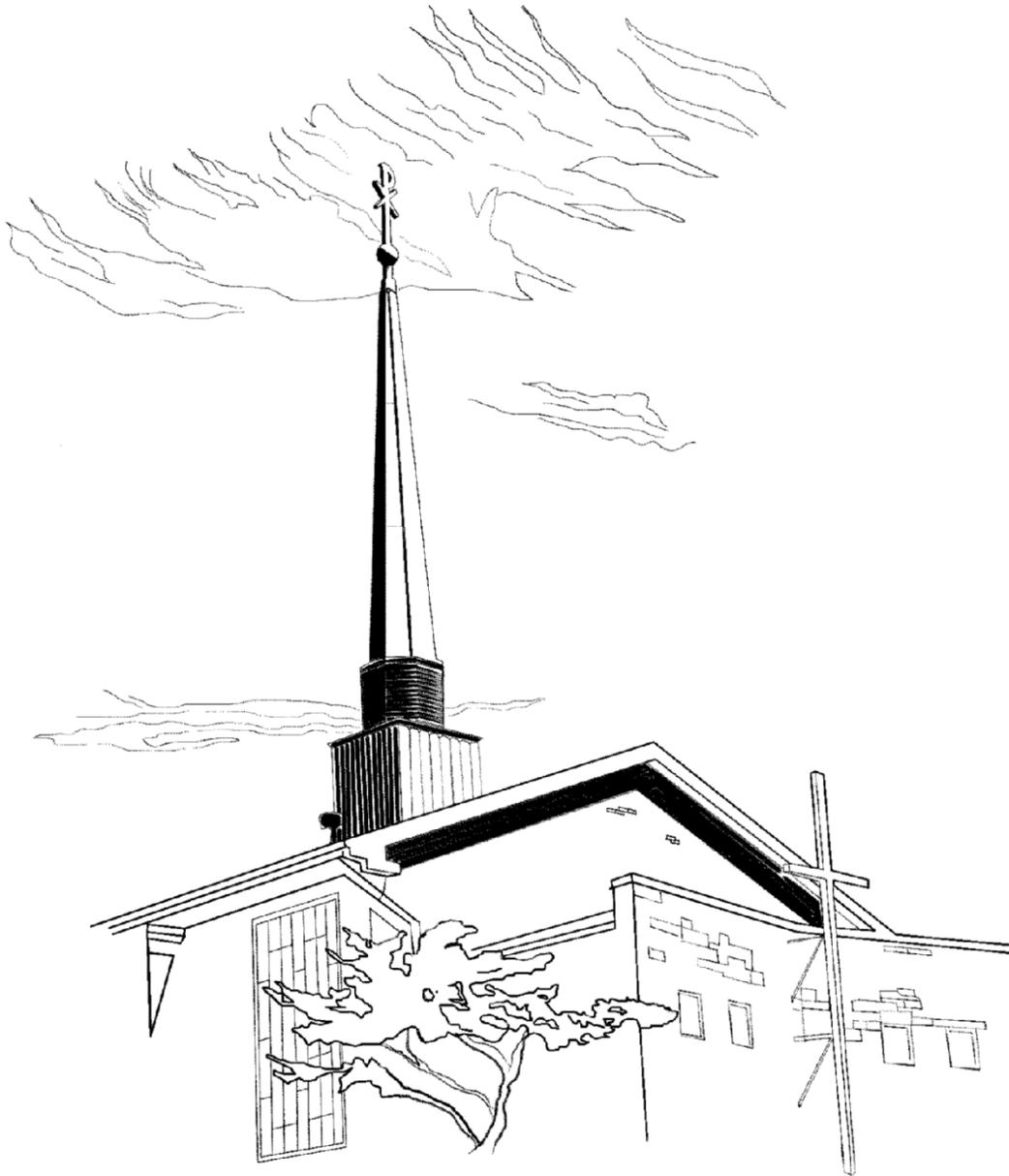


**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**January – December 2017**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**ITHACA, NEW YORK**





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**ANNUAL REPORT**  
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**Members of the Staff**

The Rev. Dr. David A. Kaden, Senior Minister

Susan Fast, Designated Assistant Minister

Dr. William Cowdery, Organist and Music Director

Stacy Wilder, Director of Children's Ministries

Diane Beckwith, Director of Youth Ministries and Junior Choir Director

Jessica Galbreath-Nocera, Church Manager

Mary Ellen Stewart, Finance Manager

Jim DuPay, Church Custodian

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting**  
First Congregational Church of Ithaca, NY  
January 29, 2017

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Cyndi Slothower, Church Council President, at 11:05 am. Cyndi commented that it was lovely to have the Annual Report distributed electronically before the Annual meeting. There was prayer for the one death and four baptisms that occurred in the Congregation this year. The meeting was called to order. A quorum was present. Cyndi was elected moderator and inspectors of election were elected. Cyndi introduced the Church officers.

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the 2016 annual meeting; the motion passed. It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the May 22, 2016 Congregational meeting with the correction of the spelling of Michael Kazarinoff's name. The motion passed. It was moved and seconded to accept the committee, boards and staff reports found in the annual report with the corrections of removing Mary Flinn from garden caretakers, substituting George Hudler, Dianne Cross, Brian Wansink and Jerry Stedinger for Elizabeth Thonney as representatives to PCM, and the correction of the spelling of Cyndi Slothower's name. The motion passed.

Cyndi Slothower and Andy Weislogel reported that there are many things to celebrate in the Church this year. David Kaden completed his first year as Senior Pastor. We received 18 new members and church school attendance has increased. Sue Fast has fulfilled the role of Pastoral Assistant in the absence of an Associate Minister. The Growth and Communications Committee was reactivated. We had a successful capital campaign to update our facilities under the leadership of Mary Grainger. Pam Swieringa and Danny Fox are overseeing the capital improvements. There have been some changes in the order of worship, we have new hymnals and the youth are more involved in worship. After 27 years of faithful service Cathy Dawson has retired.

Walt Cottrell reviewed the Endowed Income Use Committee report on page 19. Walt is grateful for the support of the 16 families who have contributed, some more than once. There are brochures in the narthex with more information, and additional contributions are welcome.

Michael Kazarinoff gave the Stewardship report and is confident we will make our budget as pledges keep drifting in. So far there are 112 pledges for \$341,000.

Brad Grainger said it was nice to be in a warm church. The furnace went out on Friday and he and Cathy Dawson spent hours trying to find the right people and tools to fix the problem.

Brad presented the budget. The committee wanted to make the budget look more like an accounting report using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. For this reason some

information has been added: endowments, pass through accounts (outreach special offerings, youth, pastor's discretionary funds, depreciation.) It was moved and seconded to adopt the 2017 budget. The motion passed. Bob Swieringa will be the new treasurer.

John Zollweg presented the nominating report with the changes of Elizabeth Thonney is no longer on the Protestant Cooperative Ministry board and the 2017 PCM board FCC representatives will be George Hudler, Diane Cross, Jerry Stedinger and Brian Wansink. John asked incoming officers and incoming committee members to stand and be recognized. It was moved and seconded to accept the slate of officers and committee members. The motion passed. The Congregation also took a moment to recognize those going off committees. There was special appreciation and a gift for Brad Grainger who is stepping down as treasurer. In his role of treasurer he was often in the church two or three times a week. He tried to resign 6 months ago but agreed to serve until now.

Andy Weislogel said his first year as Council Vice-President has been a pleasure getting to know and working with Cyndi and the committees.

The meeting closed with a hymn and a prayer by David Kaden at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robin Stedinger,  
Church Clerk

**Minutes of a Congregational Meeting**  
First Congregational Church, Ithaca, NY  
June 25, 2017

The meeting was opened with prayer at 11:15am. Cyndi Slothower was elected moderator and inspectors of election were elected. A quorum was present.

John Zollweg noted that official business used to be done by US mail. Many now do business by websites or on-line. The Church proposes to change the Church Constitution and By-Laws from requiring certain notifications be sent to the Congregation by US mail to being sent by electronic means.

It was moved and seconded to modify Article 5 of the First Congregational Church of Ithaca Constitution to allow notifications to be sent electronically. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to modify Article 5 of the First Congregational Church of Ithaca By-Laws to allow notifications to be sent electronically. The motion passed.

Pam Swieringa updated the Congregation on progress of capital campaign building improvements. Summer plans are to refurbish rooms 1 and 2 and to improve and extend the lower parking lot. Fall plans are to improve the side, weekday, entrance by adding a 12' x12' vestibule. This is within the capital campaign budget and will fix leaking gutters, keep ice and rain from over the doors and ice from under the doors, help with heat retention, reduce dirt in the church, improve security especially for the nursery school and at times when there are only a few people in the building.

Andy Weislogel closed the meeting with prayer at 11:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robin Stedinger,  
Church Clerk

**Clerk's Report of Membership**  
January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017

**Losses**

By death.....	13
Arthur Bloom	
Ted Buckley	
Barbara Cowdery	
Roger Cramton	
Jane Elliot	
Ken Felch	
David Flinn	
Alice Garmezy	
Nancy Katzmann	
Olaf Larson	
Bonnie MacDougall	
George Ridenour	
Jean Trenchard	
By letter of transfer.....	0
From Active to Inactive membership.....	0
Removed from the Roll.....	2
Total losses.....	15

**Additions**

By reaffirmation of faith and new members.....	7
Bernie Graham	
Madeline Graham	
Joan Larson	
Christian Shaffmaster	
Melissa Schaffmaster	
Scott Yonker	
Leah Yonker	
By transfer.....	4
Len Johnson	
Misao Johnson	
Dianne Southard	
Paul Southard	
By association.....	2
David Bebko	
Shawn Bebko	
Reactivated.....	0
Total Additions.....	13
<b>Active members as of January 1, 2018.....</b>	<b>443</b>
Full members.....	406
Associate members.....	37

**Baptisms – 2017**

Katherine Jean Stepp Breen  
Charlotte Pass

**ROSTER OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**  
**January 2017-January 2018**

Council President	Cyndi Slothower
Council Vice-President	Andy Weislogel
Church Clerk	Robin Stedinger
Historian	Barbara Taylor
Treasurer	Robert Swieringa
Past President	John Zollweg

**ADULT EDUCATION**

Diane Shafer	2018	Enid Zollweg	2017
Brian Wansink	2018	Patricia Baxter	2017
		Carolyn McPherson	2017

**BUILDING & GROUNDS**

Howard Fairchild	2018	Danny Fox	2017
Jim Gilmore	2018	Karlis Musa	2017
Frank Phillips	2018	Pamela Swieringa	2017
Paul Southard	2018	George Schneider	2017

**CARING**

Jeannie Cottrell	2018	Joyce Billing	2017
Ray Gozzi	2018	Charlotte Bosworth	2017
Marlene Jewell	2018	Betsy Nicholson	2017
Cindy Marschner	2018	Patricia Baxter	2017
Barb Taylor	2018	Jacquie Kaden	2017
Jean Wentworth	2018	Bobbie Schneider	2017
Anne Rodda	2018	Patricia Fairchild	2017
Chris Xenakis	2018	Barbara Schramm	2017

**FINANCE**

Brad Grainger	2018	Laura Andolina	2017
		Eugene Yarussi	2017
		Daniel Breen	2017
		Robert Swieringa	2017

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Len Johnson	2018	Pam Hanna	2017
		Mary Grainger	2017
		John Mazzello	2017
		Michelle Woods	2017
		George Hudler	2017
		Erika Mudrak	2017

**GROWTH & MEMBERSHIP**

Sue Eslinger	2017
John Zollweg	2017
Tara Wilder	2017
Dave Wickstrom	2017
Lorrie Phillips	2017
Barbara Schramm	2017
Kelly Behan	2017

**OUTREACH\***

Susan Lewis	2018	Nancy Stewart	2017
Lynne Whetzel	2018	Barb Taylor	2017
Renee Zonder	2018	Brad Buchanan	2017
		Mary Heffner	2017
		Myla Strawderman	2017

\*Karen Knudson – Kitchen Cupboard  
Coordinator

**SENIOR PASTOR RELATIONS**

Monica BosworthViscuso	2017
Tove Hammer	2017
George Hudler	2017
Cindy Marschner	2017
Robert Swieringa	2017

**STAFF SUPPORT**

Holly Kazarinoff	2018	Bonnie Edwin	2017
Pam Hanna	2018	Rhonda Gilmore	2017

**STEWARDSHIP**

George Ridenour	-	Fran Kozen	2017
George Schneider	2018	Alice Colby-Hall	2017
Ray Gozzi	2018	Michael Kazarinoff	2017

**WOMEN'S MINISTRIES**

Amy Stoll	2018	Nancy Stewart	2017
Kelly Behan	2018	Jacquie Kaden	2017
		Greta Dewey	2017
		Joy Swanson	2017
		Sarah How	2017

**WORSHIP**

Paul Viscuso	2018	Enid Zollweg	2017
Laurie Hultberg	2018	Siu-ling Wong Chaloemtiarana	2017
Sarah Roberts	2018	Tom Roach	2017
Becky TenEyck	2018	Sandy Hudler	2017

Note: Terms are through calendar year 2017  
and through calendar year 2018.

**PROTESTANT COOPERATIVE  
MINISTRY**

Jery Stedinger  
George Hudler  
Diane Cross  
Brian Wansink

**ACTION FCC**

Kristen Brennan  
Al George  
Mary Heffner  
Karen Knudson  
Nancy Menning  
Michael Smith  
Linda Yannone

**DELEGATES TO THE UCC GENERAL  
AND NY CONFERENCE MEETING**

Enid Zollweg  
John Zollweg  
Linda Yannone

**DELEGATES TO SUSQUEHANNA  
ASSOC.**

Enid Zollweg  
John Zollweg  
Linda Yannone

**ENDOWMENT INCOME USE  
COMMITTEE**

Walt Cottrell  
George Hudler  
Lana Pfann  
Diane Shafer  
Cathy Dawson

**INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

Laura Andolina  
Walt Cottrell  
Brad Grainger  
George Schneider  
Bob Swieringa

**STEPHEN MINISTERS**

Patricia Fairchild  
Ray Gozzi  
Karen Hays  
Ellie Kraft-Sanders  
Cindy Marschner – Stephen Leader  
Barb Taylor

**MEMBERSHIP CLERK**

Barbara Taylor

**BOY SCOUT TROOP 2, CUB PACK 4  
AND VENTURE CREW 2000 REP**

Joyce Billing

**BYLAWS**

David Flinn  
Renee Zonder  
John Zollweg

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TEAM**

Michael Carpenter, Project Manager  
Howard Fairchild  
Danny Fox, Site Manager  
Brad Grainger  
George Schneider, Finance  
Pam Swieringa, Chair

**GARDEN CARETAKERS**

Greta Dewey  
Sandy Hudler  
Karen Knudson  
George Ridenour  
Bobbi Schneider  
Barbara Schramm  
Robin Stedinger  
Jean Wentworth  
Madison Wright  
Linda Yannone  
Jeanne Yarussi

**SOUND SYSTEM TASK FORCE**

Mike Billing  
Brad Buchanan  
Lana Pfann  
Jery Stedinger  
Dave Wickstrom

**UCC CALLED-TO-CARE**

Susan Fast  
Barbara Schramm  
Chris Xenakis  
Jean Wentworth  
Joyce Billing  
Karen Hays  
Barb Taylor  
Betsy Nicholson



Annual Report  
**CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT & VICE-PRESIDENT**  
January – December 2017

Our Church Council has again enjoyed collaboration and leadership from Rev. David Kaden as Senior Minister. We have a spirit of action and experimentation, listening for God's leading as we yearn to be faithful. Rev. Kaden led us into cooperative interfaith worship and action this year, building relationships with other churches and other faiths. He has also been a face in our community for extravagant welcome to LGBTQ Christians, many of whom have had a hard time finding such churches. We have an ongoing desire to grow in these areas.

Along with continued upward progress in membership, the numbers in children, tween and youth programs have continued to grow, swelling the ranks of Sunday school, children's choirs, and youth handbell choir, and providing a critical mass for a substantial confirmation cohort which began in October 2017 and will finish in the spring of 2018. Rev. Kaden, Stacy Wilder and Diane Beckwith are anticipating continued growth in Children's and Youth Ministries and are discussing changes that will be needed to faithfully serve our young families.

After the Growth and Communications Committee was reconstituted in 2016, it was decided to divide this committee into separate committees for Communications, and for Growth and Membership. The former has greatly enhanced our community and social media visibility and installed a monitor in the narthex to promote church news and events. They have also made great strides toward an updated and more robust and flexible church website. Growth and Membership has devoted considerable effort to considering what a welcoming church should look like, and to helping new members find what they need in our church, and integrate and share their talents and energy. In August, Council moved to appoint an "Action FCC" Committee under the Outreach Committee to get First Congregational more involved on topics of social justice in the community.

Sue Fast has continued to fulfill the role of Designated Assistant Minister in the absence of an Associate Minister, and given particular loving attention to a Caring ministry. She will complete her studies and be eligible for a church "call" in the Fall of 2018. Our office staff, Jessie Galbreath-Nocera as Church Manager and Mary Ellen Stewart as Financial Manager, continues to grow into their roles and evaluate best practices as our church grows.

We see the physical facility of FCC Ithaca as part of our ministry to the wider community. Our successful Capital Campaign in 2016 to update our facilities had made for exciting improvements, overseen by Pam Swieringa and Danny Fox. The church school and nursery school areas and the fellowship hall have all been updated this year.

In August, we convened the Diaconate for a fellowship retreat to plan the next year of programming, and to reflect on the concept of ministry and service. Several committees took advantage of this time and opened discussion to work together. This year, Church Council has encouraged committees with complementary missions to run more efficiently by meeting on the same day, thus fostering interaction (e.g., the Finance and Investments committees). This is in keeping with our desire to reduce the time our sole Minister must spend in meetings.

Our church bylaws, which were out of date, have been thoughtfully and prayerfully reconsidered and revised under the leadership of John Zollweg and David Kaden, with input from Council, to project the universal welcome and progressive spirit of First Congregational Church, Ithaca and more accurately reflect our current needs and governance as a church. One Council member reflected “I didn't realize how much theology was involved in re-writing this document. It sounds so much better now and really reflects what our church is.”

We continue to be faithful in our giving, supporting water projects in Honduras, Puerto Rico, Haiti and India, as well as neighbors in need in Ithaca and responding to natural disasters around our country.

Council emphasizes the importance of extravagant welcome to all, acknowledges the value of celebrating our joys and collective accomplishments, and we envision a strong and productive future for our church as we strive to reflect God's love in our community and our world.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cyndi Slothower, Council President  
Andy Weislogel, Council Vice-President

Annual Report  
**STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**  
January – December 2017

The theme chosen for the Stewardship Campaign for 2018 was “Still Building”. A pledge goal of \$358,000 was set to sustain the initial budget projection for 2018. A low key public campaign for three Sundays beginning the end of October 2017 was mounted.

Long time committee member, and major church contributor, George Ridenour passed away during the campaign. The loss of George highlighted for the committee a current and continuing concern with the pledging profile of the church: the continuing loss of long time, major contributors due to death. Such losses in 2017 have substantially (>\$30,000) reduced our pledging base for 2018.

Response to the 2018 Campaign has been positive. As of January 9, 2018, we have received 108 pledges for a total of \$319,000. Of these pledges, 2 are "new". The average pledge, ~\$3,000 to this point, and the average increase by previous pledgers, 7% to this point, both continue to remain gratifyingly strong! However, there still remain a number of regular pledgers who have not yet responded, so the pledge campaign follow up by the committee continues.

A second committee concern with the pledging profile of the church is that we have not yet had as many new pledges as had been hoped for from the numbers of new members have joined over the last couple of years. In the mid-term future, our pledging base will constrain staffing levels, if we do not increase numbers of pledges in our pledging base to reflect the influx of new members, thus offsetting with numbers of pledges, lost pledging dollars (due to deaths).

Many thanks to the members of the Stewardship Committee, especially to Alice Colby-Hall, who is leaving the committee after years of faithful service, as well as to Mary Ellen Stewart, Church Financial Manager, for all their work on this campaign. We are **still building** our church of the future.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael Kazarinoff, on behalf of the Committee

**Stewardship Campaign Committee**

Michael Kazarinoff (Chair), Fran Kozen, Alice Colby-Hall, George Schneider, Ray Gozzi.



Annual Report  
**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
January – December 2017

The members of the Finance Committee for 2017 were: Bradley Grainger (Chair), Laura Andolina (Assistant Treasurer), Daniel Breen, Robert Swieringa (Treasurer), and Eugene Yarussi. Mary Ellen Stewart was Finance Manager.

The Finance Committee is responsible for the financial planning and management of the Church's fiscal affairs, ensures that the financial records of the Church are audited annually at the close of each calendar year, recommends financial, operating, and compensation policies to Council, and develops the annual budget for Council and Congregation approval.

Insero & Co. CPAs, LLP (Insero) audited the financial statements of the Church for the year ended December 31, 2016 and issued its report dated September 26, 2017. Insero concluded that, in its opinion, the Church's financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the First Congregational Church of Ithaca as of December 31, 2016 and 2015, and the changes in net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

The Church's Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2016 included total assets of \$1,897,041, total liabilities of \$10,197, and net assets of \$1,886,844. The Church's Statement of Activities for 2016 included total support and revenue of \$606,164, total expenses of \$471,148, and change in net assets of \$135,016. A copy of Insero's audit report is available in the Church Office.

In 2017, financial software was updated, payroll was handled by an outside service, and the Treasurer (or in his absence, the Assistant Treasurer, or Finance Committee Chair) met weekly with the Finance Manager to review day-to-day financial and operating issues and to sign checks for expenses associated with church operations. The Finance Committee strengthened internal controls and implemented new policies and procedures for counting collections and outreach contributions to other nonprofit organizations.

During 2017, contracts were renewed with the organizations that conduct programs in the Church, including the Community Nursery School, The Nest (toddler care), Music Together, and the Ithaca Concert Band. Contributions for use of the Church building totaled \$24,676 in 2017.

The Finance Investment Subcommittee met quarterly in 2017 to review and manage the Church's endowment funds. The Subcommittee members were George Schneider (Chair and Trustee), Laura Andolina (Assistant Treasurer and Trustee), Walton Cottrell, and Bradley Grainger. As of December 31, 2017, the Church's endowment funds totaled \$1,645,429 and had a 14.4% return for 2017.

Financial results for 2017 and a proposed budget for 2018 are provided elsewhere in this Annual Report. In January 2017, Council and the Congregation approved an operating budget for 2017 that included budgeted total cash revenues and expenses of \$504,669 and a deficit (Excess Expenses) of \$42,000, which was equal to the expected noncash depreciation expense of \$42,000. Actual total cash revenues for 2017 of \$497,621 were 1 percent (\$7,048) lower than budgeted total cash revenues. Actual total cash expenses of \$468,948 were 7 percent (\$36,989) lower than budgeted total expenses for 2017. The actual deficit (Excess Expenses) of \$12,059 for 2017 was \$29,941 lower than the budgeted deficit.

The proposed operating budget for 2018 includes budgeted total cash revenues and expenses of \$492,570 and a deficit (Excess Expenses) of \$48,000, which is equal to the expected noncash depreciation expense of \$48,000. Budgeted total cash revenues and expenses for 2018 are expected to be about 2 percent lower than in 2017.

The Congregation approved a \$400,000 Capital Improvement Campaign in 2016 that will be funded by congregational contributions of \$165,000, matching unrestricted endowment funds of \$165,000, and other designated endowment funds of \$70,000. At December 31, 2017, total expected contributions of \$124,743 have been received and \$168,906 has been invested in capital improvements.

Respectfully submitted, Bradley Grainger, Chair, Finance Committee

First Congregational Church of Ithaca  
**2017 Budget and Actual, 2018 Budget**

	<u>2017 Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>2017</u>	<u>2018 Budget</u>
<b><u>REVENUES</u></b>			
Pledges	\$ 345,469	\$ 355,250	\$ 345,000
Special Outreach	\$ 48,000	\$ 17,618	\$ 20,000
Youth programs	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,466	\$ 2,400
Sunday School	\$ 200	\$ 577	\$ 500
Non-Pledge	\$ 11,000	\$ 27,689	\$ 20,000
Plate Currency & Coin	\$ 10,500	\$ 6,518	\$ 7,500
Interest	\$ 2,000	\$ 452	\$ 2,000
Pastor's Discretionary	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,875	\$ 2,000
Restricted Endowment	\$ 13,000	\$ 13,000	\$ 13,500
Unrestricted Endow.	\$ 45,500	\$ 45,500	\$ 54,170
Contrib. For Bldg. Use	\$ 25,000	\$ 24,676	\$ 25,500
<b><u>TOTAL REVENUES</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 504,669</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 497,621</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 492,570</u></b>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>			
<b>Salaries:</b>			
Pastoral Staff & P/T pastoral support	\$ 123,850	\$ 125,949	\$ 127,500
Program Staff	\$ 67,620	\$ 68,414	\$ 70,000
Support Staff	\$ 63,360	\$ 68,792	\$ 68,000
<b><u>SUBTOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 254,830</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 263,155</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 265,500</u></b>
<b>Personnel Expenses:</b>			
Retirement - Pastors	\$ 15,589	\$ 13,650	\$ 16,100
Health Ins. - Pastors	\$ 11,975	\$ 10,878	\$ 12,600
Health Ins. - Staff	\$ 4,225	\$ 1,718	\$ 2,000
Travel	\$ 600	\$ 946	\$ 900
Prof. Advancement	\$ 4,900	\$ 3,394	\$ 5,500
Payroll Taxes & Ins.	\$ 16,050	\$ 18,588	\$ 17,425
<b><u>SUBTOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 53,339</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 49,174</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 54,525</u></b>
<b><u>TOTAL PERSONNEL</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 308,169</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 312,329</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 320,025</u></b>
<b>Program Expenses:</b>			
Susquehanna Assoc.	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,383	\$ 3,600
O.C.W.M.	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,880
Outreach - Local	\$ 12,500	\$ 14,075	\$ 13,000
Outreach - Special	\$ 48,000	\$ 17,618	\$ 20,000
<b>Total Outreach</b>	<b><u>\$ 76,500</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 47,576</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 49,480</u></b>
Christian Education	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,243	\$ 5,000
Youth Programs	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,024	\$ 2,400
Sunday School collections	\$ 200	\$ 152	\$ 500
Pastor's Discretionary	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,300	\$ 2,000
Worship	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,832	\$ 2,650

Music	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,747	\$ 7,250
Caring	\$ 1,200	\$ 3,022	\$ 3,000
Growth & Membership	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500
Women's Ministries		\$ 960	\$ 500
Stewardship	\$ 200	\$ 135	\$ 500
Finance	\$ 4,500	\$ 9,262	\$ 4,800
Communications	\$ 1,800	\$ 3,258	\$ 3,500
Endowment Use Committee	\$ 26,600	\$ 16,000	\$ 26,365
Office	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,844	\$ 12,000
Staff Support	\$ 1,000	\$ 72	\$ 300
Misc. Expense	\$ 1,000	\$ 462	\$ 800
<b><u>SUBTOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 141,500</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 108,889</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 121,545</u></b>

**Property Expenses:**

Utilities	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,417	\$ 18,000
Building & Grounds	\$ 22,000	\$ 19,646	\$ 21,000
Insurance & Taxes	\$ 15,500	\$ 10,667	\$ 12,000
Depreciation	\$ 42,000	\$ 40,732	\$ 48,000
<b><u>SUBTOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 97,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 88,462</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 99,000</u></b>

<b><u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 546,669</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 509,680</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 540,570</u></b>
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<b><u>EXCESS REVENUES (EXPENSES)</u></b>	<b><u>\$ (42,000)</u></b>	<b><u>\$ (12,059)</u></b>	<b><u>\$ (48,000)</u></b>
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FCC operating budgets are prepared on a cash basis--revenues are recorded when received and expenses are recorded when paid. Fixed assets are not expensed when acquired, but are capitalized and depreciated over time. FCC's annual financial statements are prepared using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and are audited by an independent accountant.

Annual Report  
**ENDOWMENT INCOME USE COMMITTEE**  
January – December 2017

The members of the Endowment Income Use Committee for the year were: Cathy Dawson, George Hudler, Lana Pfann, Diane Shafer and Walt Cottrell. David Kaden served as the advisor to the committee. The committee was established by Council in 2006 to recommend the best alternatives for utilizing unrestricted income from the church's endowment fund. The policy of the church is to use no more than 4.5% of the average balance of the endowment fund over the past 3 years. Council approved the following projects recommended by the committee during the year:

1. The income from certain endowment funds is restricted in use by the donors. \$13,000 of restricted endowment income was used to fund a portion of the Music, Outreach and Property budgets:

Total restricted projects:	\$ 13,000
----------------------------	-----------
2. Church operating budget \$ 26,600
3. Agua Clara for water plants in Honduras and India \$ 5,000
4. Pure Water for the World sand water filters in Haiti \$ 10,000
5. Folio Water Filters for India \$ 1,000
5. FCC Capital Reserve for new capital projects \$ 7,000
6. Interest income for church operating budget \$ 2,000
- Total Disbursements and Reserves \$ 64,600

As can be seen from the above project list, the largest allocation from the fund was used for the church operating budget. Another important focus was providing clean water in under developed areas such as Haiti, Honduras and India. An addition was made to the reserve for capital projects.

During the year, the committee and Council also approved the use of \$76,000 of endowment funds to purchase a second mortgage on the home of Dr. Kaden. This mortgage was then placed in the bond portfolio of the endowment fund.

For 2018, the committee recommended to Council that \$7,000 of unrestricted endowment income be set aside in the capital reserve for the capital projects. The committee also recommended funding four water projects for 2018: Save the Children for families in Puerto Rico \$8,000, Agua Clara \$5,000 for water purification plants in Honduras and India, Pure Water for the World for sand water filters in Haiti \$3,000 and Folio Water for paper water filters in India \$1,000. Council has approved these recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Walton Cottrell on behalf of the Endowment Income Use Committee

Annual Report  
**OUTREACH COMMITTEE**  
January – December 2017

Outreach changed leadership in 2017 as we said good-bye to Myla Strawderman with her move to Rochester in the summer. Previous to her departure she stepped down as chair and Renee Zonder was nominated to the position. This year brought important discussions around Outreach's mission and we as a committee decided to move away from monthly hands on activities due to lower congregational participation and to focus on a few larger projects throughout the year (Feed my Starving Children, Lunches of Love for the Rescue Mission, Giving Tree and PCM study bags). We also discussed our role in activism in the community. The consensus was that Outreach should remain the "giving" arm of the church and an ad hoc committee under our umbrella was developed through David's leadership to address systemic causes of need in the community. We also reviewed policy regarding donations as a 501 (c) (3) organization. We were given direct guidance on how to ensure that all of our donations go to organizations that have legal designation of a 501 (c) (3) non-profit. This information was given to the congregation through our survey and was recommended for addition to the by-laws.

This year we continued to provide new opportunities for the congregation to learn about organizations who make our community stronger, as well as providing opportunities for the congregation to give input on organizations they felt we as a church should support. We continued our support to many local, national and international organizations focused on food and housing security such as the Rescue Mission, Second Wind Cottages, Fresh Snack program, Kitchen Cupboard and Feed My Starving Children. We added new groups and causes as well; The San Xavier school bus fund to raise money for a new bus serving the Tohono O'odham school children, Prisoner Express funding books to those incarcerated in the U.S. and the Global Roots Play School, providing refugee and immigrant families in Ithaca a childcare option that supports families relocating here, accessing ESL classes and a sense of community.

The summer brought significant natural disasters across our country; hurricanes and flooding to Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico and wildfires to the Western Plains and Pacific regions. In conjunction with Council we raised funds through special offerings as well as allocated budget monies to aid support and relief to all these disasters through the UCC Disaster USA fund that allowed us to direct our funds to specific causes.

We remain a Neighborhood Food Hub, rescuing fresh produce for local pantries. We were successful in engaging more of the congregation in helping set up and tear down the hub each week and donations continued to flourish. This year's Giving Tree was "expanded" again to 180 tags, up from 170 tags in 2016 and 125 in 2015. This year we included a cash donation option that supported the Family and Children Services' "Open Doors" program. These funds were given in response to a direct ask from F&CS and will be used to supply mobile phones and minutes to homeless youth in the program to maintain contact with their caseworkers.

Outreach developed a survey for the congregation to receive feedback about the organizations we currently support as well as others that the membership would like us to consider. We received 20 responses and of that small data set the majority were supportive of

the direction we as a committee are taking with our focus on food and housing insecurity. Of particular interest was the continued positive support of Feed My Starving Children which FCC has strongly supported for the past 7 years. With this information we organized another successful fundraiser selling local coupon books to pay for food at the Ithaca Mobile Pack as well as running a matching funds campaign through our special offering to support 2018 startup seed money. These effort led to a donation in total of just under \$11,000 to FMSC and the Ithaca Mobile Pack.

First Congregational Church is a “five for five” UCC church, meaning that we hold special mission offerings for One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need and The Christmas Fund, in addition to Our Church’s Wider Mission. It has become clear that Outreach needs to provide more information to the congregation regarding this designation and its importance to FCC. This will be an effort we address in 2018.

Finally Outreach worked with the church office to redevelop our pew envelopes to streamline the offering processing procedures for both Finance and Mary Ellen. This resulted in a new multi-use envelope in the pews with space to allocate funds to special offerings, pledges, and other funds that may arise on occasion such as the building capital campaign. These were rolled out this fall and seem to be working well for all parties.

Below is a summary of our hands on activities as well as our special offering collections for 2017. Monetary notations indicate monies raised through special offering and do not indicate any funds donated directly from the budget unless noted.

**2017 First Congregational Outreach Activities Summary, Month by Month:**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>Special Offering*</b>	<b>Hands on Projects, M4M, Events</b>
January	1/19	(none)	
February	2/9	PCM (\$1,067)	M4M PCM
March	3/9	San Xavier Bus Fund (\$1118) OGHS- March 26 (\$899)	<b>PB&amp;J</b>
April	4/13	CWS blanket drive (\$691)	PCM study bags (60 for CU/80 for IC)
May	5/11	Fresh Snack program (\$378)	<i>Congregation Survey</i>
June	6/8	Family Reading Partnership (\$244) Strengthen the Church June 4 (\$170)	Book drive for FRP
July	7/13	Christmas Fund (\$597)	<b>FND Food Hub</b>
August	8/10	Prisoner Express Project (postage for books) (\$526)	<b>FND Food Hub</b>
September	9/14	Disaster Funds 3,10,17 (\$4,183)  FMSC 24	<b>FND Food Hub</b>
October	10/12	FMSC 1,8 (\$4,595) Neighbors in Need Oct 15, 22, 29( \$455)	<b>PB&amp;J</b> October 22nd
November	11/9	Kitchen Cupboard (\$1,528)	
December	No meeting	(none)	Giving Tree 180 gifts/(\$256) in donations to Open Doors

\*PCM = Protestant Campus Ministries, OGHS=One Great Hour of Sharing, FMSC=Feed My Starving Children, M4M = Minute for Mission in church service, FDN = Friendship Donation Network. ^ collection on going.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Zonder

**2017 Outreach Giving from Budget  
January – December 2017**

**Outreach Giving**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Amount</b>
OCWM Basic Support (a 5-for5 item)	\$12,500
<b>Outreach Locally Controlled</b>	
Postcard campaign	\$136
Rotary diaper drive	\$250
PB&J sandwiches for Rescue Mission	\$572
Protestant Cooperative Ministries	\$33
Area Congregations Together	\$400
PCM Study Bag supplies	\$393
Church World Service Blanket Drive <i>supplement to round gift</i>	\$9
Prisoner Express <i>supplement to round gift</i>	\$6
Family Reading Partnership <i>supplement to round gift</i>	\$6
UCC Wildfire Relief, committee match	\$1,767
PB&J lunches supplies	\$277
Ithaca Mobile Pack	\$5,004
Ithaca Rescue Mission	\$750
Downtown Ithaca Children's Center	\$250
Finger Lakes Residential Center	\$250
Kitchen Cupboard <i>supplement to round gift</i>	\$22
Giving Tree purchases	\$154
Second Wind Cottages	\$720
UCC Hurricane Relief - Puerto Rico	\$720
UCC Wildfire Relief, 2017 Year-end	\$720
Local giving	\$12,439
OCWM contributions	\$12,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24,939</b>

Annual Report  
**BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**  
January - December 2017

The committee supports the routine maintenance, repairs, inspections and service contracts required to maintain the building and grounds. This includes the lifts, kitchen equipment, fire alarm systems, heating, plumbing, locks, and outside maintenance. We coordinate with Jessica Galbreath-Nocera, church manager, and decide which items to do ourselves, to call in a service provider, or to refer to the Capital Improvements Team.

This year, we have upgraded thermostats, all exit lights, exterior and steeple lights. We enhanced the kitchen's Ansel fire detector and obtained proposals for upgrading the 1989 fire alarm system that will be handled by the C. I. Team. We had an in-depth review of the elevator and it is in good order. Karlis Musa assisted with upgrading office computers, and Pam helped Jessie with the telephone system replacement. We assisted with installing the new narthex screen for the Communications Committee, the AED unit in the main hallway, and the blue bird boxes made by Monica's class.

General cleaning is important, and we coordinate with our custodian, Jim DuPay, about various cleaning and small repair needs and the removal of waste. He keeps our spaces ready for use throughout the year, for which we are grateful. We had carpets cleaned and some floors waxed. We coordinated volunteers at two Saturday work bees on May 13 and October 21, that included cleaning of furniture, pews, windows, installing or removing storms and A/C units, timer changes on thermostats and clocks etc. Spring work bee included bed preparation and planting and repairing pot holes; Fall includes pruning, leaf removal, clearing gutters and window and stairwells, and storing of hoses. Karen Knudson and Danny Fox led the Garden Committee and gave many hours of work. They added two new white flower boxes by the entry and main gardens were improved.

We communicate with non-church groups using our facilities, especially the Community Nursery School. A new initiative was the planning of the Ithaca Concert Band concert on June 6, which was enjoyed by 115 people including some residents from Longview. It was held in the Fellowship Hall due to bad weather, however that turned out well and Diane Beckwith organized and served free ice cream. The band also had a good time and we've planned a concert for Father's Day 2018, hoping to be outside on the new paving.

We thank the staff for assisting with these efforts, and the many volunteers who help keep our church home well maintained, including the Youth Group and Scout Group 2.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pam Swieringa, Chair  
Howard Fairchild  
Danny Fox  
Jim Gilmore

Karlis Musa  
Frank Phillips  
George Schneider  
Paul Southard



Annual Report  
**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TEAM**  
January – December 2017

The Capital Improvements Team was formed to manage capital improvements to our building during 2016-2018, and is being funded by the \$400,000 Capital Campaign. We are a sub-group of the Buildings & Grounds Committee who initiated the campaign and support the work. The larger scope is to modernize the mechanical and technology equipment to give better performance and cost savings through energy reduction and reduced maintenance. We wish to enhance the appearance, space use, accessibility and safety of our facilities. Phase I work in 2016 focused on the lower level with upgraded flooring, lighting and electrical, ceilings and painting and other items completed.

Phase II planning during 2017 focused on improving the building “envelope”. This includes replacing old windows and doors, ceiling insulation, heating and cooling issues. Mike Carpenter is our lead consultant and continues to give solid planning advice, suggests alternative solutions, provides estimates, and researches local providers to complete the work. We met with a number of heating, HVAC, window firms. We engaged an architect, Claudia Brenner to discuss options for improving the three entrances and developed a design for a vestibule addition to the west side entrance. Claudia has also provided designs for reuse of space to accommodate additional bathrooms if we so decide.

We completed projects in the south office wing and in the upstairs Youth Room. New LED lighting fixtures and ceiling upgrades were made in the Sunday School area, hallway and Minister’s office. The Youth Room ceiling panels and insulation replaced, and new recessed lighting was installed. Danny Fox managed this work and completed much of the tear-out himself with Karen Knudson. A lot of consideration was given to selecting new windows, and all the south wing plus the library, kitchenette and upper stairs are scheduled to have old single-pane windows replaced in early 2018.

Exterior projects addressed were the parking lot paving project and the steeple lights. A comprehensive evaluation of the lots and of drainage issues was led by Paul Southard, a new and valuable team member. We concluded that remedial work to the entire asphalt surface was needed and selected First Choice Paving in Cortland. Council agreed to the cost overrun, and to add additional area on the lower lot for two handicapped spaces.

**The following work was completed in Phase II – 2017.**

1. Programmable thermostats: Rooms 2, 11, 12. Expensed to B&G.
2. Lighting upgrades: Sunday School Rooms 1,2, Minister and Christian Ed. offices, main office hallway, and upper Youth Room. \$7,987.23
3. Ceiling Tiles: Sunday School, hallway and Youth Room. \$668.83
4. Windows: 25 Anderson units for office wing, Library and kitchenette, upper stairwell and Youth Room. \$6,000 deposit paid. Total installed est. \$20,000.
5. Tile Floors: Sunday School Rooms 1,2 using Karndeen LVT. \$7,596.31. Also installed last year in lower level, the total flooring is \$60,000 which is \$10K over budget.
6. Water Cooler: replaced existing by Sunday School with Elkay Water Bottle Refilling and bubbler. This was not included in 2016 budget. \$1,296.21

7. Parking Lots:
  - 40% of East upper lot and ramp to upper parking 17,000 sq.ft. \$26,000.
  - Lower lot with additional 1,270 sq. ft. , total 5,200 sq.ft. \$11,000
  - 60% West upper lot 21,000 sq.ft. will be completed in 2018. Est. \$32,000
8. Office Phone System: All-Mode Communications replaced phones with current technology units providing remote messaging access. \$4,067.27
9. Narthex Flat Screen TV: A Communications Committee project, John Zollweg managed the purchase and installment. \$631.53
10. Outside Lighting: Replaced four steeple spotlights with LEDs. \$1,877.60
11. Project Management Fees, Mike Carpenter: 60 billed hours \$3,000
12. Design Fees: Claudia Brenner, architect. Consultations and drawings \$5,789.65

Total estimated expenses for 2017 were \$74,000. Expenses are listed by the category in the FCC Capital Projects 2016-18 Budget, and several new items included as capital improvements. Both the Tile Floors and the Parking Lot projects ran over budget. However, others have come under budget and we have made cost savings through hands-on volunteer work by our team members and others including Karen Knudson, Paul Dawson and Frank Phillips. All contracting and payments are done by us through the church office. We thank Mary Ellen Stewart for supporting this important function.

Each project is researched and multiple bids sought for quality and fair pricing. Excellent input has come from a number of members, including Rhonda Gilmore and John Zollweg. Al George and Paul Dawson worked on the elevator review. Phase III in 2018 will bring many projects to fruition, including installing the new windows, a side door vestibule, HVAC improvements, Sanctuary and sound system, and our narthex and library renovations. Sub-groups will be needed to work on various areas, and everyone is welcome to help with this revitalizing of our church home.

Respectfully submitted by the Capital Improvements Team:  
Howard Fairchild  
Danny Fox  
Brad Grainger  
George Schneider  
Paul Southard  
Pam Swieringa, Chair  
Michael Carpenter, Consultant

Annual Report  
**CARING COMMITTEE**  
January - December 2017

This past year we have continued to expand our ministry of Pastoral Care. We are grateful for the amazing job of caring that Sue Fast provides to our church community and her support to the Caring Committee. The committee is also appreciative of Rev. Kaden's involvement in the work of the committee and his encouragement to expand our role.

The Caring Committee under the loving direction of Jean Wentworth with assistance from Marlene Jewell and Jeanne Yarussi provided the stunning sanctuary arrangements of Easter Lilies and Christmas Poinsettias. The distribution lilies and poinsettias to church members who are or have been on the Prayer Tree and to those who find attending services challenging were coordinated by Jean Wentworth at Easter and Joyce Billing at Christmas.

Our thanks to Karen Jackson who continues to see to the seasonal change of flowers in the narthex planter.

Our Prayer Ministry includes the Prayer Care Tree and additional prayer opportunities to our community. Prayer Shawls and baby blankets so wonderfully made by the Yarn Group were given to those in need by the staff and members of the Caring Committee and Yarn Group Members. Committee members Ray Gozzi and Jean Wentworth with assistance from Odei Gad, Linda Yannone faithfully offer individual prayers following the Sunday morning worship.

Our every Sunday responsibilities are rotated monthly among committee members. Delivery of Sunday flowers arrangements, note writing to visitors and those mentioned in prayer requests, serving coffee and providing refreshments for the coffee hour are among the regular weekly tasks of the committee. Charlotte Bosworth and Joyce Billing regularly prepare the coffee, tea and lemonade set up for the coffee hour.

This year we continued offering a monthly all-church Dish-to-Pass following the church service attended by 40–60 each time. Other hospitality tasks taken on by the committee include many all-church meals including a Chicken and Biscuit luncheon for the Foote Lecture, assisted by Pam Swieringa and Diane Shaffer, 5 Lenten meals along with several Memorial Services receptions. We coordinated meals for several church families who were experiencing health issues or the birth of a child, and refreshments following events for Feed My Starving Children.

I would like to thank the committee for the continued efforts on behalf of the Caring Committee. Those serving this year Patricia Baxter, Joyce Billing, Charlotte Bosworth, Jeannie Cottrell, Patricia Fairchild, Jacquie Kaden, Ray Gozzi, Marlene Jewell, Cindy Marschner, Betsy Nicholson, Bobbie Schneider, Barbara Taylor, Anne Rodda, Barbara Schramm, Chris Xenakis, Madeleine and Bernie Graham, and Jean Wentworth. And, special thanks to *all* of the people who have helped by writing notes, delivering prayer shawls and flowers, providing meals and rides and prayers!

Cindy Marschner, Caring Committee



Annual Report  
**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES**  
**(Including CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM)**  
January – December 2017

This is my 10<sup>th</sup> program year at FCC. It seems like just yesterday I reflected in my last report that this would be my tenth year and here we are. The old cliché “time flies” is never truer than when you work with children. We have had a busy year full of meaningful time together in Sunday school class, fellowship time and working on projects. We have welcomed new families and this fall we have seen our Beam Nursery group grow to an average of 6 toddlers per week! In my ten years here, I have never seen so many children go up for the Pastor's children sermon as are going up this year. It is an exciting time of growth for the church family.

***Children's Worship*** – For the 8<sup>th</sup> year we have used a curriculum with this group to explore Bible stories with Prek-3<sup>rd</sup> graders through a worship format. We spent time in the fall on a several week study of Moses. The children were involved with several service projects including making blankets and Valentines for hospitalized people, collecting items and money for the SPCA, coordinating and packing six Thanksgiving meal baskets for local families, the Warm Woolly Tree, a Kid Knits hat knitting party, and decorating all the bags for the Outreach Committee's Lunches of Love project.

***YAC*** – formerly known as the Tweens class, the self-named Young Active Christian class of 4-6<sup>th</sup> graders worked with Monica Bosworth Viscuso each Sunday. The class explored a variety of scriptures and teachings including parables and the commandments. Guest interviews were a great way to get to know several different church members. Group challenges are also a big part of the YAC Sunday time. These are activities where the group is presented with a problem or a goal and needs to think, listen, share ideas and act together to solve the problem or meet the goal. Sometimes kids define goals for themselves. The class worked on service projects including building 13 birdhouses, raising \$253 to split between Heifer Int'l and the TC SPCA, making Project Linus blankets and creating woven star decorations to give to FCC shut-ins. Two big special events were a lock-in/sleep-over and the production of a play: “Where Love Is, God Is” for Celebration Sunday.

***Fellowship*** - Families joined together this year to go bowling, have a Family game night, do an Easter Egg Hunt and decorate the church for Advent. We have an active group of families that, despite their busy lives outside of FCC, are plugging in to our events and enjoy spending time together.

***Children and Youth Ministry Team*** - Several years ago, this team was formed as an informal way for all parents and interested church adults to be involved in program planning. At that time, there were few members interested in serving on formal committees and the idea of the “team” was a way to keep parents involved in some way without the commitment of an official committee. This team met 3-4 times this year to plan programming under the direction of myself and Diane Beckwith. Council has asked that, as per the church by-laws, a Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry committees be re-organized. This is happening and the final meeting of the Children and Youth Ministry Team will be January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Going forward, the Children's Ministry Committee and Youth Ministry Committee will be overseeing programming for children and youth.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Stacy Wilder, Director of Children's Ministries



Annual Report  
**DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES**  
January – December 2017

The combined Youth Ministries and Children's Ministries team has met throughout the year, providing guidance and support for our programming, fellowship and curriculum continuity. This planning group met Jan. 22, April 30 and Sept. 17. We have provided youth programming to approximately 12 Middle and High School youth.

My position continues to be that of coordinating and directing the Jr. Choir, the Pentecost Singers, and directing and leading the Youth Group fellowship and Sunday morning program, included 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. The 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders were in a class with Monica Bosworth and K through 3<sup>rd</sup> were in a class with Stacy Wilder.

All of the 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth remain in the worships service every Communion Sunday, serving as greeters and ushers and participating in Communion. This year we also had different youth reading scripture in worship occasionally.

We started off the year in Sunday School reviewing Epiphany, then explored the Gospels with the aid of the Concordance. We then spent several weeks reading Luke with the help of the Hip Hob Bible, the Inclusive Bible and the Good News Bible. In February the youth provided Super Bowl sub sandwiches as a work trip fundraiser. Extra fun was had with a Lock-in the night before where we made dinner, cleaned the sanctuary and Chapel, made the subs, played games and watched a movie. The Youth Group collected the saved palm fronds from the previous year's Palm Sunday, burned them and made an olive oil paste to be used on Ash Wednesday. The Youth provided a Pasta Brunch on the March 5 Communion Sunday dish-to-pass day. During Lent the Children and Youth Ministries Team organized a Lenten program with Bill Cowdery: "Pitches, Pipes and Poetry" which included a tour of the organ pipes. We also hosted an All-church Game Night and Dish-to-Pass. Palm Sunday was again celebrated with our annual Palm Sunday Brunch where we raised \$539 towards our youth work trip.

After Easter our Sunday class included packing the PCM Study Bags, preparing flames for Pentecost, and preparing for Celebration Sunday. A new project was setting up a permanent, magnetic name tags for our church members. We ordered tags and racks, printed out name tag cards and set up the system in the Narthex. The Youth took on the responsibility of reminding people to take, and return, their tags, identify anyone who didn't have one yet, and keeping the racks alphabetized. The system is in place and seems to be working well.

For the first time this year, the Youth Group prepared and served lunch for about 100 women at the annual Habitat for Humanity Women's Build on May 13. Our connection through Kristen Brennan led us to participating in this worthwhile community event.

Also new this spring was that our church participated in the Ithaca Festival Parade. I was the point person; reserving our spot, acquiring the pick-up truck (thank you Danny Fox!), organizing and setting up an FCC t-shirt tie-dyeing party, coordinating the decorating of our truck and ordering and coordinating the carrying of an FCC banner and a UCC "We are the Church"

banner. The Youth Handbells, with several guests, marched and played in the parade with us. We had about 30 people representing FCC.

The Ithaca Community Band, which rehearses in our Fellowship Hall, hosted a concert at our church in June where the Youth Group provided an Ice Cream Social.

Our Children and Youth-led Celebration Sunday service included youth readers, an 11-piece Youth Band, Children's Sunday School singers, Jr. Handbells and youth ushers and greeters. The Strawberry Shortcake Coffee Hour was held on Celebration Sunday, raising about \$250 for our work trips.

In the Fall, the Youth Group Sunday class started out with a unit on Moses. We then explored Worship – different styles, favorite or least favorite parts, etc. As this year was the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation, we spent a couple of weeks studying the Reformation and its history. We were able to have David Kaden join us one Sunday to offer a Sermon talk-back with the Youth. For 2 Sundays in December, we made embossed Christmas Cards to sell, raising a total of \$250 for Heifer, International.

Our Confirmation Class began in October, created and led by David Kaden with support from me. We have 10 students grades 8<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> participating in this class. The class met 5 times in October and November and will resume in January. This is a very active cohort of youth who know each other well and enjoy spending time together. They are very enthusiastic about the class and look forward to it each week. The Youth Group remained in the worship service on the days of Confirmation Class, sometimes through the Sermon.

The Jr. Choir sang in worship about 4 times during the year, including Palm Sunday, Celebration Sunday, Christmas Sunday and Christmas Eve. The youth choir, the Pentecost Singers, sang on Thanksgiving Sunday and Christmas Eve, as well as with the Jr. Choir.

The Christmas Eve family service was again a highlight of our year. We had 11 musicians, 9 young singers, 8 youth singers, a 12 member Youth Handbell choir led by Nancy Weislogel, a 5 member alumni choir and 4 youth readers participating in this lovely service. This, and every year, we received numerous comments on how beautiful and meaningful this service is.

The Church Council has requested that the Youth Ministries and the Children Ministries reform into separate committees to align with our church Bylaws. We have had 4 people volunteer to be on the Youth Committee. This new committee will begin operating in the New Year after the Annual Meeting. I'm looking forward to working with these individuals as they take on the running of our Youth program.

It is so exciting to see the growth occurring in our Children and Youth programs. We have engaged young people and parents who are invested in their family church life. I'm looking forward to the coming year of learning and sharing and growth in our church. And finally, I always so appreciate working with this great staff and all of our youth and their families.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Beckwith, Director of Youth Ministries

Annual Report  
**ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
January – December 2017

May we live into our vision, united in Christ's Love, a just world for all. The purpose of Adult Education is to offer Bible Study and *AfterWords* to increase understanding of the scriptures, educate on issues facing the world, community and church and to inspire faithfulness in everyday life and spiritual journeys. We aspire to enrich the lives of others in a manner that allows them to be advocates for social justice. Here on earth, we are called to be God's hands to do God's work.

January 15, 2017 SACRED CONVERSATIONS PANEL ON RACE RELATIONS.

There was standing room only the chapel and overflow in the Narthex for this presentation. The presenters were Gary Stewart, Jacquie Kaden, Rev. Chris Xenakis, and Josephine Allen, Ph.D. Rev. Kaden acted as moderator. As a result of this panel, the Lenten Series: "SACRED CONVERSATIONS ON RACE," described elsewhere in this report.

January 22, 2017 Susan Fast presented a discussion on End of Life Planning to approximately twenty-five individuals.

February 12, 2017 Monroe Weber-Shirk from Cornell University and three of his students presented the *AfterWord* providing an update on the AquaClara Water Project. In partnership with Aqua Para el Pueblo in Honduras, they have developed and implemented sustainable water treatment technologies that are lower cost and higher performing. Our congregation has been a staunch supporter of this project. Approximately twenty-five individuals attended.

February 19, 2017 Rev. Dr. David Kaden presented the AfterWord, based on his book MATTHEW, PAUL, AND THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE LAW. Roughly fifty people attended as he addressed topics such as power, colonialism, ancient Roman law, modern indigenous custom and early Christian uses of Jewish Law.

February 26, 2017 The Hon. John Rowley, spoke on the effectiveness of treatment against the heroin epidemic and how it is changing treatment protocols. He identified the populations, etiology of the problem from family genetics, overprescription and foreign trafficking into this country. Approximately forty people attended the presentation.

March 12, 2017 Carol Hockett, Coordinator of School and Family Programs at the Johnson Museum of Art explored Van Gogh through the lens of his faith and efforts at ministry. Approximately thirty people participated in the discussion.

March 26, 2017 Natasha Thompson, President and CEO of the Food Bank of the Southern Tier presented. She is Chair of the Food Bank Association of New York State. She is a member of Feeding America's National Council of food banks and teaches food budgeting classes to low income individuals. Approximately thirty-five to forty people attended her presentation.

May 20 – 21, 2017 Foote Lecture Dr. Edith Rasell, Minister of Economic Justice for national UCC. Approximately thirty-eight people attended the Saturday evening dinner and presentation. On Sunday Dr. Rasell delivered the sermon and AfterWord, approximately forty people attended the discussion.

September 10, 2018 John and Marcie Bishop, and Odei discussed their trip to Ghana to visit Odei's family to standing room only in the Chapel.

September 24, 2017 Gary Stewart moderated a panel discussion on being Muslim in Ithaca and the world. Approximately fifty people attended the presentation.

October 1, 2017 Andy Weislogel led a tour of the Rembrandt Exhibition at the Johnson Museum on the campus of Cornell University. This tour followed the monthly dish -to- pass. Participants car pooled from the church to the Johnson Museum. Approximately twenty people attended.

October 22, 2017 Enid Zollweg, Carolyn McPherson, Bill Cowdery, and Diane Southard presented a “A Crash Course on the Reformation.” Carolyn introduced the topic of Martin Luther. Participants learned “The Reformation Polka”, as taught by Enid, learned about papal bulls and transubstantiation. Bill presented some of the music of the period and Diane Southard showed slides, relating to Luther from her most recent trip to Germany. Approximately thirty-five people attended.

October 29, 2017 Rev. David Kaden presented, to approximately forty-five people, his “Confirmation Booster, Pt. I (a/non) *WHO, WHAT, WHERE IS GOD.*” There was a discussion of “God” in scripture, tradition, and today.

November 12, 2017 Brian Wansink presented the AfterWord on “Love, Faith and Food Waste.” Brian presented the results of a two year study across America and Brazil that revealed some unexpected insights about love, faith and food waste. Approximately forty people were in attendance.

The Tuesday noon Brown Bag Bible Study continues. Attendance varies depending on the Lectionary.

LENTEN SERIES: During Lent, we gathered on a series of Wednesday evenings, for a simple soup supper followed by a Sacred Conversation on Race. Led by the Rev. David Kaden, Rev. Enid Zollweg, Rev. Chris Xanakis, Jacquie Kaden, Susan Fast, and Gary Stewart, our church examined the issues of race and racism, white privilege, and the future of race relations in the United States in a post-Obama era. A number of acclaimed authors of color were introduced. (Thurman, Baldwin, Coates, MLK). A special focus of our study was on what can be done to help our children/grandchildren/community learn to appreciate and celebrate racial/ethnic diversity in Ithaca and America. Feedback on the discussions was positive, inspiring, and informative.

As of the end of January, I will be stepping down and off the Adult Education Committee. It has been my pleasure to work with all of you and those who are currently serving on the committee. A special thanks goes to John Zollweg and Paul Viscuso for insuring that there was always sound, a screen and projector set up and ready to go. It made the work of the committee that much smoother. Thank you also to Gary Stewart for his invaluable help in securing panelists for the variety of discussions on race relations in the community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia A. Baxter, Chair  
Rev. Enid Zollweg  
Carolyn McPherson  
Diane Shafer  
Brian Wansink  
Rev. David Kaden  
January, 2018

Annual Report  
**WOMEN'S MINISTRIES**  
January-December 2017

Women's Ministries creates and coordinates opportunities for women to experience spiritual encouragement, education, support and community in the life of our church. All women in our church community are warmly invited to participate in any and all of our activities (assistance with childcare and transportation are available). Laughter, support and networking are a part of all events.

Activities for women may be accessed on the church website. We also continue to keep women in our church family updated on activities, share ideas and inform the wider community of WM activities through church announcements, the bulletin and the Highland Highlights.

The following areas highlight those programs carried out by Women's Ministries in 2017:

Personal Connections-

- WM has continued to reach out to newer women at FCC, and has made a concerted effort to identify and provide support for various women at FCC who may need our love and care. This support ranges from occasional visits, sending cards and lifting up specific prayers for individuals.
- On August 12<sup>th</sup> an intergenerational group of women took a field trip to the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Park.

Spiritual Growth-

- WM hosted a half day spring retreat in May at the church which was attended by approximately twenty women. We began with fellowship over breakfast and coffee. The retreat topic was "Contemplation and Appreciation." Nancy Stewart led us in a walking meditation. We ended with communion in the chapel.
- We held a fall retreat at the home of Diane Shafer in October with an option for attendees to stay overnight on Friday. The theme was "Grace." Over twenty women attended this event, including some older women as well as some who had never attended a retreat before. The feedback was that staying in town at someone's home is preferable for future fall retreats.

Donations-

- WM approved a \$100 donation for a church member's attendance at a wider church conference on Grace.

Small Groups-

A number of small groups meet on an ongoing basis. These groups have their roots in Women's Ministries. Today these groups function independently and no longer give us formal reports. The present small groups provide opportunities for women to network, study and deepen their spiritual life together. These small groups include:

The Yarn Group- An informal group which meets every other week in each other's homes or at the church to work on personal handwork projects or prayer shawls; beginners always welcome. Several prayer shawls were distributed in 2017. We also continued knitting small "Linus blankets", or pocket prayer shawls to be distributed.

Women's Study Group- A weekly morning gathering to pray and share thoughts on specific readings, chosen by the group meets on Monday mornings. This group is led by Susan Fast.

Leadership:

WM operated without an official chairperson in 2017. Nancy Stewart stepped up to facilitate our monthly meeting and other members filled in as needed.

2017 Women's Ministries Members:

All women are invited to attend any WM meeting, and we are always hoping to add the energy and ideas of new members to our group. We are also looking for those who are able to assist with short-term projects and retreat planning. Sarah How joined WM in April and Jacquie Kaden switched from a member to WM follower in September. In June at the request of council, we changed our meetings to the third Sunday of the month. We now meet at 9:00 a.m. in the library. Please join us and share your ideas!

Jacquie Kaden	Greta Dewey
Nancy Stewart	Joy Swanson
Amy Stoll	Sarah How

Respectfully submitted, Amy D. Stoll

Annual Report  
**MEN'S MINISTRIES**  
January - December 2017

The Men's Breakfast Discussion Group is open to all men at church. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 8:30 in the morning for an hour at the Royal Court Restaurant on Meadow Street. We discuss topics that will challenge us to think more clearly about how our faith informs our understanding of the big issues of our time. We have read articles dealing with religion and politics, religion and science, economics, theology, etc.

Join us if you would like to share breakfast with us before work on Tuesday mornings. We try to end or at least break at 9:30am.

Annual Report  
**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**  
January 1 – December 31, 2017

The Communications Committee is responsible for promoting and sharing the Church's mission and programs with the congregation and the wider community. Our committee began the year as the Growth and Communications Committee, but in April the Church Council approved the creation of a new Growth and Membership Committee. That committee is now responsible for the development of new and current members, while we focus on communications of all types.

As part of the Communications Committee's charge, in 2017 we worked with church staff and groups to promote church activities, including special services during Lent and Advent and events like *AfterWords*, the Advent Garden and the Ithaca Concert Band concert held at the church over the summer. We advertised using traditional media, such as newspapers like the *Ithaca Journal* and *Ithaca Times*, and also promoted the church frequently using social media. First Congregational Church has an active presence on Facebook and Twitter. You can follow the church on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/IthacaUCC](http://www.facebook.com/IthacaUCC) or on Twitter at [@fccithaca](https://twitter.com/fccithaca). Thanks especially to committee members Mary Grainger, Pam Hanna, and Erika Mudrak for their dedicated work sharing the news of the church on traditional and social media.

Over the last year, we have continued to record weekly videos of the sermons to share via the church website and on YouTube. Thanks to a lot of hard work and creativity by George Hudler, we increased the video quality and shortened the time it takes to post the video online. Showing video of the sermons is an important way of sharing what our church is like to prospective visitors, while helping members who cannot make it to church have a deeper experience.

One of the more noticeable communications improvements made in 2017 was the installation of a television set in the Narthex, near the stairs and coat closet. On a weekly basis, we have been highlighting notable activities with words and images, including reminders of upcoming events and messages from church groups. It is easy to add a message to the screen, and if you have something you'd like to share while folks are coming in to church or enjoying fellowship afterwards, just let us know. The internet-connected television has many other features, including playing videos, showing photos, or connecting to a laptop. John Mazzello, Erika Mudrak, and Michelle Woods designed the weekly slides for the screen in 2017.

Finally, in the second half of the year the Communications Committee began discussing a much-needed revision to the church website, found at [www.fccithaca.org](http://www.fccithaca.org). The current website has become dated and no longer offers all the features our growing church needs. Len Johnson, John Mazzello, and Michelle Woods have been working with David Kaden and the Church Council to create the new site design, and we are looking forward to sharing it when it is completed in 2018.

These are just some of the many activities the Communications Committee worked on during 2017. As we move into 2018, please remember that we are available to help you and your group to reach out to the congregation and the community. Do not hesitate to get in touch for any communications needs.

**2017 Committee Members:** *Mary Grainger, Pam Hanna, George Hudler, Len Johnson, John Mazzello (chair; email [jmazzello@gmail.com](mailto:jmazzello@gmail.com)), Erika Mudrak, Michelle Woods*

Annual Report  
**GROWTH & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**  
January 1 – December 31, 2017

This past fall the Leadership Development Committee was transformed into the Growth & Membership Committee. Previously, Growth had been paired with Communications. Membership was coordinated through the Nominating Committee. This newly morphed committee will focus on tracking people from the moment they first visit our church to the time they decide to join the church to the time they join a committee or become involved in other ways in the life of the church. Our intent is to work with the Staff to help foster this sense of community through the coordination of events, finding ways to facilitate opportunities for people to get to know one another, actively participate on committees, and feel connected. This committee serves FCCI's members, keeps in contact with visitors, works closely with Jessie and David, and reports regularly to Council.

One of our first tasks was to produce a slate of candidates for nomination to various committees for the January 2018 Annual Meeting. We will work this coming year to develop general policies and procedures for the nominating process, including the possibility of a database to track members' length of terms on committees. We also plan to create a simple survey of interests, skills, and experiences of both longtime and newer members to assist us in matching those attributes with the needs of our committees. In combination with the survey, this fall we plan to reintroduce the Festival of Ministries. Each committee will have a booth to highlight the focus of their work. We hope this will entice people to join a committee to which they feel the potential for a mutually rewarding experience. We would also like to explore fellowship and service opportunities for the college-age cohort.

Members of G&M, along with David, Mary Ellen, and Jessie, are working to review and update the current database system used in the office. There has been much discussion about the needs and expectations of a robust system and we anticipate that will continue at least into the spring.

With a focus on wanting our visitors to feel connected, our committee members contact, within a couple days, those who complete pew cards. We are intentional about inviting visitors to our dish-to-pass dinners and making them aware of other upcoming worship and fellowship opportunities. In addition, we asked Jessie to create generic business cards that include all the ways in which to contact the church (including twitter, FB, etc.). These are available on the name tag table for visitors to take and can be shared with others 'around town' as appropriate. In addition, we will try something new by having a small table near the front door to display packets of information for visitors to take as interested.

Growth & Membership is also responsible for New Member Sundays. We have decided to combine new ideas with some that were used years ago and will evaluate their effectiveness. These include providing a tour of the building during the orientation meeting at which members of G&M and David meet with prospective new members; having Sponsors for new members; including a brief bio on each new member in the bulletin on New Member Sunday; and providing special refreshments the day new members join.

The upcoming year will be a busy and exciting one!

2017 Growth & Membership Committee Members:

Kelly Behan  
Sue Eslinger  
Lorrie Phillips  
Barbara Schramm  
Dave Wickstrom  
Tara Wilder (Chair)  
John Zollweg

Annual Report  
**WORSHIP COMMITTEE**  
January 1 – December 31, 2017

*“Worship is a way of seeing the world in the light of God.” --Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel*

Worship is one of the central elements in the life of this church and the lives of many members of this congregation. Our church members have varied religious pasts and experiences with regards to worship services. The committee tries its best to make the worship service meaningful to all.

On behalf of the entire Committee, I sincerely thank everyone who has helped make our worship life run smoothly. Spanning generations, we had many people volunteer to read, usher, serve communion, serve as acolytes, keep the liturgical colors matching the church seasons, changing the banners, and the list goes on. Each and every one of you are deeply appreciated.

This year has been an active year for our committee. On top of the normal Sunday morning services, we had a number of special services, including one for Ash Wednesday, five for the Triduum, or “three days” (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday), two for Christmas Eve, and seven memorial services. The Worship committee has agreed to have a presence at memorial services in order to provide support in terms of logistics and ushering duties. The Advent Garden, a special contemplative service run under the aegis of the committee, was attended by 83 people, many of whom were visitors to our church.

We discussed two perennial topics again this year: ushers and communion bread. We updated a detailed set of instructions for ushers plus a quick cheat sheet. The method we established for people to sign up to usher a month at a time failed this summer and never recovered, which means that we look forward to more discussions in 2018 about options for getting people to usher. We also talked more about communion bread with regards to gluten-free vs. wheat bread, the idea of inclusion, plus practical matters concerning palatability and issues surrounding dry, crumbly breads. After 10+ years of dialogue and contemplation, we are hopeful that the current solution for communion meets the needs of inclusion, dietary restrictions, and palatability.

One other aspect of communion that was a topic involved youth as communion servers. The general recommendation of the committee is that communion servers will have gone through the confirmation process or an equivalent experience. Unconfirmed youth who demonstrate a respect for the sacrament could be considered, just as unconfirmed adults are.

Christmas and Epiphany were prominent topics this year. The antependia (tablecloth and hangings on the pulpit and lectern) for Advent are blue, with scenes from Christmas. The liturgical color for Christmastide is white, but the white antependia that we have are more appropriate for Easter. Enid Zollweg has taken on the task of designing new Christmastide antependia for the church, to be ready in 2018. The Christmas decorating moved back to a Friday night. This worked well this year because of how Thanksgiving and Christmas aligned. We coupled the decorating with a fund raising dinner hosted by the youth. Thanks to Diane Beckwith for coordinating this and Stacy Wilder for providing beautiful decorating opportunities for the children. Many hands made light work.

We also spent a bit of time discussing possible changes to the Christmas Eve services. This came about because of comments from youth and parents who raised some issues concerning certain aspects of the services, primarily the first service. Those comments were relayed to staff.

The puppet kings, a long-standing tradition in our church, have been managed and maintained by June Morse and Joyce Billing for 35 years. The puppets had no home in terms of committees and Worship has agreed to be their home. However, the puppets will have a dedicated ad hoc group of caretakers which is being formed, serving

under the aegis of Worship, who will also work with the Christian Education staff with the setup and choreography. This is viewed as a joint effort.

Life is a continuum of change and the worship life of this church is no different. Here are some of the changes that have come through the committee. New offering plates replaced the old ones that we have used for many years and which were deteriorating. Many thanks to Jeanne Yarussi, Jean Wentworth, and Pam Swieringa for preparing two lovely new artificial flower arrangements for the communion table for services when there are no donated flowers. To reduce waste and save money in the long term, we replaced the communion table candles. The old candles had non-refillable liquid wax inserts that were expensive. The new candles are refillable, and buying liquid wax in bulk is more economical. Much thanks to the committee for their valuable input concerning the choice of candles, as well as to Rhonda Gilmore for her advice.

Sometimes we borrow ideas from other churches and Pentecost 2017 was one such example. Instead of having a scripture passage read in multiple languages this year, we borrowed an idea from a church in Australia. This was a collaborative effort with children and youth and the ministers. The idea was to emphasize the gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. Isaiah 11:1-3). The youth cut out red paper flames which had one of the gifts written on each one. On Pentecost, the children distributed the flames to the congregation and choir during Children's Participation.

Enid Zollweg and Laurie Hultberg, two members of the committee, led a summer book group focused on centering prayer. Enid and Laurie have led contemplative services in recent summers and this was an outgrowth of those services.

The capital improvement team's work on the church building will be heading into the Sanctuary and Chancel areas in 2018. A subset of the Worship committee will be working with the team as we envision needed work and possible changes to the worship space. The committee would also like to replace the marble baptismal font, which is heavy and dangerous to move. The *Nest of Thorns*, a piece of artwork owned by the church, was shored up by June Szabo but is still fragile and losing pieces. We have been in contact with June and are looking to have it stabilized again.

Tom Roach will be leaving the committee – we thank Tom for all of the work he has done. We also thank the office staff, Jessie and Mary Ellen, for their invaluable support.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Viscuso, chair of the Worship Committee.

2017 members : Becky TenEyck, Bill Cowdery, David Kaden, Enid Zollweg, Laurie Hultberg, Paul Viscuso, Sandy Hudler, Sarah Roberts, Siu-Ling Chaloeintiarana, Sue Fast, Tom Roach

Annual Report  
**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**  
January - December 2017

The congregation has continued to support the music program generously this year, which marked my twenty-first year as Director of Music. It remains my great personal joy to serve our warm and responsive congregation. The church staff provides invaluable support and encouragement, and an environment full of humor, help and strength. As always the teamwork of members of the choirs (and their families) has been a constant source of energy and inspiration.

**Handbell Choir.** The Handbell Choir has provided music for services every six to eight weeks, including Easter and Christmas Eve. Nancy Weislogel and Paul Viscuso played a handbell duet on Nov. 26. During the summer Paul performed extensive maintenance on our handbells, and oversaw the replacement of one cracked bell under warranty. The Handbell Choir numbers ten regular members, expanding on occasion to twelve or thirteen.

**Junior and Youth Ensembles.** The Junior Choir held practices on specially designated Sundays immediately after our worship service. They sang on Palm Sunday (April 9), Celebration Sunday (June 11), Thanksgiving Sunday (Nov. 19), the Sunday before Christmas (Dec. 24), and the early service on Christmas Eve. Besides our full group of singers, we have a “youth” group of middle-school voices – the Pentecost Choir – who have sung separately. At our first Christmas Eve service we had special music by a “reunion” group of older singers, and at both services Sarah Beckwith sang a solo. We have enjoyed the wonderful leadership of Diane Beckwith, who continues to combine the position of Junior Choir Director with her work as Director of Youth Ministries very effectively.

Our Junior Handbell Choir also rehearses after services on many Sundays. They performed on five occasions: Palm Sunday (April 9), Celebration Sunday (June 12), All Saints’ Sunday (Nov. 5), the Sunday before Christmas (Dec. 18), and the early service on Christmas Eve. They also marched and played in the Ithaca Festival parade on June 2. Nancy Weislogel continues to lead, and to bring great joy and vigor to this group now in its fifth year and numbering about 15 players.

The Youth Band played on two occasions: Celebration Sunday (June 11), and the early service on Christmas Eve. Young players offered special music on several occasions: pianist Samuel Smith on March 26, cellist Gigi Weislogel on April 30, and violinist Sophie Bosworth-Viscuso on Feb. 12 and Aug. 6.

**Senior Choir.** The Senior Choir numbers about thirty; they sing at all regular services, except during summer months of July and August, with a typical participation of fifteen to twenty. The Senior Choir provided special music on two occasions this year. On Music Sunday, May 7, they performed Mozart’s Mass in C Major, K. 337, accompanied by an 11-piece ensemble of strings, winds and trumpets; soloists were sopranos Andrea Dietrich and Pam Swieringa. On the First Sunday in Advent, December 3, the choir performed four choruses from Bach’s Cantata No. 21, accompanied by an 11-piece ensemble of strings, three trumpets and timpani; this work tied in with our observance of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

Many members have made special contributions to the functioning of the Senior Choir. Siu-ling Chaloehtiarana has continued to serve with wonderful artistry and cheer as assistant conductor and piano accompanist on Sunday mornings. Alice Colby-Hall and Barb Taylor have put in many hours of work as choral librarians. Don Hinman has minded the teakettle, and numerous members have brought in cookies and treats for Thursday evening rehearsals. Pam Swieringa and Alice Colby-Hall have taken leading roles in coordinating our operational routines in and around services.

**Events.** On several occasions we have had visits from outstanding local musicians. On Sunday Feb. 26 three folk musicians joined us to perform part of the "Bluegrass Mass" by Carol Barnett. On Easter Sunday we were joined by musicians from Ithaca College: Professor Frank Campos and student (trumpets), and Professor Conrad Alexander (timpani). On Sunday Oct. 19 four members of the Ithaca Gay Mens' Chorus provided special music. On the Third Sunday in Advent, Dec. 17, we had Christmas music accompanied by the Ithaca College Faculty Brass Quintet, who also played for a carol sing after our service.

Warmest thanks go to those who provided music during the summer months. They included soloists Mike Billing, Donna Bloom, Andrea Dietrich, Don Hinman, David Marcham, George Ridenour and Pam Swieringa. Guest soloist Angus Godwin joined us one Sunday. Guest organist George Damp took the bench on Sunday Aug. 13.

As part of our church's observance of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, Bill Cowdery collaborated with Carolyn McPherson and Enid Zollweg in an *Afterword* on Luther and Music on October 22.

We are seeking to restore an active Music Committee in accordance with our church's bylaws. We held an ad hoc meeting of such a committee on Dec. 7. Scheduling further meetings needs attention.

**Organ, Pianos, and Facilities.** Our organ and two grand pianos are in excellent condition, having received full year-round maintenance. We need soon to fix a few large old organ pipes that are beginning to sag under their own weight. We still maintain one upright piano for classroom use. We gave serious thought to acquiring a Steinway baby grand from members Ed and Marlene Wolf, but budgetary considerations weighed against this (it was instead bought by the Savage Club of Ithaca). We have made our sanctuary Steinway available for programs by outside groups on a regular basis, notably the Tompkins County Music Teachers Association during their mid-winter festival.

William Cowdery  
Organist and Director of Music

Annual Report  
**UCC DELEGATES**  
January 1 – December 31, 2017

There were two meetings of the Susquehanna Association this year, at McLean in April, and at Walton in September. At the meeting in McLean, we heard a presentation from each member of the Conference staff about what they do. In Walton, we had discussion about how the Association can function effectively in the 21st Century.

The New York Conference, UCC, held its annual meeting in Tarrytown in May. The meeting was held jointly with the Regional Synod of New York, Reformed Church in America. The theme was “Leading off the Map.” The keynote speaker was Rev. Jim Herrington, who also presented a clergy retreat that Enid attended the day before the meeting.

One of the continuing problems for the Conference is a significant budget deficit. Cuts have been made to the conference staff, but a significant annual deficit remains. It was proposed that each Association collect an additional \$2.00 *per capita* assessment and forward it to the Conference.

This proposal will be considered by each Association, and if all approve, it would become effective in the 2019 budget year.

Enid and John represented our congregation at the Ordination of Rev. Rachel Ditch and installation of Rev. Vicki Burtson at Homer UCC in March. They also attended the Ordination of Rev. Rebecca West at Preble UCC in May and John attended the installation of the Rev. Larry Cronk at the United Church of Oxford in June.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Yannone,  
Enid Zollweg,  
John Zollweg

Annual Report  
**STAFF SUPPORT COMMITTEE**  
January 1 – December 31, 2017

***Mission Statement:** Developing personnel policies and practices that lead to staff contributing to life and growth of the congregation.*

We started the year off with a Staff Appreciation Luncheon on Jan. 30, 2017, hosted by Rhonda Gilmore and catered by Joyce Billing. Joyce chose the theme “Huygge” (Danish for warm and cozy lifestyle) and provided our awesome FCCI staff with a delicious Danish lunch.

Our Committee and Rev. David Kaden conducted mid-point reviews for all lay staff in February. The year-end reviews in May/June, were conducted the same way plus in most cases, a member of an appropriate committee also attended. This gave all of us a more complete picture of the employee and his/her program and responsibilities.

We met with Building/Grounds Committee to discuss what FCCI needs in terms of Custodial Care and how to keep our facility safe and clean. We looked at a variety of scenarios and are in the process of re-writing the Custodian’s job description.

We met with Finance and Stewardship Committees and Rev. Kaden, to brainstorm staffing in general terms: What do we need to do as a church and does our current volunteer and paid staffing structure allow us to do it? This continues to be an on-going discussion as our church grows in membership and the Constitution and By-Laws are revised.

We met with Finance to discuss Human Resource issues, such as Living Wage, amount and timing of salary increase, Family Leave Policy, setting up Retirement Accounts for employees, etc. We plan to meet together several times a year for this purpose.

We are working with Mary Ellen Stewart, Finance Manager, on updating the FCCI Personnel Policy. This includes clarifying that employment at FCCI is ‘employment at will’, that all non-ordained staff are non-exempt, what HAP (Health and Personal) and vacation benefits they receive, how they are supervised and evaluated, grievance procedures, etc.

Sue Fast was appointed to a full year position as Designated Assistant Minister for 15-18 hours/week, Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2017. At the December Council Meeting, it was approved to extend this for one more year, through December 31, 2018.

At Christmas 2017, a small token of appreciation was given to each staff member.

Blessings,

*Holly Kazarinoff- Chair and Council Rep.  
Bonnie Edwin  
Rhonda Gilmore  
Pam Hanna*

**NOMINATION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**  
**January 2018-January 2019**

Council President	Andy Weislogel
Council Vice-President	Pam Hanna
Church Clerk	Robin Stedinger
Historian	Barbara Taylor
Treasurer	Robert Swieringa
Past President	Cyndi Slothower

**ADULT EDUCATION**

Enid Zollweg	2019	Diane Shafer	2018
Carolyn McPherson	2019	Brian Wansink	2018
Steve TenEyck	2019		
Nancy Menning	2019		

**BUILDING & GROUNDS**

Danny Fox	2019	Howard Fairchild	2018
Karlis Musa	2019	Jim Gilmore	2018
Pamela Swieringa	2019	Frank Phillips	2018
George Schneider	2019	Paul Southard	2018

**CARING**

Joyce Billing	2019	Jeannie Cottrell	2018
Charlotte Bosworth	2019	Ray Gozzi	2018
Betsy Nicholson	2019	Marlene Jewell	2018
Patricia Baxter	2019	Cindy Marschner	2018
Jacque Kaden	2019	Barb Taylor	2018
Bobbie Schneider	2019	Jean Wentworth	2018
Patricia Fairchild	2019	Anne Rodda	2018
Barbara Schramm	2019	Chris Xenakis	2018
Cathy Dawson	2019		

**CHILDREN' MINISTRIES**

Jennifer Wansink	2019
Erika Mudrak	2019
Leah Yonker	2019
Jenny Breen	2019

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Mary Grainger	2019	Len Johnson	2018
John Mazzello	2019		
Michelle Woods	2019		
George Hudler	2019		
Erika Mudrak	2019		
Melissa Shaffmaster	2019		

**FINANCE**

Laura Andolina	2019	Brad Grainger	2018
Eugene Yarussi	2019		
Daniel Breen	2019		
Robert Swieringa	2019		
Scott Yonker	2019		

**GROWTH & MEMBERSHIP**

Sue Eslinger	2019
John Zollweg	2019
Tara Wilder	2019
Dave Wickstrom	2019
Kelly Behan	2019
Lorrie Phillips	2019
Barbara Schramm	2019

**OUTREACH\***

Nancy Stewart	2019	Susan Lewis	2018
Barb Taylor	2019	Lynne Whetzel	2018
Brad Buchanan	2019	Renee Zonder	2018
Mary Heffner	2019		

\*Karen Knudson – Kitchen Cupboard  
Coordinator

**SENIOR PASTOR RELATIONS**

Monica BosworthViscuso	2019
Tove Hammer	2019
George Hudler	2019
Cindy Marschner	2019
Robert Swieringa	2019

**STAFF SUPPORT**

Bonnie Edwin	2019	Holly Kazarinoff	2018
Roger Eslinger	2019		
Cyndi Slothoier	2019		

**STEWARDSHIP**

Fran Kozen	2019	George Schneider	2018
Michael Kazarinoff	2019	Ray Gozzi	2018
Marcie Bishop	2019		
Christian Shaffmaster	2019		

**YOUTH MINISTRIES**

Sue Sullivan	2019
Nancy Weislogel	2019
Karin Silva	2019
Monica BosworthViscuso	2019
Shawn Bebko	2019

**WOMEN'S MINISTRIES**

Nancy Stewart	2019	Amy Stoll	2018
Greta Dewey	2019		
Joy Swanson	2019		
Sarah How	2019		

**WORSHIP**

Enid Zollweg	2019	Paul Viscuso	2018
Siu-ling Wong Chaloemtiarana	2019	Laurie Hultberg	2018
Bill Heffner	2019	Sarah Roberts	2018
Sandy Hudler	2019	Becky TenEyck	2018
Karen Hays	2019		

Note: Terms are through calendar year 2018  
and through calendar year 2019.

**PROTESTANT COOPERATIVE  
MINISTRY**

Jery Stedinger  
George Hudler  
Diane Cross  
Brian Wansink

**ACTION FCC**

Kristen Brennan  
Al George  
Mary Heffner  
Karen Knudson  
Nancy Menning  
Michael Smith  
Linda Yannone

**DELEGATES TO THE UCC GENERAL  
AND NY CONFERENCE MEETING**

Enid Zollweg  
John Zollweg  
Linda Yannone

**DELEGATES TO SUSQUEHANNA  
ASSOC.**

Enid Zollweg  
John Zollweg  
Linda Yannone

**ENDOWMENT INCOME USE  
COMMITTEE**

Walt Cottrell  
George Hudler  
Lana Pfann  
Diane Shafer  
Cathy Dawson

**INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

Laura Andolina  
Walt Cottrell  
Brad Grainger  
George Schneider  
Bob Swieringa

**STEPHEN MINISTERS**

Patricia Fairchild  
Ray Gozzi  
Karen Hays  
Ellie Kraft-Sanders  
Cindy Marschner – Stephen Leader  
Barb Taylor

**BOY SCOUT TROOP 2, CUB PACK 4  
AND VENTURE CREW 2000 REP**

Joyce Billing

**MEMBERSHIP CLERK**

Barbara Taylor

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TEAM**

Michael Carpenter, Project Manager  
Howard Fairchild  
Danny Fox, Site Manager  
Brad Grainger  
George Schneider, Finance  
Pam Swieringa, Chair

**GARDEN CARETAKERS**

Greta Dewey  
Sandy Hudler  
Karen Knudson  
Bobbi Schneider  
Barbara Schramm  
Robin Stedinger  
Jean Wentworth  
Madison Wright  
Linda Yannone  
Jeanne Yarussi

**SOUND SYSTEM TASK FORCE**

Mike Billing  
Brad Buchanan  
Lana Pfann  
Jery Stedinger  
Dave Wickstrom

**UCC CALLED-TO-CARE**

Susan Fast  
Barbara Schramm  
Chris Xenakis  
Jean Wentworth  
Joyce Billing  
Karen Hays  
Barb Taylor  
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Annual Report  
**DESIGNATED ASSISTANT MINISTER**  
January – December 2017

During 2017, I have served in a variety of capacities, primarily assisting the Senior Minister in pastoral care, leading worship, and overseeing the church's care ministry.

**Worship.** With the Senior Minister, I have contributed to worship services nearly every Sunday, and have substituted for the Senior Minister when he has been away. I have participated in the second-Thursday communion services at Kendal; and have led some Sunday afternoon services at Longview, accompanied by organist Bill Cowdery and choir members when they were available. The last Sunday in July, we worshiped outdoors in Buttermilk Falls State Park, using the service I had created for my Yale Ecotheology course.

**Pastoral Care.** For care-giving, I have contacted numerous First Congregational members and friends by phone, email, mail and texts; and have made home or care-facility and hospital visits. Some of the visiting has been done with another caregiver, and some alone. Pastoral care has been extended to individuals, to households, or done in a group setting. A most important aspect of First Congregational's pastoral care is our Caring Team. Facilitated by Cindy Marschner, the Caring Team and Called-to-Care members comprise a loving and dedicated network devoted to hospitality and diverse care ministries, which are attentive to individuals' care needs.

**Education.** Memorial planning and other end-of-life issues were included in the *AfterWord* I led in January, aided by valuable input from members of the Funeral Alliance: John Mazzello and Diana Nathanielsz.

Sunday School children and parents made beautiful and delicious braided yeast communion bread in February.

During the Lenten series, which comprised panel discussions on racism and white privilege, I shared ideas and verse from my favorite poet, African-American Lucille Clifton.

For a portion of the year I coordinated and led the Women's Study group in their readings and discussions. Women's book study group read and discussed *Underdogs and Outsiders* five Monday mornings. I offered the same study on five Monday evenings, for people who wanted an Advent study but who could not attend mornings.

Beyond time spent at First Congregational, I am a fourth-year student in **New York School of Ministry**, in the Word and Sacrament Program, the school's ordination track. To share what I learned during my 2016 summer Yale Divinity School courses in funerals, poetry, ecotheology, and Biblical bread-making, I developed and shared educational opportunities during 2017.

I am honored to be a member of the staff of First Congregational Church of Ithaca.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Fast



Annual Report  
**SENIOR MINISTER**  
January – December 2017

In 1926, historian Maurice Powicke described Christianity as follows:

Organized Christianity came into existence, and exists, to preserve a treasure, a command to be executed, a promise to be repeated, a mission to be fulfilled. This treasure belongs to past, present, and future; it is potential, yet active; an object of contemplation, yet the inspiration of right conduct. An unfathomable mystery, it must be related to all knowledge. And in their endeavors to guard and transmit their trust, its guardians have raised the most perplexing issues. ... In the exploration of the recesses of the soul, they have developed the arts and sciences, and constructed theories of the universe.

The treasure which has caused all this activity was cast into the world with a few simple sentences. ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbor as thyself. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’ And again, ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. No one cometh to the Father, save by Me. Take, eat; this is my body.’ And again, ‘Go and preach the Kingdom of God. Feed my sheep. Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. I have come not to bring peace, but a sword.’

Like two sides of a coin, I see two aspects of this quote that describe church for us today: institutional treasure and humble beginnings. The two do not always blend easily. There is the elegant simplicity of those words and actions of Jesus: the inspired prose of his Sermon on the Mount (or, “on the Plain” depending on whether you’re reading Matthew’s version or Luke’s); the stunning beauty of his parables (the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Searching Woman); his gentle openness with the woman at the well (John ch. 4); his deliberate touching of the man with leprosy (Mark ch. 1) - a man whom no one dared touch. Beatitudes, healings, simple teachings, biting criticism of religious rigidity, the promise of his ongoing presence, the power of his self-sacrifice. Words and deeds that inspire wonder. To these can be added the earnest intensity of St. Paul, who wrote about love and community. And then there’s St. John’s theologically profound three word statement: “God is love.” Humble soil - words and stories, healings and welcoming embraces, a Passion and an Easter - produced the tree that is the world’s largest religion. This tree is our treasure, as Powicke writes.

A treasure that needs tending. Notwithstanding its humble roots, this tree that is a treasure is also an institution. Some in our day are skeptical of “institutions”: institutions have traditions, some of which seem irrelevant to the fast-paced iPhone/social media age; institutions are filled with imperfect human beings who make mistakes and need grace; institutions have roofs that need mending, boilers that need replacing, and pews that need resurfacing; institutions have annual budgets and fundraising goals; institutions can take time to make decisions; and institutions sometimes need to be reminded of their humble beginnings.

First Congregational Church is very much an institution; it is also our treasure. Housed within its walls are bottles and bottles of that amazing grace we sing about and embrace as our own - bottles we guzzle. FCCI is a building that needs to be heated and cleaned; it needs to be decorated and de-decorated before and after Christmas; it has budgets and stewardship

campaigns and an endowment (that is, mercifully, managed by people with expertise in finance); FCCI has a Staff and an army of volunteers that keep it going, all in service of the institution - the tree, the treasure. But FCCI is also a spiritual community, a family of faith, a place where that old gospel is proclaimed by our words and deeds - a gospel that is itself a treasure with its own humble beginnings in a promise God made long ago to the patriarch Abraham: all the families of the earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:3). That “all” is an inclusive “all.” It includes “all” people without exception. If there is one thing FCCI stands for as an institution - and boldly so - it is being a welcoming church. The opening section of our new Constitution and Bylaws says,

As an Open and Affirming congregation, this Church will welcome into its membership any person regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or creed, who in their journey of faith wishes to enter into covenant with us and promises as best they are able to follow in the way of Jesus Christ, to resist evil and oppression, to work for love and justice, and to seek to bring healing to the world. (Bylaws, I.1)

Notice the two qualifiers in this paragraph: *to enter into covenant with us* (to recognize that we are all part of a family, a community of faith); and *to promise to follow in the way of Jesus Christ*, which is the way of love that *resists evil and oppression, works for love and justice, and seeks to bring healing to the world*. Such a statement, now enshrined in our Bylaws, stands as a perpetual reminder that the institution of FCCI - the tree, the treasure with its roofs and boilers and budgets - is rooted in Christianity’s simple beginnings: in the words and deeds of a first century Jewish Rabbi named Jesus who changed the world by embracing the least and the lost.

The capstone of the preceding year was Council’s approval of our renovated Constitution and Bylaws with its bold announcement of gospel welcome. This new document will ensure that our church treasure has tighter processes for decision-making. The document makes our institution stronger now and for those who come after us, even as it more closely connects us with Christianity’s humble beginnings.

The gospel was proclaimed not only in the words of this document, but also in our actions this year. In January of 2017, we hosted an interfaith healing service for all who felt wounded by the election cycle. We also began the UCC’s Sacred Conversation on Race in January with a panel discussion on race, and continued the conversation through Lent. In February, we participated in the Ithaca Wants Refugees letter-writing campaign. In June, we sent over 80 letters to Washington D.C. for the “Bread for the World” campaign. We also participated in the interfaith pride service remembering those killed on the anniversary of the Pulse nightclub shooting, and we donned our rainbow bling and rang our bells while marching in the Ithaca Festival. This past year’s Foote Lectures were on the topic of economic justice, which led to the creation of the Action FCC group to help our church become more engaged in social justice issues in Ithaca. Action FCC helped facilitate our involvement in the interfaith Leading with Love walk to mark the beginning of the school year; and this group is beginning to plan for 2018. In September, we hosted a panel discussion on Islam with leaders of Ithaca’s Muslim community. In October, we hosted a music concert put on by the Society for Turkish Classical Music. Also in October, we sent a signed letter to our elected officials demanding action on assault weapons in the wake of the Las Vegas shooting. Many thanks to those of you who helped make all of this happen (especially Gary Stewart!), and helped us forge stronger bonds with other faith communities in Ithaca.

Healing, racial justice, advocating for refugees, LGBTQ+ remembrance, economic justice, interfaith engagement, community action, and non-violence. I believe the nonviolent, justice-loving, inclusive Christ we honor each Sunday is smiling on FCCI this year. We are an institution, but one filled with God's spirit. And our actions this year connect us with the humblest beginnings of our sacred tradition: loving God *by* loving our neighbors.

Our public Christ-like posture is only one aspect of all that FCCI has accomplished this year. In brief: we have permanent name tags (many thanks to Diane Beckwith and the youth!); a small group of our members read Mary Susan Gast's *That We May All (Finally!) Be One*, and discussed ways to live more fully into our UCC identity; beginning last January, our Annual Report became available in electronic form; we have a screen in our Narthex that runs announcements (many thanks to the Communications Committee!); 14 of us completed the AED and basic CPR training in May; our youth are regularly involved in Sunday morning services; our confirmation class continues to connect themes from *Harry Potter* to our faith as Christians; our Leadership Development Committee was transformed into Growth and Membership; we had a Diaconate retreat in August; we took in 13 new members; our capital improvements are continuing (many thanks to Pam Swieringa and her team!); our Finance Manager has been working closely with our Treasurer and our Staff Support Committee to ensure that FCCI follows best practices around finances and employment; we hosted the Ithaca Concert Band in June and served ice cream; our caring ministry continues to be robust, led by Sue Fast, Cindy Marschner, Joyce Billing, and the Caring Committee; our families group continues to meet regularly and its numbers are growing; more than 80 people participated in this year's Advent Garden; our all-church decorating became an evening event in early December with over 50 in attendance; the list goes on and on.

These are all objective markers of FCCI's vitality, and of our commitment to its value as an institution. It is our treasure, to borrow again from Powicke's statement back in 1926. It is a treasure that we have inherited from saints who have gone before us, and that we will leave as a legacy to the saints coming after us. Our church in this tiny corner of the world is one outpost of God's reign, and one community among thousands and thousands of others across boundaries and across time. We continue to face the challenges that most churches in North America face in terms of demographics, but I firmly believe that if we stay faithful to our humble roots as Christians - roots that go back to a visionary Rabbi from Nazareth with, as G. K. Chesterton once put it, "gigantesque" "diction," "full of camels leaping through needles and mountains hurled into the sea" - our church, our institution, our treasure, our glorious tree, will flourish.

Respectfully submitted,

David A. Kaden, Senior Minister