

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HASTINGS, NE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HASTINGS

SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST SINCE 1873

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 28, 2024 (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 (Page 11)

FOUNDATION REPORT – Doug Soderquist, Secretary of Foundation (Page 12)

STATE OF THE CHURCH ADDRESS & PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 12-41)
- Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett, Senior Pastor

ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS FOR 2025 (Class of 2027) – Robin Koozer

Deacons (6)	Session (4)	Trustees (4)
Lisa Unger (2 nd Term)	Steven Illingsworth (2 nd Term)	John Nelson (2 nd Term)
Betty Smith	Richard Johnson (2 nd Term)	Erik Nielsen (2 nd Term)
Melissa Karloff	Sue Medsker (2 nd Term)	Kevin Turner (2 nd Term)
Neil Kerr	William Oliver (2 nd Term)	Todd Pankratz (1 year term, filling vacancy)
Janet Brandt		
Lois Hafer (2 nd Term 1 year term, filling vacancy)		

ELECTION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2025 - 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 28, 2024

The annual meeting of the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Hastings, Nebraska was held on January 28, 2024 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 28, 2023. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.*

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

Membership, December 31, 2022	455, 210 Friends
Received during 2023:	
Profession of faith, reaffirmation, restoration	8
Certificate of Transfer	0
Confirmation	7
Losses 2022:	
Certificate or Removed from Rolls	0
Death	12 8 Members, 4 Friends
Membership, December 31, 2023	462 Members, 201 friends

Youth/Young Adult/Adult Baptisms	0
Infant Baptisms	2
Weddings	2
Funerals	15

Average worship attendance: On-Line & In-Person:	281
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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 AND BUDGET PRESENTATION: The Rev. Gregg Allen-Pickett presented the budget for 2024, which has been approved by the Session.

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 \$68,250

Head of Staff – Housing	\$33,075
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 2024. Upon a voice vote, motion carried.

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

Associate Pastor – Salary	\$46,200
Associate Pastor – Housing	\$15,750
Associate Pastor – Medical Insurance & Pension Payment	\$18,120
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 2024. Upon a voice vote, motion carried.

FOUNDATION BOARD: The Foundation Report is printed in its entirety in the annual meeting report booklet. Committee representative, Tony Eddleman, explained that the Foundation had a good year and voted to distribute 4% funding to the church. A new scholarship was also established from undesignated funds from the Memorial Committee for a Legacy Scholarship.

STATE OF THE CHURCH ADDRESS & PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT: The Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett first reflected on 2023 commenting on the creativity and commitments all year by staff and members indicating that FPC has come roaring back from the COVID years. For that, he gives great thanks and appreciation. This year of the 150th anniversary of FPC has been incredible. A successful capital campaign was conducted that exceeded all expectations. These funds will address the campaign priorities of hospitality, accessibility, family friendly, preservation and sustainability. He gave thanks to all for their generosity, both financially and prayerfully; for the volunteers for their time and talents; to the Session for their leadership and to the staff who helped all endeavors thrive. By all trackable metrics, FPC continues to grow and thrive thanks to the efforts of the congregation and the staff.

When viewing intangible metrics related to church viability, one can sense that people are feeling proud and engaged. There is a positive feeling and a deeper sense of engagement both inside the church and within the greater community. It is evident that this church is living out the vision and mission articulated in the Strategic Plan which was adopted in March, 2019 and are continually living a legacy of love. Additional slides highlighted by Pastor Gregg included 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.

ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS FOR 2024 (CLASS OF 2026)

For Session: Kim Creech (2nd Term), Brian Johnson (2nd Term), Kay Georgiana, Susie Graham, Sue Medsker (1 year term)

For Deacon: Linda Johnson (2nd Term), Chris Wray, Laurie Johnson, Chris Schukei, Bryon Jensen

For Trustees: Gary Bauer, Susan Hoff, Barb Harrington

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

ELECTION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2024:

Rev. Gregg Allen-Pickett presented the following slate for the 2024 Nominating Committee: Sue Medsker, Mile Karloff, Paula Crosier 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 2024:

Membership on December 31, 2024

462 members, 201 friends*

Received during 2024:

Profession of faith, reaffirmation, restoration	9
Certificate of transfer	0
Confirmation	11

Losses 2023:

Certificate	0
Death	12 (8 members, 4 friends of the church)

Membership on December 31, 2024

473 members, 197 friends*

Youth/Young Adult/Adult Baptisms	0
Infant Baptisms	2
Weddings	1
Funerals	12

Average worship attendance:

(online and in-person combined)	275
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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

2024 Budget & Actual Expenses and 2025 Budget for First Presbyterian Church of Hastings			
Offerings and Income	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
General Fund estimates - Current yr	\$ 675,000	\$ 732,207	\$ 692,500
Other Income	\$ 119,000	\$ 119,896	\$ 109,050
Per capita receipts	\$ 4,500	\$ 5,067	\$ 4,500
Annex Rental/Building Use	\$ 10,400	\$ 4,565	\$ 8,000
Total Offerings and Income	\$ 808,900	\$ 861,735	\$ 814,050
Mission - Local and Global Community Outreach	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
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 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Chancel Choir Director - Stipend	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,400
Calvin/Westminster Choir Director - Stipend	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,400
Chancel and Cal/West Bell Director - Stipend	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,400
Children's Bell Choir Director - Stipend	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,400
Children's Choir Director - Stipend	\$ 7,200	\$ -	\$ 7,400
Organist	\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500	\$ 17,000
Music Director	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,200	\$ 7,400
Accompanist and Music Coordinator	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,650
Pulpit Supply	\$ 300	\$ 313	\$ 300
Special Worship Services	\$ 800	\$ 492	\$ 800
Communion Supplies	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,230	\$ 1,000
Seasonal/Liturgical Décor	\$ 200	\$ 101	\$ 200
Copyright License Fees	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
Worship Enhancement - Flowers	\$ 2,500	\$ 414	\$ 2,000
Worship Services - Radio Broadcast	\$ 3,500	\$ 1,995	\$ 3,000
Worship Services - Video	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,427	\$ 1,300
Misc Committee Expense - Wor & Music	\$ 250	\$ 108	\$ 250
Subtotal - Gathering to Worship	\$ 76,550	\$ 65,580	\$ 77,400

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Christian Education - Teaching the Word to our children, youth, and adults	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Director of Child & Youth Education	\$ 26,626	\$ 29,440	\$ 27,400
Dir. Of Child and Youth Education - Cont Ed	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Christian Ed Helper	\$ 1,000	\$ 788	\$ 1,000
Curriculum and Supplies	\$ 6,300	\$ 6,391	\$ 6,300
Background Checks	\$ 200	\$ 182	\$ 200
Middle School and High School Youth Group	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,695	\$ 3,000
Wednesday Night Live	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,757	\$ 4,000
Library Books, Subscriptions and Supplies	\$ 1,400	\$ 696	\$ 1,000
Nursery Workers	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,542	\$ 1,700
Campus Ministry	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 200
Church Officer Training	\$ 850	\$ 850	\$ 850
Adult Education Materials and Speakers	\$ 1,000	\$ 30	\$ 800
Scholar in Residence	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,200
Subtotal - Teaching the Word	\$ 48,876	\$ 48,471	\$ 49,650
Proclaiming the Gospel in Word and Deed: Preaching, Leading, Pastoral Care	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Head of Staff - Salary	\$ 68,250	\$ 68,250	\$ 70,300
Head of Staff - Housing Allowance	\$ 33,075	\$ 33,075	\$ 34,100
Head of Staff - Pension/Medical Insurance	\$ 36,000	\$ 40,720	\$ 43,000
Head of Staff - Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,863	\$ 5,000
Associate Pastor - Salary	\$ 46,200	\$ 46,200	\$ 47,500
Associate Pastor - Housing Allowance	\$ 15,750	\$ 15,750	\$ 16,200
Associate Pastor - Pension/Medical Insurance	\$ 18,120	\$ 14,727	\$ 27,434
Associate Pastor Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$ 2,000	\$ 172	\$ 2,000
Subtotal - Proclaiming the Gospel	\$ 224,395	\$ 223,757	\$ 245,534
Caring for our Congregation	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Deacon's Fund	\$ 300	\$ 98	\$ 300
Deacon's Card/Postage Fund	\$ 100	\$ 22	\$ 100
Parish Nurse expenses	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 100
Name Tags	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 50
Special Events/Membership Recognitions	\$ 4,500	\$ 2,165	\$ 2,100
Baptismal gifts	\$ 200	\$ 92	\$ 300
Outreach/Marketing and Welcome Brochures	\$ 1,500	\$ 756	\$ 1,400
Friendship Pads/Pew Cards	\$ 150	\$ 761	\$ 150
Subtotal - Caring for our Congregation	\$ 7,050	\$ 3,894	\$ 4,500

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Stewarding Church Facilities for Mission, Ministry, Education, and Worship	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Facilities Manager - Salary	\$ 41,300	\$ 42,229	\$ 42,500
Facilities M. - Health Insurance and Retirement	\$ 18,450	\$ 18,060	\$ 19,581
Utilities - Gas, Elec., Water, PEACE Ctr. Utilities	\$ 49,700	\$ 44,784	\$ 46,000
Telephone and Internet	\$ 7,050	\$ 7,155	\$ 7,050
Maintenance & Repairs, landscaping, sprinkler	\$ 28,600	\$ 22,355	\$ 28,600
Custodial Supplies	\$ 4,500	\$ 7,917	\$ 4,500
Contract Svcs - Exterm, Trash, Lawn, etc	\$ 22,000	\$ 20,803	\$ 22,200
Kitchen supplies	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,378	\$ 2,500
Property/Liability Insurance	\$ 53,619	\$ 54,670	\$ 58,300
Copier Lease Expense	\$ 9,500	\$ 10,351	\$ 9,500
Van - Gas, Maintenance, Insur, Fees	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,316	\$ 1,500
PEACE Center Maint., Repair, Contract Services	\$ 22,000	\$ 3,318	\$ 17,000
Subtotal - Church Facilities	\$ 260,719	\$ 234,336	\$ 259,231
Congregational Administration for the ministry and mission of the church	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Administrative Specialist - Salary	\$ 35,500	\$ 35,693	\$ 36,565
Admin Specialist - Pension/Health Ins	\$ 12,180	\$ 12,292	\$ 12,913
Finance Director	\$ 14,500	\$ 14,709	\$ 14,935
Office Staff Professional Development	\$ 500	\$ 383	\$ 500
Stewardship Expenses	\$ 1,000	\$ 739	\$ 1,000
Office supplies and New Equipment	\$ 7,000	\$ 8,566	\$ 6,000
Computer software/support	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,602	\$ 3,000
Postage - Gen & Admin and Newsletter	\$ 2,200	\$ 3,124	\$ 2,400
Online Payment Fees and Office Fees	\$ 2,900	\$ 2,019	\$ 2,900
Professional Services - Audit	\$ 4,000	\$ 8,150	\$ 8,000
Federal withholdings matching/SECA	\$ 25,618	\$ 26,924	\$ 22,055
Website Maintenance	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,494	\$ 1,200
Subtotal - Congregational Administration	\$ 109,598	\$ 117,695	\$ 111,468
Supporting the ministry of the Presbyterian Church	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
PC(USA) Per Capita	\$ 16,100	\$ 16,100	\$ 16,100
Synod Benevolence	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Presbytery Benevolence	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 17,500
Theological Education Fund (PCUSA)	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Subtotal - Mission support	\$ 41,100	\$ 41,100	\$ 38,600
	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Total Expenses	\$ 808,019	\$ 776,589	\$ 813,910
Total Offerings and Income	\$ 808,900	\$ 861,735	\$ 814,000
Difference	\$ 881	\$ 85,146	\$ 90

PASTORAL TERMS OF CALL

TERMS OF CALL FOR REV. GREG ALLEN-PICKETT

TITLE: Senior Pastor/Head of Staff

Head of Staff – Salary	\$70,300
Head of Staff - Housing Allowance	\$34,100 (this is the portion of salary that is taxed differently for pastors)
Head of Staff - Medical Insurance & Pension Payment	\$43,000
Head of Staff - Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$5,000

TERMS OF CALL FOR REV. DAMEN JENSEN-HEITMANN

TITLE: Associate Pastor

Associate Pastor – Salary	\$47,500
Associate Pastor - Housing Allowance	\$16,200 (this is the portion of salary that is taxed differently for pastors)
Associate Pastor – Medical Insurance and Pension Payment	\$27,434
Associate Pastor Travel, Prof. Expenses, Con Ed	\$2,000

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

Annual Report 2024

Balances in the eight funds managed by the Foundation as of December 31, 2024:

Music Fund	1,892,999
Property Development Fund	529,225
Christian Education Fund	380,830
Scholarship Fund	352,388
150 th Legacy Scholarship	31,124
Essex Scholarship Fund	2,109
Irva Smith Endowment	83,688
Designated Uses	<u>69,887</u>
Total	\$3,342,250

The 2024 year-to-date return was 12.53% on December 31, 2024.

The Foundation distributed \$87,500 (Music, \$71,000; Christian Education, \$14,000; Designated Uses, \$2,500) in April 2024. \$25,000 was distributed from the Music Fund to the Capital Campaign in April 2024. \$1,000 was distributed from the 150th Legacy Scholarship to Scholarships in May 2024.

At its October 28, 2024, quarterly meeting, the Foundation Board members finalized the distribution to the Church. A total of \$123,500 will be distributed from the above funds (Music, \$87,700; Christian Education, \$17,200; Designated Uses, \$3,200; Scholarship, \$16,000; 150th Legacy Scholarship, \$1,400). This is a 4.5% distribution from the fund's assets in 2024.

The Foundation paid \$410 for the preparation of its 990 Tax Form.

The Foundation also manages funds for the Session/Trustees. The December 31, 2024, balance in that account was: \$1,176,628. \$75,000 was transferred to the Church in May for renovation of stained-glass windows at the Hastings College Chapel. The 2024 year-to-date return was 6.95% on December 31, 2024.

Tony Eddleman was approved by the Foundation at the October 28, 2024 meeting to serve an additional term on Foundation. Request a vote of the Congregation for approval.

Doug Soderquist, Moderator

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

As expected, it continues to be a pleasure to serve as the Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Hastings. Looking back over the past year, I recognize that I have had the opportunity to continue to do many of the things I love while also gaining skills and stretching myself in new ways. It is good to know a place where people take seriously the call that God has placed upon our hearts. It is even better to be able to be a part of it in some small way.

Throughout 2024 I continued many of the duties that I have performed since becoming part of the staff. My work with youth continued directly with our Senior High youth on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and through our Go & Serve trip. I assisted them as they planned Youth Sunday, Senior Recognition, and Go & Serve Sunday. I also spent a good deal of time working with our Middle School students through confirmation, Middle School Retreat, special service projects, Wednesday Night Live, and summer fellowship opportunities.

I have also continued to serve as the staff liaison to the committees of Global Mission and Local Social Witness, Congregational Life, and Go & Serve. You can read about their work in their reports, but it has been a pleasure to work with them to help foster a church community that lives out Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves.

My activities related to adult education this year have seen the formation of Forum topics on a wide variety of subjects, weekly pod/video casts, preparation of PW bible study leaders, assisting in leading Tuesday Noon Bible Study, and partaking in the After Party Faith and Politics discussions. Through these conversations and more, I have found myself continuing to evolve in my understanding of the faith and community around me.

Participating in and helping to lead worship continues to be a large portion of my role here at First Presbyterian church. I preach on a regular basis, assist in leading worship every week, and generally play a significant role in facilitating the more "unusual" Sunday services. Those "unusual" services are often a highlight of the year for me and this year was no different. It is a treat help our youth craft and deliver meaningful messages for Youth Sunday and Go and Serve Sunday and I particularly enjoyed doing some writing and advising for our children's Christmas Pageant, "While by Their Flocks."

"Other duties as assigned or spotted" is a tricky category to sum up for an annual report, but there certainly has been a fair amount of that as well. Funerals, baptisms, home communion and hospital visits, Vacation Bible School, pulpit supply, parament changing, candle smithing, and a variety of others activities may well fall into this category. And to be honest, they all provide a variety of experiences that I rather enjoy.

The creation of both the Advent devotional and the Lenten devotional were once again important grounding points to my year. My hope is that both projects add to the spiritual depth of the congregation, but even if they didn't, I might still take them on. I appreciate having the opportunity to think deeply and slowly about two of the most spiritually rich portions of the Christian year. Taking the time to write (or help others write) prayers for these seasons is a practice of significance for me personally.

It has been a full and good year to be a part of First Presbyterian Church of Hastings in the year 2024. It has been a blessing to me, and I hope I have been a blessing to it.

Peace and all good, Damen

P.S. – I also cleaned up my office a little bit this year ☺

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, ADULT EDUCATION

Damen Jensen-Heitmann- Associate Pastor

In the year 2024 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.

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 *First Thoughts* 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.

Of special note this year is a series of discussions which were held in a variety of spaces and at a variety of times. These conversations were based on the *After Party* curriculum and focused on how people of faith might navigate a fraught and contentious political climate. The conversations were hosted by Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett, Rev. Damen Jensen-Heitmann, and Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh. Held at First Presbyterian Church and Steeple Brewing Company over the course of five weeks, approximately 50-60 people participated in the dialogue. Many requested to continue similarly structured conversations moving forward.

2024 Forum Speakers and Subjects

- Rev. John H.G. Curtiss, Lynden Hall, Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett – “Ethical Care for All”
- Global Mission & Local Social Witness Committee – “Frontera de Cristo Trip Preview”
- Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh – “How Israel Was Built”
- Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh & Greg Allen-Pickett – “Faithful Politics”
- Dr. Stephen Hamilton – “Reflections on Sacred Music”
- Chris Schukei, Dan Peters – “Hastings Public Schools Foundation & Hastings Community Foundation”
- Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett, Rev. Shelli Latham, Rev. – “Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation & Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation”
- Rev. Dr. Robert Von Trebra – “Faith and Science Symposium”
- Sue Nedderman – “What’s to Come at General Assembly”
- Rev. Bill Nottage-Tacey – “The Barmen Declaration”
- Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh, Dr. Robin Koozer – “Ash to Ash: Funeral Practices and Columbarium Project”
- Members of the US-Mexico Border Trip – “Celebration at Frontera de Cristo”
- Rose Koepp, Hannah Jensen-Heitmann – “While by Their Flocks”
- Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh – “Hope and Humility in Jesus’ Birth”

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, CHILDREN & YOUTH

Rose Koepp, Director of Christian Education

2024 was another wonderful year of serving the children and youth of this beloved community! Looking back, we were really quite busy!:

In January, I took a little trip to St. Louis with Pastors Greg and Damen to attend the Association of Partners in Christian Education annual conference. We learned many helpful tools for guiding children and youth on their faith formation journeys. I came back more excited than ever with new things to try out!

In February, Damen and I, along with Chris Wray and Colleen Williams, took the Jr. High students on a 24-hour retreat to Kearney. We stayed at the Crowne Plaza where we swam and had a couple of group Bible-study sessions, and we played at the Big Apple Fun Center. The theme for the weekend was 'More than ME'; students learned about what the Bible has to say about living in community with one another. It was 24 hours of fun and fellowship! We all left that weekend with a deeper sense of community and stronger understanding of one another.



(Pictured above, from left to right: Harrison Welsch, Madilyn Graves, Vivian Fong, Raegan Welsch, Esther Allen-Pickett, Kade Jorgensen, Meredith Oliver. Right: Caleb Schukei, Charlie Ratzlaff)

We finished out the spring semester strong, using our "Living the Word" narrative lectionary curriculum. We welcomed some new students to our group, confirmed eleven eighth graders, and graduated three seniors.



(Left Picture: Confirmations students; Caleb Schukei, Charlie Ratzlaff, Harrison Welsch, Peyton Mitchel, Esther Allen-Pickett, Lexi Longshore, Kade Jorgensen, Keaton Redline, Collin Hermes, Olivia Canady, Lyla Adam)



(Right Picture: Graduating students; Tethloach Duang, Jonah Snell, Tristan Propp)

During the summer months, Pastor Damen and I once again held space for Jr High fellowship. Once a week students gathered to play board games and talk for two hours. 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.

This summer we also brought back Elementary Summer Movie Club. On the first Sunday in June, July, and August, elementary students gathered at the church to watch a movie and learn a biblical lesson that ties in with the movie. We ate pizza and popcorn, and had a lot of fun! Approximately twenty students attended each movie night.

The last week of June we put on the Vacation Bible School program “Camp Firelight” by Cokesbury. VBS was a four day program that ran for three hours each morning.

We had twenty-two volunteers from the church and community who worked together to put on an amazing week of learning and fun for forty students. The students learned that they can trust in God when they are afraid. They memorized Psalm 54:10, “Whenever I’m afraid, I put my trust in you,” and daily camp call-outs: Trust God to go with us and lead the way, trust God to share wisdom, trust God to give us peace, trust God to give us joy.



As part of the week, attending students brought donations for Camp Calvincrest in Fremont, NE. I’m sopleased to report that we were able to send them \$430 which they will use towards a project on their to-dolist.



(Pictured above and below: various students and volunteers at VBS)

Last year, we unknowingly created a new tradition following VBS which is to take the Jr. High students to the Henry Doorly Zoo. This year we went in August, right before school started. Pastor Greg and I took a group of nine students to Omaha and spent the day exploring the zoo and building community together.

In September we kicked off our school-year programs again; continuing to follow the narrative lectionary, play bells, sing in choir, and learn and grow in faith together. We continue to have a very strong team of volunteers who make everything happen as we serve appropriately sixty students.

In October, we held an event called “Pumpkins and PJ’s”. This was a three hour event for students on a Saturday night, designed to let parents have a night out. We shared a meal, watched a movie about trusting God when we are scared, made a craft, did a couple of science experiments, played some games, and decorated cookies. We had a great night with twenty students and six volunteers!



(Pictured Right: students participating in Pumpkins & PJ’s)

December was a very busy month for the children and youth. First, we hosted our annual Christmas Craft Make-and-Take Event where students come and make a craft that they can then give as a Christmas gift to someone they love. This event is always so much fun!

In December we also put on a Christmas program for the congregation. “While by Their Flocks”, a musical by Hannah Jensen-Heitmann and myself, tells the story of three shepherds who all have some pretty blatant character flaws. The shepherds hear a message from the angels and then embark on a transformative journey to see the Christ child. The students worked diligently on the music for several months leading up to the production and did an outstanding job during the performance! We are so blessed to have children and youth who are excited and willing to try new things and do it with their whole hearts –this came across very clearly in their performance!



(Pictured Left: Elementary Choir Right Top: PreK/K Sheep
Right Bottom: Raegan Welsch, Maddie Gosda, Meredith Oliver, Madi Graves, Vivian Fong.)



2024 was a year full of new adventures and growth for all involved in Christian education here at First Presbyterian Church! I am so thankful to those who volunteer and continue to help make all of these opportunities happen for our children and youth. Here’s to another year of growing in Christ, together!

-Rosalie Koepp

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE

Moderator: Mary Kay LaMaster

Mission Statement: 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 2024 included:

- Hosted potlucks in April and October
- Coordinated 4th Sunday fellowship where other committees hosted and supplied cookies
- Hosted a cupcake reception following the organ recital in February
- Provided coffee for Pentecost Sunday service at Chautauqua Park
- Provided meals for the new member classes in April
- Made May Baskets for the VIP's. Thank you, Deacons, for delivering them!
- Purchased and handed out chocolates for Mother's Day and Father's Day
- Rented the Aqua Court in June to provide a free night at the waterpark and also handed out popsicles
- Worked with the Mission committee to serve root beer floats during the car show in July. Free will donation to the Middle School gym shoe fund.
- Hosted a picnic at Harms Park prior to attending a Sodbusters baseball game in July.
- Supplied greeters for Church in the Park.
- Hosted an ice cream social following the 10:30 worship on Sept. 8th
- Hosted 1st Presbyterian Trivia night at Steeple Brewery on Sept. 29th.
- Provided volunteers for the Christmas Make and Take Craft event on Dec. 7th. Thank you Rose and CE for a great event!
- Responsible for Hanging and removing of the greens/décor. Thank you, church family for your willingness to stay following worship and make this an efficient way to decorate our beautiful church and also put away the décor until next year. Thank you to the youth group for bringing up the décor from the basement.
- Purchased new Friendship pads for the pews.
- Reviewed the membership roll. This will continue in 2025

Thank you, Pastor Damen for all your assistance to our committee.

Thanks to the amazing committee members: Kathy Amyot, Cheryl Lockwood, Jessica Meeske, Julie Thomsen, Dana Miller, Deb Johnson, Tim Johnson, Steve Illingworth, Marsha Nelson, Kathy Reimer, Melissa Davis, Jan Bolliger, and Pastor Damen Jensen-Heitmann, staff liaison.

Respectfully submitted
Mary Kay LaMaster, moderator

BOARD OF DEACONS

Moderator: Lisa Unger

2024 Deacon Roster

Class of 2024

Daveta Brader
Lois Hafer
Sally Hatcher
Julie Thomsen
Lisa Unger

Class of 2025

Katharine Davis
Milrae Korb
Lois Meeske
Mary Plock
Brady Rhodes

Class of 2026

Laurie Johnson
Linda Johnson
Byron Jensen
Chris Schukei
Chris Wray

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. Throughout the year the deacons made over **1,000 contacts** during 2024. These contacts are made in person, via a phone call or text, or simply a card.

Deacons are assigned one or two VIPs. A VIP is an individual who is home bound or 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. Each Easter the Deacon delivers to their VIP an Easter Lily, on May 1 the deacons delivered May baskets, provided by Congregational Life Committee. In December each VIP receives a poinsettia from their Deacon. In addition to these three contacts, the deacons stay in touch with their VIP throughout the year via phone calls, texts, and in-person visits.

Deacons accompany Pastor Greg to serve communion on Wednesday following the first Sunday of the month at Regency and College View. Thursday we serve communion at Kensington and Providence. We continue to use the communion packets made up with the cup and delicious bread provided by Andy Barrows. The Deacons have assisted in **serving communion to our members 24 times** in 2024.

Each Sunday we see beautiful flowers at the altar, and each Sunday they are delivered by a Deacon following the service to someone that has been ill, to a family that has lost a loved one, to those who have a special celebration, or to someone special that we would like to show our appreciation for their work in the church. When we have a birth in our community a rose is placed at the pulpit. The Deacon delivering flowers that Sunday delivers that rose to the family. During 2024 the Deacons have made over **104 flower deliveries**.

Transportation to the church is available through the Deacons for individuals or families that have a one time or an ongoing need for service. This is arranged through the church office and Deacons are contacted. This service was rarely used during 2024.

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

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 them in church service. Residents greatly enjoy the Deacon joining them and the special “wave greeting “ from the congregation during the passing of peace. The deacons **supported “remote worship” 50 times** in 2024.

The Deacons sign up each month to reach out to families and extend their love and support by organizing and serving funeral luncheons. In 2024, the deacons **served 9 funeral luncheons totaling to 764 people**. This time of gathering is a special way to support the families.

During Holy Week in March the Deacons assisted with a new prayer calling ministry. Following dinner and brief orientation, Deacons ,Elders ,Trustees and staff were each given a list of church members to call. These board members took prayer request for joys and concerns that were shared. This ministry was spiritually beneficial for everyone involved and brought the congregation closer to each other and their faith. Together we made **400 phone calls**.

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 to be called upon to serve truly exemplifies the “hands and feet of Jesus” here on earth.

GLOBAL MISSION & LOCAL WITNESS COMMITTEE

Constance Malloy, Moderator

2024 Annual Report for the **Committee on Global Mission and Local Social Witness**
First Presbyterian Church, Hastings, Nebraska

Members: Erica Brooks, Sharon Brooks, Susan Cole, Kim Creech, Dan Deffenbaugh, Lynden Hall, Jan Ham, Jeni Howard, Jodi Graves, Richard Johnson, Chris Junker, Pamela Lainson, Constance Malloy (chair), Jane Marsh, John Nelson, Beverly Rader, Meg Stewart-Magee, Denny Storer, Jody Stutzman

Staff: Pastor Damen Jensen-Heitmann

Purpose: To make meaningful and lasting connections with people in need in our community and our international mission partners.

Communion Offerings

The committee decides each year upon organizations in our community who could use our financial support, and these become the recipients of our monthly Communion Offerings. This year's recipients have been the following:

- **January: Threads of Grace** (\$1,215) provides new clothing to children aged birth to 19 years who are entering foster care and any child in Adams County going through a personal or family crisis.
- **February: Special Children's Fund** (\$637) provides financial assistance to low-income families whose child is experiencing a health.
- **March: Central Community College Food Pantry** (\$703) provides students with food and other necessities.
- **April: One Great Hour of Sharing** (\$752) supports hunger relief through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promotes development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and provides Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.
- **May: Open Table** (\$1193) provides over 4,000 sack lunches to Catholic Social Services to be distributed on weekdays to any who come by to request them.
- **June: Camp Calvin Crest** (\$657) is a PCUSA camp and conference center in Fremont, NE.
- **July: Crane Trust** (\$290) protects and maintains the ecosystem of the Big Bend area of the Platte River
- **August: Food for Thought** (\$639) provides children at risk of hunger a backpack of food to carry them through the weekend.
- **September/October: 50% of Peacemaking (PCUSA) Offering** supports national and international programs for peace and social justice), 25% to **Revive Ministries** for addiction recovery, and 25% to Presbytery (total: \$1047)
- **November: Heartland Health Center** (\$545), located in the old Crosier Monastery, provides medical, dental, and mental health services on a sliding scale to low-income and uninsured people.
- **December: Joy Offering (PCUSA)** (\$2667) helps current and retired church workers in need and helps develop future church leaders at schools and colleges that are Presbyterian related.

Other December Mission Traditions:

1. **The Giving Tree** project gives members of the congregation the chance to take a gift tag and provide a requested gift to a client served by South Central Behavioral Services.
2. **The Reverse Advent Calendar** is included in our Advent Devotionals and designates a few organizations who make a wish list, from which our committee chooses a few vital items to serve these local agencies. This year, our partners were
 - **Hastings Public Schools** (food, general hygiene and feminine hygiene products),
 - **EnCourage**/formerly SASA (razors, diapers, toothpaste and toothbrushes),
 - **Crossroads** (pillows, blankets, body wash, shampoo and conditioners),
 - **Maryland** (dish drainers, can openers, laundry soap), and
 - **Healthy Families**/Formerly Healthy Beginnings (sleep sacks, infant hats and mittens, car ice scrapers/brushes). We want to shout out thanks to the church youth who helped Damen set up tables and organized signs that made our project so much easier this year!

The Hands Around the World Gift Shop moved this year to a new space in the church that adjoins the library and is across the hall from the kitchen. This store sells fair-trade items from the SERVV catalog that are created by artisans from third-world countries so that they earn a decent wage. The shop also sells fair-trade coffee from our Mission partners in Frontera de Cristo. The shop is curated by Pamela Lainson, Paula Crozier, and Susie Graham. It donates \$100 each month from profits to United Harvest.

United Harvest Mobile Food Pantry is a cooperative effort of First Presbyterian Church and First United Methodist Church initiated by the two churches' mission committees and affiliated with the Foodbank for the Heartland. (More details can be found in a separate report.)

The Mission Committee has collaborated with **United Way** on two projects this year. Six members of the church volunteer with **Bridging Forward**, a program focused on fostering relationships and poverty alleviation, and in our PEACE Center, we also hosted **Toys for Tots**, which distributes toys to children at Christmas time.

Raices de Mi Pueblo is a Mexican Dance Troupe that our committee hosts two evenings a week in the PEACE Center. Maria Rubalcava teaches children and youth dances from various parts of Mexico, and they share this cultural enrichment in lots of venues, including the Prairie Loft Flatwater Festival, Multicultural Festival at Hastings College, Kool Aid Days, the State Fair, Downtown Festival of Lights, and a cultural festival in Grand Island. Dan Deffenbaugh was able to arrange for some tickets for families involved in Raices de Mi Pueblo to attend a September marimba concert in the Red Cloud Opera House.

As requested, the Mission Committee sponsors meetings of the **South Heartland District Health Department** in the Fellowship Hall for meetings on health issues of interest to members of Hastings' Spanish-speaking community. Mission members are responsible for reserving Fellowship Hall, arranging set up and take down, and greeting guests, then locking doors at the end of the meeting.

As part of our **Refugee Resettlement Program**, members of the Mission Committee have assisted the Duang family with a high school graduation party in Fellowship Hall for each of their children. This year, Tethloach Duang graduated from Hastings High School, and with help from the family, we prepared food and drinks for a hundred guests.

Each year, Julie Thomsen spearheads a **winter coat collection and distribution** in conjunction with a United Harvest date.

The Mission Committee provided a water station for this summer's **Pride Parade**. Lynden Hall provided recyclable cups, and Constance and Meg oversaw the hydration station.

Every summer, the committee participates in an evening **picnic at Lake Hastings for the migrant workers** who come to serve our community. This year, we welcomed 120 workers. Mark and Aida Evans arrange for the cooking of Mexican food, and our committee supplies salads, desserts, and water. In conjunction with the arrival of the migrant workers, Jody Stutzman, who works for Proteus, arranged for a health fair for the workers.

Open Table sandwich making and lunch bag packing took place on three Sundays in July: the 14th, the 21st, and the 28th. We were slightly hampered this year by the kitchen renovation, which meant that we had no sinks and only one small refrigerator available. However, as usual, it all worked, and we had lots of joyful help! We appreciate all who volunteer, including the Brader family, who delivered many of the over 4,000 lunches to Catholic Social Services. Many thanks to Meg, Jeni, and Sharon, who do lots of the behind-the-scenes work on this major production.

The Mission Committee designated Hastings Middle School as the recipient for funds raised by the **Melon Roast and root beer float party** in the FPC parking lot on August 10th. The money will be used to purchase gym shoes for students to use in gym class if they can't afford them or forget them.

In addition to these community partners, the Mission Committee helped to sponsor a trip to reconnect with **our mission partners at Frontera de Cristo** in October 2024. First Presbyterian has had an active relationship with these partners since 2016, when four church members went to the border to learn more about this mission. Members there have visited us; we have returned their visits. This year, a group of about twenty visited Agua Prieta for their fortieth anniversary as a Presbyterian border ministry. The group consisted of choir members, Mission Committee members, Hastings College students, members of the congregation, and a few affiliates. We listened to talks, ate with, prayed with, lamented with, sang with, and celebrated with members of the Frontera de Cristo community as if they were family, as indeed they are. The trip to the border put human faces on the issues we read about in the news, and now we know people whom we can pray for. It was a special treat to hear about the coffee growers in southern Mexico who are now able to stay on their land, united with their families, and make a decent living sending their beans to Frontera de Cristo, where those beans are roasted, ground, and distributed to various churches, like ours, for sale. The group was able to save money on postage by counting numerous boxes of coffee as luggage on our flight home.

Respectfully submitted by Constance Malloy

GO & SERVE
Amy Black, Moderator

Stay & Serve projects were planned this year prior to our summer mission in order to get the group used to working together and serving others. We tied blankets with residents at College View Assisted Living, gathered a million pounds of food for the Hastings Food Pantry and served as Christmas elves helping some local residents bring their holiday decorations up from storage.

The fund raiser for the year was the annual Stock Sale to the congregation which raised \$8,365 dollars.



Our main mission was a trip to Charlotte, North Carolina to serve with Cross Missions (www.myersparkpres.org). This ministry is housed in Myers Park Presbyterian Church. Eleven students and four sponsors spent the week serving a variety of organizations. The students participating were Benett Baack, Henry Black, Grace Brader, Tethloach Duang, Keira Erickson, Ashton Essink, Laura Kate Oliver, McKain Ratzlaff, Paige Redline, Moses Rhodes, and Paxton Rhodes. The sponsors were Rev. Damen Heitman-Jensen, Amy Black, Tammie Nowka and Leah Ratzlaff. Special shout out to Leah who joined the trip when dropping off McKain in the church parking lot! She packed in 15 minutes and was on the road to the airport.

In Charlotte the agencies we served were:

- Diaper Bank of North Carolina (www.ncdiaperbank.org): Our task was to stack and wrap diapers for distribution across the state. Their vision is that “every family in North Carolina will have access to basic necessities to support their dignity, health, and quality of life”.
- The Harvest Center of Charlotte (www.theharvestcenter.org): We cleaned houses and landscaped on the campus dedicated to temporarily serving people on their journey to permanent housing. Some students even got to style the mannequins in the boutique!
- Hope Haven (www.hopehaveninc.org): We prepared and served lunch to the individuals being served by this addiction recovery center.
- LifeSpan Services (www.lifespanservices.org) We participated in chair yoga (harder than it looks), crafts, landscaping and a competitive game of Bingo with the residents. At this organization services are provided for developmentally and intellectually challenged individuals.



- Samaritan's Feet (www.samaritansfeet.org) : The group packaged new shoes for shipment all over the world in support of the organization's vision which is “a world with zero shoeless children”.
- A Brighter Day Outreach (www.abrighterdayoutreach.org) : We delivered pamphlets door-to-door to promote a neighborhood celebration. This organization has the “goal of disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline”.

- NC MedAssist (www.medassist.org) : We packaged over-the-counter medicines per individual requests to be distributed free of charge. MedAssist provides prescription and over the counter medications to those in need.
- Urban Walk: The group did a guided tour of downtown Charlotte to learn about being unhoused in the city. Everyone is now able to recognize hostile architecture designed to deter the presence of those living on the streets.

At the week's end all 15 of us decompressed at the U.S. National Whitewater Center (www.whitewater.org). The group climbed rock walls, rafted on a man-made course where Olympiad's train, and challenged themselves on ropes/zipline courses.

We offer our thanks and appreciation to the congregation for their continued support of our youth and Go and Serve.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Black

MEMORIALS AND GIFTS COMMITTEE

Mary Olsen, Moderator

ANNUAL REPORT – 2024

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

Capital Campaign - \$9,356.28

FPC Deacons Fund – \$2.09

FPC General Fund – Mexican Choir Trip - \$1000.00

FPC Postal Account - \$500.00

Roses for Newborn - \$38.37

Monies from the following funds were used for the requests:

Ruth Caldwell – FPC Postal Account

Designated Library Fund – Capital Campaign Library

Designated Middle School Room Décor – Capital Campaign Middle School Room

Designated Music – FPC General Fund

Designated P. W. Tablecloths – FPC Deacons Fund

Julia McDougal – Capital Campaign Kitchen Ovens

Betty Payne – Roses for Newborn

Yearend balance - \$48,549.06. Of that amount \$19,933.50 is undesignated.

Received - \$7,940.00. Expensed - \$10,896.74.

The Committee gratefully acknowledges gifts received in memory of:

William Beck

Roberta Lloyd

Lori Billings

Julia McDougal

Vernon Groves

Dean Meyer

Helen Jacupke

David Schawang

Eleanor Jorgenson

Ken Stein

Pat Kleiber

Memorials are thankfully accepted for either designated or undesignated gifts.

Moderator: Mary L. Olsen

Session Representative: Kay Georgiana

Trustee Representative: Dana Wolford

Stephanie Bliss

Diane Christensen

Ann Koozer

Tammie Nowka

Wihlma Price

Kaela Pumroy

Kathy Utter

Ex Officio – Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett

MUSIC STAFF REPORT

Linda Vollweiler, Music Director/Organist

It has been a grand and glorious year of music at First Presbyterian Church and this is due to the talented and dedicated music staff which includes, Dr. Byron Jensen, Dr. Brett Epperson, Linda Johnson, Tim and Teresa Canady, Dr. Susan Oliver, Mary Plock, Linda Vollweiler and supportive pastors Greg Allen-Pickett and Damen Heitmann. Our church offers a variety of music ensembles open to both youth and adults. Ensembles include: Praise/ Alleluia Choir, Praise/ Alleluia Ringers, Calvin/Westminster choir, Calvin/Westminster Ringers, Chancel Choir and Chancel Bells. All ensembles rehearse on Wednesday evenings. A Contemplative service, led by Pastor Allen-Pickett and Pastor Heitmann is offered every Sunday at 8:30 a.m. in the Chapel. Mary Plock, Music Coordinator schedules the musicians for this service. At 10:30 a traditional worship service is held in the sanctuary with organ and choirs presenting special music. Linda Vollweiler schedules song leaders to lead congregational hymn singing. This service is streamed with the help of talented tech folks lead by Eric Nielsen.

At First Presbyterian Church we proclaim the good news of the gospel. Our directors and organist choose music to glorify God. Please consider joining one or more of our ensembles. We welcome new participants of all ages, backgrounds and music levels.

At the 10:30 service on December 15th our youth presented a musical written by our Youth Director, Rose Koepp and our Musical Academy Director, Hannah Jensen. Participants did an outstanding job presenting a meaningful message. On December 22 the Calvin Westminster and Chancel Choir combined for a service of Lessons and Carols. We had two candlelight Christmas Eve services at 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Cathedral Brass played at both services. On Dec. 24th several Chancel Choir members went to College View Assisted Living. Choir members presented an anthem and led the singing of carols. Pastor Greg (assisted by his daughter Esther) conducted the service. Sunday, Dec. 29th was an opportunity for alumni to have the opportunity to share their musical talent at the 10:30 service. The congregation appreciated their music and enjoyed seeing those that returned to Hastings for the Christmas Season.

I'm pleased to announce that the past year we added The Hastings Orchestra Quartet (a string quartet) as a new music in residence ensemble in addition to The Cathedral Brass. These ensembles will play at the 10:30 services.

Money from the Langenberg Legacy Program continues to support the music program. Hastings College students serve as Langenberg Section leaders in Chancel Choir and ringers in Chancel Bell Choir. The legacy also supports song leaders, instrumentalists, and orchestra members for Christmas, Easter and other special services. We continue to be fortunate to have so many musicians willing to give their time and talents to participate in these services. The Langenberg Lesson Program reimburses families and students \$250.00 per child per semester for private lessons. Requirements are that parents are members of FPC and students are active participants in the music program. This is a wonderful way for students to have the opportunity to take lessons. 22 students took advantage of this program in 2024. These students present special music during the summer months at the 10:30 a.m. service.

I would like to thank the music directors for their outstanding leadership, all the solo and ensemble musicians, our pastors and the FPC members. Without all of you the music program would not be the outstanding program it is.

In Christ, Linda Vollweiler, Director of Music and Organist

WORSHIP, ARTS, AND MUSIC COMMITTEE

Robin R. Koozer, Moderator

The Worship, Arts, and Music Committee (often referred to as WAM) is a standing committee of FPC and meets February-June and August-December. WAM is overseen by the session of FPC. The Mission of the Committee is, “***Giving Glory to God through worship and the arts***”. In order to oversee this mission, the committee works closely with the pastors to direct the worship and music life of the church (in accordance with the Presbyterian Directory of Worship), maintains the instruments owned by the church, and carefully monitors the Langenberg funds in conjunction with the Trustees and Session.

The church is very fortunate to have a gifted and talented cadre of musicians and educators who serve as staff members working diligently and creatively to enhance the varied music needs of FPC worship:

Linda Vollweiler, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Brett Epperson, Chancel Choir Director and Coordinator of the Langenberg Music Series

Dr. Byron Jensen, Chancel Bells and Calvin/Westminster Bells Director

Linda Johnson, Calvin/Westminster Choirs Director

Mary Plock, Praise/Alleluia & Calvin/Westminster Choirs Accompanist and Contemplative Service Coordinator

Teresa Canady, Praise/Alleluia Choir Director

Susan Oliver, Praise/Alleluia Bells Director

Generally, two services occur on Sunday mornings. The Contemplative Service (8:30) is held in the Chapel and serves as an alternative (in the style of *Taizé*) to the Traditional Service (10:30), held in the Sanctuary. Beginning in June and ending in August, the 8:30 service is moved to Alexander Park (weather permitting) for Worship in the Park. WAM thanks all of the song leaders for their leadership during the 8:30 and 10:30 summer and special services. Additional appreciation is given to students in the Langenberg Lesson Program for supplying special music during the summer months.

In addition to the weekly contributions made by the various music ensembles, WAM has presented several special Sundays and musical opportunities this year. These special presentations are funded by the Langenberg Funds and are included in Dr. Epperson’s report (which follows). Under the coordination of Dr. Brett Epperson, the *Langenberg Music Series* was re-established and will serve not only our church and city, but additional communities and constituents. Langenberg Funds provide for this series as well as various individuals who serve FPC in special roles related to the music program:

Brett Epperson; *Coordinator of the Langenberg Music Series*

Hannah Jensen-Heitmann; *Composer in Residence*

The HSO Strings; *Ensemble in Residence*

The Cathedral Brass; *Ensemble in Residence*

Other Langenberg funds were utilized in support of the Hastings Community Music Academy, the South-Central Nebraska Children’s Chorale, the Hastings Public Schools summer band and orchestra, and in collaboration with the FPC Mission Committee, a five-day mission trip to Frontera de Cristo in Mexico in October.

In addition to various music items, WAM provided leadership and direction for a permanent display (located in the first-floor hallway of the Education Wing) of framed photographs by photographer, Jorn Olson. The display visually enhances text from *Genesis I*, “*In the Beginning, God Created the Heaven and the Earth...and it was good.*”*

Members of WAM include: Session Representatives-Susan Medsker and Robin Koozer (Moderator); Music Staff; Members: Linda Vollweiler, Linda Johnson, Brett Epperson, Byron Jensen, Susan Oliver, Mary Plock, and Teresa Candy. Members at large-Kay Georgiana, Neil Kerr, Becky Meyer, Dana Miller, Eleanor Oliver, Mary Olson, Sarah Wolf, Mary Fisk, and Ron Bourke. Sarah Wolf serves as the secretary *extrodinaire*.

*The congregation is invited to visit the display located in the first-floor hallway of the Education Wing.

LANGENBERG CONCERT SERIES REPORT

Dr. Brett Epperson

Annual Report - Langenberg Music Series 2024

Re-establishing an annual series of special music programming in our church's 150th year provided an opportunity for recommitment to a core component of our church's identity. In our 151st year, continuing this special music programming has allowed for so many meaningful connections and enriching experiences throughout 2024

In February, organist Stephen Hamilton led worship from the organ with guest conductor Matthew Myers from Washington State leading the Chancel Choir. Hamilton also provided a vibrant organ recital that afternoon.

In March, the *Spiro Spero Singers* gathered again to share Dietrich Bustehude's "Ad manus" from *Membra Jesu nostri* and Caroline Shaw's *To the Hands*. These pieces challenged us to consider what we do with our hands... numerous congregants commented afterwards how profoundly meaningful this worship service was.

Our *Pentecost in the Park* service saw members of our Chancel Choir and friends sharing music in a Gospel style - the culmination of a weekend festival led by incredible singer and conductor Marques J. Ruff. Dr. Ruff has communicated a desire to return to First Pres for more special music programming in the future.

In August, *Spiro Spero Singers* presented Ariel Ramírez's *Misa Criolla*. This Spanish-language mass reminded us of the inclusive and vibrant ways Christians worship the world over. It also prepared the hearts of many towards the October Music & Mission trip to the US-Mexico border to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of partner ministry *Frontera de Cristo*. The choir that traveled to the border was so warmly received and meaningfully contributed to numerous events throughout that celebration weekend.

While not as long a distance to travel as the US-Mexico border, many members of our Chancel Choir traveled to First Plymouth Church in Lincoln, where we shared in the music-making with friends there. The Plymouth Choir hopes to visit First Presbyterian in the coming year.

The First Pres Chancel Choir shared a meaningful performance of Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* in November, featuring our own Tyler Koepp and Morgan O'Neill as soloists. Stage director Patrick Chiu joined us from Pennsylvania for the weekend, adding subtle elements of staging that greatly enhanced this experience for all.

In the new year, we look forward to visits from two outstanding guest organists, a semi-professional choir made up of singers across Nebraska, and much more to come. First Presbyterian Church's continued support of special music programming allows us to "draw the welcome circle" wider, inviting members of our community and music lovers across central Nebraska to appreciate the place and people that make First Presbyterian Church truly special.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Moderator: Mary Fisk

Annual Report 2024

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 2024, PW contributed financially to church mission projects including the PW Thank Offering, the PW Birthday Offering, the Least Coin Offering, Morrison Cancer Center From the Heart Fund, Living Waters for the World, the Hunger Fund, and the CROP Walk. We donated cookies for the UCC Bloodmobile.

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. In May, we sponsored "Undie Sunday" in conjunction with Gifts of Women Sunday. In October and November we collected materials for hurricane relief. We put together 14 clean up buckets, 20 period kits, and 25 health kits. We delivered them to Lincoln and they were sent from there to places in need.

Gifts of Women Sunday was April. Jill Boyd, Cozad First Presbyterian Church, gave the sermon. Members of PW read the scriptures and served as ushers and greeters. Susan Oliver was recognized and honored with a PW Honorary Life Membership for her service to the church.

Church Women United held their May Friendship Luncheon. Linda Johnson was recognized as First Presbyterian's Inspiring Woman at the event. FPW donated salads for the celebration. In September, Jeni Howard was honored for Human Rights.

PW programs for 2024 included presentations about Hastings Symphony Orchestra, HC International Students, PW history presented by Laura Marvel-Wunderlich, Reflections on the Scotland trip, and the Raices de me Pueblo Dancers. In November, we honored the women in our church who had died during the past year and Kathleen Keefer talked about her USAME Trip at the Arizona/Mexico border. In December, Brett Epperson brought the HC Choral Union to sing Christmas songs for us.

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 2024-2025 study is "Let Justice Roll Down".

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Moderator: Erik Nielsen

Class of 2024

John Nelson
Erik Nielsen
Kevin Turner

Class of 2025

Kim Kern
Danna Wolford
In memoriam: Ken Stein

Class of 2026

Barb Harrington
Susan Hoff
Gary Bauer

The trustees oversee the property and finances of the Church. It was a busy year with the implementation of the many Capital Campaign projects.

We remain grateful for the work of Tony Calhoun, our church's facilities manager, who helps to keep the church properties in good shape and oversees the contractors in the building.

We are also grateful for Deb Hamburger, the church's finance manager, who helps to keep our books in order. We also grateful to Jane Bauer who serves as the volunteer treasurer for the church.

Melissa Davis, the office manager, continues to do an excellent job as well.

We saw an increase in the use of the PEACE Center following the renovation of the gym and the Trustees approved many building use requests for that space including the Hastings Pickleball Club.

Fiscally, the church is in excellent shape. We ended the year with a surplus budget. This was due to excellent budget management by the staff, and the incredible generosity of the congregation. We will carry over the surplus into 2025 to offset increasing costs in insurance.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Moderator: Tim Redline

First Presbyterian Scholarship Committee

Class of 2024

Tim Redline, Moderator

Class of 2025

Lindsey Stout

Class of 2026

Ross Struss

Cheryl Lockwood

Linda Johnson

Session Rep: Justin Brader

Trustee Rep: Kevin Turner

The following scholarships were awarded for the 2024-2025 school year:

Luke Brooks - Binfield scholarship in the amount of \$3000

Campbell Schukei - Binfield scholarship in the amount of \$3000

Eleanor Oliver - Essex scholarship in the amount of \$500

Tristan Propp - Legacy scholarship in the amount of \$500

Claire Schwarz - Legacy scholarship in the amount of \$500

The criteria was set for the new “150th Anniversary Legacy Scholarship” to the following:

Eligibility

- to be a member of First Presbyterian Church, Hastings NE
- to be any year in college but preference given to graduating high school senior(s)
- to attend a 2 year or 4 year, post-secondary education

Description

- Multiple scholarships may be awarded at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee.
- The total of all scholarships shall not exceed \$1000.
- The scholarship may be renewed.
- The scholarship will be paid directly to the applicant.

Tim Redline will be stepping down as moderator and we thank him for his service!

Ross Struss was elected the new moderator.

PEACE CENTER REPORT

The PEACE Center (old Middle School Annex), which the church purchased from Hastings Public Schools in 2009, has continued to grow as a “Community Center,” providing safe ways to gather and continue the ministry and mission of First Presbyterian Church while serving the larger community. We have seen increased usage in 2024 with the capital campaign projects. We hope that continues to grow in 2025!

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 8-12 pickleball players use the gym 4-6 times weekly.

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 10 community organizations and 50 families that come through to receive toys.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HASTINGS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: 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 CLUBS: Four days a week a different groups use the PEACE Center gym for exercise and the classroom for a coffee fellowship group.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REPORT
Greg Allen-Pickett, Senior Pastor

In 2023, the church had a capital campaign that coincided with the 150th Anniversary. The campaign sought to raise \$2million for remodeling and renovation projects.

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation we raised \$2 million in gifts and pledges from our members and an additional \$230,00 in grants. Some church members paid their pledge in full while many made their pledges to be paid over a 2 or 3 year period.

To date, we have received over \$1.7 million in fulfilled pledges and gifts.

We have been hard at work implementing the projects defined in the capital campaign in 2024 and the changes in the church and the PEACE Center are noticeable and drawing positive attention from the community.

The new bathrooms off of the sanctuary are a welcome addition. They are handicapped accessible and easy to find, which helps with hospitality and comfort. We were able to honor the historic architecture of the Memorial Room and incorporate stained glass that was salvaged from the church basement and restored.

In addition, we converted the former women's restroom off the sanctuary into what we are calling the "wobble room" and a family bathroom for the growing number of young children and families in our church. It is equipped with comfortable seating, a colorful rug and paint scheme, a full bathroom with a diaper changing table, and will have a television that is livestreaming the worship service.

We also refreshed the main bathrooms in the church behind the Fellowship Hall to be more modern and welcoming. We completed a significant kitchen remodel to open up the space, replace the appliances, countertops and flooring, and update the finishes. The church offices, Anderson Conference Room, and Parlor have all been updated as well. All of these changes provide greater hospitality and welcome to our church members and visitors alike.

We've updated and improved many of our Christian Education spaces and added a new handicapped accessible bathroom on the second floor Christian Education wing. We've added automatic door openers on our exterior church office doors to make the space more accessible as we have increased both church and community use of our Christian Education wing.

We are excited about all of the progress that has been made, and anxious to finish the remaining projects in the church. This summer we plan to make our choir loft handicapped accessible and improve the lighting in the sanctuary for our broadcast ministries.

The PEACE Center has seen some major improvements as well. The gym floor was repaired, repainted, and resurfaced and the gym was repainted and refreshed. The gym is now being used

9-10 times per week by different community groups including the Hastings Pickleball Club, two community walking groups, a homeschool group, and more.

All of the windows in the PEACE Center have been replaced, with many of them restored to their original opening size. The plumbing in the building has all been updated, along with the lighting, flooring and paint and we completed the parking lot project.

Over the next few months we will be remodeling and refreshing all of the classroom spaces in the PEACE Center to make them more hospitable and welcoming for community use. We will also complete the rain garden project. We will also be installing solar panels on the roof of the PEACE Center and the church to help offset our utility bills, and continue to do maintenance for long-term sustainability of our facilities.

One the next page is a detailed list of the projects, the budget, and the progress.

First Presbyterian Church Capital Campaign Projects

Church Projects Update

Hospitality	Progress	Budget	Actual Cost
Remodel and Upgrade Kitchen	COMPLETED	\$175,000	\$160,000
Update Main Bathrooms	COMPLETED	\$50,000	\$45,000
Refresh church offices, Anderson Room, Parlor	95% COMPLETED	\$75,000	\$85,000
Improved lighting in Sanctuary	SUMMER 2025	\$15,000	TBD
Relocate Fair Trade Store, Remodel Library	COMPLETED	\$30,000	\$30,000

Accessibility	Progress		
New Sanctuary Bathrooms	COMPLETED	\$80,000	\$80,000
Handicapped Entrance for Office Doors	COMPLETED	\$15,000	\$10,000
Accessible Restroom on 2nd Floor Ed Wing	90% COMPLETED	\$30,000	\$28,000
Handicapped Accessible Choir Loft	SUMMER 2025	\$100,000	TBD

Family-Friendly	Progress		
Cry Room and Family Bathroom off Sanctuary	95% COMPLETED	\$35,000	\$32,000
Complete Christian Ed Wing Remodel	COMPLETED	\$40,000	\$35,000
Repair flooring, Basement Middle School Room	COMPLETED	\$20,000	\$22,000

Preservation and Sustainability	Progress		
Assessment and Maintenance of Stained Glass	IN-PROGRESS	\$75,000	TBD
Brick Tuckpointing	IN-PROGRESS	\$100,000	TBD
Bat Mitigation	COMPLETED	\$50,000	\$52,000
Solar Panels	SPRING 2025	\$60,000	TBD

CHURCH PROJECTS TOTAL: \$1,000,000 \$579,000 To date

PEACE Center Projects Update

Hospitality and Accessibility	Progress	Budget	Actual Cost
Remodel Classrooms and Bathrooms	10% COMPLETED	\$60,000	\$10,000
New doors, windows, signage	90% COMPLETED	\$150,000	\$200,000
New exterior entrance and vestibules	50% COMPLETED	\$40,000	\$20,000
Parking Lot Project	COMPLETED	\$425,000	\$425,000

Community Friendly	Progress		
Convert H.S. Youth Room to Community Room	SPRING 2025	\$20,000	TBD
Fix water damaged gym floor, refresh gym	COMPLETED	\$75,000	\$65,000

Long-Term Sustainability	Progress		
Plumbing Project	COMPLETED	\$50,000	\$45,000
Capstone Sealing, Shingles, Tuckpointing	75% COMPLETED	\$50,000	\$30,000
Solar Panels	SPRING 2025	\$60,000	TBD
Rain Garden	IN PROGRESS	\$20,000	TBD

PEACE CENTER PROJECTS TOTAL: \$1,000,000 \$795,000 To date

HEARTS & HANDS AGAINST HUNGER

Hearts & Hands Against Hunger of Hastings Annual Report 2024



Hastings Middle School 7th Graders



**Brownie & Girl Scouts and
Leaders**

Girl Scouts, Cub and Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, Grade School Classes, Middle and High School Classes, National Honor Society, College Groups, Church Youth Groups have all come to pack meals at the Presbyterian Church Peace Center during the last year. The 1500 volunteers packed over 500,000 meals at the Peace Center in 2024.

Recently, Orphan Grain Train was able to ship 256,600 meals to Haiti. The last shipment of meals was 3½ years ago. Haiti is currently experiencing high levels of poverty, malnutrition, and food insecurity. We hope these shipments can continue during the next year. During the last year, Orphan Grain Train shipped Mercy Meals to nineteen different countries plus numerous locations in the United States.

The mission of Hearts & Hands Against Hunger is to package nutritious food for hungry and starving children and their families. Volunteers of all ages make a difference in the world by coming together to package these lifesaving meals. Working together we can make a difference in a hungry child's life.

Since 2008, Hearts & Hands volunteers have packed over 9,000,000 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.

As Christians, we are to feed the poor and help people who are in need. When we serve others, we are serving Christ. In Mathew 25, verse 40 Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeanne Hastings, HHAH Committee Member

Groups that packed meals at Hearts & Hands Against Hunger 2024

- St. Ann's Church/Doniphan 4th-12th grade
- Hastings Noon Rotary Club
- Hastings HS Student Council
- Webster County 4-H Jr. Leaders
- Girl Scout Troops Grades K-4th grades
- St. Paul Lutheran Confirmation/Minden
- St Paul's Church Holstein
- Hastings Middle School 8th Grade (240 students)
- Sertoma 8-man Football Camp
- Monday Weekly Packing Group
- Hastings College Freshman
- Hastings Middle School 7th Grade (120 students)
- 1st Presbyterian Church – Middle School Youth Group
- Trinity Lutheran-Hildreth Bible Study
- 1st St Paul Lutheran Bible Study
- Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church - Holdrege
- Sertoma 8-Man Football Camp
- Faith Lutheran Church Youth Group
- OB/GYN Staff & family members
- Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts
- Faith Lutheran OWLs group
- Deshler Public School Leadership Group
- Heritage Bank & Insurance Employees & Families
- Hastings Realtors
- Silver Lake Middle & High School Students (100 students)
- ESU9 staff & family members

HASTINGS COMMUNITY MUSIC ACADEMY

Executive Director: Hannah Jensen-Heitmann

2024 was a year full of growth, excitement, and musical achievements.

We expanded our class offerings, launched a monthly newsletter, and welcomed the South Central Nebraska Children's Chorale under our umbrella. This spring, we offered a variety of enriching programs, including preschool and homeschooled elementary music classes, a beginning community handbell ensemble, a bigs and littles beginning ukulele class, and auditions for the South Central Nebraska Children's Chorale's summer session. We also co-hosted a benefit recital with members Sigma Alpha Iota, the women's music fraternity at Hastings College. This event not only raised funds for our organization, but also showcased performances by HCMA and Hastings College students. We also participated in Give Hastings Day, and earned some extra monies for our Give Hastings Day window display. We are looking forward to participating again in 2025!

This summer, was full of music making and community engagement. We held a three-day Uke Jamboree for students ages 9-13, culminating in a fun 30 minute performance at Flatwater Music Festival at Prairie Loft, where participants showcased the songs they learned and wrote. Our Jambalaya Pep Band brought energy to multiple events throughout the summer, while preschool music classes, a creative elementary music class, and band instrument lessons offered learning opportunities for kids of all ages. The South Central Nebraska Children's Chorale had an exciting first session, with weekly rehearsals and several performances, including a tour in Omaha and Hastings. We also partnered with Leapfrog Village at CCC to host an *Encanto* Afternoon at the Hastings Museum. This event welcomed 150 predominately Spanish-speaking community members for a free meal, family activities, educational resources, and a Spanish-language showing of *Encanto*.

This fall was filled with even more community connections and music enrichment opportunities. The South Central Nebraska Children's Chorale returned for their fall session, providing audiences with several holiday performances around town. We offered a range of classes including, preschool music, homeschooled elementary music, and creative elementary music, along with a community holiday band who performed at several venues around town. A new highlight was the premier of our semi- professional handbell ensemble, and ended their first session with a joint performance with the South Central Nebraska Children's Chorale in December.

In October, we partnered again with Leapfrog Village to host a Family Halloweenfest at CCC, attracting 315 participants and providing an opportunity to showcase our organization. November brought our Musical Showcase and Fundraiser, featuring performances from our ensembles and private lesson students.

By the end of the year, we had served over 180 community members through our classes, ensembles, and private guitar, voice, flute, and percussion lessons. We also continued hosting a monthly Musical Storytime at Bryant Books and Music in downtown Hastings, and participated in two events with the Hastings Public Library.

The Hastings Community Music Academy is excited to offer a variety of new and returning classes in 2025, and we look forward to watching this organization continue to grow. We extend our deepest gratitude with First Presbyterian Church for their generosity, support, and guidance, which have been so valuable to our mission.



LIBRARY REPORT
Sue Medsker, Librarian

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 2024, circulation was 52 items, down from 159 in 2023. Most of that is due to the library being closed for renovations from November 1, 2023, through summer 2024. Suggestions for increasing the usage of the library and for additions to the collection are always welcome.

Twenty-six books were added to the collection in 2024. All were purchased with income from The Ann Binfield and C. G. & Idilla Jeffrey Wallace memorial funds. Of the 26 books, 11 were fiction, 13 were nonfiction and 2 were children's books.

The library also subscribes to 3 journals. They are Christian Century, Horizons Magazine, and Presbyterian Outlook. Back issues are kept for 2 years.

The library's renovation is now complete. Volunteers have been removing cards from the card catalog for books that were weeded from the collection. We still need volunteers to help get the catalog online. This will involve adding books to an online database, which will then be converted to a catalog. Contact me if you would be interested in helping with this.

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

AN ENDURING MEMORIAL

For Christians, how we are remembered in death says much about our beliefs in life. Simple, dignified arrangements that bear witness to hope in the resurrection can also provide comfort for those we leave behind.

First Presbyterian Church will construct a Prayer Garden Columbarium and Memorial Wall as another method of interment or recognition for deceased persons with a connection to the church members, guests and future attendees.

Annual Report of the Prayer Garden, Columbarium and Memorial Wall

Historically a Columbarium Committee formed in 2008 and proposed building a columbarium to be located in the current nursery located. At that time the congregation did not express enough interest in proceeding.

Following the extremely successful Capital Campaign a few members started discussing the possibility of building a Columbarium in the garden area between the Chapel and Education wing. From November 2023 to March 2024 new concepts were studied and the Long Range Planning Committee's plans were reviewed.

In March 2024 the Session gave permission to form a Columbarium Committee with the proposed location in the courtyard. A committee was formed had held their first meeting in April.

The Prayer Garden, Columbarium and Memorial Wall committee members are:

Jane Bauer*, Barb Harrington, Janna Johnson*, Cal Johnson, Robin Koozer, Phil Odom*, Kathy Reimer, Steve Wolford* and John Pershing. A (*) designates members of the 2008 committee. September 19, 2024, the plans were presented to the Session and a funding request of \$256,000 was made and unanimously approved. The estimated cost of construction is \$366,035. The Session approved advancing \$266,000 that included a ADA door opener. The Prayer Garden, Columbarium and Memorial Wall will be funded by donations and sales of niches. No funds will be used from the Capital Campaign. The Session approved advancing the construction funds as needed. This advance will be repaid as niches are sold.

Bids for the construction were open October 23, 2024 and Carmichael Construction was awarded the bid. Carmichael Construction is the contractor of the Capital Campaign renovations. Construction is to start early January 2025 with completion by September 1, 2025.

Financials

Donations for construction and planning	\$116,000
Sales of Niche	\$17,400
Niche sales breakdown:	
Trust Fund	\$1,200
Urns/inscriptions	\$3,975
Construction donations from niche sales	\$12,175
Total as of 1/6/2025 for construction	\$128,175
Expenses paid as of January 7, 2024	\$47,422.32
Design work, permit, promotional materials, deposit on niches	
Available funds from donation and sales	\$80,752.68

