

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HASTINGS, NE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



The Vision of First Presbyterian Church

(Our purpose)

Sharing the love of Christ from the heart of Hastings since 1873

The Mission of First Presbyterian Church

(How we attain our purpose)

Welcoming all,

Living the love of God and neighbor

Seeking to transform ourselves, our community, and our world to be more Christ-like through service, worship, prayer, education, and fellowship.

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First Presbyterian Church, Hastings, Nebraska
2023 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION AGENDA

Sunday, January 28, 2024

First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary

Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett, Moderator

Karen Doerr, Clerk of the Session

OPENING PRAYER – Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett

MINUTES – Karen Doerr, Clerk of Session

Approval of minutes from congregational meeting held January 29, 2023 (Pages 4-6)

REPORT OF THE CLERK OF SESSION – Karen Doerr, Clerk of Session (Page 7)

FINANCIAL REPORT & BUDGET PRESENTATION – Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett (Pages 8-10)

TERMS OF CALL FOR PASTORS – Karen Doerr, Clerk of Session (Pages 11-12)

FOUNDATION REPORT – Tony Eddleman, Vice-Chair of Foundation (Page 13)

STATE OF THE CHURCH ADDRESS & PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 12-42)

- Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett, Senior Pastor

ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS FOR 2024 (Class of 2027) – Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett

Deacons (5)	Session (4)	Trustees (3)
Linda Johnson (2 nd Term)	Kim Creech (2 nd Term)	Gary Bauer
Chris Wray	Brian Johnson (2 nd Term)	Susan Hoff
Laurie Johnson	Kay Georgiana	Barb Harrington
Chris Schukei	Susie Graham	
Byron Jensen	Sue Medsker (1 year term)	

ELECTION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2024 - Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett

Jessica Meeske, Sue Medsker, Mike Karloff, Paula Crozier

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT, CLOSING PRAYER – Rev. Damen Heitmann, Associate Pastor

MINUTES OF A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
First Presbyterian Church
Hastings, Nebraska
January 29, 2023

The annual meeting of the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Hastings, Nebraska was held on January 29, 2023 in the sanctuary immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. The Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett gave remarks of greeting and the opening prayer. A quorum was declared by Karen Doerr, Clerk of Session.

MINUTES: *It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes from the Congregational Meeting held on January 30, 2022. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.*

STATE OF THE CHURCH ADDRESS & PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL

REPORT: The Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett provided a state of the church address, followed by a summary of the Annual Report, highlighting the information that had been available to all members prior to the meeting. Pastor Greg enthusiastically reported that FPC continues to grow and thrive thanks to the efforts of the congregation and the staff. He is appreciative of everyone's continued giving, prayers, volunteerism, creativity and dedication. Highlights included the addition of 11 new members, a 3% growth in attendance and the creative in-person worship opportunities that included jazz and blue grass music as well as nine services in the park.

When viewing intangible metrics related to church viability, one can sense a positive spirit and a deeper sense of engagement surrounding FPC. There is more volunteering both inside the church and within the greater community and one sees more children and youth participating in the many programs offered. There is a buzz in the community about what is going on at FPC, thanks to the articles in the Tribune and on local television news stations.

Additional slides highlighted the reports of Associate Pastor Damen Jensen-Heitmann, Christian Education Coordinator for Youth and Children, Rose Koepp and Music Coordinator, Linda Vollweiler. Reports of Committees and Boards were included in the printed Annual Report and summarized in the slide show.

CLERK'S REPORT: The annual report of the Clerk was presented as follows:

Membership, December 31, 2021	455, 210 Friends
Received during 2022:	
Profession of faith, reaffirmation, restoration	7
Certificate of Transfer	0
Confirmation	4
Losses 2022:	
Certificate or Removed from Rolls	0
Death	11 Members, 5 Friends
Membership, December 31, 2022	455 Active, 205 friends
<hr/>	
Youth/Young Adult/Adult Baptisms	0
Infant Baptisms	8
Weddings	3
Funerals	16
Average worship attendance: On-Line & In-Person:	262

Active Officers:	
Elders	13
Deacons	15
Trustees	9

Motion and a second to approve the Clerk's Report as presented. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Mary Plock, chair of the Trustees, presented the budget for 2023, which has been approved by the Session.

Motion and a second to receive the budget as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried.

TERMS OF CALL FOR PASTORS:

Karen Doerr, Clerk of Session, presented the following terms of call:

Terms of Call for Senior Pastor, Rev. Greg Allen Pickett:

Head of Staff – Salary	\$65,000
Head of Staff – Housing	\$31,500 (this is the portion of salary that is taxed differently for pastors)
Head of Staff – Medical Insurance & Pension Payment	\$36,000
Head of Staff – Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$ 5,000

Motion and a second to approve the Terms of Call for the Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett for 2023. Upon a voice vote, motion carried.

Terms of Call for Associate Pastor, Rev. Damen Jensen-Heitmann

Associate Pastor – Salary	\$44,000
Associate Pastor – Housing	\$15,000 (this is the portion of salary that is taxed differently for pastors)
Associate Pastor – Medical Insurance & Pension Payment	\$13,500
Associate Pastor – Travel, Prof Expenses, Con Ed	\$ 2,000

Motion and a second to approve the Terms of Call for the Rev. Damon Jensen-Heitmann for 2023. Upon a voice vote, motion carried.

FOUNDATION BOARD: The Foundation report is printed in the annual meeting report booklet. A brief explanation was provided by moderator, .

2022 CONGREGATIONAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT:

Mary Plock, chair of the Nominating Committee presented the following individuals to the congregation for election to the named boards:

For Session: Justin Brades, Dan Deffenbaugh, Robin Koozer and Mary Kay LaMaster

For Deacon: Katherine Davis, Milrae Korb, Lois Meeske, Mary Plock, and Brady Rhodes

For Trustees: Kim Kern, Ken Stein and Danna Wolford

The following were proposed for the 2023 Nominating committee: Teresa Luther, Brian Johnson, Vonda Essex and Jessica Meeske.

Motion and second made that the entire slate be accepted unanimously. Upon a voice vote, motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no further business brought before the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Pastor Damen Jensen- Heitmann closed the meeting with prayer and the song, "We are the Church".

Respectfully submitted

Karen G. Doerr

Clerk

REPORT OF CLERK OF SESSION

Karen Doerr, Clerk of Session

The following congregational data provides a brief snapshot of First Presbyterian Church in 2023:

Membership, December 31, 2022	455 members, 205 friends*
Received during 2023:	
Profession of faith, reaffirmation, restoration	8
Certificate of transfer	0
Confirmation	7
Losses 2023:	
Certificate	0
Death	12 (8 members, 4 friends of the church)

Membership, December 31, 2023	462 members, 201 friends*
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Youth/Young Adult/Adult Baptisms	0
Infant Baptisms	2
Weddings	2
Funerals	15

Average worship attendance:	
(online and in-person combined)	288

Active Officers;	
Elders	13
Deacons	15
Trustees	9

*During 2020, the Membership Rolls Update Committee worked to define membership categories for our church, and then apply those new definitions. "Active members" of First Presbyterian Church, Hastings now include those who are baptized, have made a profession of faith, have been accepted into membership of the Church, and who participate in the life of the church in at least two ongoing ways, such as: attend worship or receive communion at least once per year, contribute to the finances of the church in an amount equal to or greater than apportionment, serve on a board or committee, pray for the church, and so on. "Friends of the Church" include those individuals who may not be active members as defined above, but still wish to be affiliated with First Presbyterian Church.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2023 Budget & Actual Expenses and 2024 Budget for First Presbyterian Church of Hastings

Offerings and Income	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
General Fund estimates - Current yr	\$ 660,000	\$ 690,377	\$ 675,000
Other Income	\$ 41,650	\$ 138,294	\$ 119,000
Per capita receipts	\$ 5,500	\$ 4,845	\$ 4,500
Annex Rental/Building Use	\$ 8,500	\$ 7,700	\$ 10,400
Total Offerings and Income	\$ 715,650	\$ 841,216	\$ 808,900
The Mission - Local and Global Community Outreach			
Mission Co-workers	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Habitat for Humanity	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Hastings College	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Adult Mission	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Open Table	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
OPSF-Kessler Scholarship	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Mission Outreach	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Disaster Assistance	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Local Mission – Discretionary	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00
Youth outreach	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00
Subtotal- Mission/Community Outreach	\$ 27,300	\$ 27,300	\$ 27,300
Gathering to Worship	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Chancel Choir Director – Stipend	\$ 6,865	\$ 6,865	\$ 7,200
Calvin/Westminster Choir Director – Stipend	\$ 6,865	\$ 6,865	\$ 7,200
Chancel and Cal/West Bell Director – Stipend	\$ 6,865	\$ 6,865	\$ 7,200
Children's Bell Choir Director – Stipend	\$ 6,865	\$ -	\$ 7,200
Children's Choir Director – Stipend	\$ 6,865	\$ 6,865	\$ 7,200
Organist	\$ 15,750	\$ 15,750	\$ 16,500
Music Director	\$ 6,865	\$ 6,865	\$ 7,200
Accompanist and Music Coordinator	\$ 5,200	\$ 5,200	\$ 5,500
Sound Technician/Social Media	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500
Pulpit Supply	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300
Special Worship Services	\$ 800	\$ 567	\$ 800
Communion Supplies	\$ 1,000	\$ 494	\$ 1,000
Seasonal/Liturgical Décor	\$ 200	\$ 209	\$ 200
Copyright License Fees	\$ 1,500	\$ 529	\$ 1,500
Worship Enhancement – Flowers	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,990	\$ 2,500
Worship Services - Radio Broadcast	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,694	\$ 3,500
Worship Services – Video	\$ 1,300	\$ 729	\$ 1,300
Misc Committee Expense - Wor & Music	\$ 250	\$ 137	\$ 250
Subtotal - Gathering to Worship	\$ 77,990	\$ 68,424	\$ 81,050

Christian Education - Teaching the Word to our children, youth, and adults	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Director of Child & Youth Education	\$ 25,358	\$ 22,827	\$ 26,626
Dir. Of Child and Youth Education - Cont Ed	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Christian Ed Helper	\$ 1,000	\$ 705	\$ 1,000
Curriculum and Supplies	\$ 5,750	\$ 4,439	\$ 6,300
Background Checks	\$ 200	\$ 36	\$ 200
Middle School and High School Youth Group	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,703	\$ 2,500
Wednesday Night Live	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,478	\$ 4,000
Library Books, Subscriptions and Supplies	\$ 1,400	\$ 828	\$ 1,400
Nursery Workers	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,583	\$ 1,700
Campus Ministry	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 200
Church Officer Training	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ 500
Adult Education Materials and Speakers	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
Scholar in Residence	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Subtotal - Teaching the Word	\$ 46,608	\$ 38,599	\$ 48,426
Caring for our Congregation	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Deacon's Fund	\$ 300	\$ 64	\$ 300
Deacon's Card/Postage Fund	\$ 100	\$ 71	\$ 100
Parish Nurse expenses	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 200
Name Tags	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 100
Special Events/Membership Recognitions	\$ 4,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 4,500
Baptismal gifts	\$ 200	\$ 56	\$ 200
Outreach/Marketing and Welcome Brochures	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ 1,500
Friendship Pads/Pew Cards	\$ 150	\$ -	\$ 150
Subtotal - Caring for our Congregation	\$ 7,050	\$ 2,691	\$ 7,050
Stewarding Church Facilities for Mission, Ministry, Education and Worship	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Facilities Manager – Salary	\$ 39,335	\$ 39,242	\$ 41,300
Facilities M. - Health Insurance and Retirement	\$ 16,788	\$ 15,331	\$ 18,450
Utilities - Gas, Elec., Water, PEACE Ctr. Utilities	\$ 47,000	\$ 47,187	\$ 49,700
Telephone and Internet	\$ 7,050	\$ 7,126	\$ 7,050
Maintenance & Repairs, landscaping, sprinkler	\$ 24,150	\$ 30,921	\$ 28,600
Custodial Supplies	\$ 4,500	\$ 5,886	\$ 4,500
Contract Svcs - Exterm, Trash, Lawn, etc	\$ 22,000	\$ 21,094	\$ 22,000
Kitchen supplies	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,611	\$ 2,500
Property/Liability Insurance	\$ 39,215	\$ 44,701	\$ 53,619
Copier Lease Expense	\$ 9,000	\$ 10,311	\$ 9,500
Van - Gas, Maintenance, Insur, Fees	\$ 250	\$ 252	\$ 1,500
PEACE Center Maint., Repair, Contract Services	\$ 14,000	\$ 38,257	\$ 22,000
Subtotal - Church Facilities	\$ 225,788	\$ 261,919	\$ 260,719

The Mission - Proclaiming the Gospel in Word and Deed, Teaching, Preaching, Leading	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Head of Staff – Salary	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 68,250
Head of Staff - Housing Allowance	\$ 31,500	\$ 30,554	\$ 33,075
Head of Staff - Pension/Medical Insurance	\$ 36,000	\$ 38,252	\$ 36,000
Head of Staff - Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,900	\$ 5,000
Associate Pastor – Salary	\$ 44,000	\$ 41,730	\$ 46,200
Associate Pastor - Housing Allowance	\$ 15,000	\$ 14,338	\$ 15,750
Associate Pastor - Pension/Medical Insurance	\$ 13,500	\$ 12,266	\$ 18,120
Associate Pastor Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$ 2,000	\$ 119	\$ 2,000
Subtotal - Proclaiming the Gospel	\$ 212,000	\$ 207,159	\$ 224,395
Congregational Administration for the ministry and mission of the church	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Administrative Specialist – Salary	\$ 33,800	\$ 33,942	\$ 35,500
Admin Specialist - Pension/Health Ins	\$ 11,072	\$ 11,517	\$ 12,180
Finance Director	\$ 13,780	\$ 13,756	\$ 14,500
Office Staff Professional Development	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ 500
Stewardship Expenses	\$ 500	\$ 732	\$ 1,000
Office supplies	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,258	\$ 6,000
Computer software/support	\$ 3,000	\$ 6,097	\$ 3,000
Office New Equipment	\$ 1,000	\$ 18	\$ 1,000
Postage - Gen & Admin and Newsletter	\$ 2,400	\$ 1,729	\$ 2,200
Office Expense - Fees, etc.	\$ 400	\$ 84	\$ 400
Online Payment Fees	\$ 400	\$ 2,515	\$ 2,500
Professional Services – Audit	\$ 2,500	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Federal withholdings matching/SECA	\$ 24,399	\$ 24,399	\$ 25,618
Website Maintenance	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,183	\$ 1,200
Subtotal - Congregational Administration	\$ 98,951	\$ 104,230	\$ 109,598
Mission - Supporting the mission work of the Presbyterian Church	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
PC(USA) Per Capita	\$ 16,100	\$ 16,100	\$ 16,100
Synod Benevolence	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Presbytery Benevolence	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 20,000
Theological Education Fund (PCUSA)	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,800	\$ 2,000
Subtotal - Mission support	\$ 46,100	\$ 45,900	\$ 41,100
	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Total Expenses	\$ 742,833	\$ 753,598	\$ 808,019
Total Offerings and Income	\$ 715,650	\$ 841,216	\$ 808,900
Difference	\$ (27,183)	\$ 87,618	\$ 881

PASTORAL TERMS OF CALL

TERMS OF CALL FOR REV. GREG ALLEN-PICKETT

TITLE: Senior Pastor/Head of Staff

Head of Staff – Salary	\$68,250
Head of Staff - Housing Allowance	\$33,075 (this is the portion of salary that is taxed differently for pastors)
Head of Staff - Medical Insurance & Pension Payment	\$36,000
Head of Staff - Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$5,000

TERMS OF CALL FOR REV. DAMEN JENSEN-HEITMANN

TITLE: Associate Pastor

Associate Pastor – Salary	\$46,200
Associate Pastor - Housing Allowance	\$15,750 (this is the portion of salary that is taxed differently for pastors)
Associate Pastor – Medical Insurance and Pension Payment (half of pension is paid by PC(USA) Board of Pensions)	\$18,120
Associate Pastor Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$2,000

FOUNDATION AND ENDOWMENT ACTIVITY REPORT
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HASTINGS FOUNDATION
ACTIVITY REPORT

Annual Report 2023

Balances in the eight funds managed by the Foundation as of December 31, 2023:

Music Fund	1,776,572
Property Development Fund	430,715
Christian Education Fund	352,447
Scholarship Fund	314,031
150 th Legacy Scholarship	27,395
Essex Scholarship Fund	1,879
Irva Smith Endowment	74,578
Designated Uses	<u>64,614</u>
Total	\$3,042,231

The 2023 year-to-date return was 14.98% on December 31, 2023.

The Foundation distributed \$57,300 (Music, \$47,800; Christian Education \$9,500) in March 2023. This was a 3% distribution from the fund's activity in 2022.

At its January 22, 2024 quarterly meeting, the Foundation Board members finalized the distribution to the Church. A total of \$87,500 will be distributed from the above funds (Music, \$71,000; Christian Education, \$14,000; Designated Uses, \$2,500).

The Foundation paid \$400 for the preparation of its 990 Tax Form.

The Foundation also manages funds for the Session/Trustees. The December 31, 2023 balance in that account was: \$1,179,881. The 2023 year-to-date return was 6.92% on December 31, 2023.

Doug Soderquist, Moderator

ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S REPORT
Damen Jensen-Heitmann - Associate Pastor

It is not uncommon for me to ask a student to describe an experience of something in three words. "Tell me about marching band," I'll say, "in three words." Or, "What three words would you use to describe your Christmas?" It is a quick way to get a broad understanding of how something is going in a person's life. I then, of course, follow up with questions based on the words that were shared. For example, "What is so tiring about marching band?" or "What makes for a relaxing Christmas?" You get the idea.

As I began to write my annual report I decided that giving myself a similar assignment might help to crystalize and clarify my own thinking. What three words would I use to describe my experience of 2023 at First Presbyterian Church of Hastings? Eventful. Diverse. Didactic. Those are the words I'd choose. Allow me please to elaborate.

Eventful

A lot of big things happened this year and it was a pleasure to be involved in many of them. Participating in the various 150th events gave me a greater understanding of the past and a renewed hope for the future. Joining in conversations around the capital campaign helped me to see the faith of others. And beyond those things events like confirmation, graduation, two Go & Serve trips, Youth Sunday, pet blessing cookout, Sodbusters, special worship services and many more currently lost to my mind provided for a very eventful year.

Diverse

The work this year has been far reaching and I have grown my skillset in a variety of areas. Throughout the year I've; dug into writing projects with the Lenten and Advent devotionals, regular sermon and worship prep, and the *Bearers of the Divine* cantata, taught through confirmation, bible study, and senior high activities, organized trips and special events, created graphics and edited video for digital publication, visited people in the hospital, led funeral services, and worked with committees. The work has been far-ranging this year and kept me on my toes.

Didactic

Even still, a large part of my responsibilities remain focused on teaching the faith to others. Through my work with children of all ages, our weekly pod/videocast, Tuesday Noon and PW Bible study, monthly preaching, and confirmation much of my time is spent encouraging people to engage with the faith with their hearts, heads, and hands. In particular, I am glad to be able to teach confirmation with our 8th graders. It is an honor to attempt, as best as I am able, to hand along the core of the faith to them. I am appreciative of their questions and energy and often get the opportunity to marvel at the depth of their thoughts and hearts.

In the year 2023 it was a please once again to be among the people of First Presbyterian Church of Hastings.

Peace and all good,
Damen Jensen-Heitmann

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, ADULT EDUCATION

Damen Jensen-Heitmann- Associate Pastor

In the year 2023 First Presbyterian Church has continued to offer engaging, thought-provoking, and faith-filled opportunities for adult faith enrichment. Here is a brief synopsis of our offerings over the past year.

Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh served another year as our Scholar in Residence. In this role Dan provides a weekly book study and also leads multiple Forum series. The weekly book study continues to meet via Zoom and studies a variety of contemporary religious scholars and thinkers. The group ranges from 8-12 people in attendance and is always happy to welcome new thinkers and questioners. These sessions are recorded and posted to the church's YouTube page. Dan's Forum subjects will be covered later in the report.

Heirs Apparent, a fellowship group focusing on issues of contemporary faithful living, continues to meet during the Sunday School hour.

Pastors Greg and Damen continue to offer a Bible Study on Tuesdays at noon. The study focuses on examining the scripture that will be used for the upcoming Sunday. This pairs nicely with the *Monday Check-In* which is a recorded conversation between Pastors Greg and Damen and features their initial thoughts and questions of the text to be used for the week. These conversations are now recorded in the church's new podcast recording studio.

A dedicated website to host all our enrichment recordings and well as new programs to present to the congregation and beyond is currently being built and should be completed soon. Once it is done all of our past recordings will be edited and hosted via this site.

Forum has also continued in its traditional format. Forum meets during the Sunday School hour and features a variety of presenters covering a variety of subjects.

2023 Forum Speakers and Subjects

- Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett, Rev. Doodle Harris, Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh – “The Things We Never Read”
- Wendy Gwenapp – “Let the Children Come to Me: The Importance of Early Childhood Education”
- Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh – “What We Believe: Doctrinal Confessions”
- Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh – “Resurrection Narratives”
- Rev. John H.G. Curtiss, Rev. Dr. Cheryl Elford, Rev. Ron Holmes, Rev. Duane Queen, Rev. Stan Kessler – “Memories and Hopes: 150 Year Celebration”
- Dr. Byron Jensen – “History of Music Ministry at FPC”
- Dr. Laura Marvel-Wunderlich – “Updated History of FPC”
- Dr. Rich Lloyd – “Living Connection: First Presbyterian Church and Hastings College”
- Anne Phelps – “Arts in Worship”
- Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh – “How Israel was Built”
- Hannah Jensen-Heitmann – “Bearers of the Divine: An Advent Cantata”

I am pleased to work with so many wonderful people in order to provide opportunities for continued growth and faith development among our disciples.

Respectfully Submitted,
Damen Jensen-Heitmann

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & YOUTH

Rose Koepp, Director of Christian Education

Working with the children and youth at First Presbyterian Church brings me immeasurable amounts of joy! We did so many fun and exciting things in 2023:

We finished out the spring semester strong with our typical curriculum and programing; K-5th Sunday school and Wednesday Night Live following the Revised Common Lectionary with curriculum from Sparkhouse; Jr High studying the Old Testament; Sr High digging deeper into the letters of the New Testament. In May we confirmed seven students and graduated six seniors. (Pictures: Left: Confirmation class of 2023; L-R Jacob Shin, Paige Redline, Henry Black, Maddux Pumroy, Riley Propp, Ruei Duang, Paxton Rhodes. Senior class of 2023; L-R Selah Wenburg, Claire Schwarz, Campbell Schukei, Eleanor Oliver, Jackson Graves, Raneer Canady)



During the summer months, Pastor Damen and I held space for Jr High fellowship. Once a week students gathered to play board games and talk for about an hour. This is something we started doing in the summer of 2022 and we were happy to be able to facilitate this again this summer. We plan to continue this in the future.

We offered a new program this summer for elementary aged students called Summer Movie Club. Hastings College Chaplain, Rev. Doodle Harris, taught students a Biblical lesson that related to a popular Disney movie, and then we watched the movie together and enjoyed pizza and snacks. We met once a month from May-August. We had approximately twenty students attend each movie night. (Picture on right: students watching a movie during one of our movie nights.)



This summer we put on the Vacation Bible School program “Hero Hotline” by Cokesbury. VBS was a four day program that ran for three hours each morning. We had twenty volunteers from the church and the community who worked together to put on an amazing week of learning and fun for 40 students. The students learned what it means to be every-day heroes as they studied Romans 14:19: “So let’s strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up.” As a part of the week, attending students brought in gently used toys to be donated to the Barnabas Community in Lincoln, NE.

(Pictures left to right: students singing; volunteers at the welcome table; students doing a craft)



Following our week of VBS, a group of Jr High students, made up of students who had volunteered as helpers for VBS, had the opportunity to deliver all of the toy-drive toys to the Barnabas Community in Lincoln, NE. The students had fun delivering the toys and seeing how a non-profit organization like the Barnabas Community handles donations. After we delivered off the donations, we went on to spend the day at the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, NE. We had a blast spending the day together in fellowship!

(Pictures: Peyton Mitchell, Harrison Welsch, Esther Allen-Pickett, Raegan Welsch, Vivian Fong, Rose Koepp, Tyler Koepp)



The fall semester brought with it some schedule changes. We as a church have switched over to the Narrative Lectionary, which means new curriculum for K-5. The new curriculum is called "Living the Word" and it is put out by Spirit and Truth Publishing. We also made the decision to move youth group back to Wednesdays. Both the new curriculum and the new schedule have been working out very well!

Last year we started a new Preschool/Kindergarten program on Wednesday nights called "Frolic" (named for the curriculum they use). I am very pleased to report that this program is still going strong! This program, as well as many of our other classes are being taught and facilitated by new volunteers this year. I am so thankful for all of the new faces we have here this year! We could not have these programs without them!

The last big thing we did during 2023 was the Christmas Craft Make-and-Take Event. This event was new last year, and we were so excited to be able to offer it again this year! The Christian Ed Committee and the Congregational Life Committee joined forces again to create space where children could come and create a craft that they can then give as a Christmas gift to someone



they love. We had over 50 people from the community come through to make crafts and enjoy a hot chocolate bar. Those of us volunteering have had so much fun the past two years putting on this event! We look forward to doing it again next year and hopefully growing it a little bit each year.

(Picture to the left: students crafting during the make-and-take event.)

2023 was a blast! I cannot wait to see what 2024 has in store for us! Thank you again for the wonderful opportunity to serve the children and youth of this church!

-Rosalie Koepp

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE

Congregational Life Committee

Moderator: Mary Kay LaMaster

Congregational Life provides hospitality, fellowship programs and events which draw people together for recognition, celebration, encouragement and enjoyment of the church family. The committee develops and oversees evangelism and renewal efforts, membership recruitment, new member integration and church marketing.

Congregational Life continues to offer a variety of events for our church family.

Activities for the 2023 year included:

Potlucks in February, April and October.

Church (Church + Brunch) at Blue Fork in March.

Assisted the Sesquicentennial committee with some events including Living History Evening in March and pie reception following the Cantata in December.

Made May Baskets for VIP's and Deacons delivered.

Coordinated with Mission committee sponsored Car Show to provide root beer floats with a free will donation to Raices DiMi Pueblo. We served 115 root beer floats.

Hosted a Tailgate meal at Harms Park prior to attending the Sodbuster baseball game in July. 75 attended.

Coordinated 4th Sunday Fellowship where other committees hosted and supplied cookies.

In August we had an ice cream social following the 10:30 worship.

Handed out chocolates to honor Mothers and Fathers on Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Served as greeters for Church in the Park.

Sponsored Christmas Craft Make and Take event for families in the community. Thank you to Rose for her assistance.

Prepared and served meals after each of the 3 new member classes.

Coordinated Hanging of the Greens. We appreciate all who help decorate following the 10:30 service. This seems to be an efficient way to decorate. Thanks to the Youth Group for bringing the décor up from the basement and to Bonnie Grams for organizing the totes!

We want to thank Pastor Greg, Pastor Damen, Church staff and the Sesquicentennial Committee for the outstanding job they did to help our church celebrate this special year!

Committee Members: Kathy Amyot, Cheryl Lockwood, Jessica Meeske, Julie Thomsen, Dana Miller, Deb Johnson, Tim Johnson, Steve Illingworth, Marsha Nelson, Kathy Reimer, Melissa Davis, Pastor Damen Jensen-Heitmann, staff liaison.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Kay LaMaster, Moderator

BOARD OF DEACONS

Moderator: Linda Johnson

Annual Report 2024

The Board of Deacons is the “presence of Christ” in our church community. This ministry focuses on the care and compassion for the members of our congregation. This fifteen member board is composed of naturally caring individuals that enjoy reaching out to others and sharing their kindness and love.

Church members and friends of our church are divided into fifteen parishes with one deacon assigned to each parish. These deacons provide a special connection with members to make sure they feel welcome. This is accomplished through personal visits, phone calls, emails or cards to celebrate special occasions or support in times of need. Deacons often assist a parish member by picking up groceries or running other errands as needed.

Deacons are assigned one or two VIPs (Very Important People). A VIP is an individual who is homebound, unable to get out easily, or may reside in a care center or retirement home. The hope is to connect with their VIP at least once a month through a visit, call or card. Covid continues to effect these visits.

Deacons accompany Pastor Greg to serve communion on the Wednesday following the first Sunday of the month at Regency and College View. On Thursday of the same week, communion is served as needed at other residences and to individuals that are unable to get to church. We continue to use the communion packets made up with the cup and delicious bread provided by Andy Barrows.

The flowers provided for the altar each Sunday are delivered by a deacon after the service to someone that has been ill, to a family that has lost a loved one, to those with a special celebration or to someone in appreciation for their work in the church. A rose is placed on the pulpit when there is a birth in our church community. The Deacon delivering flowers that Sunday delivers the rose to the baby’s family.

Transportation to church is available through the Deacons for individuals or families that have a one time or ongoing need for this service. This is arranged through the church office and Deacons are contacted. This service was rarely used during 2023.

Donated Food Pantry items are delivered by Deacons to the Food Pantry. Rich McKenzie, a former Deacon, volunteered to do this for the Deacons for 2023.

The creation of the stay-at-home church provided on Facebook is a welcome opportunity for residents at College View to gather and watch church services together. Deacons sign up to take large print bulletins and to join in the service. Residents greatly enjoy the deacon joining them and the special “wave greeting” from the congregation during the passing of the peace. Our many thanks to Ann Koozer for coordinating this important service between College View and the Deacons the past three years.

The Deacons were able to reach out to families this past year and extend their love and support by preparing and serving eleven funeral luncheons. This time of gathering is a special way to support the families.

During Holy Week in April and in September as a part of the 150th church celebration, the Deacons assisted with a new prayer calling ministry. Following dinner and a brief orientation, Deacons, Elders, Trustees and Staff were each given a list of church members to call. These board members took prayer requests for joys and concerns that were shared, followed by a prayer with the member at the close of the conversation. This ministry was spiritually beneficial for everyone involved and brought the congregation closer to each other and to their faith.

The Board of Deacons shares their love of Christ through their care and compassion for our church family. Their willingness to call upon others and be called upon to serve truly exemplifies the “hands and feet of Jesus” here on earth.

GLOBAL MISSION & LOCAL WITNESS COMMITTEE
Annual Report 2023
Constance Malloy, Moderator

Mission Statement

The Global Mission and Local Witness Committee is following our call to love and care for our neighbors by serving, supporting, and developing relationships within our church, community, country, and world.

In 2023, our committee continued to find ways to connect with each other and develop meaningful connections with members of our church family, our community, our fellow Presbyterians, and our Global Mission partners. We always welcome suggestions or support for new ways to make connections and serve others.

Building Connections/Relationships/Partnerships Through Offerings:

This committee selects monthly communion offerings to be given to community partners. The committee also helps coordinate four national PC(USA) offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace and Global Witness, Pentecost, and Joy.

- These communion offerings were completed in 2023:
 - January: Mentoring Works (formerly Big Brothers/Big Sisters)
 - February: Central Community College (Hastings) Food Pantry
 - March: Joyful Noise
 - April: One Great Hour of Sharing
 - May: Open Table
 - June: National Pentecost Offering and Raices de Mi Pueblo
 - July: Kids' Closet
 - August: Our Place After School Program (for middle and high school students)
 - September: Hastings Literacy Council
 - October: National Peace and Global Witness Offering split with Rite Aid Care Clinic of Hastings
 - November: HPS Foundation Elementary Playgrounds
 - December: FPC-USA Joy Offering, as well as Reverse Advent Donations. As part of advent, the congregation generously donated requested items to five local agencies: Catholic Social Services, Crossroads, High School and Middle School Food Pantries, Toys for Tots, and Maryland Center. Our committee organized and distributed donations.

Developing Relationships and Partnerships Through Ongoing and New Service Projects:

- The donation station, set up in Fellowship Hall, continues to receive donations for selected programs that are either ongoing or seasonal, such as Proteus (shirts/hats for migrant workers), coat drives, Brooks' Bookshelf, EnCourage, Happy Nappies, and Hastings Food Pantry. Information on these collections is available via the church office.
- With ongoing safety modifications relating to Covid-19 variants, we continued our partnership with First United Methodist Church to coordinate the United Harvest food distributions on the third Saturday of each month in the parking lot of our First Presbyterian Peace Center. Each month many members of our two churches, along with other organizations, churches, and independent volunteers, join to help set up and

distribute the food. The average number of volunteers each month is 55. Our Hands Around the World Store donates \$100 monthly to United Harvest.

- In response to ongoing food insecurity in our community, committee members have continued to give out food to 40 families at our First Presbyterian Peace Center. On the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, we have distributed 40 boxes of fresh produce. The United Harvest team also donates 160 pounds of ground beef each month to be distributed with the produce boxes. Most of the recipients are Latino families. This distribution will end for our church at the end of 2023 because the new transportation plans can no longer be predictable. Special thanks to Andy Barrows and Will Locke, who have regularly helped committee members with this labor of love.
- Our committee sponsors activities in our PEACE center that foster ongoing relationships with our Latino community. Maria Rubalcava teaches a twice-weekly dance class, Raíces de Mi Pueblo. The dances taught originate from different parts of Mexico and Central America. Maria teaches these classes to promote physical fitness, confidence, pride of heritage, cultural knowledge, and relationships.
- Committee members once again partnered with Aida and Mark Evans in preparing a welcome meal in July for over 100 migrant farm workers from Mexico who are employed seasonally in our community. In 2023, members of the committee assisted in preparing and serving food for a picnic at Hastings Lake.
- In mid-July, the Mission Committee was finally able to host a mission group from Pastor Kendra Grams' church, First Presbyterian Church, in Hudson, Wisconsin. (The trip had been planned a couple of years earlier but had to be postponed due to the COVID pandemic.) We had dinner waiting for them when they arrived on July 13th, and members of our committee dined with them. They slept upstairs, used showers in the basement, and usually made their own meals in our kitchen. They enjoyed watching Raíces de Mi Pueblo rehearse, and they joined us for service projects: United Harvest, Open Table, and HMS Gardens with Jayson Stoddard. With members of Mission, they visited Prairie Loft and attended a Sodbusters baseball game.
- This year, our church has continued a connection we made last year with South Heartland District Health Department. The Health Department reached out to our church because they wanted to gather and provide information for Hispanic communities in Hastings. Our Peace Center and Church were recognized as safe and familiar places to gather. Mission Committee members sponsored these meetings, where important representation and information about a variety of health issues was shared in Spanish. These meetings have been ongoing every few months and are generally held in the Peace Center or Fellowship Hall.
- For the past 19 years during the month of July, our congregation has packed sack lunches and special meals for the Open Table community sack lunch program. In July of 2023, our church prepared approximately 4,000 sack lunches to distribute on Mondays through Fridays at the downtown Catholic Social Services Office. Sack lunches are prepared following church services each Sunday during the month of July. This year, thanks to many helping hands, we were able to fill our quota and eliminate our fourth Sunday of operations.
- In July, Sarah Allen arranged a "melon roast" car show with Steve Cropley. Raíces de Mi Pueblo performed. Proceeds of about \$500 went to help with travel and costumes for the dance troupe.

- In October, Julie Thomsen organized a coat drive in conjunction with United Harvest Saturday to distribute donated coats at our church. Approximately 90 coats were distributed that morning.
- In December, the Giving Tree was, as usual, placed in Memorial Room to support clients of Assertive Community Treatments, people with severe and persistent mental illness living in our community. Members of our congregation selected tags with Christmas gift requests, bought the presents, and returned the wrapped gifts under the tree. For many recipients, this is the only holiday gift they receive. All gift requests were fulfilled.
- For the third year, Mission donated \$10,000 to United Way to help develop quality daycare programs/training and to provide scholarships for families who need support. The \$10,000 yearly donation was set up for five years and will be reviewed after the five years.
- For the second year, our committee continued a joint effort with Hastings College students and Chaplain Doodle Harris by supporting a Food4Thought trivia night fundraiser in our Fellowship Hall. Mission Committee provided varying types of chili, cinnamon rolls, salads, and drinks before the trivia contest began. The Food4Thought Program provides backpacks of food over the weekend to students whose families face food insecurity. The event generated \$840 for Food4Thought.

Building Connections and Relationships with International Mission Partners

Although we couldn't meet in person with Kristin Hamner this year, our committee continues a commitment to form an interactive relationship with two of our International Mission Partners.

- **Frontera de Cristo.** We have continued a meaningful relationship with this bi-national border ministry. We have sent groups there, and they have sent groups here over the past seven years. We also continue to sell Café Justo in our Hands Around the World Store and church office. We send annual financial support for their ministry. We encourage congregation members to learn more about them at fronteradecristo.org, justcoffee.org, or searching for them on Facebook. In June, 2023, the Mission Committee hosted a barbecue and potluck dinner to welcome our partners from Frontera de Cristo, Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado, who shared news about their program with members of the congregation who joined us that evening. They also enjoyed a performance by the dance troupe we sponsor, Raíces de Mi Pueblo. In 2024, the Mission Committee hopes to plan a fall adult mission trip to Frontera de Cristo.
- **Foundation for Peace in the Dominican Republic.** Kristin Hamner, a Grand Island native, is the director of missions for this incredible program in the Dominican Republic. She has visited our church several times when she has been back in Nebraska. You can learn more on her Facebook page or on the Foundation for Peace website.
- **Hands Around the World.** Pamela Lainson manages the Hands Around the World Store in the memorial room with help from Paula Crozier and Susie Graham. The fair-trade store benefits artisans and farmers from third-world countries. The store is open before and after church services, as well as for various seasonal events. Café Justo (coffee) continues to be sold from the store and church office. The Hands Around the World Store contributes \$100 each month to the United Harvest Food Distribution.

In 2023, we had more opportunities to get to know people we might not otherwise have met, and our committee served others, built relationships, and shared Christ's love both inside and outside the walls of our church building. We continue to be grateful for the generosity, creativity,

kindness, and genuine witness to Christ's love from our congregation and staff. Please consider joining our committee. Just let one of us or church staff know that you are interested. Our work is a joy!

Respectfully Submitted,

Constance Malloy, Moderator

2023 Mission Committee Members: Sharon Brooks, Constance Malloy, Meg Stewart-Magee, Dan Deffenbaugh, Denny Storer, Jan Ham, Julie Thomsen, Pamela Lainson, Jane Marsh, Beverly Rader, Erica Brooks, Paula Crozier, Jodi Graves, Lynden Hall, Richard Johnson, Chris Junker, Kim Creech, Jeni Howard, Sarah Allen, and Damen Jensen-Heitmann



GO & SERVE

Rev. Damen Jensen-Heitmann, Associate Pastor



Go & Serve 2023

Go and Serve decided to try something new in 2023 and sent two group of faithful disciples!

In early June an intrepid group of high school students spent a week in Hazard, Kentucky working with the Housing Development Alliance and First Presbyterian Church of Hazard. Go and Serve has traveled to Hazard in the past and it was joy to see some of our old friends and introduce a new group of students to the Appalachian Mountains. The group, consisting of Jackson Graves, Eleanor Oliver, Gauge Tinsman, and Moses Rhodes was chaperoned by Damen Jensen-Heitmann and Kili Wenburg. They spent their days in Kentucky working on a porch and ramp to make a home accessible and painting on a rainy day.



The congregation should once again be proud to have raised high school students who are curious, compassionate, and find joy in serving others. It was a remarkable group who served others as true reflection of the love of Christ.

In early August a small group of young adults (ages 18-29) gave things a try by heading to Houston, TX. Jennifer Boeve, Aster Canady, Hannah Jensen-Heitmann, and Damen Jensen-Heitmann stayed hydrated during the Texas heat and spent time painting, doing light carpentry, and tidying up the exterior of a home in Houston. During their time there they stayed at Pines Presbyterian and volunteered through The Restoration Team which works primarily to repair homes damaged by hurricanes and flooding.



Our young adults are eager to do good in the world and are excited to take on another Go & Serve adventure in the year ahead. The first attempt at a young adult trip provided several learning opportunities and also highlighted to engage people of this age in service ministry.

The Go & Serve Committee offers their appreciation and thanks to the congregation for their generous support of this vital ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Damen Jensen-Heitmann



LIBRARY UPDATE
Sue Medsker, Librarian

LIBRARY YEAR END REPORT 2023

The First Presbyterian Church library has over 3,000 volumes of fiction and nonfiction. These include major holdings in religion and theology, as well as collections of fiction, biography, large print and juvenile titles. In 2023, circulation was 159 items, down from 201 in 2022. Part of that is due to the library being closed for renovations from November 1st through the end of the year. Suggestions for increasing the usage of the library and for additions to the collection are always welcome.

Fifty-seven books were added to the collection in 2023. Twenty-nine were gifts and the rest were purchased with income from The Ann Binfield and C. G. & Idilla Jeffrey Wallace memorial funds. Of the 57 books, 10 were fiction, 30 were nonfiction and 17 were children's books.

The library also subscribes to 4 journals. They are Christian Century, Horizons Magazine, Presbyterian Outlook, and Presbyterians Today. Back issues are kept for 2 years.

The library's renovation will be complete in early 2024. At that time, the books will be returned to the new space. The new books which have been on book carts waiting to be added to the collection will be added, and the catalog will be put online. We will need volunteers to do all this, so please contact me if you would like to help.

Library use is open to all church members and friends, and is on the honors system. The checkout period is two weeks and books are always due on a Sunday, since that is the day the majority of members come to the church. Fines are not collected for overdue books. However, if you fail to return a book in a timely fashion, you will receive a notice.

Donations of items to the library are always accepted, with the understanding that if the librarian deems that they are not useful or appropriate for our library, they will be donated to a book sale or returned to the donor. Suggestions of items for purchase are always welcome.

Sue Medsker
Librarian

MEMORIALS AND GIFTS COMMITTEE

MEMORIALS AND GIFTS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT – 2023

The Memorials and Gifts Committee has been working very diligently to administer memorial monies for approved requests. The following requests were approved:

Capital Campaign - \$2950.00
FPC Foundation – 150th Anniversary Legacy Scholarship - \$26,005.00
FPC Postal Account - \$1005.00
Go & Serve - \$170.00
Roses for Newborn - \$25.58
Scholarship Committee - \$1000.00
South Foyer Mirror - \$1016.28
Transfer to Deacons Account - \$338.88
Transfer to Hastings College - \$100.00
Transfer to Sunday School Account - \$25.00

Monies from the following funds were used for the requests:

Paul Becker	Vernon Kooy
Mark Bliss	Gladys Kuehn
Anne Bohlke	Irene Lindau
Lula Buhr	Darrel Lloyd
Jim Cooke	Alice Locke
Mary Jeanne Cooke	Leah McCrady
Ellen Dwyer	O. J. McDougal
Frank Emmons	Betty Payne
Mary Jo Emmons	Dean Pickett
Georgie Evans	Rich Portwood
Galen Finley	Katherine Sachtleben
Joanne Finley	Rhonda Sanford
Frank Georgiana	Wayne Specht
John Harrington	Betty Jo Trenchard
Irmice Heeren	Robert Trenchard
Jane Horton	Winnie Vaughan
Darlene Howard	Richard Viglicky
Barbara Jackson	Carol Wheeler
Dixie Kerr	Don Whitcomb
Jean Koch	

Yearend balance - \$53,229.10. Of that amount, \$24,492.96 is undesignated.
Received - \$5525.00. Expensed - \$32,635.74.

The Committee gratefully acknowledges gifts received in memory of:

Mary Giesler
Sharon Harvey

Roberta Lloyd
Julia McDougal
Rich Portwood
Rhonda Sanford

Memorials are thankfully accepted for either designated or undesignated gifts.

Moderator: Mary L. Olsen
Session Representative: Kathy Amyot
Trustee Representative: Kay Georgiana
Stephanie Bliss
Diane Christensen
Jane Johnson
Tammie Nowka
Wihlma Price
Kaela Pumroy
Kathy Utter
Ex Officio – Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett

MUSIC STAFF REPORT
Linda Vollweiler, Music Director/Organist

Annual Report 2023

What a grand and glorious year 2023 has been in the life of First Presbyterian Church. The 150th Anniversary of the church brought about many special events. It is difficult to know where to begin. Since my title is Music Director/Organist, I would like to review the music activities that took place.

On January 15th we had the privilege of hosting Dr. Jens Korndoefer, a world renown organist. Dr. Korndoefer played for the 10:30 a.m. worship service and gave a spectacular organ recital in the afternoon. There were many folks from both the church and community in attendance. Everyone was invited to greet Dr. Korndoefer at a reception following the recital.

A Mass written by Joseph Jongen was presented by the Chancel Choir, Cathedral Brass Quintet, and Organ on April 16th. The Kyrie, Credo, and Gloria were the parts of the Mass sung during the church service.

Our Pentecost service was celebrated on May 28th in the Pavilion at Chautauqua Park in Hastings. The Spiro Spero Singers provided the music.

The following weekend, The Spiro Spero Singers and Chamber Orchestra presented the Cantata “Gelobet sei der Herr, Mein Gott, BWV 129 by J.S. Bach. Following the Cantata the ensemble sang several bluegrass-like choral arrangements.

Our Scottish Heritage was celebrated on August 13th with a bagpiper playing several Scottish tunes during the Worship Service. A covered dish dinner followed the service.

The Presbyterian Jazz Weekend was October 6th, 7th, 8th. We had the pleasure of hosting The Theodicy Jazz Collective. This professional ensemble performed 2 concerts – one at The Lark and the other one in our sanctuary. They also played for our October 8th worship service.

The Chancel Choir, soloists, and Chamber Orchestra premiered “Bearers of the Divine” a choral cantata written by our own Hannah Jensen-Heitmann. Hannah wrote the music and words. Damen Jensen-Heitmann inserted scripture between each song. The cantata was beautiful and very well received by the congregation. We are so proud of Hannah!

As you can see it was a busy year, however, it could not have been possible without our wonderful pastors – Greg Allen--Pickett and Damen Jensen-Heitmann.

A BIG thank you to our music staff: Dr. Brett Epperson, Dr. Byron Jensen, Linda Johnson, Tim and Teresa Canady, Dr. Susan Oliver and Mary Plock. I’d like to also thank Erik Nielsen and Tony Calhoun for the behind-the-scenes work they do to make our musical events run smoothly.

In Christ,

Linda Vollweiler
Music Director/Organist

WORSHIP, ARTS, AND MUSIC COMMITTEE

Dave Cooke, Moderator

The Worship, Arts, and Music Committee is one of the main committees overseen by the session. Our duties are to watch over and direct the worship and music life of the church, in accordance with the Presbyterian Directory of Worship; to maintain the instruments owned by the church; and to carefully utilize the Langenberg funds in conjunction with the Trustees and Session.

The music staff consists of Linda Vollweiler, Music Director and Church Organist; Dr Brett Epperson, Chancel Choir Director; Dr Byron Jensen, Chancel and Calvin/Westminster Hand bell Director; Linda Johnson, Calvin/Westminster Choir Director; Mary Plock, Calvin/Westminster and Praise/Alleluia Accompanist; Tim and Teresa Canady, Praise/Alleluia Choir Directors; Susan Oliver, Praise/Alleluia Hand bell Director; and the Celebrate Band. They all work very hard to provide a year of wonderful music for First Presbyterian Church.

Services were arranged so there was a 10:30AM service every Sunday. The 10:30AM service remains the Traditional Service in the Sanctuary. We held 8:30 Taize Services in the chapel when it was too cold for worship in the park. The Taize Services provide an alternative to the traditional service. Worship has been in person and online. Sundays in the summer, worship in the park was offered at 8:, but fewer weeks, due to weather and trips. We would like to thank all the song leaders for their help during the 8:30 and 10:30 services.

All Sundays are special, and we are blessed with wonderful music each week, but WAM has contributed to several extra special Sundays (and some other special days, as well), this year:

- February 19: *Celebrating Gifts of Women*, with the Chancel/Cal West women
- March 12: We heard the Cathedral Brass and Chancel Choir
- April 9: Easter Sunday, we again heard the Cathedral Brass, with the Chancel Choir and Bells
- May 14: Mother's Day, we heard the Chancel Men
- May 28: Pentecost, we had the *Bluegrass Service in the Park*, at Chataqua Park
- June 3 (Saturday) we hosted a *Bach and Bluegrass Concert* in our Sanctuary
- June 4: Trinity Sunday, we heard the Bach Cantata
- June 7 (Wednesday) we hosted a visit from Mission Workers Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado, and a Mexican Folkloric Dance Presentation from *Raices de mi Pueblo*
- June 25: It was Barbershop Chorus Sunday
- August 13: Scottish Heritage Sunday. Yep, bagpipes. Also *Spiro Spero Singers!*
- October 1: Hastings College Sunday, with the HC Choir and Bells
- October 6 – 8: Jazz Weekend, with Theodicy Jazz giving concerts at the Lark and in the Sanctuary, and a Jazz Mass with the Chancel Choir on Sunday
- November 12: All Saints Day, we heard The Chancel Bells and Choir, with violin
- November 26: We heard the Cathedral Brass
- December 10: Cantata Sunday, *Bearers of the Divine - An Advent Cantata*, by Hannah Jensen-Heitman

Several activities were partly or fully funded by Langenberg Funds. Those funds supported Legacy Lessons and, beginning this year, finance the *Langenberg Concert Series*, proposed by Brett Epperson. Some funds were used for needy Hastings Public School students for the summer band

and orchestra program. Cathedral Brass was our Ensemble in Residence. We help support the Hastings Community Music Academy.

Members of WAM include: Moderator-Dave Cooke (Session); Session Representatives- Neil Riley and Robin Koozer: the Music Staff; Members: Linda Vollweiler, Brett Epperson, Kay Georgiana, Neil Kerr, Becky Meyer, Dana Miller, Erik Nielsen, Eleanor Oliver, Mary Olson, Sarah Wolf, Mary Fisk, and Alice Throckmorton. Sarah is the secretary, and is non pareil.

LANGENBERG CONCERT SERIES REPORT

Dr. Brett Epperson

The 150th Anniversary of First Presbyterian Church's founding was celebrated in a variety of ways, notably through a *number* of special music events throughout the year. Such music programming has been made possible via the enduring generosity of Luella Langenberg - her gift to support the special music programs of First Presbyterian Church allows our congregation to share world-class live music with Hastings and our greater Central Nebraska community. To coincide with the church's sesquicentennial, the Worship, Arts, and Music committee supported the re-establishment of the Langenberg Concert Series, to continue in our 151st year and beyond.

Some special music projects underwritten by Langenberg funds are familiar occurrences to our congregation, such as bringing in a guest organist for worship and a concert - like Jens Korndörfer's visit to us in mid-January of 2023. Featuring our Ensemble-in-Residence, the Cathedral Brass Quintet, allowed our Chancel Choir to explore new repertoire, as we presented highlights from the Joseph Jongen *Mass* in worship in the spring.

Langenberg funds also allowed us to explore new musical possibilities, including the establishment of a professional chamber choir, the *Spiro Spero Singers*, who first shared their combined voices during our Pentecost in the Park worship, followed by our *Bach and Bluegrass* concert and a Bach cantata in worship the following weekend. The ensemble's name comes from the Latin phrase *Dum spiro spero*: "While I breathe, I hope." The *Spiro Spero Singers* bookended summer music-making by coming together for our Scottish Heritage Worship service in August as well.

The resumption of Chancel Choir rehearsals in the fall coincided with gearing up preparations for a number of long-planned-for musical celebrations. The 150th Anniversary Worship Service in September highlighted the talents of many of our congregation's music ensembles. The Theodicy Jazz Collective was a mountaintop music experience for many in October - how special to welcome a child of our church, Ann Phelps, and her musical compatriots to Hastings - a vibrant example of how outstanding worshipful music from a variety of backgrounds can draw the holy circle wider for all who hear.

A fitting culminating event of the first calendar year of the re-established Langenberg series was the world premiere of Hannah Jensen-Heitman's Christmas Cantata, *Bearers of the Divine*. How fortunate are we that a beloved member of our congregation created a work of art so thought-provoking, nuanced, and moving? As composer-in-residence for the year, Hannah has written a new hymn for the congregation we will sing during the Lenten season.

It has been a year *full* of special music-making at First Presbyterian Church. We hope that the re-establishment of the Langenberg Concert Series may serve as an additional point of entry for our congregation, inviting those who appreciate great music to be part of our beloved community of believers. Here's looking forward to more great music-making in 2024 and beyond.

-Brett Epperson, Ph.D.

Chancel Choir Director & Director of the Langenberg Concert Series

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Moderator: Mary Fisk

Annual Report 2023

As it is stated in the "Presbyterian Women's Purpose", we meet to nurture our faith, to support the mission of the church worldwide, and to build an inclusive, caring community of women. All women of the church are welcomed and encouraged to participate.

In 2023, PW contributed financially to church mission projects including the PW Thank Offering, the PW Birthday Offering, the Least Coin Offering, Our Little Angels, Threads of Grace, Living Waters for the World, the Hunger Fund, and the CROP Walk. We donated cookies for the UCC Bloodmobile.

Gifts of Women Sunday was February 19. Sue Collier, the pastor from FPC, Lincoln gave the sermon. Members of PW read the scriptures and served as ushers and greeters. Sharon Brooks was recognized and honored with a PW Honorary Life Membership for her service to the church.

Church Women United held their May Friendship Luncheon. Hannah Jensen-Heitmann was recognized as First Presbyterian's Outstanding Young Woman at the event. FPW donated salads for the celebration.

PW programs for 2023 included presentations about Our Little Angels, Threads of Grace, Juvenile Justice Ministry, enCourage Advocacy Center, Linda and Richard Johnson about NAM, and the Hospice Choir. In November, we honored the women in our church who had died during the past year. In December, Mary Plock entertained us with Christmas music. Hannah Jensen-Heitmann told about the Cantata she wrote which was presented by Hannah, the Chancel Choir, HC students, Damen, and an orchestra in December.

Circles met for Bible study and fellowship each month September through May. Damen Jensen-Heitmann met with lesson leaders each month, giving suggestions and methods for presenting the lesson. Our 2023-2024 study is "Sacred Encounters".

One of our mission projects is "Food From the Heart". We encourage members of the church to make casseroles and soups to be placed in the church freezers. The finished casseroles in the freezer are for anyone to take and give away to people who need a reminder they are loved.

Presbyterian Women Annual Financial Report 2023

General checking account

Balance forward December 31, 2022 \$2,122.52

Receipts:	Apportionments from circles	\$2,400.00
	Bible Study books	\$185.00
	Birthday Offering	\$317.00
	Collections	\$2,065.00
	Cookbooks	\$175.00
	Food from the Heart donations	\$79.00
	Least Coin	\$37.87
	Luncheon income	\$641.00
	Miscellaneous	\$50.00
	PCUSA Hunger Fund	\$126.30
	Thank Offering	<u>\$366.00</u>
	Total income	\$6,442.17

Expenses:	Bible Study books	\$181.50
	Birthday Offering	\$317.00
	Church Women United - dues	\$40.00
	Collections remitted - Mother's Day, Father's Day	\$2,065.00
	FPC for postage, copies	\$100.00
	Food from the Heart expenses	\$90.01
	Gifts for speakers	\$367.80
	Honoraria	\$275.00
	Honorary memberships	\$95.00
	Horizons subscriptions	\$75.80
	Hunger fund	\$126.30
	Kitchen supplies	\$179.70
	Least Coin	\$37.87
	Library books	\$100.00
	Luncheon expense	\$204.03
	Pres. Central NE - mission pledge	\$1,500.00
	Pres. Central NE - presbytery/synod support	\$225.00
	Thank Offering	<u>\$366.00</u>
	Total expenses	\$6,346.01

Balance on hand December 31, 2023 \$2,218.68

Regular savings account	\$291.08
Interest	<u>\$0.28</u>
total	<u>\$291.36</u>

Frances Anderson Memorial Fund	\$2,773.84
Interest	<u>\$4.14</u>
Total	<u>\$2,777.98</u>

Total assets on December 31, 2023 \$5,288.02

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Moderator: Kevin Turner

The Board of Trustees meets the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 in the Anderson Conference Room. They are responsible for the oversight and maintenance of the church's financial viability, as well as all church properties and worldly assets.

Pastor Greg has reported to Session each month on behalf of the trustees, and one trustee serves on each of the following committees: FPC Foundation, Memorial Committee, United Harvest, Nominating Committee and Scholarship Committee.

Trustees are proud of the work we have accomplished during this, our 150th year, and we are grateful for your support. We are looking forward to several more major projects and enhancements being completed in 2024.

The 2023 Board of Trustees included: Erik Nielsen, Sue Horton (Secretary), Kay Georgiana, Mary Creigh, C.L. Wimer, Ken Stein, Kim Kern, Danna Wolford, Kevin Turner (Chair).

2023 Projects Completed at Church Properties:

- New roofing installed at PEACE Center
- Bat Mitigation Project
- HVAC Upgrade in Main Church

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Moderator: Tim Redline

2023 Annual Report

The Scholarship Committee was blessed with several worthy applicants and 4 scholarships to award for the 2023-2024 school year. The scholarships are; the Ann L. Binfield, Chip Essex Memorial, Ted and Lori Schroeder, and the FPC Legacy Scholarship. A description of each scholarship and criteria can be found on the church website at fpchastings.org.

The scholarship recipients were:

Luke Brooks - Binfield scholarship
Campbell Schukei - Binfield scholarship, Schroeder scholarship
Eleanor Oliver - Legacy scholarship
Jackson Graves - Legacy scholarship
Claire Schwarz - Legacy scholarship

Committee members were:

Class of 2023 Class of 2024 Class of 2025 Ginny Locke Tim Redline
(Moderator) Justin Brader Linda Johnson Ross Struss

Session Rep: Justin Brader

Trustee Rep: Kevin Turner

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tim Redline, Ph.D.".

Tim Redline

PEACE CENTER REPORT

The PEACE Center (old Middle School Annex), which the church purchased from Hastings Public Schools in 2009, has continued to support various groups and function as a “Community Center,” providing safe ways to gather and continue the ministry and mission of First Presbyterian Church while serving the larger community.

Currently the PEACE Center serves over **1,000 people per month** through ministries and community partnerships detailed below:



UNITED HARVEST MOBILE FOOD PANTRY: On the third Saturday of every month, 400 families receive a free food distribution from the PEACE Center. In addition to the 400 recipient families, there are 40-60 community volunteers that help with the distribution of food.

HEARTS AND HANDS AGAINST HUNGER: In partnership with the local Kiwanis Club, food is packaged by volunteers and sent around the world to communities in need. See the attached report.

HASTINGS COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY: The PEACE Center provides a sorting and storage facility for the Hastings Community Food Pantry. 20 volunteers per month help sort and store the food that is donated and distributed by this ministry.

RAICES DE MI PUEBLO MEXICAN FOLKLORIC DANCE TROUPE: The PEACE Center is the home base for this dance group which includes up to 20 dancers weekly along with their family members who accompany them.

SOUTH HEARTLAND DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT (SHDHD): Hosts 3-6 gatherings per year to teach health education seminars in Spanish to Latino families. Attendance is 20-30.

CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Hosts community classes (including dog obedience training) weekly with 10-20 students and 10-15 dogs.

HASTINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUMMER BAND: Hosts an annual concert with 75 students and 150 family members, many from lower socio-economic families.

HASTINGS PICKLEBALL LEAGUE: Groups of 4-8 pickleball players use the gym twice per week.

UNITED WAY OF SOUTH CENTRAL NEBRASKA: For one week in December, the Toys for Tots program is run out of the PEACE Center. 20-30 volunteers participate along with 50 families that come through to receive toys.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HASTINGS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: The senior high youth group meets weekly in the PEACE Center. The PEACE Center is also used for recreation for other Christian Education activities. 40-50 children and youth use the space monthly.

QUILTERS CLUB: Women from the church and community gather weekly to sew quilts. This provides fellowship for those women. The quilts they make are for personal use, donated to families in need, sold in silent auctions to raise money for local nonprofits, and given to military veterans.

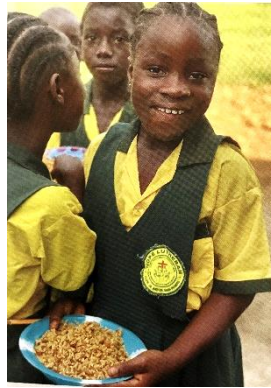
WALKERS CLUB: Four days a week a group of up to 10 senior citizens use the PEACE Center gym for exercise and the classroom for a coffee fellowship group.

HEARTS & HANDS AGAINST HUNGER

Hearts & Hands Against Hunger of Hastings Annual Report 2023



Cub Scouts & Parents, Pack 207



Hope School, Liberia



Hastings Middle School 7th Graders

Last year, 2186 Hearts & Hands volunteers packed over 793,456 meals at the First Presbyterian PEACE Center. These meals filled five semi-trailers. With the help of Orphan Grain Train, these meals were shipped to 18 countries and to many hungry people in the United States. Orphan Grain Train frequently gets thank you letters from the organizations receiving the food. A school in Liberia recently wrote:

"Most of the students at Hope Lutheran School in Liberia struggle to eat one meal per day. Students arrive not having eaten breakfast, without lunch money, or even a small snack. We are so blessed to receive the rice meals that Orphan Grain Train delivers to our school. Students ask to have school on Saturdays."

This year we had two community packing events. In April, more than 300 volunteers helped pack 156,816 meals for hungry children in Guatemala. Volunteers of all ages with a range of abilities traveled from as far as 100 miles away for this event. In November, 240 volunteers packed over 85,000 meals to be sent to Maui, where devastating fires left many people homeless and without work. Thrivent helped us with these events by purchasing the ingredients.

Since 2008, Hearts & Hands volunteers have packed over 8,600,000 meals at the Peace Center. We thank members of First Presbyterian Church for supporting this project with their monetary donations, volunteering at events, and by allowing Hearts & Hands to use the Peace Center. We appreciate everything First Presbyterian Church does to make our mission of feeding hungry people possible.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeanne Hastings, HHAH Committee Member



First Presbyterian Youth Group

Groups and number of volunteers that packed meals at Hearts & Hands Against Hunger during 2023.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Geneva	44
Rotary Club	20
Hastings HS Student Council	29
Saint Michaels Grade School	42
Blue Hill Youth Group	16
St Paul's Church Holstein	6
Hastings Middle School 8th Grade	115
Hastings Middle School 8th Grade	112
Good Samaritan Village	9
Give Hope to Guatemala Event	330
Hastings Middle School 7th Grade	68
Hastings Middle School 7th Grade	61
Lions Convention	21
All Star Wrestler Camp	56
Sertoma 8-man Football Camp	54
Weekly Packing Group	53
Hastings College Freshman 1st Shift	49
Hastings College Freshman 2nd Shift	46
Bruckman Rubber & 1st Interstate Bank	24
Bible Study 1st St Paul Lutheran	29
Adams Central Honor Society	31
Mary Lanning Home Healthcare	14
1st Presby Youth & Hastings OB/GYN	18
Hearts & Hands for Maui Event	250
Sandy Creek HS	29
Cub Scout Pack 207	62
Deshler HS	40
Silver Lake HS	106
ESU #9	30

HASTINGS COMMUNITY MUSIC ACADEMY

Hannah Jensen-Heitmann

2023 was a wonderful and exciting year for the Hastings Community Music Academy. In the spring, we held a five-week session of Supplementary Elementary Music for homeschooled students as well as a four-week session of ukulele for retirees. We also participated in Give Hastings Day for the first time, and were blown away by the financial support we received from this community. We look forward to participating again and raising our goal in 2024.

This summer, we held a Uke Jamboree for students ages 9-13 for three days, followed by a 30-minute performance at Flatwater Music Festival at Prairie Loft to share the songs they learned and wrote. Additionally in June, we held our first Songwriting and Recording Class where students spent a week creating and writing songs, and were able to record a demo with a professional producer at the end of the week. We also started a Community Band that rehearsed for 8 weeks, and we ended the summer with our popular Sign Language Choir, bringing in participants ages 6-75.

In the fall, we began offering private guitar and voice lessons, taught by local music teachers. These lessons have given us another way to provide music education to members of our community, and employ different teachers in our nonprofit. We also began offering Musical Storytime at a new bookstore downtown, held a Community Handbell Ensemble, Supplementary Elementary Music, our first Holiday Community Band who weekly played at several assisted living facilities, and a Holiday Sign Language Choir, who performed at the Celebration of Lights in Downtown Hastings.

By the end of the year, we had offered classes for over 175 community members, who have varied in ages and abilities. We have a lot of new and returning classes planned for 2024, and we look forward to watching this organization continue to grow. We share our deepest and heartfelt thanks with First Presbyterian Church, and the generosity, support, and guidance we have received from its members.



150th Anniversary Committee Report

In anticipation of our church's 150th anniversary in 2023, a committee was formed at the end of 2022 that would be in charge of managing and supporting any activities that pertained to the celebration of our 150th anniversary. This committee was made up of the following people (in alphabetical order): Colleen Adam, Greg Allen-Pickett, Kathy Amyot, Richard Johnson, Rose Koepp, Cheryl Lockwood, Sue Medsker, Mary Olsen, Mary Seiler, Elaine Specht.

The 150th committee helped with many projects throughout the year (see the image to the right for the full list), but our big projects included a Living History dinner and show, the stained glass project, the 150th celebration service and dinner on September 10th, and a book retelling the history of the last 25 years of our church.

In March, the committee put on an evening of living history in which members of the church acted out scenes from the history of our church. This was accompanied by a soup supper. It was a lovely evening of fun and fellowship!

In early 2023, Brian and Laurie Johnson, with the help of other church members, pulled old/broken stained glass out from the basement of the church. The Johnsons then took the glass home, cleaned it up, and created stunning stained glass ornaments and decorations. These creations were available for purchase leading up to our 150th celebration on September 10th. We are so thankful to Brian and Laurie for their hard work and creativity!

On September 10, 2023, the committee hosted the official 150th celebration service and luncheon. The service was full of special guests and special music. It was a spectacular celebration of all that our church has been and continues to strive for. Following the service, the committee had the PEACE Center set for a celebratory meal. We served over 350 people. It was such a great way to spend time together remembering where we've been and looking forward to what's to come!

The culminating task for the committee was creating a book that laid out the last twenty-five years of church history. We enlisted the help of Laura Marvel-Wunderlich who gathered stories and held interviews with church members. Several church members also submitted their own writing to be included in the book. This book is set to be available sometime early 2024.

It has been an honor to serve the church this year through this committee. We are all very thankful for the opportunity!

 FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HASTINGS LIVING A LEGACY OF LOVE		
	Jens Korndörfer Organ Recital Sanctuary	JAN 15
	Living History Evening & Soup Supper Fellowship Hall	MAR 26
	Joseph Jongen Mass with Cathedral Brass Sanctuary	APRIL 16
	Pentecost Blue Grass Mass Chautauqua Park	MAY 28
	Bach & Blue Grass Concert & Worship Sanctuary & Alexander Park	JUNE 3 & 4
	Presbyterian Mission Co-Workers Fellowship Hall	JUNE 07
	Open Table Meal Packing Fellowship Hall	JULY 9, 16, 23, 30
	Scottish Heritage Worship Sanctuary	AUG 13
	150th Anniversary Worship & Lunch Sanctuary & PEACE Center	SEPT 10
	Hastings College Sunday & World Communion Sanctuary	OCT 01
	Theodicy Jazz Concert & Worship Service Sanctuary	OCT 7 & 8
	Bearers of the Divine Advent Cantata Sanctuary	DEC 10
Schedule subject to change. Please see bulletins, newsletters, websites, and social media for details.		



Report on the Capital Campaign

We set a goal to raise \$2million for the capital campaign. We raised a total of \$2.23 million!

\$2.01 million in gifts and pledges from church members

\$220,000 in grants from outside organizations and foundations

\$2.23 million total

THANK YOU to the congregation for your generosity, vision, and wisdom!

THANK YOU to the capital campaign co-chairs: John and Cathy Pershing and Susan and William Oliver

THANK YOU to the “Initial Gathering” Chairs: Curtis & Kathy Reimer, Chuck & Jane Bauer, Todd Pankratz & Jessica Meeske, George & Colleen Adam and the “Advanced Gathering” Chairs: Robin & Ann Koozer, Chuck Shoemaker and Lynne Friedewald

The projected schedule for the capital campaign church projects in 2024 is:

Completed: Bat Mitigation

In Process:

Library Remodel to include Hands Around the World Store

New Storage Closet on 2nd Floor Ed Wing

Winter/Early Spring 2024:

Hands Around the world store Relocation

Turn Hands Around the world store into bathrooms

Convert Women’s bathroom in sanctuary in to Family Wiggle Room

Basement Floor project

Handicapped Office entrance

New Upstairs Bathroom in Christian Ed wing

Remodeled Parlor

Summer 2024 Projects:

Bell Room

Kitchen Remodel

Choir Loft Handicapped accessible

Main Bathroom Remodel

Office Updates

The PEACE Center projects are underway and will continue throughout 2024

Read a great article in the Hastings Tribune about the capital campaign here:

<https://bit.ly/FPCH-Tribune>