentile

Associate Pastor

Bill Chin

Director of Music Ministry

Michael Surratt

Organist

*“Rejoice in
the Lord always,
again I say
rejoice.”*

Annual Report 2013

www.firstunitedoakpark.com



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2014

AGENDA

1. Prayer of Blessing – Associate Pastor Marylen Marty-Gentile
2. Luncheon
 - Conversation at tables: the challenges and highlights of 2013
 - Please write your answers to three questions on the sheet at your place
3. Congregational Meeting called to order by Moderator Sam Dammers
4. Opening prayer by Vice-Moderator Melinda Haag
5. Verification that a quorum is present
6. Discussion of 2013 challenges and highlights – Kent Organ
7. Moderator’s Report – Sam Dammers
8. 2013 Annual Report Q&A
9. Nominating Committee: 3 Council Vacancies – Laurie Jolicoeur and Pricilla Sibley
10. Report of the Transition Team – Tom Wolford
 - Introducing the Team
 - William Bridges’ transition model
 - Three Questions: *What is most important to me about First United Church? What do I worry most about when I think of First United Church? If I could change one thing about First United at the drop of a hat, what would it be?*
 - Discussion at tables
 - Discussion all together
 - Moving Forward with the Transition Team
11. For the Good of the Cause
12. Closing Prayer – Interim Lead Pastor Kent Organ

Reports from Staff

Report of the Interim Lead Pastor

Kent Organ

It is a joy and privilege for me to be your interim lead pastor. Thank you for the many ways that you have welcomed me and my leadership.

I was impressed with you for a long time. As a seminarian in the 1960s, I occasionally came to Oak Park to hear David Watermulder preach. I since got to know you better through friends and colleagues, Bobbi Wells Hargleroad, Jim McClure and Brian Sickbert. Then, last June, I was chosen to join you in this important in-between time. I was immediately struck by:

- the skill with which you and your staff were navigating the challenges of the initial months after Julie Harley's dread diagnosis;
- the extent and effectiveness of your social ministry outreach with low income neighbors;
- the creativity and quality of your worship and community life.

I am delighted to be here with you.

Soon after I arrived I heard concern that First United not "lose momentum." When I asked what they meant, it seemed to boil down to a concern that attendance and giving might decline. I was urged to give leadership to the area of financial stewardship, which I did. Eight months later, these bottom line indicators are encouraging, as the 2013 annual report shows. But in addition, I have enjoyed the enthusiastic engagement of Bible 101 students, the problem solving that the committees, staff and I have done and, above all, you the people of this church.

Now, with the guidance of the Council's newly established Transition Team, we will be working to prepare ourselves for the next chapter in this congregation's life and work, a new beginning beyond this transitional time. I thank God for the opportunity to share this ministry with you.

Report of the Associate Pastor for Children and Family Ministries

Marylen Marty-Gentile

On December 30, 2012 (six weeks after I was ordained as a minister of word and sacrament), I preached a sermon called "Where Do We Go from Here?" Two weeks earlier, former Lead Pastor Julie Harley had preached her last sermon to the community. We all had many questions and wonders about what the future held for First United Church. I said, *"Like Mary and Jesus, we have no detailed road map on how to live in this next time. We just know we are moving into in-between time, transition time, interim time. In scripture this is referred to as the wilderness."*

We often think of wilderness as a barren place, but in our holy texts, wilderness is a place and time of testing and formation and life. In the wilderness, despite arguments and hassles, the Israelites became a people with an identity and a purpose.

Testing, formation, life are what this congregation encountered and found in 2013. After the initial shock of Rev. Julie Harley's retirement, we collectively picked ourselves up and moved on with energy and faith. We missed Julie Harley's daily presence and spirit, and yet together

we discerned that this community is the church of Jesus Christ; no pastor is the church. We worshiped. We continued serving the world. We supported Julie and cared for other sisters and brothers. We educated. We partied. We prayed. We even canceled meetings in Lent.

From January to June, I had the privilege, with support from my colleagues Leah Fowler and Rob Leveridge and the church council and personnel committee, to serve as your interim interim. By God's grace and your spirit, our ministries continued without skipping a beat. And you gave generously so that in April and May we raised enough money to refurbish the Rose Window, a sign of real vitality and growth in a wilderness time.

In June, I was glad to be able to pass the Head of Staff baton to our new colleague Kent Organ and resume my primary ministry. I continue to stand in awe of all those who serve and support the children and family ministries of First United: our dedicated and beautiful church school leaders, the committed Children's Ministry Committee, our four welcoming and competent nursery caregivers. I love to witness the growing faith of our children and youth, even as they might not have words to identify their growth and faith.

Serving you in new ways was a growth experience for me as I too was re-formed in this wilderness. The time reminded me how much I love this church and her people. I also could see in new ways the potential this community has to be a faithful people of God. You long to more deeply experience the holy, to follow Jesus, and to let the Holy Spirit lead you. It is an exciting time in this church. God does and will continue to do new things as we listen to God's voice and call.

Report of the Associate Pastor for Membership and Congregational Care

Rob Leveridge

2013 was a year of substantial transition and a time when the strength of First United Church's community and ministries was powerfully demonstrated. After the retirement of Rev. Julie Harley at the end of 2012, the pastoral staff invested heavily in the spiritual well-being of church-members, both through pastoral care and in our collaboration with ministry leaders in a congregation under real stress. We were regularly impressed with the spiritual maturity and openness we encountered among the membership of the church.

I was blessed to see excellent ministry happening in many areas where I work in the church. The deacons continued to deepen their relationships as a team and to grow their readiness to provide spiritual care and leadership, creating a ministry of prayer and anointing after worship services on Sundays.

The stewardship committee had an enormously successful year with a very small team – only two official members, plus Rev. Kent Organ and I, with robust support from several members of the finance committee. We worked with great dedication and efficiency and are celebrating a successfully funded year of ministry for 2014!

Worship continues to be a strong center to the congregational life at First United. Attendance has been steady and services seem to be times when large numbers of people encounter the Holy. I continue to observe children being deeply connected in worship and cherish the depth of adults' experiences in worship as well. We continue to see large numbers of visitors to our church and have had another year in which between 10 and 20 people participated in each of our three membership classes, which we now call Newcomers Gatherings.

I treasure this congregation and feel enormously enriched to be able to do good work with so many good people here.

Report of the Associate Pastor for Youth Ministry, Adult Education and Faith in Action

Leah Fowler

The most significant aspect of my work at First United in 2013 came with the addition of Faith in Action to my responsibilities in addition to Youth Ministries and Adult Education, which I already staff. Had my initial call been to staff the mission and social justice work of the church along with youth ministries, I would have been thrilled! Part of my sense of call to the ministry has always included the belief that the church can be a motivator in communities and even in the world to bring forward the peace and justice spoken by the prophets and Jesus himself. That belief has shaped my work—my preaching, my mentoring of youth, and my partnership with Adult Ed.

However, now staffing three program areas that are very important to the identity church, I have had to rely more deeply on our capable lay leadership. In Faith in Action, we have worked to clarify some roles and expectations for the different Action Teams. We brought over 30 people in April to Advocacy Days in Springfield, and returned in Springfield to rally around marriage equality. Both events seem to have influenced policy in our state! In Youth Ministries, we have changed the work of the Youth Committee to focus on ministries of hospitality, ministries of presence, and ministries of discernment with the youth and advisors who work with them. We have worked to clarify expectations of volunteers on that committee, and of youth advisors. In FUSH (senior high youth group) and FUJI (junior high), our numbers have steadily increased; we regularly have 60 youth present on Sunday nights. The blessing of greater numbers also brings the challenge of working with diverse learning styles while still sharing the good news of our faith. For Adult Ed, we have come to agree that our space greatly limits the kinds of classes that are offered. We are hopeful that plans underway to create a divider in Centennial Hall will enable Adult Ed to have a track of classes that focuses on social justice issues, and one that focuses more on spiritual and theological issues—not that the two are mutually exclusive! These would be in addition to ongoing small groups, including the Sunday morning Bible Study, Faith 101, and the Parenting in Faith group.

For 2014, I expect to attend the Women's Retreat after missing it the past 2 years due to childbirth and childcare. I plan to bring a delegation to Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, DC in March. I wish to explore coursework in pastoral counseling, to sharpen my skills especially with issues specific to youth and their families. I want to deepen communication and involvement with youth parents and families. With Faith in Action, I hope to have guiding conversations about the big picture of what we are doing, to make sure our commitments and involvements contribute to the goals of our committee and of our church. In worship life, I hope to continue to find meaningful roles for youth and to keep their stories and interests as a guide in my preaching.

It has been a challenging year for me, both vocationally as I have added significant responsibility for my work, and also personally, as I have struggled with the sudden death of my mom last spring. I am thankful that the congregation has been so supportive and continues to inspire me in my sense of call.

Reports from Council and Committees

Church Council

Samuel R. Dammers, Moderator

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Church Council continued implementing our church vision to build relationships that bless, challenge, and transform. Council meetings are conducted as “worship with a focus on the business of the church.” We continue a tradition of beginning meetings with “Spiritual Food for Thought.”

Church Council is normally focused on serving as spiritual leaders of the congregation and on providing fiduciary responsibility and oversight for the church. In interim times the Council assumes a greater role to provide leadership for the congregation.

The Church Council has accomplished the following:

- Successfully completed a limited capital campaign to fund and complete the restoration of the Rose Window
- Appointed an Interim Pastor Nominating Committee and consequently hired Interim Pastor Kent Organ
- Continued to provide financial resources (in the form of insurance) to Pastor Emerita Julie Harley
- Adopted and balanced an aspirational budget which provided for increased staff compensation, funding increases for mission work, and specific capital improvements intended to enhance building utilization
- With the approval of the congregation, assembled a Transition Team to facilitate congregational discernment prior to appointing a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Nominating Committee

Laurie Jolicoeur

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Priscilla Sibley

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The Nominating Committee views our service to First United as a ministry. In this large church, we struggle to find ways to connect members with their own sense of ministry. This year we reached out to engage committee life in a new way. In July we offered a one-hour voluntary session to share what the Nominating committee members have learned over the past year as we visited committee meetings and talked with chairs. Our purpose was to share “what works” and “what doesn’t” in committee life. We requested that every committee send at least one representative to the gathering; in turn we asked the representative to share what they thought was of use to the committee. We received very positive feedback from participants.

We continue to consider what it is that people desire or expect when they join a committee; we also ponder how First United can develop an agile committee structure that responds to both the needs of the church community and the real lives of our membership. We request that all members of First United update the “Gifts We Bring” document *annually* in order for us to stay in touch with the changing needs and situations of members of the larger community. We do strive to be enablers for the people of First United to do God’s work.

Deacon Board

Elizabeth Samore

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The Deacon’s board continues its mission of caring for our congregants. The board consists of 14 Deacons, each ministering to approximately 25 to 30 households. Each Deacon is responsible for reaching out to members three times per year and on an as needed basis.

The year 2013 was one of innovation for the Deacon Board. The Meet Your Deacon Day was replaced with a new program of care group identification which is name-tag based. Each congregant has a name tag with an identifying color which matches that of their Deacon. This facilitates communication between members of care groups and the corresponding Deacon.

2013 also marked the launch of the Deacon's Prayer and Anointing Ministry. After Sunday worship, Deacons have been and will continue to be available for congregants that would like to share joys and concerns after worship in the lobby. However, we noticed that this was underused by the congregation. To better fill this need, the Prayer and Anointing Ministry now meets after Sunday worship in the Chapel. This is a more private and contemplative setting in which meaningful and prayerful communication can better occur.

Lastly, continuing education for Deacons has been instituted at each monthly meeting. Each Deacon participates in role play of Deacon/Congregant interaction and thoughtful discussion as to how to support all members of our spiritual community.

Personnel Committee

Janet Leong

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2013 was another productive year for the Personnel Committee as we supported Marylen Marty-Gentile during her term as interim Head of Staff, hired a new Interim Lead Pastor, and continued to support the development and growth of all staff members. Kent Organ, Interim Lead Pastor, arrived on June 14 and quickly acquainted himself with the Church's organizational structure, congregation, and staff members. At the recommendation of the Church's Operations Manager, we reconfigured the custodial staff to maximize coverage, hiring two new part-time church custodians.

The Personnel Committee Liaison Program continued to provide support to all staff members through individual meetings throughout the year. 2013 successfully ended with personnel reviews for all staff members conducted by Kent Organ and a member of the Personnel Committee. The meetings included a review of 2013 activities and objectives for 2014. In spring 2014, each staff member will review his/her progress in reaching 2014 objectives. In 2014, the Personnel Committee will create a Mission Statement and will continue its work of ensuring that the personnel practices of First United are professionally sound, represent the values of our church community, and serve our goal of attracting and retaining church staff of the highest quality.

Faith in Action Committee

Marsha Hubbuch

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First United Church of Oak Park has long been considered a leader in social justice, and our Faith in Action (FIA) committee is primarily charged with addressing these issues. Our goals are to be faith advocates for the poor and to empower people by changing structures rather than providing charity alone, thereby opening the path to long-term well-being for all through employment, housing and education.

To best fulfill these goals, the committee is broken into six action teams: Advocacy, Education and Mentoring, Economic Sustainability, Environmental Stewardship, Global, and Housing Justice.

Advocacy has been working in conjunction with United Power and the Community Renewal Society in support of social justice issues. We sponsored a screening of "A Place at the Table" to raise awareness of cuts in SNAP funds and other hunger issues. We have been working on curbing gun violence and have drafted a "gun free zone" statement in response to the new IL concealed carry law.

Education and Mentoring focused on two main projects over the last year -- The Cluster Tutoring Program and the Summer Tutoring Program. Cluster has expanded to 100 tutoring partners at two locations with a goal of increasing to 120 pairs. This year FIA added funding for a reading program for 33 primary school children, college planning materials and a laptop computer for students. Rachel Harley led the Summer Tutoring Program, a joint effort of First United, Elmhurst College and Unity Lutheran Church of Berwyn which served 16-20 students last summer.

Economic Sustainability (ESAT) helps individuals and groups to attain financial independence through the use of preventative measures and the granting of micro loans to some individuals. ESAT supported the Walk-In Ministry (now known as Prevail), which provides support to those in need of emergency resources and jobs. Prevail has doubled their hours of operation to meet needs. This group also provides support to the Food Pantry.

Environmental Stewardship has moved from a pilot program to a full action team this year. This team has sponsored several adult education programs and has supported anti-fracking legislation, films on environmental education and sponsored the Oak Park Living and Learning Tour.

Global has focused primarily on the crisis in Syria this year and has provided funds for refugees. They also contributed \$1,000 for the Philippine typhoon victims, \$1,000 for a Zimbabwe HIV/AIDS benefit at Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church, \$1,500 for the FUSH summer work camp and co-sponsored a film for the One Earth Film Festival.

Housing Justice is recruiting church members to attend a United Power Action event with Gov. Quinn on Jan.19 to address issues of providing affordable housing, curbing gun violence, securing broader healthcare access and ending foreclosures in southwest Chicago. This year HJ funded PADS expansion of permanent supportive housing and New Mom's Cooperative Living program helping young at-risk families to stabilize. Financial support also continued for the PADS emergency shelter program where many First United members regularly volunteer. In addition to the work of these action teams, FIA funds the mission work of our two denominations.

In 2013, First United provided a significant increase in funding to this committee and has pledged even more in 2014. We are grateful to be a part of a community of faith with this commitment to all.

Adult Education Committee

Pauline Coffman

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Our committee has met monthly to plan and carry out adult education seminars, this year on the theme of "Discipleship—in relation to God, to one another, and to the world." We offer a variety of study opportunities: Bible study on Sunday mornings, Monday evenings (thank you, Kent Organ!), and Wednesday mornings. Two small groups meet on Sunday mornings, Parenting in Faith and Faith 101.

Our Sunday morning seminars have offered looks at Arab history (with Rev. Amir Tawadrous of Egypt), Syrian refugees (with Mary Mikhael, retired President of the Near East School of Theology); PADS and Gun Control. In November, we looked at how we handle grief, forgiveness (mercy) and reconciliation (with Bob Hostetter, communications professor from North Park U). We concluded that series with an introduction to the work of the Transition Team. In December, our staff led discussions on expectations of the Messiah, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and those who announced Jesus' coming. Concurrently, a session on the new healthcare law drew a small group, but was well-received by those who attended.

Youth Committee

Sharon Stolz

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Because the Youth Committee was initially formed in an Interim period, we are working with Leah Fowler now to define our focus as a permanent group. We also want build our work on the spiritual practices of the Christian tradition itself. These practices include:

Hospitality. (1) Sponsoring the combined FUSH/FUJI "Welcome Back" Barbecue that kicks off our program year in September; also the Adviser Appreciation Christmas Gathering. (2) Developing a Youth Ministry Bulletin Board through which the congregation can learn about FUJI/FUSH activities and our Advisers.

Discernment. (1) Serving as a conversation partner to Leah as she listens to the concerns and ideas of youth, parents and the FUJI/FUSH Advisers. (2) Continuing to obtain feedback about the Youth Ministry year from the Advisers, as well as from all FUJI/FUSH attendees and their parents through a survey that will be distributed in June.

Our thanks also go to our past co-chairs (Rocio and Dave), to the FUJI/FUSH Advisers, to the parents who planned and provided the annual Christmas dinner for FUSH, and to Leah for fostering a shared ministry culture between herself, the Advisers and our Youth Leaders.

FUJI (First United Junior High)

FUJI in 2013 brought lots of new faces, new challenges, and new ideas. We have new advisors -- Walter Miller and Brenna McClean -- and veterans -- Stacy Vojta, Rachel Harley, and Chris Englehardt. We also have an energetic new class of seventh graders and a solid group of returning eighth graders. So far this year we have picked apples for the food pantry, thrown a birthday party at Interfaith house, and sorted boxes of food while discussing food access. We also had a lock-in, explored the church through a game of sardines, and played others games that build community while making us laugh. We are looking forward to our annual OWL lock-in, broomball, and gaining a deeper understanding of what it means to be a junior high youth.

Children's Ministry Committee

Christine Keyes

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This year the Children's Ministry Committee continued its mission to maintain a safe, intellectual, emotional and spiritual environment to nurture the children of our congregation. We do this by supporting our church school leaders, creating opportunities for our children to be full worship participants and by providing quality nursery facilities. Although we have made no major changes to our committee responsibilities we continue to fine-tune them to provide the best possible experiences for children, parents and church school leaders.

Tasks and responsibilities for which we continue to be responsible include, but are not limited to overseeing Gathering Day, supporting Hanging of the Greens and the Christmas Eve Pageant, providing food for Leader Breakfasts, ensuring nursery upkeep, and sponsoring Meet and Greet for parents. Church school leaders are assigned a committee liaison who communicates with and supports each class with their specific needs. Leaders are also shown appreciation in various ways throughout the year including breakfasts and small gifts prepared by the committee.

Our mission as a committee is to continue these things and to be additional support to the Associate Pastor for Children and Family Ministries. We continue to learn from experiences and will continue to provide support to all of our church school leaders, families and children. While evaluating what has made us successful in the past we will be able to better the committee as a whole.

Planned Giving Committee

Gene Armstrong, Chair

geneann1113@yahoo.com

Gene & Ann Armstrong, Co-coordinators

The Planned Giving Committee, a subcommittee of Finance, was created in 2009 to help insure the church's ability to continue its ministry and mission in the future by securing gifts from people through their wills and other estate planning vehicles. In 2013, we identified three additional members and friends who have included a gift to First United in their estate plans. Those who have let the church know that they have made this commitment are called "Kindred Spirits". Kindred Spirits now includes 43 families and individuals. The Committee also 1) built awareness of planned giving opportunities through articles in the *Messenger Bell* and testimony during worship; 2) responded to church members who requested information on budgeting and financial planning for the future by offering a two-part Adult Ed program entitled "Money Matters – Make It Count"; 3) met individually with congregation members to discuss planned giving and encourage them to include the church in their estate plans; and 4) worked to build a sense of camaraderie and identity among Kindred Spirits by hosting the fourth annual Kindred Spirits Donor Thank You event in September. Members of Kindred Spirits include:

Members of Kindred Spirits include:		
Anonymous (9)	Stanley and Christine Davis	Irene Herrick
Gene L. and Ann H. Armstrong	Bob Downs	Rosemary Irmis
Marsha and Rick Ashton	Theodore and Joanne Despotes	C. Vincent and Eleanor Davidson Long
Jim Bailey	Marjorie Fallon	Jim and Lynn McClure
Barbara Ballinger	Sara (Rickert) Faust	Allen and Georga Parchem
Jane Barker and Melinda Haag	Hilda Fischer	Ruth Peaslee
Carole Bergstraesser	Michael and Marylen Marty Gentile	Sherlynn D. Reid
Hank Bode and Susan Cartland-Bode	Stuart Gillette and Yvette Bouchard	Kris and Connie Ronnow
Christopher Damon and Connie Henderson-Damon	Bob and Janet Haisman	Sara Stevenson and Mark Breen
Marion Davis	Rev. Dr. Julie R. Harley	Mary Sue Voth
	Bud Hayes and Vickie Engelhardt	Ben and Kari Wilcox
	Raleigh Hegwood	Thomas and Michele Wolford
		Herbert and Claudette Zobel

We are also delighted to report that in 2013 the church received a planned gift from the Vivian Soderdahl Trust. Mrs. Soderdahl, who died in 1992, was the wife of long-time member Paul Soderdahl and was an active member of our church for 46 years. Church Council allocated half of this unrestricted gift to our General Endowment and half to our Special Mission Endowment Fund. We are deeply grateful for Mrs. Soderdahl's commitment to First United and this profound expression of her Christian faith.

Finance

Al Parchem

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In 2013 the Finance Committee focused mainly on monitoring the implementation of policies and procedures that were put in place in 2012 for accounting, gifts to the church, and the endowment. Because of the quality of the work done in 2012, not many changes have been necessary, but some minor modifications were considered and in some cases adopted.

The committee recommended that an outside accounting review be conducted in 2014 and firms have been identified for the project. We anticipate that the work will be considered as a

“control audit” which will provide a roadmap for improvements leading to a full audit in a year or two. The committee has received one proposal and will solicit additional firms in early 2014.

Thanks to the work of the Financial Manager, Julie O’Shea, the committee now has a more thorough understanding and documentation of the church’s restricted accounts. Restricted accounts hold funds provided by a donor or donors for specific purposes. Gaining greater clarity on these funds and donor intent is an important responsibility of the Finance committee.

The committee began exploring how to improve financial transparency and clarity with organizations that are considered “off budget” such as Evening Division and the First United Church Nursery School. Initial discussions have taken place and will continue in 2014.

By far the most pressing issue facing the Finance committee is recruiting new members. Increasing the membership of Finance and Stewardship was a year-long challenge and is still a problem heading into 2014. In order to insure an orderly and informed transition as members complete their terms, Finance and Stewardship need to expand as soon as possible.

Building and Grounds Committee

John Zaruba

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The B&G Committee supervised the following major projects in 2013:

- Repair of the ornamental plaster work and repainting of the south sanctuary entrance vestibule --\$3600
- Restoration of the Rose window, including exterior tuck pointing of the south sanctuary parapet wall, repair of the plaster walls and ceiling adjacent to the window, complete removal of and rebuilding and cleaning of all the sections of the Rose window glass, restoration of the exterior wood framing, replacement of the interior wood stops for each section of the window, and complete painting of the exterior and interior window frame -- \$85,000 +
- Throughout the year, we pursued efforts to increase the efficiency of the various heating systems in the church. This has included an analysis with Nicor to address mechanical problems and get cost estimates on heating solutions. Although we did not discover any solutions that would qualify for grant money from Nicor, we began a series of repairs to seal leaking steam pipes and to replace broken pumps and valves. This is a project that will continue on in 2014. Costs to date are approximately \$11,000.
- Micah Easty and fellow Boy Scouts contributed labor and design input to construct a brick path from the sidewalk over to the newly installed Tree Map, just west of the patio. This included an area for permanent bike racks.
- Refinishing of the east and west exterior sanctuary doors -- \$3500
- Repairs to numerous interior and exterior doors, including new weather stripping on many of the exterior doors -- \$800
- Refinishing of the wood floor in the west transept of the sanctuary -- \$2100

Additionally, plans were drawn up and preliminary quotes obtained to begin work on installing a curtain wall in Centennial Hall so that two meetings can be held in that space simultaneously. Plans were also devised to create a “room-within-a-room” in the gym for FUSH and FUJI, and to turn the current Youth Room into office space/conference room space for Prevail.

Special thanks this year go to Emory Mead and Megan Lewis, who joined members of B&G on the Rose Window Design Committee. Additional thanks to Hank Bode and Gy Menninga for volunteering their time on numerous repair projects throughout the church.

New Members Committee

Dave Dallam

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In early 2013 the committee agreed that the mission of the New Members Committee is to engage our visitors in our community and to encourage and facilitate their interest in putting their faith into action with us.

To this end we continue to guide an evolution in the manner in which our classes are taught and led. Formerly, first and second week meetings focused on Rob Leveridge providing church information, with the third and fourth encouraging attendees to share faith stories. We now begin with two weeks of general discussions about faith, the Bible, religion, worship, etc. These discussions are guided by Rob and the committee in attendance to express our church's beliefs, practices and ministries. By encouraging broad and deep discussion from the first class we believe we are enjoying higher engagement from the attendees, and we are doing a better job of demonstrating our faith in action.

We have also begun to hold more regular social gatherings for all visitors and our most recent new members to expedite their engagement with each other. Finally, we have begun a practice of identifying ministries of interest for each class attendee and are introducing them to ministry leaders to ensure a smooth transition from interest to action.

We traditionally hold three annual sessions of four-week classes, occurring each February, June, and October. This year our February classes included 11 adults (and their 8 children), all of whom joined First United. Our June class also included 11 adults (and their 4 children), all of whom joined our church. The most recent classes in October included 12 adults (and their 6 children), eight of whom joined the church. We therefore admitted 30 new members in 2013.

Communications Committee

Jackie Eckholm

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The Communications Committee oversees electronic and printed media for both public outreach and internal relationship building. Our accomplishments in 2013 include the following:

1. **First United Website Redesign:** Each year, 10,000 unique visitors set foot on our digital doorstep (www.firstunitedoakpark.com). Because 80% of people experience a church through the website before setting foot on site, we wanted to get it right and budgeted for a church communications consultant. We also surveyed staff, church members and literature on the subject. All data pointed to this: members and visitors (and the site is mostly a marketing piece for visitors) need a site to highlight "front door ministries" in 10-15 streamlined, invitational pages with less text and more visual impact. With this direction, updates have been made.
2. **One Menu for Ministry Involvement:** Scattered Ministry information was consolidated and updated under a single "ministries" menu on our website to present the multitude of opportunities for living out our core value that all members be engaged with at least one ministry. Ministry categories include Children, Youth, Adult Ed., Music, Serving, Fellowship, Spiritual and Social Justice.
3. **PR instead of paid newspaper ads:** Marketing and PR professionals on the committee agreed that expensive newspaper ads are probably not an effective use of funds. We are blessed to have Debby Preiser who is a local PR professional and is devoted to helping us do PR for First United.
4. **Newsletter Workflow and Editorial Roles:** Messenger Bell Newsletter process was redesigned to include more upfront staff collaboration, editorial input, images, and enhanced microtext (e.g., better, longer headings targeted to the skimming behavior of many readers).

5. **Every Sermon Online:** This year we have consistently published audio of our Sunday sermons to the web within 48 hours of the Sunday service thanks to custodial staff recording, staff coordination and volunteer audio editing and uploading. 5 people per day now spend an average of 3 min. on our sermons page (up 60%).
6. **Committee Process and Roles Evolution:** We agreed to meet only quarterly while collaborating in ways that worked better while working to fully engage each committee member according to gifts and interests. This way of working is more effective and satisfying.

Memorial and Legacy Gifts received in 2013

Legacy Gifts

The church received deferred planned gifts from the following:

The Vivian Soderdahl Living Trust

Memorial Gifts

The church received gifts made to honor the memory of the following persons:

Ralph & Beta Balgeman

Shirley Peterson

Lloyd Hunter

June Ross

Sandy Meade

Paul Soderdahl

Mary Jane Miller

Sally Sutherland

Don Peaslee

First United Church of Oak Park

Statement of Financial Position

	as of <u>Dec 31, 2012</u>	as of <u>Dec 31, 2013</u>
<u>Assets</u>		
Cash	\$ 197,637	\$ 231,875
Investments at cost (including unrealized Gains/Losses)	2,688,776	3,078,815
Presbyterian Foundation Gifts	<u>30,553</u>	<u>30,606</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 2,916,966</u>	<u>\$ 3,341,296</u>
 <u>Restricted Liabilities</u>		
Building Loan - Park National	\$ 114,830	\$ 100,413
Net Capital Project Unfunded	\$ (114,054)	\$ (100,068)
 Rose Window Receipts	 \$ -	 \$ 86,165
Rose Window Restoration	\$ -	\$ (88,665)
 Restricted Operating Funds	 \$ 96,366	 \$ 67,824
Memorial Fund	\$ 8,058	\$ 21,438
Micro Loan Program Fund	\$ 16,648	\$ 20,007
Sr/Jr High Program Fund	\$ 8,014	\$ 7,770
Future Year Pledges	\$ 70,776	\$ 63,775
 <u>Endowment Funds at Market</u>		
General Endowment Fund	1,178,622	1,349,995
Special Mission Endowment Fund	1,308,351	1,490,858
Priebe - Nursery School Support Fund	20,162	24,233
Gebhard- Christian Mission Travel Fund	72,598	83,472
Alice Flowers - Music Fund	68,370	82,194
Harrison - Forest Home Cemetery Care	32,572	36,296
Haines - Jr Hi Scholarship Fund	3,000	2,000
Haines - Sr Hi Scholarship Fund	2,100	1,100
Presbytery Foundation - Memorial Gift	8,583	8,635
Presbytery Foundation - Charitable Interest	<u>21,970</u>	<u>21,970</u>
	\$ 2,716,328	\$ 3,100,753
 Fund Principal & Net Activity	 \$ -	 \$ 61,884
Total Liabilities	<u>\$ 2,916,966</u>	<u>\$ 3,341,296</u>

All financial figures are presented with information available as of January 16, 2014

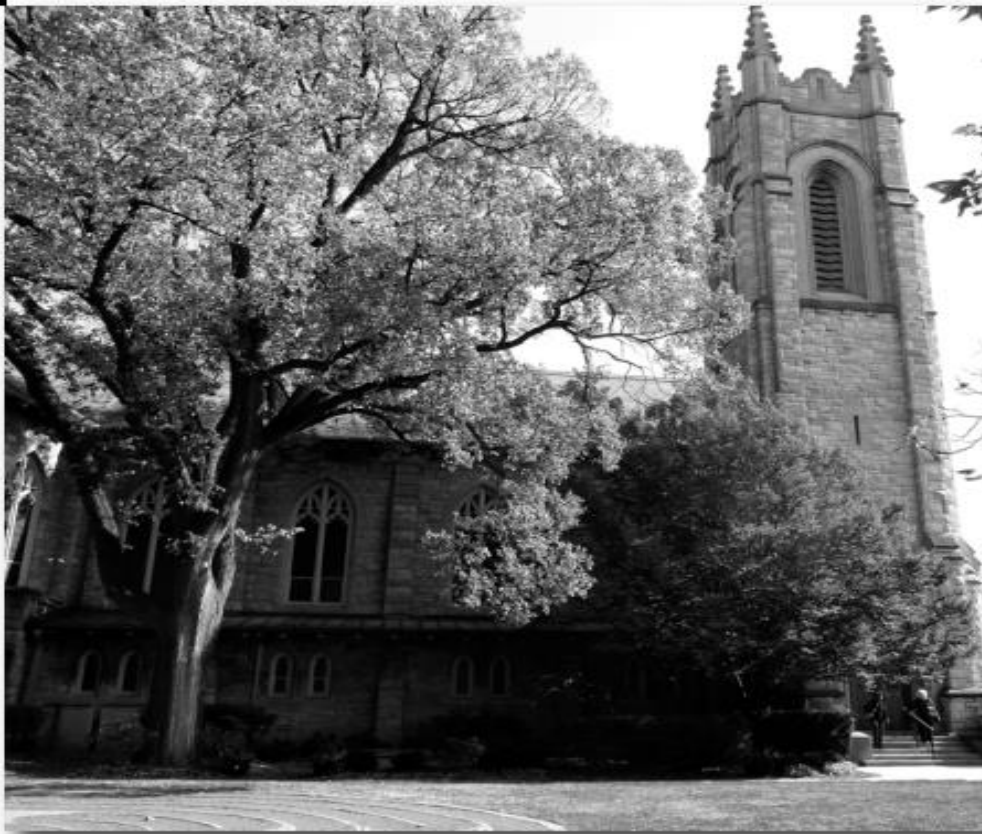
The balance sheet and operations of our First United Nursery School and Evening Division are not included in this report

First United Church of Oak Park

Sources and Uses of Funds

GENERAL OPERATIONS	Budget <u>2012</u>	Actual <u>2012</u>	Budget <u>2013</u>	Actual <u>2013</u>	Budget <u>2014</u>
<u>Sources of Funds</u>					
Pledge Income	\$ 676,870	\$ 689,126	\$ 701,636	\$ 732,782	\$ 768,000
Mission Endowment Draws	109,973	109,590	100,639	100,639	102,417
Other Endowment Draws	64,417	64,417	60,553	60,553	57,877
2013 Carry forward to 2014				(27,264)	27,264
Other Income	<u>136,525</u>	<u>177,242</u>	<u>157,550</u>	<u>186,685</u>	<u>178,548</u>
Total Sources of Funds	\$ 987,785	\$ 1,040,375	\$ 1,020,378	\$ 1,053,395	\$ 1,134,106
<u>Uses of Funds</u>					
Pastoral & Administrative Staff	\$ 547,979	\$ 557,270	\$ 612,207	\$ 578,786	\$ 604,552
Admin & Building	238,218	235,432	203,614	224,963	307,414
Faith in Learning	24,214	23,408	23,700	21,636	27,600
Faith in Worship	20,965	18,076	19,285	17,603	21,400
Faith in Community	16,439	10,908	13,136	9,287	15,725
Faith in Action	<u>136,800</u>	<u>151,009</u>	<u>137,739</u>	<u>139,236</u>	<u>157,415</u>
Total Uses of Funds	\$ 984,615	\$ 996,103	\$ 1,009,681	\$ 991,511	\$ 1,134,106
Net General Operations Fund	\$ <u>3,170</u>	\$ <u>44,272</u>	\$ <u>10,697</u>	\$ <u>61,884</u>	\$ <u>-</u>

ENDOWMENT OPERATIONS	Actual <u>2012</u>	Actual <u>2013</u>
<u>Sources of Funds</u>		
Investment (Losses) Income	301,036	532,913
Investment Expenses	<u>(10,929)</u>	<u>(11,901)</u>
Total Sources of Funds	\$ <u>290,107</u>	\$ <u>521,012</u>
<u>Uses of Funds</u>		
Draws from Endowment Funds	\$ 147,390	\$ 136,588
Permanent Loss on Investments	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Uses of Funds	\$ <u>147,390</u>	\$ <u>136,588</u>
Net (Uses) Sources of Endowment Funds	\$ <u>142,717</u>	\$ <u>384,424</u>



FIRST
UNITED
CHURCH OF
OAK PARK

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Oak Park, IL 60301
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Annual Report 2013

Reminder:

Annual Meeting (with Lunch)
Sunday, Jan. 26 at Noon