



744 Fair Oaks Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302
www.fairoakspres.org

Annual Report
2023 – 2024

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Co-Pastors' Report

As we reflect on our life together as a church this past year, we must say that this has been a notably beautiful, inspiring time at FOPC even in the midst of challenges.

Take the Great Church Basement Deluge of last July for instance. Even more than the sight and sound of those 30 inches of water rushing in on a Sunday morning, what we remember from that day are all of you, *dozens* of you, jumping into the fray in your Sunday best, helping as you could during what felt like an impossible situation. We remember the profound, candlelight worship service born out of the fire department coming to shut off the gas and power. And there were even more of you cleaning up the aftermath. The way you gave of yourself was remarkable.

We also think on our beloved Hannah Voigt's final Sunday with us before retiring after her decades-long career as church organist. While saying farewell to Hannah as our organist was difficult, the love in the sanctuary was undeniable - as undeniable as the fire codes we broke that morning, there were so many of us.

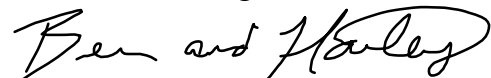
We consider all the relatively quiet but impactful ways different pockets of people came together this year to contribute to the most mundane of human activities like changing the sanctuary lightbulbs (which in actuality *was* quite a project). How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb, you ask? About half a dozen of us.

There are also those big, singular events, such as the way our congregation responded to the humanitarian crisis of thousands fleeing Venezuela to seek asylum in our country and being sent by the busload to the Chicago area. Our congregation contributed to helping many become our new neighbors in Oak Park.

By the numbers, our congregation has also experienced remarkable growth this past year. As pastors it is a humbling thing, especially in this day and age, to be a part of a faith community that isn't just surviving but thriving and to see so many wonderful new faces on a weekly basis. Likewise, last November we saw our church's most successful pledging season in years since we have been co-pastors.

These are only a fraction of examples we could give to try to illustrate what has been a season with plenty of challenges and no shortage of hard work, but a season defined by overflow of communal effort, service, hospitality, and grace. If we had to guess, this next year at FOPC is going to be just as amazing as we complete our first century as a church and pave the way for the century to come. Keep up the love, Fair Oaks!

With enormous gratitude,



Ben and Hailey, co-pastors

Roster of Session and Board of Deacons

Elders and deacons are elected to office by the congregation. They serve three-year terms and may serve two consecutive terms before rolling off for at least one term.

The Session

The Session is responsible for oversight of the mission and government of the local church. The Session consists of ordained elders who have been elected to office by the congregation.

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Laura Baig	Carey Beck	Barb Mayer
Cheryl Hover	Kathy Fox	Joe McIntyre
Steve Perkins	Wendy White	Rachel Tesch
Kristi Dahm	Greg Wolski	John Vishneski

Clerk of Session: Cathryn Steeves

The Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons provides several ministries as they care for the congregation, as discussed on the following page.

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Jim Haglund	Nancy Carr	Julia Inksetter
Lisa Johnson	Bill Green	Lisa Lewis
Dave Potterveld	Anette Nam	Gayle O'Carroll
Greg Webster	Phyllis Tresselt	Julia Schroeder

Board of Deacons

In the PC(USA) Book of Order, the role of deacon is described as one providing “compassion, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ.” At FOPC, this calling is fulfilled primarily through varied forms of support for those in need of it and hospitality for the benefit of the wider congregation.

The Deacons are organized around three areas of service:

Immediate Care provides help and prayer in times of crisis, such as illness, death of a loved one, or job loss. This team always has at least one deacon on call to reach out to those in crisis and to coordinate the church’s response to any needs. Confidentiality is maintained as requested by those seeking help, and prayer concerns are shared with the congregation as requested. David Potterveld once again was the lead for this team, coordinating a rotation of individual “on call” deacons as well as point person for the Meal Train. David was joined by Jim Haglund, Greg Webster and Gayle O’Carroll.

The role of Member Care is to maintain contact with the broader Fair Oaks community by celebrating life events, maintaining relationships with all congregants, and connecting with visitors. As per usual, the Member Care Team provided gifts to newborns and support to their parents, care packages to college students at Thanksgiving and Valentine’s Day, and flowers and devotionals during different liturgical season and holidays. This year, the Member Care team initiated “Name Tag Sunday” on the first Sunday of each month to facilitate relationships among us, and the team reached out to provide a personal welcome to those visitors who provide us with contact information. Phyllis Tresselt served as the lead for the Member Care Team, supported by Julia Schroeder, Nancy Carr and me.

The Hospitality Team is the third arm of the deacons’ ministries, and they are dedicated to emulating the openness and provision Jesus practiced in the Gospels as often as any of his healing miracles. Bill Green serves as the head of the Hospitality Team, joined by Julia Inksetter, Lisa Lewis, and Anette Nam. Hospitality is the group that provides our church coffee, tea, lemonade, and baked goodies on Sunday mornings and at memorial services, graciously cleans up at the end of our fellowship hour, and in so doing provides not only the gift of caffeine but the warm and inviting atmosphere for congregants to connect, meet each other for the first time, or catch up after long weeks. This team works hard to also show care by ensuring that allergen-free food and drink is provided.

At the conclusion of summer, two exceptional deacons, David Potterveld and Greg Webster, will be rolling off of the board. Both will be sorely missed, and we heartily thank them for their time, energy, and talent.

Submitted by Lisa Johnson, moderator

The Session of Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church 2023 Statistical Report of the Clerk of Session

Starting membership: 364

Gains

Certificate gains 4

Youths by profession of faith 7

Professions or reaffirmations 6

Losses

Certificate losses 2

Deaths 0

Removed from Rolls 47

Membership as of 12/31/2023: 332

Baptisms

Presented by others 3

At confirmation 0

All other 0

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation July 2, 2023

I. **Call To Order.** The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was called for the purpose of electing officers and receiving the Annual Report. It was called to order by Moderator Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch at 11:02 am and opened with prayer.

II. **Election of Officers.** Steven Perkins, Session representative for the Nominating Committee, reviewed the members of the Nominating Committee.

- a. Mr. Perkins presented the committee's nominations for the office of Elder, Class of 2026 -- Barb Mayer, Joe McIntyre, Rachel Tesch and John Vishneski, and to fill an open spot in the class of 2024: Kristi Dahm. There were no nominations from the floor. Nominations were closed and the candidates for office of Elder were elected by a unanimous voice vote.
- b. Mr. Perkins then presented the following candidates for the office of Deacon - Class of 2026: Lisa Lewis, Gayle O'Carroll, and Julia Schroeder, and to fill an open spot in the class of 2025: Phyllis Tresselt. There were no nominations from the floor. Nominations were closed and the candidates for the office of Deacon were elected by a unanimous voice vote.
- c. Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch thanked the outgoing Elders and Deacons for their service to Fair Oaks and also thanked the Nominating Committee for its work this year.

III. **Presentation of the Annual Report.** The Annual Report, a description of the church's activities for the year, financial reports, and statistical information on church membership and participation, was presented.

IV. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 am. The meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch, Moderator

Cathryn Steeves, Clerk

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Corporation

January 28, 2024

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Moderator Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch at 11:06 am and opened with prayer. A quorum was present.
- II. **APNC Update:** Laura Baig reported on the search for an associate pastor. She said that because many people have left ministry, there are few candidates available for part-time positions. As a result, the committee does not expect to fill the position very soon.
- III. **Financial Report and Budget:** John Vishneski presented a summary of results. Revenue came in as expected and total expenses were above budget – in part because of the July flood – resulting in a deficit for the year. Pledges received for 2024 were the highest of the last five years, and we have budgeted for an increase in expenses, in particular for the associate pastor position, resulting in a deficit for 2024. The Session views the new position as investment in the future. There was a short period of questions and comments from the congregation.
- IV. **Terms of Call:** Mr. Vishneski made a motion to change the co-pastors' terms of call. In particular, the 2022 terms of call included 2% raises and an increase of \$1,000 for entertaining/professional expenses. After discussion, the new terms of call were unanimously approved.
- V. **Adjournment and Prayer:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am and closed with the Benediction by Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch, Moderator

Cathryn Steeves, Clerk

Adult Education

The Adult Education committee, Cheryl Hover, Meghan Strubel and I, met with Ben on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Our plan for the year was to have programs about different topics of interest to our members, information about our mission opportunities, and intersperse Bible studies and discussions throughout the rest of the Sundays.

We started the church year with Rally Day, sharing our Adult Ed plans for the year, and discussing the scriptures from the sermons. For World Communion Sunday we held an intergenerational session to bake communion wafers to be used in Worship that day and learn about communion. This program is very popular, and we plan to do it again next year.

In October and November, we shared information about what was happening with the Asylum Seekers in Oak Park and how our members can support these new neighbors. In December Ben led us in a *Lectio Divina* practice on scripture for the current Sunday's Bible verses and we shared Christmas traditions with each other while decorating cookies to be shared during the caroling at The Sheridan.

In 2024 we held a series of programs we called "Acts of Love" which included learning about senior services available from the Township, things to know about dementia, planning your own funeral, end of life options, endowments and pledging, and the memorial garden we will be installing at FOPC. We also held a two-week program discussing the movie *Women Talking*, and the Last Supper with Gloria Groom and Joe Berton. This Spring we had a series about environmental issues including Environmental Justice, Electrification, Food Waste, and Andrew Holder sharing the film he created about fish in the Des Plaines River.

The Fair Oaks Book Club met the fourth Tuesday of each month at members' homes. We alternated fiction and non-fiction books each month. We also went together to see *The Penelopiad* at the Goodman Theatre.

The Thursday morning Bible study continued this year. Topics covered ranged from a character study of David to different atonement theories to finding joy in everyday life. Different book titles included: *The Secret Chord* by Geraldine Brooks, *Inciting Joy* by Ross Gay, *Original Blessing: Putting Sin in its Rightful Place* by Danielle Shroyer, *Making Sense of the Cross* by David Lose, *Women Talking* by Miriam Toews, and *The Ballot and the Bible: How Scripture Has Been Used and Abused in American Politics and Where We Go from Here* by Kaitlyn Schiess.

Submitted by Kathy Fox, moderator

Buildings and Grounds

Introducing Joseph McIntyre who took over B&G in September of 2023.

Buildings and Grounds is comprised of:

- The Property Committee: who works to meet monthly in person or updated via email
- Handy Service: a company that we call in monthly to work on task items at the Church and at the Manse
- AV Task Force
- The Church Body: who updates me on any issues that arise throughout the church

The Mission of Buildings and Grounds is to be good stewards for the building properties (Church and Manse) that are entrusted to the FOPC Church Body, to leave a legacy in a healthy beautiful church building and home that has been here before we were and will be after we are, and to establish routine financial commitments to ensure long term viability of our church properties.

Notable events this year is our churches 100 year celebration. We will work to ensure our property is in esteem position to shine on its centennial birthday, including the addition of a Memorial Garden.

Property Committee:

- Members: Carl Krieter, Kent Bromley, Lamar Johnson, Ben Lynch (by force), John Beck, Joseph McIntyre, Dave Potterfield

This year we created a task list. This list has items listed in sections titled "Ongoing Maintenance", "CAPEX", and "Special Projects".

Each month we add to the list based on feedback from the congregation, our observations, and long term needs that the church properties have. We organist them into the categories and prioritize them and get them completed through a Handy Service, or congregational support.

Handy Service:

This year we hired a Handy Service on retainer, \$100 per hour, 4-8 hours per month to work on the Church or the Manse list of items needed to complete. They also help with

long term needs such as bids for contractors to support needs i.e. Chimney repair, concrete repair, roofing repair.

AV Task Force:

- Task Force Members: Derek Inksetter, Joey Graves, Ben Lynch (by force), Dave Potterfield, Ed Nam

This year we created an AV task force to assess our need to upgrade our sound equipment in the sanctuary and the fellowship hall. We were able to identify the needs and find to bids to ensure we found an appropriate solution.

Key Highlights:

- Eradicated items in basement damaged by the flood – most were covered by insurance
- Completed Boiler replacement in the Church (still needs a vent resolution)
- Completed Water Heater replacement
- Seeing to the new alley restoration will ensure future flooding issues will not flood our basement anymore
- Sealed the hole in the Church South Wall to ensure water will not pour into the basement
- Changed lightbulbs in the Church Sanctuary
- New Boiler and AC completed and installed at the Manse property
- Handy Service hired and completed 2 strike lists so far at the Church and 1 upcoming at the Manse
- New AV Quote agreed on and scheduling installation of new equipment
- Eradicated squirrels and sealed chimney so they do not have a point of entry
- Memorial Garden being installed in the Courtyard led by Christine Baumbach and her task force

While these are just some key highlights and processes we have put in place, we have many items we are still working to schedule and set up for the long term future of our church properties. . While we know that the physical property of our church is just a building, we must ensure we have a healthy physical property so that when we gather in his name, then he to will be amongst us.

Submitted by Joe McIntyre, moderator

Children and Youth

Committee Members: Rachel Tesch (moderator), Hailey Braden Lynch, Marci Ko, Abigail Koning, Elizabeth McVey, Kennedy O'Carroll, Eric Older, Wendy Owen, Beth Potterveld and Jaden Wielhouwer.

The Children and Youth Committee met monthly throughout the year. LOGOS Summer was launched successfully in June 2023 with just over 30 children attending throughout the week and many volunteers from the congregation leading programs. Logos Summer feedback was extremely positive from the children, parents and volunteers. The children enjoyed activities including: worship arts (music), compassion, story, cooking, gardening, science, Bible, recreation and drama. Given the success of the program in 2023, the Children & Youth Committee has focused on coordinating the second year of LOGOS Summer in June 2024. The program will be held Monday, June 10 through Friday, June 14, from 8am - 5pm.

The committee continued to evaluate and consider the ideal approach for helpers in the loft (nursery). Numerous families utilize the 'Prayspace' that was moved to the room above the sanctuary. This set up allows for children to play and wiggle, while still able being to hear the service via the windows. Throughout the majority of the year, there was a staffed position in the loft to assist with any needs and to help parents that was minimally utilized by congregants. When the individual staffing of the position was no longer available, the committee thoughtfully considered the need for weekly assistance. Following several months with no helper, the committee ultimately recommended that the position be filled to ensure that the needs of current families are met as well as those of any new families who may visit FOPC.

During the year, in addition to weekly Sunday school for elementary and mid-high, FOPC held monthly events for mid-high youth group and senior-high youth group, a Christmas pageant, and numerous fundraising events for the Mission trip. Mission trip fundraising efforts included Donut Day, Fall Feast collection, March Mission Trip Madness, restarting the brunch fundraiser and directing the offering collected during Youth Sunday to the mission trip.

The safe practices policy was also reviewed and updated to reflect current practices at FOPC.

Submitted by Rachel Tesch, moderator

Outreach and Community Engagement

Committee Members:

Anette Nam, Caroline Older, Christine Baumbach, Lindsay McIntyre, Derek Inksetter, Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch, Wendy Owen, Grace Fox, Carey Beck (chair).

Thank you to our special contributors:

- We are extra thankful this year for Grace Fox who volunteered to share her gifts in design and visual storytelling to help advance this committee's goals. Her time and talents helped us achieve our biggest goals this year related to modernizing two of our most impactful communication channels: E-Weekly and the Sunday Bulletin.
- We are also thankful for Monica Sheehan, our FOPC Office Manager, who is an integral extension of this group & has made significant contributions to advance our work.

Role of committee:

The committee supports internal and external communications across various channels such as website (www.fairoakspres.org), e-weekly newsletter, Facebook group page, word-of-mouth and local community news outlets such as *The Wednesday Journal*.

For reference, the following is our strategic vision for this committee:

It's our goal to:

Invite our congregation & community into a safe spiritual space – as inspired by the life & teachings of Jesus Christ – where they can fully be themselves as created by our God.

It's our vision that:

Everyone feels welcome and loved both at church & within the church community, which ultimately encourages a lifetime of religious practice through the work of the Holy Spirit.

We value:

Authenticity	We show up authentically to who we are and who we were created to be.
Inclusivity	We are agents of grace – meeting people where they are and letting them know that there is a place for all at Fair Oaks.
Flexibility	We recognize that there are many ways to live with religion, worship God and have a relationship with Christ.
Sustainability	We think long-term, recognizing the Holy Spirit at work in our congregation, Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church and the collective Church.

2023-24 Results:

- Streamlined comms guidelines for each channel to optimize effectiveness
 - Updated E-Weekly, linking to website for more info
 - Sunday Bulletin: reduced paper use via design, simplified copy, and updated fonts
 - For privacy reasons, we are no longer sharing the Prayer Care list online (endorsed by Session Fall '23); Members can call or email the church office for info, also still included in printed Sunday Bulletin
 - Facebook continues to improve engagement over the past year
 - Ads placed in Wednesday Journal during Christmas & Easter seasons
 - Remote Worship: Effective May '24, we now link in Facebook driving viewers to YouTube. (This is driven by Facebook changes)
- The committee is working to update member photos in preparation for an updated Member Directory to be ready Fall 2024, coinciding with our centennial program year.

Submitted by Carey Beck, moderator

Congregational Activities

Committee Members: Ben Lynch, Karen Bromley, Kristi Dahm (Chair), Wendy Owen, Steve Perkins and Wendy White

The Congregational Activities Committee offered a full year of events to provide fun and strengthen the bonds of fellowship within the Fair Oaks community. Events held this program year include:

Rally Day (September 10) A sandwich buffet lunch was served following service. Representative from all FOPC organizations presented posters and information to share with the congregation and new and old members curious about getting involved.

Fall Feast (November 12) The delicious annual potluck dinner was a huge success!

Parents' Time Out (Oct 13 and Jan. 26) In order to strengthen turn out while reviving this Fair Oaks tradition, we expanded the invitation to all parents with school age children. The first took place at the Owen-Wolski home. The second PTO was hosted by the Topels. Both events drew a good crowd of parents for pizza while the children played in the basement with senior high babysitters. We are aiming for one PTO per quarter. For the spring quarter, the progressive dinner takes the place of PTO.

Advent Luminaria and Campfires (December 18) A small group of dedicated adults and kids assembled and installed luminaria along the 700 block of Fair Oaks and Thomas. This *Light Up the Night-Oak Park* event coincided with the Fair Oaks Longest Night Service, providing beautiful lights for those attending.

Winter Soup Luncheon (February 15) Members gathered for a cozy soup lunch. To increase participation, the invitation was extended to anyone free on a Thursday lunch hour (previously this was a senior event). Earlier advertising might have led to a larger crowd.

Ski Trip (February 20) A dedicated few braved the cold for skiing at Cascade Mountain.

Chili and Pie Potluck (March 3) The Ford-White household hosted a spectacular potluck chili and pie dinner. The unusual warm weather allowed for an outdoor table - a chili dinner first. Fair Oaks has some great cooks!

Progressive Dinner (April 13) This annual tradition returns after several years disruption by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thanks to the Bromleys, Johnsons, Strubels, Hovers, and the Steeves-Perkins and Kelly-Marzec households for hosting appetizers, dinner & desserts.

Summer Celebration (upcoming - June 2) The taco truck will return! A bouncy house and lawn games will provide entertainment for all ages.

Submitted by Kristi Dahm, moderator

**FAIR OAKS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

2023 Financial Summary

We closed the past year with an operating loss of \$10,248, which was less than the budgeted loss of \$11,470. The shortfall was made up for by increases in our invested funds at Edward Jones. Total revenues exceeded the budget by \$9,706, or approximately 2% of budget. Pledges and gifts exceeded the budget by \$10,363.

Expenses ended the year at 102% of budget, with most of the excess in building and grounds expenditures. In general, costs were up due to cost of living increases.

On the accompanying statement of financial position (balance sheet) are assets, liabilities and net assets at December 31, 2023. Total assets equaled \$456,435 at that date. Of that total, \$365,749 are net assets without donor restrictions. These include Session designated reserves, including the building reserve, endowment reserve and special gifts and memorials. The general operating reserve is \$248,072 at December 31, 2023. Restricted net assets include items received for specific purposes (mission, primarily) and 2024 pledges received prior to December 31, 2023. During 2024, these prepaid pledges become part of pledges and gifts income.

Other Committee News for 2023 and 2024

During 2023, the Finance Committee conducted an internal audit of the financial records for 2022. An internal audit of the 2023 financial records will be conducted during the summer of 2024. In addition, members of the committee have been reviewing our accounting processes and controls in order to ensure that they are reasonable and effective. We have also been looking at historical balances including certain special gifts and memorials that have been held for multiple years to ensure that they are effectively utilized.

Lastly, members of the committee have met with both the Session and an adult education class to introduce what could be achieved with a more robust endowment giving program.

Submitted by Wendy White, moderator

LOGOS

Another successful year of LOGOS is in the books. We had twenty-one kids enrolled from grades 1-5, fifteen from middle school and twelve from high school for a grand total of 48 kids. Children, youth and adults gathered each Wednesday from September through March to experience the four parts of LOGOS: Bible Study, Worship Arts, Recreation & Play and Family Time. We experienced a 25% growth in enrollment from last year, and we expect that to continue as many new families have enrolled and have told their friends. We also had 10 kids come on Shadow Night which is on the final night where kindergarteners and invited friends come to try out the program.

After a couple of years of transition, the LOGOS kitchen was back to pre-pandemic operations. Some amazing FOPC members (Karen Bromley, Jim Eldred, Wendy Owen, John Messina, Julia Inksetter, Kathy Fox, Chris Marzec & Maggie Kelly, Lisa Johnson and Carl Kreiter) volunteered to cook even though they no longer have kids in the program (Thank You!) and we were back to having 3-5 parent volunteers each night to help prepare, serve and clean up. The delicious desserts provided by our wonderful baking team/ministry led by Nancy Van Der Griend were indeed the highlight each week.

LOGOS Sunday was held on March 17th and all ages contributed to making the service splendid and meaningful.

We look forward to another successful year building new relationships, spreading God's love each week, treating all as children of God and having fun!

The LOGOS Board is: Laura Baig, Karen Bromley, Rose Guccione, Hailey Braden-Lynch, Cathryn Steeves and Linda Van Dyke

Submitted by Laura Baig, moderator

Faith in Action/Mission

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. " Matthew 25:35-40

Committee Members: Carol Huck, Marci Ko, Amy Kuehl, Linda Martens, Julia Mattiace, Barbara Mayer (chair), Beth Messina, Nancy Van Der Griend, Hailey Braden Lynch

The Faith in Action/Mission Committee of Fair Oaks is charged with coordinating ongoing church mission activities, seeking out and evaluating new opportunities locally, nationally and globally, and educating and informing our congregation about these opportunities.

We continue to make progress toward Faith in Action/Mission goals to:

- Concentrate our efforts to strengthen Fair Oaks relationship with a small number of local agencies to increase the focus and impact of our mission work,
- Pursue hands-on mission projects to support our monetary giving,
- Enhance focus and involvement in global mission,
- Coordinate and publicize mission and outreach efforts throughout the church.

New ventures this year include:

- **Work to support the migrants** that were bussed to Chicago then moved into Oak Park. We assembled hygiene kits for Harmony House Food Pantry and the 15th District Police Station residents in Chicago, made and distributed breakfasts to those housed at Chicago's 15th District Police Station, served lunches to those housed in Oak Park at the Carlton Hotel and the YMCA, and today, we are partnering with United Lutheran Church to support Juan Carlos and Jean Carlo Franco Herrera who are living in an apartment in United Lutheran Church. We purchased an electric bicycle for Juan Carlos, funded and arranged summer activities for Jean Carlo, funded a pool pass and CRC membership for both of them. We will continue to provide food every other week along with United Lutheran.

- **Funding to support three Austin partners**, in an effort to strengthen our ties with our neighbors there:

Bethel New Life (BNL) empowers individuals, strengthens families, and rebuilds west side neighborhoods through community driven, solution-oriented, and value centered approaches, including a network of wellness partnership programs and initiatives that prepare individuals, families, and neighborhoods to be healthy and well through all stages of life.

A House in Austin offers parenting support for families on Chicago's West Side, including high quality early learning, nurturing support, and parent education.

Austin Coming Together (ACT) is dedicated to providing backbone support for a 50+ network of non-profit, faith-based, public, and private entities.

- Funding **Working Water the Gambia**, a non-governmental organization, which built a solar powered water well in a rural village in the African country of The Gambia.
- Funding **Gambia Rising** is a small, committed team of Gambians and Americans working to make it possible for deserving Gambian students to stay in school.
- We plan to rotate collecting donations for more of our mission partners including our new Austin Partners and Housing Forward.
- We plan to participate in a back-to-school drive in August for Hepzibah foster care families.

We continued traditional projects such as:

- Christmas stockings for the Night Ministry
- Christmas coat and gift drives for New Moms and Infant Welfare Society
- One Great Hour of Sharing

Additional Updates:

Learning Edge, formerly known as Cluster Tutoring, completed its third successful year at FOPC. Fair Oaks is one of three Learning Edge sites that hosts volunteers and students for tutoring in the evening. On Monday evenings, 19 students receive 90 minutes of one-on-one tutoring at FOPC. The majority of the students come from the neighborhoods of Austin and Garfield Park. In response to Christ's call to serve God's children, Fair Oaks is committed to dedicate 13% of our annual church budget to mission work, in collaboration with partner agencies and congregations. The list of organizations we are supporting in 2024 on the next page.

Submitted by Barb Mayer, moderator

Faith in Action/Mission Budget :

February 7, 2024		2024
Faith in Action/Mission Budget		
Short term		\$61,360.00
Long term		\$7,670.00
Total Budget		\$69,060.00
Global Ministries		
	The Gambia water well	\$6000.00
	Gambia Rising Scholarship	\$1000.00
	Cuba Mission Partners	\$1000.00
	Thailand: McGilvary FOPC Scholarship Fund	\$2000.00
	Thailand: Payap U. Scholarship Fund	\$1000.00
	Thailand: Prince Royals Coll. Sch. Fund	\$1000.00
	Thailand: William Yoder Scholarship Fund	\$1000.00
Total Global Ministries		\$13,000.00
USA & Presbytery		
	PCUSA - Basic Mission Support	\$1,000.00
	PCUSA - Theological Education	\$500.00
	PCUSA - YAV Direct Mission Support	\$3,000.00
	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	\$1,000.00
Total USA & Presbytery		\$5,500.00
Shared Mission Support/Chgo Pres		\$12,500.00
Local		
	Bethel New Life - Austin	\$1,780.00
	ACT (Austin Coming Together)	\$1,000.00
	A House in Austin	\$1,780.00
	Beyond Hunger	\$5,000.00
	Learning Edge	\$2,000.00
	Community of Congregations dues	\$500.00
	Holiday Food Baskets	\$1,000.00
	Housing Forward (Have a Heart Gala)	\$2,500.00
	Housing Forward - food	\$1,000.00
	Infant Welfare Society	\$1,000.00
	Interfaith Green Network	\$250.00
	New Moms	\$650.00
	Night Ministry	\$2,000.00
	Night Ministry - stockings	\$1,700.00
	Refugees (formerly RefugeeOne)	\$4,200.00
	Sarah's Inn	\$1000.00
	Sr High Mission Trip	\$500.00
Total Local		\$27,860.00
Miscellaneous for emerging needs		\$2,500.00
Total Giving		\$61,360.00

Music Ministries Instrumental Music

It's been a wonderful year of instrumental music.....

- Three handbell choirs continue to contribute music to worship: Intermission Bells (middle school), Encore Bells (high school) and Fair Oaks Ringers (adult). Intermission got a huge boost this year with many incoming 6th graders. Encore will say goodbye to Kai Coffee, Connor Kuehl, Anna Miller and Katelyn Paeth as they graduate – we thank them for many years of beautiful playing. Fair Oaks Ringers has drawn some fresh interest and we're excited to have a larger pool of players to engage. Along with playing on many Sundays, the bell choirs also offered special music on Christmas Eve and Easter. And not to be overlooked – lovely fellowship has been had by all!
- The Fair Oaks Clarinet Choir remains viable and has brought on some younger talent and energy. Many thanks to Kathy Fox, Charlie Inksetter, Julia Inksetter, Ruth Kulkarni, Thomas Smith, John Vishneski and Lily Yera.
- A small brass group has offered music a couple times this year. Many thanks to Connor Kuehl, Linnea Nam, Carolyn Rainey, Beth Potterveld and Greg Webster.
- It's also a joy and privilege to provide music for two special services: 1) the Longest Night service which Tehra Hiolski and I find immense peace and commitment in being a part of and 2) Ash Wednesday – we're alternating years of a small bell choir and clarinet group providing music for this service.
- Many thanks to Mimi Awad, Linnea Nam, Nils Nam, Andrew Older, Thomas Smith and John Vishneski for playing solo pieces during the church year. And I'm not sure if it was in the last year or year before, but Asher Lynch and Andrew McVey have also shared their gifts and I want to make sure they are acknowledged. Also thank you to Derek Inksetter for playing timpani on Easter.
- We seem to be at a standstill with finding a new organist but are blessed to have a pool of players from which to choose. Many thanks to Dhilanthi Fernando, Tehra Hiolski, Nicholas Hymson, Val Maze and Jennifer Trueman for being a part of the musical family at Fair Oaks.

Engagement is a priority of my mission to provide instrumental music at Fair Oaks. If you have an interest or talent to share, please let me know. It's a wonderful blessing to be a part of the musical life here at Fair Oaks. I feel enormous gratitude 😊

Linda Van Dyke, Director of Instrumental Music

Vocal Music

Dear Members and Supporters,

This year has been a testament to the collegial collaboration among the Church Staff; the talent, dedication, and resilience of the Chancel Choir; and the energy and joy that comes from the singing of children in the LOGOS program.

Reflection

Church Staff

Rev. Hailey Braden Lynch, Rev. Ben Lynch, Linda Van Dyke, Jaden Wielhouwer, and I meet frequently to discuss matters related to church services, special services, LOGOS, and the continued search for a collaborative organist/pianist. Monica Sheehan continues to provide excellent support to all of us. I am blessed to have such wonderful colleagues.

Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir provides music for select worship services throughout the liturgical year. We rehearse once during the week most weeks and on Sunday mornings before the services in which we sing. We are composed of volunteers from the congregation, two professional singers, and the occasional ringer. The following are some highlights from the past year:

The Choir reconvened for the 2023-2024 liturgical season on September 7, 2023, in preparation for Rally Sunday. Melinda Alberty and Henry Hunt remain our Soprano and Tenor section leaders, respectively. Maurice "Mick" Houlahan was with us until a change in employment in late November rendered him unavailable to continue singing with us. Our last service for the liturgical season occurred on May 19, 2024.

Worship Services: We have sought to enhance the worship services through carefully selected anthems, offertories, and other special music. Though small in numbers, we strive to make a joyful noise in our singing.

Special Celebrations: The Chancel Choir played a vital role in music for Lessons & Carols, Maundy Thursday and Easter. Jess Koehn joined us for Lessons & Carols. Henry Bogzevitz, Samuel Mitzenmacher and Antonio Quaranta joined us for Holy Week. We invite anyone who likes to sing to join us year-round.

Chancel Choir Budget: We are grateful for the generous support received from the church and individual donors throughout the fiscal calendar year. These contributions enable us to sustain our musical programs, maintain our keyboards, purchase new sheet

music, clean our robes, and hire more singers where needed. Our budget remains at \$10,000 for the fiscal year.

A Word on Masks: Fall through Spring, respiratory illnesses have infected choir members and the Oak Park community at large. Fall, 2023 saw an uptick in cases of influenza, COVID, RSV and other respiratory infections, for example.

Singing requires deep breathing, healthy phonation, and diction, resulting in a greater projection of aerosols within a confined space. The health, safety, and livelihood of those who participate in the Chancel Choir remains a top priority. While perhaps not aesthetically pleasing, mask-wearing continues to be seen among singers who either have symptoms of respiratory illness, or fear contracting respiratory illness.

LOGOS

The children of PB&J LOGOS and LOGOS Musical Notes provided vocal music and smiles on five occasions:

- The June 18 service,
- The October 22 service,
- The December 10 Christmas Pageant,
- The February 25 service, and
- The March 17 LOGOS Sunday service.

Some children also sang Christmas carols at The Sheridan on December 20, 2023.

Looking Ahead

LOGOS

I look forward to working with the children in LOGOS when we reconvene in September.

Pianist/Organist Search

Since Hannah Voigt's retirement, Pastors Hailey and Ben scheduled keyboardists for Summer 2023. Linda Van Dyke and I have been engaging four pianists/organists throughout the liturgical season. We have scheduled them through the end of Summer, 2024.

I have sent many email invitations to members of the American Guild of Organists - Chicago Chapter. While some have expressed an interest in substituting, none are interested in a full-time position.

We will continue to call on the keyboardists with whom we have worked until such time the position is filled. We may want to consider hiring two organists part-time.

Music Library

I continue to endeavor to create a searchable database of the church's music library. This will enable me and future directors to better program Chancel Choir music.

Christmas Caroling

I am grateful to everyone who Christmas Carols at Belmont Village and The Sheridan. It was meaningful to the residents and all who participated. I am grateful to all who sang and brought cookies to The Sheridan. I will be reaching out to the Worship & Arts Committee for help in ministering to the elderly again.

Acknowledgments

My heartfelt gratitude is directed to all the members of the Chancel Choir for their unwavering dedication and commitment. Their passion for music and devotion to serving the congregation through their talents is truly inspiring. I am privileged to work alongside such a talented and compassionate group of individuals.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the church staff, clergy, the Worship and the Arts Committee, and volunteers who have supported us in countless ways. Their collaboration and assistance have been invaluable in making our ministry meaningful.

I thank the congregation and the community for their continued support, attendance and encouragement. Your presence and enthusiasm have been the driving force behind our efforts, and we are honored to share our music with you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rose Guccione
Director of Vocal Music

Nominating

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7

The election of church officers is at the heart of what it means to be Presbyterian.

To fulfill the mission of the Nominating Committee to call effective church leaders, the Nominating Committee seeks to present officers-elect who represent the congregation's diversity. We request and accept names submitted by congregants, as well as by committee members. We then prayerfully and carefully consider all names to ensure representation of all groups within the congregation.

The committee's work is to develop a slate of candidates for the church offices of Elder, Deacon and Nominating Committees that reflect the composition and diversity of the congregation. In addition, we were asked to nominate several members to our Associate Pastor Nominating Committee due to upcoming vacancies. All candidates are presented to the congregation for election at a congregational meeting before their term begins.

The Nominating Committee membership consists of one or two Elders, one Deacon and up to four at-large members of the congregation who are elected at the prior annual meeting. The current committee members are: Cheryl Hover (Session representative), Steve Perkins (Session representative), Greg Webster (Deacon representative), Kent Bromley, Angela Topel, Beth Potterveld, and Rev. Ben Lynch (ex-officio). We are grateful to those individuals serving on the Nominating Committee.

Submitted by Cheryl Hover, moderator

Personnel

Committee Members: Greg Wolski (co-chair), John Vishneski (co-chair), Greg Topel, Priscilla Bell and co-pastors Hailey Braden Lynch & Ben Lynch

The calling of the Personnel Committee is to lead the hiring of new church staff (as needed); conduct the annual reviews of the church staff; make recommendations to Session regarding church staff compensation and benefits, position roles and responsibilities and support the performance efforts of the church staff. The very nature and composition of the Personnel Committee is such that it must coordinate closely across all FOPC committees, especially Finance/Stewardship, Worship and Property.

The Personnel Committee is pleased to report that the staff of Fair Oaks work together in a collegial and positive manner that keeps the church running smoothly and ably supports its mission. Rose Guccione, Director of Vocal Music, and Linda Van Dyke, Director of Instrumental Music, have settled into those newly created positions and have ensured that consistently high-quality music has been a staple of our worship services. Monica Sheehan, Church Secretary, as she has consistently for years, reliably managed the church office duties of Fair Oaks. And, our co-pastors Hailey Braden Lynch & Ben Lynch, have worked tirelessly to lead our numerous volunteers and provide spiritual inspiration for the congregation. The Personnel Committee is grateful for the staff's hard work, talent, and dedication, and approved a modest raise for all staff members to send a clear message of appreciation and recognition, which was in turn approved by the congregation.

The position of Church Accompanist remains unfilled following Hannah Voight's retirement in June 2023. The Personnel Committee, in close coordination with Rose and Linda, has actively pursued potential leads, including one candidate that progressed through the interview process but ultimately was not chosen. Fortunately, Rose and Linda have developed a cadre of talented musicians, who play piano and/or organ, to fill the accompanist role on a part-time basis. This structure allows Fair Oaks to continue to have high quality music while allowing the Personnel Committee and Music Directors time to find the right candidate for Church Accompanist.

The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) consisting of Laura Baig, John Beck, Margot Eldred, Connor Kuehl, Elizabeth McVey, Greg Meadors, Erika Panichelli and Thomas Smith, have continued to diligently search for a candidate for the Associate Pastor position. Having reached the conclusion that there are few candidates interested in a part-time position, the APNC and Personnel Committee recommended that Fair Oaks seek a full-time Associate Pastor, a recommendation in turn approved by the congregation.

Having completed seven years as co-pastors of Fair Oaks, Ben and Hailey became entitled to take well-earned sabbaticals in accordance with their original terms of call. Ben and Hailey developed a thoughtful and detailed plan, coordinated with the

Personnel Committee, that allowed them the space to take a proper sabbatical and minimize the effect of the respective absences on the congregation. Great teamwork as usual.

Finally, we are blessed to have had energetic and capable interns this past year to help support our church's permanent staff members. Last summer Juliette Bonnländer, a graduating Senior from the University of Florida, joined us in May as a Summer Intern for 10 weeks. Juliette's primary focus was the planning and coordination of our newest major program, LOGOS Summer Camp, which lasted for one week in June, 8 pm to 6 pm, and included 30 campers along with nearly two dozen adult and teen volunteers. She also helped support the co-pastors with several other efforts and even preached a sermon at the conclusion of her time with us (during the infamous 'flood Sunday,' no less). Then FOPC welcomed Jaden Wielhouwer, a 2022 graduate of Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, as our year-long church intern focused on youth. Jaden arrived in July 2023 just in time to help lead last summer's Senior High Mission Trip in Colorado. Since then, Jaden has helped coordinate and lead numerous youth outings and parties and Bible studies, supported our middle school and high school students at extracurricular events, and guided a terrific Youth Sunday worship service. Jaden's two final projects before the end of July will be leading this year's LOGOS Summer Camp as well as the Senior High Mission Trip to Florida, both of which she has already dedicated many hours toward regarding the planning and volunteer coordination.

The Personnel Committee would like to thank all our church staff and the many volunteers for their incredible leadership. There is no question that producing all aspects of worship takes an inordinate amount of time, talent, and technical skills. We greatly appreciate each of you who has assisted. We are blessed to have so many congregational members who are willing to work together. It is only because of each of your efforts that we were able to have another incredible year, continuing our worship and fellowship virtually and in person. The Personnel Committee appreciates everyone's time and effort and complete dedication to FOPC. We are especially blessed by the continued leadership of Hailey and Ben.

Thank you to the Personnel Committee members for their efforts in supporting the church staff and the ministry of the FOPC congregation.

Submitted by Greg Wolski and John Vishneski, co-moderators

Stewardship



Committee Members: Cheryl Hover (Chair), Ben Lynch, Greg Wolski and Lisa Lewis

The Stewardship Committee completed the majority of work from October to December of 2023. The theme this year was “Building Something That Matters”. We asked each member to consider pledging so that we may continue to grow and build upon our first 100 years.

The main focus was asking for an 8% pledge increase across the board to have sufficient funds to cover a full-time associate pastor role. This change to full-time from a previously open part-time position was made due to the lack of candidates seeking part-time work.

As in years past, multiple church members spoke at worship services in the months of October and November to share their church experiences and what it means to pledge. These speakers were Cheryl Hover, John Beck and Lisa Lewis.

Giving Sunday was November 19, 2023. There was a big push in November and December and included following up with members to pledge (phone calls/individual emails/eWeekly distribution/Sunday service). The result was a successful campaign. The church was able to pass a budget that allows for continued programming and the ability to call a full-time associate pastor in 2024.

With gratitude to the committee and all members of Fair Oaks who continue to amaze me with their generosity of gifts – in time, talent, and financial contributions.

Submitted by Cheryl Hover, moderator

Worship and the Arts

Committee Members: Steve Perkins (Moderator), Christine Baumbach, Amy Kuehl, Martha Fluharty, Sheryl Martin, Doug Rainey, Phyllis Tresselt, Nancy Van Der Griend, Ben Lynch (ex-officio)

Background on Worship at FOPC

Worship is an essential part of our life together at Fair Oaks and is one of the primary means of living out our mission “to *PROCLAIM* by word and deed the good news of our savior Jesus Christ, to *NURTURE* children, youth and adults into Christian faith and discipleship, and to *SERVE*, in Christ’s name, the Oak Park community and beyond.”

We worship together each Sunday at 10:00am. Youth of all ages are invited to participate in worship in the sanctuary, while young children have the option of attending Bridges to Worship, which offers a style of worship more customized to young kids. Those with infants have the option of enjoying the service in the loft above the sanctuary. Those youth who choose to participate in Bridges to Worship are invited to return to the sanctuary during the offering to finish the service with their parents.

During the summer months (June-August), our worship service shifts to be more personal, informal, and interactive with the congregation.

We also offer special services throughout the year, including:

- Longest Night Service: This service is scheduled for mid-December and is designed to acknowledge that the Advent period can also be a painful time for those who might be suffering in some way. During the past few years, this service has coincided with the Light Up the Night celebration in Oak Park, where blocks in the Village are illuminated with luminaria. We participate in this special celebration by placing luminaria on the blocks surrounding the church.
- Christmas Eve Services: We celebrate Christmas Eve with a family-oriented service at 4:30 followed by another service at 11 pm.
- Ash Wednesday Service: We commemorate the beginning of Lent with an evening service at 7:30 pm on Ash Wednesday. This service features the imposition of ashes as a sign of our own mortality.
- Maundy Thursday Service: This service is an evening service at 7:30 pm on the Thursday before Easter. This service commemorates Jesus’s last supper with his disciples. During that meal in the upper room, Jesus washed his disciples’ feet and gave them a new commandment: “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34). The word “Maundy” comes from the Latin *mandatum*, meaning “command.”

Highlights for the 2023-24 program year include:

- Rose Guccione continued in her role as Director of Vocal Music (see her Annual Report in a separate document).
- Linda Van Dyke continued in the role of Director of Instrumental Music (see her Annual Report in a separate document).

- The congregation celebrated communion on the first Sunday of each month. Communion is continuing to be served in a hybrid format with congregants coming down the center aisle and taking a piece of pre-sliced bread and a cup of juice from the communion servers. This year, many of the church elementary aged youth participated in preparing communion with supervision from adults.

- Our committee worked together to provide specially designed visual communication elements for the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas as well as Lent, Easter and Pentecost. New this year, our Pentecost service will be enhanced with hundreds of flames hanging from the rafters to highlight the celebration of Pentecost.

- In order to focus on stewardship of the earth, we are continuing to use a one-page bulletin in worship each Sunday, with additional pages added only when necessary,

Submitted by Steve Perkins, moderator

Youth Ministry Intern Report

As I reflect on my role as the Youth Ministry Intern over the past year, I'm proud to witness Fair Oaks' commitment to creating an inclusive space for high school and middle school youth. The creation of the part-time youth ministry internship position was a direct response to the growing need for focused support for these age groups within our church community. Fair Oaks has demonstrated a deep understanding of the significance of providing a safe and welcoming environment for youth to explore their faith and connect with one another.

Throughout the year, Fair Oaks has remained dedicated to engaging youth through established programs like LOGOS and monthly youth groups, while also exploring innovative ways to involve them more deeply in the life of the church.

There has been overwhelming support and encouragement from the congregation as I've transitioned into this role. The willingness of so many individuals to volunteer as youth leaders and mentors speaks volumes about the community's commitment to its high school and middle school youth. The emphasis on sustained involvement of volunteers with youth and children is particularly noteworthy, as it fosters relationships between adult congregants and young people, providing trusted adults for guidance and support.

Within the high school youth group, I've observed the church's willingness to meet young people where they are in their faith journey. This approach not only fosters enthusiasm among youth for attending church activities but also provides an avenue for the church to demonstrate love and care to its youth members. Weekly programs like LOGOS consistently draw a strong attendance, and monthly youth groups are eagerly anticipated. With thirty-seven high schoolers registered, the Mission Trip remains a highlight and a significant point of connection with our high school youth.

Middle school programming has grown over the last year. Due to increased participation in the middle school youth group, we made the decision to split the LOGOS group into two, ensuring that every middle schooler feels valued and included. The dedication of our volunteers has been instrumental in fostering connections between middle schoolers and adult members of the congregation, affirming their sense of belonging and love within the church community.

Looking ahead, I believe expanding our volunteer base should be a priority to prevent overexertion of our current volunteers. Middle school retreats, youth groups, and LOGOS sessions have consistently seen high attendance and sparked enthusiasm among participants, signaling a strong foundation for continued growth and impact in the coming year.

With thanks,
Jaden

Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church
Income Statement
1/1/2023-12/31/2023

	<u>Jan - Dec 23</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>
Income			
Offering	502,362.57	492,000.00	10,362.57
Other Revenues	<u>2,543.79</u>	<u>3,200.00</u>	<u>-656.21</u>
Total Income	504,906.36	495,200.00	9,706.36
Expense			
Building and Grounds	89,429.00	73,700.00	15,729.00
Christian Education	2,667.76	2,800.00	-132.24
Church Office	10,693.34	7,325.00	3,368.34
Congregational Activities	2,154.81	2,000.00	154.81
Deacons	2,026.97	2,500.00	-473.03
Mission	64,426.00	64,376.00	50.00
Other	24,677.16	20,219.00	4,458.16
Outreach	1,998.17	1,500.00	498.17
Programs	3,862.07	2,500.00	1,362.07
Staff Compensation	295,835.38	312,000.00	-16,164.62
Worship And Music	<u>17,383.56</u>	<u>17,750.00</u>	<u>-366.44</u>
Total Expense	<u>515,154.22</u>	<u>506,670.00</u>	<u>8,484.22</u>
Net Income	<u><u>-10,247.86</u></u>	<u><u>-11,470.00</u></u>	<u><u>1,222.14</u></u>

Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church
Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
December 31, 2023

ASSETS

Cash and equivalents	\$ 134,980
Investments - Edward Jones	319,705
Prepaid expenses	1,750
Total Assets	\$ 456,435 (A)

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 19,488
Total Liabilities	19,488

NET ASSETS

With donor restrictions:	
Restricted for specific purposes	18,198
Time restrictions - prepaid pledges for 2024	53,000
Total Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	71,198
Without donor restrictions:	
Special gifts and memorials	17,577
Building reserve	75,000
Endowment fund	25,100
General operating reserve	248,072
Total Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	365,749
Total Net Assets	436,947
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 456,435 (A)