

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GLEN ELLYN ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26



## **The Annual Meeting of the Members**

**Sunday, June 7, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary**

The agenda for the meeting will include the following Congregational actions:

- Election of the Slate of Candidates for Church Council and Committees
- Discuss and vote on the proposed Church budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27

*Submitted by Carol Nunkovich, Clerk*

# FCCGE Staff and Church Council

## Staff

Senior Minister ..... Rev. Seth Ethan Carey  
 Associate Minister ..... Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck  
 Administrative Assistant ..... Laura Peccarelli  
 Business Administrator ..... Michelle Jones  
 Director of Christian Education ..... Catherine Curtis  
     Youth Education Coordinator ..... Cathy Basso  
     Associate for Youth Education ..... Jessi Fleming  
 Director of Communications ..... Sherry Flugel  
 Director of Music Ministry ..... Michele Hecht  
     Associate for Music Ministry ..... Jeff Haeger  
     Handbell Director ..... Matthew Prins  
     Organist ..... Shu-Hui Janet Tsai  
 Director of Youth Ministry ..... Tanner Spear  
 Seminary Intern ..... Delaney Beh  
 Sexton ..... José Beltran  
 Nursery Care Coordinator ..... Polly Cooper  
 Nursery Care Provider ..... Amy Zita  
 Nursery Care Provider ..... Maggie Zita

## Church Council 2025-26

Moderator ..... Jesse White  
 Assistant Moderator ..... Dorothy Powers  
 Treasurer ..... Jason Savitt  
 Assistant Treasurer ..... Tim Keeley  
 Clerk ..... Carol Nunkovich  
 Connections Committee Chair ..... Jennifer Sellers  
 Finance Committee Chair/Treasurer Emeritus ..... Whit Brooks  
 Property & Grounds Committee Chair ..... Mike Sorensen  
 Service & Justice Committee Chair ..... Catherine LaChapelle



*Above (l to r): Catherine Curtis (Dir. Of Christian Ed); Amy Zita (Nursery Care Provider), Jose Beltran (Sextant); and Jessi Fleming (Assoc. for Youth Ed), enjoy the Rally Day picnic.*



*Top right (l to r): Seminary Intern Delaney Beh, Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck, and Rev. Seth Ethan Carey awaiting the outdoor procession on Palm Sunday.*



*Bottom right (l to r): Dir. of Music Ministry Michele Hecht; Associate for Music Jeff Haeger; and Organist Janet Tsai on Easter Sunday.*

# Table of Contents

**Staff & Church Council** ..... Inside front cover

**Annual Meeting Agenda** ..... 4

    Church Year Goals 2026-27 ..... 4

    Minutes of June 1, 2025 Annual Meeting of Members ..... 5

    Nominations of Officers and Committee Members..... 8

    Treasurer’s Report ..... 9

    Finance Committee Report ..... 11

    Endowment Fund Committee Report ..... 11

    Annual Fund Report .....12

    Proposed Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget and Comments ..... 13

**FCCGE Member Responsibilities** .....15

    Membership & Attendance 2025-26.....16

**Reports of the Clergy**

    Senior Minister .....17

    Associate Minister .....18

**Reports of Staff Directed Ministries**

**Music and Worship**

        Director of Music Ministry..... 19

        Worship Ministry Reports ..... 21

**Education**

        Director of Christian Education .....24

        Director of Youth Ministry.....27

**Reports of Council, Committees and Ministries** ..... 31

**Moderator’s Report** .....32

**Connections Committee** .....33

        Connections Ministry Reports .....34

**Property and Grounds Committee**.....37

**Service and Justice Committee**.....39

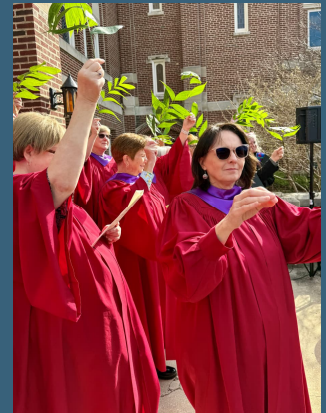
        Service and Justice Ministry & Mission Reports .....40

        An Update on Church-sponsored Scouting Troops .....48

Photos of Staff Recital 2026 .....49

Open and Affirming Statement, Global Mission Statement,  
and Just Peace Covenant ..... Back cover

*Inside...*



*Music—pg. 19*



*Education—pg. 24*



*Connections—pg. 33*



*Service & Justice—pg. 39*

## Annual Meeting Agenda

Sunday, June 7, 2026

11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Welcome & Invocation .....	Rev. Seth Ethan Carey, Senior Minister
Call To Order—Declaration of Quorum .....	Jesse White, Moderator
<i>FCCGE Bylaws, Section 5a—A quorum will be: Fifty members at any annual or special meeting of the members.</i>	
Approval of Minutes .....	Jesse White, Moderator
Minutes of the June 1, 2025, Annual Meeting of Members	
Moderator’s Report .....	Jesse White
Nomination and Election of Leadership Candidates .....	Dorothy Powers, Assistant Moderator
Senior Minister’s Report (including staff-led Ministries) .....	Rev. Seth Ethan Carey, Senior Minister
Finance Committee and Treasurer’s Reports.....	Whit Brooks, Finance Chair
Approval of Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 .....	Finance Committee
Committee Reports for 2025-26	
Connections Committee .....	Jennifer Sellers, Chair
Property & Grounds Committee .....	Mike Sorenson, Chair
Service & Justice Committee .....	Catherine LaChapelle, Chair
Looking Forward .....	Jesse White, Moderator 2026-27
Opportunity for Comments from Members .....	Moderators
Benediction .....	Rev. Seth Ethan Carey

## Church-Year Goals for 2026-2027

**Spiritual Development:** Encourage our Congregation to face today’s challenges with spiritual maturity, grounded in the teachings of Jesus.

**Environmental & Financial Sustainability:** Steward the resources of our *Forward in Faith* campaign to ensure the financial and environmental sustainability of the church.

**Building Community:** Strengthen our connections and nurture deeper relationships with one another and with our partner organizations in the local community.

# Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting of Members

## Minutes for FCCGE Annual Meeting June 1, 2025

**Welcome and Invocation**—Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck, Associate Minister

**Call to order—Declaration of Quorum**—Rich Troyer, Moderator, 2024-2025

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn, conducted in person in the sanctuary, was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by Moderator Rich Troyer. A quorum was determined with 60 plus persons seated in the sanctuary. In attendance were staff, Rev. Seth Ethan Carey, Senior Minister, and Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck, Associate Minister; members of the church council: Rich Troyer, *Moderator*; Jesse White, *Moderator Designate*, Cathy Christoff, *Assistant Moderator*, Jason Savitt, *Treasurer*, Jennifer Sellers, *Chair, Connections*, Whit Brooks, *Finance Chair, (Treasurer Emeritus)*, Mike Sorensen, *Chair, Property & Grounds*, Maria Metz, *Chair, Service & Justice*, Sandy Butt, *Clerk*; and members of the Congregation.

**Approval of minutes from June 2024 Annual Meeting**—Sandy Butt, Clerk

The minutes of the FCCGE Annual meeting on June 2, 2024 appear on pages 5-7 of the annual report.

**Motion to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of June 2, 2024, as presented. Jeannine Kannegieser moved to approve, and Jackie McCarthy seconded. The motion is approved.**

**Moderator's Report**—Rich Troyer, Moderator

Rich thanked the Congregation for their support. A lot has happened since first joining the council in 2019. First to highlight great things at FCCGE this past year: Our Sunday attendance (in person and online) averaged 302 people this year, 1,433 attendees at our Christmas Eve sermons—our highest attendance in at least five years, we supported 16 mission partners, endowment fund was more than \$1.1 million allowing us to make a material contribution to the operating budget on an ongoing basis, we are sending 36 singers and guests to Ireland to participate in the Limerick Sings! Festival, our youth work camp took 16 volunteers to St Louis to serve a collection of community aid organizations and we celebrated Catherine Curtis 20 years of service and are looking forward to celebrating Seth's 20 years this summer. Rich also thanked the committees and moderator team for a wonderful year and their service to the church.

**Nomination and Election of Leadership Candidates**—Cathy Christoff, Assistant Moderator

Recognized and expressed heartfelt gratitude to the current and outgoing committee leaders. Your time and talents have left a lasting impact. To incoming chairs and members, we welcome you and look forward to leading the congregation into the future. Let us support and celebrate one another and continue walking forward in faith.

**Motion to approve the slate of new nominees and church officers as presented, with any open positions to be filled by Council, as provided in the bylaws. Marger Kovatch moved to approve, Paul Wussow seconded. No discussion followed. Motion passed.**

**Senior Minister's Report**—Rev. Seth Ethan Carey, Senior Minister

This has been a banner year at FCCGE. We've built on a few years of momentum with great generosity of members. Everything seems to be going right here. It is a sanctuary. We are welcoming a lot of new members. In the midst of planning our next capital campaign for 2026. We are also celebrating our phenomenal staff team. Catherine (Curtis) and Cathy (Basso) lead a great group of children. Recently, we welcomed Jessi Fleming as a youth education associate. Once again our music staff has outdone themselves. Our choir is in top form and continues to grow. Michelle Hecht - the best musical director in the whole world - leading the annual Cantata and a choral tour to Ireland. Our administrative staff are doing a wonderful job. New administrative assistant Jackie Chaon is a great addition to the staff. Sadly, our facilities manager returned to his home in Poland. Thanked Paster Kyle - her friendship in worship is unmatched. A dependable partner in ministry and good friend. Intern Delaney Ben will continue their studies at the University of Chicago. Thank you to the congregation for stepping up in countless ways. Rich Troyer - a thoughtful leader and we are grateful for his leadership. Our church is only as strong as its people and you are the best people.

**Treasurer's Report & Approval of Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Operating Budget** - Jason Savitt, Treasurer

It's been a pleasure to work with everyone in council and the staff. We're lucky to be surrounded by such talented people. We've worked hard to be good stewards to your generous giving. Overview - financial position is very good and strong, both in terms of

## Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting—*continued*

income, expenses and assets. This past year, we saw the first noticeable increase in revenue in many years. Hoping this trend continues to keep up with inflation and staff needs, missions.

Revenue - budgeting 5.4 percent revenue increase. Taking a more conservative and comprehensive approach to budgeting the future. Incoming revenues were fairly stagnant since Covid. We've had greater engagement by the congregation and new members to be thanked for this. Connections committee remains cost neutral. Property and grounds have done a great job keeping everything within budget and on time. We are committed to raising service and justice budget to dedicate to our missions. More money is budgeted for education due to increased family demographic in the church. Personnel is 80 percent of our operating budget. It's our belief that we are very lucky to have our wonderful staff and they are our greatest asset. We've made a financial commitment to keep our salaries up and competitive with consumer price index.

We are projecting a deficit of \$12,697 - this is a conservative estimate.

### **Open up to questions:**

- David Exner - concerned we will be able to sustain our wonderful staff. Is 1.9 percent enough to meet the needs of inflation and cost of living? Whit Brooks answered - 2.9 percent increase in salary for staff is committed to make up for inflation and cost of living increases.
- Celia Rodee - Embarking on capital campaign, concerned about overhead cost of campaign. Rev. Seth Ethan Carey answered - costs for capital campaign will be folded into the campaign itself.
- Tim Waterloo - Bottom lines; A deficit budget. Past few years more deficit budgeted. Not actuals. Whit Brooks answered: the trend is that we've gotten better at refining our budget. We will have a surplus this year. What the finance committee will do is come to council and decide what we do with the surplus. We could give more to missions, add to capital campaign, For estimated income, we use the prior 12 months as the estimate for the following year. We're seeing a significant uptick in revenue.
- Jackie McCarthy - Noticed building usage revenue is up 155 percent. Jason Savitt answered: Tanner Spears oversaw usage of the parking lot - Glenbard West student parking. We have a waitlist for community parking. This revenue was formerly in education budget and moved to general revenue line.

### **Approval of Budget, FY 2025-2026:**

**Motion to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget as presented. Moved by Tom Petrich, seconded by Jeanine Kannegieser. The motion passes.**

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Finance Committee—Whit Brooks, Chair**

Michelle Jones is truly excelling in her role as business manager. Began a modeling exercise - what do the next 5 years look like? Continue to support service and justice committee. Continue to provide consistent service to the congregation and overall community. Asking congregants to give more. Auto pledges - there will be an inflationary increase. Urged congregation to consider contributions to the endowment fund. FCCGE has been taking advantage of using the building for revenue opportunities. Urged congregants to volunteer to see first hand how impactful FCCGE is and see where our money goes. Because of your generosity, Jason, Tim and Whit are staying on for the next year. In summary, we should all be proud for being in a solvent position.

#### **Connections—Jennifer Sellers, Chair**

The Connections Committee engages the FCCGE community. Kicked off with Rally Day in September; Oktoberfest - German themed menu by Kitchen Chicks; Progressive dinner; Advent festival; Cookies for elders; Euchre tournament; Easter egg hunt organized by Tanner Spears; Women's Fall retreat; Tower hill summer retreat; Welcomes new members all year long. Community and connections are more important than ever. Grateful for the fun and generous Connections Committee, Jennifer will be staying at the helm for 2025-2026.

#### **Property & Grounds—Mike Sorensen, Chair**

Property and grounds work has been a bit quieter this year. We've been conservative due to past stagnant revenues and increasing costs. Lost services of FCCGE Facility Manager Wojciech Grasz. His prior duties split between the committee and business administrator Michelle Jones. Delayed some of the long-term improvement projects. Carefully exploring adding solar panels to the church, which could be an amazing opportunity. An initial survey may allow us to have 33 percent of church power produced by solar energy. This couldn't be a better time to explore the possibility of solar panels on the flat part of the roof. A lot of the

## Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting—*continued*

inflation and reduction act credits will be done for the year. If we start this year, we could still get the credits which could be 70-80 percent of project cost. It would be a wise investment. Mike will be staying on as committee chair. The committee is in need of more members. It's so rewarding to see how this church operates.

### **Service and Justice**—Maria Metz, Chair

Thanked the committee members and gave a tip of the hat to the finance committee. Recognized there was collaboration across the board, but especially with finance, to commit to outreach. Very rewarding to have a great relationship with finance committee. We have three pillars – Equity, Health and Security – these are how we choose which ministries to support. Try to find a balance to support these pillars. It will be a blessing to have an additional budget - we will put emphasis on food security. It's not salaries - we do live out our mission that is especially unique to this congregation. Catherine LaChapelle is transitioning to chair of committee.

### **Looking forward**--Jesse White, Moderator 2025-2026

Want to thank Rich Troyer for thoughtful and steady leadership this past year. It's been a joy to work with him. Thanks to Pastor Seth and Pastor Kyle. Looking ahead I am fortunate to be surrounded by dedicated volunteers and these goals show who we are as a church. Reviewed church year goals: Spiritual Development; Environmental and financial sustainability; Building community. All helps us feel more connected to our church community. Thank you for providing a church that feels like a second home. Emphasized with the upcoming capital campaign, the endowment isn't just for emergency use, it plays an active role in supporting our missions.

### **Opportunity for Comments from Members**

- Celia Rodee - want to thank Whit, Jason, Rich, and Endowment committee. Want people to know how fortunate we are to have the financial acumen. We're not just looking at building capital, we're building on missions and ministries. Very healthy church, grateful.
- Observation: good portion of congregation online. At what point do we go back to two services? Seth - Two services: The time to consider that is when we are truly at capacity. One service has really brought people together. It's been an important part of the recipe to our success.
- Maria Metz; Observation: our attendance grows online, how can we grow and serve that group? Who are those folks? Are there other ways to build connectivity with the online community?
- Gabe Koenig: Other churches find that young people want more music, keep preaching short.
- Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck - 47 percent experience worship online. Possibly have Friday/ Saturday night online groups.
- Carla DeFlorio - small groups are doing so well, possible online small group activity.
- Carol Montgomery Fate - Whatever Seth is doing - it's working, keep doing it. I love this church. For Service and Justice committee - If we have an organization to recommend, what's the process?
- Maria Metz - Suggest reach out to Service and Justice chair and make a pitch. Committee has a vetting process. Someone to act as a liaison. How does it fit into our mission plan? There is a lot of prayerful consideration. We are always actively looking at who Service and Justice supports.
- David Exner: When we come into this building - these four walls, we come into our second home.
- Dorothy Powers: thank you for being the face of the congregation and welcoming us all.

### **Closing benediction**—Rev. Seth Ethan Carey

Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m. Minutes submitted by: Sandy Butt, *Clerk*

### **Approval of the Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting**

*A motion will be made to approve the Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting as presented, followed by any discussion, and a vote of the members present.*

## Nominations for Church Council & Committee Members

The following are the church officer positions and committees that form the core of our church government structure. Members are listed with the year their term expires. The names listed in **Bold** designate nominees to serve terms beginning July 1, 2026.

### Officers:

Jesse White, Moderator	2027
Dorothy Powers, Moderator Designate	2028
<b>Tom Petrich Assistant Moderator</b>	<b>2029</b>
Tim Kelley, Treasurer	2027
Jason Savitt, Assistant Treasurer	2027
Carol Nunkovich, Clerk	2027

### Property & Grounds Committee:

Mike Sorenson, Chair	2027
Mike Artrip	2027
Mike Zita	2027
Tom Rausch	2027
Rick Hall	2027
<b>Mike DeFlorio</b>	<b>2029</b>

### Connections Committee

Jo Ann Ginger, Chair	2027
Sally Fairbank	2028
Becky Gadomski	2028
Jen Ikens	2028
<b>Chris &amp; Mary Bass *</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Katie Keeley</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Christine McMinn</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Brandi Wilson</b>	<b>2029</b>

\* *Sharing duties*

### Finance Committee:

Whit Brooks, Chair	2027
Tim Keeley, Treasurer	2027
Jason Savitt, Assistant Treasurer	2027
Dave Mook, Endowment Chair	2027

### Service & Justice Committee:

Catherine LaChapelle, Chair	2027
Mike DeFlorio	2027
Andy Livingston	2027
Alice Stuhlmacher	2027
<b>Jennifer Larrabee</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Tom Fate</b>	<b>2029</b>

### Endowment Fund Team:

Dave Mook, Chair	2027
Dean Fischer	2027
Matt Szafranski	2027
Merle Rajek	2027

**Approval of the Slate of Nominations** — *A motion will be made to approve the Slate of Church Officers and Committee Members as presented, followed by any discussion, and a vote of the members present. Any open positions will be filled by Council as provided in the Bylaws. Most committees have room to grow, so please contact a committee chair, moderator team, or clergy member to inquire if there may be a place for you to participate on a committee.*

### Experts Serving the Church

In addition to our dedicated officers and committees, several members with professional experience in needed disciplines have provided strong, volunteer support to FCCGE. For the coming year, these are some of the people who have committed to make a difference in specific areas. We are grateful for their support.

Legal: Ted Harman  
 Insurance: Martha DeForest  
 Human Resources: Clara Hughes

Church Archives: Karen Pulver, Dolly Rada  
 Audio-Visual: Dave Hecht  
 Annual Report Editor/Designer: Jackie McCarthy

## Treasurer's Report 2025-2026—Jason Savitt

The Treasurer's Report contains two components. The first section reports on the financial activities of the current fiscal year-to-date (July 2025 - June 2026) and the second outlines the 2026-2027 budget passed by Council.

The fiscal year of First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn begins on July 1st of each year and ends on June 30th of the following year. This allows for our fiscal year to match our program year. Since our annual meeting is prior to our fiscal year-end, year-end financial statements are not available. Fiscal year-end statements will be published to the congregation in August 2026. All illustrations and figures below are as of March 31, 2026.

### **Financial Position (Current Financial Year 2026)**

The financial position of the church is defined by our Balance Sheet (shown below). It shows where we are at a point-in-time identifying all assets, including cash on hand (operating funds, endowment fund, and restricted donations and council designated funds) and our building. It also includes our debt and equity, showing an overall financial position. We use the cash basis of accounting so there are no payables listed such as payroll or other liabilities. It is of note that we do not record depreciation on our building and equipment.

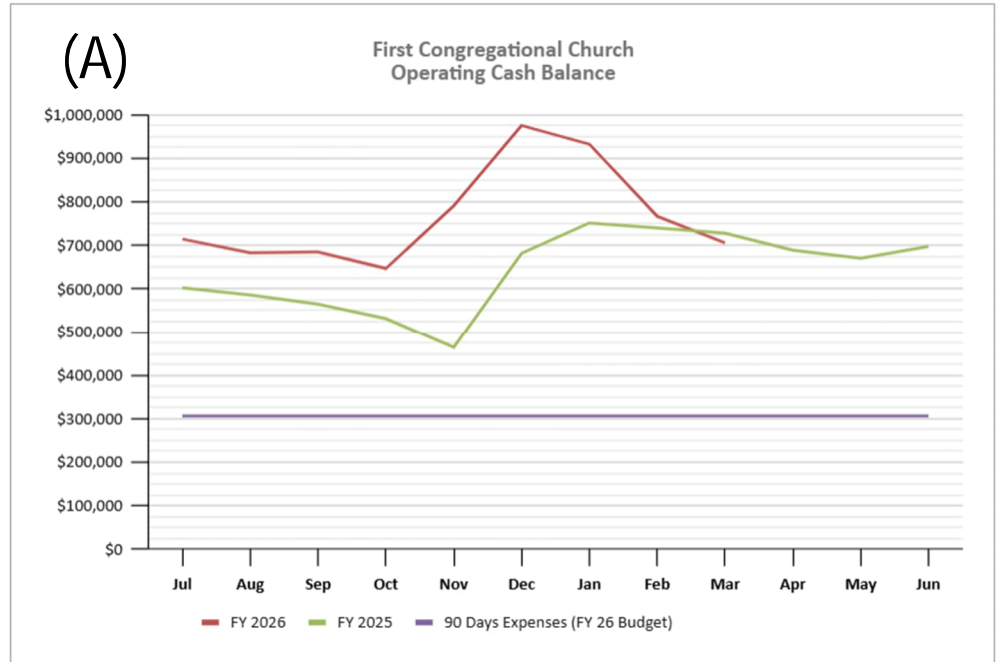
<b>FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GLEN ELLYN</b>		<b>Balance Sheet</b>	
<b>As of March 31, 2026</b>			
<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>As of Mar 31, 2026</b>		
Current Assets		Total Bank Accounts	\$ 2,338,641.44
Bank Accounts		Total Current Assets	\$ 2,338,641.44
1.3002 Charles Schwab Endowment Fund	1,299,745.49	Fixed Assets	
1008 Limited Use Money Market		1.4001 Land, Bldg, Equip	6,745,792.00
1008.10 Ensuing Year Pledge	26,872.00	1.4004 Columbarium	3,825.00
1008.11 Capital Campaign	108,350.63	Total Fixed Assets	\$ 6,749,617.00
1008.13 Other Limited Use	440.00	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 9,088,258.44</b>
1008.2 Bldg Reserve Council Desig	-22,264.18	<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
1008.3 Music	15,483.06	Liabilities	
1008.4 PADS	46,560.94	Current Liabilities	
1008.5 Youth Work Camp	5,569.35	Total Credit Cards	\$ 4,408.59
1008.6 Sem Scholarship	3,311.23	Other Current Liabilities	
1008.7 General Education	17,774.80	Payroll Liabilities	-32.67
1008.9 Charitable Crisis Council Desig	908.56	Total Other Current Liabilities	-\$ 32.67
Total 1008 Limited Use Money Market	\$ 203,006.39	Total Current Liabilities	\$ 4,375.92
Operating Accounts		Total Liabilities	\$ 4,375.92
1.1001 Checking	323,980.00	Equity	
1.2003 Morgan Stanley	0.00	Endowment Note	190,000.00
2003.1 Morgan Stanley	381,803.87	Mortgage Note	1,220,096.69
2003.2 Morgan Stanley Capital Campaign	130,139.32	Retained Earnings	7,611,486.29
2003.3 Morgan Stanley Ensuing Year	-33.63	Net Revenue	62,299.54
Total 1.2003 Morgan Stanley	\$ 511,909.56	Total Equity	\$ 9,083,882.52
Total Operating Accounts	\$ 835,889.56	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 9,088,258.44</b>
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 2,338,641.44		

# Treasurer's Report — continued

## Cash Position

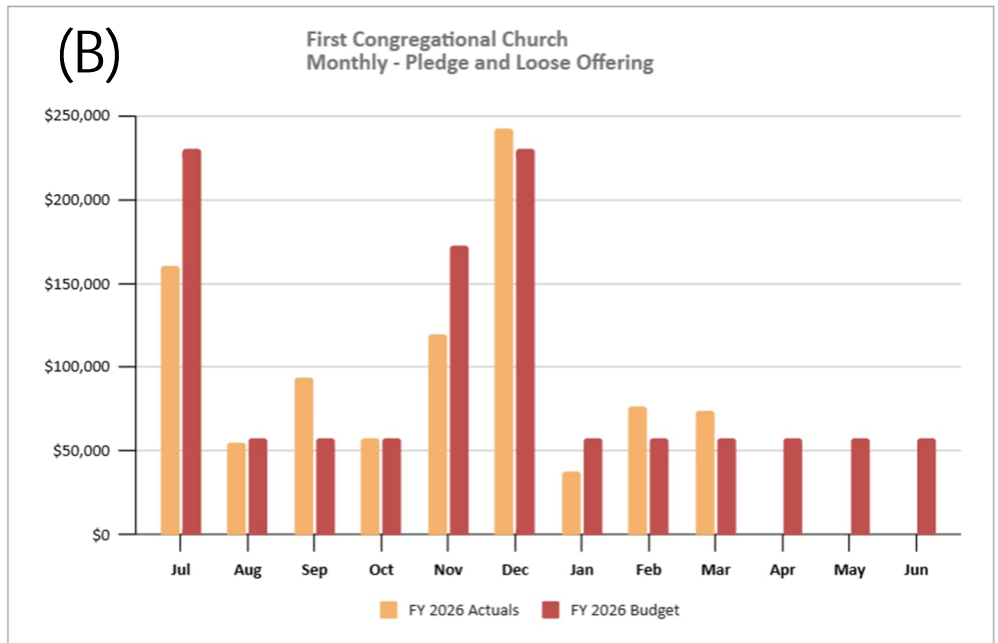
Many activities of the church are seasonal in nature and are not smoothly dispersed throughout the year. For example, church programs are limited during the summer, leading to a lower level of expenditure during this season. Further, contributions to the church are not evenly collected and we historically see higher income months in July (beginning of fiscal year) and in Nov/Dec/Jan (holiday season). Therefore, our operating cash balance fluctuates throughout the year.

Our historic monthly cash balances are reflected in the graph (A), with the horizontal line depicting a 90-day cash balance as a baseline. The prior 3-year illustration shows that the church has maintained a cash position well above the baseline 90 days' cash balance for the past several years. It is noteworthy that we have funded several large projects from this cash position, such as our solar electrical energy project, several HVAC repairs and a one-time donation to Service & Justice in the past year.



## Receipts vs. Budget

We estimate and budget our receipts based on the historical seasonality of collections. Chart (B) reflects our current fiscal year's actual receipts vs. budget. The large spike in July is due to pledges given in advance for the entire fiscal year and the other spikes occur around the holiday season. We continue to refine our forecast techniques to more accurately predict incoming donations and look for trends, continuing to align our income and expense budgeting process.



## Summary of Fiscal Year 2025-2026

The approved budget for FY 25-26 anticipated a deficit of \$12,694. As of March 2026, the expenses realized are aligned with our budget expectations. Unfortunately, collections are currently behind pace, and we project them to come in 3% (~\$35,000) below budget by the end of the fiscal year.

As of March 2026, FCCGE had \$705,784 in operating cash, continuing a positive trend in our cash position for several years. This is attributable to diligent expense management, a high-interest rate environment, and active congregation participation. This places the church in a position where we have more than the 90 days of expenses that we keep as normal practice. In the past several months this position has been used to fund our solar sustainability project, HVAC repairs and upgrades, among other planned and unplanned cash needs.

## Finance Committee Report—Whit Brooks, Chair and Treasurer Emeritus

**Finance Committee members 2025-26:** Whit Brooks (Chair and Treasurer Emeritus); Jason Savitt, Treasurer, Tim Keeley, Assistant Treasurer; Dave Mook, Endowment Fund Chair

The Finance Committee's purpose is to enable the pastoral team to carry out its mission. The committee plays an important role in ensuring the pastoral team's compliance with government legislation and procedures, and with the FCCGE policies regarding financial matters. With accurate and accessible records, the congregation is fully equipped to work together to determine annual budgets and future missions.

The Finance Committee's primary objective is to oversee and keep financial records for the congregation. This includes tracking of financial contributions, operational expenses and managing large investments. Over the past year we engaged with the Capital Campaign, an initiative that will improve the financial strength and sustainability of our congregation for a generation to come.

Thanks to the generous contributions of our membership, and diligent expense management from our staff and volunteers, the church's finances remain robust and healthy. Please see this year's Treasurer Report for further details.

The Finance Committee's goals center around two themes for next year. First, we intend to improve daily operational processes for efficiency and security. For instance, we intend to decrease our reliance on our current accounting firm to be more efficient in our operations and reduce expenses. We are also committed to improving our financial security hygiene, given cybersecurity and other fraud risks in the financial markets.

Next, the Finance Committee is focused on pursuing new strategies to improve the sustainability of our church's finances in the long-term. The Capital Campaign aims to strengthen our endowment by \$3.5m, which is roughly a 200% increase over the current balance. In time, this will help reduce inflationary pressures in the annual operating budget. However, given the timing of capital campaign contributions, combined with a prudent strategy to fund the operating budget given a 3-year average balance of the endowment, means the impact to the annual operating budget will be delayed. It will take as many as 5-7 years to see the full impact of the capital campaign on annual operating budgets, and we will need to manage annual inflationary pressures in the meantime. However, given the generosity of our faith community, we remain optimistic that we will continue to provide existing services and remain steadfast in our commitment to provide fair compensation to those who dedicate their careers to our church and its congregants.

## Endowment Fund Report — Dave Mook, Chair

**Endowment Fund members 2025-26:** Dean Fischer, Merle Rajek, Matt Szafranski, and Dave Mook (Chair).

The value of the Endowment Fund as of 12/31/25 was as follows:

	<u>12/31/25</u>	<u>12/31/24</u>	<u>Change</u>
Fund balance	\$ 1,314,993	\$ 1,149,345	\$ 165, 588

Investments are in the iShares ESG Aware Growth Allocation ETF (EAOR). Funds were moved to an ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) strategy in April 2021 to better align with the values and mission of our church. The 2024 return on EAOR was 15.6%.

As of March 31, 2025, the total value of the Endowment was \$1,299,745.

In November 2025, a transfer of \$41,578 was made from the Endowment Fund to the church operating fund. This represents 4% of the average year-end balance of the fund over the prior three years. Previously dividends and income were distributed to the operating fund. This change was approved by the committee and Church Council and communicated to the congregation at the 2024 annual meeting.

The fund received \$30,000 in contributions during 2025. We have received \$13,000 in contributions YTD through April 20, 2026. We expect significant growth in the Endowment as a result of the Called Forward Capital Campaign.

In February 2026, the Endowment team participated in an end-of-life planning/legacy gift session with Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck and church member and private wealth advisor Nancy Bell. Approximately 20 members attended. Thank you to all who contributed and informed us of provisions you have made for FCCGE in your estate plans or wills. If you have questions about how to make such provisions, please contact one of the Endowment Fund members.

## Annual Fund & Capital Campaign Report—Rev. Seth Ethan Carey

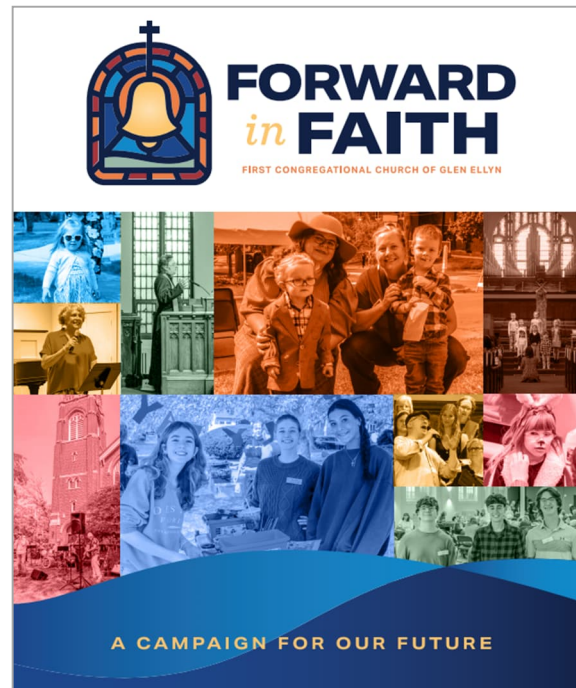
In challenging times like these, who believes that it's a good time to undertake a significant fund-raising campaign? Only those who feel compelled to move forward in faith, both in defiance of the adverse times and also because of them. We are called to be the light, the salt, and the hope that will lead the way. Our congregation is built on a legacy of forward thinking and faith, demonstrated by the eight women from the founding congregation who saved money for eight years to buy a bell fit for a tower that didn't even exist yet. Like those women who saved for the bell, we had lofty ambitions for our *Forward In Faith* campaign. And together, we exceeded our goals.

### **The *Forward in Faith* Capital Campaign**

*Russ Graunke and Maria Metz, Co-Chairs*

Our hope was two-fold: raise \$1 million for our Annual Fund to support the church and its ministries in the coming fiscal year. Our goal for the capital campaign was to raise \$5 million over the next three fiscal years as follows:

- \$1 million to support near-term capital projects;
- \$3.5 million for our Endowment to ensure long-term financial stability and generate interest income that will continue to support our operational costs into the future; and
- \$500,000 to build a community fund that will provide ongoing support for mission partners in our community.



I am pleased to share the results of the campaign, thus far, and celebrate all that we'll be able to do together.

### **For Fiscal Year 2026-2027:**

- **218 households** have pledged to support the Church financially in the coming year, including **14** brand new pledges.
- We are pleased to share that **80%** of giving households were able to increase their annual pledge, **12%** have pledged to maintain their current level of giving, and **7%** are entirely new commitments this year.
- Our pledge total for this year's Annual Fund campaign, thus far, is **\$1,018,551**.
- Our Capital Campaign pledges amount to **\$5,277,110**, exceeding our hopes and fully funding our Capital Projects, Endowment, and Community Fund.
- In addition, **25** families have made plans to include us in their estate with a legacy gift that will sustain our church long into the future.
- In total, we raised **\$6,245,661**, a truly remarkable demonstration of generosity and faith.

**What will FCCGE be doing in a hundred years?** This campaign will help the church continue to be an island of coherence in the uncertain times that surely will greet us in the next century.

We are truly blessed to be an island of coherence at a time when the future is uncertain and our community is in need. Thank you all for your support during our Forward In Faith campaign. And a very special thanks to the folks on the various teams who led our efforts, including team chairs Celia Rodee, Andy Ginger, Maggie Fredericks, Deb Giampoli, and our campaign co-chairs Maria Metz and Russ Graunke.

**Together, our church family has enthusiastically committed to moving forward in faith.**

## Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 — Comments

We are proposing a deficit budget of \$41,596 for FY 26-27.

From a revenue perspective, the Finance Committee has adopted an ongoing practice of deriving revenue based upon the prior 12 months of collections when the budget is proposed (April 2025 – March 2026). Given the current macroeconomic trends and ongoing fluctuations in world markets, we have taken a conservative view that FY 26-27 collections will be in line with the past 12 months.

From an expense perspective, our projected deficit is the result of inflationary pressures on wages, employee benefits and property/casualty insurance. We will also continue with the recently adopted practice of increasing/decreasing our Service & Justice spending evenly with top-line growth, allowing our mission partners to share in our collective success.

It is the position of the Finance Committee that this deficit allows for a conservative outlook on revenues while supporting our staff, facility, and many missions. To present a balanced budget would mean exploring cuts in staff benefits, programs and missions, which we determined was not in the best interest of the church. The Finance Committee is comfortable that this budget represents our desired and predicted outcome for the financial year, with a cash position in place to support a budget deficit in the near term.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 PROPOSED BUDGET

#### Revenue

- Pledge and loose offerings forecasts are based on the prior 12 months and adjusted by a factor that incorporates a conservative outlook.
- The endowment fund will donate 4% of the average balance of the past 3 years. This has improved the sustainability of our operating accounts and is scheduled to continue for the foreseeable future. As Capital Campaign collections begin in the next fiscal year, we anticipate the endowment will have a more significant impact on our yearly operations, but this will take several years to see significantly impact the annual operating budget.

#### Mission & Program Support

- The budget represents a slightly diminished rate towards our Service & Justice mission support for FY 26-27. The current budget supports our ongoing partners at a steady level and does not account for an \$11k lump-sum donation made in FY 25-26 to Service & Justice initiatives (implying our level of support is higher in FY 26-27 than conveyed in the proposed budget).
- Church school and youth groups are showing steady growth in participation rates thus associated expenses and staff budgets have been adjusted to meet those needs.
- Other program budgets, including Music and Worship, have been adjusted to meet the goals and objectives outlined in their individual reports.

#### Staff Support

- The FY 26-27 budget assumes all clergy and personnel positions are fully staffed for the entire year.
- A 2.7% increase in the cost of living has been budgeted for church personnel. This equaled to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation in calendar year 2025, and reflects our continued commitment to our great staff members at FCCGE.

#### Debt Service

- There is no outstanding debt, therefore no debt service payments in the proposed budget.

#### Building Support

- The Property & Grounds budget has been reduced. Although we expect energy prices to increase, this risk is mitigated by our solar project and several other projects (HVAC) that lead to greater energy efficiency. Additional projects will be funded by the Capital Campaign in future years, leading to a planned reduction in the annual maintenance.

As always, we strive to be good stewards of the generous gifts from the Congregation and other sources. Our goal is to ensure that the Church will continue to offer heartfelt hospitality, justice and progressive Christianity in both the upcoming year and long into the future.

## Proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget with Prior Year Comparisons

	<u>FY24-25</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>FY25-26</u> <u>Proposed</u>	<u>FY26-27</u> <u>Proposed</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Increase/</u> <u>Decrease</u>	<u>FY 26-27 Comments</u>
Unrestricted revenue					
Pledge & Loose Offerings	1,094,812	1,153,577	1,118,969	-3.0%	<i>Represents expected FY 25-26 collections, a slight decrease in comparison to FY 24-25</i>
Endowment	42,950	41,578	47,239	13.6%	
Interest	24,605	24,439	21,600	-11.6%	<i>Endowment contributions not yet impacted by capital campaign collections</i>
Building Usage	2,566	6,566	7,500	14.2%	
Church Fundraiser	-	-	-		
Donation Processing Income	2,500	3,000	3,000	0.0%	
Other	-	-	-		
<b>Total Unrestricted Revenue</b>	<b>1,167,433</b>	<b>1,229,160</b>	<b>1,198,308</b>	<b>-2.5%</b>	
<b>Connections</b>					
Program Revenue	9,500	8,785	7,000		
Program Expense	9,750	9,378	7,900		
<b>Net Connections Costs</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	
Council	2,500	3,500	2,500	-28.6%	
Finance	51,855	62,530	71,140	13.8%	<i>Increase primarily driven by property/casualty insurance</i>
Property & Grounds	152,205	156,404	137,885	-11.8%	<i>Decrease driven by reduced energy needs (solar project)</i>
<b>Service &amp; Justice</b>					
Program Revenue	6,500	12,500	3,000		
Program Expense	70,200	79,700	63,700		
<b>Net Service &amp; Justice Costs</b>	<b>63,700</b>	<b>67,200</b>	<b>60,700</b>	<b>-9.7%</b>	<i>Does not include an additional \$11k lump-sum transfer from operating cash</i>
<b>Education/Music/Worship</b>					
Program Revenue	25,882	23,980	25,250		
Program Expense	78,690	82,660	77,650		
<b>Net Edu/Music/Worship Costs</b>	<b>52,808</b>	<b>58,680</b>	<b>52,400</b>	<b>-10.7%</b>	<i>Reduction primarily driven by updated assumptions, matching current year projections</i>
Personnel	876,318	892,950	914,380	2.4%	<i>Includes a 2.7% raise to match CPI inflation in calendar year 2025</i>
<b>Total expenses less program revenue</b>	<b>1,199,636</b>	<b>1,241,857</b>	<b>1,239,905</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	
<b>Excess/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(32,203)</b>	<b>(12,697)</b>	<b>(41,596)</b>		

**Approval of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget**—A motion will be made to approve the proposed Fiscal Year budget as presented, followed by any discussion, and a vote of the members present.

## FCCGE Member Responsibilities

*Membership in this Congregation is open to any person who requests it, who confesses faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, who agrees to its purpose and covenant, and who agrees to abide by the responsibilities of a member. These responsibilities are determined by the Connections Committee and, according to our Constitution, are to be distributed to all members annually. As a faithful reminder of the promise we made to serve God together and to support each other in our respective journeys of faith; members of this faith community are expected to:*

**Attend Worship.** We come together to be centered on God in community with others. Regular attendance nourishes and renews our spirit. It reminds us that we are part of something greater than ourselves. We are strengthened to interact within our daily community with an attitude of Christian love and fellowship.

**Volunteer.** Contribute your time and talents to the Church on a ministry team or Church sponsored event(s). We are the hands and feet of Christ. Enjoy the fellowship of others as you engage in meaningful activities within this faith community.

**Give.** Our Church budget is funded entirely by the financial generosity of our members. You are encouraged to contribute a percentage of your resources. By doing so, as your resources change the dollar amount may vary; but your commitment to support the life and work of the Church remains constant.

**Pray.** We believe that God is still speaking and that also means that God is listening. During worship we pray in community centered on God, supported by each other. During the week, we pray privately, for each other and to grow and move forward in our own personal faith journey.

**Vote.** As a member of First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn you have the right and the responsibility to vote for nominated lay leaders, to approve the annual Church budget, and other important matters of the Church that require Congregational approval. Your involvement making decisions in the life of the Church is essential to help our community of faith grow and change centered on God.



**God welcomes all!** On April 12, 2026, Newcomers Ministry leader Theresa Exner (at the lectern) welcomes new members (l to r): Phil and Stacey Handal with their three children, Carol Bayers (joined by her daughter); Mike and Lisa Hartley; and Connie Paprocki (joined by her husband) with Rev. Seth Ethan Carey officiating.

# Membership & Attendance 2025-2026

In 2025-26, church records were updated to more accurately reflect active participants in our church community. Member and attendance figures were compiled from data beginning July 1, 2025 - May 1, 2026.

## TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 2025-26: 1,470

Membership includes Visitors, Friends\*, and Members

Friends: 76

Visitors: 279

Members: 1,076

Family units: 416

\* Friends of the church are active participants in church life, but have not officially joined as members.

## Church community statistics 2025-26

New Members: 15 (not including confirmands)

Confirmands: 9

Baptisms: 4

Deaths: 4

Marriages onsite: 0

<b>WORSHIP ATTENDANCE</b> <b>Fiscal Year 2025-2026</b> July 6, 2025 - May 3, 2026 (50 Services) <i>FCCGE offers in-person and live-stream worship services.</i> <i>Attendance figures include in-person attendance taken by our Usher Ministry and online views recorded on YouTube.</i>	Total In-person Attendance: <b>7,810</b>  Avg. In-person Attendance per Service: <b>156</b>	Total Online Views: <b>8,925</b>  Avg. Online Weekly Service & Sermon Views <b>182</b>	Live-streamed Services Views: <b>1,850</b>  Online Sermon Views: <b>1,850</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE</b> <b>SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICES</b>	<b>In-person Attendance of Special Services</b>	<b>Online Views of Special Services</b>	<b>TOTAL Attendance Special Services</b>
<b>Christmas Pageant</b> (Dec 21)	302	211	513
<b>Christmas Eve</b> (7 pm & 10 pm services)	485	423	908
<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	75	39	114
<b>4th Grade Bibles Sunday</b> (Mar 22)	200	114	314
<b>Palm Sunday</b>	195	124	319
<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	83	95	178
<b>Good Friday</b>	75	142	217
<b>Easter Sunday</b> (9 am & 10:30 am services) Live-stream of 10:30 am Easter Service only	547	239	786
<b>Cantata Sunday</b>	280	377	657
<b>Confirmation Sunday</b> (May 3)	176	127	303
<b>CHURCH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:</b>	<b>Church School Participants</b>		
<b>Nursery &amp; Church School Attendance</b>	75 participants / Avg. 27 children weekly		
<b>Nursery &amp; Church School Volunteers &amp; Staff</b>	4 youth / 8 Staff volunteers		
<b>Confirmation Class Attendance</b>	26 youth / 4 Adults weekly		
<b>2025-26 CHURCH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>57 students / 12 adults weekly</b>		



This year's annual report will tell you many things about the amazing work of this church community. What you won't read about, here, are the quieter stories that lie between the reports. The heartfelt exchange in the parking lot. The new friendship that emerged from a musical collaboration. The laughter in a committee meeting. The passing of beloved friends, or the grief that was shared with a pastor or a Stephen Minister. The chronic illness, made a little more bearable by a friendly face delivering a meal.

But you know those stories. They might be yours. And together, they are ours; the story of a church that offers community, sanctuary, and hope amidst the chaos of our world.

We once again find ourselves in difficult and troubling times, and such matters weigh heavily on those who are paying attention. At a conference I attended this year, some of my colleagues remarked that it is a difficult time to be a pastor; but the universal consensus is that the work has never felt more important.

The Church exists for a time such as this; and this church has proven itself to be, in the words of Ilya Prigogine, an island of coherence in a sea of chaos. The teachings of Jesus are not only coherent, but necessary; loving our enemies, extending grace and forgiveness, caring for the sick and the poor, and sharing what we have are tenets that form the structural foundation of the saner, more compassionate, and more sustainable world that Jesus called the Kingdom of God. We are striving to do our part, and we have accomplished a great deal this year. Our collective contributions of time, talent, and treasure have enabled us to:

- More than triple our donations to the Glen House Food Pantry,, contributing 2,346 lbs. in shelf stable food and 640 lbs. of produce, in addition to over \$14,000; and every dollar purchases \$8 worth of food
- Secured approval and funding for 42 units of affordable, accessible, and supportive housing in Glen Ellyn
- Install solar panels on our roof, reducing energy costs with more sustainable infrastructure
- Significantly grow our phenomenal Choir and Children's ministries
- Establish a \$500,000 Community Fund that can support game changing projects for community partners and ministries
- Raise an astonishing \$5,745,661 for on-going operating expenses, capital needs, and our Endowment—the gift that keeps on giving.
- Gather for vibrant, Spirit-filled worship every Sunday as we explore how the Gospel applies in our world today

This is all over and above the ongoing work of the congregation, which you can read about in these pages. You'll hear about a thriving ministry for children and families, a growing choir, community engagement, and the many ministries that serve those in need.

But don't forget about the amazing stories—your stories—that live between the lines.

Blessings,

Seth



*Above: Rev. Seth Ethan Carey joins the Rally Day band to sing lead on the classic heavy-metal hit "Born to Be Wild" by Steppenwolf.*

## Associate Minister Report — Reverend Kyle Roggenbuck

*"I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship."*

*~Brene Brown*



*Reverends Kyle and Seth, Easter Sunday 2026.*



*Rev. Kyle and Cleo, her 9-month-old Great Dane pup.*

As I write this, I am reflecting on the wonderful FCCGE Confirmation class of 2026 and all the ways they found connection in our church—the ways they were seen, heard, accepted, loved without judgment. That is who we are or at least who we strive to be. And it is the guiding principle of my ministry here among you.

Last year, we began several formal, and some informal, small groups to facilitate ways that we can know and see and accept one another on a deeper level. All ages were able to come together, from the Senior Drop In group and Senior Luncheon, to the Couples' Groups, to our newly revived Bible Study group, to our Sermon discussion group, to our Book Group, to our play group. There are so many ways for folks to feel like FCCGE is a "second home".

Our Stephen Ministry Program is as robust as ever with almost all of our 14 Stephen Ministers hard at work caring for our people. We also participated in our Annual Transgender Day of Visibility.

One of the newest initiatives of which I am so proud, was our "Sacred Ground" dinner and a movie program which our Racial Justice Ministry began this year. We realized the simple fact that, as MLK said, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." And we decided that we need to educate ourselves as a congregation about the need for active systemic change. Angela David said, "in a racist society, it not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist."

To this end, the Racial Justice Ministry held monthly community events featuring documentaries about immigrants, indigenous peoples, the roots of slavery, Christian Nationalism, Jim Crow. After each yummy meal we had a chance to discuss these important issues and to contemplate methods of action at the end.

One of the fun initiatives that arose out of our Racial Justice Ministry and the twice a year Royalties for Spirituals collection, was our participation with the NAACP's ACT-SO program for black high school students in Dupage County. This year we had 10 folks from FCCGE volunteer as judges and helpers.

I am looking forward to another great year of finding new and creative ways to follow God's Holy Spirit that truly connects and binds us in surprising and life-giving ways. Thank you for giving me a chance to be a part of this great cloud of witnesses.

On a personal note, 2025-26 has been a year of transition for Guy and me, retirement for Guy, the loss of a dear father and a dear sister—but one of the joys we have welcomed into our lives is our new Great Dane puppy Cleo (who at 9 months is 110 pounds and still thinks she is a lap dog). I'm including a photo here.

With Grace and Peace,  
Kyle

## Director of Music Ministry Report—Michele Hecht



We offer a variety of music at FCCGE. On any given Sunday, you might hear the choir, handbells, Taizé Ensemble, and soloists presenting music in an array of music styles from traditional, classical, folk, rock, pop, country and jazz, among others. Our talented music staff includes Jeff Haeger, Music Associate; Shu-Hui Janet Tsai, Organist; and Matthew Prins, Handbell Director.

As is part of our **Rally Day** tradition of the choir singing an up-tempo, inspirational pop or gospel song, accompanied by a band, we got the congregation standing on their feet with "Shambala" by Three Dog Night, a favorite from the 1970's, and a reprise of the a cappella gospel song, "Revelation 19:1." The choir welcomed a record number of **16 new choir members** this year, several who are new to FCCGE!

Several soloists and groups selected, prepared, and presented special songs to accompany liturgical themes for three different **sermon series**, "Wild God" (Fall), "What Do You Fear?" (Advent), and "Tell Me Something Good" (Lent.) Newly composed choir songs ("The Feet of the Hungry", "Light, Surround Them") were purchased and presented that amplified current social justice issues like immigration.

The **Recorder Ensemble**, which includes members from First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton, continued to offer selections in worship at both churches a few times each year. Andy Livingston continued to lead **The Ad Hocs**, a fluid collection of adult and teen musicians, that offers special music in worship, often in coordination with sermon series.

In addition to our own events, we hosted two events by outside groups. **Bells In Motion**, a professional handbell ensemble, gave a festive concert in December, and we opened our Sanctuary to the **Illuminated Concerts** (string quartet playing music of Bridgerton and The Beatles, surrounded by the light of 1,000 LED candles), organized by the Glen Ellyn Business Alliance. These were great opportunities for people in the community to experience the hospitality of FCCGE.

On Saturday, March 21, several church members joined me in serving as judges and volunteers for the **DuPage County ACT-SO** (Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics) annual competition. Bob Rada and I judged some very talented students in several music performance categories. ACT-SO is the recipient of our **Royalties for Spirituals** collections twice a year, paying a debt for the use of Negro Spirituals in worship. (Read more about it in the Racial Justice Ministry report on page 46)



*Above: On Rally Day, the FCCGE choir presents a rendition of "Shambala" by Three Dog Night. Below: Rally Day musicians Shu-Hui Janet Tsai (keyboard), Luke Holly (drums), Jeff Haeger (piano), Lowell Lindstrom (bass guitar), Laura Hall (acoustic guitar), and Andy Livingston (electric guitar).*



*Above (l to r): Carla DeFlorio, Colleen Spaeth, Jackie McCarthy, and Theresa Holly present "A Lil' Church" by Toby Mac. At right: Our FCCGE choir on Communion Sunday.*



## Music Ministry Report—*continued*

The **Handbell Choir** offered music in worship on a monthly basis. Many of the arrangements they played were by our own Dr. Matthew Prins, our resident published composer and handbell director. In April, several additional ringers were recruited to present Matthew's celebrated arrangement of "**Good Vibrations**" by the Beach Boys (pictured at right).



On **Cantata Sunday, April 26**, the choir performed a new, multi-movement sacred choral work, "A Vision Unfolding" by Kyle Pederson with a chamber ensemble, with Caroline Andres as the narrator, and with an introduction by Ida Hagman. The music was composed in 2021 in a Broadway / pop style, based on texts by Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, and other poets focused on social justice. The church also celebrated my 25th anniversary as Director of Music Ministry that day (see special callout below).



### FCCGE celebrates Michele Hecht as Director of Music Ministry for 25 Years

On Sunday, April 26, 2026, FCCGE celebrated Michele Hecht's 25th year anniversary as the Director of Ministry at FCCGE. Members of the Music Makers Ministry Beth Rosch and Lora Ilhardt spoke about the impact Michele has made on this church and their personal lives. Rev. Seth produced a special video featuring images of her musical contributions to this church.

In 2001, Michele was a choir member when she was asked to fill in as director for Easter Sunday services and took the permanent position as music director soon after. For 25 years she has led, challenged, loved, and supported the choir through thousands of rehearsals, hundreds of anthems, and numerous choir trips. As part of her celebration, a Kudo Board was set up where the congregation could post well wishes and in thanks, shared her own thoughts on 25 years:

"Thanks so much, dear friends, for sharing your kind words, well wishes, and treasured memories. I especially enjoyed reading how music has touched you and created a sense of community. I feel like the luckiest person in the world to be able to do something I love with such wonderful people. Being music director at FCCGE has been and continues to be one of the greatest blessings in my life. I look forward to more music and fellowship together!"

*At right: Michele Hecht with the framed collage commemorating her 25 years with FCCGE.*



## Music Ministry Report—*continued*

On March 22, our **Angel Choir** (ages 3-5) and **Joyful Noise** singers (elementary-age) presented songs in worship. These musical opportunities offer kids and families the ability to participate in a one-time event with limited rehearsals.



*Pictured far left: Volunteer music leader Lora Ilhardt directed the youngest singers in the Angel Choir.*

*At left: Beth Rosch led the Joyful Noise singers, accompanied by Ethan Baedke on piano.*

Guest jazz composer / scholar / performer **Deanna Witkowski** worked with our choir on a few of her original songs, and, along with her trio, led the congregation in singing some more originals and arrangements of traditional hymns in worship on Sunday, May 17.

Our **Staff Recital**, a special event that occurs every other year, returned on Wednesday, May 27. Several staff members and a few volunteer music leaders performed a varied program of classical, Broadway, pop, folk, rock, and jazz. The freewill offering replenished the fund for guest musicians, new equipment, and choir trip scholarships. *See photos on page 49.*

The choir is looking forward to a very special trip to NYC next spring! We received a special invitation to join a festival chorus in the **Carnegie Hall debut** of "Aeterna Via", Composer Elaine Hagenberg's newest work for choir and orchestra. Nearly 40 FCCGE singers are signed up, and we have been given a preview of the unpublished score—very exciting! The choir will present this music as our 2027 Cantata.

**Music Makers Ministry**—Special thanks to the members of this team for providing care for our choir members, assisting with special worship services, and helping to plan socials and other big musical events. Members: Martha DeForest, Lora Ilhardt, Gabe Koenig, Karen Koenig, Jackie McCarthy, Beth Rosch, and Colleen Spaeth. My thanks also goes to several other dedicated volunteers who help me to plan and deliver the best musical experiences possible: Jill Foucré assists with choir trips and other tasks; Leslie Foster is the Music Librarian; Phil Gliori assists with digitizing the music library; and Sharon Wussow helps with visual displays. It took our entire volunteer team to host the **Illuminated Concerts** at our church in January—from directing traffic in the parking lot to setting up 1,000 LED candles in the Sanctuary—our team helped set the stage for a magical night of music (*pictured below right*).



*Above: On any given Sunday, our Pastors, music directors, tech ministry team, song leaders, and worship leaders, gather in the conference room to walk through the order of worship, details of the service, music cues, and camera shots for live-streaming the service.*



## Worship Ministry Reports

**Worship Ministry Members 2024-25:** Maggie Fredricks, (Leader) Michele Hecht (Staff Liaison), Karen Koenig (Worship Provisions), Jennifer Lindstrom (Ushers), Deb Giampoli (Visual Arts), Lisa Crank (Tech Team), Susan Dudish-Poulsen (Flowers) ; Missy Carlson (Worship Leaders)

The Worship Ministries of our church are under the guidance of the Director of Music Ministry, Michele Hecht. Five teams of volunteers oversee all the details of handling specifics of Sunday worship and special services and events.

**Flower Ministry**—*Susan Dudish-Poulsen (Leader)* The Flower Ministry coordinates the donations and ordering of flowers for the altar each Sunday and the special arrangements for Christmas Eve and Easter services. This year, parishioners donated 36 poinsettias for Christmas, and 24 lilies were donated for Easter. Our goal is to at least meet or exceed these same numbers for our special arrangements next year. Each Sunday service has space for up to two arrangements, and donor dedications are printed in the Sunday bulletin. Advance orders to save a date of special personal significance are welcome. To sponsor Sunday altar flowers, click the link in the weekly eBlast or visit the church website at <https://fccge.org/flowers/>.



**Tech Team Ministry**—*Lisa Crank (Leader); Dave Hecht (technical director)* Tech Team members (2025-26): Tom Melms, Robb Sackett, Norm Adams, Matt Stout, Phil Gliori, Paul Flugel, Luke Holly, Andy Livingston, Dan Olsen, Paula Rada, and Rose Quealy (in training), are responsible for sound setup, recording, and livestreaming of the weekly services and special services and events. The Tech Team assists with setup and tear down of microphones, stands and speakers; conducts soundchecks; and adjusts sound levels during services. Periodic training sessions are held to review questions that arise and to encourage cross training of equipment and new team members.

**Worship Provisions: Communion, Baptism, Paraments, Sacristy, Liturgical Supplies**—

*Karen Koenig (Leader)* The purpose of this ministry is to provide and set up needed provisions to enhance the worship experience so that the congregation will build their connection with God. **Communion:** Served the first Sunday of the month and Maundy Thursday. Grape Juice, bread, and a gluten free op-



tion is provided. There are 12 church members and two clergy on the communion serving team. All families are welcome and invited to have their children partake in communion elements. **Baptisms:** The silver bowl in the Baptismal font is cleaned and filled with warm water on the day of each baptism. **Paraments/Robes:** Colors of the altar, pulpit, and lectern paraments and robe stoles are changed as determined by liturgical calendar. The robes, stoles and paraments are on a cleaning schedule. **Liturgical supplies:** Weekly organization of the Sacristy room and regular replenishment of candles, oil, lighters, ashes, Christmas Eve candles, tissue packets, and communion supplies are set in place for worship services and special liturgical events. Also assist with provisions for Weddings, Funerals, and special events held in the Sanctuary.

**Usher Ministry**—*Ted Harmon (Leader) and 30 other dedicated volunteers and subs.* Our mission is to staff every event held in the Sanctuary—all regular and special worship services as well as memorial services. We light the candles, pass out Church Bulletins, welcome everyone, guide visitors, tally attendance, collect offerings, adjust the lights and ring the bell. We want to make everyone feel welcome. Most ushers serve one Sunday a month and as needed for special services. We are always looking for new members to join the team. Please reach out if you would like to join us.

**Worship Leaders**—*Missy Carlson (Leader)* **2025-2026 members include:** Norm Adams, Kathy Bayert, Missy Carlson, Cathy Christoff, Linda Davenport, Carla DeFlorio, Joe Fortunato, Rick Hall, Lora Ilhardt, Richard Jones, Jeannine Kannegieser, Karen Koenig, Melissa Meyer, Laura Peccarelli, Tom Petrich, Karen Pulver, Celia Rodee, Sylvia Rodee, and Jennifer Sellers. With faithful regulars and generous volunteers, our team breathes life to the scripture during services. Every Sunday and on occasional holidays, our readers bring their talents to worship. Our entire budget is the willingness and time of our volunteer members, with the same monetary requirements expected next year. One hope is that more volunteers join us in the worship leader rotation! Youth readers, one-time readers, and regulars would be welcome! If interested, please contact Missy Carlson at [k-mcarlson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:k-mcarlson@sbcglobal.net).

## Visual Arts Ministry Report—Deb Giampoli, Leader

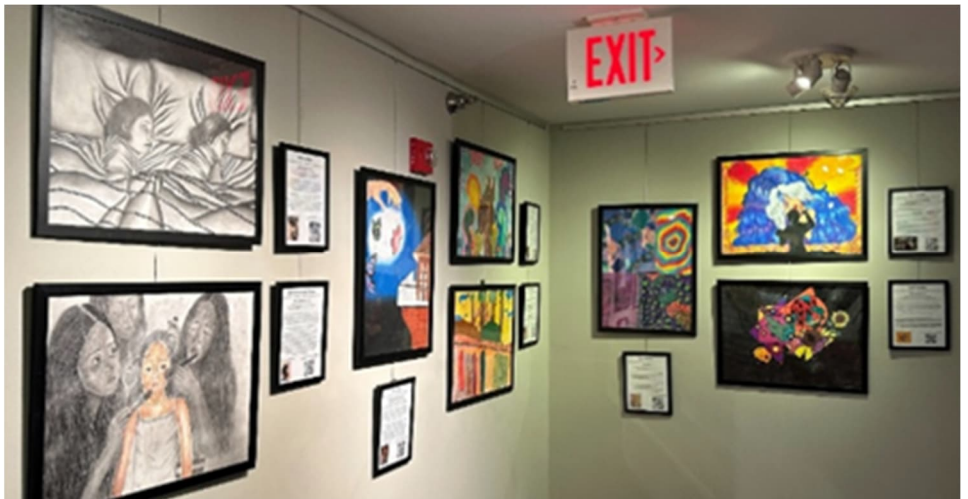
**Visual Arts Ministry (VAM) 2025-26 Team**—Many thanks to VAM team members Jim Bailey, David Exner, and Linda Wallace, our Christmas elves Dolly, Bob, and Paula Rada, and “ad hoc” VAM team members Andy Ginger, Mike Sorenson, Tanner Spears, Roy Giampoli, Jose Beltran, and the FCCGE Youth Group, without whom the vision, courage, creativity, installation, resources, muscles, ladders, tools, and physical set-up and take-down of these exhibits would not have been possible.

The VAM team’s mission is to “evoke emotion and enhance the worship experience through visual art”. This year, we planned and installed several exhibits in the gallery (two by our youth) and, driven by our vision to “bring the grandeur of our magnificent Sanctuary to life”, we added to our decorations and lighting for Christmas and the Lenten/Easter season.

**1st Gallery: The Sacred Art of Ethiopia**—This rental exhibit depicted stories from the Bible, seen through Ethiopian culture. Ethiopia is home to one of the oldest Christian civilizations in the world and more than half its people today identify as Christian. The exhibit featured hammered metal crosses, folding icons, and paintings of biblical themes. One highlight was a 100-year-old painting on leather of Mary and Jesus surrounded by depictions of stories from the life of Jesus.

**2nd Gallery: A Future with Hope**—For the fourth year in a row, FCCGE children and youth participated in the UCC’s climate hope art contest. Children and youth of all ages were invited to draw, paint, or color works of art to bring the theme “A Future with Hope” to life. The works by our youth were first featured in the gallery and then displayed in the Welcome area (*see photo of the gallery in Christian Ed. Report on page 26.*)

**3rd Gallery: World Through A Different Lens (pictured at right)**—we worked with One Community and Glenbard West High School again (our third year in a row), hosting a reception and gallery exhibit reflecting the diverse identities and experiences of the students. This year’s theme was a “World Through a Different Lens”. After their one day opening and reception in our gallery, the work moved to downtown Glen Ellyn store front windows, where it was displayed through the month of April.



**Christmas:** we purchased new, larger ornaments worthy of the much larger tree secured last year for the Sanctuary (the smaller ornaments were placed on a tree in the Welcome area). In addition, this year we added lights to the wreaths on the windows and purchased a new handmade manger and nativity figures for the table at the back of the Sanctuary.

**Lenten Season Cross (pictured at right):** The cross was first placed at the front of the Sanctuary, dimly lit and draped with satin and tree branches, a fitting depiction of a somber season. For Easter, the draping and lights on the cross were changed to a scene reminiscent of a sunrise, and satin fabric was draped from the ceiling, creating a feeling of joy, hope, and resurrection (*see our Sanctuary at Easter pictured on the cover of this Annual Report*).



**4th Gallery: Art by our confirmands (pictured above)**—As a final assignment, our confirmands were to reflect, through writing or visual art (photography, painting, drawing, etc.), an “important aspect of their faith journey”. The sign in the gallery challenged all of us to think about what we would create if we were given the same assignment.

**For 2026-27:** The VAM plans to bring more Christian-themed fine art into the gallery, create an exhibit for Pentecost, and purchase new banners for the sanctuary.



## Director of Christian Education Report—Catherine Curtis



**Christian Education Staff:** Catherine Curtis, Director of Christian Education; Cathy Basso, Youth Education Coordinator; Jessi Flemming, Associate for Youth Education; Amy and Maggie Zita, Ellison Priebe and Polly Cooper, Nursery Care Providers.

**Staffing 2025-26:** When Bobby Zita accepted full-time work in his field in Iowa, long-time church member Polly Cooper stepped into the open role in the Nursery.

**Program Year: Mid-August 2025 to May 2026**

**Summer Sundays: June 2026 to Mid-August 2026**

**Online Registration:** Increased from last year to 61 families registered for 113 children/youth.

**Participation:** Sunday morning church school continues to be a place of joy and community. Children and youth assistants feel comfortable asking questions and sharing their thoughts. Students are engaged and happy to be in church school and in addition to other church-related activities, are forming friendships with each other and the adult and youth leaders. The children show that they are aware of the tensions of the world and synthesize what they are learning about God's love and the teachings of Jesus in their daily lives as well as noting when they see the antithesis. Loving our neighbor is incorporated into church school throughout the year as well as the knowledge that each individual has the choice to be present in the world, their community, and their family in ways that can bring them closer to God (love, forgiveness, compassion) or distance themselves from God (greed, fear, anger). It's a joy to have parents share that their children love coming to church and to have the students themselves sharing their desire to be in church school!



**Above:** Children gathered around Rev. Seth for the Blessing of the Backpacks (and the people who carry them) on Aug. 17, 2025, the day of our Church School Kick-off.



**Monthly Young Family Play Dates:** These informal meet-ups coordinated by Jessi Fleming build and nurture a community of caring for both adults and kids.

**Church School Curriculum** was Year B of our three year Scope and Sequence with units on the Joseph (Hebrew Scriptures), Advent/Epiphany (Angelic Visits & Dreams), Encountering Jesus, and Lent Thru Gospel of Matthew taught in developmentally appropriate ways for our three classes: Preschool, K/1st (Young Children & Worship) and 2nd-5th (Lighting the Way rotation model) so that families might have conversations about the same Bible stories.

**6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Confirmation and our Youth Fellowships** are overseen by Tanner Spears, our Director of Youth Ministries (*see pages 27-30*).

# Christian Education Report—*continued*

## Special Education Events & Ministries

**Community Vacation Bible School (VBS)** was Monday, June 23 - Friday, June 27, 2025 and was again held at FCCGE in partnership with First United Methodist Church of Glen Ellyn as our Community VBS location for our theme Just Like Me - Diggin In & Growing Deep. We were thrilled to have 50 participants plus 7 staff & clergy, 26 adult volunteers and 15 youth volunteers during the week of VBS plus 11 adult volunteers who assisted with prep, set-up, decoration, and clean-up. VBS participants collected food and created Birthday Bags for Glen House Food Pantry, created “booboo bunnies” for Teen Parent Connection, learned about The GardenWorks Project and planted seeds to grow veggies to feed our neighbors, and made mini first aid kits for the GE Public Library Community Cupboard. At the time of this writing we are looking forward to once again hosting Community VBS Monday, June 22 - Friday, June 26, 2026 for "Peace Camp: Peace Campers Choose Love over Fear."

### Christmas Pageant

(pictured at right) was on Sunday, December 21, 2025, during the regular worship service and was based on “The Friendly Beasts” but with our own expansion of the story. With the assistance of staff and volunteers, church member Jessica Zolmierski directed the pageant of 34 children, 14 student crew, and 26 adult volunteers. This just continues to grow in participation and joy!



**Our Whole Lives** Staff members Tanner Spears, Cathy Basso, Catherine Curtis, and trained volunteer leader, Sylvia Rodee taught a modified version of seven workshops from the 7th-9th grade Our Whole Lives curriculum to a small group of students. It was great to return to this ministry and we are hopeful for more participation in the future.

**Heifer Market (Pictured below)**—On Sep. 28, 2025, 70 children, youth and adults sold animal-shaped and -themed treats to raise money for Heifer International. This annual tradition beloved by the congregation raised \$1,013.69 dollars for Heifer International which was triple matched by a generous donor.

**Easter Egg Hunt** took place on Saturday, March 28, 2026, and was our fifth event in conjunction with the Connections Committee. Attendance was even better than expected with a couple families mentioning that they had changed Spring Break plans in order to participate! See *Easter Egg Hunt photos in the Connections Committee report beginning on pg.34.*



## Christian Education Report—*continued*

**The Presentation of Bibles** was on Education Sunday, March 22, 2026, with seven 4th graders receiving their bibles (*see recipients pictured at right*). This important milestone was preceded by a pizza party, game night, and rehearsal to celebrate with the 4th graders, their families and 3rd and 5th graders attending.

**Climate Hope Art Contest** took place in spring 2026. This is a UCC nationwide activity where students submit their original artwork visualizing “A Future with Hope.” Of the 354 artists that participated from across the nation, FCCGE had the most entrants with 10 finalists from our church. All of the FCCGE artwork was featured in our art gallery (*pictured center right*) and then moved to the Atrium to continue to display art depicting the need to care for Creation.

**Church Library/Resources** — Volunteer librarian Dolly Rada continues to integrate new books into circulation. Thank you to former book reviewer, church member Marilyn Peretti. The Fleming Family Book Reviews began last fall with books reviewed by a family for families. These reviews align with the lectionary and themes throughout the year. New books are continually being added to our church library that reflect diversity, inclusivity, justice, the joy in Creation, and the teachings of Jesus. A small team is being assembled to catalog our collection so that church members and guests will be able to do an online search for titles. A selection of books is always available for children to read in worship via the library cart in the Narthex.



*Located just outside the lobby, our church library is a vibrant place for children and families after worship services.*



## Director of Youth Ministry Report—Tanner Spears



As Director of Youth Ministry, I'm pleased to report we have seen an increased interest in and greater participation in our youth programs this past year.

**345 Fellowship**—Designed for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders, we had three fellowship opportunities this year: *I Heard it Through the Grapevine* (World Communion Sunday: Juiced Edition), *College Care Packages*, and *Where the Grass is Greener*. The College Care packages are always appreciated as our college students love getting cards written by these elementary aged youth. For our last fellowship, it will be combined with confirmation so we can welcome the 5th graders who will be moving up into confirmation classes. Something we are noticing is more families with younger children are wanting to do service work. We had over 30 people come out for the *Feed My Starving Children* event on February 7th! Adult leaders Ethan Bae-dke and Lauren Miller helped coordinate the Illinois Prairie Path Clean-Up in April. Our youth volunteers included Ian Smethells, Ari Stevenson, and Tyler Zita. Next year, we will continue

to offer 345 seasonally with a sprinkle of service opportunities in between.

**College Care Packages**—This year we sent 24 packages to college students of church families to arrive by Valentine's Day, of which 19 were new recipients and 5 were repeat recipients from last year. We've been told our care packages are just the motivation some needed to finish their homework and study for finals. In addition, not only did our college students love the goodies, but their roommates enjoyed them too! Pictured below is the 345 Fellowship activity day of packing the boxes and writing adorable letters!



**Confirmation 2025-26**—Attendance was up with an average of 14 per lesson day. For our Pennsylvania group, the two 9th graders attended a separate class via Zoom for their final year of confirmation, while the 6<sup>th</sup> grader tried a hybrid format during normal confirmation time! This year we had a total of **nine confirmands**, all of which had sponsors!



*Sponsors and Sponsees get to know each other through "speed dating" at the Sponsor's Dinner.*

Our three main events for the year were: **Orientation** (September), **Sponsor's Dinner** (December), and **Sponsee's Presentation Lunch** (April). All of the events were well-attended (40-70 people) and we plan to continue the same next year.

Thanks to our "rockstar" volunteer teachers **Chris Henkel**, **Dan Hitzemann**, and **Kate Brooks**—so blessed to have them and excited they will be back next year.

For our **Service & Faith Visits** we had two groups on most days. Our two service visits included the **North-**

## Youth Ministry Report—*continued*

ern Illinois Food Bank and Feed My Starving Children. Our two faith visits included Trinity UCC in Chicago and the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette (pictured at right). It was great to see our youth sharing these experiences by bringing at least four friends/guests from outside the church to each confirmation activity.

New this year were guest speakers from various ministries who shared at the beginning of class what they do and how our youth could get involved. One of those visits included a whole mock Newcomer Session with Clara Hughes and Teresa Exner, so confirmands had an idea of what it meant to join the church. A couple new lessons included the **Climate Hope Art contest** where we had seven finalists from Confirmation (see their artwork on the next page). We also had a lesson on Jesus' Miracle Mix-tape, stories rewritten in Gen Z slang and another lesson where we talked about the impact of language on social media.

Our goals for Confirmation continue to focus on relationship building. Our new events are paying off and creating both a seriousness and importance of participating in confirmation. The curriculum continues to grow and incorporate new, timely lessons that not only engage the youth, but also reflect relevance to their lives. *Youth Ministry Report continues on page 30.*



*Above: Attendees of the Sponsee's Luncheon enjoy lunch followed by presentations from the Sponsee's. Thank you to this year's sponsors: Jill Hewitt, Alice Stuhlmacher, Andy Livingston, Ted Harmon, Time Waterloo, Jenny Fischer, Jen Ikens, Catherine Curtis, and David Exner.*



*FCCGE Confirmation Class of 2026 (l to r): Annabelle Becket, Caelen Bilotta, Myles Clarin, Ben Hurst, Brandon Johnson, Fionnuala Keeley, Deirdre Keeley, Alice Mammaing, and Dax Spring.*

*Continued from page 29*

Although content is important, we strive to find more ways to have the youth connect with the adult teachers and each other. One of the ways we have done this is by splitting into smaller discussion groups. Sponsorship is growing and we created a new “Sponsor Yearbook” where families can get to know willing adult members. This also acts as record of reference for future families and the Director of Youth Ministry. Having this type service record to reference makes it easier to fill roles and know who to ask for help.

### Youth Group 2025-26

#### Youth Group Leaders and Volun-

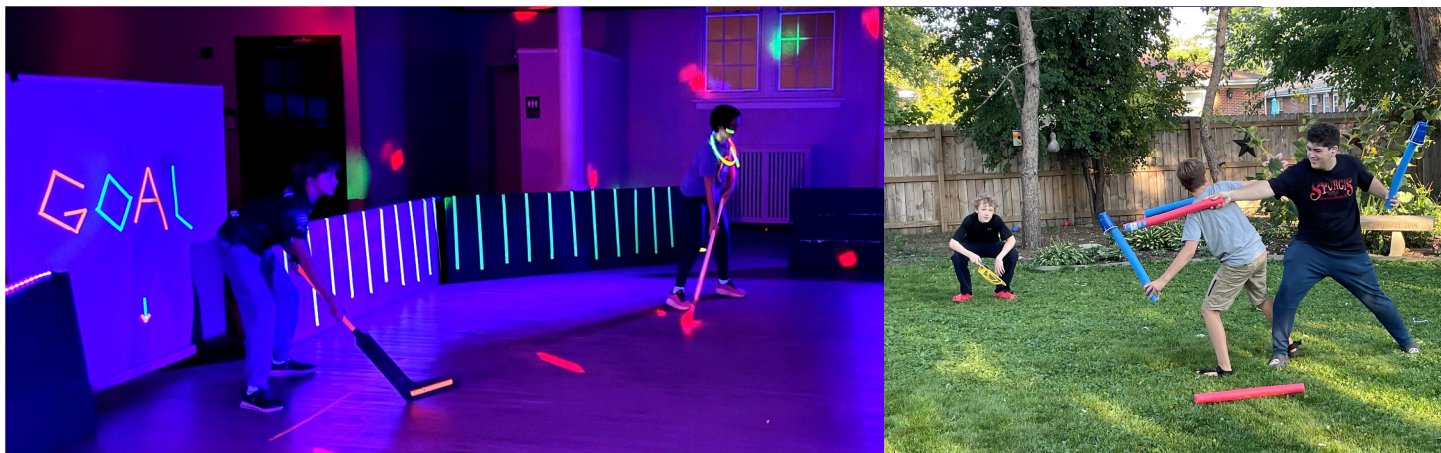
**teers**—Tanner Spears (Lead), Lizz Mook, DJ LaChappelle, Polly Cooper, Cathy Basso, Jeff Basso, Megan Savitt, Ethan Bae-dke, and Kate Brooks.

**Reimagining youth group**—Last summer, I spent a lot of time researching and reading about what make a sustainable youth group. From what I learned, I started a **youth ministry development team** who has been meeting with me throughout the year. We started thinking about a systemic approach to what is needed, set a new mission, and identified a set of core values. We held focus groups and now are in the processes of creating a new name, slogan, and logo.

This effort led us to combining some of FCCGE’s youth activities with **St. Mark’s** and **First United Methodist Church** for a fuller youth experience. We started with events that were already on our church schedules. This brought some new faces and our youth brought friends who had never been to a youth group before. But the varying meeting days-times-places did cause some confusion. For example, only one of our youth members attended the Valentine’s themed night. But we did have a few successes: **Sleep Out Saturday** saw 11 of our 24 youth members camp out at First United Methodist Church, compared to 6 camping out at FCCGE last year; and between the three churches, 30 attended the **Friendsgiving** held at St. Mark’s.

If I have learned anything about youth ministry this year it is to stay flexible and change is a constant! Next year we officially are joining forces with St. Mark’s to offer a *weekly* youth group on Wednesday nights from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Odd weeks will be held at FCCGE and even weeks at St. Mark’s. I will continue to lead all nights with volunteers from both congregations. Those nights will be for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders with small groups split by grade.

This collective format for youth groups has become more popular because it has gotten results across the nation. It also sup-



## Youth Ministry Report—*continued*

ports our interfaith connections and sets us up for a community-wide offering, which seems to be where the future of youth ministry is heading.

For FCCGE, we had 14 youth group nights, an average attendance of 7 per night, and each youth member averaged coming 4 nights during the year. At first we have separate middle school and high school groups, but due to attendance we decided to combine them and offer youth group two times a month. Sunday evenings turned into OWL and the first week (usually Communion) was deemed a family night, and we also used Sundays for special events, like the Chili Cook-Off.



We acknowledge youth ministry “isn’t about numbers,” but you do need a critical mass of youth to play games, create friendships, and eat those snacks!!!

A shout out to **Max LaChapelle** for building us a Gaga Ball pit for his Eagle Scout project. And a special thanks the **Kaina family** for hosting the backyard BBQ last Summer.

**Work Camp 2025**—To pick-up where last year’s report left off, we served with ASP again and were assigned to Breathitt, KY. We had a crew of 18 people: 4 from FCCGE and others from St. Mark’s and First United Methodist Church. We stayed at Trinity Episcopal Church in Covington, KY on the drive down. We had three crews, but two of them worked together on the same project. One group worked on protecting the foundation with underpinning and the other group work on installing a HUG insulation system for the new siding. *Use the QR code below to see a slide show of the 2025 trip.*

Our fundraisers were successful with student parking fees generating over \$6,000 this year, the Chili Cook-Off over \$1,500, and we are hoping the flower sale can raise the same as last year (\$870). We’ve raised enough to be able to send our participants to work camp completely free!

**Work Camp Summer 2026**—we are joining forces again and this timer we’re heading to Leslie County, KY. We have 24 signed up with 6 from FCCGE. Greg Fairbanks and Michael Sorensen will join Tanner Spears as leaders. Our work projects are not yet known, but we leave June 6 and return June 13, 2026.



*Use the QR code to view the 2025 Work Camp Trip Slideshow.*



DuPage United  
Action Assembly  
Feb 2026



## Council, Committees, Ministries & Partner Reports



Pride Brunch  
June 2025



*Debbie and Jesse White enjoy Oktoberfest 2025.*

Dear FCCGE community members,

As we gather for this year's Annual Meeting, it is a wonderful time to celebrate our achievements from the past year and to look ahead with hope. During my three years on the Moderator team, our world and our country have undergone dramatic political and social change that has deeply impacted our community; yet FCCGE has remained strong, vibrant, and fully committed to our values of welcoming all who seek a closer relationship with God while providing much-needed love and service to those around us.

We've continued to grow stronger, with new members and financial security to ensure our worship and missions will be staffed and funded well into the future.

Some notable achievements include:

- Adding 24 new members, including 9 new confirmands
- Increasing our Sunday School attendance by 10% and serving 61 families and 113 children and youth
- Growing our ministry partner relationships to 25 and working to understand their evolving needs in future budget planning
- Conducting an exceptionally successful capital campaign and annual fund drive to increase our long-term ability to sustain our missions, staffing, and property

Our Church Goals for 2026-27 are similar to last year's goals, but were revised to reflect completion of the capital campaign and encompass the focus of all church activity:

**Spiritual Development:** Encourage our Congregation to face today's challenges with spiritual maturity, grounded in the teachings of Jesus.

**Environmental & Financial Sustainability:** Steward the resources of our *Forward in Faith* campaign to ensure the financial and environmental sustainability of the church.

**Building Community:** Strengthen our connections and nurture deeper relationships with one another and with our partner organizations in the local community.

There is just so much to be excited about at FCCGE. Through our partnership with Glen House Food Pantry we donated goods and funds in recognition of the massive rise in local food insecurity. Our members worked with DuPage United, showing up in local council meetings, and meetings with elected officials to promote projects focused on justice in our community. The Connections Committee kept the church social calendar full at Rally Day, Oktoberfest, the progressive dinner, euchre night, and many other fun events; and the Kitchen Chix made sure the participants were well fed!

Our youth are involved in community service events with activities such as attending the *Feed My Starving Children* event and assisting in the Prairie Path Clean-Up event. Property and Grounds led the planning for our Solar Energy project that will begin shortly, as well as keeping our building well maintained. No summary can fully capture the countless ways the passion and purpose of our members are expressed each day, to one another and to our broader community.

Our dedicated clergy, staff, committee members, ministry teams, and volunteers make it all happen, and I want to thank each of you for being part of this remarkable community. It has been a deep honor and privilege to serve on the Church Council and Moderator team these past three years, and I look forward to the year ahead with great excitement.

**Jesse White**, Moderator, 2025-26

## Connections Committee Report—Jennifer Sellers, Chair

**Connections Committee Members 2025-26:** Jennifer Sellers (Chair), Tom Petrich, Tanner Spears, Sara Waterloo, Jo Ann Ginger, Jen Ikens, Sally Fairbank, Becky Gadomski

The **Connections Committee** enhances the spiritual life of church members by fostering a culture of engagement. It is responsible for creating an inclusive environment, fostering involvement, and coordinating membership integration. Connections organizes and executes important all-church fellowship and recreational events.

**Rally Day** – We hosted a picnic-themed kickoff to the program year on September 7th which featured live music from Roger Hughes’ band, an outdoor bounce house, and a variety of kids’ activities coordinated by the Christian Education team. The Kitchen Chix provided the hot dogs, subs & ice cream sundae station to about 150 people while volunteers manned a popcorn machine outside. We encouraged folks to participate in an interest survey to help match them with a ministry they might support for the church year.

**Oktoberfest** – We were blessed with beautiful fall weather for this outdoor event on Friday, October 3rd and more than 75 people attended. Volunteers erected several large tents and then set up the twinkling lights, tables & centerpieces while the Kitchen Chix provided a bountiful feast of German fare. We sat together at long tables, listening to German music and enjoying each other’s company. Special thanks to Jo Ann Ginger for taking point on this event!



*Above: Great weather, food, and company were the highlights of Oktoberfest 2025.*

*Center: Colleen and Matt Spaeth bring traditional flair to the party with their Dirndl and Lederhosen!*

*Far left: Kitchen Chix “strudel queens” Lisa Clay and Maggie Fredericks.*

**Progressive Dinner** - In what has become an annual tradition, Nicole Baedke once again organized the church progressive dinner on November 15th for about 60 people at 10 different host homes. This has become a wonderful way for the generations as well as veteran and newer members to meet and get to know one another!

**Advent Festival** - Much thanks to Mindy Post and family for once again creating the magic of the holidays with fellowship and fun crafts for about 50 families attending the Advent Festival in Pilgrim Hall on December 7th.

**Cookie Delivery** - The Kitchen Chix made a delectable variety of holiday cookies which were then boxed and delivered to approximately 50 senior members of FCCGE on Sunday, December 14th. Members of both the Connections Committee and Stephen’s Ministry helped make the deliveries and spent time visiting with these folks in their homes, an interaction everyone enjoyed!

**Euchre Tournament** - This annual (mostly) friendly competition was hosted at the home of last year’s winner, Tom Petrich, on February 28th. Ted Harman was the big winner this year and, as tradition holds, will host next year’s tournament. Another

## Connections Committee Report—*continued*

tradition started by this group is to place all the proceeds from the tournament into the offering plate on Sunday morning, marked by a cheerful clink and clatter of coins!

**Easter Egg Hunt** - The Connections Committee supported the Youth Ministry team in co-hosting the annual Easter Egg Hunt by hiding hundreds of candy-filled eggs around the church and helping 39 of our youngest members find them on the Saturday before Palm Sunday (3/28/26). Pictured below are some of the happy egg hunters and Committee member Jo Ann Ginger (waving) and husband Andy Ginger enjoying the results of the hunt with their granddaughter.



## Ministries of the Connections Committee

**KITCHEN CHIX MINISTRY**—Leadership: *Laura Carey, Maggie Fredricks, Mindy Post and Celia Rodee*

The Kitchen Chix ministry is a very vibrant and TASTY ministry team with more than **70 church volunteers** and we are still growing and continuing to welcome new members every month. The original name “Kitchen Chix” may be a playful nod to “chicks,” but our flock happily includes everyone who’s ready to don an apron and spread a little love. Anyone interested in raising an oven mitt to help sustain and nourish our congregation, **YOU ARE WELCOME HERE**, in all seasons!

### **MEMORIAL SERVICES**

The Kitchen Chix ministry provided food for four memorial services that included receptions in Pilgrim Hall in the past year. There were volunteers who prepared and served the food (appetizers, luncheons, casseroles, and beverages) and/or baked cookies and other desserts, and set and cleaned the room. Our mission is to soothe and nurture grieving families and friends during this difficult time.

Memorial services we supported in the last year included:

Bill Burghardt	July 12, 2025
Betty Peaslee	August 16, 2025
Roger Hughes	February 14, 2026
Susan Schurmeier	March 7, 2026



*We warmly welcome everyone into the Kitchen Chix family, as evidenced by **Brian Hamilton**, one of our most treasured Chix in the kitchen!*

## Ministries of the Connections Committee

**KITCHEN CHIX HOSPITALITY 2025-26**—The Chix helped provide the extravagant welcomes and opportunities for fellowship and celebration throughout the year by baking, making, and serving deliciousness to our members and guests:

**Racial Justice Dinner, Film & Discussion Series:** Lynn Kubat led the Chix for planning, preparing and serving monthly dinners for ~40-50 who participated in the Racial Justice Dinners and Sacred Ground Film series in Pilgrim Hall (November – March).

**June/July 2025: Pride Brunch** - The Chix rolled out an extravagant rainbow pride welcome to over 75 folks for a delicious brunch buffet served in Pilgrim Hall (6/29/25)

**September 2025: Rally Day** – Served Hotdogs, Chili and Veggie Wraps, along with an extravagant Parade of Cupcakes (in celebration of Pastor Seth’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary), and iced tea and lemonade for over 200 attendees of Rally Day (9/7/25)

**October 2025: Oktoberfest** (10/3/26) – a favorite annual event for 75-100 attendees. Prepped, cooked and served a German Feast for our annual Oktoberfest, including pretzel bites, potato salad, red cabbage and sausages all served outdoors under the stars!

**December 2025: Advent Fest** (12/7/26) - Finger Food Lunch with hot cocoa and marshmallows for 80+ participants in Pilgrim Hall as part of the Annual Advent Fest.

**Christmas Cookies for Seniors 2025:** Baked, packaged and helped deliver cookies on 12/14/25 to Seniors in the Congregation (another fabulous and much loved annual tradition)

**January 2026: Campaign Baking Brigade** - Teams of Chix worked in the church kitchen to bake Over 240 little loaves of Cinnamon Swirl sweet breads to go into the *Forward in Faith* campaign Inspiration Bags

**February 2026: Campaign Kick-off Lunch** - Prepared a delicious lunch for 40 volunteers on Campaign Kick-off Sunday to fuel canvassers before they headed out to hand deliver over 200 Inspiration Bags to church families to launch the *Forward in Faith* Campaign.

**March 2026: Campaign S’Mores and Hot Cocoa** - Served to members of all ages on Inspiration Sunday (3/8/26) to provide a sweet inspiration to members to make their pledges to the *Forward in Faith* Campaign.

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade Bibles** (3/22/26) 4/26 and Children’s choirs made a great excuse to go over the top with homemade mini cupcakes (with FROSTING) and punch in the narthex after church.

**April 2026: Easter Sunday** (4/5/26) continued annual tradition with over 300 devilled eggs and over 150 mini muffins and served to Easter Sunday attendees of all ages.

**Cantata Sunday** (4/26/26) and **Celebration of Michele Hecht’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary** as the FCCGE Music Director. Served Punch and Mini Cupcakes to more than 280 attendees and prepared a special cake just for Michele—her favorite: Carrot Cake!

**May 2026: Confirmation Dinner** (5/1/26) Prepared and served a magnificent Pasta Bar to confirmands, families and sponsors as they rehearsed and prepared for Confirmation Sunday.

**June 2026:** At the time this writing we are preparing for the PRIDE Sunday Brunch (6/14/26) in Pilgrim Hall where ALL are welcome!

And a BIG shout out to the **Green Team** who provide volunteers to do the dishwashing for all of these events so that we can be more environmentally-friendly in our extravagant hospitality!



*Above: Many Chix make light work at the Pride Brunch.*

*Below: Kitchen Chix Debbie Rausch, Sharon Wussow and Darren Stevenson work the serving line on Rally Day.*



## Ministries of the Connections Committee—*continued*

### **NEWCOMERS' MINISTRY**—*Clara Hughes, Teresa Exner and David Exner, Jill Hewitt*

The purpose of the Newcomers' Ministry team is to welcome visitors to our church on Sundays, to host scheduled information sessions and introduce new members during the designated Sundays for joining our faith community.

The newcomers' ministry held three in-person newcomer welcoming sessions with 13 visitors attending. At the time of this writing, 14 new members joined our faith community from July 1, 2025 through April 12, 2026.

**David and Teresa Exner** continue to host the Welcome Desk. Their gracious welcoming has continued to bless all of us as we enter into worship. We are looking for additional support for our Welcome Desk and our newcomer team so we can build on how we welcome visitors to our faith community.

Thanks to **Jill Hewitt** and **Laura Peccarelli** who helped us improve our newcomer tracking so we could better communicate with visitors and newcomers.

Our ministry would not be as successful if it were not for the efforts of our staff who attended the meetings or watched the young children in our nursery during the newcomer sessions. Special thanks to **Sherry Flugel** who publishes our new members in our weekly eblast and for **Laura Peccarelli** who sets the stage so we can keep a smooth program running.

### **OPEN & AFFIRMING (ONA) MINISTRY**—*Dorothy Powers, Chair*

**Chair:** Dorothy Powers **Members:** Maggie Andres, Courtenay Cook, Carla DeFlorio, David Exner, Teresa Exner, Chuck Lindberg, Katie Lindberg, Christine McMinn, Melissa Meyer, Carol Nunkovich, Vicki Sheridan, Diane Slocum, Tanner Spears, Bob Tyler, Debbie White, Rose Marie Pinkos, and Alex Wood

We are proud to have a growing team that is deeply committed to our mission and purpose. Printed on the back cover of this Annual Report is the ONA Statement. We keep the tenets of that statement at the heart of congregational life knowing that "We affirm that God is glorified when we welcome all people to our spiritual community, as Jesus did."

We live out this commitment by regularly reviewing events and opportunities, and developing new ideas to share with our congregation and the broader community.

#### **Highlights of Our Impact**

**June 15, 2025** — ONA member Melissa Meyer shared a personal testimony on Alzheimer's Awareness, broadening our congregation's understanding of inclusion.

**June 29, 2025** — Celebrated our **5th Annual Pride Brunch** following Sunday service (*pictured on page 31*). The Kitchen Chix provided a wonderful meal that brought together a large and joyful cross-section of our congregation. Events like this deepen our community's awareness of God's Open and Affirming love — for all people, in our church and beyond.

**July 16, 2025** — ONA hosted a public screening and discussion of the 2022 **documentary *Mama Bears*** (Crossroads Entertainment). CEO Jonathan Schrader led an open discussion following the film. The documentary follows conservative, devout Christian mothers who reconcile their faith with their children's LGBTQ+ identities and become fierce advocates to protect their children from discrimination and harm.

**November 20, 2025** — ONA joined other congregations for an interfaith **Transgender Day of Remembrance** at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Glen Ellyn, hosting a resource table for attendees.

**March 29, 2026** — ONA and Pastor Kyle participated in an Interfaith Service hosted by Congregation Etz Chaim of Lombard to celebrate **Transgender Day of Visibility**. Hundreds gathered from nine faith communities across Glen Ellyn and neighboring suburbs — including two Jewish congregations. Four testimonies, three from members of the trans community and one from a parent, offered moving insights into the trans experience: the blessings of support-



*Above: ONA hosts a screening and discussion of the 2022 documentary, *Mama Bears* (Crossroads Entertainment) on July 16, 2025.*

*Below: Hundreds gather for a Transgender Day of Visibility interfaith service at Congregation Etz Chaim of Lombard.*



ive families, workplaces, and communities, and the challenges of our current divided society. Resource tables from affiliated support groups created opportunities for personal conversations and meaningful connections.

**May 24, 2026** — Geri Kerger, CEO of NAMI DuPage, will introduce our congregation to the **National Alliance on Mental Illness and its services**. We will partner with our Service & Justice Committee to support their work going forward.

We continue to grow our Open and Affirming presence — deepening our reach and extending a warm welcome to all who are seeking a safe, loving church home.

## Property & Grounds Committee—Mike Sorenson, Chair

**Committee Members 2025-26:** Mike Altrip, Rick Hall, Tom Rausch, Mike Sorensen (Chair) and Mike Zita.

The Property and Grounds Committee helps facilitate the ongoing maintenance and long-term renovation projects related to the building and the grounds around it.

**HVAC upgrade**—This year, we completed the final upgrade to our last remaining legacy HVAC unit. It's a high efficiency unit and should save the church considerably on its monthly utility costs.

**Solar Project**—The solar project is slated to be completed by the end of June and is estimated to offset 30% or more of our electricity use. We look forward to embarking on the next capital improvement phase for the building. Sustainability is the goal as we continue to invest in the church's future.

**Garden Restoration**—Thanks to a very active Gardening Ministry (see report next page), we are in the process of removing weeds and invasive plants from the property. Maintenance was becoming more than we could handle on a reasonable basis and the outcome should provide a much more sustainable property (see insert below). A very special thanks to all that volunteer their time to keep the property beautiful.

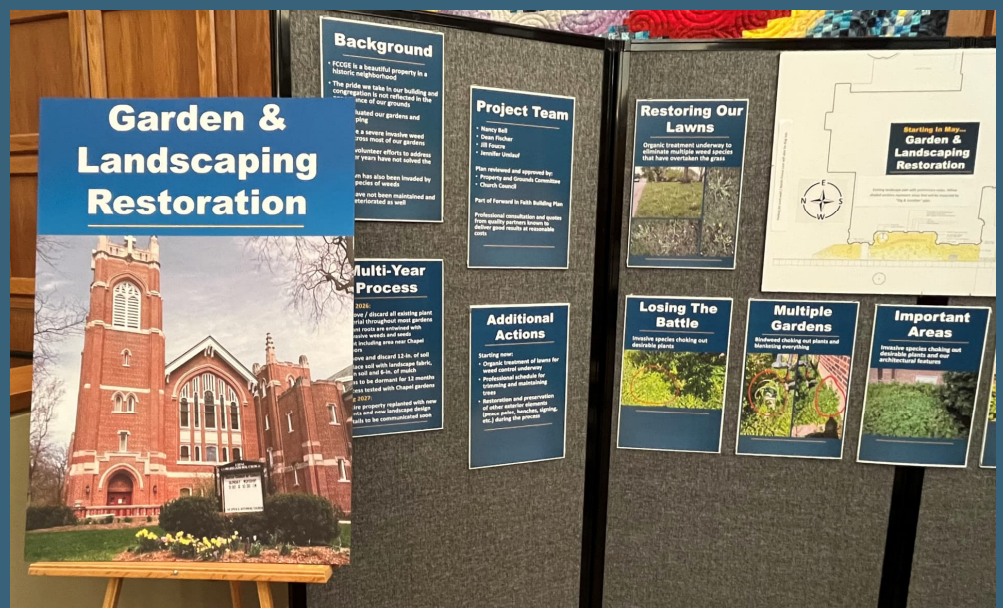
**Future Projects**—Large projects for the next couple of years include south wall painting and wood/door repair, continued landscaping improvements, kitchen refresh and brick maintenance.

Finally, if you see anything in the church that might need to be repaired please don't hesitate to call the office or send an email to [property@fccge.org](mailto:property@fccge.org). With such a large and dynamic property we all can help keep it looking and running smoothly.

### Garden & Landscaping Restoration Project

*Starting in May 2026, our gardens will receive a much needed makeover to bring our grounds up to the standard of our beautiful, historic building.*

*To learn more about this project, visit the display in the upper level of the Atrium of our church or read more about it in the Garden Ministry report on the next page.*



### The Garden Ministry—Nancy Bell, Leader

*“The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature.”  
~Alfred Austin*

A ministry under the umbrella of the Property & Grounds Committee, the Garden Ministry is responsible for planting, watering, weeding, and caring for all the places around our grounds where flowers, shrubs, and trees bloom. **Nancy Bell** began overseeing the gardens in 2017, and the ministry grew from there. Thanks to the many hands that have helped over the years, including: **Jenny and Dean Fisher, Jill Foucré, Leslie Nelson, Teresa and David Exner, Lee Anderson, Katie Miley, and Deirdre Winkelhake.**

Throughout summer 2025 the team worked hard to manage two very invasive weeds — bindweed and thistle. Even in the midst of that challenge, the beds facing Forest Avenue and the gardens at the main Chapel doors on Anthony offered blooming roses, the scent of geraniums, and lots of bees buzzing from catmint and other summer flowers. Most of the visible plants and shrubs in these spaces have been added over the past nine years.

Fall 2025 brought the annual task of adding 200 bulbs to keep our spring displays full and vibrant from year to year. This year’s bulb garden did not disappoint. The garden beds were filled with 100s of blooming bulbs, including a special space for **The Yellow Tulip Project, Garden of Hope** – to honor Mental Health Awareness Week (*Pictured at right*).

Heading into the winter months, we did minimal clean-up to ensure we protected and overwintered the garden’s many beneficial insects that help to maintain healthy biodiversity in our landscape.

As we approach the end of the church year and the start of a new growing season, the following multi-year garden and renovation project is underway.



### Garden & Landscaping Renovation Project

**Project Team:** Nancy Bell, Dean Fischer, Jill Foucré, and Jennifer Umlauf.

As a subgroup of the Garden Ministry, in coordination with the Property & Grounds Committee, this team will lead the garden and landscaping renovation project over the next several growing seasons.

**2026:** To restore our lawns, an organic treatment is underway to eliminate multiple weed species that have overtaken the grass. To restore the health of our landscape, all plants and shrubs compromised by invasive roots and seeds are being removed, along with the top 18 inches of soil. Fresh soil and 6 inches of fresh mulch will be installed, and the beds will rest until the 2027 growing season—a necessary reset to prepare for replantings.

**2027:** The entire property will be replanted with new plants with new landscape design (details of which will be communicated soon.)

As work progresses, the project team will oversee proper restoration and preservation of some of the exterior hardscape elements as well, such as the peace poles, benches, and signs.

This renovation is being strategically planned to ensure the beauty, resilience and restoration of the church’s gardens and lawns for years to come.

## Service & Justice Committee—Catherine LaChapelle, Chair

**Committee Members 2025-26:** Mike DeFlorio, Catherine LaChapelle (Chair), Andy Livingston, Jeanelle Hayner Olson, Shelagh Savino, Alice Stuhlmacher

### Mission of the Service & Justice Committee:

- Identify and establish new mission and justice opportunities for our congregation
- Provide opportunities for congregational participation in new and ongoing mission and justice projects
- Support our mission partners in operating effectively
- Prayerfully assess the allocation of mission dollars to appropriate organizations

### Overview of the 2025–26 Church Year

The 2025–26 church year has been an extraordinary and energizing one for the Service & Justice Committee. We began the year by launching a new ministry initiative: supporting our neighbors in Carol Stream with backpacks and school supplies to help students start the year with confidence. Soon after, we engaged deeply with the *Forward in Faith* capital campaign’s invitation to imagine “something big” in terms of giving to our wider community. We workshopped ideas and held many conversations with our partner ministries. Ultimately, a powerful idea emerged: the creation of the **Forward in Faith Fund**. The congregation’s commitment to dedicating a portion of the capital campaign to community impact has been profoundly inspiring. Over the year, the concept took shape, and we began planning and preparing for the Fund’s launch next year.

### Ongoing Responsibilities and Partner Engagement

Alongside this work, the Committee continued its core responsibilities. We maintained active relationships with our 25 ministry partners, reaching out to understand their evolving needs and incorporating those insights into our budget planning for 2026–27. These conversations remain central to our mission of supporting partners who serve our community with dedication and compassion.

Toward the end of the year, the Committee revisited the three guiding pillars that shape our work as outlined in the chart below. Each of our ministry partners supports one—and often more than one—of these pillars, reinforcing the interconnected nature of justice work.

### Looking Ahead to 2026-27

In the coming year, we anticipate finalizing the scope, structure, and process of the **Forward in Faith Fund**. We hope to issue our inaugural call for proposals to ministry partners and other community organizations, inviting them to dream boldly about projects that advance equity, security, and health in our broader community.

We are delighted to welcome **Tom Fate** and **Jennifer Larabee** to the team in 2026-27. Their experience, insight, and passion for service will strengthen our work as we continue to live out our mission.

<p><b>Equity Partners</b>—promoting equality of status, rights, and opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DuPage United</li> <li>• Glen Ellyn Children’s Resource Center</li> <li>• Open &amp; Affirming Ministry **</li> <li>• Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation</li> <li>• Racial Justice Ministry **</li> <li>• Royalties for Spirituals **</li> </ul>	<p><b>Health Partners</b>—promoting mental, physical, spiritual, and environmental health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central DuPage Pastoral Counseling</li> <li>• Glen Ellyn Youth &amp; Family Counseling</li> <li>• Green Team Environmental Ministry **</li> <li>• Ministry of Meals **</li> <li>• Stephen Ministry **</li> <li>• UCC Outdoor Ministries</li> <li>• Yoga **</li> </ul>	<p><b>Security Partners</b>—promoting safety and stability in housing, food, and other basic needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backpacks for Bright Futures</li> <li>• Bridge Communities</li> <li>• Computer Ministry **</li> <li>• DuPage PADS</li> <li>• Garden Works Project</li> <li>• Glen Ellyn Walk-in Ministry</li> <li>• Glen House Food Pantry</li> <li>• Habitat for Humanity</li> <li>• Onward House</li> <li>• Rebuilding Together</li> </ul>
<p>** denotes an internal program or ministry vs an external organization we support as a congregation in various ways</p>		

**DuPage United Core Team Members 2025-26**—*Andy Livingston, Clara Hughes, Roger Hughes, Katie Lindberg, Laura Peccarelli*

FCCGE is a member of DuPage United (DU), an inclusive, self-funded and fiercely non-partisan organization whose members are non-profit institutions in DuPage County, including churches, synagogues, mosques and educational and social service agencies. We build our civic people power to move on justice issues. DuPage United provides a learning platform for our members to develop skills rooted in the tradition of relational power-based community organizing. The issues we work on are based upon listening to our members and engaging our people power.

### Highlights of our Impact Fall 2025-Winter 2026

Thank you for your engagement in these Actions. Without your support none of this would have been achieved.

**Fall DU fundraiser**—We met our goal of raising \$12,500 in year one of the two-year matching fund campaign. Thank you to all who have donated to this important effort.

**Affordable, Supportive Apartment Development - 640 Taft Avenue Groundbreaking Action**—Faith Lutheran hosted the November 13, 2025, action assembly attended by over 250 DU members, community allies, and elected officials from across DuPage County (*pictured at right*). We challenged elected officials with a call to action to work with us to build more affordable apartment developments. The need is urgent to come together and build together now. We succeeded using our people power to garner immediate release of HUD funds for 640 Taft Avenue that were held up during the government shut down.



**DuPage United Annual Assembly February 1, 2026**—Close to 200 DU members attended the annual assembly hosted by FCCGE and we rocked it! (*see full assembly pictured on pg. 31*). Leaders rolled out our 2026 campaign “Come Together-Build Together” to increase awareness and engagement around housing and safety infrastructure needs. Highlighted were affordable housing and our campaigns for a sidewalk near Villagebrook Apts. in Carol Stream and state funding for a stoplight in front of Marian Park Apts. in Wheaton.

**Special remembrance**—The FCCGE family and DuPage United Core Team lost one of its dearest members and strongest advocates for social and civic justice in February 2026—Roger Hughes. Roger tirelessly worked along side his wife, Clara Hughes, on many DuPage United actions, committees and projects. His quiet strength, good humor, and passion for justice will be remembered and missed.

### DuPage United Goals for 2026-27

- Greater DuPage United – Grow our people power; hold effective actions with key elected officials to further justice campaigns.
- FCCGE Core Team – Continue to listen and build relational power within our institution so we can come together to successfully address justice issues in our community.

### Glen Ellyn Chamber of Commerce names FCCGE’s Clara Hughes Citizen of the Year

Clara Hughes was named the **2025 Stuart S. Stone Citizen of the Year** by the Glen Ellyn Chamber of Commerce. Clara was recognized for her significant contributions to civic service, voting rights education, and her dedicated work with DuPage United in advocating for affordable housing in the community.

*Pictured is Clara Hughes (far right) with her good friend and DuPage United colleague Debbie Suggs during the Chamber’s award ceremony on March 10, 2026.*



**Glen Ellyn Children’s Resource Center—Sarah O’Donnell**

GECRC is grateful for the leadership and service of its board and volunteers this past year, many of whom were FCCGE volunteer tutors. Glen Ellyn Children’s Resource Center continues to serve as a neighbor-to-neighbor organization dedicated to helping children and families thrive through free out-of-school academic and enrichment programming. GECRC partners closely with local school districts, volunteers, donors, and community organizations to provide equitable opportunities for children in grades K–8, particularly those facing economic barriers.

FY25–26 was a year of strong growth and measurable impact for GECRC. The organization opened an additional site at District 41’s new Kindergarten Center, served 282 students in after-school programming across District 41 and CCSD89, and engaged 218 students in its summer program—a 36% increase over the past three years. Academic outcomes remained strong, with 72% of participating District 41 students showing literacy growth, 91% demonstrating gains in math, and 77% strengthening key social-emotional learning skills.

Among GECRC’s most significant accomplishments this year were achieving DCFS licensing across all program sites and expanding community support. More than 200 volunteers helped provide tutoring, mentoring, enrichment, and over 6,500 hours of monthly academic and social-emotional support. Partnerships with Glen House Food Pantry and Kiwanis Club also helped ensure participants received fresh fruit daily. With support from FCCGE, GECRC hired a bilingual Burmese translator—an alumna of the program—to help families enroll and connect with local resources, strengthening access for newcomer families.

GECRC also strengthened its long-term sustainability by updating policies and procedures and gaining approval to help families apply for CCAP, expanding access to affordable child care. Looking ahead, GECRC is well-positioned to build on this momentum through continued family support, strong community partnerships, and the ongoing generosity of FCCGE.



**Glen Ellyn Walk-In Ministry—Lora Ilhardt**

The Glen Ellyn Walk-In Ministry was created 32 years ago by the Glen Ellyn Ministerial Association to provide a source of compassionate assistance to Glen Ellyn residents and members of Glen Ellyn churches who are in need of emergency aid. It is an all-volunteer mission coordinated and funded by 13 Glen Ellyn churches, including FCCGE.

The Walk-In Ministry relies on donations from individuals, organizations, and our member churches. We assist our clients by giving them Aldi food gift cards, train passes, and gas vouchers. We also assist with utility bills, car repairs, auto insurance and prescriptions by sending checks directly to the service providers. We interact in-person with our clients at our offices located at the First United Methodist Church of Glen Ellyn. Our office hours are Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. until 12 noon.

Last year we provided assistance to 428 clients. Our goal is to be able to continue providing much needed emergency services to the community. We are always looking for more volunteers to help provide services to our clients.

**Glen House Food Pantry—Andy Ginger**

The Glen House Food Pantry has been serving DuPage County for over 45 years, seeking to eliminate food insecurity and “Make Hunger History.” FCCGE was a founding member of the Pantry and remains committed to its mission. Our ministry encourages donations of food and funds as well as volunteering at the Pantry and everyone at FCCGE is welcome to help.

Food insecurity touches 10% of households in DuPage County, almost 95,000 families. Demand has risen as much as 40% in recent months. Now, supplemental food benefits have been reduced again.

Political developments are increasing the risk of hunger in our commu-



*Shopping area at the Glen House Food Pantry.*

nity. Food banks have less food to distribute because of at least \$1 billion in federal funding cuts. Illinois had \$14.7 million in funding terminated and \$6.4 million in other USDA funds frozen, halting a program that paired local farmers with food pantries to deliver fresh produce.

Hundreds of families visit the Pantry to shop. But the Pantry also has more than 20+ out-reach programs to support the needs of others in the community, including children, seniors, veterans, and homeless families through schools, libraries and other organizations. These programs are implemented by groups like the Kiwanis, PADS, the YMCA and many more.

### Highlights of Making a Difference 2025-26

In the past year, FCCGE held special collection drives in April, May, June, September and December, donating more than any prior year...2,346 lbs. of food and needed sundries. The Green Team's Project Eden donated 640 lbs. of fresh produce grown in our own home gardens. Our youth made birthday bags filled with cake mix, canned icing and candles. Many of us volunteered each week, serving over 9,500 families. And FCCGE and members donated over \$14,000 to the Pantry last year.

### How can YOU help?

Bring food items to donate on Sundays. Donate funds using the envelopes in the lobby or through the Tithley app. Your donations help the Pantry buy food to make up the shortfall. Every \$1 you donate can buy several \$\$ in groceries for the Pantry. Participate as a volunteer...see [glenhousefoodpantry.org](http://glenhousefoodpantry.org) With your help, we can help our neighbors and help the Pantry make



hunger history. Thanks for your ongoing support!

**Far left:** The Pantry van makes an appearance at Rally Day.

**Left:** Pastor Seth blesses donations collected by members of our church.

### The GardenWorks Project— Teri Wood, Executive Director

The mission of The GardenWorks Project is to address food insecurity by creating and nurturing connections between food growers, local food pantries, and individuals in need.

In 2025, The GardenWorks Project donated more than 6,900 pounds of fresh produce to DuPage County food pantry partners—nearly 3,000 pounds more than the previous year. The organization expanded to 26 garden sites and supported about 70 households and more than 300 individuals, including children and seniors.

Partnerships with Bridge Communities, Mercy Housing, and local food pantries strengthened the garden-to-pantry model and helped fresh produce reach families quickly after harvest. The DuPage County Fairgrounds garden contributed more than 1,000 pounds through weekly volunteer sessions, while market gleaning and the Fresh Food Connect app increased donations and improved tracking. The organization also advanced its rebranding, communications, and community engagement. We are especially grateful to the volunteer board for its leadership and support throughout the year.

In 2026, The GardenWorks Project will focus on expanding garden sites, strengthening partnerships, increasing pounds donated, growing its volunteer base, improving data tracking, and building long-term sustainability.

Thanks to organizations like FCCGE for your continued support.

**Green Team**—*Tom Rausch and Nancy Bell Co-Leaders*

**Green Team ministry 2025-26:** Chris Bass, Nancy Bell, Bob Burrows, Angela Cary, Seth Carey, Lisa Crank, Catherine Curtis, Karen Elis, David Exner, Teresa Exner, Rosemarie Freeman, Andy Ginger, Carol Ginger, Melissa Guido, Daniel Harman, Clara Hughes, Jeanine Kannegiesser, Katie Lindberg, Joan Looi, Maria Metz, Katie Miley, Rosemarie Pinkos, Karen Pulver, Diane Pyzik, Debbie Rausch, Tom Rausch, Kyle Roggenbuck, Eva Schuchardt, Jen Sellers, Amy Shorner-Johnson, Leslie Sommers, Mike Sorenson, Tanner Spears, Alice Stuhlmacher, Jim Stuhlmacher, Myra Walden, and Deirdre Winkelhake

**Mission**—The Green Team supports love and respect for Creation and acts on environmental and climate-related concerns. We strive to reduce the church’s environmental impact and support sustainability within our church and our community. We raise awareness of environmental concerns and partner with organizations that seek environmental justice.

**Key Accomplishments**

- About two dozen home gardeners continued to embrace **Project Eden**, growing more than 640 pounds of produce at home and in the church garden (which is 180 lbs. more than last year) for donation to food pantries.
- More than once a month, on average, at least 50 members **assisted with kitchen clean-up** and washed dishes after large church meal events, preventing throw-away plates, glasses and utensils.
- We continue to host monthly nature and fellowship **All Church Hikes** at various locations, including a New Year’s Day walk at Churchill Woods (*snowy group pictured top right*) and a Cantigny Garden Walk in May.
- Special thanks to **Nancy Bell, Katie Miley, Bob Burrows, and Karen Elis** for their work and coordination of church gardens, Project Eden, church composting and dish washing and meal cleanups.
- Several members participated in the new UCC-sponsored Climate Hope Affiliates (CHA) program, and with Catherine Curtis’s leadership started a Glen Ellyn chapter and FCCGE hosted a “Closed Townhall” with **Congressman Sean Casten** on April 10, 2026 (*pictured center right*). The event attracted climate leaders from several different faith communities.
- We participated in several events and supported groups like **Go Green Glen Ellyn, Citizens’ Climate Lobby, and Faith In Place** in activities like voter post carding and recycling. We also donated to Faith In Place which has helped us in many ways including their webinars on solar for churches.

**Goals for 2026-27**

The Green Team will continue supporting Project Eden, kitchen cleanup, composting, and other ministries related to reducing the church’s environmental impact, and will participate in and hold events that bring people together. The team will work with Property and Grounds Committee in communicating the need for capital investments that improve our environmental footprint and in celebrating our rooftop solar project planned for completion in 2026.



*Green Team celebrates the Eden Harvest on Oct. 5, 2025.*



*Above: FCCGE hosts a “Closed Townhall” with Congressman Sean Casten.*

*At left: David and Theresa Exner give out vegetable plants and seedlings to help people start their Project Eden gardens for 2026.*

### **Backpacks for Bright Futures—*Community Life of Carol Stream Crossing***

**Leaders 2025-26:** Lindsay and Aaron Wilhoft of Community Life and FCCGE members Carla and Mike DeFlorio

This year FCCGE partnered with Community Life at Carol Stream Crossing Apartments to help fund back-to-school backpacks for students and families in need. This program has been providing backpacks and school supplies to families in need for the past five years. In recent years, local partnerships fell through on funding. But through a prior connection with church member Carla DeFlorio, FCCGE joined in supporting this program outside of budget perimeters with a \$500 grant and additional collection from our congregation. These funds were combined with crowdfunded donations Lindsey and Aaron raised to provide backpacks and supplies to around 50 students. Unfortunately, we could not provide the required headphones as the cost was prohibitive.

Our goals for next year would be to get more families involved and raise funding so that crowdfunded donations will not be necessary. Additionally, we hope to provide all required supplies (including headphones) as well as lunch boxes, water bottles, and athletic shoes. Thank you FCCGE for your continued support!

### **Central DuPage Pastoral Counseling Center—Genalin Niere-Metcalf, PsyD, MA, RN**

Central DuPage Pastoral Counseling Center (CDPCC) continues its mission of welcoming all, inspiring hope, and fostering healing through evidence-based, integrated therapeutic and spiritual care. Rooted in Christian tradition, our licensed therapists care for the whole person by addressing psychological, physical, spiritual, and cultural needs. We also support churches and communities through consultation and psycho-relational-spiritual education.

In 2025, CDPCC provided 7,586 therapy sessions, including 1,302 supported by compassion funds—17% of the care offered to individuals and families in need. Looking ahead, we hope to deepen partnerships with local churches, such as FCCGE, and expand our ministry of care through church and clergy consultation, spiritual direction, and practical psychoeducational seminars, workshops, and groups. To meet growing demand, we are also prayerfully seeking to hire two additional therapists in the coming year.

### **Computer Ministry—Mike DeFlorio**

The Computer Ministry at FCCGE is about creating a rebirth of old electronics for the advancement of GOD's kingdom. Since founding the ministry in 2024, Michael DeFlorio has been its sole volunteer, building partnerships with World Relief, the People's Resource Center, College of DuPage, and Willow Creek Church's Computer Connection Ministry. Those relationships helped FCCGE achieve these key accomplishments in 2025-26:

- Delivered twenty (20) laptops to World Relief for training immigrants in computer skills, using the Internet to search for employment, and giving them more confidence in the labor force
- Initiated working relationships with the College of DuPage and Willow Creek Church's Computer Connection Ministry to get donations of laptops
- Donated fifteen (15) monitors to the Peoples Resource Center, establishing a relationship with them.

### **Goals for 2026–27**

1. Recruit volunteers to join the Computer Ministry to help with the above.
2. Further enhance the work with World Relief
3. Develop relationships with other ministries within FCCGE as well as outreach programs within the surrounding communities
4. Build relationships with more businesses, organizations, and private individuals who can provide donations
5. Build a relationship with the Illinois Conference of the UCC Church

To grow the ministry and meet these goals, FCCGE needs a core team of volunteers with interest or experience in computer repair. This team could strengthen ministry partnerships, expand community relationships, and connect donated equipment with people in our community who need it.

The need is clear—but with more volunteers, we can turn this vision into action.

### **Glen Ellyn Youth and Family Counseling Service (GEYFCS)**

Glen Ellyn Youth & Family Counseling Service (GEYFCS) is a 501c3 non-profit community mental health center housed in the First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn which provides reduced-fee counseling services for low-income individuals and families and those who may lack insurance resources. GEYFCS is partnered with local schools and police to provide mental health treatment, group supports, community referral, and substance abuse assessment services. GEYFCS' mission states no individual or family is ever denied services based on an inability to pay. Thanks to FCCGE generously giving us office space, it allows us to supplement reduced-fees for clients, maintain counseling staff, and meet operational needs.

### **Habitat for Humanity**—Jennifer Taff, Executive Director

DuPage and Chicago South Suburbs Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope through affordable housing and critical home repairs. Through partnerships with volunteers and community organizations, such as FCCGE, Habitat helps create safe, stable, and affordable housing that strengthen communities for the long term.

This past year, Habitat completed a 23-unit townhome development in Hanover Park and provided critical home repairs for 30 homeowners, many of whom were seniors or veterans requiring accessibility and safety modifications to their homes. Looking ahead, Habitat is about to break ground on a 12-unit townhome development in West Chicago on donated land. Construction will take place over four years, with three homes built annually. Habitat has also partnered with the Village of Park Forest on neighborhood revitalization project. Thanks to FCCGE for its continued support and helping us to build and repair more homes in the DuPage and South Suburban communities.

### **Ministry of Meals**—Jenny Fischer

The Ministry of Meals continues to be a thriving ministry that delivers meals to our church family during times of illness or crisis. Our volunteer roster includes 74 cooks and 5 "shepherds" who coordinate and schedule meal deliveries. Our ministry prepared and delivered **65 homemade meals last year**. We use the free website mealtrain.com to organize the meal assignments and schedule meals online. If anyone is interested in helping us reach more people in need, please contact me: jennyfischer@gmail.com.

### **Onward House Christmas Gift Appeal**—Marge Kovatch

**Program Facilitators:** Marge Kovatch (Lead), Karen Ellis, Sandi Wroblewski, Jo Ann Ginger, and Sylvia Rodeo

Onward House, located in the Belmont Cragin area of Chicago, is an outreach facility that supports under-resourced families by offering daycare, head start and afterschool programs. Each year, our ministry's purpose is to provide Christmas gifts for the children registered in those programs. Selecting and giving these gifts brings joy to the recipients, but also to the congregants who provide the gifts. We do not use any funds from FCCGE, only what congregants choose to donate to the program. For Christmas 2025, we were given **names of 198 children from Onward House** and gift suggestions specific to each child. Members of the congregation were able to choose a name and provide gifts for one or more children. Thanks to our facilitators and the many church members that helped with wrapping, loading the gifts at FCCGE into the rented truck, and unloading the gifts at Onward House upon delivery.

### **Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS)**—Trica Kearns, FCCGE liaison

As DuPage PADS enters its 41st year of service, their Interim Housing Center in Downers Grove continues to provide needed food, shelter, stability, and educational and counseling services to individuals and families working towards permanent housing. DuPage PADS offers a variety of ways to get involved, from on-site volunteering to remote tasks. Remotely, you can purchase needed supplies the next time you are shopping on Amazon. Search for 'DuPagePads Urgent Needs List' and your donation will ship directly to PADS. To volunteer, you can find, register, and sign up for open volunteer shifts at the DuPage Pads Volunteer Portal. Visit <https://dupagepads.org/volunteering/> For 2026-27 we hope to identify more ways to help and give. Thanks to FCCGE support and volunteers who continue their passion for ending homelessness in DuPage County.

### **Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation**—Nick Schafer, Certified Fundraising Executive

Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) fosters healing, restores relationships, and builds community among people most affected by violence, poverty, and systemic injustice. Through a restorative, relationship-centered approach, PBMR supports young people and families with dignity, consistency, and care. Over the past year, PBMR provided one-on-one support to more than 500 individuals and reached thousands more through mentoring, restorative justice circles, and community programs. In neighborhoods and detention settings, the ministry created spaces for healing, accountability, and growth while also responding to urgent needs such as family crises, housing instability, and trauma. In the year ahead, PBMR plans to expand staff capacity to meet growing demand and ensure more individuals and families can access the support and relationships that sustain long-term healing and hope. I want to thank FCCGE for your generous and continued support.

**Racial Justice Ministry—Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck, Associate Minister**

**Ministry Members 2025-26:** Michele Hecht, Ida Hagman, Mary Lohtak, Tom Fate, Lynn Kubat, Robbie and Mark Spehr, and Karen Koenig, all took part in this ministry.

The goal of our Racial Justice is to gather with a spirit of humility, knowing that there is much to learn about anti-racism and yet we know how important it is for us to confront it in ourselves and in our communities in all its forms. We want to educate ourselves and the congregation about the issues that surround racism. We want to build relationships and partner with communities of color and indigenous people to learn and listen, to come alongside them, and find ways to become better allies. Finally, we want to find tangible ways to act as we love our neighbor.

This year we launched **Sacred Ground**—a bold initiative to gather once a month to have a meal together, to watch a documentary, and to have lively discussion with one another—while taking home some concrete actions individuals can use.

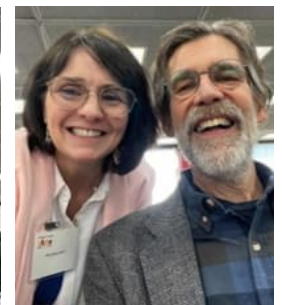
Some of our topics included Immigration, the Roots of Whiteness, Indigenous History, Black Roots, Slavery, and Christian Nationalism. These gatherings were very well attended and provided not only an excellent meal (thanks to our Kitchen Chix) but important conversations and ways of connecting and wrestling with our current world.

On Saturday, March 21, 10 volunteers from FCCGE served as judges and volunteers for the **DuPage County ACT-SO** (Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics) annual competition, which aims to encourage high academic, cultural, and entrepreneurial achievement among African American high school students. The competition allows students to showcase their hard work and talents in 32 different categories across STEM, the Humanities, Business, and the Arts. ACT-SO is the recipient of our **Royalties for Spirituals** collections twice a year. Since the authors/composers of Spirituals were enslaved people and never recognized or paid royalties for their musical contributions, FCCGE collects funds to pay a debt for the use of Negro Spirituals in worship and presents it annually to the ACT-SO program.

Next year we intend to expand our program and tackle additional topics in our monthly Sacred Ground gatherings. We also work hard to connect folks to concrete ways to get involved in the community and find ways to partner with communities of color.



Pictured with Michele Hecht (pink sweater) are fellow **FCCGE ACTSO judges and volunteers** (clockwise from top left): Bob Rada, Melissa Meyer and Michele; Karen Akers, Jeff Fitzgerald, Michele, and Bob Burrows; Michele and Tom Fate; Michele and Carla DeFlorio.



**Stephen Ministry—Maggie Fredricks, Leader**

**Stephen Ministers:** Tom Fate, Jenny Fischer, Maggie Fredricks, Becky Gadowski, Brian Hamilton, Tracy Kline, Leland Livingston, Kristin Malone, Dorothy Powers, Karen Pulver, Celia Rodee, Daren Stevenson, Jen Stevenson, Sara Waterloo and Paul Wussow. Maggie Fredricks serves as the Stephen Leader, and Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck provides clergy support.

The Stephen Ministry program trains laity to walk beside fellow congregants who are experiencing life difficulties: grief, loss, divorce, illness, health issues, transitions such as job loss, children leaving home for college or work – or any other problem which calls for the ongoing help of a lay minister. Stephen Ministers have worked one-on-one this past year with 14 church members, meeting for as long as the problem persists, and providing a safe, confidential relationship with someone who listens objectively, acts with empathy, and provides support and prayer.

If you are interested in finding out more about Stephen Minister or know someone who may benefit from this Christian support, please reach out to one of the Pastors or a Stephen Ministry Leader.

**Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago**—Dan Williams (WiGiv) and Randy Briasco (FCCGE), Leaders

Since 1991, Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago (RTMC) has repaired over 2000 homes and 285 community facilities with the assistance of tens of thousands of volunteers. They work in partnership with community leaders, trade unions, service clubs and volunteers to improve Chicagoland homes and neighborhoods.

In our 28th year of supporting RTMC, church member, Dan Williams, brought his WiGiv group to collaborate with FCCGE and the RTMC organization to help facilitate the repair of a chosen home in Maywood. On April 25th, our volunteers, along with union electricians and painters, gave the homeowner, Mary, a fresh new look on the projects she wanted completed. This included 4 rooms painted along with stairs, new outlets, screen door, hand railing, lights, stair work and landscaping.

Very grateful to have Dan Williams and WiGiv join us and look forward to working together again.

Thanks to all the volunteers and union workers in making this a very successful and enjoyable experience.



*Volunteers from FCCGE and WiGiv on Rebuilding Together day April 25, 2026.*

**The Yoga Ministry**—Cathy Christoff

The Yoga Ministry’s mission is to offer experiences through yoga that help cultivate a strong mind and body which can, in turn, direct us to live our lives with more joy and clarity. God is very much a part of this process because we have the potential to surrender. The ministry was on sabbatical this year with no volunteers to teach in place of my serving as Moderator Designee, a role from which I eventually needed to resign. My goal for next year is to offer a creative workshop that would start out with a Yoga Practice to cultivate creativity followed by an art project led by a member/artist. I am also considering a “Yoga Day” where the day might look like: Circle Time - Yoga Practice – 2 speakers (1/2 hour each) – GOOD FOOD – Entertainment – End of day Yoga Practice – Passing Circle. I am looking forward to bringing this yoga experience back to FCCGE.

**Tower Hill / Pilgrim Park Outdoor Ministries**—Catherine Curtis

**FCCGE Participant Leaders:** Catherine Curtis, Cathy Basso, Gabriel Koenig, and Noah Pottebaum

In a time when many church camps are closing their doors, we continue to be blessed to be served by two camps: **Tower Hill Camp and Retreat Center** in Sawyer, MI, on the shore of Lake Michigan and **Pilgrim Park Camp and Conference Center** in Princeton, IL near Starved Rock State Park.

On the third weekend of July, FCCGE hosted our annual All-Church Retreat 2025 at Tower Hill welcomed 20 attendees and two new households. Retreat goers enjoyed swimming, climbing the dunes, trail walking, star gazing, and storytelling around the campfire.

Our congregation continues to offer scholarships to youth who wish to attend summer camp at either location. One of our Confirmands, Brandon Johnson, shared his testimony on Confirmation Sunday on what Godstock at Tower Hill Camp has meant to him the past few years and shared, “I’m still trying to figure out my faith and what I believe in, but this place is where I would say it is the strongest. How people can come together peacefully for one week is inspiring to me.”



## Service & Justice Ministries & Mission Partners—*continued*

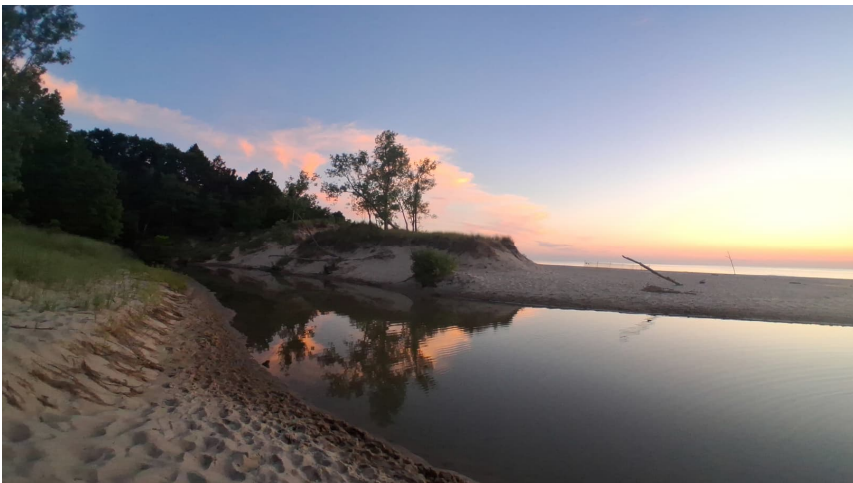
Rev. Tracy Heilman, Site Director of Tower Hill Camp preached at FCCGE for Earth Sunday, sharing that when we foster and spend time in Creation, such as at camp, then we nurture the desire to protect and care for Creation.

Director of Christian Education, Catherine Curtis is part of a planning team creating and co-leading the first new UCC-sponsored summer camp at Tower Hill in

years: **Creation Care Camp**. It is an adult+child camp that will inspire a love of Creation that will then be translated into taking action on behalf of Creation.



*All-Church Retreat 2025 means bonfires, sandcastles, and making new friends. Catching a sunset on the beach are Darren Stevenson and David Exner (above left) and Eva Schuchardt, Ann VanSeters, and Rosemarie Pinkos (above right).*



### **An Update on Church-sponsored Scouting Troops—Boy Scout Troop 51 and Cub Scout Pack 41**

For years, FCCGE sponsored Boy Scout Troop 41 and Cub Scout Pack 51 that used our building and facilities for meetings and activities. Due to changes within the Scouting America (formerly Boy Scouts of America) chartering system, churches and local organizations no longer need to sponsor individual troops. Scouting America is experiencing a shift toward broader community sponsorship to stabilize membership and diversify unit ownership.

As a prior troop sponsor, FCCGE was required to share their annual activities and financial reports through our church annual report. This year, we are providing an update on the changes to the troops for congregational awareness:

- **Scouting Troop 41** merged with Troop 46 at First Presbyterian Church, Glen Ellyn. Our 10 scouts, combined with their 20+ scouts, strengthens the troop and makes it more fun for the scouts. Priorities of the merger have been high-quality programming and awesome experiences for the Scouts.
- **CUB Scout Pack 51** is planning to re-charter through Three Fires Council of Scouting America. This is a change that Scouting America is implementing for a lot of troops to relieve sponsor organizations of liability. Pack 51 may continue to conduct activities at FCCGE under a facility use agreement or join the other troops at First Presbyterian.

These scouting troops will continue to serve the community through service projects at First Congregational and First Presbyterian as part of their scouting purpose and responsibilities.

**FCCGE Staff Recital 2026**—On Wed., May 27, 2026, the church music staff, clergy and volunteer musicians and music leaders filled the Sanctuary with an amazing evening of music—from classical and jazz to Broadway and rock. Thanks to Master of Ceremonies Dean Fischer, the Music Makers Ministry, and our Tech Team for helping stage such a magical evening.



**Staff Recital Performers 2026**

**Front Row (l to r):** Rick Hall, Volunteer (bass guitar, harmonica, trombone); Heather Novak, Volunteer (trumpet); Sherry Flugel, Communications Director, Volunteer Director of Angel Choir (soprano); Dean Fischer, Master of Ceremonies; Michele Hecht, Director of Music Ministry (soprano); Beth Rosch, Volunteer Director of Joyful Noise (vocals); **Middle Row (l to r):** Shu-Hui Janet Tsai, Organist (organ, piano, keyboard); Jessi Zolmierski, Volunteer Director of Children's Pageant (mezzo soprano); Lora Ilhardt, Accompanist for Angel Choir (guitar, vocals); Rev. Seth Ethan Carey, Senior Minister (vocals); Tanner Spears, Director of Youth Ministry (piano, vocals); **Top Row (l to r):** Jeff Novak, Volunteer (bass guitar); Jeff Haeger, Music Associate (piano, vocals); Andy Livingston, Volunteer Leader of The Ad Hocs (guitar, vocals); Luke Holly, Volunteer (drums); Chris Walker, Volunteer (guitar); Rev. Kyle Roggenbuck, Associate Minister (vocals).

## Just Peace Covenant

Just Peace invites all of us to testify with our actions and lives. As a Just Peace Church, it is our commitment to act in love, faith and spirit as we live and work toward:

- Just Peace in the community—so that all may live free from fear
- Just Peace with the environment—so that life is sustained
- Just Peace in society—so that all may live with dignity
- Just Peace among the nations— so that human lives are protected

Therefore, we resolve to grow in love of God and neighbor as a Just Peace congregation and faithfully live out our vision to be grounded in tradition, centered in worship, called to serve, fortified by justice, sustained by peace, and free to dream.



## Open & Affirming Statement

At First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, we rejoice in our community of faith, strengthened by diversity, including: culture, economic status, age, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, and physical or mental abilities. We affirm that God is glorified when we welcome all people to our spiritual community, as Jesus did. Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

## Global Mission Statement

A Global Mission Church: prays regularly for partners, missionaries and the world; educates its members about global issues from preschool age to adult; seeks justice for the "least of these" in the international community; receives the gifts of the global church; gives to the work of global mission; sends its members into the world to share the Good News; and grows in sharing the story of God's mission with others.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
OF GLEN ELLYN

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