



Covenant Presbyterian Church

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



Learning God's Love, Living God's Love

Mission Statement:

Claimed and humbled by God's grace, we are disciples journeying in covenant with God and one another. Our disciple-forming community is called to worship and pray together; to cultivate deep and nurturing reciprocal relationships; to minister faithfully in our daily lives; and to warmly welcome all into our fellowship as we seek a Christ-centered life. We cannot journey alone; we need one another. Together, with hearts, minds, and arms wide open, we reach out to others in love.

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Pastor/Head of Staff

Pastor Charlie Berthoud

I give thanks to God for 2023! It was a good year for us at Covenant. Among MANY things to highlight, I want to focus on just five:

1) Celebration Sunday! After the long season of Covid isolation, we had a wonderful celebration in May with a beach theme, to recognize and re-welcome new members and families with baptisms since Covid began in early 2021.

We had cake, decorations, and festive beach clothes. We prayed for and gave thanks for new members and baptisms. I'm proud of how our congregation navigated Covid, welcoming new folks and continuing with our wonderful ministries. Thanks be to God.



2) Guatemala Youth Trip. In the long history of Covenant's connection with Guatemala there had never been a youth group trip until this past summer, when Bailey Green and I led a group of six teens and five adults. We interacted with kids and teens—playing soccer, visiting school, working side by side, meeting Santo Domingo scholarship students and more.

3) Seminary Students and Preachers: Several Covenant members have been taking seminary classes, and several of them have been preaching at small, under-staffed churches in the Madison area. This summer we had a very successful "Good News From the Pews" sermon series, featuring sermons from Covenant members.



4) Matthew 25: We continue to grow in our engagement with the M25 initiative, to focus on dismantling structural racism, eradicating systemic poverty, and enhancing congregational vitality. We were blessed with the presence of Rev. Dr. William Yoo (pictured), author of *What Kind of Christianity? A History of Slavery and Anti-Black Racism in the Presbyterian Church*

5) Staffing. It was wonderful to welcome Rev. Megan Berry to Covenant this summer, and I'm excited to welcome Rev. Jess Scholten to Covenant in February 2024. They bring energy and vitality to our common ministry.

Pastor/Head of Staff (continued)

We have faced major institutional change in the past three years, with three new FT office staff. Thank you Janet, Derek, and Bailey for your wonderful work. I remain super grateful for the wisdom, faith, and detail focus of Melissa Hinz (to say nothing of her musical gifts). Rodrigo Morales is doing a wonderful job keeping our facility clean. We are blessed with a great staff.

As we move into 2024, I'm excited about the possibilities for us to grow in faith, hope and love. But we have a challenge before us with our **budget**.

The Session approved a budget with a projected deficit of about \$69,000. In the past eleven years, we have regularly passed budgets with deficits in the \$30,000 range, and we almost always have ended with a surplus. For 2023, we are projecting a surplus of around \$30,000 (final numbers being tabulated) and in 2022 we had a surplus of over \$90,000 (due mostly to staff vacancies).



Year	Budgeted deficit	Actual surplus
2022	36,821	90,723
2023	3,656	30,000 (approx.)

Given our pretty consistent history of spending less than budgeted and receiving more than budgeted, the Session felt comfortable with a larger than usual budgeted deficit for 2024. Note: there were also modest budget cuts made to Mission, Building & Grounds, and Christian Education in the 2024 budget.

Now feels like a good year to invest in the future of Covenant. We are hopeful for a year of spiritual growth and increased congregational vitality, with the likelihood of a deficit in our operating budget. We have over \$500,000 in reserves, which gives us some cushion.

As for growth and vitality, I'm considering some options for a renewed focus on Christian identity and discipleship in our world today, toward the end of helping new people step into Christian faith and Covenant Presbyterian. Stay tuned.

I became your pastor in February 2013. As I begin my 12th year with you, I remain very grateful for the opportunity to serve here. This congregation is special. And we remain healthy, thanks to dozens of Covenant people who volunteer in a wide variety of ways. Special thanks to Clerk of Session Laurie Jones (who wears a few other hats), to diligent Treasurer Gordon Enderle, and to our hard-working committees.

May God strengthen us and guide us in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Berthoud

Associate Pastor for Children, Youth & Families

Pastor Megan Berry

It is hard to believe that I started as your new Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and Family Ministries a mere six months ago and wow has the time flown! As I reflect on the past six months with you all, I'm reminded of many scriptures that bring me comfort and give me courage.

"I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope." -Jeremiah 29:11

"But now, says the LORD – the one who created you, Jacob, the one who formed you, Israel: Don't fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine." -Isaiah 43:1

"There's a season for everything and a time for every matter under the heavens..." -Ecclesiastes 3:1

While I didn't experience all of 2023 with you all, I know 2023 brought a lot of changes and transitions, and a mixing of old traditions with new ideas. It was a season that continued to ask a lot of many of you, but hopefully, a season that continued planting seeds in the faith lives of our children, youth, and families. And that is my hope for 2024, that we can continue planting those seeds and growing together, mixing tradition with new thoughts and living into the season that God calls us to this year.

So here are some highlights from July 25, 2023, and on:

Children Ministries

This Fall, we made the decision to experiment with two aspects of our Kaleidoscope and worship experience for our kids. First, we returned to a worship-based curriculum for that time with our kids. Studies have shown that kids who do not experience worship or learn about what happens in worship become teens and young adults who do not yearn to come to worship services because it's new. Throughout the Fall, we have been experimenting with a new curriculum to help teach the kids what it means to participate in worship, what the elements of worship are, and why worship is vital in our lives as Christians.

The second aspect of Kaleidoscope that we are experimenting with is taking a break from Kaleidoscope on the First Sunday of the month when we celebrate communion together. Similar to our reasoning for teaching kids about worship during worship, we made this decision because it is important in the development of our kids' faith lives for them to experience the sacraments fully and build that rhythm in their lives.



Associate Pastor (continued)

Sunday School

We kicked off Sunday School on Sept 10 with a fun-filled Scavenger Hunt around the church building! This Fall, we broke up our kids into four classrooms: PreK - 1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, 4th-5th grade, and our middle schoolers (6th-8th grade). They have been learning various stories from the Old Testament including the Creation story, stories from Exodus and Esther, and what it means to share peace with one another.



Youth Connections

This year, we combined MSYC and HSYC into one big Youth Connections to help bridge and build connections between our middle schoolers and high schoolers. We meet weekly for games and fellowship time before splitting the middle and high schoolers up for small group time. The youth have been to Pres House to enjoy worship with the college students and planned and executed a wonderful Halloween Party for Covenant kids!



Confirmation

Confirmation started on Sept 17 with a wonderful and mighty group of eleven youth. They have been learning all about the church, what it means to be a member of a church, and asking amazing questions about the Bible and why we believe certain things over what other denominations believe.

There are so many more highlights that I could talk about, like our amazing Christmas Pageant on Dec 24, the children singing and playing boom-whackers at my installation in November, or the youth Christmas party, but you don't want 10 pages of my writing to read.

As I look ahead to 2024, I am excited for the possibilities that lay ahead and the energy in the room to try new things and experiment knowing that there is a season for everything and God knows the plans for us. What comforting words to hold onto.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Berry



Music Ministries

Melissa Hinz, Ben Welch

***“Praise the Lord. Praise God in the sanctuary; praise God in God’s mighty heavens.”
-Psalm 150:1***

It seems as if every year we can look back and see the many ways God is at work in the music and worship ministries at Covenant. We are grateful to have so many wonderful and dedicated musicians that provide music for worship week to week. We are also grateful for others who offer their time and talents as ushers, readers, greeters, and worship leaders, as well as those who work behind the scenes to make our worship space beautiful throughout the year on the Adornment committee. We continue to be grateful for Bob Schaefer and all the “Work Day” volunteers who offer their time to do various projects as needed around the church. It is the work of many faithful servants that blesses and enriches our congregational life together.

Melissa Hinz, Minister of Music and Pastoral Care, continues to direct the Covenant Chancel Choir as well as the Adult and Middle School Handbell Choirs. Both adult groups have enjoyed welcoming new members and offer music regularly in worship.

Leading the 9am service most Sundays is Contemporary Worship Director Ben Welch on piano with the New Day Ensemble. Ben also participates in special services and events throughout the year providing music and leading song. This past year, the New Day Ensemble presented a special Christmas Cantata on December 17.

We continue to be blessed by Doug McNeel’s music and accompanying skills as he leads us in hymn and song. We are enjoying seeing more of Doug with the organ camera which offers an up-close view of the organist on the screen in the sanctuary. Doug plays for most 11am services, accompanies the choir, and plays for other special services as well.

New to our worship staff this year is Jay Petrie. Jay works as our livestream technician and assists with other audio/visual technology as needed. We are grateful for the gifts that Jay brings to Covenant.

Arlene Kennedy leads our Sunday School music time with the children sharing occasionally in worship. Middle School youth have also had the opportunity to play bells in worship after having some learning time together. A Pageant was presented by the children on Christmas Eve morning, directed by Arlene. We look forward to a musical to be presented in spring 2024.

Covenant and Westminster Presbyterian collaborated on two separate projects this last year. We shared leadership of Lenten Wednesday Taize services for five weeks in the Lenten season. We also hosted a handbell workshop with Larry and Carla Sue in July. We had over 40 people involved in the workshop and enjoyed the Sue’s music on worship on Sunday morning.

Covenant hosted another Ukraine benefit concert in August with Ivan Shmilo, a Ukrainian musician who plays the bandura, and a Ukrainian dance duo. Another special music event was the installation of Pastor Megan in July involving the adult choir, handbells and the children sharing music in celebration.

Other special musical events for the year include a Jazz service in February, a brass quintet at Easter, a trombone choir over the July 4 weekend, brass for Reformation, and a return of the near-westside Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve service that took place at Bethany United Method

Music Ministries (continued)

ist. We hope to plan more ecumenical events in the coming year.

Covenant's ministries of worship and music are made possible through the offerings of time and talent by many in our community. We are continually grateful for the musicians, the leadership and the congregation for their support and participation in these ministries.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Hinz and Ben Welch



Board of Deacons

Katie Herringa, Moderator

We started 2023 in a more “normal” fashion for church activities post-pandemic. Our board was able to connect virtually on a monthly basis for meetings, meet occasionally in-person and build a great sense of community as we resumed post-quarantine church activities. The deacons gathered as a group a few times to help organize the deacon closet and to deep clean the church kitchen. It was a success!

The year saw most of our traditional Fellowship activities return in a pre-pandemic way. Wonderful opportunities to connect the congregation through food, community, and celebration were held. Donuts and coffee were hosted weekly in various states in Bradfield/the Courtyard. Additionally, the Fellowship Committee was able to host several celebrations along the way including a sledding outing (February), Pi day celebration with a banquet of pies, celebration Sunday (May), an Easter brunch, a church picnic at Covenant with a bouncy house (June), and an Advent Celebration in Bradfield including a hot chocolate bar (December).

The caregiving team and their card writing volunteers were able to continue their greatly appreciated ministry throughout the year. We continued connecting with members on their birthdays. Each week a dedicated team contacted via email or mailing a card to our Covenant members to wish them all the best in their year ahead. In addition, 725 cards were sent out for Christmas and Easter and 194 weekly care cards were written and delivered in support of Covenant family and friends from the Sunday morning prayer list. A total of 919 Cards throughout the year!

The caregiving team launched a new program this year to connect with Oakwood and Attic Angels residents. A handful of social events were attended by members of the team at these facilities, which was a success and greatly appreciated by the residents! There are plans to have regular events scheduled in the future, including providing communion and possibly some kind of a short church service for the residents.

The Welcome Committee was able to provide connection and a welcoming environment for our members and those with an interest in Covenant. A number of individuals were able to join us for in person worship leading to continued interest in joining Covenant. We welcomed several new members to the church this year. The Welcome Committee continues to manage greeting and welcome center duties as we strive to provide smiles and warmth to all visitors.

Finally, a few of the newer initiatives launched last year continued to be successful and grow- Covenant’s *CONNECT* program and its Spiritual Strolls. Other *CONNECT* events included: Ice Cream at the Terrace, attending an APT play (starring Sarah Day!), Mallards game, Wisconsin Soccer Game tailgate, Olbrich Gardens tour and board games at church. Spiritual Strolls took place all across Dane County - UW Arboretum, Owen Park, Picnic Point, Aldo Leopold Nature Center, Pope Farms, Holy Wisdom Monastery, the Ice Age Trail, and more! There was a good turnout of Covenant members at the *CONNECT* and Spiritual Strolls activities, which provided wonderful opportunities to have more fellowship!

The following individuals contributed their time, talents, and treasure to the congregation through their service on/to the Board of Deacons in 2023: Chris Turner & Margie Coons

Board of Deacons (continued)

(Fellowship Co-Chairs), Katie Herringa (Moderator), Lynn Vande Sande (Vice Moderator), Kim Huff (Caregiving Chair), Emily Lanphear (Welcome Chair), Steve Resan, Judy Von Bergen (Nominating), Ginny Yuska, Sherry Hershberger, Bob Cole, and Mary Kieta. The Board was also served by a number of supportive staff and church members including: Pastor Charlie Berthoud, Melissa Hinz, Bailey Green, Derek Handley, Pastor Clara Thompson and Donna Monson.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Herringa



Adult Education Committee

Melissa Hardy, Chair

The Adult Education Committee supports the congregation in providing Christian based faith formation opportunities that help everyone learn God's love and live it. Classes also emphasized Covenant's commitment to be a Matthew 25 Congregation.

Included in Adult Education are Sunday morning classes, small group discussions, church library, and help with periodic devotionals. Classes were held both in person and via Zoom & YouTube. Committee meetings were also held mostly via Zoom, with several planning sessions held in person. The monthly *Caravan* newsletter and the weekly "Connections" email were used to publicize classes and group activities.

Sunday Morning Adult Education Classes

A wide variety of classes were offered through the year, with sessions led by members of staff and the congregation, in addition to several outside speakers.

All offerings were selected to support the mission and vision of the church.

2023 began with several classes in conjunction with the pastors' sermon series "Creation Care: Our Common Calling." Classes included: "Presbyterians, Earth Care and Activism," "Creation Care," "Matthew 25," and "Love Now: Public Action to Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground."

From mid-February through the Lenten Season, class offerings complimented the Sermon Series on "We Belong to God: A Series about Life and Death." Class offerings included: "Planning for Disability and Death – Easing the Transition," "Memorial Service and Burials," "Good Grief," and a 3-part series on "The Atonement."

In the late spring, the class "Whose Planet is it Anyways? Stewardship Challenges for a Crowded World" and "Revelation" completed the program year.

During the Summer months, an in-person Bible study took place before worship on Sundays. These informal sessions were facilitated by members of the adult education committee and other members of the congregation. Pastoral staff provided questions to help initiate discussion.

Foundational classes continued in the fall. Classes included "Who are we as PC(USA)?," "Presbyterians and the Bible," "Budget and Stewardship," "Sermon on the Mount," and "Spiritual Gifts." We were also blessed by several outside speakers in the Fall, Dr. William Yoo presented on his book "What Kind of Christianity," Rev. Kirk Morledge shared his experiences as a Chaplain in the Navy, and Arturo Ambriz educated us on the Lussier Community Education Center, one of Covenant's Mission Partners.

Covenant Library

Our church library contains over 1,000 books. Patricia Herrling was the Librarian through June and Marty Slager assumed the Librarian responsibilities in the fall. New books were added through the year to support book groups and sermon themes. Committee members suggested titles for the library, and many donated books were also received and put into circulation.

Small Groups

Covenant held a six-week Small Group series in the Fall which provided a learning opportunity through personal connections and building community among attendees.

Adult Education Committee (continued)

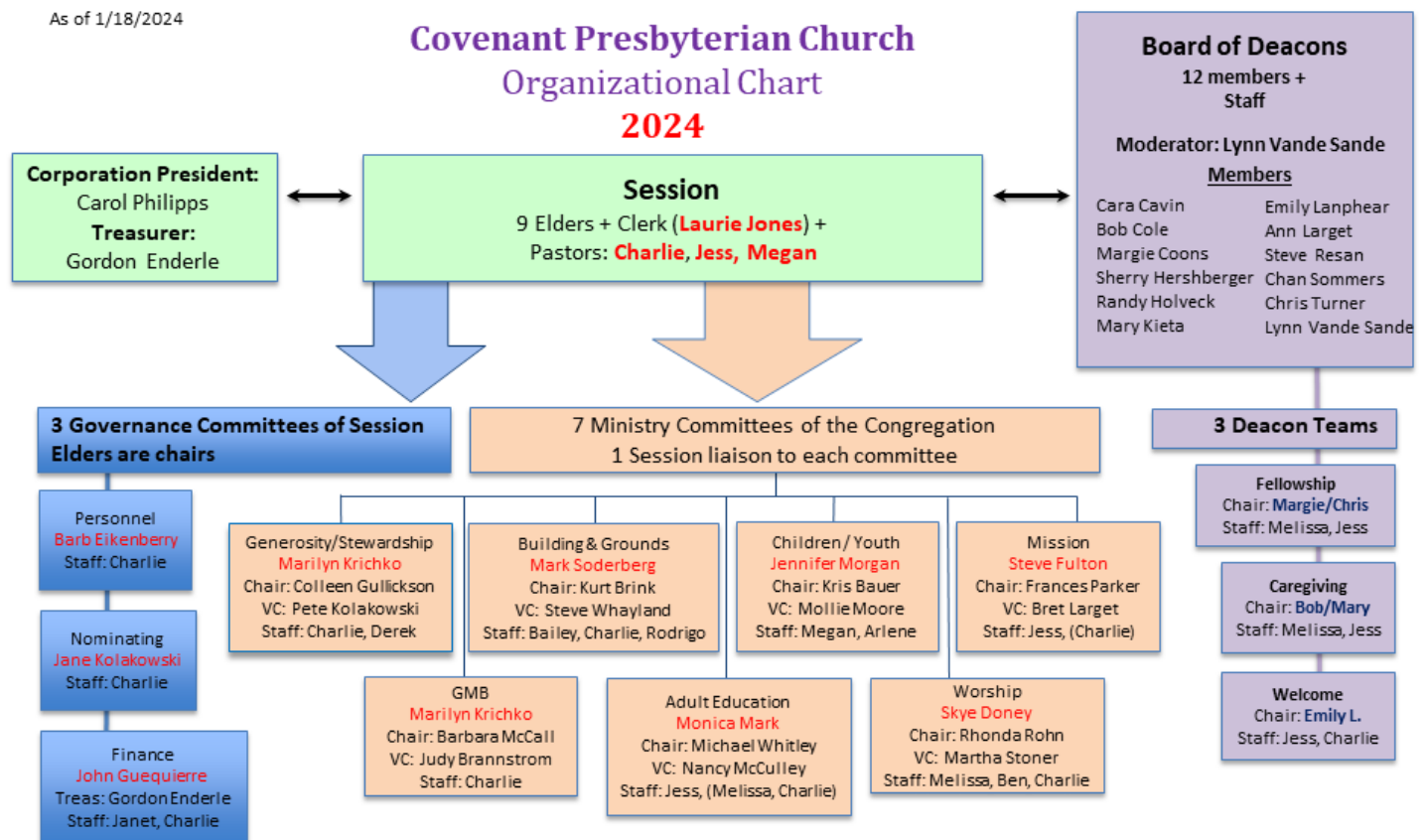
Another small group that met consistently in 2023 is the Racist Anonymous Fellowship, which is a group of individuals seeking to achieve a better understanding of systemic racism and to recover from racial conditioning. This group meets via Zoom weekly.

Thank you 2023 Adult Education Committee Members: Melissa Hardy (Chair), Barb Eikenberry, Patricia Herrling, Jane Kolakowski, Nancy McCulley, Brenda Moton, Marty Slager, John Strikwerda, Jenny Von Bergen, Michael Whitley, Elder and Session Liaison Monica Mark, and Melissa Hinz. Many thanks as well to Jay Petrie, who assisted with technical support and streaming classes via YouTube.

Thank you also to class presenters, members who suggested intriguing topics, and small group leaders. All helped keep Covenant's adult Christian education meaningful and accessible during another challenging year.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Hardy, Chair

As of 1/18/2024



- Session consists of 9 Ruling Elders (in red), the Clerk of Session (in red), and three pastors (in red)
- Elders **chair** the three Governance Committees (darker blue boxes).
- Elders are **liaisons** of the Ministry Committees (peach boxes).
- Ministry Committees are chaired by non-elders; vice-chairs will learn the system to become chairs in 2025.
- Deacons (purple box) have 12 members, plus pastoral care staff.

Other Ongoing Small Groups

Racists Anonymous Fellowship (RAF)

Meets seasonally on Thursdays at 7:00pm

RAF is a fellowship of individuals seeking to achieve personal recovery from racist habits and the effects of racism. Its purpose is to help individuals address their own role in the sin and addiction of racism. Visit covenantmadison.org/raf to learn more about RAF.

Contact: Jennifer Morgan

Fiber Friends

Meets on the first and third Thursdays of the month from 10:00-11:30am

In past years women in this group, along with several other women in the congregation, have made many pairs of mittens, hats, scarves, baby sweaters, and prayer shawls. The donation of time, talent, and yarn touch the lives and warm the hands and heads of many children and young adults in Madison and the hearts of Covenant members. The group is always open to anyone who might like to stop by and work on a personal project or learn a new one!

Contact: Polly Guequierre

Mercy Mats Small Group

Meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 1:30-3:00pm

A mercy mat is a hand-crocheted bed roll made from reused plastic shopping bags. As part of the Adult Education Committee's theme of Compassion: Giving of Ourselves, this group meets to sort, cut, and crochet strips of plastic into useful sleeping mats. Over 700 bags per mat are needed! You don't need to know how to crochet to participate. An instructor will be present at each meeting. Mats are donated to our mission partners Friends of State Street and Porchlight.

Contact: Nancy McCulley

Soul Sisters

Meets on the second Sunday of the month at 12:30pm (new time!)

Soul Sisters is open to all Covenant women. The purpose of gathering together is:

- to have thought-provoking, inspiring, and educational discussions
- to envelope each other with warmth
- to get to know other Covenant women better

They meet in person AND via Zoom. Contact the office for more info on the Zoom option.

Contact: Barb Eikenberry

Tuesday Morning Small Group

Meets Tuesdays at 9:30am

Join us for coffee and conversation.

Contact: Jim Spilburg

Thursday Morning Men's Group

Meets Thursdays at 7:30am

Join us for coffee and conversation.

Contact: Eric Wendorff

Friday Women's Book Club

Meets on the first and third Fridays of the month at 9:30-11:00am

Join us for book conversations and prayer, in-person and sometimes on Zoom.

Contact: Kris Anderson

Nominating Committee *Amy Poland, Elder and Chair*

Presented by the 2023 Nominating Committee at the October 29, 2023 Congregational Meeting:

Three-year terms (January 2024 - December 2026):

Elders

Skye Doney
Barb Eikenberry
Jane Kolakowski

Deacons

Cara Cavin
Randy Holveck
Chan Sommers

Presented by the 2023 Nominating Committee at the December 31, 2023 Congregational Meeting:

Three-year terms (January 2024 - December 2026):

Deacon

Ann Larget

2023 Nominating Committee

Amy Poland, Elder & Chair
Eric Wendorff, Non-Session Elder
Judy Von Bergen, Deacon Rep
Jenn Sauer, Member-at-Large
Polly Guequierre, Member-at-Large
David Moore, Member-at-Large

Mission Committee

Ann Athas, Chair

“And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” -Matthew 25.40

Covenant Presbyterian Church became a Matthew 25 Congregation in 2021. In accepting this invitation from the PC(USA), Covenant committed itself to working toward building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. These three tenets of the Matthew 25 call have become the guiding principles that direct the Mission Committee's work.

Along with prayerfully considering how the congregation's financial resources designated for mission giving were spent, the committee coordinated efforts with other church committees, collaborated with our local and international mission partners, and provided opportunities for members of the congregation to engage in their own personal mission journeys.

Coordination with the Adult Education Committee provided opportunities for the congregation to learn more about our local and international mission partners. Arturo Ambriz from the Lusier Center and Betsey Moe from CEDEPCA both visited and led classes at Covenant this year. The Mission Committee nominated eight agencies to the Gifts, Memorials and Bequests Committee as 2023 beneficiaries of the Peterson Ministry Fund, which benefits programs serving children locally, nationally, and internationally. The committee acted as liaison for the Middle School Sunday School teachers as they and their students ran a very successful campaign for the Tiny House community. It also supported the high school youth with funding as they assembled hygiene kits for distribution by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Our partnership with Glenn Stephens Elementary School continued to thrive. Covenant provided pen pals for three classes of fifth grade students, fruit for healthy snacks for all students six times throughout the school year and snacks for teachers as they prepared their classrooms for the start of the new school year. Covenant provided snow gear, food and fuel cards for students and families in need, and, as part of Vacation Bible Camp, school supplies. In addition, Covenant volunteers celebrated with the school community in greeting students arriving for the first day of school.



Covenant's bond with mission partners in Guatemala remained strong. Thirteen youth and adults visited Guatemala under the auspices of CEDEPCA in the summer. Proceeds from the Silent Auction and targeted donations will provide scholarships and support with supplies, transportation, uniforms, school fees and internet for 53 students from Monte Hebron Presbyterian Church in Santo Domingo, Guatemala, when the school year begins in January 2024.

As well as working with our mission partners, the committee participated in projects with additional local agencies. In the spring, the committee promoted a sneaker drive held at Covenant by Reach Dane, an agency serving Dane County children and families through Head Start and

Mission Committee (continued)

congregation aware of opportunities with publicity in the “Caravan” and “Connections” and by recruiting volunteers based on their interests from serving survey data and providing detailed information about volunteer opportunities. The committee offered opportunities for volunteers to make and deliver meals to Pres House and The Triangle, to register for workdays at Solace Home, and to become pen pals and deliver fruit to students at Glenn Stephens School. The Caravan’s “Mission Spotlight” featured the work of one of our mission partners each month.



The Mission Committee recommended local beneficiaries for two of the PC(USA) special offerings. The local portion of the Pentecost offering is designated for an agency that supports young people and children-at-risk. Covenant’s 40% portion of the Pentecost Offering was directed to Free Bikes 4 Kidz Madison. Congregations are encouraged to use the local portion of the Peace & Global Witness Offering to connect with the global witness of Christ’s peace. Covenant’s 25% was directed to the John Knox Presbytery’s campaign for RIP Medical Debt. In addition to these PC(USA) offerings, Covenant’s Christmas Eve Offering was earmarked for mission giving. The entirety of this offering was sent to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for humanitarian aid in the Middle East.

Additionally, the Committee named recipients for funding through Covenant’s Madison Racial Justice Initiative. A portion helped fund scholarships for students of color enrolled in the fall semester of the Madison Learning Community, a program that offers seminary-level courses to lay leaders. The remainder was directed to Madison’s Own It: Building Black Wealth, an organization that seeks to empower communities of color to build wealth through home ownership.

Covenant supports mission coworkers around the world as well as locally. Internationally, the congregation supports PC(USA) Mission Coworkers Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta in Indonesia, Jed and Jenny Koball in Peru, Betsey Moe in Guatemala, and Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather in South Sudan. Additionally, we support Eric Miller in Kenya and Hospital St. Croix, Covenant Hospital and LifeSaver Clinics in Haiti.

For more details on the distribution of funds to our mission partners in 2023, please see the Financial Report.

Vice-Chair Frances Parker will assume leadership of the committee in 2024, with Bret Larget slated to lead in 2025. Committee members include Deb Cohn, Sarah Day, Friedemarie Farrar, Deirdre Frees, Maribeth Gettinger, Mary Kinsley, Bret Larget, Sally Lorenz, Frances Parker and Jane Pearson. Elder Steve Fulton serves as our committee liaison to Session, and Charlie Berthoud is our Pastoral Representative.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Athas

Worship Committee

Martha Stoner, Chair

The purpose of the Worship Committee is to oversee, support, enrich and plan for the worship life of Covenant Presbyterian Church and to advise the Session regarding worship. During this year the committee discussed how to energize and enliven worship and encourage more people to attend worship in person.

The Worship Committee is comprised of the Adornment Team, the Communion Preparation Team, Youth and Children representative, an Elder, a representative of the Ushers, Music staff member, and the Pastor. The 2023 Worship Committee included: Martha Dodds Stoner (Chair), Rhonda Rohn (Vice Chair), Fern Lawrence (communion), Peggy Bugg (adornment), Gary Pivotto (usher), and Faith Windsor-Leonard (Elder). Staff members included: Pastor Charlie Berthoud, Melissa Hinz and Ben Welch.

As we moved into a post-Covid worship environment, we have enjoyed spirit-filled worship services with our friends and family. The church was fortunate to welcome the following guest preachers during the year:

Rev. Peder Johansen
Rev. Everett Mitchell*
Rev. Betsey Moe*
Rev. Dr. William Yoo*
rev. abby mohaupt
Rev. Kerri Parker*
Rev. Clara Thompson
Rev. Chelsea Cornelius
Rev. Sue Melrose
Rev. Fletcher Harper



Several members of Covenant took a course on writing and delivering sermons and five of them preached during worship over the summer. We have welcomed having more church members participating actively in worship as liturgists.

Covenant was blessed with many special services. Among those were the following:

- Transfiguration Sunday Jazz Worship with guest musicians - Feb 19
- Taize Services on Lenten Wednesdays, shared with Westminster Pres - Mar 1-29
- Maundy Thursday - Apr 6
- Good Friday at Covenant and Westminster, combined choir/guest musicians - Apr 7
- Easter with guest musicians - Apr 9
- Pentecost with Kite Flying - May 28
- Church Picnic and Worship - June 4
- Vacation Bible Camp Worship - June 18
- Handbell Workshop and Handbell duo during worship, Larry & Carla Sue - July 13-14
- Music Commissioning Sunday - Sept 17
- World Communion Sunday - Oct 1
- Installation of Megan Berry - Nov 18
- Thanksgiving Eve Worship with other near west-side churches, combined choirs, at Bethany United Methodist - Nov 22

Worship Committee (continued)

- Special Music Sundays in Advent - Dec 10, 17
- Christmas Eve (Sunday) 10am Christmas Pageant, 6pm Handbells, 8pm Choir

We're looking forward to Pastor Megan Berry's additions and suggestions for including the children and youth in our worship services. The children's messages have continued with the joy-filled contributions of Marge Resan, Nick Von Bergen, Brooke Von Bergen (and Gus), and Cindy Lovell, as well as Pastor Megan. Arlene Kennedy has brought energy to worship with the children and their music.



At the request of Pastor Charlie, the committee went through the Wedding Policy, updated it and sent it to the Session for adoption.

Charlie's sermon series have included themes such as Creation Care, Building Blocks for Living, and Peace, etc... We are constantly challenged to think about our faith and how to live it in our community. We are also encouraged to include prayer in our daily lives and to reach out to others with love and compassion.



The support of Melissa Hinz as Minister of Music & Pastoral Care has been invaluable to the functioning of our committee, the various teams and the worship of this congregation. We are so grateful for her presence and help in the organization and implementation of adornment activities and communion and countless other things.



We are blessed at Covenant to have the support and leadership of our excellent and caring staff: Pastor Charlie Berthoud; Associate Pastor Megan Berry; Minister of Music and Pastoral Care Melissa Hinz; Contemporary Music Coordinator Ben Welch; Jay Petrie, Livestream Operator; and Organist Doug McNeel with support this year from Donna Monson, Pastoral Care and Mary Kieta as Sunday Host.

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Dodds Stoner

Personnel Committee

Eric Girard, Elder & Chair

The last three years were busy ones for the Personnel Committee, with 2023 being one of the busiest yet. The big difference between the past year and the previous two is that as we transition from 2023 to 2024 we will be fully staffed for the first time in three years! With the addition of two Associate Pastors, Covenant has a complete staff in all pastoral, program, and

Personnel Committee (continued)

administrative areas.

The role of the committee is to work with the Head of Staff, Charlie Berthoud, and The Employee Group (TEG), who manages payroll and benefits for Covenant Staff. Our committee typically meets once a month with Pastor Charlie. Beyond the meetings, committee members are actively involved in recruitment, job postings, job interviews, staff communication, and staff performance reviews. In 2023 the committee facilitated staff performance reviews for all members of staff. Each committee member has responsibilities as a liaison to one or more members of staff.

The Personnel Committee is one of the two committees (the other is Finance) that is chaired by a current ruling Elder. Eric Girard has finished his three-year term as chair in 2023. Barb Eikenberry begins her term as Elder and Personnel Committee chair in 2024. The committee consists of five members, including the chair, that typically serve five-year terms. 2023 was unique with Brad Brown stepping in for a one-year term that coincided with leading an associate pastor search and a children’s and youth minister search. Brad’s role on both committees was critical as Personnel, APNC, and Session discussed and decided upon the two-pastor model.

In 2023 and in past years, the committee has benefited from a balance of continuity provided by five-year terms, and fresh perspectives, such as Brad’s one year term. Committee members must maintain employee confidence and confidentiality while helping manage the church’s largest expense, staffing. Personnel works closely with the Finance Committee and the Treasurer on setting salary budgets. The committee must balance the growing costs of providing fair compensation with the demands of a challenging environment for employers.

Much study, discussion, and discernment went into recommendation of the two-pastor model that Session supported, and that the congregation voted on with the terms of call to Jess Scholten. This work happened in 2023 and in the years before, involving much thoughtful contribution from members currently and previously on the committee. In a three-year period, Covenant has had three retirements, a pastor dissolution, and turnover in every administrative role. Yet, our congregation thrives with new member growth, new activities, and new office processes.

In addition to ending his role of chairperson, Eric Girard will be leaving the committee after a three-year term. Raleigh Jones, a veteran of personnel, will step in to complete the five-member committee. Committee membership is outlined in the table below.

Member	2023	2024
Committee Member 1	Eric Girard *	Raleigh Jones (Year 4 of 5)
Committee Member 2	Brad Brown	Barb Eikenberry * (Year 1 of 5)
Committee Member 3	Tom Popp	Tom Popp (Year 2 of 5)
Committee Member 4	Beckie Fulton	Beckie Fulton (Year 3 of 5)
Committee Member 5	Sally Lorenz	Sally Lorenz (Year 5 of 5)

* Chairperson

Our committee is excited about the staff at Covenant and the contributions they can make to our community now and in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Girard

Gifts, Memorials & Bequests Committee (GMB)

Barbara McCall, Chair

As we remember the generosity of Covenant members and friends in the year 2023, “...*let us come into God’s presence with thanksgiving...*” -*Psalm 95*

The Gifts, Memorials & Bequests Committee (GMB) is charged by the Session to encourage members and friends to consider financially supporting the mission and ministry of the church above and beyond operating fund pledges and to fiducially administer these special gifts according to the GMB Protocol. This report states the ways in which we have fulfilled our mission. In the calendar year 2023, we authorized the distribution of a total of \$95,415.00 as discussed below.

Memorial donations were received commemorating the lives of Audrey Dean, Jean Hastings, Barb Besadny, Bette Duff, Bob Richardson, Ann Seybold, David Dean, Joyce Millner, Sandra Osborn and Richard McGary. We also received a gift from a generous, anonymous donor.

A Bequest was received from the estate of Sandra Osborn.

Wish List and other requested items were funded in consultation with family members and with guidance from the GMB Protocol. A total of \$44,315 was authorized for the following needs: guest speakers rev. abby mohaupt, Rev. Dr. Fletcher Harper, and Dr. William Yoo; scholarships for Covenant members Marilyn Krichko, Melissa Schmidt, Jo Wiersma, Carrie Sanders and Brenda Moten attending locally offered seminary classes from Dubuque Theological Seminary; financial support for Jo Wiersma and Natalie Handley for their last semester of seminary; scholarships for students of color attending Dubuque Theological Seminary; the costs of Covenant members attending the 2024 Matthew 25 conference in Atlanta; scholarships for Black History for a New Day participants; staff participation in the Leadership Institute; books for Covenant leadership training; Guatemala mission trip expenses for staff; shelving units with trays for Glenn Stephens Elementary School; the Tiny House Project; Ukrainian Benefit Concert; contribution to Presbyterian Disaster Relief for the benefit of Ukraine; Handbell workshop at Westminster Presbyterian Church; guest musician expenses for worship throughout the year; and the purchase of two timpani drums.

The Don and Marion Peterson Ministry Fund is designated for the benefit of children at local, national and international levels. Covenant is the beneficiary and steward of distributions from the Fund. In December, the years’ proceeds of \$37,600 were divided equally among these eight organizations that serve children and youth: Domestic Abuse Intervention Center, RISE, The Extended Hands Pantry, The Playing Field, The Rainbow Project, PC(USA) Hunger Program, YWCA Family Housing Stability & Family Shelter, and The Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA). GMB is grateful for the assistance of the Mission Committee in determining the disposition of these gifts.

Friends of Covenant’s Future are those individuals who have remembered Covenant in their estate plans, those who funded the Medical Mission Endowment Fund, and those who gave major gifts to Covenant. We are truly grateful for these special donors and thank God for their support of our congregation.

Legacy Brochure was updated this year and may be found either on the Covenant web page or in written form in the office. The brochure invites you to consider ways that you might sup

GMB Committee (continued)

port Covenant's future through a bequest. **The Wish List** is a Session approved list of items that are "extras" beyond the annual operating budget. Items on the Wish List can be funded through bequests, memorials or as special gifts. Members and staff may ask for a special need to be approved for inclusion on the Wish List. A copy of the Wish List is available online, in the church office or from any GMB member.

Medical Mission Endowment Fund is a permanent endowment created through irrevocable gifts to the Presbyterian Foundation. Covenant is the recipient of annual distributions which are then used to fund PC(USA) and other approved overseas medical missions. In January 2023 GMB distributed \$1,500 to the Medical Benevolence Foundation and \$1,500 to Village Partners, Inc. as our 2022 contributions. In December 2023 we distributed another \$1,500 to each of these organizations as our 2023 contributions. In addition, the sum of \$7,500 was donated from the Sandra Osborn bequest to Village Partners, Inc in Haiti for the updating and repair of dormitory housing for visiting physicians at Mombin Crochu Hospital.

GMB Committee: "Many hands make light work." The members of the GMB committee include Judy Brannstrom (Vice-Chair), Anne Lawrence, Janice Walden, Ann Sydnor, Fern Lawrence (Thank-you notes), Marilyn Krichko (Session Representative), Deborah Cohn (Mission Committee Representative) , and Barbara McCall (Chair). Pastor Charlie Berthoud is our staff advisor. We are supported by staff members Janet Cresson, Bailey Green and Derek Handley. It is a joy to work with all of these friends. They are well acquainted with Covenant members and the needs and goals of our congregation. Our committee deals with money to be sure, but as we consider our responsibilities, we tenderly hold in our hearts all the ways that you and others have made Covenant a loving and faithful community. May the Lord be praised!

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara McCall, Chair

Finance Committee *John Guequierre, Elder and Chair*

Covenant remains fiscally strong, with substantial resources that support its capacity to carry on God's work. For 2023, Covenant budgeted \$1,057,885 in operating revenue and \$1,061,542 in operating expenses, which would have yielded a small deficit of \$3,658. Based on our financial results through November, we are likely to match our revenue budget, with higher-than-budgeted interest income and building use fees offsetting a shortfall in pledges. Expenses are running under budget in 2023, which may help us realize a surplus for the year, possibly as much as \$40,000. The generosity of Covenant's membership remains amazing, as is the diligence of the staff and the many committee volunteers in the wise management of expenses. It should be noted that there is substantial financial activity outside of operations which are administered by the Gifts, Memorials, and Bequests Committee, where gifts are recognized and disbursed according to the wishes of the donors

Covenant's financial reserves at the end of 2023 are likely to be at least \$500,000. That is a very good position for us to be in as we begin 2024 with a likely budget with a substantial deficit. While this is a situation Covenant has not faced for over a decade, it comes as no surprise to either Session or the Finance Committee. Earlier in 2023, when it became obvious that the labor market was not going to provide us with a lay children and youth education coordinator, Session authorized our diligent search committees to recruit two ordained associate pastors, knowing the larger compensation packages on top of inflation in staff compensation and utilities and increased funding requests from some committees might result in a deficit for a few years. The faith behind that decision was that a robust youth and ministerial program would eventually lead to increased membership and income, which is needed anyway to cover cost inflation. When the 2024 annual budget is finalized in January, it is likely to yield an expected deficit in the \$100,000 range unless Session cuts some of the requested increases. Session's task is complicated by the possibility that 2024 pledges may match or fall below 2023 giving based on pledges received as of late December. It should be noted that Covenant's highly respected Treasurer has counseled against approving a deficit of this magnitude. Covenant's reserves can support that situation for a few years, giving us time to make staffing and budget adjustments, if our hoped-for growth in membership and income is not realized. Our budgeting also reflects the knowledge that we will not be mounting a capital campaign for at least a year or two because of the long lead-time to properly plan for rejuvenation of Covenant's grounds and parking lot.

In compliance with Session policy, Covenant arranges for an independent review of financial activities every three years. Wegner CPA was engaged to review the 2018-2020 accounts. COVID related staffing issues and the complexity of Covenant's accounts delayed Wegner's final report. When received, it again, as in their prior report, sternly recommended that Covenant abandon its long-standing use of so-called "dedicated accounts", which do not comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and pose a significant hole in Covenant's system of financial controls. The efforts of the Finance Committee and Treasurer Gordon Enderle to address this issue was complicated by the limitations of Covenant's accounting software, which was not developed for churches with Covenant's significant financial resources. As of November, 2023, Finance Committee had proposed and Session had adopted all of the new or amended policies recommended by Wegner.

Another major committee project is the development of a comprehensive manual of financial

Finance Committee (continued)

policies and procedures. Committee member Dick Lovell is leading the effort, with major contributions from all staff members. A draft of the manual was completed in November and a working version completed in December. The manual exists “in the cloud” with major cybersecurity protections. Elders, Deacons, staff members and committee chairs will be given controlled access beginning early in 2024.

Amanda Carlson, who earned a PhD in accounting during her tenure on the Finance Committee, was a key contributor to the Committee’s policy initiative. We were sorry to lose her this Fall as she relocated to the East Coast for a great academic position. We are eager to add another member to the Finance Committee. A background in accounting or finance would be welcome, but not essential.

God’s Blessings,

2023 Finance Committee

John Guequierre (Elder and Chair), Amanda Carlson, Dennis Joosse, Dick Lovell, and Tim Smeeding.

Generosity Committee

Ann Perry, Chair

The Generosity Committee began meeting in January in preparation for the 2023 Generosity Campaign. Initial meetings focused on reviewing committee responsibilities and setting the agenda for the campaign. In addition to the overall Generosity campaign, duties for Generosity Committee include outreach for church special offerings, testimonials to be included with quarterly statements, and the fall giving campaign. In March, the committee began working on the fall giving campaign.

The work included review of previous materials sent, discussion on outreach and the annual theme. The theme “Building Blocks” was chosen, and a bible verse was selected. This theme supported the sermon series “Building Blocks for Living”. The campaign materials included a brochure, time and talent sheet, and pledge card.

By October the materials were mailed, and outreach began. Outreach included testimonials during service, graphics with QR codes, use of monitors in the gathering space, bulletin boards, and participating in Adult Education.

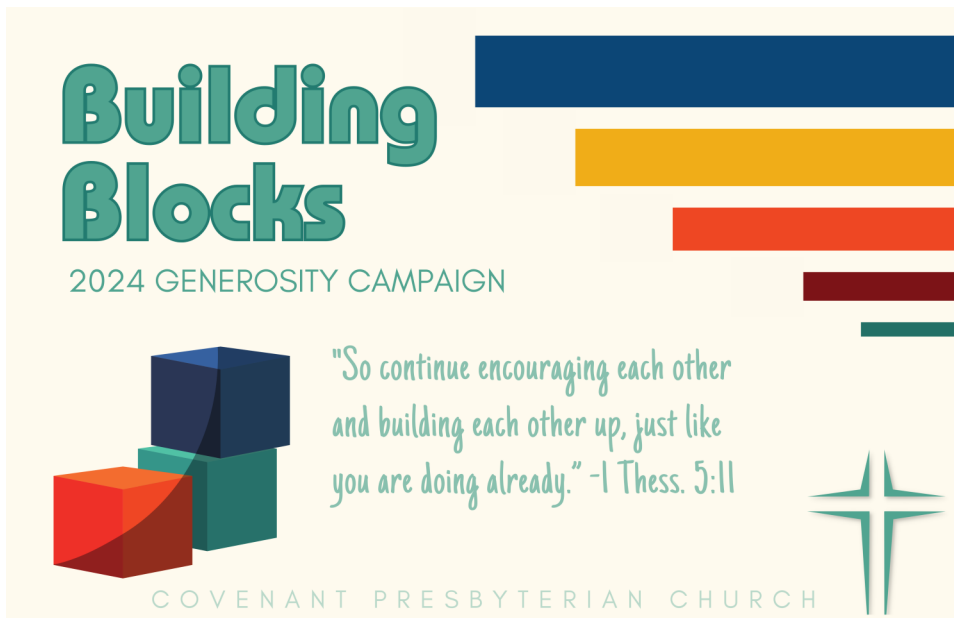
The committee worked with the church office on incoming pledge logistics of tracking and database entry. The committee finished out the year by sending Thank you notes to those who graciously pledged. The campaign ended with:

Total pledges: 204

Total pledged: \$952,732.96

I would like to thank the awesome, faithful committee members: Peter Kolakowski, Page Moreau, Ernie Perry, Colleen Gullickson (vice chair), Laurie Jones, Pastor Charlie, Derek Handley, Bailey Green and Marilyn Krichko (Elder). This group generously gave of their time and talents to make this committee a success for Covenant. I not only enjoyed having them on the committee, but getting to know them was truly a blessing.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Perry
Chair, Generosity Committee



Building & Grounds Committee *Kurt Brink, Chair*

Members: Charlie Berthoud (Pastor), Tom Blewett (past Chair), Kurt Brink, Bailey Green (Church Administrator), Peter Hughes (Chair), Mary Kieta, Doc Parker, Mark Soderberg (Elder liaison to session), Bob Schaefer, Steve Whayland (Chair for 2024 will be Kurt Brink)

Meetings: Monthly meetings were held on the 3rd Thursday of each month with the following exceptions – July (summer recess – no meeting), Aug 15 (Tue), Sep 19 (Tue), Nov (no meeting due to church activities), Dec 14 (due to members travel schedule).

Native plantings: Steve Whayland and Rosemary Jones coordinated an effort utilizing Good Earth Ecological Services to provide native plants for a vegetative border along the Mineral Point side of the church and replacement of a tree in front of the lounge. Costs for plants and some labor by Good Earth was approximately \$4,000. A work group was assembled by Bob Shaefer and all plants were installed on Sept 20. An irrigation system was installed along with fencing.



Security cameras: Doc Parker implemented a complete overhaul and replacement of cameras for our video surveillance system (VSS). This was an extremely complex task that Doc undertook and utilized volunteer assistance from his employer as a training experience for newer employees. The work included purchase of eight cameras and associated cabling and connectors. A summary of the tasks is listed below:

- All cables in the server room have all been terminated.
- Cables at five of the eight camera locations have been terminated and tested and are ready for camera installation. These locations did not require removal of the old cameras to terminate the cables.
- The remaining three camera locations (coat room, narthex, office) require removal of the cameras to extend the cabling up from the lower level before they can be terminated and tested. Doc preferred to install all of the cameras at one time to avoid a mix of old and new.
- The steps include:
 - configure the new cameras and network switch
 - install the new cameras and network switch
 - bring the cameras online and add them to the Axis Companion app
 - remove all old camera cabling

Doc Parker and his crew completed all of the work in December and security system was active on the Axis Companion app.

Building & Grounds Committee (continued)

Columbarium Expansion: Greg Hinz coordinated and did all of the work associated with the expansion of the columbarium such that on April 8 a workgroup had only to move the system into place. Greg did a superb job and deserves appreciation from all of us.

Decorative screening outside of Columbarium: Ann Athas and Rosemary Jones coordinated the purchase of decorative screening for outside the Columbarium. This screening was installed by Dave Athas and Peter Hughes on June 1.

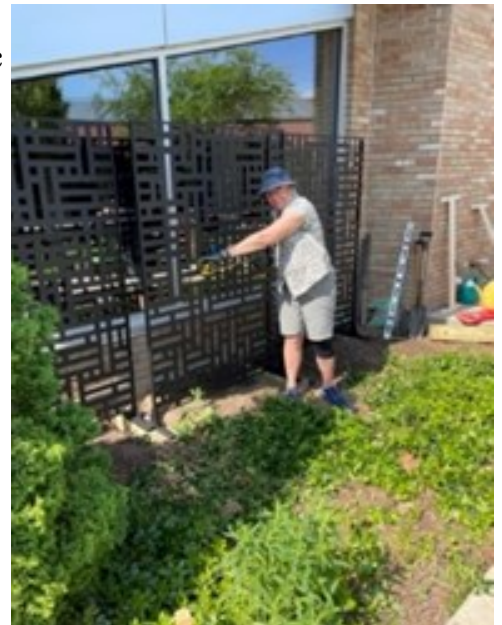
Roof leakage near Charlie's office: Kurt Brink spent considerable time getting Tilsen Roofing to respond to a leaking roof issue. After months of effort the company responded and made necessary repairs on Dec 14 at a cost of \$800. Will need to see if this has solved the problem after the next significant rain event.

High consumptive water use for chilling system for sanctuary and organ loft:

Bailey, Ken Corbett, and Peter Hughes met with Scott from Control Systems to review humidity control for the organ loft and to review the consumptive water use by the chiller system for the sanctuary.

Humidity for the loft is provided by a small humidifier located in the basement room housing the air handling system for the sanctuary. This humidifier simply humidifies the air in this room and is controlled by a humidistat located on the side of the electronics cabinet. Humidified air is pulled into the duct leading to the organ loft. The humidity level is set to 50% and is managed by the control program. There is another humidistat that is in the organ loft area but it appears that it is only used to display the humidity level of the area - not to control the level. Scott did reprogram the control program to display this level on the home screen. The way the system is set to operate should never allow humidity levels to reach unacceptably high levels in the loft area.

We were unable to do much with respect to the consumptive water use by the chiller system for the sanctuary. City water is used by the air handler system to cool the two high pressure pumps used for the air conditioner. We don't have a cooling tower to allow this water to be reused so it gets dumped into a pit with a sump pump that discharges it into the city sewer. A review of the water usage on Aug 29, 2023 showed about 10.5 gal/min was being used between 8am-4pm. The Aug 2023 water bill was \$2400. Since we are not in an active cooling season we were not able to see the system in operation so the plan will be to have a technician from 1901 come out next spring and evaluate how the system is functioning. We reviewed the HVAC programing



Building & Grounds Committee (continued)

and nothing jumped out as a red flag. Scott added an output to the displayed information on the HVAC program that identifies whether a switch located in Pastor Jess' office is in the Auto or Manual mode. Bailey will send a note to staff indicating this switch should be in Auto mode.

Safety: Numerical labeling of access doors for emergency responders was completed on Jun 6th by a work group.

General maintenance items: Bob Schaefer has again this year been instrumental in coordinating and resolving a significant number of plumbing, lighting, painting of offices, holiday decorations, yard maintenance and other items too numerous to mention. He has been able to maintain the willing cooperation of a large group of church members who volunteer for many assorted work tasks. Bob documents each work activity with what was done and who was there to assist. Covenant is fortunate to have his generous contributions of knowledge, organization skills, and work ethic to keep our building in great repair.

Continuing Activities into 2024

Electronic sign for front of church: We will need to meet with city about zoning issues.

Parking lot resurfacing: Planning should include schedule and funding issues.

Office remodeling: Will need to develop scope of work and send it out for bids

Evaluation of consumptive water use: We will address in Spring 2024 after cooling season starts.

Lighting in Bradfield: We are evaluating replacing the lighting in Bradfield with LED lights. The existing florescent lights and ballasts would be replaced with direct wiring. These should last longer and be more environmentally acceptable.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Hughes

Clerk of Session

Laurie Jones

The following summarizes the change in membership of
Covenant Presbyterian Church 2023:

Active members as of December 31, 2022:		752
Plus new members during 2023		
By letter of transfer:	3	
By reaffirmation/confession of faith:	16	
Total new members in 2023:	19 →	+19
Less membership losses in 2023		
By letter of transfer:	4	
By death:	13	
Other:	30*	
Total loss of members in 2023:	47 →	-47
Total membership as of December 31, 2023:		<u>724</u>

Other Statistics

Sacrament of Holy Communion served to entire congregation:	20
Sacrament of Holy Communion served to individuals/small groups:	11
Weddings:	0
Memorial services and funerals:	10
Baptisms:	4

2023 Session Members:

Class of 2023

Eric Girard
Amy Poland
Faith Windsor-Leonard

Class of 2024

Monica Mark
Jennifer Morgan
Mark Soderberg

Class of 2025

Steve Fulton
John Guequierre
Marilyn Krichko

Laurie Jones, Clerk of Session
Pastor Charlie Berthoud, Moderator

***The large number is due to an audit of our membership rolls, resulting in loss of inactive members per their request.**



COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

Covenant Presbyterian Church

326 South Segoe Rd, Madison, WI 53705

(608) 233-6297

info@covenantmadison.org

www.covenantmadison.org

