



2020 Annual Report  
**First Federated Church**  
of Peoria, Illinois



**Our Logo**

*These crosses remind us that at First Federated Church we are rooted in Christian tradition while we are embracing the future as we serve Christ today.*

*We also remember that God reaches out to us before we can reach out to God. In response, we are called to reach out to each other and to the greater world as we seek to Glorify God.*

*At FFC, we look ahead without forgetting our faith.*

*Both crosses – the modern and the traditional – share a common center, just as our lives share a common center: the life, love, and teachings of Jesus Christ.*

*At FFC, we are students and followers of Jesus Christ.*



**Our History**

Our proud history began in the early 1830s when Congregationalists and Presbyterians arrived to Peoria, then a frontier village on the rise, where they first worshipped in a simple log cabin. First Congregational was organized in 1834; Second Presbyterian was organized in 1853. They built their congregations and houses of worship, established Sunday Schools, engaged in mission work at home and abroad, provided leadership within their churches and community, and occupied influential positions in the religious life of Peoria.

The First Congregational Church building at Hamilton and Monroe was destroyed by fire in March of 1936, a local tragedy that soon prompted Second Presbyterian to invite this newly homeless congregation to worship with them in May of 1937. Both congregations had

limited resources and desired to continue a program of Christian service and leadership. Along the way they discussed plans to unite through a federation agreement which they finalized with the ratification of the Articles of Federation in November of 1937.

The name adopted was  
FIRST FEDERATED CHURCH.

A new church building was part of First Federated's plan. The congregation worshipped in the Second Presbyterian Church building at Madison and Jackson (now Peoria's Obed and Isaac's Microbrewery and Eatery) until a new building was constructed on Florence Avenue at Sheridan Road.

This church building was dedicated in January of 1950.

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### Executive Board

#### **Class of 2020**

Debbie Dornaus, (PCUSA)  
El Higus, (PCUSA)  
Bridget Mattson, (UCC)  
Hank Stone, (UCC)

#### **Class of 2021**

Karen Henderson, (PCUSA)  
Greg Johnston, (PCUSA)  
Jamie Richardson, (UCC)  
Barney Shultz, (UCC)

#### **Class of 2022**

Trish Fordyce, (PCUSA)  
Michelle Johnson, (UCC)  
Suzanne Mooney, (PCUSA)  
Ron Silver, (UCC)

### Board of Deacons

#### **Class of 2020**

Hans Busch  
Kathy Chittick  
Susan Hoffman  
Alice Racine  
Ann Ragsdale  
Cathy Shultz  
Cindy Schoen  
Ralph Schoen  
Debby Triebel

#### **Class of 2021**

Al Hedeman  
Kay Hulin  
Carol Long  
Diane McCormick  
Jane & Jim Rosen-  
baum  
Soni Owen  
Jerri Varnold  
Jane Vaughn  
Heather Wahlstrom

### Nominating Committee

#### **Class of 2020**

MaryLee Bales, (UCC)  
Jennifer VandeWiele, (UCC)  
David Bailey, (PCUSA)  
Kristen D'Alfonso, (PCUSA)

#### **Class of 2021**

Carrie Bottrell, (UCC)  
Theresa Pfeiffer, (PCUSA)  
Luke Sheley, (UCC)  
Debby Triebel, (PCUSA)

#### **Clerk Of The Congregation Class of 2020**

Joyce Smith

### Program & Support Staff

#### **Transitional Minister**

Pastor David Ezekiel  
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#### **Minister of Pastoral Care**

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#### **Sunday Nursery Attendant**

Kirsten Hanson

#### **Financial Secretary**

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#### **Secretary**

Cecelia Walter  
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## Pastor David Ezekiel, Transitional Minister

I became your transitional minister in the middle of October at the invitation of the Executive Board. Together, we will laugh well and accomplish much as we navigate the transition from the retirement of your pastor to the call of a new one.

You have already experienced some transitional elements in this year alone as the coronavirus has so impacted our lives. Beginning in the middle of March, the Executive Board acted to close the building in order to protect the members and staff, support the public good, and do our part to slow and contain the pernicious spread of the virus. I have heard how you supported this decision and adapted well as worship and meetings moved online. This was a new reality and it became a learning experience for all.

The church began easing back into in-person worship, but rising cases have necessitated the move to online worship once again. Once more, we will weather the disruption by being socially connected while being physically distanced. Meanwhile, I and the worship leaders will engage our creativity to the best of our abilities to empower your worship until we are safely able to resume in-person worship.

Worship leadership is the most obvious work a pastor does. (By the way, thank you for such nice compliments.) The rest of the work a pastor accomplishes is often behind the scenes. This includes coaching, encouraging, guiding, nurturing, teaching, and planning. The outcomes are manifested in the ethos and life of the congregation and the results are expressed through other components of the church, such as the Committees, the Executive Board, staffing, to name a few.

But, as a transitional minister, my work also includes the following five developmental tasks of interim ministry. Those five areas tasks are assisting the church to:

- Effectively assess its history – where it came from and how it has reached this point in its corporate life;

- Discovering what the future holds and plotting a path to move in that direction;
- Recognizing and understanding the leadership shifts that are occurring;
- Developing new denominational connections, resources, and linkages; and,
- Committing to new leadership and embracing a new future together.

In the long run, the wisdom garnered from this work will allow the church to reap rewards. When congregations know their history, they can appreciate their heritage, and at the same time be aware of the issues and concerns that need to be resolved in order to move freely into the future. Undertaking such work allows the church to understand its identity and adopt a clear vision of where it wants to go in the future. The formation of identity enables the understanding of who the church is now, in its present context, and what God is calling this particular church to become. It is the task of developing the vision to which a congregation is being called. Vision will be instrumental in clarifying and guiding the task of the pastoral search committee to identify and select the right candidate for tomorrow's leadership.

How long this will take is unknown, especially as it is complicated by the COVID pandemic. But you and I are engaged in a partnership to identify and develop congregational health and vitality. I look forward to working with you as together we empower the wonderful ministry that is First Federated Church.

~Pastor David





## Rev. Stephen Barch, Minister of Pastoral Care

This year has been an interesting year for all of us. It started off pretty well. Was doing all the normal visitations, Hospital calls, home visits and shut in visitations. Then came March and everything shut down overnight. We were not able to do any in person visitations so we started looking for new ways to stay connected to the population that could not be here physically. I started calling people and sending notes. I tried to check with the hospitals and see those who I could (and since being a chaplain at Methodist Hospital) I used my connections to get in as often as I could. This worked for a few months and it seemed like as time went on with the shut down and the physical distancing, My job really became important. We could not meet in person so it was the only way that we could stay in touch was through the phone calls and the notes. It has been interesting since then. I would work with Frosty and Cecelia to know who needed a visit and would reach out to those we knew needed a visit and to those who were sick or lonely.

What I am finding now is that everyone is affected and not only the older people so I started going through the directory and calling everyone. It seems as though everyone is feeling isolated and needing someone to talk too. My phone calls with each person has almost doubled in length and they want to talk about anything. It is like they are just needing someone who will listen to them and their

story. All of the calls have been wonderful and very enlightening. We have a wonderful and very caring congregation and they will ask how someone is doing or they will let me know what someone is going through so I can call them and check up on them. It is a different way of doing visitation but it has been both a blessing to me personally and it has really deepened my ministry as I get to connect with people on a different level. They are willing to share with me what is going on in their lives and how they are handling the stress of the virus and the total upheaval of their lives. This has led to come counseling sessions with some and some Pastoral calls by Rev. Frosty as I would keep him informed of situations going on in people's lives. Since Rev. Frosty has been gone people keep asking me if I have talked to him and how he and Rev. Sue are doing. Everyone seems to be concerned about the state of our country and our city and being able to talk about it seems to help them. I never would have imagined the scope of this ministry, but God is using it to both teach me and to keep people connected to each other and the Body of Christ.

GOD BLESS!!

*Rev. Steve*



## Russel Boulton, Director of Worship and Music

I think we all can agree that 2020 has not been a great year. I had several neat projects planned: another combined piece for the adult bell choir and the LOGOS kid ringers, a couples recital with Mark and Liegh Grizzard with Emma and me, the Orpheus concert, a recital during Bach Festival Week, a duet recital for Organ and Piano, and a pending invite to host Illinois Wesleyan's choir. None of this would come to fruition. Hosting the Millikin University Choir in January was an outstanding success, as that event brought in well over 200 visitors to the congregation. The music department there and I have discussed an ongoing rotation of their ensembles coming to sing in Peoria, but we cannot schedule anything until we are on the other side of this. The same is true for the Bradley Chorale. We hosted them just before COVID struck for an open rehearsal and a concert, which also went well, but further plans are greatly delayed. I am ever so thankful I was able to participate in the Stronghold retreat again this year. That is such a moving, spiritual experience and an act of confidence building in the future of our church and country as the FFC young people are truly inspiring.

Spring and Summer YouTube services were a special challenge, but we learned, adapted, and created a fair bit of online traffic (thanks in large part to Cecelia) and laid the groundwork for the streaming we can do now (thanks in large part to Andy), though we are still working out the kinks. We did upgrade the sanctuary sound system via Bylerly Sound, which has worked well and prevented any interference from the 5G roll out over the summer and fall.

As soon as the preschool was allowed to up and running I was back with them. Music activities are still somewhat curtailed, but we are being inventive. I have also been able to read to each room more, and I am nearly full

time in the Jack and Jill (4 year old room) and help on the morning check in duty and am the evening door man every day. There are two families strongly considering membership at this time, and I shamelessly plug our programs, services, and mission work to all who would listen.

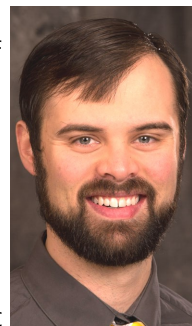
To finish out this year we are again hosting the Sing It Yourself Messiah, though this year it will be the Hum It Yourself version, doing only the Christmas portion plus the Hallelujah Chorus, as to keep the time close the the CDC recommendation, and with only half of the normal orchestra. Orpheus, elements of the church choir (My BU kids, Karen, and maybe others) are in active talks regarding outdoor carolling and I am still trying to find scheduled time for a homegrown holiday brass group that could play with bells covered.

Frosty's retirement and welcoming Pastor David has presented challenges and benefits of other sorts. So too has Joel's departure. For his own health he needed to step away. Marcia Richardson is now with us, and is an accomplished player in her own right. On a final note, Emma and I are separating. The long and the short of it is she doesn't want children and I do. Some of you have been aware that we have been in a rough patch and I greatly appreciate your support. I will further appreciate the added support during this continued time of transition, which only seems appropriate to have been piled on in 2020.

Thank you for your continued stewardship of FFC and the staff that serves you.



Russel Boulton  
Director of Worship and Music



## Brittany Arnold, Director of The Preschools at First Federated Church

The Preschools at First Federated Church are designed to provide a safe, nurturing environment for children to wonder, discover, and grow. We believe when children are in a setting where they feel secure, they will explore their world and be open to trying new things. We foster an environment where children are encouraged to use their creativity and imagination. The Preschools at First Federated Church provide interactions and experiences to help children develop socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

The children are exposed to age appropriate curriculum (Creative Curriculum) that will allow them to be successful and prepare them for their future. As children move from parallel play to cooperative play, they are guided towards socially acceptable behaviors. They learn to become problem solvers and to develop conflict resolution skills. Children learn the core values of being responsible and considerate members of society. We believe that each child is special and unique. Their feelings count, their sadness is comforted, their joy is shared, and their accomplishments are praised. Most of all, we want to instill a lifelong love of learning in our children. Ours is a place "Where Love and Learning Come Together."

We have a variety of schedules to provide our families: Before-Care 7:30-8:30, Full-day Preschool 8:30-3:30, Half-day preschool 8:30-11:30, and After-Care 3:30-5:30. These options are available for the following days of the week: Monday through Friday or Monday, Wednesday, and Friday or Tuesday and Thursday. FFC members receive a discount on tuition.

Enrollment this year was down quite a bit due to COVID-19.

The following things were cancelled due to COVID-19: The week of the Young Child, Teacher Appreciation Week, Grandparents Day, a Thanksgiving Celebration, a Christmas concert held in the Sanctuary, and a Christmas Party held in the Fellowship Hall with a visit from Santa. We modified the following activities to meet the COVID-19 restrictions: A drive through graduation ceremony, our classroom Halloween as well as our Christmas parties, and our fall parent teacher conferences. Picture Day was held in the fall and was open to all preschool students and staff.

We did hold a modified summer camp this year. Each week of summer we had weekly themes that we

implemented. We also had activities that correlate with our theme as well. In the past we would have weekly in house or off-campus field trips all based around our weekly theme. We did not have any field trips or in house events this year due to COVID. We always incorporate water days weather permitting. Our weekly themes might change from time to time but here are some past themes and field trips that we have implemented in the past summer: Summer kick-off- bubbles, painting, ice cream social, popsicles, and face painting; Camping Bear Hunt- s'mores, Going on a Bear Hunt; Farm/Animals -Barnyard Discovery in house Field Trip, A visit from TAPS Animal Shelter, an in house event with the Zoo Mobile, garden in a glove, and a field trip to Fondulac Farm Park; Oceans/Water- Ocean stories and sign language with Communication Junction; Bugs - dancing worms experiment and in-house field trip from Forest Park Nature Center; Outer Space - Astronaut food, in-house event with the Sky Lab from the Peoria Riverfront Museum, and making moon sand.

In addition, in keeping with First Federated Church's Mission Statement, the children visit the Chapel each week with Mr. Russ. The children learn age appropriate Christian music, learn about prayer, and listen to Bible stories both in Chapel time and throughout the week.

*Brittany Arnold*

Brittany Arnold,  
Director, The Preschools at  
First Federated Church



## Jessica Sheley, Director of Children's Ministries

**Sunday School:** We continued our ninth year of our "large group/small group" format with a curriculum called 252 Basics. Small group leaders and children have enjoyed the activities that the curriculum provides and the children participate in in-depth discussions that encourage them to grow in their faith. Children enjoy learning about a different "core virtue" each month through various stories in the Bible.

**Small Group Leaders:** We continue to use teams to lead small group time during Sunday school at each grade level. Each person has been responsible for leading 1-2 Sundays per month. This year's small group leaders are:

**Preschool Palace:** Emily Malerich, Carrie Hill, and Amber Nelson

**Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grades:** Carrie Bottrell, Mandy Ellis, Jennie Frank, Jamie Richardson

**3rd, 4th and 5th Grades:** Anni Reinking, Mandy Ellis, Sarah Breidert, Donna Forbis

**Junior High:** Karin Terry, Becky Braun, Emily Hampton

**Pretzel Prayer Sunday:** Led by a group of FFC families and volunteers, the children enjoyed making pretzels during Sunday school and learned the history behind the significance of the pretzel. Thank you to Kent Kowalske for serving as our pretzel "monk"!

**Palm Sunday:** Although we were not able to do an in-person Palm Sunday processional this year, many church families made empty tomb muffins at home and sent in pictures of their families enjoying Palm Sunday together at home.

**Bible Adventures Workshop:** In September, our third graders were presented with new Adventure Bibles during a private ceremony. These third graders came to a socially distanced workshop and rotated through stations that helped them learn more about their new Bibles and how to use them.

### SHARE / OUTREACH

**Vacation Bible School:** Unfortunately we were not able to hold our annual VBS program due to Covid-19 restrictions. We hope to hold a full or modified

Rocky Railway VBS in summer 2021.

**LOGOS:** In January we continued our mid-week program for kindergarteners – 5th graders. The Logos program from GenOn Ministries features intergenerational relationships among adults and children, a nightly meal, recreation, music, and fellowship. Held on Wednesday nights, the 4-week Logos program was held at the Life Together Center and included 25 children. Children and adults alike had a great experience!

**Gingerbread Party:** Although we were not able to gather for our annual Gingerbread Party this year, a "drive-thru" gingerbread event was held, in which families picked up homemade gingerbread and icing and built the houses at home with their families. Thank you to our volunteer bakers who worked endlessly in the kitchen so we could continue this special tradition!

### MISSION & SERVICE

Throughout the year, children learned firsthand how to use their resources of time, talent, and giving to serve God's kingdom.

**"Operation Christmas Child":** Although we were not able to gather together for Shoebox Sunday this year, our church families packed 62 boxes at home and also generously donated toward the costs to ship the boxes to children in need around the world. Thank you to all who helped with this project!

**Buehler Home:** Valentines and treats were delivered to residents of Buehler Home in February during Sunday school.

### Junior High

**Junior High Fellowship:** Our junior high students were able to enjoy several outdoor gatherings this summer/fall. We utilized the Life Together Center's outdoor patio area and our new Gaga Ball Court, donated and built by the Vandewiele family. The junior high students also enjoyed a fellowship night at a private, socially distanced party at Elevate Trampoline Park.

**Confirmation, Class of 2020:** Confirmation is a series of four retreats, utilizing the Big God, Big Questions curriculum. Retreats were held in the church's 3rd floor junior high room and focus on

## Jessica Sheley, Director of Children's Ministries, continued

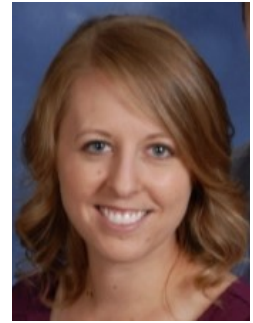
worship, teaching, mission, and discipleship. We completed 3 out of 4 scheduled retreats before we were restricted by Covid-19. The final retreat was completed by the students at home.

The 2019-2020 Confirmation Leadership Team was Jessica Sheley, Lisa Hackett, Cheryl Resnick, Linc Hobson, Sandy White, Don Haworth and Frosty Krummel. Many thanks to them for their dedication and leadership during the confirmation year. During a beautiful outdoor ceremony, seven new members joined First Federated Church: Kayla Alderson, Alex Braun, Zhi Yu Kolmer,

Gavin O'Laughlin, Elle Seshul, Shealyn Terry, and Jacob Vandewiele



Jessica Sheley,  
Director of Children's Ministry



## Worship Committee

The Worship Committee was formed in early March 2020 and was quickly faced with health and safety concerns related to the global COVID pandemic. In line with government health guidelines to limit social gatherings to 10 people or less, the Executive Board and Worship Committee canceled in-person services effective on March 22, 2020. This was a difficult decision, but keeping our members safe and doing our part to lessen the spread of the virus in our community were the most important factors. From late March through early July, worship services were recorded and posted online every Sunday morning for viewing at home. We also offered drive-up communion on May 31st, with 85 elements picked up that day.

Beginning on July 12th, we started in-person worship services in the Life Together Center, both at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. Reservations and masks were required and temperature/health checks were completed at the entrance. The Life Together Center was chosen as it was easier to social distance, provided efficient entry and exit processes, and was easier to clean. We continued to post services online for anyone to view. Drive up communion was offered on Communion Sundays for those who felt more comfortable worshipping at home.

Beginning on September 13th, we moved the in-person worship services to the Garth or Commons

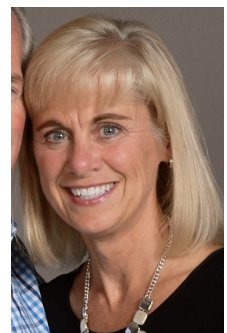
for the 8:00 service and to the sanctuary for the 10:00 service. We continued to post weekly services online, either in pre-recorded format or livestreaming when that became available. Drive up communion continued on Communion Sundays.

As I write this annual update during a large spike of COVID cases in our state and community, we decided to cancel in-person services effective November 15th through the end of November. At that time, we will reassess the COVID situation to determine if we can safely return to in-person worship in December. While our goal is to return to in-person services as soon as possible, safety for our members and community will continue to guide our decisions.

A big thank you to all who have helped with creating and communicating online services. We have learned a lot and improved our technology along the way. Also thank you to those who helped make in-person worship services safe for those able to attend.

Together we will get through this pandemic. Looking forward to sharing more in-person worship services in 2021.

Suzanne Mooney,  
Worship Committee Chair





## Buildings and Grounds Committee

The committee members (Kent Kowalske, Hank Stone, John Mooney, John Kolmer, Steve Thompson, JoAnne Richardson, Helen Peterson and Tim Swain), our administrative staff and our pastors deserve our gratitude for accomplishing so much during a year of unprecedented challenges. In addition to the routine matters of landscaping, painting, HVAC maintenance and repair, parking lot maintenance, and kitchen maintenance, four issues deserve special mention.

First, the committee negotiated extensions of the Facility Use Agreements with the Community Foundation of Central Illinois ("CFCI") and Youth Music of Illinois (formerly Central Illinois Youth Symphony) at the Life Together Center ("LTC"). The extension of the CFCI agreement is for five years with a 4.2% increase in the first year and the opportunity to increase the cost sharing amount, if warranted, annually. The Youth Symphony extension is for two years with a 6% increase in the first year with the potential for a cost increase in the second year. LTC's other occupants, the Presbytery of Great Rivers and Look It's My Book have multiyear written agreements, as well.

Second, the Sanctuary Lighting Project was completed under the direction of Dave Ryan. Dave's work was exceptionally good, and it was completed on time and under budget. His full report is attached. The Project had two parts: 1) upgrading the existing lighting in the sanctuary and choir area and 2) illuminating the large stained-glass window on the east side of the sanctuary.

The lighting in the sanctuary had deteriorated since the sanctuary was remodeled. The deterioration was mostly due to burned out spotlights, broken fixtures and a lack of understanding of the electronic controls. Those conditions were corrected. In addition, the lighting in the choir area was improved by replacing standard light bulbs with more advanced lights that safely project more lumens. The illumination of the stained-glass window gives the church greater visibility at night and enhances the curbside appeal of our church.

Third, on June 12 the Illinois State Fire Marshal's Office inspected those portions of the church used by the Preschool and noted several significant violations. The more significant violations relate to doorways separating classrooms from corridors and stairwells. The existing doors do not meet the current fire code standards, nor do the doorways comply with the Americans with Disability Act accessibility standards. These must be corrected before the Division of Children and Family Services ("DCFS") will relicense the Preschool.

These violations were unanticipated. The last State Fire Marshal inspection (2017) found no violations relating to doors and doorways despite the fact that the State Fire Code was unchanged from 2017 to 2020. Moreover, the annual City of Peoria Fire Department inspections never

raised a concern about the doors and doorways. Both the City of Peoria and the State Fire Marshal recommended that FFC retain an architect to bring these portions of the church into compliance. Nathan Custer of Dewberry has been retained. Drawings and specifications are being prepared and bidding is planned for December. Construction must be staged in three segments for each of the three affected classrooms because DCFS will not permit the consolidation of classrooms during construction due to pandemic health restrictions.

Fourth, the church roof has deteriorated to the point that it needs to be replaced. The need to replace the roof is most acute on the original church building. Temporary repairs have been made, bids are being solicited and the possibility of dividing the work into two phases over two years is being explored. The replacement of the original building's roof is estimated to take two to three months and should begin in the Spring of 2021. The roof leaks also damaged the organ. The cost to repair the organ is significant. The current plan is to replace the roof before spending the money to repair the organ.

Finally, I want to recognize our Directors of Music and Worship, Children's Ministries and Youth Ministries for engaging our youth in the landscaping and maintenance work around the church and LTC during their "Stay at Home, Socially Distanced Mission Trip". Thank you, Russel, Jessica and Lisa.

Barney Shultz

Moderator, Building and Grounds Committee



### Building & Grounds Committee: Sanctuary Lighting Report

The Church had an ongoing need to perform maintenance of sanctuary lighting and provide the choir with more illumination, and honor a member who provided support to illuminate a stained-glass window from inside the church so at night the window would be visible on Sheridan Road. An electrical contractor (CIES) and Thompson provided a \$92k proposal which included illuminating all stained-glass windows on the east side of the church. Thompson Electronics used local ETC rep, KSA Lighting Controls in Toluca, IL, as the rep for the equipment supply. The cost of this scorched earth approach was not in the B&G funding. Dave Ryan was asked to assist B&G in developing less costly alternatives with a strong sense of urgency to improve the current situation quickly.

## Building & Grounds Committee: Sanctuary Lighting Report, continued

### Lighting Maintenance and Choir Illumination

In order to save costs, a two-step plan was devised to first service the dimmer system and then hire electricians to perform routine bulb/system maintenance. A detailed inventory of lights and current status was developed to form the basis for a scope of work for the dimmer field service and the electricians. Each light was identified on a plan and a detailed BOM with status was developed.

KSA Lighting was contacted to identify a service person but, as a rep KSA, does not have service support. KSA does have lighting expertise in the sales process but, given the outstanding quote, they suggested contacting CIES/Thompson.

Looking online, a service provider was identified from Cleveland, OH <https://goknight.com/> 1-866-457-5937. This rep had service support with both new parts and remanufactured parts in abundance. Matt Knight performed the service. The T&L cost was more than the 5 hours of service. Matt proved to be very knowledgeable on lighting systems and the Unison ETC dimmer.

A bid was sought from two contractors, CIES and Grimm. The CIES quote was \$1020 lower so work was awarded to CIES. A church member was present to facilitate solutions as issues arose. CIES sent a senior person, Bill, with a less senior person, Josh. The team was efficient, skilled in the trade, and resourceful. The primary difference in bid costs was Grimm costed scaffolding and CIES costed ladders which demonstrated resourcefulness.

### Transept Lighting

As shown below the transept window had high visibility to Sheridan road. Given that the view of the balance of



stained-glass windows is impeded by foliage the scope of project was limited to single transept window.

A two-phase approach was developed to validate a strategy of using off the shelf high volume parking lot lights to illuminate the transept stained glass. Two electrical contractors bid a parking lot light on a stand for a trial test. Grimm was awarded the work and was \$300 cheaper. The Grimm fixture showed true craftsmanship and the design was resourceful.

B&G committee noted that the window was washed out from the initial trial. A decision was made to reduce lumens by 50% and split between two lamps on either side of the window. A simple timer was installed with a manual override switch.

### Work Completed

- Three dimmer cubes were replaced in our lighting system.
- The 10500 lumens added to the choir area.
- The 4 spotlights on the sides of the vault are now working. You will notice two of these lights illuminate the organ pipes and the other two add general lighting to the choir area.
- Diffuser was added to several spotlights
- A sanctuary light was replaced that did not match the rest of the sanctuary lights.
- Two puck lamps and two spots were replaced
- The transept window is lit at night.
- Toward the end of the project, an additional pendant incandescent light and the cross light burned out and those too were repaired.

The vendor, CIES, was supportive throughout these updates. A combination of a loss of initial bid for transept lighting and references to scorched earth approach were outward signs to the vendor to be customer-centric. CIES rose to the occasion and provided quality resources, resourceful solutions, and a high standard for customer service.

### Recommendations:

Several aspects of the above work are worrisome. Missing failure records, lack of maintenance, no defined maintenance process, and a delay in executing a member gift, should be addressed.

Maintain a regular punch list for B&G. Lack of reliable issue history made isolation of lighting issues between the dimmer system and bulb maintenance impossible. The transept lighting wish list item appeared to get lost which is unfortunate given a donor's gift.

Perform preventative maintenance and inspection on an ongoing basis for sanctuary lighting and entire church. One safety issue was uncovered during initial inspection. Regular inspection would aid in proactive issue management and allows for isolation of issues within a system. For example, if one light is out and the other light on the dimmer system works then the issue is a burned-out bulb or possibly cabling. An added benefit would be to document church systems, age, availability of replacement parts.

Consider organizing a library of manuals, schematics, wiring diagrams.

Consider creating an inventory of routine parts available and track stock levels.

Provided with this report is a file that has a working punch list, an inventory list, and planned maintenance recommendations for consideration by the B&G to incorporate into a new process. That process should include both staff and the B&G committee working collaboratively to be proactive and organized.

Dave Ryan (Project Coordinator)

## Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality task force was formed in March 2019 and became an official committee in January of 2020. The purpose of the Hospitality Committee, as written in the FFC bylaws, shall be to ensure that both members and guests are warmly greeted and welcomed. It is the responsibility of this committee to make a good first impression and create best practices to ensure that first time visitors return.

Team members: (original task force included)

David & Vickie Bailey  
Brant Bechold  
Ann Binkele  
Russel Bolton  
Pat Fenoliga  
Bruce Fordyce  
Wendy Garnant  
Rob Hackett  
Marianne Klisares  
Claire McQuerry  
John & Suzanne Mooney  
Thersa Pfeiffer  
Ralph & Cindy Schoen  
Luke & Jessica Sheley

A review of FFC membership and weekly guest attendance numbers indicate a decline consistent with that of churches nationwide. Of course, every church thinks they are the friendliest church in town but without a concerted effort it is difficult to achieve.

The definition of hospitality is the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guest, visitors or strangers. We first looked at what actions we could take to make our church more hospitable.

Since first impressions are key to the vitality of a church the team chose to look thru the lens of a first time guest, making sure all feel welcome.

Many people check out the church website before choosing to come to church. The team examined and gave recommendation for the FFC website.

Out side of the church we reviewed signage, parking lot, landscaping. Still need to install signs to designate parking spots for guests.

Inside the building: Directional signing, cleanliness and safety of the nursery and cleanliness of restrooms were

checked. Wearing of name badges became a priority for our congregation and the team hosts were given an "Ask Me" button to easily identify someone who could answer a question from guests. Friendly out-going persons with the gift of "hospitality" were placed at each entrance to welcome everyone with warm smiles.

For worship: the bulletins were reviewed and determined that everyone, including those who did not grow up in the church, could easily understand and follow the service.

FFC informational packets and bread or cookies, (thanks to the "Dough Boys"), packed in FFC logo bags, was well received by first time guests. Also, a very good "Welcome" brochure tells "Who We Are" including our history, what we believe and what FFC offers. The team hosted three (3) new member informational brunches.

We encouraged members to participate in "bring-a-friend" Sunday.

During January we were able to identify seventeen (17) first time guests, of which eight (8) have made return visits. We also recognized that we have a growing number of "regular" guests.

The pandemic has curtailed the usual welcoming hugs and serving coffee/treats but given us opportunities to be creative in our methods to connect with each other. Elbow bumps and a smile with our eyes is the new norm.

With the assistance of ten (10) young families, "goodie bags" containing prepackaged snacks were distributed to our members in health care facilities. Cards were sent to our newest confirmation class. As church service resumed we served water and bars in the churchyard. With masks and social distancing, we hosted an outdoor celebration for Frosty's retirement.

The team is currently organizing a virtual Advent Calendar.

Thank you to the many dedicated Hospitality Team members and to all who will continue to participate in this most important ministry for FFC.

Grace and Peace,

Trish Fordyce,  
Moderator



## The Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons welcomed ten new deacons in January 2020.

On February 16 the annual Deacon Expo was held during Fellowship Hour. Refreshments were served in the Commons as church members learned about the various deacon ministries. Deacons answered questions and encouraged members to sign up to help serve in each ministry.

Beginning in March the pandemic caused many of the deacons' duties to be cancelled. However, some of the missions and ministries were adapted for the "new normal."

- The deacons helped greet, take temperatures, and usher during Sunday morning services.
- Throughout the year the deacons ministered to their parishioners with Christian care. The deacons reached out through postcards, notes, emails, and phone calls.
- Easter and Holiday greeting cards were mailed to all church members.
- The deacons helped greet and usher for the Sing It Yourself Messiah in December.
- The church was decorated for Advent and Christmas.

The deacons and many church volunteers served during visitations, funeral services, and memorial receptions this past year for the following: Suzanne Meyer Stuber, Brandon Smith, Laura Racine, Lynn Banta, Michael VerKuilen, Bob Gilmore, and Anne Bodtke. Other church members who passed during the year and did not need the deacons' assistance were Edward Griffin, Earl Doubet, Susan Collins, Nelson Chatham, Betty Grimsley, Pat Loring, David Eckstrom, BJ Triebel, Ken Jones and Joyce DeBruyn.

Five new deacons will be installed to the 2021 Board of Deacons. We look forward to a year filled with hope and new beginnings at First Federated Church with a Deacon Board who will serve generously.

Grace and Peace,

Ann Ragsdale and Debby Triebel, Co-Moderators



## FFC Women's Club

Women's Club meets the 4th Wednesday of the month from September through May with the exception of November/December when we combine the meetings and meet the first Wednesday of December due to the holidays. This year we also did not have a January meeting. We enjoy a light lunch and fellowship followed by a program and a short business meeting. We have \$20 dues that covers the cost of our lunch and the speakers/entertainment. We volunteer to host coffee hour a few times a year as our service to the church. Anyone is welcome to visit us at any time.

Women's Club has approximately 50 paying members with an average attendance of 30-35. The club is governed by an elected board. This year's board consisted of President – Ann Ragsdale; 1st Vice President – Laura Johnson; 2nd Vice President – Jerri Varnold; Secretary – Kay Hulin; Treasurer – Jan Chapman; Past President – Barb Hein; Calling Chairman – Barb Hein; Devotions – Kathy Allin; Women's Civic Federation Representatives – Joanne Richardson and Helen Peterson.

Each year we continue to seek new members and lost two loyal members this year – Suzanne Stuber and Anne Bodtke. They will be missed. A Blessing Bag collection is

taken at each meeting and this year we donated money from the previous two years. \$200 was given to Esther and \$200 to The Dream Center.

Our programs this year were - September - "Peoria Stories – Tales of the Heartland" - Ken Zerski; October – Our speaker was unable to come so we enjoyed Halloween Games; December - "Christmas Sing Along and Holiday Eats and Treats; February – "The History of Springdale Cemetery" - Mark Matuszak. This was our last meeting of the year due to church activities being shut down by the Pandemic.

We enjoy the fellowship each month and are looking forward to the time when we can plan our meetings and gather again.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ann Ragsdale





## Pulpit and Staff Committee

2020 brought many significant changes to the personnel of First Federated Church. Staff compensation was changed, fulltime employees' roles and reporting patterns were adjusted and two retirements were received.

The year began with plans to change the compensation packages for our fulltime staff. The employees received increase in wages to assist them in the reduction of First Federated Church paying health benefits for their family members. These changes have been explained and accepted by staff and will result in savings for the church and increases for the staff.

We had multiple personnel changes in 2020. Lisa Hoepker, our financial secretary for the last twenty-two years retired. Sabrina McGrath was hired as a part time book keeper and some of Lisa's responsibilities were redistributed to Gail Weghorst and Cecelia Walters. Cecelia Walter was moved to a salaried position as Administrative Assistant for Clergy and Congregational support. Her position will report directly to the Head of Staff, and will include responsibility for the part time book keeper position. Gail Weghorst, Business Administrator will assume the payroll responsibilities. Other staff changes include the addition of Lisa Hackett as part time youth director, and the replacement of Jay Schierer with Fred Weghorst as part time buildings and grounds person.

On October 31, 2020 Rev. Dr. Frosty Krummel retired from active ministry at First Federated Church. He has been the senior minister for fifteen years; the longest serving head of staff in First Federated Church's history. Although limited by the restrictions of the pandemic, a celebration was

held in honor of his ministry. In tribute to his leadership, an endowed scholarship at Wana Wa Mola was established in his name. He will be greatly missed.

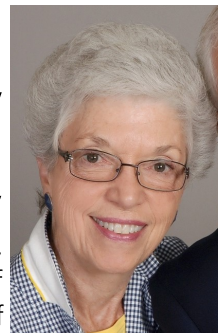
Subsequent to Frosty's retirement, Dr. David Ezekiel was contracted with the Executive Board as First Federated Church's transition minister. He started his work on October 18, 2020.

Due to the arrival of the COVID Pandemic, many efforts were made to keep our employees and our members safe. After weeks of shut down, corporate worship was reestablished, first in the Life Together Center and then in the sanctuary. CDC guidelines have been followed. Because of the many changes and restrictions caused by the pandemic, the Pulpit and Staff asked the Executive Board to make an exception in our vacation policy for fulltime personnel. This year, employees will be permitted to carry over five days of vacation time from 2020 to 2021 with the stipulation that the carried over vacation time be used before the end of the first quarter of 2021 and all 2021 vacation be used before the end of 2021.

It has been a year like no other, and it has been a tribute to our employees and volunteers who have done so much to make these extraordinary circumstances manageable. Many people deserve our gratitude.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Dornaus,  
Vice-moderator and Chair of  
Pulpit and Staff





## Finance Committee

As you might expect 2020 has been a challenging year financially with the Covid virus. We are thankful to all of you, the members of our congregation, for continuing to fulfill your pledge commitment in these challenging times.

We began our 2020 year with a nice surplus carryover from our 2019 year of \$116,222. This surplus was transferred to our general reserves fund. We are trying to build our general reserves fund balance to be at least 50% of one year's expenses. We are at about 28% currently. This is our rainy day fund if something unexpectedly would happen that we had not anticipated.

With the Covid virus restrictions our Preschool was shut down from mid March through the first part of June and the use of our LTC has been severely restricted. Fortunately, we were able to obtain two grants which helped offset these revenue shortfalls and we anticipate ending the year with a surplus which we can carryover and transfer into our general reserves fund.

We will be presenting a balanced budget for 2021. However, it will only be balanced by using some of our general reserves fund. At the initial close of 2021 Stewardship Campaign on November 19th, our total pledges were approximately \$65,000 less than last year however our campaign will remain open until the end of November. We are hopeful we can reach our 2020 pledge amount or even exceed it. Our Congregation's generosity is key in maintaining our Mission of Making Disciples through our 4 pillars of Worship, Teaching, Fellowship and Missions.

The Finance Committee has met as needed to review the financial year-to-date results, discuss plans for the remainder of the year, and plan the stewardship campaign. Beginning in August we formalized our meeting structure to be monthly and developed a standard agenda to assist with ongoing needs by the committee.

Our Endowment has grown this year with our balance being \$2,059,247 at the end of October. The goal for our Endowment Fund is \$10 million. The Endowment Committee was actively meeting until Covid and will begin meeting again in December. This year again, the Stewardship Campaign's pledge card included a place to note one's interest in contributing to the Endowment.

Historically, we have had approximately 50% of our membership pledge or contribute regularly to our Ministry Budget. Thus far in our 2021 Stewardship Campaign we are approaching close to 60% participation which is an increase from prior years. This year's 2021 Stewardship Campaign has been challenging with the limited in person services and messages. However, Stewardship Moments and weekly updates have continued to keep the congregation informed. We prayerfully ask that you continue the generosity and commitment to support the ministry of First Federated Church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget Mattson, Finance Committee Chair

David Bailey, Treasurer



## Missions Committee

My, the difference a year can make. 2020 started “normally” as we were planning for our regular mission committee events. Then the pandemic began, and like everyone, we had to pivot. Our first responsibility was to safety – not only of our FFC family, but also the organizations and individuals we work with.

The unfortunate result was the cancellation of many of our regular activities. But we carried on.

As you may know, District 150 provides breakfast and lunch to their students. When the District went to remote learning in March, distribution centers were set up across the city to provide breakfast / lunch meals to students. FFC was the only church that served as a distribution center – staffed entirely by volunteers – through the end of school in May.

There were many FFC members that participated in taking distributions shifts at the church. However, three people, in particular, went “above and beyond” by taking more than their fair share of shifts. Thank you to Fred Hoy, Brian Hulin, and Suzanne Mooney. A fourth person, Heather Wahlstrom – who works with and knows many of the Thomas Jefferson students-- hand delivered meals to the neediest. Quietly, and without fanfare, the four of you were wonderful examples of service and discipleship.

Outside of Thomas Jefferson school is a large “birdhouse looking” container. It is a small pantry – that members of your mission committee periodically stock with food as well as regular household items (things like laundry detergent). The school district wants these “pantries” to be for the local community around each school – to help those that may be struggling with some of the necessities of life.

Our Snack Pack program continues at Neighborhood House. Our intention is to re-start at Whittier School as soon as the students are physically back.

Historically, through our mission grants, we have supported several different organizations such as Center of Prevention of Abuse, Crittenton Center, and Midwest Food Bank. These organizations do tremendous work. But, given the economic realities for many of our neediest citizens, we decided to use our mission grant budget to “purchase” a month of dinners at the Dream Center. During a normal month, the Dream Center will serve up to 1,900 dinners.

We continued our annual pledge of support to Wana Wa Mola in Mombasa. We are making a difference in the lives of these former “Garbage Boys” living on the streets. Several have now started college or technical training schools.

Videos were recorded from our various mission partners to describe their activities and how FFC’s support benefits their work. These videos are being rotated on the church’s website.

The annual Christmas Gift Catalog has been sent to every member of our congregation. This year, FFC members are supporting the following organizations: Center for Prevention of Abuse, Crittenton Center, Dream Center, Elite, Midwest Food Bank, Neighborhood House, PAWS, Peoria Grown, and Phoenix Community Development Services.

In another sign of the times, the Giving Tree went virtual this year. FFC members responded by taking all of our “virtual” stars. Gifts purchased are supporting children at Crittenton Center and Dream Center. It may not be the same as being in our beautiful church taking a star from the tree, but we guarantee you that the gift given is perhaps even more meaningful this year. Thank you to those who participated.

Looking forward to 2021, we are hopeful that the rummage sale and Passport to Hope will occur. But, as of today, we simply do not know. Regardless, your FFC mission committee will carry on – working to make the lives of the less fortunate a little better – both here in Peoria and across the globe.

Co-Moderators: Greg Johnston and Karen Henderson

## Christian Education Committee

Christian Education is a major part of the purpose and activity of First Federated Church. It includes all the age groups and requires many willing and faithful volunteers.

Adult Christian Education includes a book study led by Ron Silver held on Sunday mornings in person when possible and via zoom when needed. Theology on Tap has provided opportunities for people to explore some of the challenging questions encountered when on a faith journey, this is led by Shane Richardson. Book studies on facing racism as a society were also held. Bible studies are also offered at Independence Village and Lutheran Hillside Village.

Our Senior High youth group is now under the leadership of Lisa Hackett. They continue to meet for a variety of activities that are socially distant and responsible in the global pandemic. The mission trip was unable to be held this year due to the pandemic.

Junior High youth are meeting for activities and are being led by Jessica Sheley. Six of our youth were confirmed into full membership at FFC. Special thanks to Laura Kowalske, who recently retired from our Confirmation Program, she has devoted many years to the program and we are most grateful for all she has done for our youngest new members.

The Sunday school programs started on Kickoff Sunday, September 8th. Bible Dedication Sunday was September 29th. Sunday school children also participated in Shoebox Sunday gathering supplies and activities to be sent to second and third world children. Junior high Sunday school is using the Orange curriculum which is focusing on the Psalms and prayer.

LOGOS meets Wednesday evenings for six week sessions each semester. Currently 24 children are participating in LOGOS. The evening includes a light meal, a lesson, and fun activities. Kitchen volunteers provide the meal and table parents help with the serving and fellowship at the tables. Children learn how to use manners, say grace, and serve each other as well as taking turns cleaning up after the meal. Each evening has a theme that keeps it very interesting and fun.

A new advisory board has been established for the purpose of supporting our youth and Christian Education leaders and volunteers. The board will meet in advance of each liturgical season and help establish programming. It will also be the link to First Federated Preschool programming. The Preschool is working on having an updated area which will make our facility fire code compliant. There are two separate groups meeting to support the Preschool, a group focused on the physical building and a group focused on curriculum and furthering the reach of the school.

Christian Education at FFC has the benefit of many dedicated and talented volunteers, and leadership from our clergy and staff who work tirelessly to insure that members have many opportunities to enrich their Biblical knowledge and deepen their faith.

Respectfully submitted,  
El Higus,  
Moderator



Sunday, August 23rd  
we held our Confirmation  
ceremony in the  
"front yard" of  
the church



## 2020 ~ A Look Back



Congratulations to the 2020 Souper Bowl Soup winners!

And then the Coronavirus happened . . .

The church and campus was under lockdown from March 19th to June 8th.

Worship services, Bible studies, Committee and Staff meetings went online.

Sunday, July 12th we held our first, in-person, socially distant, by reservation only worship service in the Great Hall of the Life Together Center. 27 people attended the 8 and 10 am services.

### Worship in the Great Hall



Check-in, facial covering, and temperature checks required.

Sunday, August 9th we celebrated the burning of the Life Together Center mortgage. Sid and Flo Banwart were special guests.



Rev. Dr. Forrest (Frosty) Krummel, Jr. preached his final service for FFC on Sunday, October 4th, his call was officially dissolved on Sunday, September 27th at a Special Congregational Meeting after 14 years as our Senior Pastor.

Pastor David Ezekiel was hired as our Transitional Minister. He began on October 15th.



## Membership Summary

### TOTAL ACTIVE MEMBERS

**December 1st, 2020**

Presbyterian - 345  
United Church of Christ - 232  
Total - 577

### NEW MEMBERS (11)

**January 19th, 2020**

Tim McCoul

**March 1st, 2020**

Celia Johnson  
Jean Monroe  
Leslie Tate

**August 23rd, 2020**

#### Confirmands

Kayla Alderson  
Alex Braun  
Zhi Yu Kolmer  
Gavin O'Laughlin  
Elle Seshul  
Shealyn Terry  
Jacob VandeWiele

### MARRIAGES

(1)

Performed by Rev. Dr. Forrest Krummel, Jr.

August 8th, 2020

Abigail Grace Jockisch to Jacob Christian Taylor  
Off Campus ~ Venue Chisca  
1009 SW Washington Street, Peoria Illinois

### BAPTISMS

(7)

Performed by Rev. Dr. Forrest Krummel, Jr.

February 23rd, 2020

Leo Samuel Higus  
Son of El and Timm Higus

March 1st, 2020

Leslie Tate

July 26th, 2020

Evelyn Joan Ellis  
Daughter of Mandy and Brett Ellis

August 30th, 2020

Magnolia Suzanne Lee  
August O'Donnell Lee  
Children of Emily and Mike Lee

Performed by Pastor David Ezekiel

October 25th

Waylon Matthew Casey  
Son of Megan and Joshua Casey

October 25th

Eric Jon Grimm

### COMPLETED THIS PART OF LIFE

(17)

*In loving memory of the following members who have completed this part of life since our last report.*

Lynn N. Banta	1/2/2020
Edward L Griffin, Jr.	1/19/2020
E. Brandon Smith	1/26/2020
Suzanne Meyer Stuber	2/18/2020
Earl Doubet	4/3/2020
Susan Collins	4/5/2020
Nelson Chatham	4/9/2020
Patricia M. Loring	4/26/2020
David Ekstrand	7/4/2020

Michael T. VerKuilen	8/1/2020
B.J. Triebel	8/19/2020
Robert E. Gilmore	9/22/2020
Anne Bodtke	10/15/2020
Kenneth W. Jones	10/20/2020
Joyce DeBruyn	10/21/2020
Jo Tucker	11/2/2020
Kenneth Moline	11/16/2020



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