



# **Church of the Cross**

## **2022 Annual Report**



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# ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

January 29, 2023

Rev. Julie Peterson, Moderator

## Declaration of a Quorum

## Adoption of the Agenda

## Opening Prayer

## Approval of Previous Congregational Minutes

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Congregational Meeting, November 13,2022 .....[Page 3](#)

## Congregational Reports

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2023 per capita = \$36.50 per active member

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Deacons, Nancy Keppel.....[Page 8](#)

Nominating Team, Jane Lesch .....[Page 9](#)

Election of Nominating Team for 2023

Adelaide Grant-Acquah 1-year term

Karen Franz 1-year term

Jane Lesch 1-year term

## Ministry Team Reports

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## Corporation Reports

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2022 COTC Budget Mission Giving .....[Page 23](#)

## New Business

## Adjournment

## Prayer

# **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES**

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## **Annual Congregational Meeting, Sunday, January 30, 2022**

**The Annual Congregational Meeting of Church of the Cross was held via Zoom at 11 a.m.** Moderator Rev. Julie Peterson called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and opened with prayer.

A brief worship service took place at the beginning of the meeting, as a continuation of the regular Facebook video worship service. Elders Charlie Keppel, Sue Liautaud, Ken Groenewold and Stu Truelsen were installed. Deacons Nancy Keppel, Suzanne Letterer and Jeff Peterson were installed, and Deacon Lois McPherson was ordained and installed. A quorum was declared.

Minutes of the Called Congregational Meetings held January 31, 2021, and November 14, 2021, were approved.

The following reports were presented as printed at this meeting.

### **Congregational Reports:**

- Pastor's report presented by the Reverend Julie Peterson
- Clerk of Session report presented by Pat Groenewold
- Deacon report presented by Judie Truelsen
- Nominating Team Report presented by Stu Rutter

### **Ministry Team Reports:**

- Stewardship Team report
- Worship Team report presented by Stu Truelsen
- Micah 6:8 Team report presented by Ken Groenewold

### **Corporation Reports:**

- Corporate Operations Team report presented by Jim Letterer
- Property Team reports presented by Jim Vakoc and Charlie Keppel
- Financial Reports including the Statement of Financial Position and the 2022 Ministry Budget presented by Ken Groenewold

Motion passed unanimously to approve the Terms of Call of the Rev. Julie Peterson for 2022 as presented.

There being no further business, a motion prevailed to adjourn, and the Moderator closed the meeting at 11:50 am with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Groenewold, Clerk of Session

## **Called Congregational Meeting, Sunday, November 13, 2022**

**A Congregational Meeting of Church of the Cross for the purpose of electing officers was held in the sanctuary following the Sunday morning worship service. Moderator Rev. Julie Peterson called the meeting to order with prayer at 11:07am.**

A quorum was declared.

The chairperson of the nominating committee, Jane Lesch, thanked the 2022 Nominating Committee members for their excellent work this year and placed in nomination the following slate of candidates proposed by the nominating committee:

For the office of elder:

Stu Rutter 3-year term Class of 2025

Stu Truelsen 3-year term Class of 2025

Cheryl Wilkins 3-year term Class of 2025

For the office of deacon:

Susan Buchholz 3-year term Class of 2025

Glenna Morgan 3-year term Class of 2025

Lois McPherson 3-year term Class of 2025

Ann Moorman 1-year term Class of 2023

The moderator invited nominations from the floor. There were no additional nominations put forward. Nominations were closed and the above candidates were unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:09 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Groenewold

Clerk of Session



# CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS

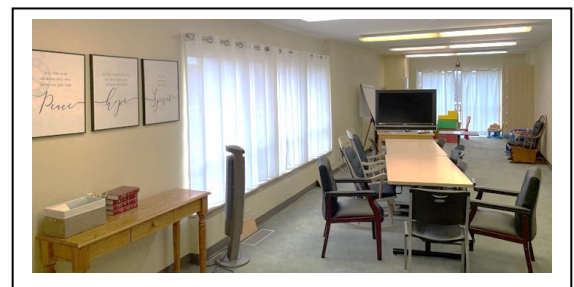
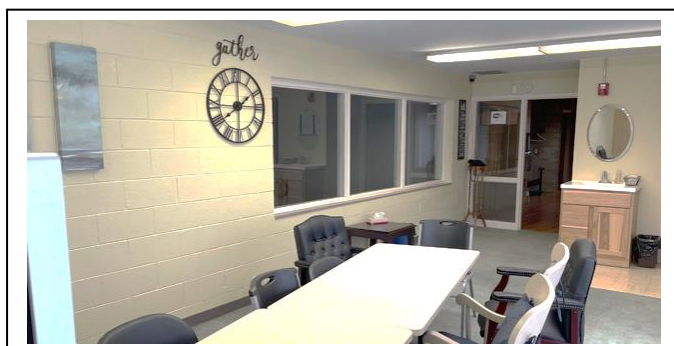
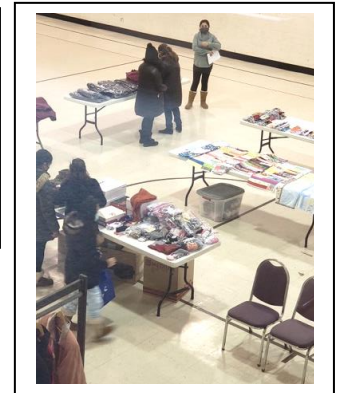
## Pastor's Report

2022 was a year of the Holy Spirit in so many ways as we found God's Spirit around almost every corner. Turn the pages of this report to see just how the Holy Spirit is bearing fruit in and through Church of the Cross in so many different ways, events, and people.

During Lent we studied Joan Gray's book Sailboat Church, which drew us into a deeper awareness of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Creating our own 'boats' we had a visual reminder to raise our sails and set our attention on the Holy Spirit. To which, we discovered new life within us just waiting to unfold for God's kingdom. During this study, like the Psalmist, we prayed, *"Teach us to do your will, for you are our God. Let your good spirit lead us on a level path."* (Psalm 143:10-adapted for the community)

With refreshed eyes and renewed spirits, we began looking around in new ways, and here are just a few things which unfolded this year:

- A "Winter Warmth Event" in January when clothing was provided to many families. (See Micah Report)
- Recognizing our community's need to heal from the pandemic and share our gratitude for all who provided for us during the pandemic, we held an interfaith COVID Remembrance Vigil to remember the deceased and express our gratitude. We are grateful to Leslie Michaels for painting the Peace Mural on our gym wall. (See Worship Report)
- A wonderful outpouring of volunteers who worked during the Spring Clean-up for our facility.
- Discovering the nursery was an unused space just waiting for some attention, the dedicated work of many people brought to life The Gathering Place—a room ready with internet and screen set up for bible studies, meetings, group conversations, and more.



- As you see in the Worship Team Report (and the sanctuary), the Holy Spirit essentially dropped a baby grand piano into our sanctuary, via Dr Robert Kania and donor Mally Micelli, that is. The surprise and joy of this gift delights us every Sunday!
- We were once again able to travel to Sisseton, SD on a mission trip. While it was a much smaller Vacation Bible School (VBS) than pre-covid, the intent of the mission has turned its focus to helping local congregations learn how to provide VBS for their congregations. We recognize this will be a



lengthy learning curve, but we are excited to be a part of it. We give thanks to the Dakota Partnership board and to Cathy Walker for leading all of us in this mission of bringing good news in the name of Jesus Christ.

- The thrill of opening *Lilies of the Field* Community Clothes Closet on November 8, thanks do dedicated volunteers at the direction of co-coordinators, Jane Lesch, Judie Truelsen, and Laura De La Cruz... and every single person who donated money or gently used clothing to support this mission. (See *Lilies of the Field* report)
- Jim Buchholz formed a non-traditional, interfaith worship service geared toward the 12-step recovery community. The ‘Community for Conscious Contact’ worship services are held monthly, and the response has been extremely positive.



We continue to learn that “...to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” (Romans 8:6b) live in the energy we feel for our ministry and our congregation. *Peace* in the assurance God’s Holy Spirit is taking our sails on a course of faithful service to our Lord. While we may not know how the Holy Spirit will move us next, we trust we are in God’s hands.

2023 now looms on our horizon, so I invite you to lift your energy, imagination, and love up with the sail of your boat to see how the Holy Spirit will work in and through you to the glory of God, Father, and Holy Spirit.

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”* (Romans 15:13)

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Julie

## Report of Clerk of Session

The Church of the Cross Session is the governing body of the congregation and functions in compliance with the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church, USA and COTC's bylaws in all its actions. The bylaws provide for nine elders to be elected by the congregation. Elders are normally elected to three-year terms and may not serve more than two consecutive terms (6 years) but may be re-elected after at least one year has passed.

### **The nine elders serving in 2022 were:**

#### Class of 2022

Jane Lesch  
Stu Truelsen  
Jim Vakoc

#### Class of 2023

James Buchholz  
Laura De La Cruz  
Cathy Walker

#### Class of 2024

Ken Groenewold  
Charlie Keppel  
Sue Liautaud

**Rev. Julie Peterson served as the moderator of session and Pat Groenewold was the clerk.**

The session had 11 regular stated meetings and 1 special called meeting during the year and participated in a joint meeting with the deacons. Meetings were held virtually via Zoom, with the hybrid option for in-person participation in July, October, and December.

### **In 2022 the following teams supported the work of the session:**

Corporate Operations Team – Jim Letterer  
Nominating Team – Jane Lesch  
Property Team Inside – Jim Vakoc  
Property Team Outside – Charlie Keppel  
Stewardship Team – Bob Lovell  
Worship Team – Stu Truelsen  
Micah 6:8 Team – Ken Groenewold  
Lilies of the Field Community Clothes Closet – Jane Lesch

The pastor celebrated the Lord's Supper in worship 15 times during the year and a guest pastor celebrated the Lord's Supper in worship, when the pastor was away, once in 2022.

Home communion was suspended in January, February, and October due to Covid concerns. The Lord's Supper was celebrated with members not able to attend worship nine times during the rest of the year. The pastor was assisted by a currently serving deacon each time.

There were no baptisms this past year.

There were no weddings this year.

There were three funerals for members Sandra Lovell, Ann Scheerer and Pamela LeMay and two funerals for non-members Helen Miller and Larry Vakoc.

## MEMBERSHIP TABULATION FOR 2022

Membership reported at the beginning of the year		69
Membership gains during the year		0
Received by Profession/Reaffirmation of Faith or Certificate of Transfer		
Membership loses during the year		-5
Transfer	2	
Removal from the rolls	0	
Death	3	
Membership at the end of the year		64

## IN MEMORIA OF CHURCH OF THE CROSS MEMBERS

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2021 ~ NANCY HARMON

2022 ~ SANDRA LOVELL  
ANN SCHEERER  
PAMELA LEMAY

### PSALM 23

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul:  
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley  
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*



## Deacons Report

The deep generosity of our congregation allowed us to provide support to the following:

- **Direct assistance requests** – 12 individual requests **totaling \$2,310.49.**
- **“Souper Bowl” Sunday took place and \$321 was donated to the Schaumburg Food Pantry** through donations sent to the church office.
- **Aldi’s cards** provided food during the Easter season. We were able to provide 48 cards at \$40 each family in need at Lakeview Elementary School = **\$1,900**
- Easter flowers were sold online and provided beauty to our sanctuary for the Easter service. **Proceeds from the 2021 Christmas poinsettias and 2022 Easter flowers allowed us to purchase 20 Walmart cards at \$25 each (total=\$500)** which were shared with our veterans through Joe Palmer of We Who Serve.
- **Aldi’s cards** provided food to needy families at Lakeview Elementary during the Christmas season. We were able to provide 60 cards at \$45 each = **\$2,655**
- **Warm Coats donated to Lakeview Elementary children for a total of \$1,848**

We celebrated Palm Sunday on Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> with a Potluck brunch in the COTC lounge.

Distribution of Warm Coats to Lakeview Elementary



Celebrating Palm Sunday in the lounge



National Night Out



We celebrated getting outside again with our community when we participated in the **National Night Out on Tuesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.** In conjunction with the Hoffman Estates Police and Fire departments, and other community businesses, we filled our parking lot with friends and neighbors and celebrated being together once again out in the great outdoors. Hot dogs and chips, cookies, and soft drinks were served and enjoyed by all.

# Nominating Team Report

Members: Jane Lesch, Jeff Peterson, Cheryl Wilkins

The purpose of the Nominating Team is to present candidates for the offices of Ruling Elders, Deacons and the three At-Large members of the Nominating Team to the congregation for their election to offices. The Nominating Team also oversees the completion of annual Financial Review and the associated written procedures for the reviews.

The following candidates were presented to the congregation and were elected on November 13<sup>th</sup> to begin serving in 2023:

## Elders:

- Stu Rutter                      Class of 2025
- Stewart Truelsen            Class of 2025
- Cheryl Wilkins                Class of 2025

## Deacons:

- Susan Buchholz              Class of 2025
- Lois McPherson              Class of 2025
- Glenna Morgan               Class of 2025
- Ann Moorman                Class of 2023 (one year term)

The following At-Large members to the Nominating Team will serve one-year terms in 2023:

- Adelaide Grant-Acquah – 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Karen Franz – 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Jane Lesch – 2<sup>nd</sup> year

The 2022 Financial Review Team for the church's 2021 financial results was led by Charlie Keppel and John Baker and assisted by Vanessa Brand. The review was completed and accepted by Session in September. There were no significant findings.

The job of the Nominating Team depended heavily on the team members; Deacon - Jeff Peterson, and the At-Large member - Cheryl Wilkins. Their work was greatly appreciated!

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Lesch, Elder

Moderator, Nominating Team

# MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

## Stewardship Team Report

**Theme:**

***“Have I not commanded you?  
Be strong and courageous. Do not  
be terrified; do not be discouraged,  
for the Lord your God will be with you  
wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9 (NIV)***

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>2021 *(note)</b>	<b>2022 *(note)</b>	<b>Change</b>
Number of pledges	34	31	-9.7 %
Total money pledged	\$153,730	\$158,560	+3.1 %
Average pledge	\$4,521	\$5,114.8	+11.6 %

<b>Major Maintenance Fund</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Change</b>
Number of pledges	21	19	-10.5 %
Total money pledged	\$29,180	\$22,400	-10.3 %
Average pledge	\$1,389	\$1,179	-17.8 %

<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Change</b>
Total money pledged	\$182,910	\$180,910	-1.1%

\*Note: 2021 comparison to 2022: 12 pledges same as 2021; 6 pledges decreased from 2021.  
13 pledges increased from 2021; 3 pledged in 2021 and not in 2022.

Your Stewardship Team,

Bob Lovell-Chair, Terry Maulding, and James Buchholz

## Worship Team Report

Members: Pastor Julie Peterson, Laura de La Cruz, Jane Lesch, Mike Lorentz, Marie Rutter, Stu and Judie Truelsen.

The AV Team that projects and streams worship services consisted of John Baker, Jim Moorman, Mike Lorentz, and Stu Truelsen.

**This was a most unusual year that included Christmas day falling on a Sunday. The next time that will happen is the year 2033. In addition to our traditional candlelight service on Christmas Eve at 7 p.m., we returned on Sunday for a Christmas Day service. The sanctuary never looks better than during Advent with an array of Poinsettias, the Christmas tree with Chrismon ornaments, candles, ivy, and other decorations.**

We planned a Christmas Sabbath on December 23, that never took place because of blizzard warnings and extreme cold. The idea was to open the sanctuary all day and through early evening for prayer and meditation. Our flyer asked the question--Need a moment to rest in awe of the Christ Child? Church officers were scheduled to be available on two hour shifts to pray with anyone who asked. Christmas Sabbath was going to be a respite from the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping. As it was, the storm ended most of the running around for everyone.

**Throughout 2022 we adjusted the worship service because of the lingering COVID pandemic and its new variants.** At times this meant wearing our masks, but we ended the year with optional wearing of masks. Other precautions included extra spacing in the pews, communion taken in the pews with pre-filled cups and wafers, and finally hybrid communion with the option to remain seated or be served the bread and wine at the front of the communion table. Many of our congregation did in fact get COVID during 2022, but the symptoms were tolerable. Of course, we continued to stream our worship services for all those unable to attend in person, and on various Sundays Cheryl Wilkins added a Spanish reading of scripture.

**The Sailboat Church study prompted us to leave our comfort zone and listen for the Holy Spirit to direct us as a church. We certainly did that with the COVID Remembrance Vigil on May 25,** a Thursday evening. It was an interfaith gathering in the gym to remember beloved families, friends, colleagues, and neighbors lost to COVID. Faith and community leaders participated in the service. Candles were lit by those in attendance, and a tree was donated and planted by the Keppel family as a memorial. A beautiful peace mural was painted on a portion of the gym wall by Leslie Michaels.

Covid-19 Vigil





**Dr Robert Kania and Marie Rutter performing a duet on the new baby grand piano**



**Being guided by the Holy Spirit means to expect the unexpected. What could be more unexpected than the gift of a baby grand piano,** which now occupies a place near the front of the sanctuary. The piano was donated by Mally Micelli, the creative thought behind the Elgin Messiah Sing-along. She and Dr. Robert Kania worked together on the sing along. Several members of our choir participated in the sing-along and got to thank Mally in person. Robert alternates between the grand piano downstairs and the organ and digital piano upstairs. The choir also has been singing around the new piano on occasion. It's

always nice to have the choir sing where we can see them.

**Another way in which we were led by the Holy Spirit was by sponsoring a non-traditional, interfaith worship service geared toward the 12-step recovery community.** Led by Jim Buchholz, the service is an experiment to determine whether there is a need and interest in this community of unchurched seekers for this type of worship. A commitment was made to meet once monthly for six months. The group met three times during 2022 and grew from an initial 12 to 21 on New Year's Eve.

**Worship at Church of the Cross is so meaningful to all of us. We are blessed to be led in worship by Pastor Julie. We are blessed to have faithful choir members led by Marie and Robert's splendid accompaniment. As our outdoor sign said right after Christmas, "Comfort and Joy Found Here." How very true.**

Submitted by,

Stu Truelsen  
Worship Team Chair

**Sanctuary decorated for Christmas**



**Palm Sunday**





## Micah 6:8 Team Report

*The Micah team seeks to support the congregation as COTC does God's work as we best understand God's will, by doing justice loving kindness and walking humbly with God.*

Members: Ken Groenewold, Laura De La Cruz, Jeff Peterson, Rev. Julie Peterson, Judie Truelsen, and Cathy Walker

We see social justice as love applied to systems, policies, cultures, and individuals. Our primary desire is to focus on racial justice, to be open and affirming to LGBTQ+ persons, and to support immigrants and refugees.

The Micah team seeks out and evaluates opportunities for the church as a whole to serve others. When we find an opportunity, we make recommendations to the session which then decides which opportunities to accept. 2022 was our first complete year in service. Several items implemented this year are listed below:

- In January COTC held a **"Winter Warmth Event"**. Clothing was provided to many families. This was done in conjunction with Partners for Our Community (POC), Christ Church in Hanover Park, and The Rotary Club of Schaumburg, Hoffman Estates.
- In February, in honor of **black history month**; We made a presentation to the congregation regarding the DuSable Museum of African American History.
- During the summer, in conjunction with POC, we were able to provide furniture and bicycles to immigrant families.
- We reviewed and recommended the **"Being Mortal—End of Life Series"** which was open not only to our church members but also to all members of the community.
- We reviewed and recommended a program which was initiated and implemented by Jim Buchholz. The program is named **"Community for Conscious Contact."**
- In the fall we explored the possibility of a clothes closet at COTC. We met with Elk Grove Presbyterian Church which already had a community clothes closet and a food pantry. Based on this work, we planted the seed that bloomed as our ongoing program **"Lilies of the Field Community Clothes Closet."** Knowing we need additional volunteers; we continue to be tremendously grateful for our COTC volunteers even as we spread the word into the community to assist us in this vital work.
- We applied for and received a grant of \$5,000 from the Chicago Presbytery to support the clothes closet.
- For 2022, \$5,000 was budgeted for unspecified items. During the year, \$1,000 was used to match contributions for the people of Ukraine and \$4,000 was used to support the startup of *Lilies of the Field* Community Clothes Closet.

We communicate with the Village of Hoffman Estates, POC, the Kenneth Young Center, other churches, and non-profit organizations to seek new opportunities and to communicate what is being done at COTC.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ken Groenewold, Chair

## ***Lilies of the Field Community Clothes Closet***

Coordinators: Jane Lesch, Judie Truelsen, Laura De La Cruz.

Volunteers: Sue Liautaud, Ann Moorman, Cathy Walker, and many more!

**The concept of the COTC running a clothing closet began in the Micah Group in 2021.**

Through discussion, discernment, and prayers, the decision was made to open the closet. There was a lot of cleaning and rearranging to create the space and with a lot of hard work by a lot of volunteers the closet was opened on Nov. 8, 2022. Since that day the closet has provided clothing for 19 people and their families by providing them about 600 items in addition to supplying some coats, hats, and gloves for Lakeview School children.

**The clothing closet provides gently used or new clothing to our patrons free of charge.**

**The closet relies on donations of gently used clothing and monetary donations from our congregation and our community.** We also requested and received a \$5,000 grant from the Presbytery for the closet's needs. There will always be a monetary need as we will need to buy new underwear and socks.

Currently our hours are:

- Tuesdays: 11 am – 1 pm
- Thursdays: 4 – 6 pm
- The first and third Saturday of the month: 9 – 11 am

Plans in December were underway for an event being put on by the Kenneth Young Organization as they bring a large group of immigrants to COTC for a day in early January 2023.

*(2023 Note: 139 people from 39 families were able to receive close to 830 items.)*

I'd like to thank everyone who has volunteered their time to help get the closet up and running.

I am overwhelmed by the willingness of the whole congregation to pitch in and help with this project. The only way this project will continue successfully is if we can keep up the support of the congregation and get more support from our community. We ask that everyone keep talking about the closet with their friends and relatives and encouraging donations and volunteering.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Lesch

Judie Truelsen

Laura De La Cruz

**Clothing Closet Coordinators and a few Volunteers**



# CORPORATION REPORTS

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## Corporation Team Report

Members: Jim Letterer, President; Jim Vakoc, Vice-President; Ken Groenewold, Treasurer; Pat Groenewold, Secretary; Terry Maulding, congregation member; Hank Morgan, congregational member; and Rev. Julie Peterson.

Corporate Operations (Corp Ops) meets monthly and as needed for emergencies. This team is responsible for the church's budget and finances; building and grounds; other administrative matters; and personnel matters. Following is a summary of major activities and accomplishments during 2022 in each of these areas:

### **Budget and Finance**

- Monthly review of financial reports, statement of funds, general fund income and expenses, investment balances and making recommendations to session on financial decisions as required.
- Annual update of signing authority on bank and investment accounts
- Summary financial information presented to the congregation periodically.
- Transfer cash from investments to general fund with session approval as needed for operations.
- Recommendations to session for 2023 budget, including salary increases for staff.
- Periodically meet and consult with external investment advisor.
- Additional financial details are provided in the treasurer's report in the Annual Report document.

### **Building and Grounds**

- Oversight of regular maintenance and repairs to the building with outstanding support from Jim Vakoc for indoor items and Charlie Keppel for outdoor work
- Management of use of COTC facilities by other organizations, including fee rates, agreements, compliance with insurance and child protections policies, and reviewing new usage requests
- The refurbishing of the old nursery space into a Gathering Room, with nursery space at the back of the room was completed with wired internet access to make streaming and virtual meetings more dependable.
- GE replacement refrigerator for \$899 was purchased for the downstairs kitchen and charged to the Major Maintenance account.
- Secured chairs to replace older, broken ones.
- Supported various workday projects both in the building and on the exterior.

### **Other Administrative Responsibilities**

- Review and execute contracts including heating / air-conditioning, insurance, lawn maintenance, snow plowing, and fire safety.

### **Personnel**

- Pastor Julie has a number of action items for Corp Ops each month, including the ongoing discussion of how wonderful it is to have such a great COTC staff!
- Coordinate annual review for the pastor.
- Review and revise job descriptions as needed.

A big **thank you** to Ken, Pat, Terry, Hank, Jim V, and Pastor Julie for all their hard work on Corp Ops in 2022!

Jim Letterer

COTC President