



# **ST. PAULS ANNUAL MEETING**

**Sunday, March 12, 2023**

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# Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda

March 12, 2023

**Opening Devotional**.....Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald

**Call to order & remarks**.....Ben Emmrich, President of the Congregation

**Approval of 2022 Annual Meeting minutes**..... Karen Lyons, Secretary

## **Motion // Discussion // Vote**

**Remarks**.....Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald

**Financial report and vote on the 2023 budget**..... Sally Fletcher, Treasurer

## **Motion // Discussion // Vote**

**Facilities Update and Capital Improvements for 2023**..... Nate Combs

**Nominating Committee report and election**.....Lorne Frank, Chair

## **Motion // Discussion // Vote**

**Adjournment, The Lord's Prayer**.....Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald

*Members of St. Pauls have voice and vote.*

*Friends of the congregation have voice.*

# President's Report

Members and Friends of St. Pauls,

St. Pauls United Church of Christ is a community called by God to action – for each other, for our faith and for our City.

## **In the last year, our community has responded forcefully to this call!**

Last year, I shared that my focus as President would be to ensure that our Congregation reinvigorates our Church Community through connections to St. Pauls and to each other. I am happy to report that we've done just that, taking great strides as a church community to solidify our connections to St. Pauls and to each other, and acting forcefully on the six pillars of St. Pauls Strategic Plan, where God calls us to:

1. God is calling us to grow towards each other
2. God is calling us to grow toward God together
3. Increasing diversity in our Partnerships and our Congregation
4. Living our faith in an age of injustice
5. Using our building for service and mission
6. Tending our finances faithfully

My highlights of the past year include:

- Welcoming Pastor Liz Nickerson as St. Pauls new Associate Pastor. I've been impressed by Liz's work during her first months within our midst and excited to see her impact expand, especially within St. Pauls ministries to Children and Families.
- The financial resiliency of our Congregation:
  - Strong, successful annual pledge drive, led by Jack Lyons. We received over \$875k in pledges (a 25% increase year over year) and increased "giving units" (meaning, households that give to St. Pauls) from 172 to 240. Thank you all for your generosity!
  - Ended 2022 with a budget surplus of just under \$300k, driven by \$380k in non-recurring bequests to the Church. Planned giving will continue to be a focus as we tend our finances faithfully.
- The strong performance of our HR Taskforce, led by Karen Lyons, which has professionalized the HR policies and practices of our Church Staff.
- The reignition of our Children's ministry, with a robust in-person Sunday School, Oktoberfest, Bible-off-Broadway and upcoming Summer Camp. It's wonderful to see the children of our church so engaged with these programs!
- Taken meaningful steps on the "Expanding our Openness" capital campaign. The next steps as we plan for this capital campaign are being led by our Building Accessibility Task Force, chaired by Karen Johnson. This taskforce has scheduled meetings on March 26th and April 16th, for members of the Congregation to prayerfully discern Phase II of this critical project. Please join for these sessions!

Each of these efforts support the strategic pillars of our Congregation, while also drawing our congregation together and serving our Chicago community. We commit to continuing this work in 2023.

In my second year as Congregational President, I've relied heavily on many of you for counsel and support. Thank you especially to Pastors Matt, Jeff and Liz, our dedicated staff, the members of the Church Council and to all the volunteer members that serve our Ministries. St. Pauls is strong because of each of you.

I'm excited for what lies ahead in the life of our Church, and I commit to working alongside each of you as we make a joyful sound in our city.

Yours in service,

Ben Emmrich  
Congregation President

# 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ST. PAULS CONGREGATION

March 6, 2022

Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald and Director of Music Kurt Hansen led the congregation in an opening devotional.

Ben described the hybrid format and thanked everyone for coming, whether in-person, on zoom, or on the conference phone line.

Ben reminded us that all that motions will be voted on by voice for people attending in-person, a poll in zoom, and a keystroke on the conference line.

Ben reminded the Congregation that members have voice and vote and visitors have voice.

Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald thanked Ben for his inspirational leadership, remarked on the miracle of technology and thanked the tech group Kevin, Maddy, Jim, Brian, and Claire.

Pastor Matt led the congregation in an opening devotional.

Topic	Discussion
<p><b>Call to Order and Remarks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ben Emmrich, President of the Congregation, called the meeting to order at 11:18 AM</li> <li>● Ben’s personal goal focus for this next year is to reinvigorate the Church Community by ensuring that our Congregation builds meaningful connections to St. Pauls and to others.</li> <li>● Ben is looking to the Six Pillars of the Church’s Strategic Plan to guide our collective efforts towards building community – stated each one</li> <li>● Ben is proud of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Our work with the Khaksar family, refugees from Afghanistan thank you to Mark Pellegrino for his leadership</li> <li>○ Our deepening relationship with Lighthouse Church</li> <li>○ The successful creation and launch of two Task Force efforts: The Revitalization of our Youth and Family Ministry Task Force, thank you to Justin Hartanov for his leadership;</li> <li>○ And the HR Task Force, thank you to Karen Lyons for her</li> <li>○ Leadership</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Ben’s intention is for the Congregation to be “aggressively hospitable”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approval of the Meeting Notes for the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Congregation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Motion to approve the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes by Kurt Hansen</li> <li>◆ Second to approve the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes by Philip Smedley</li> <li>◆ Meeting Minutes approved unanimously by voice vote and electronic poll</li> </ul>

<p><b>Remarks Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald</b></p>	<p>Matt thanked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pastor Jeff for his service and ministry.</li> <li>● Andy Davis and Lynn Dykstra for graciously sharing their medical expertise repeatedly during the pandemic to help the Church make wise choices for keeping everyone safe</li> <li>● The Congregation for its wisdom and dedication</li> </ul> <p>Lighthouse Church held its first funeral in the St. Pauls Sanctuary</p>
<p><b>Financial Report and vote on the 2022 Budget</b></p>	<p>Sally Fletcher, a member of the Church Finance Committee filling in for St. Pauls Treasurer, Toby Rogers, presented the 2021 financial reports and the proposed 2022 Operating Budget.</p> <p>Net operating results for 2021 - \$130,000 surplus due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Donations up 17% in 2021</li> <li>● PPP loans of \$183,00 were forgiven</li> <li>● Clergy and staff discipline around expenses</li> </ul> <p>The 2022 operation budget as proposed is a balanced one, using PPP funds and proceeds from investments to add to the expected pledge income. The focus is on rebuilding after the Pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>Wayne Parma made a motion to Approve the 2022 Congregational Budget</i></li> <li>◆ <i>Lynn Dykstra seconded the motion to Approve the 2022 Congregational Budget</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>The budget includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A reasonable compensation for the new pastor – it plans for 6 months of salary in 2022</li> <li>● 3% increases for clergy and staff for 2022 - staff and clergy did not receive salary increases in 2021</li> <li>● A salary adjustment to correct “salary compression” of a long-term employee</li> </ul> <p>Matt thanked the Congregation for the raise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Little Lights’ parents are requesting the use of credit cards to make it easier for them to pay their tuition.</li> <li>● Sally shared her appreciation and joy for Little Lights and its contribution to life of the Church and the income side of the budget – the Congregation responded with a round of applause</li> <li>● The line item for Bible Off Broadway has a “placeholder” number an adjustment will be made when the costs are clearer</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>Char Damron called for the question to be brought to a vote;</i></li> <li>◆ <i>Cindy Ball seconded the call</i></li> <li>◆ <i>The vote to call the question passed</i></li> <li>◆ <i>The motion to approve the 2022 Congregational Budget passed</i></li> </ul> <p>Sally thanked the finance committee members Hannah Bryant, Sonya Bizzolara, Larry Damron, Maddy Lockhart, Jack Lyons, Michael Sanders, Sandi Weiskirch</p>

<p><b>Facilities Update &amp; Capital Improvements for 2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is no verbal report.</li> <li>● The written report is on page 11 of the Annual Meeting Packet.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pursuit of Creation Justice Church Designation</b></p>	<p>Jan Fraccaro, Joe Womack co-chairs of the Green Team and Barb Arsenault, who has been instrumental in the Creation Justice Church exploration, presented an overview of the UCC Creation Justice Church program and designation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The UCC’s Creation Justice Church program assists Congregations in making the ministry of environmental justice an integral strand of the DNA of the Church</li> <li>● Aligns with the 4th Pillar of the Church’s Strategic Plan, “Living our Faith in an Age of Injustice”</li> <li>● Tasks to complete to move forward with application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commit to a covenant (written by Green Team)</li> <li>○ Develop an action plan (created by Green Team with input from other Ministries and staff)</li> <li>○ Create opportunities for education</li> <li>○ Join in the work of other groups engaged in projects designed to protect the environment</li> <li>○ Participate in on-going projects that care for the environment</li> <li>○ Rally to support communities that are disproportionately impacted by the neglect of our environment</li> <li>○ Encourage the creation of legislation focused on combatting climate change and protecting the environment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Creation Justice Church Covenant and Action Plan are on pages 21 and 22 of the 2022 Annual Meeting packet</p> <p>◆ <i>Carrie Bruggers made a motion to Approve the Creation Justice Church covenant proposed by the Green Team and Endorse the Action Plan and the Pursuit of the designation of Creation Justice Church at the National Level</i></p> <p>◆ <i>Doug Heyboer seconded the motion to Approve the Creation Justice Church covenant proposed by the Green Team and Endorse the Action Plan and the Pursuit of the designation of Creation Justice Church at the National Level</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Green Team will use Creation Corner (the message included in each Friday email) regularly to focus on a particular area of environmental concern, schedule a speaker or movie night to bring people together, generate energy for creating a plan and taking action</li> <li>● Concept of the Green Team’s role as the Church’s “conscience, a source of good energy” – the members of the Church are the ones who take action to make a difference</li> <li>● Impact that being a Creation Justice Church will have on members is outlined in the Creation Justice Church covenant and in Pillar 4 of St. Pauls Strategic Plan</li> <li>● The 2022 budget did not attempt to predict the costs St. Pauls will incur as we begin the process of becoming a Creation Justice Church</li> <li>● All expenditures will be made according to the policy and practice of the Church</li> <li>● Sources of information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ UCC Website</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creation Corner, St. Pauls communication</li> <li>○ The Green Team's action plan</li> <li>○ The Pollinator, the UCC's Environmental Justice blog</li> <li>● The Creation Justice Church application process keeps the applicant's focus on action</li> <li>● There will be frequent communication with Brooks Berndt, Conference Minister spearheading Creation Justice Church at the National Level</li> <li>● The Church is required to meet the standards set out in the application</li> <li>● The Green Team will update the Congregation regarding status of the application process</li> </ul> <p>◆ <i>Wayne Parma called the question to a vote</i>  ◆ <i>Philip Smedley seconded the call</i>  ◆ <i>Vote on calling the question passed</i>  ◆ <i>The motion to Approve the Creation Justice Church covenant proposed by the Green Team and Endorse the Action Plan and the Pursuit of the designation of Creation Justice Church at the National Level passed</i></p>
<p><b>Nominating Committee Report and Election</b></p>	<p>Lorne Frank shared the names for election to the Church Council, Church Representatives, and Nomination Committee for 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Church Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Renae Bradshaw, Vice President, (2-year term)</li> <li>○ Sally Fletcher, Treasurer, (2-year term)</li> <li>○ Nate Combs, Church Building Ministry Chair ( 3-year term)</li> <li>○ Nathan Chamberlain, At-large Council Member (3-year term)</li> <li>○ Beatrice Jaji, At-large Council Member (3-year term)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Church Representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cindy Ball, representative to the Chicago Metropolitan Association and Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ (1-year term)</li> <li>○ Leah Mooney, representative to the Chicago Metropolitan Association and Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ (1-year term)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Nominating Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Char Damron</li> <li>○ Nancy Voigts Godinez</li> <li>○ Lorne Frank</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>◆ <i>Wendy Love made a motion to formally approve the nominees for Church Council, Church Representatives, and the Nominating Committee for 2023</i>  ◆ <i>Lindy McGuire seconded the motion to formally approve the nominees for Church Council, Church Representatives, and the Nominating Committee for 2023</i>  ◆ <i>The motion to formally approve the nominees for Church Council, Church Representatives, and the Nominating Committee for 2023 passed.</i></p>
<p><b>Questions from the Floor</b></p>	<p>The expense for hiring a 3rd party consultant to work with the HR Task Force</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Was not included in the 2022 budget</li> <li>● Church Council granted approval for this special expenditure</li> <li>● The money wasn't spent last year.</li> <li>● The matter will likely be brought back to the Church Council for a vote to approve that expense as a non-budgeted item when the bids come in.</li> <li>● The money could come out of the Pandemic Fund.</li> </ul> <p>The \$30,000 in legal fees is to defend the Congregation during the process of separating with Sarah.</p>

The job description for the third pastor is almost ready and will be shared with the Congregation as soon as it is. The open position will be posted soon, perhaps as early as next week.

The rationale for changing the division of responsibilities among the 3 pastors evolved as a result of Pastor Matt's work with the Children and Youth Ministries Task Force

- The candidate pool for the new job will be better if the job is not limited to working with children and youth
- Since we are committed to hiring a woman, we want to avoid any appearance that "taking care of the children is women's work"
- Working directly with children has been an eye-opening experience for Pastor Matt
- The new arrangement of responsibilities will create the opportunity for each of the 3 pastors to create deep relationships with the children and youth of the Church
- We are considering creating a Task Force that will meet regularly to ensure that the new arrangement for the sharing of pastoral responsibilities remains fully integrated.

The sale of St. Pauls House to the current owner:

- Changed the name to "Paul House"
- Several artifacts meaningful to St. Pauls UCC have been gifted to the Church by the new/current owner
  - Some artifacts are still in storage at St. Pauls and need to be moved to appropriate places in the Church
- Other artifacts that hold meaning for St. Pauls UCC were part of the sale of St. Pauls House and therefore belong to the new/current owner. They are not for sale at this time.

The most recent GPS survey concluded in the last week and therefore has not been analyzed in detail

Big takeaways from an overview of the responses to the survey:

- 325 people responded to the survey at the beginning of the Pandemic
- 152 people responded to this most recent survey
  - There were very few responses from households with children ages 0-18. We need to find these families and reconnect with them
- Respondent are moving toward "doing" something, being actively engaged in social ministry rather than participating in a study group
- Desire for connection was expressed often
- There was a large cluster of responses showing interest in the Choir
- There were no other sizeable clusters of interest in an activity The detailed analysis of the survey will be shared with the Congregation and inform the process of reestablishing meaningful connections

Two of the three "music" stained-glass windows are being replaced

- The original grouping had been composed of Gregorian Chanters, Palestrina, and Bach
- The new grouping will be composed of Mahalia Jackson, Tommy Dorsey, and Bach
- The new windows have been created to look as though they have always been there
- The unveiling will be May 15 – an announcement will be going out to the Congregation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tommy Dorsey’s grandson has accepted the Church’s invitation to be part of the celebration on May 15</li> <li>● Mahalia Jackson was a member of the Greater Salem Missionary Baptist Church, whose members will be invited to be part of the celebration on May 15</li> <li>● Matt thanked Kurt Hansen for the inspiration and for taking the lead in making thoughtful, meaningful change</li> </ul> <p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Church needs to reach out with the intention to connect with people living at Lincoln Commons and in other parts of the neighborhood</li> <li>● Thank you notes to members who make pledges to St. Pauls need to be written at a time that honors the gift and fits in with the Giving Campaign.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p>	<p>Ben thanked Lindy McGuire, Toby Rogers, Philip Smedley, Michael Sanders, and Donn Schimp for their commitment and service to the Church</p> <p>Matt thanked Ben for his commitment and leadership</p> <p>A special thanks to Michael Sanders – financial giving to the Church increased during his tenure as Giving Chair, in spite of the Pandemic</p>
<p><b>Lord’s Prayer and Adjournment</b></p>	<p>The meeting adjourned at 12:27 PM</p> <p>Matt led the Congregation in the Lord’s Prayer, an annual tradition since the founding of the Church</p>

*A tally of electronic voting recorded by Brian Hafner and Jim Alrutz is attached to this report*

# Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald Annual Report

Dear St. Pauls,

As we look toward our 180th year as a church, and I enter my eleventh as your Senior Pastor, I am full of hope and gratitude for St. Pauls. We are on the other side of the Covid 19 pandemic. It feels good to breathe a sigh of relief. I have not wanted to dwell on this publicly, but the pandemic posed a real threat to our church. When a voluntary organization is forced to cease operations, its future is imperiled. If a church wasn't on sure footing before the pandemic struck, the last three years could prove devastating. Nationally, nearly 200 churches in the UCC have closed since 2017. Today, more than 60% of churches in our denomination worship with fewer than fifty people in attendance each week.

We are not immune to these trends. Indeed, 2021 and 2022 found us suffering at their hands. Our pledging households dropped by nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  to fewer than 170. Covid restrictions capped in person attendance at fifty, and many weeks we saw even fewer people in the pews.

At the time I wrote, "God will put our pandemic years to good use. He will use our response to the pandemic to make St. Pauls a stronger, more blessed place." This was an aspirational statement! I was going on faith! We had hope for St. Pauls, but nothing was assured.

Our hope did not mislead us! St. Pauls is up and off the mat, our head is clear, we are breathing deeply, and finding more energy with every Sunday morning. Worship attendance is on the rise, regularly matching or increasing our 2019 numbers when virtual attendees are included in the count. Bible off Broadway rallied dozens and dozens of young children and galvanized our Sunday School program. A huge thank you to Jana O'Brien, Pastor Jeff, Kecia Waldschmidt, the many others who made that production such a wonderful celebration of our past and future. Our last two New Member classes held more than a dozen people in each session. Thanks to Jack Lyons, his Giving Team, and your generosity, our pledges roared back from fewer than 170 to more than 240, an increase of 70 pledges in a single year. Two weeks ago, the choir stalls could not have held another singer! These numbers are meaningful because they tell the story of a resurgent church.

So, 2022 found us hopeful and relieved. It also found us grieving. Tom Henry's death marks a significant change in St. Pauls history. When we include more than a decade of faithful attendance as a retiree, Tom was at the center of our life together for nearly fifty years. I cannot be the only one who asked "What will St. Pauls be without Tom?" And I cannot be the only one who quickly realized this was a nonsensical question. Tom was shaped by our church, and he shaped it in turn. Our worship is imbued with his creativity. Our welcome reflects his inclusive hospitality. Our character carries his good humor, and our pews remain full of people he loved and served. In many different ways, Tom is still with us. I continue to thank God for giving St. Pauls such a faithful pastor, and for giving me such an extraordinary, humble and gifted predecessor.

Speaking of ministerial colleagues, future generations of St. Pauls children, families, and church members will know 2022 as the year we called Rev. Liz Nickerson to our pastoral team. Jeff and I are both delighted to have Liz as a colleague. We are off to a great start. I cannot wait to see how Liz's faith and creativity impact St. Pauls in the coming years. Many thanks to the search committee who led the effort to discern our call to Liz. Members included Sharon Collins, Nancy Curotto, Justin Hartanov, Renea Bradshaw, and Ben Emmrich.

A highlight of 2022 was the good work done by our Human Resources Task Force. I am deeply grateful to Karen Lyons and Maddy Lockhart in particular. Their hard work, and the focused dedication of Karen's team of volunteers are already making St. Pauls an even better employer. All of us who work for the church are blessed by the patience and expertise of Karen, Jen Luerssen, Eric Simonton, and Jim Alrutz.

In 2022 I took on new pastoral responsibilities and set others aside. I began serving on the UCAN Board of Directors and Program Sub-Committee. I am glad to do this work, but am much more excited by another new role. As part of our new division of pastoral responsibilities, I began teaching the High School Sunday School Class with David Burnett. This has been such a joyful experience! St. Pauls is home to gifted, curious, and faithful teenagers. Another wonderful experience was leading our "Bonhoeffer in a Year" sessions. Indeed, this deep dive into Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and theology with so many of the gifted readers in our church stands out as one of the best experiences I have had as an ordained minister.

In many ways, 2022 was a year to gather ourselves, catch our breath, come back to church, and simply be together in the presence of the risen Christ. Knowing St. Pauls, and knowing Jesus' call to "follow me" I don't believe we will not be stationary for long. As I look ahead, I see real challenges and great opportunities before us. We remain determined to make our building accessible. The pandemic blocked our plans. 2023 will find us hard at work, discerning the best way to make our building reflect our spirit. We will answer other pressing questions in the year ahead. How can we re-engage our love of service? What is the best way to work with UCAN and Lincoln Park Community Services? How can we best meet the needs of our hungry and housing insecure neighbors? Can Little Lights continue to grow? What shape will the Sunday School take? How must we change in order to remain one of the few thriving progressive churches in Chicago? Can we find a way to invite the world to church without sacrificing our "think for yourself" liberalism?

I know that God will guide us to the right answers.

My confidence comes from my strong faith in Her guidance, and from my great respect for our church leaders. St. Pauls remains blessed by a remarkable staff, and a gifted, dedicated group of lay-leaders. In the United Church of Christ, a congregation needs both in order to thrive. My gratitude for Kurt, Kevin, Brendan, Fernando, Ramiro, Louis, Maddy, Claire, Erin, Danielle, Liz, and Jeff runs deep. Our President Ben Emmrich enters his second term today, after giving St. Pauls two years of gracious, strong leadership. Ben makes big decisions well because he is a gifted listener. We are blessed by his dedication, and knack for seeing what's coming over the horizon. Our Treasurer, Sally Fletcher has solved budget woes, assembled a terrific committee and worked tirelessly to help the staff and congregation better understand our financial position.. Of course strong lay-leaders are the reflection of a generous and faithful congregation. Thank you, all of you, for being St. Pauls! After ten years, my work as Senior Pastor feels fresh and life-giving. The joy I find serving St. Pauls only grows.

Our future is bright!  
God is good!  
Christ is Risen!  
Matt Fitzgerald  
Senior Pastor

# Facilities Ministry

The last year has been busy for St. Pauls facilities maintenance and improvements, with much thanks to Fernando, Maddy, and everybody else who has helped improve the quality of our building.

Completed projects include:

- Gym Roof repaired, with new scuppers and repaired gutters to improve drainage on the East side of St. Pauls.
- New door windows installed in Pastors Matt and Jeff's offices
- Lobby furniture purchased, including seating pads for fixed benches
- New carpet for Pastor Liz's office
- Updated locks/security and remote entry system for the building
- Repairing the sagging steps and front porch of the Parsonage
- Replacing a faulty window in the Parsonage
- New Furnace for the Parsonage

With the roof repair, we are coming closer to healing the damaged parts of our building exterior that were inspected in our 2016 building envelope engineering study. We are continuing to repair our exterior by planning for tuckpointing and limestone repair on all four sides of our building in 2024.

The projects we are planning for 2023 are:

- Gym Ceiling/Wall repair from water damage
- Gym lighting updates (paid for in part by a generous targeted donation from our Pickleball players)
- Boiler Rehaul (required every 8 years)
- High School/Youth Classroom remodel to create a welcoming and inviting place for our young adults to use.
- ADA Stair Lift to the Chapel/Parlor level repaired, for use until the Capital Campaign is complete.
- Parsonage surprises

Large projects we are deferring until 2024, and hopefully planning in coordination with the Capital Campaign, are:

- Tuckpointing and Limestone repair on our building envelope
- Sanctuary Lighting design + update
- Plaster/paint repair in the Chapel, hallways, and main entrance to St. Pauls.
- Cleaning/Maintenance of our Sanctuary Altar and Chancel wood work
- Refurbishment and display of Stained Glass rescued from St. Paul's House
- Coordinated facilities expenses with the Capital Campaign, like outdoor furniture, landscaping, and elevator maintenance.

In our 2023 operating budget, I am asking for \$32,000 for the general maintenance of SPUC and the Parsonage. This keeps us in line with previous years operating budgets, but also shifts a lot of our 2023 project expenses to the Knaphurst Fund to help our projected 2023 overall budget deficit.

In 2022, we came in under our operating budget for facilities (\$35,000), but only with the help of the Knaphurst Fund for our large projects (\$109,000 in withdrawals). With the future projects we know about (above), we can predict that the Knaphurst Fund will be depleted within 4-5 years. Our plan for 2023 and 2024 is to continue using the Knaphurst Fund for needed major projects, but also start to plan for beyond the Funds depletion by starting a Facilities Reserves that can be contributed to annually, and offset the impact of large projects in the future. This fund will not be started until after the Capital Campaign is complete, so we can continue to have congregational discussions about our building and how to fund its maintenance.

Nate Combs  
Facilities Ministry, Chair

# Finance Ministry

## 2022 Operating Results:

**Operating Income** exceeded budget by 14%. Gifts from the estates of Marilyn Parsons (\$360K), Lucille Rossberger (\$10K) and Nina Whitsel (\$10K) combined with the ~ \$185K in PPP loan forgiveness bolstered our finances while recovering from the impact of the pandemic.

Through prudent management, **operating expenses** were 6% less than budget; resulting in a surplus of ~ \$298K

	Budget		Actual	Difference
Operating Income:				
Non Recurring Income	\$ 360,000		\$ 565,450	+57%
Giving Income	981,300		991,873	+ 1%
Use of St. Pauls Bldg Income	104,200		97,449	- 6%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,445,500</b>		<b>\$ 1,654,772</b>	<b>+14%</b>
Operating Expenses	\$ 1,441,025		\$ 1,356,830	-6%
<b>Net Surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>\$ 4,475</b>		<b>\$ 297,942</b>	

## Investment Funds:

Since 2013, United Church Funds (UCF) has managed St. Pauls investments. UCF offers a range of professionally managed, diversified and socially responsible investment funds exclusively to United Church of Christ Churches and ministries. For more information: [www.ucfunds.org](http://www.ucfunds.org).

St. Pauls Finance Committee monitors our portfolio monthly and our annual review with Matt Wagner, VP Institutional Relationships was held 1-17-23. St. Pauls funds declined by 12% in 2022; which is better than the global market decline of 18%. The balance of our investment accounts as of 12-31-22 was \$2,872,050 of which \$1,069,772 are restricted/designated funds (see below). Our holdings are about 15% in cash and fixed income funds and 85% in a Balanced Fund account.

## Restricted/Designated Funds:

~\$111K of Knaphurst funds were used towards HVAC and roof repairs, new lobby furniture, security system upgrades and new carpet in Pastor Liz's office. ~ \$34K was spent from other restricted funds appropriately. The balance of restricted funds as of 12-31-22 was \$1,069,772.

## Other Notes:

- Updated our tracking of restricted funds as directed in the 2020 audit. The finance committee monitors monthly.
- Sassetti LLC. (CPA) completed a Review of the 2021 financials this year. No material findings.
- Conducted Financial Review and St. Pauls Finance 101 at open congregational workshop in October 2022.



**2023 Budget:**

**Income** - While our Giving and Use of Church incomes continue to trend upwards, we are counting on significant income from Estate Gifts and a 4% draw from our investment account. The last draw from investment funds was in 2020. We have received a \$125K gift from Hazel Vespa's estate and are expecting another distribution (\$160K+) from Marilyn Parson's estate in 2023. And we are thrilled to have summer camp return!

**Expenses** - Overall a 20% increase in expenses from 2022. Increases in Staff and Administrative expenses account for the greatest impact to the overall budget. The increase is not from an increase in the number of staff, rather a reexamination of how our social justice values are reflected in our own employment practices. In keeping with the UCC's commitment to just employment and fair pay, three employees were reclassified as benefits-eligible and will be enrolled in our benefit program. An almost 9% increase in health care premiums also contributed to the 24% increase in Staff and Administrative expenses. An increase in operating expenses for our music program reflects a similar investment, as some of our musicians will be receiving their first rate increases since 2015.

**Restricted Funds:** From the Knaphurst Funds: budgeting \$50 K for the boiler, \$19,500 to upgrade Gym lights to LED, \$10K to redo the High School classroom. \$8K towards a commission for an anthem and organ and piano maintenance from Estate gifts left for music programs.

See attached worksheet for operating results and budget

**Committee Members:**

Maggie Arden (Giving)  
Sonya Brizzolara  
Carrie Bruggers (Giving)  
Hannah Basil Bryant

Larry Damron  
Sally Fletcher, Chair  
Ron Koepke  
Steve Garrett (Giving)

Jack Lyons (Giving Chair)  
Toby Rogers  
Sandi Weiskirch  
Bob Wild

Staff: Matt Fitzgerald, Maddy Lockhart

# 2023 Budget Proposal

	HIST ORICAL				Budget	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change from 2022
Operating Income:						
Non Recurring Income	\$ 147,917	\$ 96,000	\$ 328,930	\$ 565,450	400,000	- 29%
Giving Income	1,039,969	1,021,289	1,027,729	991,873	1,070,000	+ 8%
Use of St. Pauls Income	150,116	7,155	100,936	97,449	137,650	+ 41%
Total Income:	\$ 1,338,002	\$ 1,124,444	\$ 1,457,595	\$ 1,654,772	1,607,650	-3%
Operating Expenses:						
Staff & Administration	\$ 1,046,464	\$ 975,973	\$ 1,026,775	\$ 1,012,543	\$ 1,252,915	+ 24%
Building Operations	176,961	142,746	141,391	178,738	177,500	- 1%
Worship	15,706	9,650	12,584	11,619	18,500	+59%
Music	62,562	50,561	71,634	67,690	81,225	+20%
Invitational/Outreach	16,021	679	2,065	8,244	9,750	+25%
Children & Youth Ministry	31,738	14,053	5,961	13,234	23,950	+89%
Activism & Advocacy	78,860	67,827	66,382	64,762	66,850	+3%
Total Expenses:	\$ 1,428,312	\$ 1,261,489	\$ 1,326,792	\$ 1,356,830	\$ 1,630,690	+ 20%
Net Surplus/(deficit) :	\$ (90,310)	\$ (137,045)	\$ 130,803	\$ 297,942	\$ (23,040)	

# Giving Report

The theme for the 2023 annual giving drive was Rejoice, Remember, Renew!

The specific goals we wanted to achieve were to substantially increase the number of pledges, the dollar amount pledged by members and friends of St. Pauls, and to let people know that we appreciate their giving commitment whether it be financial, time/talent/service or planned intention to give to St. Pauls by future bequest.

As with prior years, we have endeavored to make it as easy as possible for members and friends of St. Pauls to make pledges and let the church know future intentions by including a bequest section to the pledge card. This year we took pledges over the phone at the annual Phone-A-Thon and by follow-on emails/texts/phone calls. These actions increased the number of pledges by more than 10%.

Attendance at St. Pauls services, whether in person or via Zoom is recovering from the restrictions due to Covid 19. While the size of the congregation is not as large as it was before Covid 19, the fact that people are coming back to church has provided a lift to the annual giving drive and helped make it more successful than it would have otherwise been.

Results as of 2-17-23	2022	YTD 2023	Change 2023 vs 2022	% Change 2023 vs 2022
# Pledges/Giving Commitments	172	240	68	39.5%
Total Giving Commitment	\$ 697,775	\$ 874,985	\$ 177,210	25.4%

At this time, I believe most pledges have been received and we are grateful to all who have pledged and given for this year!

With gratitude and appreciation!

Jack Lyons  
Giving Committee, Chair

# Nominating Committee Report for 2023

The following names will be submitted for election at the annual meeting:

## **Church Council:**

- Ben Emmrich, *Vice President (2 year term)*
- Karen Lyons, *Secretary (2 year term)*
- Jenny Benefield, *Care and Connection Ministry Chair (3 year term)*
- Annie Johnson, *At-large Council Member (3 year term)*

## **Church Representatives**

- Rick Peterson, *representative to the Chicago Metropolitan Association and Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ (1 year term)*

## **Nominating Committee for 2024**

- Nancy Voigts Godinez
- Deon Fayhee
- Creighton Hartanov

# Pastor Jeff Carlson Annual Report

After preparing through the fall of 2021 to receive them, the Khaksar family arrived on January 14th from Afghanistan. Our co-sponsorship of them through Refugee One lasted for most of 2022, with a team of volunteers and mentors led by Mark Pellegrino. Later in the year they relocated to Missouri so they could be close to family that had also come to the US as refugees.

The Polar Peace March was moved to Palm Sunday due to COVID. We raised over \$25K for UCAN plus a grant for \$50K came in from an anonymous donor. It was great to do the march in nice weather! I had many conversations with church members and staff about it being time to end the march on a high note due to decreased participation. A consensus is reached to look for new ways to support and promote UCAN at St. Pauls and keep our relationship with them strong.

In June, while organized behind the scenes, 10 youth and 5 adults spent a week with Appalachia Service Project making homes warmer, safer and dryer. Our generous congregation donated \$10,000 to send them on this trip. Thank you to all who contributed. And many thanks to David and Robin Burnett, Kelli Fitzgerald, Sue Finkle and Gerald Wilk for being team leaders. Last fall planning began for the 2023 trip when we were introduced to a new UCC/Disciples of Christ youth service and learning program called 'Be the Neighbor.' To support this effort, we signed up for a week in Tucson working with immigrant ministries.

Led by Gerald Wilk's construction skills, we once again participated in Rebuilding Together in April, doing rehab work on a home in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood. In December we attended the event where Gerald, along with Sue Finkle, chose the home for this year.

I met with the St. Pauls Anti-Racism Cluster (SPARC) throughout the year. We attended Lighthouse Foundation gatherings, had a book discussion on reparations of *The Road To Healing*, led by Jim Brandt, another one on gentrification in Lincoln Park. I invited the author of *The Battle of Lincoln Park*, Daniel Kay Hertz, to present at St. Pauls and then we followed up with a look at how St. Pauls was responding to the community changes at that time. SPARC members continued to strengthen ties with Pilgrim Baptist Church members. Many thanks to Cindy Ball for her dedicated leadership of SPARC.

St. Pauls Social, led by Jen Luerssen and her enthusiasm kept adults connected. We planned several events throughout the year that you'll find in Wendy's report.

I continue to be pastoral staff for our Stephen Ministry, but like all of our ministries it is a team. Marti Pechnyo has kept us organized and encouraged, and other ministry leaders are Rick Peterson, Karen Lyons and Joe JaQuay - along with them is a team of 10 Stephen Ministers. They meet weekly with their care receivers and monthly for peer supervision.

Weekly Wednesday Bible Study at noon continues. In 2022 we studied the Gospel of Luke, Ruth and Advent texts.

A team began work in November on getting a full Bible Off Broadway production going for January 2023. Jana O'Brien agreed to direct and write the script, while the rest of us on the team worked on songs, choreography, costumes, set, etc... It was a great way to end the year looking ahead with hope. But the production report will have to wait until next year's report!

We said goodbye to members who died this year. I officiated at the services of Maija Kroeger, Bob Kuba, Sharon Phillips and Gabriel Cabrera-Schram.

Jeff Carlson  
Associate Pastor

# Pastor Liz Nickerson Annual Report

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19

These words from the prophet Isaiah describe well our world as we are rising out of the pandemic and building our future. This is an exciting time for the church as we are starting new programs and gathering again in community. As I write this report, I have been at St. Pauls just over four months. I view my arrival here as one of the new things that God is doing. I am overjoyed to be here and serving at St. Pauls has exceeded my expectations!

In my short time here I have preached once a month, presided over communion, baptized children and participated in funerals. I have prayed with members in hospice and visited with members in their homes and coffee shops. I led an Advent Taize service and will lead a Lenten one. I hope this service will become a more regular part of our worship.

The children’s ministry at St. Pauls is coming alive after the pandemic. I am working with the Youth Education committee, Erin and Danielle and we will be incorporating a new curriculum that will be more engaging for our children and which has a lot of resources to support parents. We are still in need of Sunday school teachers and volunteers to provide babysitting. I will also be developing a comprehensive timeline so we have a trajectory for youth ministry that begins with birth and is integrated to age 18. The key focus for this ministry will be to Love God with all our heart, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourself.

We had a very successful Halloween party, Little Lights art walk/Christmas sing along and Cookies with Santa event. Out of a Little Lights cookie exchange came the idea for winter open gyms where parents can socialize as their kids run around. We had a successful one in January, are combining February’s with a Little Lights open house and have another scheduled for March. We have established a Little Lights board which is meeting monthly. Our goal is to continue to integrate Little Lights and St. Pauls children ministry with many combined events and develop age appropriate service projects for families to participate in. We will host a parent nights out/youth mission trip fundraiser on March 9. A moms’ group is also being developed. BOB was a huge success so special thanks to Jana O’Brien, Jeff Carlson and the entire BOB team!!

Summer camp, this year will combine elements of Vacation Bible School with regular camp. It will be called Compassion camp and children will explore what all living things need to live: shelter, food, water, air and community. It will focus on how we can have compassion for the earth and each other. Youth will serve as junior counselors.

I will also be serving as pastoral liaison to the live streaming/digital ministry team. That team has lots of great ideas to improve the streaming experience and further develop a digital ministry at St. Pauls.

St. Pauls has a bright future! God is doing new things here as we pull out of the pandemic. Look, do you see them? What will your role be? Please let us pastors know how you want to contribute. I am honored to serve with you and excited that working together, we can build exciting things!

Liz Nickerson  
Associate Pastor

# Activism and Advocacy Ministry

## OUTREACH & BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE:

The following benevolence grants were awarded in 2022:

- Lincoln Park Community Services \$5,000
  - A Just Harvest \$5,000
  - The Night Ministry \$2,500
  - Three Angels Children's Relief, Haiti \$6,000
  - The Resurrection Project \$4,000
  - RIP Medical Debt Relief \$5,000
  - UCC Hurricane Relief (Fiona and Ian) \$1,000
  - UCC Join the Movement (racial/social equity) \$1,000
- TOTAL \$29,500**

Historic Relationships funded in 2022:

- Chicago Theological Seminary \$1,500
  - Chicago Renewal Society \$1,500
  - Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches \$150
  - IL Conference Registration Fee \$100
  - National Gospel Music Museum \$200
- TOTAL \$3,450**

Specific Need/In Kind Donations approved by O&B in 2022:

- RefugeeOne Coat Drive – 10 coats valued at \$400
- Three Angels medical and hygiene items – valued at \$390
- Khaksar family move assistance – truck rental \$800

## **TOTAL O&B GRANTS AND DONATIONS FOR 2022 \$34,540**

In addition to grants and donations approved by the O&B committee, St. Pauls collected a special offering for Neighbors in Need of \$1,612 and also collected \$2,680 for A Just Harvest through the Birthday Fund. Our Christmas Eve offering as well as proceeds from the Advent Market and Wreath Sale all went to UCAN for a total of \$14,693.

Our congregation has focused the bulk of its advocacy and activism energy in the following areas during 2022:

- Refugee support
- Environmental activism and green education
- Social justice and racial equity
- Anti-violence and support of UCAN
- Supporting individuals in need of food, clothing, and housing support

O&B would like to foster a deeper connection between the St. Pauls community and the organizations we support financially, so members of the committee offered informational Mission Moments throughout the first half of 2022 during Sunday worship services. In November, the O&B Committee hosted an informational session for the congregation with leaders from Three Angels Children's Relief that operates in Haiti. Mary Anne Simons and Lisa Berg shared information about the political situation and events leading up to the current humanitarian crisis in Haiti and discussed how recent events have impacted Three Angels' operations. We discussed the best ways for individuals and organizations to provide support.

### **REFUGEEONE FAMILY SPONSORSHIP** (Mark Pellegrino)

In the fall of 2021 through summer of 2022 the St. Pauls community co-sponsored the Khaksars with RefugeeOne. The Khaksars are an Afghan refugee family of seven who arrived on January 14. Significant fundraising, planning, and acquisition of apartment supplies occurred in 2021. During January, many members of the St. Pauls community were involved in cleaning and furnishing the Khaksar's apartment, welcoming them at the airport and cooking food familiar to them.

Ongoing connection with the family continued through the first half of 2022 as our St. Pauls mentoring team met with the Khaksars over 3 dozen times to help them acclimate to the city. This included things like helping them understand how to pay bills, getting their cable set up, and teaching them how to use appliances in the kitchen. We showed them how to use the food pantries in the neighborhood. The team also spent time with the family playing games, helping with homework, and taking them to the lakefront. We helped them get air conditioners when the weather turned warm and arranged bikes, helmets, and locks for them. In addition, there were many texts and phone calls (Google Translate made this possible!) to help the family whenever something came up that they didn't understand or needed help with. In late June the family paid a visit to coffee hour at St. Pauls where they met many of the people who supported them behind the scenes. On July 20th we had our last official visit with the family. We agreed to keep in touch periodically and help when needed, if possible.

In October the family decided to move to St. Louis seeking a lower cost of living and because they have several friends who live there. St. Pauls provided a grant to help cover the cost of the moving truck and helped drive to St. Louis with the family to help them relocate. The family reports they are happy there.

### **SARAH'S SIBS**

During the first half of 2022, volunteers for Sarah's Sibs made lunches every Wednesday at St. Pauls as an outreach to those in need. Client numbers dwindled significantly in 2022, and although the team of volunteers hoped to see an increase in the warmer summer months, they actually saw fewer guests than they had during winter months. Sarah's Sibs have sadly decided in July 2022 that the program has come to an end based on the lack of interest, but are hopeful that the lack of guests indicates improved availability of alternative meal options for our client base.

### **UCAN** (Jeff Carlson and Carrie Bruggers)

The 8th annual Polar Peace March was postponed to Palm Sunday due to COVID. It was a beautiful day for a walk. The march raised nearly \$25,000 and there was an additional \$50,000 grant donated from an anonymous donor, with a total raised of \$79,423. UCAN chaplain Will Hall preached and the new CEO Christa Hamilton spoke at St. Pauls for the first time. A lack of participation in the fundraising aspect of the event - only ten people registered - indicated to St. Pauls volunteers and staff that it was time to retire the march in 2022 on this high note. St. Pauls will look for new ways to promote and support the work of UCAN in the future.

Members of the St. Pauls congregation participated in additional fundraising to support UCAN. In the fall we fulfilled 97 wishlists for the UCAN Gift Train, which included gift cards and registry items for a value of about \$4,900 donated by St. Pauls households. Without a 2023 Polar Peace March, O&B decided to raise additional funds totaling approximately \$14,700 for UCAN through several initiatives. The St. Pauls Advent Market held in December benefitted UCAN. About \$2,000 was raised along with the camaraderie of putting this together and the actual market day joy. Proceeds from the annual St. Paul Wreath sale of approximately \$1,800 also benefitted UCAN this year as did the St. Pauls Christmas Eve offering which made up the remaining \$10,900.



**GREEN TEAM** (Rick Peterson and Ninon Freeman)

St. Pauls established the Green Team in 2020 to help the congregation plan and take actions to implement our calling “to care for God’s creation.” Indeed, at our 2022 annual meeting, the Congregation authorized the Green Team to take steps to apply to the UCC for St. Pauls to be recognized as an official “Creation Justice” church. This process is on-going.

The Green Team has taken seriously its task of keeping the congregation informed of environmental and climate change issues. In addition to its weekly Creation Corner in the worship bulletin and the bulletin board outside the social hall, the Green Team has encouraged our pastoral staff to regularly refer to environmental justice concerns in their sermons and prayers. Further, In May 2022, the Green Team sponsored a well-received seminar on plastic pollution in the Chicago area led by Dr. Tim Hoellein of Loyola University.

The Green Team has also been involved in planning a number of projects in the last year. Pollinator gardens have been planted at the entrance of parking lot on Kemper and the Memorial Garden at the Orchard entrance to the church building. Beginning in November, the Green Team has been featuring recipes with less or no animal protein during Social Hour to further introduce the Congregation to healthy diets, an endeavor that is both environmentally positive and delicious. An exploration of the St. Pauls building becoming solar powered - and possibly solar power producing - is on-going, hastened by very positive recent changes in Illinois law as well as Federal Legislation through the Inflation Reduction Act. In September, Ninon Freeman and Rick Peterson assumed the leadership of the Green Team upon the retirement of Jan Fraccaro and Joe Womack.

**SPARC** (Cindy Zinn Ball)

Early in 2022, SPARC completed our Racial Justice Resource list for the website, available at <https://spucc.org/serve-justice/>, and collected adult and children's hard copy books for our rolling Justice Library, found most Sundays at Coffee Hour. Kids books have been particularly popular. We continue to offer additional education on both the historical and current struggle for racial equity, plus calls to action, in the Join the Movement bulletin section. We chose Reparations as our theme for the year, and held two related 2-session book discussions. Jim Brandt presented The Road to Healing by Ken Woodley, which chronicled reparations for a group of students in Virginia who had been denied education for 4 years through Jim Crow policies. Jeff Carlson coordinated a presentation of The Battle of Lincoln Park, led by author Daniel K. Hertz, which chronicled the gentrification of our neighborhood in the 20th century and its impact on earlier residents. Both of these book studies were well attended. Jeff followed up by sharing his research of St. Pauls archives to explore what role we played in that era. We have also been building relationships beyond our walls. After representatives from Pilgrim Baptist Church accepted St. Pauls invitation to celebrate the installation of our music windows, they reciprocated by inviting us to a spring celebration and fundraiser for the National Museum of Gospel Music, their summer Friends and Family picnic, and a December gospel concert. We, in turn, hosted them at our Oktoberfest. We look forward to continuing to build our friendship. SPARC invited organizers from LiveFreeChicago to provide a teach-in on the pending city ordinance to create an Office of Gun Violence Prevention, which was well attended. This culminated in the Council approving official endorsement of the ordinance by St. Pauls.

**UCC Lay Delegates** (Leah Mooney and Cindy Ball)

The Executive Council of the UCC Conference has focused on building capacity in staffing, funding, governance and finance to achieve their mission while concurrently building a culture of transparency, trust, broad engagement, innovation and anti-racism. Cleaning up Conference finances has been a major focus for the last year with the aim of greater transparency, consistent reporting, and clarity for improved decision making. They have implemented REALM accounting software, right-sized the chart of accounts, and improved the documentation process for reporting credit card expenses. They plan to hire an accounting firm and an audit firm. Council has begun a process of governance renewal, working toward updated constitution, by-laws, policies, and procedures. A Goal Setting Task Force was established to identify goals and action steps to achieve the overall goal. After receiving feedback from around the conference, an initial document will be drafted for the 2023 Annual Celebration.

**Community Engagement Program (CEP)** (Jennifer Kew)

In 2022 CEP volunteers provided laundry services on Saturday mornings to street-based guests. We determined that there was no longer enough demand to continue the laundry program in June of 2022 and suspended it at that point. Throughout 2022, CEP volunteers prepared meals at St. Pauls to deliver to the 600 W Fullerton Lincoln Park Community Services shelter location approximately once per month. We are hoping to start partnering with LPCS again in the near future when they have sufficient staff to provide case management and support services so that we can resume CEP meals onsite at St. Pauls. We may need additional help from members of the St. Pauls congregation with coordination of the support services and meal volunteer aspects of CEP to successfully relaunch meals at St. Pauls and we will need to fully reengage our volunteer base to cook for and serve our guests.

**Rebuilding Together** (Gerald Wilk)

12 St. Pauls members and friends participated in a day of service event in Englewood on 4/30. Our team included both a wall repair/painting crew and basement/yard cleanup crew. Gerald Wilk organized a large crew of contractors who helped with plumbing, bathroom, repairs, etc.

**Sharing The Table of Jesus**

On communion Sundays in 2022 the St. Pauls community collects food in the Narthex that we donate to the Common Pantry, a food pantry, was founded in 1967 to combat hunger and food insecurity in northern neighborhoods of Chicago.

Throughout 2022 St. Pauls attendance and participation in activities has rebounded, showing that we continue to be a strong, vibrant, and active congregation committed to living our faith in an age of injustice. Our St. Pauls community is working to shape the world around us through educational programs, volunteering activities, and financial support. I am thankful to everyone in the St. Pauls community who has contributed to our activism and advocacy work in 2022 as leaders, volunteers, and donors. I look forward to what we can do together in 2023!

Submitted with faith and gratitude,  
Jennifer Kew  
Activism and Advocacy Ministry, Chair

# HR Task Force

The Human Resources Task Force (HRTF) was convened at the request of the SPUCC Executive Committee in January 2022.

Many thanks to the HRTF members whose work has been invaluable.

- Jim Alrutz
- Jen Luerssen
- Eric Simonton

Many thanks to Maddy Lockhart, our Director of Operations, who has played a key role in all aspects of the work being done.

The HRTF engaged the services of Artaisha C. Thompson, MBA, SPHR to complete the mandated work with the support and oversight of the HRTF.

Artaisha began her work June 1, 2022. With her guidance, and in conjunction with the Executive Committee as needed, we have:

- reviewed SPUCC current HR policies, procedures, and practices and brought them into alignment with 2023 employment standards.
- evaluated the existing HR management system and found that did not support the integration of all HR functions important to SPUCC.
- identified and purchased a robust HR management system that integrates all HR functions important to SPUCC.
  - trained employees in the use of the new system (Gusto).
- created or updated Staff and Clergy job descriptions to accurately reflect the work that is being done or needs to be done.
  - reviewed St. Pauls values and objectives to ensure that the work being done by our Clergy and Staff aligns with those values and objectives.
  - adjusted salaries as needed to acknowledge an employee's level of responsibility.
- corrected the practice of paying more than one hourly rate for any single employee.
- made adjustments to the "benefits eligibility" status of employees, as needed, in order to bring them into compliance.
- created a Performance Evaluation tool/system
  - trained Staff and Clergy in the use of the Performance Evaluation tools
  - Set a schedule for completing the first round of Annual Reviews
    - Self-Reflections – 95% complete
    - Supervisor Reflections – approximately 65% complete
    - Meetings between supervisor and employee – approximately 65% complete
- Created a new Employee Handbook that contains supporting documentation of the newly aligned policies and procedures. it is ready for review by our lawyer, Jeremy Glenn
- provided training for SPUCC Clergy and Staff in the use of the tools that support the updated policies, procedures, and practices.

Karen Lyons  
HR Task Force, Chair

# Little Lights Annual Report

## Focused Efforts

With the slow waning presence of the pandemic, our youth programs have maintained a steady increase over the past year. As more limitations and restraints were lifted, our possibilities expanded. I continued to teach the two year olds for our Little Lights morning classes throughout the week. My personal role evolved and became more-encompassing as I joyously accepted the new title and responsibilities as Director of Children's Education at St. Pauls UCC. This took into consideration the areas that needed to be sustained through the absence of a youth pastor, as well as the need for integration within all children's programming. From the minute that Pastor Liz Nickerson stepped through the doors in October, I knew our momentum would quickly gain speed. Along with fellow Little Lights teacher and Children's Program Coordinator, Danielle Mayfield, Pastor Liz, and myself formed the new and improved Children's Ministry Team.

2022 demonstrated an increase in effective communication. The Children's Ministry Team met weekly, teachers met monthly, and Little Lights Board met monthly. With Wayne Parman acting as our church liaison, we were a united front. I would like to personally thank Wayne, Liz, Danielle, and the Little Lights Board for their services and commitment to our mission.

## Accomplishments

- LL Student Update: 45 total students enrolled for the 2022-2023 year
  - Taking into consideration the fluctuation of a few students leaving or joining mid-school year
- Additional Staff: With the increase in students, we welcomed a new teacher to our Little Lights staff
- Profit: \$52,000
  - Taking into consideration the new payment plan options that spread payments over the academic year vs the fiscal year
- Zero transmission of COVID-19 within our program: due to the diligence of our families and teachers adhering & enforcing safety protocols. This is quite an amazing feat during a pandemic and navigating so many unknowns!
- Sunday School Participants: 114 registered children through December 2022

Throughout the ongoing pandemic, Little Lights remained strong. Our efforts to continue upholding the health and safety protocols allowed programming to consistently run. Over time we were able to stop requiring parents to fill out Daily Health Screener Form and/or uphold the Chicago Travel Advisory. Wearing facial masks became optional in March.

We followed updated precautions as we adapted to knowing COVID-19 is here to stay. In June, when the COVID-19 vaccine was approved by federal officials to children under 5, we knew there was light at the end of the tunnel.

I did my part to stay current with the proper guidelines. This included my participation and completion of the Power to the Parents Vaccine Advocate Program organized by the Chicago Department of Public Health Youth Settings Team. This served as a testament to my competence and mastery of COVID-19 concepts and knowledge with certificates presented in September 2022.

At that point, Sunday School was back in full swing, with several gracious volunteers enthusiastically ready to help. We are grateful for Mary Brown, Mary Frances Winking, Philip Smedley, Creighton Hartanov, Jennifer Heiney as they stepped forward to teach Sunday School. We also thank all of our Confirmation teachers. Highlights to kick off this occasion was the Sunday School Fair and Back to (Sunday) School & Bake Sale thanks to Pastor Matt's excitement to get things going again in the fall.

## Notable Activities

- Free playdates we hosted in January during the CPS days out
- Enrichment and lunch bunch extended programs for LL students
- Pastor Jeff visited Little Lights students and led a palm parade
- Ongoing crayon/marker recycling opportunity sponsored by Green Team and Little Lights
- Revitalization of the Youth & Family weekly newsletter email
- This incorporates Sunday School lessons and useful information including youth-related events.
- POLO: I made an effort to keep our POLO (Parents of Little Ones) Group going by overlapping Little Lights events with church events including the Easter Egg Hunt and Halloween party.
- Stay and Play Friday Playgroup: The intent of this free, drop-in playgroup is to help people meet each other, offer socialization for caregivers and children, as well as create a welcoming and inviting atmosphere to help bring awareness and encourage people to come to St. Pauls. Special thanks to Dodd Brown for being our designated volunteer gatekeeper, assisting several families with strollers and managing the lift for them as they enter and exit the building.
- CPR training for staff

## Happenings & Events

- January
  - CPS days out play dates in January
- March
  - UCAN Polar Peace March
  - Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences, conducted via Zoom
- April
  - Easter Egg Hunt
- May
  - Mini Bible off Broadway Lite
- June
  - End of the year playdate and picnic at Oz Park
- July
  - Little Lights Summer Camp
    - Ages 2-5
    - 4 weeks of indoor/outdoor fun with 24 total campers
- August
  - Welcome Days
- September
  - Back to School Events
    - Open gym and Playdates
    - Sunday School Fair
    - Back to (Sunday) School & Bake Sale
    - Cards for a Cause Fundraiser
- October
  - Oktoberfest: festive kid's corner complete with bouncy house, pumpkin painting, and more
  - Open House for current and prospective families
  - Halloween Party
- November
  - CPR Training
  - Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences: conducted both via Zoom & in-person
- December
  - Christmas and Art Show: Children perform songs in the sanctuary plus hymns accompanied by the organ. Artwork by the children displayed in the narthex and lobby hall. Individual canvases and class projects auctioned off.
  - Cookies with Santa: we were thrilled to bring this experience back!
  - Parents cookie swap

## **LL Fundraisers**

- T-Shirts (May): \$460
- Yearbooks (May): \$35
- Cards for a Cause Fundraiser (Oct): \$546
- Halloween Bake Sale (Oct): \$247
- Art Show (Dec): \$1,537
- Donation Total: \$2,825

## **Ongoing Communication**

- Weekly Teacher emails
- Weekly Children's Ministry Meetings
- Friday Newsletter: summarizing classroom activities with pictures highlighting the fun
- Monthly Teacher Meetings
- Monthly Little Lights Board meetings
- Little Lights website: [littleglightslp.org](http://littleglightslp.org)
- Little Lights Public Facebook page
- Little Lights Private Families group (daily photo posts of children in action)
- Little Lights Private Instagram account (daily photo posts of children in action)
- POLO Facebook Group: post information regarding events at St. Pauls

## **Expenses**

We are proud to report minimal expenses for supplies. Our teachers are exceptional about acquiring low-cost to free materials, furniture, toys, etc. We are always accepting donations from our families and put them to use accordingly.

## **Upcoming Goals**

- Increase awareness of our programs and offerings within neighbors/community with stronger efforts to promote information through more facets. For example, including upcoming events in the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce email to reach a wider audience.
- Create additional programs. Start by offering an afternoon class option. Consider a parent-tot class. Survey parents to assess the needs. Increase the overall students/attendees by including a wider age range.
- Create a new youth group with ample opportunities for bonding with peers and offering service experiences.
- Improve and create indoor/outdoor play areas. Update mats and equipment on the stage. Use the outdoor space to its fullest extent with a proper playspace
- Establish and plan out the logistics of a scholarship/assistance fund to offer the same opportunities for families who may benefit from discounts or reduced/free rates.
- Spearhead an ongoing social connection presence sharing names, faces, and stories of members of St. Pauls. This can be a combination of social media and hard copy materials as a more in-depth extension of photo directory available through Church Center.
- Establish a Little Lights alumni chapter and/or friends of St. Pauls group for ongoing connection.

I am grateful to be a part of the family at St. Pauls. The sounds and smiles of children fuel the soul.

Erin Fitzgerald  
Director of Children's Education