



CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH ^{OF} PINEHURST
ANNUAL REPORT

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THANK YOU!

“No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” Each Sunday Pastor Phil greets us with those words, and we strive to embody them as a congregation. This past year we welcomed many new faces, celebrated each other’s joys and accomplishments, and grieved each other’s losses. Our journey together was about caring for and about each other, as it has always been.

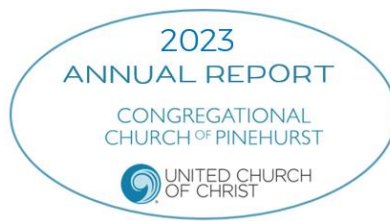
Thank you for sharing in that journey!



OUR STAFF

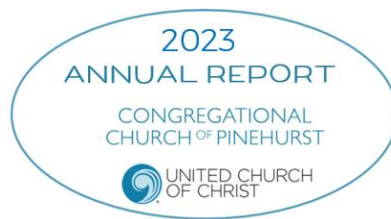
It is said that “Music assists in our expression and response to God.” Each Sunday Robert Cox, Minister of Music, led our church choir with music so uplifting and beautiful that we often could not contain our applause. The Cantata was a masterpiece! Sandy Trembly took over seamlessly in July as our Pianist when Robert Wicker moved on. Sandy has delighted us each week with her “mini-concerts” during the Interlude and the offering. Thank you, Robert and Sandy and our wonderful choir! You made each worship service even more special.

In the church office, Sandy Waterkotte, Administrative Assistant, was a welcoming presence to everyone who entered our doors, even as she juggled numerous tasks, created a weekly bulletin and kept us all organized. Maddie Broome, Bookkeeper, was equally helpful and generous with her time and talents as she paid the bills, prepared monthly budget reports and assisted Betty in keeping the congregation informed of our financial situation. Thank you both for your dedication and hard work!



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COUNCIL REPORT

Chair, Marian Maroney

Our 2023 Council membership was consistent throughout the year: Paula Shelton, Betty Chapman, Jay Sumner, Charlie Williams, Kristen Anderson, and Wayne Janoe. Each member also served on a church committee and was responsible for reporting monthly progress on a church goal (details below). Thank You to each of you for your dedication to our church and for saying, "Yes!" every time I asked for help or needed advice. It has been an honor to serve with you.

An Overview: We met on Zoom with Pastor Phil each month except July to discuss the church's financial and operational business and to receive a Pastor's Report. Council minutes and budget reports were shared monthly with the congregation through the church's e-blast.

Each Council member participated in and reported on an area of church operations: **Paula Shelton**, Vice-Chair, served on the Mission, Peace and Justice Committee and reported to Council on that committee's activities.

Betty Chapman, Treasurer, provided monthly financial reports, spearheaded the church's installation of solar panels, and created the 2024 Budget.

Jay Sumner, Secretary, served on the Worship and Education Committee and kept our church's activities visible to the community throughout the year.

Kristen Anderson also served on the Worship and Education Committee, with a focus on children's education.

Charlie Williams, as chair of the Grounds Committee, oversaw many projects and coordinated church-wide yard cleanup days.

Wayne Janoe also served on the Mission, Peace and Justice Committee and ensured that our church's services and events had a weekly presence on social media.

Finally, although Bev Valutis retired from Council last year, she continued to chair the Building Committee and reported monthly to the Council on any building issues.

Some Highlights:

In February, at Pastor Phil's urging, we broke away from the traditional Council meeting agenda which focused on the business of the church. Although we dealt with business issues each month, we also brainstormed answers to these two questions:

- What significant goals will the Council accomplish this year?
- How will these goals be accomplished?

Given the many ideas that were brought forth, Pastor Phil suggested we categorize them under five major goal areas in the life of our church: Christian Education, Community Building, Finances, Marketing and Volunteerism. These five areas support the Strategic Plan that was created in 2021 as a result of a survey taken by church members.

In May, we met for a four-hour retreat (complete with an easel and markers) at which each member gave a detailed report on current-year and five-year strategies for accomplishing one of the goal areas. The results of these reports were shared with the congregation in September.

Here are some of the activities that supported the five goal areas in 2023:



- Throughout the year Jay expanded CCP visibility in the community through advertising and sharing information with other community organizations.
- Wayne updated our church website and placed snippets of Pastor Phil's sermons on Facebook and Instagram each week.
- A Visitor's Center was created in March and is staffed weekly by church volunteers.

- Also in March solar panels were installed and were fully paid for by two grants and member contributions. Thank you to Betty for your leadership in this project!
- In April Betty presented a five-year budget plan to support bringing Pastor Phil on as full-time pastor in 2025.
- Seven "Together" Potluck suppers were attended by over fifty congregants in June, and new member get-to-gethers were hosted by Mary Scott Arnold throughout the year.
- CCP's community presence was expanded with a booth at the Sandhills Pride Fest in June and the Holly Arts Festival in October and a Trunk or Treat event in the church parking lot on Halloween.
- More congregants are volunteering as lay leaders, church school teachers and coffee hour hosts each month.



- By the end-of-the-year, our stewardship pledge goal, which was 10% over last year's goal, was exceeded and then some. What a wonderful start to 2024!

Everyone in Council is grateful to each of you who support us throughout the year. Thank you!

PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor, Phil Hardy

This past year saw growth and the addition of new people and families to our congregation at the Congregational Church of Pinehurst. Having set a goal of a net of 20 additions to our family, we narrowly missed that goal but have added people who have immediately invested themselves in the life of the church. Among those new members are young families who have created the need for a nursery ministry. Volunteers are being secured and background checks performed. A television is being mounted in the nursery which will broadcast the service and we hope to have this ministry up and running by the end of January 2024.

An emphasis on volunteerism this past year has resulted in increased participation in areas such a children's church, lay reading, coffee hour and more. We are grateful for the stewardship of our members which is reflected in their financial giving and their participation in the life of our church.

Some of the highlighted programs and services of the year included "Safe Zone Training" offered by Lauren Mathers of Sandhills Pride. This event was a part of an intentional effort to deepen our relationship with Sandhills Pride. I also participated with Lauren in a Transgender Day of Remembrance service in November.

In May of 2023 Tim Tyson spoke to a full house in our sanctuary and reflected on the events which inspired his book, "Blood Done Sign My Name."

On September 10 we celebrated the ten-year anniversary of acquiring our Open and Affirming designation. Rev. Brent Bissette who pastored the church through that process joined us as a participant in that service. Reverend Eddie Weathers, our Associate Conference Minister, offered words of greeting and congratulations as well.

We restarted and completed the "Living the Questions" series with Mary Travis offering leadership to that process.

Twenty plus participants remained after church to watch "What is War to a Grieving Child" which chronicled the trauma experienced by children and youth during the ongoing war in Ukraine. People were moved and harbored the hope of finding a way to follow up and offer some form of support.

We were pleased to once again participate in the Inter-Faith Community Thanksgiving Service held this year at Temple Beth Shalom.

We celebrate the establishment of the John Arnold Memorial Library. Church members have made generous donations of books to help us establish a diverse collection.

A Visitor's Center was created to assist in our church growth goals. Volunteers have been faithful at the Center which welcomes guests and provides them information about the church.

We were grateful to once again be led by Marian Maroney who provided outstanding leadership to our Church Council. We are equally excited about the addition of Kasmin Davis to the Council in 2024 and look forward to the leadership of Paula Shelton, our new Council Chairperson.

I am currently fulfilling the last year of my commitment as Executive Director of Johns River Valley Camp and am looking forward to becoming full-time at CCP at the beginning of 2025.



Rev. Dr. Eddie Weathers (Southern Conference Ass. Minister), with former Pastor Rev. Brent Bissette, and Pastor Phil Hardy celebrating 10 years of Open and Affirming

TREASURER'S REPORT and PROPOSED BUDGET for 2024

Treasurer, Betty Chapman

Operations Budget: The 2023 budget year concluded with a surplus of \$35,214.63, an amount created by stronger than anticipated non-pledged and collection plate contributions as well as increased interest generated in money market funds. The income surplus was \$11,829.39 (\$182,324.39 minus the budgeted \$170,495). The balance of the year-end surplus was created by expenses being less than budgeted, primarily in property

related expenses. There were no large facility issues this past year and the savings on the electricity bill (due to the start-up use of solar power in late April) added to these savings.

This surplus amount of \$35,214.63 is being added to the balance sheet for 2024 in an account restricted to the use for hiring a full-time pastor in 2025. This reserve can be used to help the church to fully budget an increased salary requirement in 2025, while continuing to "Grow the Church". Modest continued growth is critical to stabilize future personnel funding requirements.

CCP GOES SOLAR IN 2023



Balance Sheet: In terms of the overall financial status of the Church, property tax valuations were adjusted throughout Moore County which increased the church land and building assessment to \$1,549,130. Endowment increased from \$28,978.99 in 2022 to \$36,370.45 in 2023. Balance in liquid assets such as checking, savings, and investment grew from \$129,824.57 in 2022 to \$146,724.40 in 2023. Pledges prepaid for the next year increased from \$26,700 to \$35,000.

The 2024 proposed budget includes six significant changes:

1. A 10% increase in the projected income from pledges. Our successful 2024 pledge campaign, concluded this fall, indicates that this can be accomplished.
2. Reduction by approximately 50% in the electricity budget. However, increased propane costs for heating will not let us realize quite that much in overall utility costs.
3. The 2023 "Strategic Planning" budget item has been replaced by increased funding for Outreach/Advertising, and for Adult and Children's Education. These were identified strategic initiatives.
4. A Good Samaritan Fund of \$1000. This has been added to the operating budget.
5. Most of the other expenditures were calculated at inflation rates at 5%. Items where actual costs were known, or where under or over expended, were modified accordingly.
6. Finally, 5% pastor and staff raises are provided. Modest contract hours were increased for office staff to recognize the need for additional support.

* Appended is the 2024 Budget with a comparison to the prior year budget and the actual income and expenditures for 2023.

See Appendix 1: Annual Budget for 2024 (page 21)

See Appendix 2: Balance Sheet statements that show the overall fiscal health of the Church (page 25)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Chair, Bev Valutis

Keeping our aging building safe and all systems operating efficiently is in the hands of our Building chair and her helpers. There were thankfully no major building issues in 2023, and we passed the annual Central Security and termite inspections with no problems. Some of the repairs and installations that occurred this year:



A water leak was detected and repaired early in the year, which significantly reduced our water bill, and a problem with lights flickering over the altar was resolved.

The Altar floors were showing signs of wear, but after a thorough cleaning and spray with hardwood floor polish, they looked almost new. The floor in the small office outside the sanctuary was also polished.

The largest expenses during the year were the purchase of a new dishwasher and a double oven for the Hearth Room, plus a repair to the HVAC relay system to prevent future outages.

In December some stained ceiling tiles were detected in the Hearth Room and the Narthex (no leaks, though!), which are being replaced.

Thank you to Sharon for keeping our church clean, and to Ron Adams, Robert Cox, Ron Sickenberger, Dave Leuck and everyone who helped Bev with building projects during the year!

GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Chair, Charlie Williams

Our church property is a total of 11.5 acres (4 acres by the church and 7.5 acres wooded acres). Many thanks to Pam Cole who kept our lawn and bushes manicured, and to Leon Everet who hauled away yard waste whenever asked. Here is a partial list by month of what is entailed in our grounds property upkeep.

January/February - Kevin's Elite Plumbing (KEP) replaced leaky pipes at the well; Charlie discussed possible scenarios for an updated irrigation system.

March - Charlie cleared the trail through the woods area and the Stations of the Cross were posted along the trail. Contents of the church storage shed were inventoried and sorted and/or discarded. Pam Cole spread fresh mulch around the church perimeter.

April - Despite rainy weather, the Spring Grounds Cleanup day was held on April 22nd. Thank you to everyone who helped pick up pinecones, weed gardens, rake leaves and prune trees and bushes! Charlie dug out big weeds and cut overgrown shrubs and tree limbs growing in the fenced area, by the Memorial Garden and in the rear of the church.

Charlie also met with Kevin's Elite Plumbing to try to determine a way to get water from the well to irrigate the church side of the driveway, but it is not possible at this time.

May - Pastor Phil became our contact with the Garden School, and that relationship is working well. Responsibilities and liabilities for extending the use of the wooded areas for play space were discussed and Council amended our contract with the school to reflect that.

Kevin's Elite Plumbing replaced the well water pressure meter due to a pin hole leak and provided an estimate to run a water line from the well to the church, but Council decided that soaker hoses would be more economically feasible.



June - Charlie and Pam sprayed weeds in the driveway and parking areas.

July/August - Gravel was moved to fill in several potholes.

September - Charlie gifted a power washer to Pam, who had her son use it to powerwash the church sidewalks. Great job! Neil Bergman joined the Grounds Committee.

October - Charlie trimmed plants by the office entrance walkway which is mostly an herb garden - originally planted by Mary Alice Farina several years ago.

November - Turn-out for the Fall Grounds Cleanup day was very good. Thank you to all who participated and to Leon Everet who removed all of the yard waste when the work was finished.

Mark Elliott's request to re-start the installation of an easement (approved in 2019 by the congregation) from Elliott's Restaurant along our church property was announced to the congregation. An agreement was written between Elliott's and the church and signed by both parties in early December.

EASTER EGG HUNT!



Covers for outdoor water spigots will be purchased and installed for the winter weather.

December - Charlie and Tim Maroney met with Duke Energy about installing LED light posts in the church parking lot. Progress on this much-needed project will be reported in 2024 Council minutes.

Charlie posted four No Trespassing signs on the walking trail to try to curb vandalism that has been occurring on the weekends in the Garden School play areas.

In addition to Pam Cole and Leon Everet, Thank You to Neil Bergman and to all members of our congregation who pulled weeds, planted flowers, maintained the Memorial Garden and small garden around the church sign and participated in church cleanup days and throughout the year!

IT/COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Chair, Ron Adams

This year saw tech team members Bob Hoffman, Bob Nilsen, and Dave Leuck all rise to the multiple challenges presented in providing live stream coverage of our Sunday services via Facebook Live, and those challenges tend to present themselves at the most inopportune of times (usually during services!), so that is saying a lot! To date, other members of the

congregation have not indicated a wish to join this team.

2023 did not require any large expenditures on the information technology equipment side, although several smaller ones were incurred in the provision of live streaming totaling



approximately \$140. Beginning with the 2024 budget, however, I believe it would be prudent to start setting money aside toward replacing the administrative assistant's computer within another year or two. As hard as it is for me to believe, that machine was purchased in early 2017, although it doesn't seem that long ago. That does, however, make it nearly six years old, which is definitely approaching the end of its functional lifetime. Five years is the most common refresh period for PCs used in business and government, but as Sandy's needs have not appeared to exceed that machine's capabilities yet, I think it's safe for us to assume that we can get another year or two out of it.

Although Wayne Janoe and I do not frequently work together (I'm more nuts & bolts and he's more software savvy), he has done a first-rate job of taking over the website and non-live stream related Facebook postings and page maintenance, for which I am most grateful. His activities in those arenas have allowed me to focus exclusively on the live stream process, which is usually about all I can handle! We will need someone to take over Wayne's duties in mid-2024 when the Army will reassign him.

If anyone reading this report feels inclined to join this small group of tech minded folks, please don't be bashful about contacting any one of us to that end. Believe me, we are all amateurs, so don't think that you may not have the necessary skills. If you use computers at all, you already know enough to be a big help to the team. With that said, I have nothing further to report.

MISSION, PEACE & JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Chair, Kathy Nekton

The Congregational Church of Pinehurst (CCP), UCC is an open-minded spiritual community characterized by a passion for justice, delight in diversity....." and interest in making a difference.

The Mission, Peace and Justice (MPJ) committee has been committed to carrying out the very essence of this statement. The group meets the first Tuesday of the month and since the pandemic the meetings are held by Zoom at 5:30PM. Here are some highlights of the MP&J work each month:

January:

- We voiced support of the LGBTQ+ community in response to the Drag Show backlash at the Sunrise Theatre and made a commitment to broaden our definition of Open and Affirming.
- Starting in January, each month we collected fruit for the children of HOPE Academy. Thank you to everyone who contributed!

February:

- February 9th - CCP hosted a two-hour Safe Zone training led by Lauren Mathers and Michelle Cunningham of Sandhills Pride. About 40 people attended.
- February 12th - Racial Justice Sunday.
- February 14th - Several church members and Pastor Phil participated in a Sandhills Coalition for Peace, Love and Justice gathering on Rt. 690 where hate messages had been painted on the bridge.
- Each Sunday during the month a member of MP&J gave a brief response to the phrase, "I've been inspired ..."



March:

- March 19th - Several CCP members and Pastor Phil attended a meeting of the newly-formed Sandhills Coalition for Peace Love and Justice
- The One Great Hour of Sharing was collected on March 19th
- March 25th - CCP was represented at The Southern Pines Land and Housing Trust Community Day

April:

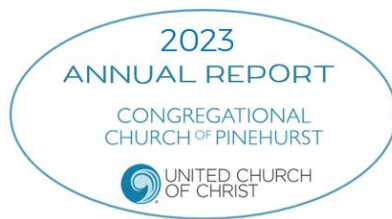
- April 30th - We celebrated Climate Action Month with the dedication of the new solar panels (and it was raining!). Betty Chapman told how this big undertaking was accomplished through grants and member donations.
- We watched a video from Grant Nilsen and saw beautiful posters made by Wayne Janoe of the panels on our roof

May:

- Council approved MP&J's request to apply for a "Cool Congregation" (work has not been completed at this time).

June:

- Saturday June 10th- CCP hosted a booth at the Pride Fest held at Weymouth Center; several members took turns at the booth. It was a beautiful day.
- June 19th (Juneteenth national holiday) - a short presentation was given on the history of the day on June 18th



July: MP&J Committee did not meet in July

August:

- Plans were made to participate in the “Stuff the Mini Bus” for HOPE Academy in Robbins; We received an Amazon list from the HOPE Academy teachers and CCP fulfilled all requests
- A Thank You was extended to Sam Walker for his membership of MP&J

September:

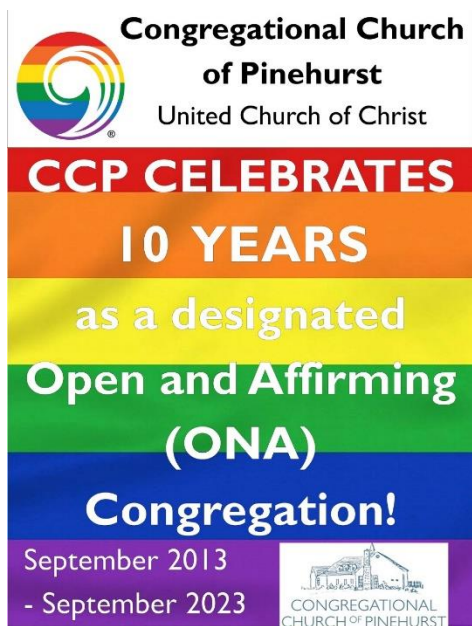
- September 10th - CCP celebrated the 10th year anniversary of becoming an Open and Affirming (O&A) church, with Pastor Brent Bissette and Pastor Phil giving homilies (Brent was CCP Pastor when we became an O&A church). A potluck lunch was held after church.

October

- The Neighbors in Need offering was taken
- We watched a video about the effects of war on Ukrainian children. Some members and Pastor Phil will decide how our church can respond.
- October 29th - We partnered with Sandhills Pride to offer Trunk or Treat in the church parking lot.
- Kathy Leuck offered an opportunity for all CCP folks to join a Zoom program on Enlightening Conversations (work on racial equity) on Tuesday evenings

November

- Our congregation filled 50 Christmas Angels requests for clothing for the HOPE Academy children; items were delivered to Clare Ruggles
- November 19th: Many congregants attended a beautiful Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at the Sandhills Jewish Congregation. Pastor Phil gave the sermon, Paula Shelton gave a reading and members of our choir sang.



December

- December 5th and 7th - Seventeen church members volunteered in the HOPE Academy “store” by helping parents choose clothing and toys for their children.
- December 17th - Ray Morris gave a very moving Christmas Fund Mission Moment.
- The Christmas Fund Offering was taken.

Members of the MP&J Committee are: Pastor Phil, Wayne Janoe, Kathy Leuck, Nancy Kingfisher, Paula Shelton and Mary Scott Arnold and Kathy Nekton, chair.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Chair, Roger Nekton

Each year, this committee is charged with finding and nominating members for the church Council. This year, only one new member was needed, and the committee chose an excellent candidate, Kasmin Davis-Bergman, who will begin her term in January 2024. The process is collaborative and confidential, and it works!

Thank you to Roger and committee members Karen Anderson and Tammy Morris for your commitment!

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Marian Maroney and Paula Shelton, Co-Chairs

The momentum due to everyone's enthusiasm for hiring Pastor Phil full-time in 2025 resulted in an unprecedented response to our Stewardship Campaign. Our 2024 pledge goal was \$145,200, a 10% increase over this year's pledge amount. Thanks to your generosity we netted \$167,400 in pledges!

Preparation for the October stewardship mailing requires behind-the-scenes help from several people, starting in early September. Don Harnum crafted a lovely and thoughtfully-written stewardship letter that set the tone for the campaign's message to nurture our church. Sandy Waterkotte created the mailing list, pledge cards and letterhead that comprised the mailing. Betty Chapman and Beth Verner stuffed over 80 envelopes and affixed mailing labels to them.



As Treasurer, Betty kicked off the campaign the first Sunday in October with her usual clear and easy to understand financial charts, and a challenge to us to consider increasing our current pledges by 10%. Jay and Holly Sumner, Kasmin and Neil Bergman-Davis, Ron Adams and Don Harnum gave powerful presentations on each of the four remaining Sundays. Thank you to each of you and to everyone who helped make this a successful campaign!

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chair, Beth Walker

We have a lot of wonderful news to share about our committee's activities in 2023. Here is a summary of our accomplishments:

CHURCH SCHOOL

- Completion of 40 lessons (lessons are easy to follow with instructions to teach a lesson and includes a craft project)
- Start of a children's library
- A group of dedicated teachers who have stepped forward to teach
- Increased and consistent attendance by families with children

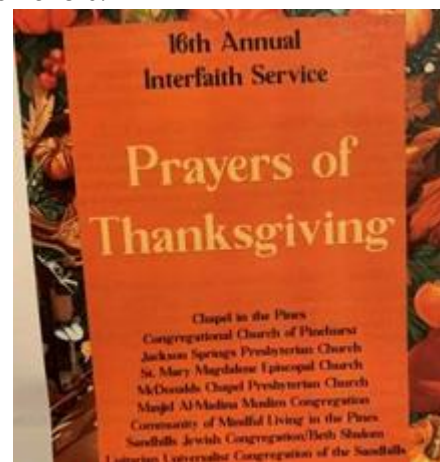
WORSHIP SERVICES

- Throughout the year special services have been held under the leadership of Phil and Robert.
- Lent, Palm Sunday and Easter Services
- Prayer cards have been created to streamline prayer time.
- Martha and Ray share Communion duties
- Special service to celebrate ten years of becoming O and A was held on September 10th.
- People are responding to be lay readers
- Moment of silence before the service to pray for all impacted by the conflict in the Middle East.
- Community Thanksgiving Service at the Temple was well represented by our church family. It was a meaningful and powerful service.
- Beautiful Cantata presented by our choir under the direction of Robert and Sandy. Phil and Stephanie were outstanding as narrators.

OUTREACH

- Newcomers Brunch in January
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Tim Tyson (along with MPJ) speaking at the church
- Living the Question under the leadership of Mary Travis
- Book study by Mary Alice Farina
- Table at The Holly Arts Festival

After 5 years, I leave the leadership of this committee in the very capable hands of Matha Nilsen who will be joined by new members Marian Maroney and Darlene Vickers.



As we move into a new year, exciting things are happening at CCP. Phil is communicating with the Garden School about sharing space. Keep a watch out!!

I have many to thank for assisting in the work of this committee. Without the dedication and perseverance of Martha Nilsen, Jay Sumner, Katherine Stevenson, Garry Taylor, Robert Cox and Pastor Phil, many of the accomplishments would not have happened. I am blessed to have been a small part of what has developed into a wonderful program for all. THANK YOU!



MINISTRY REPORTS

ALTAR GUILD

Chair, Garry Taylor

Garry Taylor's stunning Altar creations enhance our worship service each Sunday and beautifully reflect seasonal and holiday celebrations and special services throughout the year. But let us not take for granted the many other tasks that Garry and his team assume throughout the year: walking congregants to and from the church; greeting each of us and handing out bulletins; "carrying the light" into and out of the sanctuary; collecting the offerings and prayer cards; teaching our young people to help in the worship service; preparing Communion; decorating the church for special celebrations; and more!

Thank you to everyone who helps ensure that our services run smoothly.

CONGREGATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL CARE MINISTRY

Leader, Pastor Phil Hardy

The Congregational and Spiritual Care Committee used 2023 to change its name and expand its responsibilities. Formally the Spiritual Care Committee, this committee is now comprised of Mary Scott Arnold, Dave Baird, Pamela Dodge, Tom Jacobs and Gwen Koehler and Tammy Morris.

Each member of the committee is assigned to members and friends of the Congregational Church of Pinehurst. They assist the pastor in providing care to the members and keep him abreast of transitions and challenges happening in the lives of members of their Care Group.

Though mostly done behind the scenes, their ministry is of vital importance to the spiritual life of the church.

FELLOWSHIP TEAM

Co-Chairs, Mary Scott Arnold and Nancy Kinney

When Jay and Holly Sumner had to stop co-chairing this year, Mary Scott and Nancy stepped right in. With their gentle encouragement, more and more folks are now serving as coffee hour hosts. Sharing coffee and food - and especially conversation - after worship service is a wonderful and important extension of our Sunday mornings. Thank you to Garry Taylor who sets up the coffee and to each of you who hosted this past year!



TRUNK or Treat!

MUSIC MINISTRY

Minister of Music, Robert Cox

We had a great year as always. We added a few members and lost a few. Of note is Eric Christenson, who met John Arnold just before John passed away. John invited him to come to choir and he did. Even after John passed away, Eric continues to come on



Wednesday night for the music but probably more the fellowship. That is another tiny part of the ministry that we try to provide for the church and the choir members.

Lois Harvey does a tremendous job of making sure that every choir member has music in their folders and files the music away when it is finished. We were fortunate to add Sandy Tremblay and Paul Hammock to the choir.

Sandy does a great job accompanying the choir and providing moral support to its director. She has also been incredibly helpful in finding substitutes to play when she has had to be away. We now have a small roster of substitutes that we can call on when needed.

Sandy has also encouraged and incorporated members of our congregation to play instruments as part of our worship. Both James Miller and Keziah Hively have played in worship. She was hired with the understanding that she would continue until July. July will be here in the blink of an eye, so we need to begin beating the bushes to find an accompanist for the choir.

Additionally, Sandy and Paul donated the sheet music for the cantata, "The Road to Bethlehem," which we performed on December 3rd. It was well received by the congregation and the choir. We also added Jan Sutton and for a while added Elaine Halleck who recently returned to Mexico.

The choir does an outstanding job of enhancing worship at our church and brings me immeasurable joy. Thank you, UCC, for your continued support of our music ministry!

SAFETY TEAM

Chair, Marian Maroney

Although the Safety Team did not meet in 2023, safety measures established in 2022 remained in place: doors and windows are locked during worship services; surveillance cameras are active 24/7 at all entrances and monitored several times a week; dead bolts are on bathroom doors and other designated areas; a fully stocked first aid kit is mounted in the choir loft; and a phone chain is in place to notify congregants if church services or events are canceled due to weather or other emergencies.

WELCOME TEAM

Each Sunday, folks who need help walking from the parking lot to the church are greeted - rain or shine - by Tom Jacobs. Visitors are warmly welcomed at our Welcome Table, and Garry Taylor greets with a smile all who enter the sanctuary. Thank you to all who participated in these welcoming activities this year. New this year, Pastor Phil

recruited a team of outstanding ambassadors to man our newly-added Visitor's Table. This table is set up in the Narthex every Sunday, equipped with *welcome packets* (which contain a letter from Pastor Phil, visitor's cards to be filled in, a brochure which was developed by Phil for outreach opportunities, and information on the UCC). The steadfast team who rotated Sundays throughout the past year includes: Kristin and Annie Anderson, Andy and Dave Bayard, Brandy and Kat Carter, Gordon Fung and Linda James, Don and Jane Harnum and Mary and Kyle Sonnenberg. And thank you to everyone in our congregation who helped create an atmosphere of warmth, inclusion and welcome in our church each Sunday.

No matter who you were, or where you were in life's journey, you were welcomed here!

