

Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ



*"Spiritually Alive,
Joyfully Inclusive,
Committed to Justice."*

2023 Annual Report

Feb 4, 2024

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Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ
Annual Meeting Agenda, February 4, 2024

Opening Prayer – Hal Evensen

Welcome of New Members to the Annual Meeting – Hal Evensen

Adoption of Agenda

Approval of Minutes from Last Year’s Annual Meeting (February 5, 2023)

Update to Safe Sanctuary Policy – Hal Evensen

Word of Gratitude for Work of Ministries, Leadership Team, ORUCC Staff, and annual reports

Senior Pastor—Julia Burkey

Associate Pastor – Ken Pennings

Associate Pastor – Kate Mackey

Children's Education Coordinator – Julie Mazer

Leadership Team – Hal Evensen, Moderator

Clerk’s Report – Jim McNamara

Ministry of Adult Faith Formation – Leslie Linser

Ministry of Christian Witness and Service – LuAnn Greiner

Ministry of Congregational Life – Rachael Lancor

Ministry of Resources – Jon Blanchard

Ministry of Youth Faith Formation – Karen Jaehnig

Treasurer’s Report for 2023 – John Day

Open Time for Questions Regarding 2023 Life and Ministry

Adoption of 2024 Annual Budget – John Day

Nominating Report and Election – Deanna Blanchard *(presented by Barbara Stretchberry)*

Thank you to our many volunteers

Outgoing Leadership Team Members – Sally Allen, Sue Dixon, and Barbara Stretchberry

Looking Ahead to 2024 – Deanna Blanchard *(presented by Barbara Stretchberry)*

Closing Prayer – Deanna Blanchard *(presented by Barbara Stretchberry)*

2022 Annual Meeting Minutes – February 5, 2023

Call to Order with prayer – Moderator Barbara Stretchberry called the meeting to order at 11:20 AM and offered a prayer of thanks for the progress of the last year.

Welcome of New Members to the Annual Meeting – Barbara listed the new members added to the congregation since the last Annual Meeting and explained our structure and procedures.

Adoption of the Agenda – The agenda was amended to add a discussion on a motion making ORUCC “Mask Optional” for worship and meetings. The amended agenda was then approved.

Approval of Minutes from the February 6, 2022 Annual Meeting – A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the Minutes of last year’s meeting as presented in the 2022 Annual Report.

Word of Gratitude for Work of Ministries, Leadership Team, Staff and Annual Reports – Barbara expressed her thankfulness for the efforts of the many individuals that help make ORUCC a viable church institution. Questions on the submitted reports were requested. A motion was made and seconded to accept the reports as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report for 2022 – John Day reported that we ended 2022 with a \$4,000.00 deficit on a budget that, as approved at the last annual meeting, had a projected deficit of around \$9,000.00. We received over 99% of the pledged amount and our expenditures were lower than budgeted. There was a motion and second to accept the treasurer’s report and it was approved.

New Item – Request for a “Mask Optional” policy for ORUCC – Jon Blanchard moved that ORUCC enact a policy that mask use be optional for gatherings in the church. A second was made and a brisk discussion ensued. A request to table the motion and refer the matter to the Covid Response Team was made without any action being taken. Another suggestion was that the motion be made advisory, rather than binding. There were a couple of people – including one attending via the podcast – who stated that they would not feel safe in worship if the mask mandate was lifted. A suggestion was made that the motion be changed to make the vote advisory to the Covid Response Team so that it had a sense of the congregation’s thinking on the matter. There was a request that the response be non-binary on the idea of using masks. Dan Rossmiller was uncomfortable with telling the CR Team what to do and asked that we let the people on the team do the job with which they were entrusted. An idea was advanced to use “range voting” by having members vote by going to a position expressing their feelings from “Full Mask” on one side to “No Mask” on the other. There was a request for current Covid activity data for Dane County, but no one had the data available. After more discussion and an agreement from Jon that the vote would be advisory, the question was called. ***Advisory Motion: That ORUCC adopt an “Mask Optional” policy for gatherings in the church building. Results: 30 in favor, 24 opposed, 14 abstained.*** (There were more people present that did not indicate any preference.) The matter was referred to the Covid Response Team for immediate consideration and action.

Open Time for Questions Regarding 2022 Life and Ministry – Search for Associate Pastor - Nancy Wettersten said that there have been slim pickings due to the part time nature of the position and the fact that we have only been considering ordained candidates. The committee is still working and in contact with prospects.

Adoption of 2023 Annual Budget – John Day explained that the budget presented today assumes that we will have a new Youth Pastor in place for six months. There is also a 3% raise for staff and an increase in a number of line items due to inflation. Where possible, some lines have been reduced but there will be a projected deficit of just over \$10,000.00. Our Pledging came up short of our goal, mostly due to losing 14 long time pledges due to moving. We did have 25 new pledges this year which bodes well for the future. After a brief discussion, Mary Connor moved we accept the budget as presented. Sue Dixon seconded the motion. The budget was approved.

Nominating Report and Election – Hal Evensen presented the list of nominees with one addition to the printed list in the Annual Report booklet. Steve Pearson has agreed to be on the Adult Faith Formation Team. Helene Nelson moved acceptance of the slate and Ruthanne Landsness seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Thanks to our many volunteers – Barbara thanked the many people who have served so well in the past year. She gave special thanks to the outgoing members of the Leadership Team, Kythie Boyd, Chuck Kaspar and John Lemke. After thanking the members for the opportunity to serve, she introduced Hal Evensen as the new Moderator and turned the meeting over to him.

Looking Ahead to 2023 – Hal Evensen reflected on what he saw as the priorities for 2023. We need to work on being as transparent an organization as is possible so that the members can be fully engaged and proactive in our programs and work. We will be reviewing the constitution and other operating documents to be sure that they reflect our needs and purpose.

Closing Prayer – Hal read “On a New Year” and led us in reflective prayer. A motion to adjourn was made by John Day and seconded by Sara Hagen. Motion approved with adjournment at 12:18 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Jim McNamara, Clerk

2023 UCC Year in Review – Franz Rigert, Conference Minister

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all ... while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” Titus 2: 11-13

I greet you in the joyful spirit of Epiphany. The words of Titus remind us that between the grace of God that came to Bethlehem in the birth of Jesus and the full manifestation of God’s glory on Earth, we in the United Church of Christ are called to bear witness to the love of Christ every day.

The love of Christ is faithful in every generation. Four years after COVID-19 radically changed our lives, congregations still are adjusting to new realities. Many have faced significant declines and are enduring the anxiety that accompanies concerns about sustainability. Yet most have embraced new technologies, and nearly all congregations can point to bright spots of ministry that have unleashed new energy. COVID affected the wider church as well. In early 2023, we made the painful decision to sell the Trost Center in DeForest and shift the

Conference offices to Daycholah Center on Green Lake, enabling a closer partnership with United Church Camps Inc. and providing UCCI with a financial boost.

The love of Christ is courageous in the face of challenges. Our associate conference ministers – the Revs. Jane Anderson, Rachel Bauman and Michael Jones – continue to guide congregations through the search process at a time when the candidate pool is small, and the number of part-time pastorates is increasing. We consider every creative pastoral option and use the leadership and ministry skills courses of the Damascus Project to train future pastoral leaders. The Rev. Dr. Stephanie Perdew, director of the Damascus Project, secured a \$500,000 Lilly Endowment grant that – over the next five years – will widen our pool of learners through expanded course offerings at very reasonable costs. The Damascus Project is the shared educational ministry of the Minnesota and Wisconsin conferences.

The love of Christ demands justice for the oppressed. The justice working groups and Supportive Ministries Team continue to provide resources for local congregations and a collective voice supporting the poor and marginalized. The Damascus Project introduced an implicit bias course, part of our emphasis on anti-racism training. One of our newer working groups – Older Adult Ministries – has produced significant resources for local churches that seek to cultivate deeper connections with seniors. The Creation Care Team, the Immigration Justice Work Group and the Alliance for Justice, which focuses on honoring indigenous peoples, are empowering local congregations with resources to advance these vital ministries.

The love of Christ brings generosity to the world. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the 210 UCC congregations of the Wisconsin Conference remain remarkably generous. Your support through Our Church's Wider Mission provides three-quarters of the Conference budget and all sorts of resourcing, training and programs, and an incredible global mission outreach. We are deeply grateful to all those who have made commitments to the Leadership Forward Campaign. Already, Leadership Forward has received pledges totaling \$1 million. In addition, the Wisconsin Foundation UCC now holds investments of roughly \$17 million on behalf of several congregations and the Conference. The Foundation provides an ideal opportunity for your congregation to achieve excellent financial returns through socially responsible investments.

The love of Christ builds beloved community. In our wider Conference life, we are asking this question: "How can we better connect, resource and support each other, as local churches, pastors and lay leaders?" The question has prompted us to rethink church governance structures and to imagine new forms of collaboration. Meanwhile, the staff continues to cultivate care and connection with one another and to build relationships throughout the Conference. At the beginning of 2023 we welcomed ACM Michael Jones and just recently introduced our newest staff member, Carla Myers, who succeeds Susan Taylor as office coordinator. Though Sue is mostly retired, we're happy that she has agreed to work a few hours a week to coordinate the search-and-call process.

Submitted with a grateful heart in the love of Christ,

The Rev. Franz, Rigert—Conference Minister

2023 Senior Pastor – Julia Burkey

My biggest joys of serving as Senior Pastor of Orchard Ridge UCC are the relationships I cultivate along the way. I love watching children grow, meeting your grown children, sitting alongside people as they transition from this life to the next, learning what really matters to people so my preaching and teaching can reflect the realities of an incarnate God in our lives. Thank you for a wonderful 3 years of being together as church and Senior Pastor. I appreciate how time works each other into one another's hearts.

The relationships I have cultivated with our wonderful staff at ORUCC make a demanding role, playful, collaborative, joyful and creative. Thank you to each of our pastors Ken & Kate, musicians Vicki, Bruce, Bethany and Rob and staff members Julie W., Julie M., Gabe & Tim for being the engine that makes ORUCC purr with the Holy Spirit. Thank you to our fabulous moderator team Hal Evensen, Barbara Stretchberry and Deanna Blanchard who have been a joy to work with, along with every single member of the wonderful ministries and mission teams, and those members and friends who invite me to coffee or for a meal or into your life to offer pastoral care- it is a joy and privilege to love and serve God alongside of you all!

In January 2023 we began our year by dwelling on the beauty of the earth with an All Church Retreat at Daycholah Center where interactive prayer stations themed around earth, air, fire and water engaged our spirits and our bodies. Creating intergenerational community is one of our big values and the All-Church Retreat brings wonderful moments of people from all ages, together in worship and play. My spouse The Rev. Daniel Cooperrider helped us reflect during retreat time about the clouds, rivers, mountains and trees of the Bible. We even had a movement meditation and dance party, which was a great way to start the new year.

The search committee worked hard interviewing throughout the year and perhaps perfected the spiritual discipline of patience as they eagerly anticipated and dreamed about our new pastor for many months. I cannot help but to skip ahead chronologically to celebrate the big highlight of our year of calling The Rev. Kate Mackey as our Associate Pastor of Children, Youth & Families! Kate is a wonderful addition to our community, bringing a depth of leadership, spiritual grounding and a whole lot of joy. She began in June by attending Moon Beach during the week many ORUCC families attend, and then joining the mission trip! Pastors Kate, Ken and I have gotten into a wonderful weekly rhythm and truly love working and serving at ORUCC together. Congratulations to the search committee, and thank you to everyone who stepped up in the last year to continue making our transition smooth.

Our Lenten theme in 2023 was *Radical Hospitality*, and each week in worship we reflected about different aspects of hospitality. We began with the theme of moving from guest to host in our own church space (if you've come to worship at least 3 times you are now a HOST, someone responsible for setting the tone of welcome for people who first walk in the door). We continued by exploring the hospitality of Jesus, spiritual soul-care of being a host to your own spirit, the architecture of hospitality, a celebration of our innovation around the housing crisis which is the Heart Room ministry and our commitment as a sanctuary church to Immigration Justice. Inviting the architect of our most recent renovation Peter Tan from Strang Inc. to preach was a real highlight. He shared the eco intentions of our building, and the spiritual significance of our amphitheater sanctuary in the round making us appreciate how our space hosts us and our building in its design gives reverence to the gathering patterns of the Ho-Chunk Nation. ORUCC also hosted a summit on the housing crisis in Madison facilitated by the Wisconsin Council of Churches where many community members, pastors, social workers and non-profit leaders came to put our hearts and minds together to learn about what the churches response of radical hospitality could look like, with a long-term goal of using space and buildings of unused churches to house people.

From February to April, we held a rigorous study around of, “7 Deadly Sins of White Christian Nationalism” by theologian Carter Heyward, led by The Rev. Dr. David Anderman. Two very engaged classes met on Tuesdays and Thursdays to explore the biblical and theological underpinning of white christian nationalism (intentionally not capitalized to show the heretical and damaging use of the Christian tradition). Alongside learning academically, we processed emotionally the horrors of people mis-using Christian tradition and texts to persecute and exclude, and we felt the imperative of doing our best to expand our “radical hospitality,” and share messages of love, inclusion and justice.

“Our Wayfinding, the Soul-Tasks of Aging, Toward a Theology of The Elder Years,” monthly mini-retreats continued to meet in 2023. Our time together involves meditation, ritual, song, teaching and breaking into small-groups for deep discussion. This group of nearly 55 in-person and 15 people the following day over ZOOM explored themes of death and the afterlife, “becoming death doulas,” by learning to accompany our own souls and our loved ones and each other in the time of death and dying. We explored the concept of ‘spiritual legacy,’ and how to plant seeds of the next generation. In June the group agreed, “we want more Wayfinding!” My wise council of elders met over the summer and we decided to enhance the 2023-2024 program by including Biblical characters in the next round of Wayfinding, to help us connect to archetypes within ourselves and in our tradition. Beginning again in October 2023, Wayfinding continues to provide a place of beautiful soul conversations, and truly one of the favorite aspects of my ministry. In December I was invited to present at the Wisconsin Council of Churches’ Annual meeting about Wayfinding, which was a wonderful way to share the process and template with other pastors- something the wider church seems to be hungering for. I’d love the opportunity to work on writing a book or a curriculum for the wider church based on the wonderful Wayfinding process.

During the spring Care of Creation hosted book groups on the Rev. Daniel Cooperrider’s book *Speak With The Earth and It Will Teach You*. Over the summertime we engaged a preaching theme of the Phoenix Affirmations, 12 different positive statements from the progressive church themed around the love of God, the love of neighbor and love of self. These beautiful affirmations helped us move from a place of what we DO believe, after dwelling with the sins of white christian nationalism in the early spring.

Our whole church theme in Fall 2023 was Indigenous Justice and we read Katlin Curtice’s book *Native* to explore first person narrative about the struggle to be fully Indigenous and Christian. We also used *The First Nations Translation of the New Testament* in particular the Gospel of Luke, to help us open up scripture with Indigenous issues and culture and tradition in mind. I was particularly interested in how focusing on Indigenous Justice might open up our pursuit of Racial Justice and Care of Creation. In January 2024 we will host a summit to explore just that, and hopefully to create a land acknowledgment statement that will go beyond the usual statement of stolen land and include an ongoing commitment to justice using *our* particular resources. In all things, we strive to be Spiritually Alive, Joyfully Inclusive and Committed to Justice.

2023 Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families—Kate Mackey

It has been such a joy to become part of the community of Orchard Ridge UCC this year! I began my ministry at ORUCC on June 1, 2023. One of the remarkable strengths of this congregation is its dedication to our children and youth. This dedication shone through the lay people and church staff who stepped up to shepherd our vibrant children and youth programming in the transition time prior to my arrival.

January 2023 began with the beloved tradition of an All-Church retreat at Daycholah Center. Senior Pastor Julia Burkey, working with YFF and others, planned this weekend-long event.

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year we had a sizeable group of 6th-8th graders go through our OWL program. This group was led by adult lay leaders Brock Schultz, Barbara Stretchberry, Kristin Muckian.

TRU Function, our youth band, has continued to regularly meet most Sundays for rehearsal. They lead the congregation in worship once a month during the school year. The group is now up to 10 members, and Rob Martens along with Megan Piper continue to create a community of fellowship and empowerment for these youth.

Julie Mazer took on an additional ‘hat’ to wear this past year, coordinating the Sunday school programming for children Pre-K-5th grade on top of her role as Children’s Music Director. Julie has expertly maintained our Sunday school programming, and even beyond that she has continued to grow and adapt the program. We are thrilled to be able to keep her on staff for the next year in her role as the Children’s Education Coordinator, and I look forward to our ongoing creative collaboration in ministry. You can see further updates on our Pre-K-5th children’s education programming in her update for this annual report.

Beginning early in 2023, Susan Watson piloted a “Youth Newsletter.” With her support, the youth published several articles throughout the spring. Now the Newsletter team meets at 9:00 a.m. on the second Sunday of the month to continue their work. They reflect on many subjects related to life in the congregation and their own experiences of faith.

When I arrived this summer, I had the opportunity to jump right into congregational life at Moon Beach family camp at the end of June. It was such a joy to join dozens of campers from ORUCC and share in meaningful time together.

In July, I joined 18 youth and 4 chaperones on a week-long Service Trip to Duluth, MN through Service Learning Camps. I am so incredibly grateful for Kristin Muckian’s hard work to make sure that this trip continued in 2023! Our youth had a great time serving in many capacities in Duluth and Superior, WI.

One of my goals this school year has been to offer something for *every* child/youth at the 9:00 hour on Sunday mornings. On the first and third Sundays, 6th grade-High School students have been working through a Sunday school curriculum called “Echo the Story,” which seeks to help students gain familiarity with the primary narrative arcs of the Bible while asking deep questions and making personal connections to their own lives. Susan Watson and Kristin Muckian have been the primary adult guides for this group.

On the second and fourth Sundays, when the Newsletter Group and TRU Function respectively meet at 9:00, I began a new offering called “Breakfast Club”—a chance for youth who are not involved in Newsletter or TRU Function to come together for fellowship. We generally meet to share about what’s happening in our lives while working on some kind of project, such as making the gift tags for our Christmas gift sharing tree which benefitted families in our neighborhood.

In October, we had a Youth Service Trip Celebration Sunday, sharing about our trip in Duluth MN and leading the congregation in worship. Shortly afterwards, we jumped right into planning for Summer 2024. We are heading to Nashville, TN through Service Learning Camps. In the last few months of 2023, the youth and their families already completed several fundraising efforts to go towards our next summer travels.

Christmas Eve brought us to another beautiful youth-led Christmas Eve service. Our children prepared music and words related to the theme of “Hope.” TRU Function led worship, including leading the congregation in Christmas carol singing. It was a night of joyful celebration together.

My ministry in 2023 has been focused primarily on relationship building, learning about the systems and programs already in place, and beginning to explore new areas of growth and ministry for our community. There are several areas of potential ministry growth that I have begun to explore:

- Collaborative youth ministry with other progressive Christian communities in the Madison area. This included a “Friendsgiving” party in November with St. Dunstan’s Episcopal church, and the potential of collaborating on an interfaith GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance group) with the Multifaith Coalition of South-Central WI.
- Intergenerational ministry opportunities. As I have built relationships across the congregation, a desire for more intergenerational connections is something I have heard from congregants of all ages. There are already many ways that ORUCC leans into this beautiful ministry (Daycholah retreat, Moon Beach, Labyrinth walks, etc.), and I look forward to continuing to expand these opportunities.
- Summer Service Trip sustainability. This year we have already begun our preparations for a traditional Service Trip in 2024; while these trips are beloved and have many benefits to our youths’ faith development, they are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain financially. I have been having conversations with stakeholders in this programming and will continue to explore how we may need to adapt this program to make it sustainable and aligned with our theological priorities.

I am so grateful to be welcomed into this vibrant community. We have deep roots, engaged families, and adults committed to the faith formation of our youth. We are poised to try out some new ways of being ‘church’ together, and I am excited for the year to come.

2023 Associate Pastor for Congregational Life – Ken Pennings

During this fourteenth year of ministry at ORUCC, I’ve made a point of following up on visitors and new friends. In 2023, we received into membership thirty-one delightful people who have added lots of energy and vitality to our congregation! I’m always looking for ways to help these new members make connections with others who have a longer history with the church; discover points of entry into the larger life of the congregation beyond Sunday morning worship; and discover and use their gifts, talents and abilities in ministry to and with others. As an example of this, I incorporated the remarks and reflections of a number of our new members in one sermon I preached on the Phoenix Affirmations last summer.

As primary pastoral liaison to the Ministry of Congregational Life (CL), I’ve met quarterly with CL in potluck dinner meetings in homes. I have given leadership and support to ministries that come under the umbrella of CL: Pastoral Partners, Prayer Shawls, Meals Team, Lunch & Learn (previously Over 55), Welcomers, Coffee-Makers, AV Technicians, and a Dining out Group. In future months, I hope to reactivate Ushers.

A huge part of my ministry in Congregational Life is recruiting and training volunteers. I am regularly creating sign-ups using an online tool called “SignUp Genius.”

Increasingly, I am involved in the mechanics of set-up and tear-down of special services and events, helping to make sure things run smoothly. I also have assumed primary responsibility for the décor in the sanctuary, e.g. changing

seasonal banners, dressing the Communion Table, etc. Increasingly, however, our newly created Liturgical Arts Team is taking more responsibility for these things.

As primary pastoral liaison to the Ministry of Adult Faith Formation (AFF), I worked closely with AFF to include in our monthly meetings check-ins from each member of our team regarding his/her area of special interest and passion (e.g. Wayfinding for Seniors, Labyrinth, Racial Justice, Daily Reflections, Theological Inquiry, Spirituality & the Arts, etc.). With AFF's support, I worked directly with a pool of facilitators to create a schedule of In-Person/Zoom sessions of Java & Jesus on Sunday mornings at 9 o'clock, and I helped to create a new mission team which works in Liturgical Arts.

I thoroughly enjoy my participation in worship, preaching, leadership, pastoral care, and communications. It is very rewarding to work with musicians, lay liturgists, AV Technicians, and others, as we prepare for each Sunday's worship service. I attend and contribute to each of our Leadership Team meetings and retreats. I offer support to the Nominating Team in finding people to serve in a variety of ministries. I participate in the "Covid Response Mission Team." I create and send out E-Prayer once a week. Occasionally, I write articles for our publications. Often, I send out "one-shot" emails to the whole congregation promoting church-wide events and happenings.

It is a great joy to serve as one of the pastors of ORUCC!

2023 Children's Education Coordinator – Julie Mazer

It has been a joy to continue my leadership as "Children's Education Coordinator" this past year. I found that 2022 set the roots for this work and that 2023 provided space for growth. Now that the routine and structure for the program was set, I was able to focus on programming opportunities for our children and take the steps to revise our Safe Sanctuary Policy. Our growth was given an extra dose of nutrients when Kate joined the team as Associate Pastor for Youth and Families in June. Together, we revised language in the curriculum to match the progressive, inclusive theology that we value at ORUCC. Additionally, we mapped out long-term goals to deepen the curriculum experiences that we offer and to build intergenerational programming.

Following past ORUCC children's curriculum maps, the Ruby Bridges Room (K-5 grade January-May; 2-5 grade September-December) embarked on a study of the Bible. Guided by the resource, "Learning to Use My Bible," the children explored all of the sections of the Bible (Books of Law, Books of Poetry, Gospels, etc.) and the various concepts and stories within those chapters in an active, multi sensory way. They created watercolor images of the Creation story and of Pentecost, wrote their own pieces of poetry, created props to tell the story of Esther, experienced guided imagery meditations to embody the Fruits of the Spirit, and wrote short epistles to someone in our congregation. Throughout the process, the children learned how to find Bible verses and became familiar with many of the 66 books of the Bible. Our study came to a conclusion in November with a "Bible Distribution Ceremony." This tradition demonstrated our commitment to support and guide the spiritual development of the children of our church community with a resource for their at-home exploration and devotion.

Inspired by Chris Thomas and the Labyrinth Team, the children participated in five labyrinth walks throughout the year. In January, they considered what "gift" they would like to offer to the world in the New Year and presented a piece of pottery that they had created with Alice Anderman. In February, Chris and Alice trudged through the deep snow to carve an outdoor labyrinth for the children to traverse. In March, Julia Burkey offered a special, "Dancing the Labyrinth" experience. And, in April children and their caregivers were invited to walk the labyrinth as a family unit. We continued this tradition in November, considering "Hope" as our focus to launch us into the Advent season. The children and youth were offered a reflection time after each labyrinth experience. Some shared,

"I wish I could do that every day."
"It felt very peaceful"
"I thought about calm things"
"I felt like a leader."
"Why does time feel like it's gone?"

The practice of walking the labyrinth and collaborations with the Labyrinth Team will continue into 2024 and will be a regular part of our programming.

The children also had the opportunity to collaborate with the Care of Creation Team by creating images and messages promoting environmental activism. Alice Anderman presented these images in a gallery in Friendship Hall and several were used for an Earth Day postcard campaign to those in government. One image was even selected by Kristen Slack (District 19 Alder) to be selected as the background picture on her personal Alder Facebook page. Kristen shared,

"I received some delightful environmentally-focused postcards from several children who attend Orchard Ridge Church. I wanted to pass on my appreciation for this and also commend these young people for caring about the environment and taking the time to write to local policymakers about their hopes and concerns."

In an effort to connect with organizations outside of our state, the children and youth participated in the "International Peace Crane Project." This organization "invites every student on the planet to fold an origami crane, write a message of peace on its wings, then exchange it with another student somewhere in the world. The Project builds friendships, strengthens hand-eye coordination and writing skills, teaches geography, exposes students to new languages and cultures, and empowers youth to make a difference in their community, country, and world." We sent over 100 hand-made origami cranes, hearts, and doves to an afterschool enrichment group in Gainesville, Georgia and a small, one room schoolhouse on the island of Anacortes which is located off the coast of Washington. Additionally, our children and youth shared information about themselves with an "About Me" form. In return, we received many cranes, original origami pieces, and "About Me" forms from the children we connected with. Our children were delighted to discover that some of the cranes we received had special messages written inside! This project demonstrated that a small gesture can brighten someone's day and inspire hope and peace in the world.

Notably, the attendance in our Sunday School classrooms have grown throughout the year. January-May we could only support one classroom of ~8 children per Sunday. In September, we were able to organize into a Pre K-1 classroom and a 2-5 grade classroom. Families have attended more regularly and new families have visited our Sunday School program. Additionally, our nursery usually sees 2-3 children each Sunday. I see this not only as a sign of our post-Covid world, but as a testament to the engaging, positive programming we offer each Sunday and the rich relationships that have formed within our walls.

Moving into 2024, PreK-1 children will continue to learn stories about Jesus using tactile, hands on wooden props. The 2-5 grade children will begin the year by experiencing Psalm 23 through multi-sensory experiences and then take a deep dive into a reflective study of Lent and Easter. We'll end our programming year with a focus on stewardship of the Earth. The roots are set. The growth is healthy. Our garden has all the resources it needs to thrive. May 2024 bear fruit.

2023 Moderator's Report—Hal Evensen

It seems to soon to write a reflection on 2023! Although it went by quickly, we continued to grow as a faith community. As I reflect on this very eventful year, I am excited to see how our church continues to grow into new ways of doing God's work in the world, into 2024.

Before becoming Moderator, I had a series of "coffee meetings" with the past seven Moderators... something akin to a pleasurable "crash course" in lay leadership at our church. I asked about their time as lay leaders, the challenges, the lessons learned. All were generous with their time and wisdom, and they helped me to see this role as some combination of planning (*although "and God laughs..." comes to mind*) and doing what was needed at the time. I'm grateful that they continued their roles as lay leaders in our church by helping me to prepare for 2023!

One year ago, a goal of mine was for our lay leadership to build a foundation that would enable future leaders – you! – to help our church flourish. I felt that it was time for our lay leaders to "take back the church" (from restrictions and limitations imposed by the pandemic), to take ownership of our church's mission, to embrace the possibilities while continuing to extend a radical welcome to all. With this in mind, a simple thing that I've tried to do this year is to communicate with the congregation what the Leadership Team is, who is on it, and what it does. This is because it and our church function best when our members can "chip in" as their time, expertise, and passion allow – and this can only happen if people know what we're up to! And just as God takes us as we are, our church doesn't need us to be perfect: *together* we can support each other and accomplish wonderful things. I know that communicating our vision and opportunities will continue to be a priority in 2024.

Speaking of support, I want to thank our outgoing Past Moderator, Barbara Stretchberry, for her service on Leadership Team these past two years. In that time, I have gone from a mere "fan" of Barbara to an outright admirer: I am grateful for her insight, level-headedness, leadership, and heart. She – and our incoming Moderator-Elect, Deanna Blanchard – have made this year enjoyable and manageable, and I gained a sense of peace from knowing that I could rely on their support and counsel. Thank you!

Our Leadership Team worked to guide our church continue into this post-pandemic era, with new pastors, new opportunities, and new challenges:

- We established a "welcome team" for Pastor Kate, who joined us in 2023 as our new Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families. I thank this Welcoming Team (Jadyn Gilbert, Jerry Hagen, Kristin Muckian, Megan Piper, and Nancy Wettersten) for helping to create a smooth onboarding process, and for now working on Kate's installation service in March!
- We had a months-long discussion of the future of Children, Youth and Families programming and staffing in our church. We came to see that the wonderful work Julie Mazer had been doing in her short-term role as Youth Education Coordinator – combined with our pastors' gifts and abilities – presented an opportunity to grow a multi-generational ministry. So, we took a leap of faith, amid near-term financial challenges, and extended Julie's position through the 2024-25 school year. This was a long, challenging discussion, with a range of opinions and insights, and ultimately an uplifting one that made us comfortable with (and excited for!) this "leap." I am grateful for our entire Leadership Team's contributions and efforts on this issue!
- We re-started the Human Resources Team, with the goal of helping our church to be a "good employer" while supporting our wonderful staff: pastors, musicians, youth education, office support. I am grateful for this team: David Anderman, Rick Daluge, and Susan Watson worked with the Moderators and Senior Pastor. We have come a long way in establishing procedures and have already had several fruitful discussions that have helped our staff – and our congregation!

- We also revisited our approach to Stewardship, with Jim McNamara heading a new, year-round Stewardship Team (as opposed to a seasonal ad hoc team). A large part of Stewardship is “raising up the good” we do in the world, expressing gratitude both for our blessings and for others, and envisioning what may lie ahead. I thank Jim and his team for their efforts to modernize our Stewardship program!

I am grateful for the feedback several members of the congregation provided this year, whether via our new moderators@orucc.org email address (still active!) or otherwise. I have enjoyed serving as our Moderator – although I am very happy to hand the baton to Deanna! I continue to believe that our congregation will best do God’s work, *together*, and I thank you for entrusting me with this role.

2023 Report of the Clerk – Jim McNamara

Members, January 2023 – 390

Current Membership on December 31, 2023 – 410

Members admitted (31): Laura Conners, Ryan Conners, Chris Dankmeyer, Bev Davis, Susan Dovell, Ellen Franzone, Jim Franzone, Debra Greane, Paulette Harder, Julie Horton, Sean Horton, Matthew Kelehar, Amy Kell, Shazia Kirmani, Don Lusk, Maureen Lusk, Bob Millholland, Anthony Mitchell, Pam Moe, Claire Purkis, Dale Rebhorn, Leslie Rebhorn, Becky Rice, Krista Rickman, Ann Rifenberg, Kristin Schumacher, Susan Soric, Susan Wagoner, Adam Whitacre, Jenny Whitacre

Removal from Membership (11):

By request: Laurie Irwin, Julie Luecke, Sherri Mauerman, Karen Pasch, John Rasmussen

By death: Kara Ewers, Bonnie Orr, Dianne Stevens, Chris Thomas, Sidney Waldorf, Judy Winkel

Worship Services

Sundays (53)

Ash Wednesday

Good Friday

Easter (2)

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Christmas Eve (2)

Baptisms – Isaac Wendell Beck, Zoe Fayne Beck, Anthony Mitchell

Weddings – None

Memorial Services/Funerals:

Bonnie Orr – 04/15/23

Jack Christian – 06/03/23

Dianne Stevens – 06/26/23

Sidney Waldorff – 11/03/23

Kara Ewers – 11/30/23

Judy Winkel – 12/16/2

2023 Human Resources Mission Team – Hal Evensen

The Human Resources Mission Team in 2023 set out to help make the church a “good employer.” With a new Senior Pastor came a new way of doing things – and the then-impending arrival of a new Associate Pastor made us aware of the need for a good support process for *all* our valuable staff. The HR Mission Team consists of David Anderman, Rick Daluge, Hal Evensen, Barbara Stretchberry, and Susan Watson, all working closely with Senior Pastor Julia Burkey.

We set out with four goals. We made good progress on the first two; all are listed below for full disclosure, and details will follow below.

1. Establish procedures for annual reflection for both pastoral & non-pastoral employees, in which we establish and evaluate mutually determined goals and priorities for their work.
 - a. *This would include annually reviewing their job descriptions & updating them as needed. (A surprisingly large number of our staff had no written job descriptions.)*
2. Establish annual procedures for making recommendations to the Leadership Team concerning remuneration (pastoral & non-pastoral). *There was previously no mechanism for doing this.*
3. Establish “HR procedures” where currently lacking. Examples include how to consider holidays, contract signing, the Senior Pastor’s role as “supervisor” of other staff, remote vs. in-person availability, etc. *Pastor Julia requested this to provide clarity and consistency in her role as supervisor.*
4. Revisit the concept of the Pastoral Advisory Mission Team, which provides a confidential forum for pastors to discuss issues related to pastoral ministry. This is defined in the ORUCC constitution but could bear updating; the HR Mission Team would consider and make recommendations to the Leadership Team.

Annual Reflections & Job Descriptions

We developed an annual reflection process that will be applied to all staff, including Pastors, Youth Education Coordinator, Music, Office, Custodian and Tech Support. For pastors, it is also linked to guidelines from the national UCC and includes a five-year cycle to support their sabbaticals.

We prioritized starting this process with Pastor Julia in November, as a “test run.” I would characterize this as fruitful, with a lot of back-and-forth discussion and conveying topics that were “floating around” in the congregation. The process continues in January 2024 with the two Associate Pastors and our Youth Education Coordinator.

The HR Mission Team also went through the reflection process with each of the Music staff, developing job descriptions that are now kept on file in the church office. This already has been fruitful, leading to better coordination between Music and Pastoral staff, and helping us to shift responsibilities as our organist Vicki Nonn lowers her workload, a bit, in 2024 to focus on supporting the choir.

We’ve also met with Gabe Martens to both create a job description and to learn how we can better support him. This is already informing our 2024 budgeting process, streamlining some of what he’s had to do.

The results of all of this are documented in personnel files in the church office, and we regularly update the Leadership Team. This is still a work in progress, and we expect to continue to adapt as we go forward.

Remuneration Recommendations

Future iterations of the reflections will be completed by in late summer/early fall to inform the budget-making process.

HR Procedures

We have found some good sample “policy” documents from other UCC churches and in 2024 will use these as a template for our church.

Pastoral Advisory Mission Teams

The role and makeup of PAMT will be revisited after we’ve completed reflections with all pastors. This was of lower priority in 2023; the goal is to ensure that our pastors are well supported in their ministries, and existing structures are doing that well.

Future Efforts

Working with the Leadership Team, we are looking to grow the HR Mission Team. Membership would include all three Moderators (past-Moderator as Chair), three at-large members with staggered terms, and the Senior Pastor. Interested? Reach out to one of the Moderators to learn more!

2023 Ministry of Adult Faith Formation – Leslie Linser

Members: Alice Anderman, Chris Thomas, Steve Pearson, Jeanne Moberly, Pam Oliver and Leslie Linser. Ken Pennings was the pastoral liaison and Mary Connor the leadership liaison. AFF did not have a chair this year so many of the chair duties were shared among the group and pastor Ken Pennings.

The year was an emotionally tough one for AFF. We lost Chris Thomas due to her illness and death. She consistently contributed well thought out ideas on faith formation and was a positive presence in the group. She is very much missed. Alice Anderman also had some challenges due to injuries from a car accident. We were unable to enjoy her presence in the meetings for the last 3 months of her term.

AFF is commissioned to support, relate to and resource any church programs or activities that are designed to help people connect with God. AFF planned or supported a variety of activities that gave individuals and groups an opportunity to find their path to God using their mind, body or soul.

With the goal of providing an avenue for soul searching in the later years of life, the ORUCC pastoral staff led *Wayfinding for Seniors* in person and by ZOOM. Our AFF liaison for this series, Steve Pearson, reported it has been very well attended and positively received.

To enhance our minds and open our hearts to other cultures’ experience of finding God, AFF facilitated and a variety of ORUCC members hosted *Home Groups* to discuss the book *Native* by Kaitlin Curtice. It is a book about finding God from the perspective of a Christian Native American.

Jeanne Moberly continued to not only enrich our souls, but stimulate our minds by providing daily spiritual reflections that were available in the church newsletter and on the ORUCC Facebook page. These remain very popular and are a meaningful offering to the congregation and other people in the community.

This year saw the creation of a liturgical arts team. This team, which included AFF member Alice Anderman, enhanced our surroundings by dressing the worship hall with seasonally appropriate banners.

In order to appreciate and share how the sermons enhance our spirituality the team provided “Sermon Talk Backs”. These were held in person after Sunday worship service and facilitated by AFF members Leslie Linser or Steve Pearson. The people who attended shared that they appreciated an opportunity to discuss the issues raised in the sermons and how the sermons spoke to them spiritually.

To provide a way to use our bodies to connect with the spirit and to be inclusive of all, “Yoga for All” was provided on Sunday mornings during the month of June and was led by Leslie Linser. Namaste.

The labyrinth mission team of Betty Day, Kim Kaspar and Jeanne Moberly, along with Leslie Linser, provided opportunities for spiritual connection through labyrinth walks. Specifically, a labyrinth walk was organized in November with the theme of gratitude corresponding to Thanksgiving and also a special expression of gratitude to Chris Thomas for her work in teaching the youth and others about the labyrinth. We gifted Chris with a beautiful watercolor labyrinth painted by Ginny Stiles that was signed by all who walked the labyrinth.

The long running Java and Jesus has continued to stimulate people's intellect around religious and theological issues. While there is not a permanent facilitator for the group Ken Pennings and other volunteers have kept it running. This year's Java and Jesus included discussions of the Phoenix Affirmations which corresponded to a series of sermons on the topic.

The racial justice team led by Pam Oliver has been very busy and engaged with issues around the topic of racial justice. The racial justice report is included at the end of this summary.

In order to discover how AFF can best meet the spiritual needs of the church members, a google questionnaire eliciting ideas was offered in the newsletter. We received a handful of responses and we will continue to mindfully consider people's requests and needs for spiritual growth in the coming year.

In the coming year AFF will collaborate with the pastoral staff to plan and implement a video and discussion series titled, *Living the Question*. It will provide an opportunity for people to discuss issues of faith and doubt in relation to the Bible and Christianity.

Stepping off AFF after completing their 2-year terms are Pam Oliver, Alice Anderman and Jeanne Moberly. We thank them for their service.

2023 Racial Justice Mission Team – Pam Oliver

Annual report for activities in 2023 (January 2024)

1. Christian nationalism class. After discussing and learning about this issue for a couple of years, RJMT member David Anderman took the lead in organizing and teaching a class. Over sixty people signed up, it met for nine weeks between February and April with two different groups meeting each week, one in person at church on Tuesday mornings a second meeting on Zoom on Thursday evenings.
 - We had extensive discussions about how to follow up with the energy from this class, with there being interest in both more education (book groups) and opportunities for involvement.
 - We began with the idea of an involvement fair that evolved into a broader project to offer opportunities for involvement that will be continued in collaboration with other ORUCC ministries and mission teams. This is likely to turn into a multi-media project that will include posters in Friendship Hall, a paper booklet, and a website presence.

2. Ongoing participation and collaboration with the Racial Justice Task Force of the Wisconsin Conference of the UCC. Most of the focus of this group during the year was on Indigenous issues. This led to sponsoring a lecture by Mark Charles on the Doctrine of Discovery in McFarland in December. McFarland UCC took the lead and collaborated with the local school and village officials. ORUCC members attended the McFarland event and continue to be in dialog and collaboration about advancing programming and work around Indigenous issues, including work on a land acknowledgement.
3. Discussions of Indigenous issues within ORUCC.
 - Pastor Julia decided, in collaboration with the other pastors, to focus on Indigenous issues in the fall. The RJMT participated in discussions about these issues.
 - Six reading groups were formed for Kaitlin Curtice's book *Native*.
 - Several ORUCC members are looking into ORUCC's history of supporting the Indian boarding school in Neillsville.
4. Ongoing participation and reports with the monthly, statewide Faithful Stand for Equity group meetings, organized by Wisconsin Council of Churches, WISDOM, MICA, and Faith Voices for Justice. Topics have mostly been focused on teaching the truth and preserving racial equity in the schools.
5. Ongoing discussions of how to improve communication about MOSES activities and issues to the congregation including reports and calls to action in ORUCC's online Justice News and outreach to individuals about forming a core team within ORUCC to share information and decisions about MOSES.
6. Ongoing discussions of issues in local schools and reports on experiences of RJMT members who volunteer in the schools.
7. There will be a mini-retreat January 27, 2024 to discuss two issues (a) how to move forward on a land acknowledgement and (b) whether and how to make ORUCC's building useful for the community.

Active participants this year included Pam Oliver, John Lemke, Karen Jaehnig, Barbie Jackson, David Anderman, and Pastor Julia with contributions from Joyce Binder, Jill Westberg.

2023 Ministry of Christian Witness and Service (CWS) – LuAnn Greiner

Members: Diane Dulin, Jane Glaze, LuAnn Greiner (chair), Julie Horst, Giulia Lawrence, Dan Miller, Bruce Olson, Sue Dixon (Leadership Team liaison), Julia Burkey (pastoral staff liaison)

Purpose: The ORUCC Constitution states that the purpose of the Ministry of Christian Witness and Service (CWS) is to “provide leadership and direction for benevolent outreach and service to the larger community,” including these goals and activities:

- Organize and coordinate congregational service programs
- Educate the congregation regarding community needs & opportunities for service
- Facilitate community service programs
- Promote the church's wider mission and interdenominational programs
- Facilitate distribution of congregational outreach funds

The CWS ministry team achieved its stated purpose through the careful discernment, designation, and facilitation of the monthly *compassion offerings* as well as disbursement of a CWS-designated discretionary fund (*outreach support*) and the *immigration support* fund, each of which are described in more detail below. The compassion offerings provide an avenue for further partnerships and service opportunities with community-based organizations.

Our ministry team also works closely with new and established CWS-affiliated mission teams to inform and invite all in our congregation to participate in grass roots and justice-based outreach and community service. These mission teams create opportunities for each of us to move from *FAITH* to *ACTION* as we strive to live out our commitment to justice. We encourage you to read each mission teams' annual report below and reach out to their respective team leaders to learn more about these efforts and opportunities for engagement.

A special THANK YOU to Bruce Olsen and Jane Glaze who have each completed 4 years of service to the CWS ministry team. We are grateful for their collective wisdom and guidance over the past 4 years. Most importantly, we recognize their enduring commitment and contributions to housing stability for individuals and families within the southwest Madison neighborhood through ORUCC's Heart Room and Emergency Housing initiatives. While their time on the CWS team is complete, they will continue to dedicate their efforts to these important programs.

A. Coordination of Financial Support **Compassion Offerings**

It is the responsibility of CWS to evaluate and determine which non-profit organizations will receive the monthly Compassion Offerings from ORUCC members. Because of your benevolent and generous giving, in 2023, ORUCC made substantial contributions to a variety of mission efforts, including United Church of Christ programs as well as initiatives that support housing stability and immigration justice. New recipients were identified this year as well, largely to the credit of ORUCC members who submitted suggestions through the new online *Compassion Offering Request Form* that was introduced by CWS to the congregation in the spring of 2023. We recognize and appreciate the breadth of possibilities that your input brings to us as we carefully consider compassion offering recipients in alignment with our church mission.

CWS members work closely with the beneficiary organizations to develop videos and written descriptions that are published in weekly church e-posts and the church website. We have also resumed the practice of inviting representatives of recipient organizations to offer a *Mission Moment* during worship. This is an opportunity to welcome these representatives to our church home and to build meaningful relationships. The table below represents the extraordinary generosity of ORUCC members - every month – to organizations that align with our shared values and reflect our commitment of outreach and service to the larger community.

Month	Beneficiary	Rationale/focus	\$ Received
Jan	Ethical Trading Company - Madison	Ethical employment opportunities / Global	\$ 1599.30
Feb	Worker Justice Wisconsin	Worker advocacy / Wisconsin	\$ 2337.47
March	UCC - One Great Hour of Sharing	Humanitarian aid / Global	\$ 4134.00
April	Wisconsin Conference – United Church Camps	Family/community recreation / Wisconsin	\$ 2543.88
May	Outreach LGBTQ+ Community Center	LGBTQ+ support services / Local	\$ 2335.28
June	Lussier Community Education Center	Support services for underserved / Local	\$ 2512.00
July	Casa Alitas	Immigration support / Southern US border	\$ 3165.00
Aug	Great Turning Catholic Worker House, Inc	Housing support / Local	\$ 1618.87
Sept	Thiotte Haiti Vulnerable Children Relief, Inc...	Youth/community support / Haiti	\$ 4733.10
Oct	The Crossing (UW Madison Campus Ministry)	Ecumenical partnership / Local	\$ 2057.00
Nov	ORUCC Thanksgiving Year-Round Fund	Food/gas for neighbors in need / Local	\$ 3518.58
Dec	UCC Christmas Fund	Clergy Support / National	\$ 3043.51
		TOTAL	\$ 33,597.99

Outreach Support Budget

Through a line item in the ORUCC budget – *Outreach Support* - CWS had access in 2023 to \$10,000 to support a variety of outreach initiatives in alignment with the ORUCC mission. The actions below represent how this allocation was used.

- Youth mission trip chaperone subsidy: \$1500
- The Village Diaper Bank: \$600
- UCC Global Ministries (middle east support): \$2000
- Mary House of Hospitality (families of prisoners): \$1000
- Catholic Multicultural Center (immigration support): \$1000
- Great Turning Catholic Worker House of Hospitality: \$940 (supplement to August compassion offering)
- Prison ministry support through JustDane: \$900
- Annual membership dues to local organizations MOSES and Dane Sanctuary Coalition: \$500 each
- Other: McFarland UCC event speaker subsidy; Care of Creation Mission Team activities; Transgender Day of Remembrance; Heart Room 5-year recognition event

Immigration Support

At the direction of the Leadership Team, CWS was charged with disbursement of \$3500 in immigration support monies to subsidize expenses for ORUCC volunteers and clothing delivery to Casa Alitas, in Tucson, AZ.

(By LuAnn Greiner)

B. CWS -Affiliated Mission Teams and Initiatives

Heart Room Mission Team

Members: Bruce Olsen (co-chair and CWS liaison), Jen Walker (co-chair), John Day (Treasurer), Megan Piper (program evaluation), Helene Nelson

Heart Room provides families with three years of support as they work to meet their own goals for thriving in stable housing. The focus is serving families with young children, in neighborhoods on the south/southwest side of Madison. Families receive partial rental assistance and family/housing services through an innovative partnership that began in 2018 as an ORUCC pilot project. Core partners are ORUCC (lead funding partner) The Road Home (lead administrative partner), Joining Forces for Families, and the Early Childhood Initiative (lead service providers).

ORUCC members donated more than \$120,000 in 2018, for rental assistance to support an initial cohort of 8 families, and donated an additional \$120,000 in 2021 to enroll a second cohort of 8 families on a rolling-entry basis. In addition to the funds raised through these all-church campaigns, Heart Room has received financial support from individuals, congregations, and foundations. As families graduated from the program or left early because they received permanent housing subsidies, new families have been added. Three new families entered the program in 2021; 5 new families entered in 2022; 5 more families entered in 2023. As of December 31, 2023, 11 families are enrolled.

Past evaluations of the experience of the families who completed the program shows that they left with stable housing, increased income, and significant progress towards important goals for their families, including transportation goals, increased kids' engagement with school, increased financial literacy, and improved mental health and social support.

The Heart Room Mission Team and partners will be meeting in the early part of 2024 to make strategic plans for Heart Room for 2024 and beyond.

(by Bruce Olsen)

Emergency Housing Mission Team

Members: Jane Glaze, Bruce Olsen, LuAnn Greiner, Pastor Julia Burkey

The focus of the Emergency Housing Mission Team is to promote housing stability for individuals and families in the Southwest Madison neighborhood through partnerships with *Keeping Neighbors Connected* and the *Southwest Madison Action Coalition*. Additionally, this mission team makes recommendations to CWS for disbursement of the *Thanksgiving Year-Round Fund* and the *Emergency Housing Fund*, two housing-focused ORUCC internal funds.

Keeping Neighbors Connected (KNC)

KNC is an ecumenical partnership with neighborhood social workers including Joining Forces for Families (JFF) and Madison Southwest public schools, and supporting area churches of ORUCC, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (GSLC) and St Maria Goretti Parish (SMG). This partnership was formed in late 2018 with the mission of promoting and assisting neighborhood housing and school stability for low-income families in Southwest Madison. Each church donated \$2000/year for housing assistance in 2019-20.

In 2020-21, the local churches initiated emergency fundraising campaigns to meet the housing crisis and the KNC fund reached \$80,000. Soon after, the federal government released housing aid in the form of CORE 1 (2021) and CORE 2 (2022-23). All federal housing aid ended by mid-2023. With that, usage of the KNC funds has increased significantly since summer 2023. By the numbers:

- January 1, 2023, KNC Balance = \$46,720
- Donations from GSLC and ORUCC = \$12,000 (\$10,000 from the ORUCC Emergency Housing Fund, Sept 2023)
- 2023 Usage by JFF to assist 40 families = \$36,385
- December 28, 2023, KNC Balance = \$22,335

KNC Changes in 2023: School social workers no longer active in KNC due to workload and new school district policy. SMG no longer participates.

ORUCC has retained a portion of Emergency Housing funds during the pandemic and beyond for internal use and to allow flexibility for those SW area persons who fall outside of the NKC family eviction protocols. In September 2023, CWS voted to transfer \$10,000 from the Emergency Housing fund to KNC to meet the high demand for housing assistance post CORE programs. Approximately \$5000 is retained within the ORUCC Emergency Housing Fund for disbursements to individuals who do not meet KNC criteria.

Southwest Madison Action Coalition (SMAC) Housing Subgroup

This housing advocacy coalition is diverse in membership, including neighborhood leaders and social and case workers (includes Heart Room) in the SW district and Allied Drive, and all KNC partners. SMAC Zoom meetings occur the second Tuesday of each month (since mid-2021) with presentations from multiple city and county leaders and nonprofit agencies who have influence in the housing sector. It has been a time for sharing neighborhood updates, housing resource awareness and education. In some cases, it has enabled a path forward to influence decisions made at the city level. SMAC participants are reassessing goals, group impact, and directions forward in 2024. SMAC members from ORUCC include Jane Glaze and Bruce Olsen.

Thanksgiving Year Round (TYR)

Since 2021, CWS members have supported a yearlong online internal fund for our Southwest neighbors in need during the height of the pandemic and ensuing high inflation. Through the work of our partner social workers Eric at JFF and Loretta at Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), Woodman's Gift cards for food and/or gas are given to several families. Our gifts help neighbors buy gas to get to work and food needed for children in client families. These gift cards are especially appreciated during holidays and when schools are out during breaks and summer. In 2023, TYR fund continued online and was also designated as a Compassion Offering in November. We are delighted and appreciative to report the November donation reached \$3518 of which \$2000 was immediately disbursed to families in need.

(By Jane Glaze)

Greeting Card Ministry

In November 2022, LuAnn Greiner and Peg Kneuve reinstated a ministry started by Dianne Stevens (a beloved member for many years), selling artistically designed cards, with the proceeds used to help people with insecure housing issues. Pastor Ken Pennings helped design the program, featuring LuAnn's photographs and Peg's drawings and paintings. Since November 2022, this endeavor has raised over \$1,500 which is transferred to the ORUCC Emergency Housing Fund for distribution through local social service agencies. This program offers our congregation a way to help people in our area

and to communicate with others in meaningful, artistic ways. Thank you for supporting this effort by purchasing cards always on display in the Crossroads.

(By Peg Knueve)

Veggie Village Community Garden & Food Pantry Plot

Established in 2009, the Veggie Village is both a community garden made up of 14 individual plots and a food pantry plot from which fresh produce is generated for a local food pantry (Good Shepherd Lutheran Church). The Food Pantry Plot Crew includes Rachel & Brian Lancor, Jill Westberg, Leslie Linser, LuAnn Greiner and three non-ORUCC neighbors who, inspired by the mission behind this garden, are regular volunteers for a second season. It was another successful growing season with hundreds of pounds of fresh produce delivered to the Good Shepherd Food Pantry again this year.

(by LuAnn Greiner)

The Crossing Campus Ministry – ORUCC Collaboration

The Crossing's mission is to provide an open, diverse, welcoming, and faith-inclusive campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where students can deepen their relationship with God, each other and their sense of the world around them. The Crossing is committed to raising awareness about local and global human rights concerns, promotes a service, compassion-oriented approach to life, inspires courage to live as agents of peace, believes in environmental stewardship and justice, and affirms gender equality, identity, and individual preference in human sexuality. The Crossing welcomes all students and encourages them to collaborate on meaningful and impactful activities. ORUCC has had a long-standing relationship with The Crossing.

In addition to the Compassion Offering in October 2023, there were several opportunities for ORUCC members to collaborate with The Crossing this year:

- In March and October, we provided meals for the Wednesday evening Dinner+Worship time, when students worship together and then have a meal and discuss what they experienced in worship or whatever is on their hearts and minds that evening. Thanks to Sara Hagen, Giulia Lawrence, and Julie Horst who coordinated the dinner this fall and thanks to all those who provided and served the food (too many people for us to list!).
- In April, The Crossing hosted a Gala to celebrate the students. Four of us from ORUCC enjoyed good food, entertainment, and stories about how The Crossing has impacted students' lives.
- In December, Sue Dixon served food to the students at the study day brunch. There were more than 50 students who had a good meal to provide them with energy for studying for exams and finishing projects.

Are you interested in supporting The Crossing in 2024? Contact Sue Dixon at 608-712-9050 or suedix@charter.net.

(By Sue Dixon)

Palestine Justice Mission Team

The Palestine Justice Mission Team came into being in September 2023, following a series of presentations in July by Diane Dulin and Tom Beilman on a *Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel*. Our mission is to “work within the congregation and in cooperation with partners beyond the congregation to provide educational and advocacy resources in support of justice for Palestinians.” Our work in support of this mission has included:

- Providing a list of recommended books, films, curricula and news outlets for use in learning about the situation in Palestine-Israel
- Sponsoring a discussion of the film, “Roadmap to Apartheid”
- Contacting two Palestinian Americans with requests to meet in-person with our congregation
- Providing suggested actions for church members to consider in response to the war in Gaza
- Creating a webpage to communicate opportunities and resources to the congregation
- Reviewing available curricula for upper middle and high school youth, to share with church leaders for their consideration
- Submitting a request for outreach funds for an Urgent Appeal from UCC Global Ministries in support of Gaza. We are most grateful to CWS for providing these requested funds (\$2000).

We are truly thankful for the support provided to this new team. Thank you to LuAnn Greiner and Pastors Julia, Ken and Kate. We also thank the team members and friends who plan and lead these efforts toward understanding, peace and justice.

(By Diane Dulin and Tom Beilman, co-chairs)

Car Donation Mission Team

Members: Baxter Richardson, Jon Blanchard, John Rasmussen. No cars were donated in 2023.

Care of Creation Mission Team

Members: Alice Anderman, Ann Rifenberg, Marilyn and Jack Schairer, Fran Beach, Gene Dyar, Chuck Kaspar, Donna Lillethun, Chris Thomas, Jill Westberg.

Purpose: To be a means of support, education and action for those wanting to deepen their involvement in caring for creation. In addition, Care of Creation exists to bring opportunities to the congregation for reflection and action on the care for our planet earth.

Actions:

1. Whole church book read and discussion groups for Daniel's book, *Speak with the Earth and it Will Teach You*.
2. 163 reusable name tags have been ordered and distributed. More will be ordered in January of 2024. (CWS helped to supplement the cost)
3. Planning for the next FreeCycle which will be on June 12, 2024.
4. Participation in workshops and discussion with outside groups/individuals as to how C of C can learn from Native wisdom about the earth and advocate for Indigenous Justice.
5. Our Sunday school children created art focusing on the earth. Some of these became postcards which were sent to state and federal lawmakers.
6. Discussion of an electric car/bike event at Orchard Ridge, hopefully for summer of 2024.
7. Promotion of our UCC camps, including Jim Schleif, executive director, preaching at Sunday worship in the spring.
8. Bought and placed recycling baskets for each Sunday school room.
9. Successfully advocated for Wisconsin UCC Camps as the designated compassion offering recipient for April 2023. (by Jill Westberg)

Jane Ilgen Literacy Fund

Members: Jen Walker (thru May 2023); Donna Lillethun

Jane Ilgen established the "Jane Ilgen Literacy Fund" as a legacy initiative in the fall of 2020, reflecting her passion for early childhood education and racial equity, especially for African American children. The endowment fund is held by the UCC Foundation with an annual distribution of dividend income to the *ORUCC Ilgen Fund*. Account balances are as follows:

Endowment fund held by UCC Foundation (as of June 30, 2023): \$38,996.58

Distribution of dividend income to ORUCC Ilgen Fund in 2023: \$1900

ORUCC Ilgen Fund Balance (as of December 31, 2023): \$3,244.89

CWS oversees this program and designates a Mission Team chair to carry out the work. In mid 2023, current chair, Jen Walker, transitioned to a leadership role with the Heart Room Mission Team. No disbursements were made from the Ilgen Fund in 2023 as attempts to engage partner schools and RISE Wisconsin (prior fund recipients) were, unfortunately, unsuccessful. Work is in progress to identify a new chair and expand membership of this team.

Additionally, efforts will be made in 2024 to establish new avenues and streamline processes for disbursement of funds.

(By LuAnn Greiner)

Immigration Justice Mission Team

The immigration Justice Mission Team is a subset of the Ministry of Christian Witness and Service (CWS).

2023 team members included Jill Westberg, Mark Baumann (Madison Mennonite Congregation or MMC), Carol Shank (MMC), Ruth Ann Berkholtz, Baxter Richardson, Ann Haase Kehl, Ann Rifenberg, Ruthanne Landsness (Chair), and Julia Burkey (Pastor). A special welcome to new member Ann Rifenberg.

ORUCC Immigration Justice at the Border - The highlight of 2023 was the collection and delivery in July of 44 U-Haul boxes of clothing to Casa Alitas, the immigrant welcome center in Tucson, AZ. This was the fourth ORUCC clothing collection drive for Casa Alitas. The clothing drive coincided with a July Casa Alitas compassion offering. A special thank you to the many who contributed clothing, to all the volunteers who sorted and loaded the clothing, and to Steve Sheets for transporting the clothing to Tucson. Steve advised us that this was his last trip, so the team will be exploring new avenues of supporting Casa Alitas in 2024.

The clothing drive reinforced the commitment of the ORUCC congregation to immigration justice and our connection with Casa Alitas and the immigrant border experience. This commitment was extended personally through trips by our Chair (Ruthanne Landsness) in March 2023 and October 2023 as a Casa Alitas volunteer. For the October trip, Ruthanne coordinated the Casa Alitas and border activities of a delegation of 3 groups of a week each from Madison's Beth Israel Center Jewish synagogue. Mike and Ann Kehl also volunteered at Casa Alitas in March 2023. Others from our congregation who have visited recently include Paul Patenaude and Peter Hoff, and LuAnn Greiner and Leslie Linser.

Collaborations with the Dane Sanctuary Coalition – Pastor Julia and our chair continued to serve on the Steering Committee of the Dane Sanctuary Coalition, of which ORUCC is an active member. During 2023, efforts of the Coalition centered on organization of education forums, letter-writing campaigns, film showings, short-term home hospitality for immigrants, and support of the driver's program for transporting asylum seekers to their legal appointments in Chicago and Milwaukee. In July, we assisted in the hosting of a press conference on immigration reform at ORUCC. Through CWS, the team requested and processed an annual \$500 financial contribution to the Dane Sanctuary Coalition to support temporary housing and transportation for asylum seekers.

Additional Activities - The efforts of the Immigration Justice Team complemented and supported the formation of the Palestine Justice Mission Team, the nearby Catholic Worker house of hospitality, and Mary House of Hospitality that offers weekend hospitality to low-income women and families visiting incarcerated inmates. We also contributed regularly to the ORUCC Justice Newsletter, arranged for purchase of a new ORUCC display banner, and provided regular updates on border policy at its monthly meetings. We welcome new members to our committed, active team.

(By Ruthanne Landsness, chair)

2023 Ministry of Congregational Life – Rachael Lancor

Members of Congregational Life:

- Rachael Lancor (chair), Karin Drury, Jane Geier, Barb Wells, Deb Drewson
- Sara Hagen, Leadership Team Liaison
- Ken Pennings, Pastor

The Congregational Life Mission Team supports community building efforts at ORUCC. This year marked the first Chili Cook-Off and Party Gras since before COVID! We've also seen more folks taking advantage of coffee time during the 9:00 am hour and after the service to build connections with members of our community.

Churchwide events in 2023 have included:

- Chili Cook-Off (Jan 2023), including unique contributions from some of our children!
- Party Gras (Feb 2023)
- Sundae Sunday (June 2023)

- Welcome Back BBQ (September 2023)
 - Thanks to the Catering Mission Team for providing the food at this event!
- Work & Worship Lunches (May & October 2023)

In December, we also assembled over 20 care packages to be sent to college students. This tradition had been on hiatus since before COVID, and was much appreciated by the students in our congregation.

The Mission Teams of Congregational Life include the Catering Mission Team; Family Game Night; Coffee Hosts; Men's Group; Movie Group; OVER 55; Pastoral Partners; Potluck & Poetry; Prayer Shawls; Welcomers & Ushers; Women's Book Group; Women's (and Men's) Breakfast; and the Knitting Group.

Lunch and Learn – Steve Sheets

This year we elected to change our name to LUNCH AND LEARN (formerly Over-55). In reality the monthly programs are NOT purely for elders. We welcome all interested peoples.

The speakers for program year January through December were:

January 1	Claus Andersen on Scandinavian Happiness
February 8	Phil Haslinger & Julie Horst on Just Dane
March 8	Rob Zeleski on David Couper
April 11	Richard Olson on <i>The Grandparent Vocation: Wisdom, Legacies, and Spiritual Growth</i> .
May 10	Deanna Blanchard on Center for Aging Research and Education (CARE), and Dementia.
September 13	Phil Hands, Wisconsin Political Cartoonist
October 10	Doug Bradley on the Music of the Vietnam War
November 8	Christopher Kowlakowski, Veterans Museum Director, on "The Korean War"
December 13	Paul Patenaude & Ann Avery, on their medical missions to Haiti and Guatemala

In 2024 we will continue to enjoy a wonderful luncheon courtesy of our Hospitality Team for a mere \$10 donation per person. We always welcome suggestions for program speakers and/or topics.

Movie Group—Steve Sheets

Movie Group is led by Baxter Richardson, Doug Loving and Steve Sheets.

With many ORUCC members living at Oakwood Village we continued to meet at Oakwood Village in 2023 to see selected films and discuss the film after the showing. This approach has enjoyed success. We will continue this format in 2024.

2023 Ministry of Resources – Jon Blanchard

The Ministry of Resources coordinates the maintenance and upkeep of the building and grounds.

The two main focuses are to:

1. Maintain the building and grounds with monthly inspections; triaging action as needed.
2. Identify and coordinate projects involving changes and enhancements to systems and spaces.

Ministry members: Matt Dixon, Pete Haskins, Darren Schoer, Joyce Pohl, Rick Daluge,
Paul Eggerling-Boeck, Cindy Fillingame, Gabe Martens (Advisory Only)

Leadership team liaison: Jarrett Gersten

Direction:

Our ministry will continue to diversify our membership by active recruiting to include all genders and ages. We will continue monthly meetings via zoom. During months of little action, the meetings will be replaced with email updates.

Our ministry will strive to keep our building and grounds in great shape even during our times of limited usage.

Our ministry coordinates with leadership and other ministries related to use of space and improvements that support those ministries.

Projects Completed in 2023:

- Continued maintenance of mechanicals related to water heating, air heating, air conditioning
- Reactivated Brown Room outlets disabled during previous remodeling project
- Facilitated the replacement Friendship Hall ceiling light sockets to facilitate the use of LED bulbs
- Facilitated the replacement of a heating system boiler control panel
- Facilitated outside and indoor work days on a monthly basis along with two worship and work Sundays
- Continued to monitor the performance of our phone system regarding issues and outages
- Repaired, cleaned and upgraded valves in the men's restroom
- Updated a combination-controlled box outside the main entrance to hold a key for building access
- Built and installed banner hanging brackets in a storage room in the Worship Hall
- Installed new ladder racks in the janitor room
- Cleaned and organized the electrical/storage room in the basement
- Installed a water resistant foam tile flooring system in the Brown Room in the basement
- Facilitated the removal of a dead birch tree along with its stump. Replaced with a crabapple tree
- Hired a new snow removal vendor that will work with us to reduce salt usage
- Installed two new video projectors in the Worship Hall

Projects Planned for 2024:

- Facilitate outside and inside work on a monthly basis and investigate ways to engage more volunteers
- Continue replacing CFL bulbs with energy efficient LED bulbs throughout the church when possible
- Repair wood beams on the roof overhang where rot is occurring
- Remove sinks & plumbing in the Bridges, Frank and Johnson classrooms and replace counter tops
- Review summer lawn maintenance vendor with possible replacement
- Replace cracked Gilbert Road entrance sidewalk
- Add to the existing concrete outside the janitor entrance to extend to the street
- Complete an ADA assessment for the entire church grounds
- Pursue adjustment of automatic door opener at the parking lot entrance

Future Projects Beyond 2024

- Facilitate the kitchen upgrade including replacement of kitchen counters and possible repair of cabinets. The cost of this project would be paid for via monetary donations.

Solar Share Emissions Offset Impact Equivalents by participating in this MGE program

Note: these are 2022 numbers

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • 35.1 thousand miles driven | • 30.7 thousand pounds of CO2 emissions |
| • 1.6 million smart phones charged | • 227 trees planted |

Outdoor work:

We will continue to accomplish much of our fall and spring cleanup using church volunteers. We will also continue to compare this effort to the cost of hiring the work done by our vendor. Our many flower gardens remain beautiful thanks to the tireless efforts of Joyce Pohl along with help from her many helpers. Just a few are Susan Dovell, Alice Anderman, Sue Dixon, Rick Daluge and Barb and John Olson.

2023 Ministry of Youth Faith Formation – Karen Jaehnig

Members: Sally Allen (Liaison to Leadership Team)

Marcia Beckett
Joanna Beilman-Dulin
Karen Jaehnig (Chair)
Rev. Kate Mackey
Paul Vash
Marc Walker

Of major significance in 2023 is that Rev. Kate Mackey has joined as Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and Families. She began her ministry on June 1, 2023, and it has been a joy to have her inspiring messages of God's love for all of us. A welcoming committee provided opportunities for everyone to meet Pastor Kate, and she "hit the ground running."

NURSERY

Nursery care is provided by paid staff and is open most Sundays during the school calendar from 8:30am-11:30am. It is in the Francis Room and there are guidelines posted in the room and on the website. Although attendance tends to be low, it is considered a valuable resource for our families.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

From January-June 2023 grades K-5 met together with 3 adult guides present. The students listened to Bible stories, learned to find verses in the Bible, and visited stations containing activities related to the Bible story. Julie Mazer, Children's Education Coordinator and Music Director modified the lessons to accommodate the age group. The students experienced several labyrinth walks with an adult team, a handbell demonstration, and an Easter Egg Hunt. The Easter Egg Hunt was coordinated by Marc Walker and Paul Vash and the youth. They filled plastic eggs with candy and hid them on the grounds at church. The event was advertised in the neighborhood and there was a huge turnout. The school year ended on June 4, when we met outdoors for a nature story, singing, and sundaes.

From Sept. 2023-present we have two Sunday School groups. PreK-1st grades begin with a sing-along with Julie Mazer. This is followed by storytelling, discussion, and activities related to the Bible story. The 2nd-5th graders have explored the Gospels, New Testament History, Letters from the Apostles, and the Prophets. Their stations include activities such as drawing, sand exploration, word puzzles, writing prompts, collages, modeling clay, watercolor, letter-writing, and holiday related art projects.

Julie Mazer, our awesome Children's Education Coordinator provides the detailed lesson plans, all the supplies/props, as well as snacks. She communicates the plans with the Sunday School guides. This makes it convenient for the guides to have a wonderful experience while in the classroom.

MUSIC CONNECTIONS

Julie Mazer also runs the popular Music Connections, which encompasses a wide age range. They played ukuleles with TruFunction in April and did drumming with the congregation in May. The group meets during the 10:00am worship service. The available instruments include hand chimes, ukuleles, xylophones, and African drums. The students showcase their talents at the Christmas Eve service, as well as other Sundays during the school year.

Adult volunteers are always needed to comply with our Safe Sanctuaries Policy. This is an opportunity for adults to share an intergenerational experience with our youth. It need not be a long-term commitment, but they need to be trained on the Safe Sanctuaries Policy. The duties involve observing, participating and helping wherever needed. No music experience is required.

MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL

OWL (Our Whole Lives) wrapped up on April 23rd with a closure celebration. There were 10-12 regular attendees. The next OWL for 6th-8th graders is scheduled for the 2025-26 school year.

Middle School and High Schoolers can participate in “Echo the Story”, a curriculum which offers broad themes from scriptures with storytelling, creative reflections, and dialogue. There is an occasional “Breakfast Group”. On April 23rd the students introduced their Newsletter to the congregation during worship service. Their writings are on the ORUCC website. The adults who offer these programs are Kristin Muckian, Barbara Stretchberry, and Susan Watson. There was a potluck Friendsgiving Party (Nov. 17) at St. Dunstan’s (arranged by Pastor Kate) as a way of combining youth programming with other congregations. We are continuing in our discussions on ways to keep the youth involved with the congregation and with each other.

In June, five graduating high school seniors were honored at worship: Jordan Brown, Ryan Forbes, Sophie Hodkiewicz, Elizabeth Lahaie, and Bella Nuon.

SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

The policy has been reviewed and updates are completed. A training was held on Sept. 24, 2023, for all interested adults.

TRU FUNCTION

Our youth rock band continues to amaze us. They usually play on the 4th Sunday of each month and at other celebrations during the year (June 4, Oct 22, Dec. 24). They are currently adding hymn music to their repertoire. Rob Martens continues as director of the group.

SERVICE TRIP

The 2023 Service Trip was to Duluth, MN from July 9-15. The 18 youth partnered with Service Learning Camps and helped organize at Harbor House Shelter, LoLa Farm (berry picking), a community house renovation project, helped with disassembling a hoop house, mulched a path in an adaptive playground, set up a rummage sale for Harbor House, cleaned up transitional housing units, and did a deep cleaning of Duluth’s warming center. It wasn’t all work though...they ate ice cream, had a fun day at Gooseberry Falls State Park and Canal Park. They made their own dinners, had devotion time to reflect, and they supported each other.

There was generous financial support from the congregation as well as fund raising events. Fund raisers included Bake Sales, Culver’s Night Out, “singing telegrams”, Christmas Post Office, a Zentangle class, and BratFest. The bake sale held on Dec. 10 raised over \$2,000.

Kristin Muckian worked all year organizing and coordinating fund raisers for the trip. Chaperones were Rob Martens, Dan Miller, Kristin Muckian, Susan Watson, and Pastor Kate.

On October 22, the youth who attended the trip helped lead worship and celebrate their trip. A video was shown, and two testimonials were presented. An informational meeting was held afterward for the July 14-20, 2024 trip to Nashville.

Special thanks to Pastor Kate and Julie Mazer and the Youth Faith Formation Team. We are deeply grateful for the support and commitment of so many volunteers who make our programs so valued and wonderful. The entire congregations' commitment to our youth shows up in many ways throughout the year.

2023 TREASURER'S REPORT

Orchard Ridge UCC started the year with a budget that reflected uncertainty due to an unfilled Associate Pastor position and which contained a projected deficit of over \$10,000. We ended the year with that position filled and the addition of a full year Youth Education Coordinator, but with only a deficit of \$4,000. This was due to the continued generosity of the members and friends of ORUCC who exceed the expected pledge receipts, and to the careful spending of the church's ministries.

For 2023 the Leadership Team is proposing a budget that contains a 2% cost of living increase for all staff along which along with funding Kate Mackey's position for a full year brings a 12% increase in staff costs. An 8% reduction in non-staff costs was created by reducing several lines to a more realistic level, but the net result still creates a deficit of over \$15,000. It is hoped that this will be reduced by moving Memorial Funds and other non-active funds into interest bearing accounts.

The following pages give a detailed view of expenses and income for 2022 and the proposed 2023 budget.

- Statement of Cash Position
- 2023 Budget and 2024 Proposed Budget Summary
- Detail of Operating Expenses for 2023 and Proposed 2024
- Special Funds Activity for 2023

I would like to give a very special thanks to Office Manager Julie Wombacher who continues to do an exemplary job working with the very unforgiving financial software and the financial secretaries for their assistance each Sunday.

Respectfully submitted

John Day, ORUCC Treasurer

ORCHARD RIDGE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
STATEMENT OF CASH POSITION
December 31, 2023

ASSETS

Cash

Operations Checking Account	\$ 331,092.04
Petty Cash	\$ 40.50
Operations Savings Account	\$ 30,514.32
Total	<u>\$ 361,646.86</u>

Investments

Building Maintenance Reserve (UCF)	\$ 23,306.86
Operation Vision Investment Reserve (UCF)	\$ 110,353.14
Total	<u>\$ 133,660.00</u>

Other Assets

Vanco Transit	\$ 807.29
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Total Financial Assets **\$ 496,114.15**

LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES

Current Liabilities

Pledges Received for Future Year	\$ 72,394.70
Federal and State Taxes Payable	\$ (57.10)

Non Operating funds

Special Funds	\$ 142,477.15
General Memorial Funds	\$ 122,661.10
Capital Major Repair Reserve	\$ 23,306.86
Operation Vision Investment Reserve	\$ 110,353.14
Total	<u>\$ 398,798.25</u>

Total Liabilities **\$ 471,135.85**

Fund Balance

\$ 24,978.30

Total Liabilities and Equity **\$ 496,114.15**

Ochard Ridge United Church of Christ
2023 Budget, 2023 Actual Spending and Income, and Proposed 2024 Budget

	2023 Budget			Proposed 2024 Budget		
	Current Budget	Dec 31 Actual	Difference (Budget- Actual)	Amount	Diff previous to current	Pct Change
OPERATING RECEIPTS:						
Prior Year Pledges	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 5,850.00	\$ (150.00)		\$ (6,000.00)	
Pledge Receipts	\$ 445,623.70	\$ 446,284.90	\$ 661.20	\$ 467,960.00	\$ 22,336.30	5.01%
Unpledged Giving	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,768.00	\$ 768.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	
Anonymous Donation				\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	
Building Income	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ (500.00)	\$ 500.00	\$ -	
Mennonite Lease	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,356.85	\$ 356.85	\$ 18,540.00	\$ 540.00	3.00%
Miscellaneous Income		\$ 433.00	\$ 433.00	\$ -	\$ -	
Associated Savings Income	\$ -	\$ 3.05	\$ 3.05	\$ -	\$ -	
Total Receipts	\$ 479,123.70	\$ 480,845.80	\$ 1,722.10	\$ 510,000.00	\$ 30,876.30	6.44%
OPERATING DISBURSEMENTS:						
Staff	\$320,129.80	\$327,609.28	-\$7,479.48	\$359,235.83	\$ 39,106.03	12.22%
Administration	\$24,000.00	\$17,592.36	\$6,407.64	\$ 19,300.00	\$ (4,700.00)	-19.58%
Resources	\$83,900.00	\$79,398.36	\$4,501.64	\$ 83,400.00	\$ (500.00)	-0.60%
Adult Faith Formation	\$10,325.00	\$5,546.89	\$4,778.11	\$ 7,925.00	\$ (2,400.00)	-23.24%
Youth Faith Formation	\$14,400.00	\$9,343.21	\$5,056.79	\$ 11,600.00	\$ (2,800.00)	-19.44%
Christian Witness and Service	\$40,030.00	\$38,921.10	\$1,108.90	\$ 35,900.00	\$ (4,130.00)	-10.32%
Stewardship	\$600.00	\$603.43	-\$3.43	\$ 600.00	\$ -	
Congregational Life	\$7,400.00	\$5,845.29	\$1,554.71	\$ 7,400.00	\$ -	
Total Disbursements	\$500,784.80	\$484,859.92	\$15,924.88	\$ 525,360.83	\$ 24,576.03	4.91%
OPERATING SURPLUS	\$ (21,661.10)	\$ (4,014.12)		\$ (15,360.83)		

ORCHARD RIDGE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST						
		2023 Budget			Proposed 2024 Budget	
		Budget	Actual	Difference (Budget- Actual)	Amount	% change
Staff						
	Senior Pastor (Julia Burkey)					
	Salary	41,200.00	41315.38		42,024.00	
	Housing Allowance	41,200.00	41100.08		42,024.00	
	FICA	6,303.60	6288.30		6,429.67	
	Pension Fund	11,536.00	11200.08		11,200.08	
	Life and Disability insurance	1,236.00	0.00		1,260.72	
	Travel Reimbursement	2,000.00	2000.00		2,000.00	
	Continuing Education & Spiritual Retreat	2,000.00	1471.12		2,000.00	
	Health Insurance	15,188.10	14951.83		15,365.76	1.17%
	Dental Insurance	1,167.00	1171.00		1,215.00	4.11%
	Professional Expenses	2,000.00	2379.98		2,000.00	
	Subtotal	123,830.70	121,877.77	1,952.93	125,519.23	1.36%
	Associate Pastor (Kate Mackey)					
	Salary	3,820.88	3,820.88		4,480.92	
	Flexible Medical Spending Account	0.00			2,200.08	
	Housing Allowance	22,166.67	22166.62		38,760.00	
	FICA	1,695.75	1988.00		3,307.93	
	Pension Fund	3,638.25	4158.00		6,237.00	
	Health and Dental Insurance	4387.04	5033.00		7,751.52	
	Life and Disability insurance	389.81	445.52		668.28	
	Auto Allowance	991.67	970.00		1,700.00	
	Continuing Education	583.34	541.00		1,000.00	
	Miscellaneous Expenses	583.34	501.50		1,000.00	
	Subtotal	38,256.75	39,624.52	-1,367.77	67,105.73	75.41%
	Associate Pastor (Ken Pennings - 1/2 time)					
	Salary	15,500.00	16208.00		15,810.00	
	Housing Allowance	18,720.00	18720.00		19,094.40	
	FICA	3,199.23	3157.12		3,282.19	
	Pension Fund	4,790.80	6751.46		4,886.62	
	Life and Disability insurance	1,026.60			1,047.13	
	Auto Allowance	1,000.00	1000.00		1,000.00	
	Continuing Education	700.00	700.00		700.00	
	Health Insurance (Cash in lieu of)	7,600.00	7600.08		8,000.00	5.26%
	Miscellaneous Expenses	300.00	300.00		300.00	
	Subtotal	52,836.63	54,436.66	-1,600.03	54,120.33	2.43%
	Music Director (Bruce Gladstone)					
	Salary	10,446.79	10446.84		12,484.63	
	FICA	799.18	799.18		955.07	
	Subtotal	11,245.96	11,246.02	-0.06	13,439.71	19.51%

		Budget	Actual	Difference (Budget- Actual)	Amount	% change
	Accompanist (Vicki Nonn)					
	Salary	7,172.20	7172.17		5,486.73	
	FICA	548.67	548.67		419.74	
	Subtotal	7,720.87	7,720.84	0.03	5,906.47	-23.50%
	Handbell Director (Bethany Schultz)					
	Salary	4,922.18	4922.16		5,020.62	
	FICA	376.55	376.54		384.08	
	Subtotal	5,298.72	5,298.70	0.02	5,404.70	2.00%
	Youth Music Director (Julie Mazer)					
	Salary	5,020.62	5032.85		5,121.03	
	FICA	384.08	372.83		391.76	
	Subtotal	5,404.70	5,405.68	-0.98	5,512.79	2.00%
	Tru Function Director (Rob Martens)					
	Salary	4,922.17	4922.16		5,020.62	
	FICA	376.55	376.54		384.08	
	Subtotal	5,298.72	5,298.70	0.02	5,404.70	2.00%
	Office Manager (Julie Wombacher)					
	Office Manager Salary	30,170.78	30170.87		30,774.19	
	Health Insurance (Cash in lieu of)	12,000.00	12000.00		12,240.00	
	Officer Manager FICA	3226.06	3226.07		3290.59	
	Subtotal	45,396.84	45,396.94	-0.10	46,304.78	2.00%
	Custodian (Tim Rotar):					
	Salary	6,110.78	6110.87		6,233.00	
	FICA	467.47	467.48		476.82	
	Subtotal	6,578.25	6,578.35	-0.10	6,709.82	2.00%
	Technical Assistant (Gabe Martens)					
	Salary	4,000.00	3935.41		4080.00	
	FICA	306.00	306.00		312.12	
	Subtotal	4,306.00	4,241.41	64.59	4,392.12	2.00%
	Youth Education Coord. (Julie Mazer)					
	Salary	7,748.18	15,496.36		15,806.29	
	FICA	592.73	1,138.58		1,209.17	
	Subtotal	8,340.91	16,634.94	-8,294.03	17,015.46	104.00%
	Youth Trip Coord. (Kristin Muckian)					
	Salary	1,500.00	1500.00			
	FICA	114.75	114.75			
	Subtotal	1,614.75	1,614.75	0.00	0.00	

		Budget	Actual	Difference (Budget- Actual)	Amount	% change
	Other Staff Costs:					
	Workers Comp Insurance	2,000.00	2234.00		2,400.00	
	Sabbatical Fund	2,000.00	0.00		0.00	
	Subtotal	4,000.00	2,234.00	1,766.00	2,400.00	
	Total Staff Costs	320,129.80	327,609.28	-7,479.48	359,235.83	12%
	<u>Administration</u>					
	Telephone	2,500.00	2733.24		2,800.00	
	Postage	900.00	816.93		900.00	
	Office Supplies	4,000.00	3411.40		3,500.00	
	Copier Supplies	4,000.00	3428.91		3,500.00	
	Office Equipment	1,200.00	504.68		600.00	
	Website	3,000.00	322.30		500.00	
	Leadership Retreat	600.00	102.56		500.00	
	Lay Leadership	700.00	358.78		700.00	
	Advertising	600.00	565.55		600.00	
	Administrative Contracts	500.00	0.00		0.00	
	Zoom Accounts	1,100.00	544.30		600.00	
	Vanco (on line contribution service)	1,500.00	1151.05		1,200.00	
	Checking Acct Fees	1,200.00	1247.56		1,300.00	
	Payroll Processing	2,200.00	2405.10		2,600.00	
	Subtotal	24,000.00	17,592.36	6,407.64	19,300.00	-20%
	<u>Resources</u>					
	Water and Sewer	3,200.00	3183.49		3,200.00	
	Lawn Maintenance	4,000.00	3144.50		4,000.00	
	Snow Removal	12,000.00	12505.00		8,500.00	
	Property Insurance	7,500.00	8713.00		9,000.00	
	Church Maint & Repair	19,000.00	13888.84		19,000.00	
	Janitorial Supplies	1,200.00	1263.45		1,200.00	
	Gas and Electric	20,000.00	20904.94		21,000.00	
	Cleaning Services	12,000.00	11819.00		12,000.00	
	Technical Improvements/Support	3,000.00	1976.14		3,500.00	
	Property Maint Set-aside	2,000.00	2000.00		2,000.00	
	Subtotal	83,900.00	79,398.36	4,501.64	83,400.00	-1%

		Budget	Actual	Difference (Budget- Actual)	Amount	% change
<u>Adult Faith Formation</u>						
	Piano and Organ Maintenance	1,500.00	586.00		750.00	
	Guest Preachers	3,000.00	1300.00		3,000.00	
	Substitute Accompanists	400.00	350.00		400.00	
	Senior Choir Music	800.00	270.83		300.00	
	Handbell Choir Music	800.00	763.54		800.00	
	Guest Musicians	750.00	275.00		400.00	
	Worship Supplies	1,200.00	889.21		1,000.00	
	Communion Supplies	175.00	108.53		175.00	
	Adult Education	1,200.00	369.17		600.00	
	Tru Function/Tru Gumption Music	500.00	634.61		500.00	
	Subtotal	10,325.00	5,546.89	4,778.11	7,925.00	-23%
<u>Youth Faith Formation</u>						
	Sunday School	3,500.00	3284.34		3,500.00	
	Youth Gatherings Food	2,000.00	674.24		1,000.00	
	Teacher Recognition	500.00	518.37		500.00	
	Sr. High Programming	500.00	462.72		500.00	
	Middle School Programming	1,200.00	103.30		1,200.00	
	Safe Sanctuary	100.00	40.00		100.00	
	Nursery Care and Supplies	5,000.00	3713.19		4,000.00	
	Youth Music Program	1,600.00	547.05		800.00	
	Subtotal	14,400.00	9,343.21	5,056.79	11,600.00	-19%
<u>Christian Witness & Service</u>						
	United Church of Christ Support	23,000.00	23000.00		23,000.00	
	Outreach Support	10,000.00	9999.04		10,000.00	
	Sanctuary Mission Team	500.00	214.06		500.00	
	S.W. Association Dues	3,030.00	2208.00		2,400.00	
	Border Support	3,500.00	3500.00		0.00	
	Subtotal	40,030.00	38,921.10	1,108.90	35,900.00	-10%
<u>Stewardship</u>						
	Stewardship	600.00	603.43	-3.43	600.00	
<u>Congregational Life</u>						
	General Expenses	3,000.00	2154.97		3,500.00	
	Welcome Back Picnic	1,400.00	1265.32		1,400.00	
	All Church Retreat	3,000.00	2425.00		2,500.00	
	Subtotal	7,400.00	5,845.29	1,554.71	7,400.00	
Operations Total Expenses:		500,784.80	484,859.92	15,924.88	525,360.83	4.91%

Special Funds

Special Funds:	Bal 12/31/22	Receipts	Disbursements	Bal 12/31/23
Church Retreats	\$ 6,125.36	\$ 8,861.75	\$ 5,919.50	\$ 9,067.61
Prayer Shawl Fund	\$ 142.23			\$ 142.23
Compassion Offering	\$ 2,669.17	\$ 34,234.99	\$ 33,860.65	\$ 3,043.51
Handbell Enrichment	\$ 1,194.41		\$ 135.00	\$ 1,059.41
Property Maint. Set-aside	\$ 4,506.13	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 6,506.13
Sabbatical Fund	\$ 16,545.00			\$ 16,545.00
Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$ 3,296.74	\$ 1,130.86	\$ 1,110.57	\$ 3,317.03
International Fair	\$ 605.13		\$ 605.13	\$ -
Party Gras Fund	\$ 233.78	\$ 138.00	\$ 322.75	\$ 49.03
Over 55	\$ 659.47	\$ 2,648.75	\$ 3,084.52	\$ 223.70
Flower Fund	\$ 537.10	\$ 742.00	\$ 658.90	\$ 620.20
Senior Choir Fund	\$ 375.00			\$ 375.00
Youth Work Trip Scholarship	\$ 250.00			\$ 250.00
Coffee Special Fund	\$ 234.48	\$ 506.42	\$ 791.46	\$ (50.56)
Youth Service Trip Fund	\$ 9,621.59	\$ 29,760.30	\$ 26,708.20	\$ 12,673.69
Greeting Card Ministry	\$ 530.27	\$ 1,243.00	\$ 1,230.00	\$ 543.27
Landscaping Fund	\$ 3,034.75	\$ 986.82	\$ 1,607.58	\$ 2,413.99
Vegetable Village Fund	\$ 603.43	\$ 440.00	\$ 563.05	\$ 480.38
Thanksgiving Gift Cards	\$ 195.35	\$ 1,828.58	\$ 280.00	\$ 1,743.93
Misc Items	\$ 1,736.60	\$ 601.27	\$ 1,080.11	\$ 1,257.76
SWP Car Donations	\$ 532.71			\$ 532.71
Catering Mission Team	\$ 530.02	\$ 4,650.00	\$ 4,626.55	\$ 553.47
Garth Fund	\$ 3,966.58		\$ 775.53	\$ 3,191.05
Sanctuary Mission	\$ 70.00		\$ 70.00	\$ -
Leadership Retreat	\$ 85.51			\$ 85.51
Heart ROOM Campaign	\$ 85,763.25	\$ 29,442.94	\$ 47,079.75	\$ 68,126.44
Other Designated Fund (Name Tags)	\$ -	\$ 1,549.50	\$ 1,515.00	\$ 34.50
Emergency Housing Assistance	\$ 14,326.90	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 4,526.90
Jane Ilgen Literacy Project	\$ 1,344.89	\$ 1,900.00		\$ 3,244.89
Confirmation/OWL Retreats	\$ 375.00			\$ 375.00
Book Sales Fund	\$ 128.76			\$ 128.76
Kitchen Fund	\$ 1,000.00			\$ 1,000.00
Total Special Funds	\$ 176,191.97			\$ 142,060.54

Memorial Funds:

General Memorial Fund	\$ 121,266.76	\$ 2,095.00	\$ 700.66	\$ 122,661.10
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Investment Funds:

Operation Vision Investment Reserve	\$ 96,351.61	\$ 23,724.19	\$ 9,722.66	\$ 110,353.14
Building Maintenance Reserve	\$ 20,349.71	\$ 5,915.08	\$ 2,957.93	\$ 23,306.86

Nominations for 2024

These members have agreed to serve our congregation in the designated roles and time frames listed. The Constitution allows the Leadership Team to approve persons to fill vacancies. We are grateful to all who serve and have served; at ORUCC, the Members are the Ministers!

Submitted January 8, 2024 by the Nominations Committee: Deanna Blanchard (Chair), Hal Evensen, LuAnn Greiner, Susan Wagoner, and Barbara Stretchberry.

Leadership Team (3-year terms)

Past Moderator: Hal Evensen (Feb 2022 thru Jan 2025)

Moderator: Deanna Blanchard (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2026)

Moderator Elect: Dale Rebhorn (Feb. 2024 thru Jan. 2027)

Treasurer: John Day (Feb 2018 thru Jan 2025*)

Clerk: Jim McNamara (renewed x 2 Feb 2024 thru Jan 2025*)

At large members:

TBD (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2027) – CWS Liaison

TBD (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2027) – YFF liaison

Jarrett Gersten (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2026) – Resources Liaison

Mary Connor (Feb 2022 thru Jan 2025) – AFF Liaison

Sara Hagen (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2026) – Congregational Life Liaison

New at large members:

Susan Dovell (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2027)

Ann Rifenberg (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2027)

All Ministries have two-year terms, which can be extended up to two additional years or longer as needed.

*Denotes term extension

Resources Ministry

Chair: Jon Blanchard (Feb 2019 thru Jan 2026*)

Rick Daluge (Feb 2019 thru Jan 2025*)

Matt Dixon (Feb 2019 thru Jan 2026*)

Paul Eggerling-Boeck (Feb 2019 thru Jan 2025*)

Joyce Pohl (March 2021 thru Jan 2026*)

Darren Schoer (March 2021 thru Jan 2025*)

Cindy Fillingame (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

New member:

Kurt Jaehnig (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Christian Witness and Service

Chair: LuAnn Greiner (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

Julie Horst (renewed Feb 2022 thru Jan 2026*)

Dan Miller (renewed Feb 2020 thru Jan 2026*)

Diane Dulin (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

Giulia Lawrence (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

New members:

David Allen (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Mary Neuhaus (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Adult Faith Formation

Chair: Leslie Linser (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

Steve Pearson (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

New Members:

Susi Petta (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Bob Millholland (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Susan Soric (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Bev Davis (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Youth Faith Formation

Chair: Paul Vash (March 2021 thru Jan 2026*)

Marcia Beckett (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

Joanna Beilman-Dulin (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

New Members:

Al Blanchard (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Claire Purkis (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Jenny Whitacre (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Congregational Life

Chair: TBD

Karin Drury (Feb 2020 thru Jan 2026*)

Jane Geier (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

Barb Wells (Feb 2023 thru Jan 2025)

New Members:

Laura Conners (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Cheryl Donkle (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Stewardship Mission Team

Chair: Jim McNamara (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Members:

Ben Lancour-Youth Representative (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Jarrett Gersten (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Roger Avery (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Rick Daluge (Feb 2024 thru Jan 2026)

Financial Secretaries

Nancy Wettersten

Mary Bucknell

Jennifer Eggerling-Boeck

Joyce Dingman

Gene Dyar
Peter Hoff
Meg Stevens
Bryce Amburn

Historian*

Mary Connor

*Leadership Team will be forming a short-term mission team to evaluate the value of this role and define necessary duties, if any. Anyone who is interested in discussing this role is welcome to contact Deanna Blanchard or anyone on the Leadership Team.

Nominations for 2025**

Dale Rebhorn (Chair)

Deanna Blanchard

Susan Wagoner

**We will be looking for 1 to 2 more people to help with contacting members who may be interested in serving on ministries starting in 2025. The Nominations team works closely with the pastors and Leadership Team to identify people who may be interested in certain ministries. If you think this short-term opportunity to serve is a good fit for you, please let a pastor or Leadership Team member know.

Safe Sanctuaries Policy

Submitted pending adoption: August 19, 2023

Passed by congregational vote on May 2, 2004 Revised May 2013

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs." (Matthew 19:14)

At Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ, we believe that our church should be a safe sanctuary for all those who come in good faith. Most importantly, it should be a safe sanctuary for the children and youth who are entrusted to us.

The physical or sexual abuse of a child is a tragedy no matter where it occurs; it is especially so when it takes place in a house of God. Abuse in a church is the ultimate violation of a sacred trust. We also acknowledge that the abuse of children is a reality, and that no church is immune from that reality.

We want our congregation to be a haven, free of sexual misconduct or harassment. To help reach these goals, we have adopted the following policies, procedures, and educational programs to reduce the possibility of child sexual or physical abuse, or any type of sexual misconduct or harassment from occurring in our congregation. The educational aspect will make us aware of potential problems, and the implementation of prudent policies should help safeguard our children, youth, and members. While not all policies can anticipate and prevent all misfortune, they can state a purpose and provide guidance to achieve the purpose. These policies express our keen interest in protecting our children and youth, while maintaining the trusting atmosphere of our congregation for the entire congregation, adults and children alike.

We therefore enact this policy to establish and enforce rules and procedures to eliminate, as much as possible, the risk of abuse in our children and youth programs and activities.

To that end, this policy:

- Requires that classes and classrooms be configured to eliminate the possibility of children being isolated;
- Mandates specific rules for each program and activity for children and youth, inside and outside the church building, to ensure safety;
- Provides education about child abuse for the congregation, parents, youth volunteers and staff, children, visitors and others who use the church for their activities;
- Requires that those who work with children and youth, paid staff or volunteer, be carefully selected and screened, educated about the issue of abuse and trained to recognize signs of abuse:

- **Any person who has committed previous acts of sexual misconduct with children or youth shall be strictly prohibited from serving our children or youth.**
- Establishes a procedure to ensure that all allegations of physical or sexual abuse against a child, by an adult or another child, be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately, and that victims and their families be supported and treated with respect and compassion.

SECTION ONE: RECRUITING CONGREGATIONAL WORKERS: Our congregation welcomes staff and volunteers who have been members or regular attenders of our congregation for at least six months to become involved with the Educational and Youth Programs at various levels of commitment. In order to ensure that all volunteers are ready to engage with children and youth, all those who wish to apply must attend 1.) a Safe Sanctuary Workshop, usually held at least once a year by The Safe Sanctuary Advocacy Team and 2.) the New Members Class series, held twice a year. (Note: there is no obligation to become members of the church; the purpose of attending the New Member Class is for the volunteer to learn more about our church and for our church to learn more about the volunteer.) The Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families shall be responsible for screening applicants for such volunteer and staff positions. There are two levels of screening: primary and secondary.

PRIMARY SCREENING PROCEDURE: Those workers such as teachers and youth group leaders who will have appointed and frequent contact with children and/or youth must undergo the primary screening procedure by reviewing this policy and completing the attached application form. Current congregation volunteers and staff members are requested to submit to the screening procedure to signal to the entire congregation their support of the steps being taken. Furthermore, volunteers and/or paid staff or anyone with anticipated unmonitored contact with youth or children will complete the Background Information Disclosure & Screening Form. The Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families will review the submitted form and conduct a personal interview as needed (for example, if a background check reveals that a record was found, the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families would interview the applicant to gain further details and insight into the applicant's background to make a more informed decision). The Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families will arrange for a Criminal Background Check, when applicable, and will check references for paid staff. Once all the information is compiled, the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families in consultation with the Senior Pastor and Chair of the Youth Faith Formation Ministry will confirm the applicant's suitability to serve. Ongoing and formal training will be provided to the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and Families regarding screening procedures, background check procedures, and procedures for interviewing individuals to screen for possible misconduct.

SECONDARY SCREENING PROCEDURE: Applicants who will have limited contact with children or youth over the course of a year, such as the occasional nursery assistant, craft/play time leader, Music Connections volunteer, or youth group driver are asked to review this policy, its code of behavior, and return a signed acknowledgment indicating such a review to the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families. A copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy acknowledgment form is included as Appendix A.

All persons will have read and agreed to abide by all Policies and Procedures herein. Signature upon the appropriate primary or secondary application denotes a willingness to remain in compliance with these or their successors.

Any person who has committed previous acts of sexual misconduct with children or youth shall be strictly prohibited from serving our children or youth.

SECTION TWO: EDUCATION AND TRAINING: The Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families, the Youth Faith Formation Ministry, and the Safe Sanctuary Advocacy Team will be responsible for the implementation of procedures designed to educate volunteers, staff and congregation members regarding these policies and procedures. As part of each new congregation employee's orientation, each employee will review these policies, procedures and code of behavior. The Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families will ensure that the Youth Faith Formation Ministry and Safe Sanctuary Advocacy Teams define and implement procedures designed to further the intent of these policies, and educate volunteers and staff on these procedures through regular training programs. The Ministry of Resources shall design and maintain procedures related to building use which uphold the intent of this policy. Annual training programs will teach staff and volunteers how and when to report a possible sexual misconduct incident and how to discuss questionable behavior with the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families. Sunday School teachers and Music Connections volunteers are required to be trained annually on the Safe Sanctuary Policy.

SECTION THREE: MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS: Records of all actions required by this policy and any material pertinent to it, including reports, workers' surveys, and application and acknowledgment forms, shall be kept in perpetuity in a secure and confidential place, the location and security measures to be determined by the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families and the Safe Sanctuary Advocacy Team. A hard copy of all signed acknowledgment forms shall be kept in the main office, and a spreadsheet compilation of individuals who have signed this form may be maintained electronically by the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families and/or the Children's Curriculum Coordinator.

SECTION FOUR: SAFE SANCTUARY ADVOCACY TEAM: A Safe Sanctuary Advocacy Team shall be established for two purposes. 1. In the event that a volunteer, congregation member or staff member is uncomfortable reporting an allegation of sexual misconduct to the Senior Pastor or the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families that person may take the allegation or concern to the Advocacy Team. 2. The Team will also serve to support staff members charged with carrying out education of the policy to staff, volunteers, and congregation and assist in the enacting the Response Plan.

The Team will be composed of at least three people, including multiple gender perspectives, appointed by the Youth Faith Formation Ministry for indefinite terms. The Team will be a Mission Team supported by the Youth Faith Formation Ministry and the Mission Team members may serve on other Ministry and Mission Teams. Team members will be noted on documents related to this policy and changes will be announced promptly in congregation publications. All members of this team shall maintain a strict code of confidentiality.

Team members will undergo thorough screening, background checks and education on the issue of child abuse before being allowed to serve. The team will oversee the educational component of the policy. Team members will also serve as a support to the Abuse Response Team, which has the responsibility of receiving and acting on allegations of abuse and providing healing for victims, families and the congregation.

SECTION FIVE: RESPONSE PLAN:

- The safety of the child or youth will be paramount.
- Confidentiality of all involved will be respected.
- All childcare or youth workers and volunteers are mandated to report any suspected or known child abuse (whether the abuse is suspected to have occurred at church or otherwise) immediately to proper church authorities. These authorities will be the pastoral staff, the church Moderator and the Moderator-Elect who will function as the Abuse Response Team.
 - If a youth worker or volunteer cannot follow the normal procedure of reporting an incident to a member of the Abuse Response Team for any reason, they should immediately contact the local police department. For example, if a group is on a mission trip or other out of town youth event, the local police department should be contacted.
- If a report of abuse is made, the Abuse Response Team will collaboratively determine if it needs to be reported to the authorities, in accordance with Wisconsin law ([48.981\(2\)](#))
- If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the Abuse Response Team, the report can be made to a member of the Safe Sanctuary Advocacy Team who will inform the non-accused members of the Abuse Response Team and UCC Leaders outside the church. The first contact shall be Associate Conference Minister responsible for the Southwest Association. If this person is not available, contact the Wisconsin Conference Minister.
- When an allegation of abuse is made, the recipient of the report should write down what has been alleged using the child's/reporter's words. The reporter is to take down the information without asking investigative or leading questions to the child so as to not hurt the investigation. This report should be made available to the investigating authorities.
- The City of Madison Police Department/Dane County Department of Human Services will be the investigative body and deal with the alleged perpetrator.
- The Abuse Response Team will report any allegation to the UCC Southwest Wisconsin Association minister.
- The original reporter of the abuse will receive appropriate feedback as needed.

- The Senior Pastor and the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families will consult with the Leadership Team about how to proceed with any public information or communication with the congregation if deemed necessary.
- The Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and Families and the Leadership Team will designate a spokesperson for communication with the media, if there are media requests for comment or information. Any pastor or Leadership Team member who is named in the allegation is not permitted to be involved in naming the spokesperson. During the investigative stage of any allegation, the church spokesperson should limit statements to the fact that the church takes any allegation seriously and is fully cooperating with authorities. Under no circumstances should a spokesperson discuss any aspect of a case. When an allegation is resolved, members of the pastoral staff or the Moderator should consult with the Leadership Team before issuing any statement or making any comment.
- Preliminary pastoral counsel will be provided to those involved and as appropriate, referrals for counseling will be made.
- After all the necessary investigative avenues have been followed through, the church leadership and the pastoral staff will work to facilitate a healing process and foster a safe and affirming environment for the victims of the abuse and for the entire congregation.

A CODE OF BEHAVIOR

This code will be part of an initial and on-going training program.

Volunteers who have taken an active part in the life of the congregation may be invited to become involved with the Educational and Youth Programs at various levels of commitment. During this time, those planning to be directly involved in the life of the congregation shall receive training and accept the following code of behavior. New employees, having satisfied the Primary Screening Process, employed to work with children and youth, may assume their position immediately.

Covenant: Maintaining child and youth safety within our church and understanding our practices is a matter for covenant within our congregation.

Posting: These guidelines and policies should be clearly posted in all Sunday School classrooms, in the Friendship Hall, in the Music Connections rooms, and throughout the church.

Adult Supervision: No teacher, advisor, aide or anyone else working with our children or youth should place themselves in a compromising situation by being alone with a child or with children out-of-sight of other teachers, advisors, aides, or parents. The children in the educational program of our congregation shall be under the care and supervision of two adults, one of whom may be a high school aide. An exception in the education department would exist if classes are so constructed as to provide constant visual access and frequent observation by the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families or their designee (for example, another Pastor or the Chair of the Youth Faith Formation Ministry). There is no church-sanctioned event in our ministry that permits one adult to be alone with one child or youth for more than a rare brief period of time.

Specific Guidelines for Adult Supervision: Adult leaders for a youth ministry activity function as representatives of the church and as such are held to different standards than when acting as a parent or adult in their own family. The rules and guidelines of the church must be followed by all leaders at all events, thereby providing appropriate supervision for the youth. Supervision must be consistent, reasonable and prudent. Adults are encouraged to remember that they will be providing both supervision and modeling adult Christian behavior for the youth in their care, and should endeavor to see that the example they set is consistent with the values and expectations of the church community.

Classrooms: Windows (with shades open at all times) are required in all classroom doors. Absent a window in the nursery door, the top half of the door should be open at all times children are in the nursery. All activities will be kept in plain view.

Five Year Separation Rule: When utilizing high school and young adults as primary leaders in the Educational Department, Youth Programs and Off---site Activities they shall be at least five years older than any of the children or youth they supervise.

Regarding Bathroom Supervision of Children: Normally teachers, advisors, or aides who accompany a child to the bathroom, should remain outside the bathroom stall door while the child is inside. If a child needs assistance with zipping, buttoning, buckling, clean-up, wiping, etc., two adults need to be present, one of whom may be a high school aide. If anything unusual occurred during this assistance, a note describing the help given and persons present should be written and handed to the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families or designee at the close of educational program day. If, for any reason, a teacher or aide is left alone in a classroom, the teacher in the nearest or neighboring classroom should be so informed.

Nursery Staff: One may be a High School student (grades 9 through 12) Diapering of infants and toddlers may be done in the nursery if two people are present, one of whom is an adult. Parental Consent: Written parental or guardian consent is required when children or youth are involved in church sponsored activities away from the church facility.

Discipline: The purpose of discipline with children and youth is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of religious responsibility, respect and cooperation. No child shall be disciplined by the use of spanking, hitting, slapping, or any form of physical punishment. Verbal reprimands shall not include destructive criticism, insult or shouting. Teachers, advisors and aides and others helping in the classroom are encouraged to listen to the child, communicate expectations of appropriate behavior, use time---outs or give alternate choices. If a child is disruptive, a teacher or aide from the class or a neighboring class may be sent to locate the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families or her/his designee. If the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families or designee is not readily available, the child's parent should be contacted and brought to the room.

Overnight Rule: Any and all adult chaperones supervising overnight stays at our facilities or on congregational sponsored trips shall have been cleared to do so by the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families or Senior Pastor. A minimum of two adults of differing gender perspectives shall chaperone every oversight stay or trip; and should these adults be involved romantically, a third adult chaperone is to be present. Details regarding sleeping arrangements for overnight trips shall be communicated by the trip leader and agreed to by all youth and guardians in advance. In those situations where there is only one child per room, a second adult must be present. Further, a signed written consent form is required. Lights must be kept on except during specified sleeping hours. Overnights must have a designated time at which none can enter or leave the building for the night. Adult supervisors must actively seek to prevent inappropriate or abusive youth/youth behavior.

Youth Group Activities: Physical contact such as wrestling or other inappropriate high contact games are not acceptable recreational activity. No adult leader, staff or volunteer, should initiate or encourage physical or intimate contact with children or youth. Setting boundaries is the responsibility of the chaperone. The Youth Program is a group ministry. All participants are expected to remain with the group throughout the times listed in congregation publications. Leaving and Locking: Situations where one adult and one youth or child are left at the facility's door waiting to be picked up by parents at the end of an activity are not allowed. Parents are expected to respect concluding times.

Key Assignment: Only church staff members and those in leadership have keys and the access code to the church building.

Pastoral Counseling for Children and Youth: This policy applies to pastoral counseling (children and youth meeting with pastors must meet in an open space or with the door open). Continuing education of appropriate and ethical boundaries is required of all pastors.

Drugs, Tobacco, Alcohol: The use of any drugs, tobacco or alcoholic products on church property or in the church facility is not permitted during church sponsored children and youth activities.

Transportation: Transportation for field trips is provided between the church and the field trip site only. Adults providing church-sponsored transportation for an activity shall complete a criminal background check and provide a copy of their driver license and proof of insurance.

Parental Guidelines: We strongly encourage parents, when on the premises with their children, to know at all times where their children are, who they are with, and what they are doing. It is strongly encouraged that children 10 or under do not play in unsupervised areas.

Social Media: Carefully consider a relationship with youth in a social media setting. Youth will have access to "friends" or "followers" and content shared by your friends and/or followers may not always be appropriate. Refrain from private messaging within social media sites or playing games one-on-one within a site; this behavior can be compared to being in a room with a door closed. It would be appropriate, however, to set up a group Facebook page for a youth activity (such as an OWL class or youth mission trip) where many are invited to participate, including youth and adults. This can be a good way to share information, photos, etc. Set privacy settings to limit who can view the page. Again, refrain

from private messaging within that page. Written consent must be obtained prior to public release or sharing of any names or photos of children or youth.

E-mail and Texting: Refrain from engaging in one---on---one messaging with youth. Instead, send group emails or texts or cc to a parent. Save all communications with youth. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.

Visitors On--site: Visitors are always welcome at Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ. The staff or volunteers serving our congregation shall be aware of who is visiting our facilities.

Outside Groups Using Our Facilities: Outside groups are welcome to use our facility, but any outside group involving children or youth must be provided with a copy of our policies and sign that they have read and understand our policies.

Reporting Responsibilities: Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult worker and a child or youth shall be promptly reported to the Abuse Response Team (Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor of Children, Youth and Families, the Moderator, and the Moderator-elect) or a Safe Sanctuary Advocacy Team Member.

If You Suspect a Violation of the Code: If a suspected case of abuse has either been reported to you or is suspected by you to have occurred at a congregational---related function or program, immediately contact the Senior Pastor or the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families. In the case where this person cannot be reached, contact the Moderator. If the alleged abuser is the Senior Pastor or the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families, report the allegation to the Moderator.

Abuse can include, but is not limited to:

- Sexual remarks
- Inappropriate kissing
- Unsolicited hugging
- Fondling
- Touching parts of the body which would be covered by a swimsuit.
- Watching any sexual activity
- Intercourse
- Showing pornography
- Hitting
- Spanking
- Bullying

- If you are unsure whether or not your particular situation falls under this definition, it is strongly recommended that you err to the side of caution and report your suspicion immediately.

Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I acknowledge I have received, reviewed, and agree to comply with the Safe Sanctuary Policy of Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ.

If requested by the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families, I agree to provide information authorizing the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families to complete a Criminal Background Check which would include a driving record check concerning me.

Printed Name

Signed Name

Date

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

1. Name of caregiver (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

2. Child's/Youth's name: _____

Child's/Youth's age/date of birth: _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from child/youth: _____

4. Description of alleged abuse and/or report from child/youth (using child's/youth's own words as much as possible): _____

5. Name of person alleged to have committed abuse: _____

Relationship of person alleged to have committed abuse to child (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): _____

6. Name of church authority to whom caregiver reported alleged abuse:

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

7. Reported to child's/youth's parent/guardian by: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

8. Reported to Dane County Department of Human Services by: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Reported to City of Madison Police Department by: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10. Other reports or communications (name): _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

11. Additional details/notes: _____

(Signature of Caregiver)

(Date)

ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date of accident: _____

Time of accident: _____

Name of child/youth injured: _____

Age: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Location of accident: _____

Parent or guardian: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Nature of injury: _____

First aid given: _____

Describe accident: _____

Was the parent contacted? Y N

Name of parent contacted: _____

Describe contact to parent: _____

Additional notes: _____

Caregiver signature: _____ Date: _____