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Message From the Moderator

My Friends,

Two years ago, I began a journey as a Moderator for our Church. I had excitement as I looked forward to the opportunity to work with our Staff, Boards, Committees, and members. Little did any of us foresee the change in our personal lives and the life of our church that has occurred over the past year. We have been surrounded by chaos in both the political life of our country and the impacts of the pandemic.

I must tell you that even though these are difficult times, I am even more excited about the future of our church and our lives together. I have been amazed at the creativity that our staff, boards, committees, and members have shown during the past year. It has been said that in times of crisis, the pre-conceptions and familiar patterns of life are disrupted. This can be a blessing, because it provides time in that liminal space to look at where we are being called, and it feeds our creative instincts. We worship differently, we meet differently, but we are still a strong and vibrant church!

This annual report tells the story of how we have created new ways to be a church. I would like to recognize several examples.

First, my deepest thanks to our staff at the church. When the lockdown order came out in March, they changed everything about how we experience our Sunday Service in just a few days. We went from meeting at the church building to meeting online. Coffee Hour became an online event that brought together people from around the world. We went from a recording of the service to creative ways to enhance the service. Who can forget the first time we saw the “Kajsaettes” perform, greetings from the youth, passing the peace, the choir singing for us again. We are about to make the next step and move to live streaming the service, the first step to re-opening our church. Amazing!

Our children could not meet every Sunday, so Deb and team adapted. We have Zoom Sunday School and camps were conducted this summer outside, masked, and socially distanced. A great opportunity for them to be together.

We changed how we had to do Christmas, but what wonderful changes. People so enjoyed the hospitality of the Skaggs family as they made a labyrinth on their property for walking during advent. Staff created prayer stations for people so we had a new experience.

Our outreach to members greatly increased. We have all been blessed by visits and gifts from the visitation ministry. I really enjoyed the visit by the Wise Ones (and their crowns) with the Grace Gifts during stewardship. What fun!

And while we learned to do church in a different way, the business of the church continued. Board of Management (thank you Jodie and Julie) found ways to reduce costs, made sure that we supported our renters (and extended the lease for our major renter as the same rate), and put a new roof on the church (thanks Bob Matthias for your project management).

My thanks to all the Boards and Committees for all their efforts to continue as a church and find different ways to meet the needs of the church.

One last special thanks to our Senior Pastor Chris. I tease her many times that she should have attended the “How to do Church during a Pandemic” class in seminary. Too bad that class or a book did not exist. We have been lucky. Chris has been creating that process every day. It seems like there is a new challenge each week, but Chris and our staff find solutions each week.

Let us celebrate the work of all the people in our church. We are a vibrant and growing church, a true light in the community and world. We are listening to our calling and finding so many ways to grow together as a faith community.

It has been such a pleasure to work with all of you as your Moderator this year!

Charley Rastle - Moderator

Message From the Senior Minister

I am writing this report on Ash Wednesday, 2021, the beginning of Lent, the time when traditionally the church invites us into a season of sober reflection on our mortality. As we look back now on 2020, I think it's not a stretch to say that we have lived a whole year of Lent already.

Last year at this time, a global pandemic compelled us to take some dramatic measures to protect everyone from the spread of COVID-19. On March 13, less than two weeks after our last Annual Meeting, we closed our building to our congregation and the community. We cancelled every in-person activity, moved much of our shared life online, and looked for new ways to connect with one another while also maintaining the physical separation necessary for safety's sake. The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, the widespread wildfires in Colorado and elsewhere, the polarizing rhetoric in the public square, all captured the attention of our country and the deep concern of our congregation. As a church we endeavored to respond to these challenging realities with faithfulness in every facet of our shared life – our worship, witness, care, learning, service and stewardship. I am grateful for all the ways the church staff, the moderator team, Charley Rastle, Karen Cumbo, and Jessica Austin, and the whole congregation responded with grace, flexibility, encouragement, and creativity to meet every challenge.

After a couple of valiant, but less than satisfying, attempts to live-stream worship to Facebook using a cell phone and the church's video camera on a tripod, we began to pre-record our services, first from the homes of our staff and then, as we grew more confident, from the church sanctuary and chapel. Each week, every element of worship, from the hymns to the prayers, the sermon, and special music, is recorded separately, 15 or more individual video recordings, and then stitched together into one video by Christopher Carter, our Communications Specialist, who uploads the full service to premiere on Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. on our YouTube page.

Over time, we added new features to the worship services – passing the peace videos sent in by church members, candle lighting passed from screen to screen on Christmas Eve, slide shows, visual prayers, and drone camera footage of our building and the Flatirons. With the computer app Acapella and four iPads purchased on sale, Kajsa set about learning how to master recording musical ensembles, including creating sometimes nine-part choruses of herself with instruments. Our musicians, Chancel Choir, Youth Faith Singers, Bell Choir, and other instrumentalists have bravely learned how to record their singing and playing on their own, enabling us to mix parts electronically so that in time every service has come to include song leaders for hymn singing and special music for anthems. We are grateful to Chris Shearer Cooper for his technical wizardry in combining dozens of audio and video tracks together to bring us choral anthems, to Sam Bauman, who weekly mixes recordings of singers and instruments onto videos of Kajsa at piano and organ to create our hymns, and to Phil Braudaway-Bauman, who over the months has

video recorded hundreds of worship elements that have been used to create our digital worship.

We also experimented with other forms of worship. For a season, we added a Wednesday evening Vespers Service on YouTube. During day camp versions of Arts Camp our kids and middle school youth wrote and performed on video their own version of the story of Job, delighting the congregation with their creativity. In late summer and early fall, we started a Sunday evening outdoor service. During Advent, the Arts Ministry posted prayer stations through a labyrinth mowed through the field at Only Sunshine Farm, the home of David and Laura Skaggs. Our kids performed a Christmas Pageant on Zoom. On Christmas Eve, we held three brief evening outdoor services, spreading out on the Pine Street side of our building so that we could light candles and sing *Silent Night* softly from behind our masks. During the last week of January, we opened up the sanctuary for prayer visits. Households signed up for fifteen-minute appointments in the sanctuary to dedicate their annual financial pledge and visit four prayer stations.

We also found new ways to turn our witness inside out, using the outside of our building to reflect our inner commitments. We posted a large banner on the Plaza – Black Lives Matter to God and to Us. The Arts Ministry decorated the railings and the trees in rainbows and our kids colored signs and covered the sidewalks in chalk for Boulder Pridefest. On the night after the U.S. Presidential election, as votes were anxiously being counted across the country, we came together to write prayers on luminary bags and left them lit on the outside sanctuary steps all night long. We hung our Christmas greens and lights on the outside of the building for the whole neighborhood to enjoy. We rang the carillon bells in our tower every chance we got – for climate action on the 11th of every month at the 11th hour, to welcome guests to our grab-and-go Soup Kitchen, and to join the national COVID memorial on the evening before the Presidential inauguration.

In the early weeks of COVID, Jessica Austin organized a phone tree of all our members and friends, and over the next few months, every household received a phone call to see if anyone needed assistance. We moved all of our small groups online, including choirs and church school, recognizing immediately how essential every group, including our Boards and Committees, would be to sustaining our communal life. We purchased five Zoom licenses and have succeeded most of the time in preventing meetings from colliding with each other. During the summer, Karen Cumbo and Jon Hinebauch organized a variety of outdoor small group social gatherings.

Beginning Easter weekend, Kelly McDevitt and Libby Black assembled a crew to make and deliver small care packages on behalf of church to folks in our congregation living alone or isolated in retirement communities. It brought everyone so much joy that it became a monthly project of a growing group. A few months ago, the Board of Community Life took it over to continue making it a regular offering. We called them Grace Gifts, and expanded the idea into our Stewardship theme for 2021. On Epiphany, a team of 60 Magi, complete with paper crowns, delivered to every household in the congregation a Gift of Grace that included a booklet of reflections, poetry, and art written and made by church members.

As a renewed reckoning with racism came to light in our country, our time at home gave many of us an opportunity to engage in urgent, challenging, and extended learning and discussion. When George Floyd was murdered by police and protest erupted, many of us felt called to listen and to learn in new ways. We launched several study groups, first on the history of race, some discussing the documentary series, *African Americans, Many Rivers to Cross*, and others reading the book *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Idea* by Ibram X. Kendi. Eighty-nine members of our congregation joined a six-week small group discussion and course of study on White Privilege. Since then, we have continued to meet after worship for forums about race, especially as we have prepared for Rev. Traci Blackmon's time with us as our MacKenzie Lecturer in February, 2021. A ministry focused on Racial Justice is forming in our midst.

In 2019, after a season of intentional discernment to identify a church-wide mission project, the climate crisis emerged as one of four priorities for our congregation's attention. During the past year, a Climate Action Team began meeting. Its large and active membership has launched us into conversations about what it would mean for us to become a "Creation Justice Church of the United Church of Christ."

Mindful Works, the church-wide mission partner we selected in our 2019 discernment process, was declared an essential workplace and has remained open throughout this past year. While the congregation has been out of the building, we gave Mindful Works permission to expand their operations into Plymouth Hall, enabling them to maintain safe physical distances as they continued their work.

While the church building has been otherwise empty, everything came together after years of preparation for us to replace the roof on the sanctuary. A grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund, attentive financial stewardship and oversight by our Board of Management, co-chaired by Jodie Cottrell and Julie Kamrath, and project management by Bob Matthias, made this possible for us. We have also undertaken extensive work on our HVAC system and the installation of live-streaming equipment in the sanctuary. There will be more to say about what our new live-streaming capability means for us soon.

During this difficult season, the generosity of our congregation has never flagged. Our church gave nearly \$17,000 through special offerings to direct service organizations for COVID relief in addition to grants from our Benevolence Endowment Fund and 3340 lbs. of canned food through neighborhood collections overseen by Don Reed. In a time of economic insecurity for many, 98% of pledges to the 2020 operating budget were fulfilled. Several folks contributed to the church beyond their pledge. Our stewardship pledges for 2021 have already totaled \$25,600 more than last year's.

All this is to say that while the whole world has been different this year, the church has not stood still. I find it deeply moving that 25 people have joined our life as new members in this strange season. I believe our life together has been changed in other ways, too,

changes that will last even after we emerge from the pandemic to celebrate in person our covenant with God and each other. Exactly what will remain from this experience is not yet entirely clear, but we already recognize how important it is, and how possible, for the church to reach people wherever they are. The implications of that realization are myriad.

For all that has been and for all that is yet to be, in the life of this remarkable congregation, I give thanks. For all the ways God's Spirit lives and moves among us, for each one of you and for the life of faith we are blessed to share as First Congregational UCC, Boulder, I am profoundly grateful. I look forward with eager longing to the day when we can be together face to face again. That day is coming. But God is here now. Even while we are apart, God is with us now.

With Gratitude, Grace, and Peace,
Christina Braudaway-Bauman

Message From the Associate Minister

Worship and Preaching: Love, justice, healing, courage, challenge, and conversation have been the central themes of worship and preaching over the last year. As we all know, our entire context for ministry was changed in 2020. From the global pandemic that has killed hundreds of thousands to the life altering impact it has had on everyone on this planet to the Black Lives Matter Movement locally and internationally, the space in which we worship and preach has been irrevocably altered. Combine this with a contentious election and a highly publicized expression of Christianity dominating the public discourse all while trying to present a unifying message through video.

In many ways, this is the natural evolution of last year's focus on "narrative expansion" which aimed at encouraging us to make room for others in our understanding of our own stories. Living and working in the tensions of unreconciled difference, I felt and still feel called to articulate an invitation to greater community among our members and beyond our walls. In my opinion, the efficacy of preaching and worship in these trying times may start with helping us feel better, but the greater import is its encouragement for us to be better so that we can do better in the work of building Beloved Community. My focus and intentions in preaching and leading worship has that aim.

Pastoral Care: Pastoral care in the age of Covid is not without its challenges. However, with the help of numerous volunteers and the creativity of many folks, we have tried to do our best to make sure that we are connecting with as many people as possible. At times, pastoral care has manifested as tech support to help people acclimate to gathering digitally, while at other times, it has been visits in a parking lot with masks on or talking on a cell phone while looking at someone through their window. Text messaging, Zoom visits, increased emails, and connecting on social media has also increased as touch points for folks and ways of caring in this pandemic time. Managing the monthly grace gifts delivered through a cadre of volunteers has also been a much appreciated way of us being the hands and feet of Christ to one another. In this year, prayer as visitation has also become a deeper element of pastoral care--something that I am encouraging each of us to add to our Christian witness.

Congregational Life: Board of Community Life, Board of Mission and Christian Social Action, the Visitation Ministry, the A2A Mental Health Ministries, the Climate Action Team, and the Mindful Works Ministry are still staples of congregational life. I continue to participate in the Wednesday night Bible Study. The Men's Breakfast has adapted well to the online version and has consistently held at above 20+ participants with people visiting from the Boulder Community and some members who have relocated. Prior to this change we completed our annual retreat. Deborah and I completed the Confirmation program in the summer as well with a final retreat. In addition, Diana Shellenberger and I started a Weekly Poetry group at the beginning of the lockdowns that has been very enriching. I have also been working on building relationships with our young adults and am also working with members of our congregation and Community UCC on a joint Racial

Justice Ministry aimed at serving our communities on this journey as well as being a resource to the wider Boulder community.

Missions and Community Engagement: In the wider community, I have continued to hold the vision that people who may never enter our facility for a worship service, identifying with First Congregational Church as a community they can trust as expressed by Revs. Moss and Blackmon in their respective congregations while remaining mindful to the community within First Congregational. I am still on my term as the Boulder County State Rep for Together Colorado and have worked on actions for affordable housing--particularly mobile home communities, encouraging voting, and racial justice work.

Along with Matt Hess and Matt Gentry, I created and facilitated 3 practice sessions on the book, "So You Want to Talk About Race" by Ijeoma Oluo that were attended by people throughout our church and the wider community. I also participate in the NAACP Religious Affairs Committee and am cultivating relationships with other faith communities to support one another in our work toward social and environmental justice. I am keeping my finger on the pulse of homelessness, meeting up with members of that community, working with Scott Medina of Bridge House on the homeless memorial service, and serving as a POC for people within and outside of First Congregational membership who are interested in helping fill gaps in homeless response in contact with each other. At the Rocky Mountain Conference level, I have continued to work with the Healthy Ministerial Relationships Team, served on the Racial Justice Think Tank to help the conference develop guidelines for becoming an intentionally anti-racist conference and worked with the Conference Minister and members of the Board to create a new granting program known as The Tributary Fund

Website and Technology:

I still serve as a backup for most technology applications for the church website and like all of the worship staff, I have been developing skills in recording and editing videos for worship services and have gained a level of proficiency with Zoom and other conferencing platforms.

Rev. Pedro Silva

Message From the Director of Christian Education

What a year 2020 was for those of us working with our children, youth and young adults. The year started with all of our programs running strong. Our programming was mapped out for the program year and Matthew Benz-Whittington, our Director of Youth and Young Adults, and I were deep into the planning of our annual mission trip and ARTS Camp.

And then March came with Covid-19 precautions, then shut-downs, and then Stay at Home orders. Together with the Board of Christian Education we worked to make difficult decisions to cancel the Mission Trip and ARTS Camp. We became proficient in Zoom technology and moved our Sunday School gatherings online prior to the online worship service. I became the zoom teacher for Elementary Grades.

In March Matthew was blessed with a call to pastor a church in Maryville Tennessee beginning in July. Matthew's last day was Sunday, June 21st. I assumed oversight for the youth programming and was a member of the search committee, culminating in the hiring of Calvin Hardy as Director of Youth Ministry who started on October 12th.

Meanwhile, the thought of not having ARTS Camp was not sitting well with me, thus I started exploring how we could still have ARTS Camp as a Day camp and meet all the Covid protocols. I designed 2 camps, a middle school ARTS Camp that ran from June 7-13 from 9am-8pm. Using the Book of Job, we explored current issues (pandemic, BLM movement, personal conflicts) and our campers created and produced their own video rendition of the story of Job. They also created, individually in a sound booth, 2 songs for ARTS Camp worship. Counselors were Julia Wirth, Liesl Bryant, Sam Bauman and Er-Hsuan Li. In July we had ½ day Elementary ARTS Day Camp directed by Susan Wilkinson with Julia Wirth, Sam Bauman, Zach Shoffner and Maggie Wilkerson as counselors, which included music, arts & crafts, science and stories. All together we had 10 middle schoolers and 13 elementary children. Both camps were hosted by David and Laura Skaggs at their Only Sunshine Farm.

As the Interim Youth Coordinator, my deepest thanks go to our superb youth leadership team: Bill Forbes, Matt Gentry, Jessica Ostwald, Sam Bauman & Courtney Dobbins who cared for our youth through the summer and early fall. Bill & Bonney Forbes hosted several youth gatherings at their home up in Boulder Canyon as well as a Youth Leaders Planning Retreat as we all planned for fall. Bill, Matt & Jessica hosted Sunday school for the High School and Sam & Courtney hosted Sunday School for the Middle School throughout the Summer and into the fall as a way to maintain connection and community.

We were able to hold our annual Youth Family Gathering on September 12th at Carol Hindes' lakeside property and it was well attended and lots of fun!

We welcomed Calvin Hardy as our Director of Youth Ministry with a move-in gathering of youth and parents on October 6th; and Deborah hosted a lunch on October 4th for Calvin, Gracie and the Youth Leadership team. Calvin officially assumed his position on October 12th.

- ♥ Sunday school continued on a regular basis for children and youth throughout the summer as a way to maintain connection and community.
- ♥ Our final Questformation Retreat (with Rev. Pedro Silva) was held September 20th at the Skaggs Farm where we culminated our 2019-2020 Confirmation process and videoed all the pieces of our Confirmation Worship Service.
- ♥ Ginger Johnson, our Childcare Supervisor, started teaching preschool/kindergarten Sunday school every Sunday over zoom in September, delivering craft supplies for lessons.
- ♥ We had a successful gathering of Sunday School families of all age groups on Pride Sunday (September 13th) where our families made signs and decorated the sidewalks with chalk messages.
- ♥ Throughout the fall and winter we created “at home” projects for our families and delivered supplies.
- ♥ The culmination of 2020 was a Zoom Christmas Pageant for the 4th Sunday of Advent. Costumes were picked up at the church and 28 children and youth were involved in the production.

All in all, it was a year in which I stretched, flexed, explored options and created new visions for our children and youth and it worked better than I ever thought it could. Blessings were found in the most unexpected ways.

Deborah Voss, Director of Christian Education

Message From the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

I am in my fourth month here at the First Congregational Church of Boulder, and there is already so much to talk about. My wife and I have felt so welcomed by the staff and congregation, and we are so grateful for that. I am also grateful that in spite of an inability to meet in person I have had lots of opportunities to meet and build relationships with students over Zoom in many different settings. This church has a wonderful group of involved students, and it has been a joy to get to know them and their parents. There are several ways that I have been regularly interacting with students, a few of which were in place when I started and a few that I have been able to establish since I started.

First, there has been Sunday School. Since I started, I have begun writing all of the curriculum for Sunday school and switching off which class (middle or high school) I attend each week. Both groups have a very solid group of students in attendance each week that I would say is usually between five and ten students each. There are roughly 15 students that I would say regularly attend these classes. This is a very healthy number given the circumstances, and I have been thrilled to see the students continue to be committed to these classes. On top of having good attendance, I have been able to be a part of some awesome conversations with students throughout these classes as they explore concepts like love, inclusion, racism, and social stigmas. These students are filled with insight, and I am excited to continue having these types of conversations.

The one regular opportunity that I have had in the past few months to meet in-person with students has been in our Questformation classes. We have a small class of four students which has made it possible for us to meet together (usually outside). We have had three day-long retreats with these students and have covered topics that include The Trinity, the history of the UCC, and the sacraments. As I understand it, this retreat format for a confirmation class is new to this church. In my opinion it has been working very well for the students and their families, and each of the retreats has been filled with awesome insight and engagement from the students as well as great opportunities to have fun together! We have three more of these retreats planned before the end of the school year where we will be talking about Black History Month, World Religions, and planning our Questformation service.

The only other in-person activity that I have organized has been an outdoor activity group for elementary students that met several times this Fall before the weather got too cold. This group was led by a volunteer accompanied by one of the parents who had a child there. I heard many times from the families that chose to get involved that this was a great opportunity that they really appreciated. The group met at Foothills Community Park and had lots of space to play games while staying social distanced. I am hoping to start this group up again as soon as weather allows.

Since I started, I have also introduced several new "Zoom Groups" that have been meeting weekly since the beginning of November. For the most part I have been leading three zoom groups per week, two of which are the same from week to week, while the other is

on an every-other-week basis. Every Monday evening I lead a game night for up to nine students where we play the game Among Us. This is a game that can be played on a computer or on a smartphone. These groups are consistently full and have provided a really great community building opportunity. I have even had a few students who were not previously involved in the youth program join in and keep coming back regularly. Every Saturday evening I have a Dungeons and Dragons group with five students from our church. These have also been super fun evenings, and the students have only gotten more invested in this group the longer we have played. Finally on Friday nights I have led a variety of different activities like movie nights (which I do every other week), trivia nights, and board game nights. These groups have also consistently drawn groups of ten or more students. Even though this form of gathering is not ideal, and some students have a hard time engaging in more screen time, these groups have been very successful in keeping students involved in our youth program and keeping them connected to one another, and I have gotten lots of positive feedback from the students themselves as well as their parents.

As we hear more about the distribution of vaccines I am getting more and more excited about the possibility of in-person meetings and events. In the meantime, all of the opportunities noted above are great ways for our students to have fun together, continue engaging in their faith, and build a welcoming community for each other and any students that choose to join in.

Calvin Hardy, Director of Youth Ministry.

Message From the Director of Music

The year 2020 was a challenging year for the music program. Because of the pandemic all in-person activities were cancelled, including the Chancel Choir, Children's Music Program, Congregational Bells, and concert activities. Instead, we needed to find other ways and venues to get together. Initially, all zoom meetings were simply for social purposes, but after a while we started exploring how we could be more productive during our meetings.

After moving to online services, we started experimenting with how to record music and include it in the services. We began simply with recording on our own devices – phones, tablets, and laptops. We managed to get through Easter Sunday and Holy Week that way. Instead of our usual brass quintet, we hired only a trumpeter, Ken Aikin, to make recordings for us.

In May the church purchased three iPads to be used for music recordings, and we started using a music app called "a capella". It allowed us to record both audio and video, and despite a few frustrating limitations, it has worked quite well. I was able to bring choir members to church, one at a time to record, and eventually put together anthems. This app also allowed for me to record and work in a more flexible setting from home. We also explored other recording options, but all of them would require more extensive mixing, and we soon realized that it would not be sustainable, especially since I was working mainly from home, and was also tending to my daughters, one of whom started online Kindergarten this fall.

All vocal ensembles continued to meet virtually, via zoom or other venues. During the remainder of the spring, the Chancel Choir met only for social purposes. We had to cancel our performance of the Mozart Requiem in March, and it took the energy out of us for a while. Julia Wirth continued to meet virtually with both the Joyful Noise and Faith Singers.

The Congregational Bells started experimenting with how to record bell pieces, and after some trial and errors we eventually found a successful method. We were able to record a couple of pieces throughout the fall, and for Christmas eve.

In September I started up rehearsals with the Chancel Choir again, and we started working on Christmas music right away. Turned out it was a good call, because it took us three months to finish all the recordings, all while we were also preparing a few anthems for the fall. I need to mention that I could not have done the choir work without a lot of help from Chris Shearer Cooper who helped with the mixing for our Christmas anthems.

In November we hosted our Sawyer Memorial Organ Concert – virtually of course. We had originally invited organist and composer David Cherwien to play a hymn festival, but naturally we had to cancel. David graciously gave us permission to use already

recorded videos of himself playing hymns, videos where he also offered some background information to each hymn. It is still available on our youtube page if you missed it.

As we started recording in the sanctuary again, I got help from Phil Braudaway Bauman and Sam Bauman. They have been faithfully coming in every week to record me on the organ and piano, and then uploading everything for our staff to put the services together. Phil and Sam have also been mixing voices when we started adding the hymn vocal support. This leads me to also thanking all of our singers that have been coming in at odd days and hours to accommodate my strange schedule. They have recorded anthems, hymns, and other liturgical music pieces to make our services richer and more meaningful.

Lastly, to all other musical volunteers that have participated throughout the year, answered late night text messages, and recorded themselves from home with short notice - thank you! I hope and pray that we will be able to get back to making music in person soon again.

Kajsa Teitelbaum, Director of Music

Message From Our Seminarian

I am a student at Lexington Theological Seminary in Lexington, KY. I serve at First Congregational 10-hours per week while attending seminary full-time. The projected completion date of my Masters in Divinity (MDiv) is December 2021.

I began my time at First Cong this fall on September 8, 2020. Upon arriving I immediately began attending Church Council, Board of Spiritual Life and staff meetings to observe and learn from these groups. I also began attending and facilitating Women's Spirituality Group on Tuesdays. I participated in the outdoor Sunday evening services by planning and leading worship. I was privileged to work with the Arts Ministry and the youth in decorating the exterior of the church for Pride. As I became more acclimated with the various ministries at First Cong, I started attending and participating on Board of Community Life and the Visitation Ministry. As part of the staff, I assist in planning and leading worship services and even preached on December 27th.

In the four months that I was at First Congregational in 2020, I observed a thriving faith community in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic. As everyone learned, there was nothing normal about 2020 and that was also true in the life of First Congregational.

One of the biggest things that I learned this fall is that it is still possible to be the church even when you must stay physically distanced. The creativity of the staff and resiliency of the people of this church shone brightly. Continually this church found ways to worship together and stay connected. First Congregational has provided amazing training for this seminarian. I look forward to worshipping with you and continuing to learn as I serve you until the end of 2021. I am grateful for you and blessed to be your seminary intern.

Linda Kowatch - Seminarian

Board of Management

Our thanks to each member of Board of Management for being good stewards of the church. We appreciate their time and thoughtfulness in executing their responsibilities.

SIGNIFICANT HAPPENINGS IN 2020:

Roof Project-In August 2018, the State Historical Fund (SHF) announced that we were selected to receive a grant of up to \$200,000 to replace the main section of the tile roof over our sanctuary. We were required to grant Historic Denver, Inc., a perpetual facade easement. This assures the SHF that we will maintain our historic structure.

In November 2019, we awarded the bid to B&M Roofing, the lowest bidder and a vendor we have used in the past for roof repairs. We made changes to the original scope of the work to ensure the quality and longevity of this new roof. In addition, we completed repairs to the gutters and fascia on the advice of the architect and consulting engineers. We were delayed in the completion of the roof, since the manufacturing of the tile was affected by COVID. The roof was completed in December.

Cost Savings for the Church: In the middle of COVID, this has been a year of checks and balances. We suspended trash, recycling and the cleaning crew in April since the Church was closed. We increased Security for additional sweeps of the facilities, given the limited activity in the area. We decreased the overall temperature of the building while keeping the sanctuary heat stable based on the organ's temperature guidelines. Regarding our on-going partnership with Gibbons-White (G-W), our property management company, we negotiated to keep our management fees flat for the year. Our non-profit tenants have asked for rent forgiveness and we were able to accommodate them. We reduced the overall physical plant costs of running the church which significantly helped the budget bottom line.

On-going Commitment to Energy Consumption and Environment: The Church continues to support energy savings programs wherever possible. Within the last two years, we have upgraded almost all of our outside lighting to LEDs in order to be in compliance with Boulder's Dark Sky ordinance. The lighting in the chapel and sanctuary has all been upgraded to LEDs to save the cost of annually re-lamping all of them. The upper lights in Plymouth Hall have been changed to LED's.

The City of Boulder has required us to conduct an energy audit over the next two years, which will require us to replace the fluorescent lighting in all rooms with LED's. This will include hallways, classrooms, offices, kitchens, etc. It will also require us to replace all the emergency lighting in the hallways which are now fluorescent with battery backups.

BoM established a fund for alternative energy buying wind energy credits. This money goes directly to building another wind energy field.

Standard Leases and MOUs for Non-Profit Tenants- The Tenant Relations Committee developed standard leases and MOUs for our non-profit tenants with consistent calendar year lease durations and terms. To offset our building expenses and consistent with our non-profit status, we are currently leasing space to the following 501(c)(3) organizations: Open Studios, Rocky Ridge Music Academy and Mindful Works.

Carriage House- COVID has adversely impacted our Carriage House tenant, Baby Bathwater (BBW), causing cancellations of their money-making events. They did receive a PPE loan and have not missed any lease payments, but for now, they have not signed a new lease and their current lease ends March 31, 2021. We are marketing the space through G-W while awaiting BBW's decision moving forward. We are working with the G-W professional sales/lease team to ensure this space stays rented in 2021.

Live Streaming Sound System- After obtaining three bids, we signed a contract with MediaVine in September 2020 for equipment and installation for total of \$34K that will allow us to stream weekly services live. Our pre-recorded and YouTube services have been so popular that enabling ministry to live stream services seem like natural extension of our church. Even after COVID, the church will live stream allowing people outside of Boulder area, shut-ins, and on bad weather days, our congregation to meet for service. But with COVID, and other churches also going live, equipment was scarce and on back order. As of this report, equipment, installation and training will start on February 8, 2021. With multiple cameras, zoom lenses, sound and control board, weekly services will require two AV specialist instead of one during services and weekly costs will double. The church also incurred other one-time expenses for internet cabling, dedicated electrical outlet and desk for equipment in the loft, so the estimated initial cost is about \$45K. We hope having this service available to our renters, like Boulder Bookstore, might allow us to increase rental fees in the future.

HVAC System Re-Commissioning Study-We hired Bolder Energy Engineers (BEE) to conduct a limited re-commissioning study for our HVAC system in 2019. BEE proposed a phased approach where they examine the entire system looking for problems and questionable situations. The HVAC system has been a challenge for many years.

In the meantime, based on BEE recommendations, we replaced the heat pumps and modified the piping for the heat pumps for the first and second floors, raising the bleeders on the top floor and adding shut-off valves for the heat pumps. Unfortunately, the Jace control system server and the three main programmable controllers need to be replaced. The server provides remote monitoring and scheduling of the HVAC system. This was an unanticipated repair but definitely required. As of this report, the new Jace and controllers are being built and tested in the Tryg Group office with church installation expected completed by March 1, 2021.

HVAC Team- We established a HVAC team charged with continuing to make improvements and efficiency to the HVAC system. In addition, we are working with our contractor and making recommendations to our HVAC system. The goal is to have a small team of members knowledgeable about our overall system.

Painting – With our bidding process in place, we hired Mauri Painting to paint the Standish Room and the accent walls in Rooms 311, 314, Faith Cave and Teen Room. These walls were all in need of a refresh.

Historic Window and Front Entry Repair- The project consisted of repairing the front entry of the church which was severely water damaged and repairing broken windows, re-glazing and painting and general carpentry for these windows. This project came in under budget by \$7k.

Action Items for 2021:

- Continue to improve the functionality of our HVAC system and implementation of the RCx
- Replace the flooring in Plymouth Hall in partnership with the Arts Ministry.
- Replace the flooring in the Standish Room.
- Install storm windows to the historic outdoor windows outside the Sanctuary.
- Research options for refinishing sanctuary floor.

Jodie Cottrell, chair

Board of Missions and Christian Social Action

This has been a year like no other for the Board of Missions and Christian Social Action (BMCSA). BMCSA coordinates mission outreach and Christian social action of First Congregational Church. According to the FCC constitution core duties of the board include:

- Distribution of benevolence funds through a grant process.
- Support, review, removal and addition of mission and social action activities, programs and ministries.
- Communication, and support for growing edges of concern within the congregation.
- Resolutions to the UCC General Synod.

On behalf of the congregation and with approval from church council, the board distributed \$47,474 to twenty mission partner grant applicants. This year the focus was on organizations meeting basic needs in the face of the pandemic such as food pantries and housing services. In addition to supporting local programs for those most impacted by the pandemic, the BMCSA continued to support long standing partners representing a wide range of needs locally and internationally including homeless adolescents, families and adults, the hungry, persons who have physical disabilities, mental illness, domestic violence, women in prison and after release, school children in Africa and more.

In addition to distributing Benevolence funds, in the spring \$11,720 was raised in a special COVID -19 offering and distributed to Meals on Wheels of Boulder, Boulder Food Rescue, Community Food Share, Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA) and Safe Access for Everyone (SAFE). These organizations are on the front lines of the pandemic response.

In 2020, the congregation also took special offerings for Neighbors in Need (\$2550) and One Great Hour of Sharing (\$650). Our Christmas Eve Offering (\$7257) was shared three ways: for Meals on Wheels of Boulder, the UCC Strengthen the Church initiative, and the UCC Christmas Fund.

The year was highlighted by many examples of flexibility and resilience of our members and partners in the face of pandemic related obstacles and constraints. We did not hold the annual Community Partner Mission Fair and look forward to hosting in 2021 if conditions allow. This year, things looked different but here are some successes:

- Crop Walk for Hunger - Adjusted in format to include physically distanced walks and online fundraising. Coordinated by Joanne O'Keefe.
- Fourth Sunday Soup Kitchen - responded quickly to the pandemic by implementing a "to go" format. Soup kitchen served 1,862 meals in 2020 - according to Bridge House (who coordinates the efforts of several churches) this was more meals than any other lunch provider since the start of the pandemic. Coordinated by Soo Rhee

and Elizabeth Gold and many dedicated volunteers from the congregation and wider community.

- Community Table coordinated by Denise Cone on first Wednesdays.
- Habitat for Humanity- received funds from our grocery card program coordinated by Tom Woods. Special efforts were made by Sherry Leach and Tom to increase participation as part of a wider communications effort.
- School supply drive, for BVSD students coordinated by Steve Whitehead, in partnership with Impact on Education's "Crayons to Calculators" fundraiser, raised \$2,985. This amount was comparable to previous years, despite the change to financial contributions from materials collection.
- The Alternative Gift Market, coordinated by longtime volunteer Susan Bryant, raised funds to support sustainable solutions to lifting people out of poverty worldwide. Moved to an on-line platform.
- First Sunday food drive- reinvented by Men's breakfast into the Neighborhood Food Drive and organized by Don Reed. Pandemic creativity resulted in a pivot to a neighborhood-based food drive that is highly successful. Benefiting Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA). Pre-pandemic, the largest total for the "red wagon" was 164 pounds. Since the Neighborhood Food Drive, we have the following: August, 658 lbs., Sept. 425 lbs., Nov. 1023 lbs., Jan. 2021, 1263 lbs. for a total of 3370 pounds of donated food!

Growing edges of concern:

- Racial justice - In response to the national outcry against racial injustice sparked by the murder of George Floyd and the congregation's interest in continuing the conversations started in the widely attended white privilege "Let's Talk" series, we are supporting a burgeoning racial justice ministry. In addition, BMCSA supported a benefit concert for the NAACP, and a statement against school resource officers in the Boulder Valley School District.
- Climate action-The Climate Action Team was formed in August 2020. It currently has 17 active participants. Goals for Climate Action Team are:
 - Incorporate climate change regularly into spiritual life including worship
 - Educate church members on climate change
 - Make incremental change to climate change through actionable steps, and
 - Connect with other groups for learning and advocacy around climate change

The church has already made progress on many important environmental fronts, particularly through work done by the Board of Management in the church's use of energy. CAT hopes to build on this work by pursuing designation for First Congregational as a Creation Justice Church. Pursuing this designation will allow us to expand our climate justice focus to all areas of church life, including worship, community life and education. In addition, CAT intends to form partnerships with external groups, such as the UCC and environmental non-profits. We hope to complete the Creation Justice Church designation process by the end of 2021.

Communications:

This past year the BMCSA created a communications sub-committee to raise awareness of its activities and partnerships with the congregation. The committee arranges a Moment for Mission once each month during the worship service, highlighting Christian social action and offering ways for the congregation to get involved. Topics have included the food drive, alternative gift market, and Crayons to Calculators (formerly the backpack drive). Mission moments and periodic articles in the weekly newsletter provide updates on backing of community partners (such as YWCA, Meals on Wheels, Attention Homes, and Community Food Share) through benevolence and special offering funds, as well as providing support through advocacy. The communications committee also worked with the staff in updating relevant pages on the church website. Many thanks to Sherry Leach and Linda Roan Yager for leading this new sub-committee. Thanks to Christopher Carter for his assistance in making our submissions newsletter- and broadcast- ready.

BMCSA managed special offerings which, through the generosity of our congregation, contributed to UCC funds that include: Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, Our Church's Wider Mission, and the Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross). This year there was an additional special offering to support those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the board maintains memberships with the following organizations: Green Faith Alliance NAACP, Together Colorado, Interfaith Alliance, and the Colorado Immigrants Right Coalition.

With Gratitude for the generosity of our congregation and the many hands and feet that make this work possible,

Amanda Brown and Amy Shoffner, Co-Chairs
Laura Riihimaki, Treasurer

Board of Christian Education

As I assume was true for many other boards and committees, this year the Board of Christian Education spent much of its time staying on top of the ever-changing restrictions due to the pandemic, and scrambling to come up with plans to feed our young people's souls while not endangering their bodies.

In a normal year (running March to March), the board would begin its year gearing up for the summer youth events, Arts Camp and Work Camp. This year, COVID-19 was first detected in the state on March 5 and a state of emergency declared on March 10th. At that time it was unknown how dangerous the virus would be, or how long the pandemic would last, so we started brainstorming contingency plans. The Work Camp for this year was to have been an experiential trip to the US/Mexico border and would have involved both airplane and van travel. We investigated renting more vehicles to keep the youth socially distanced, but decided that both the cost and the lack of social interaction were prohibitive, and the trip was reluctantly cancelled. Several different options were discussed and plans put in place, only to have the COVID restrictions shift, resulting in various plans being abandoned. In the end, two Arts Camps were held, one for middle school and one for elementary school, at the farm of David and Laura Skaggs where there was enough space to keep everyone safe, and enough love to result in two groups of happy youth.

The next big activity for CE board in a normal year would be the annual camping trip. This event was started in 2017 and has proven to be extremely popular, and the board worked diligently to make it happen despite the pandemic. Poring over maps of the campground to make sure families could stay safely distanced and planning new layouts for food service to minimize opportunities for contagion, the board waited to hear what the National Park Service would decide. The local NPS administrators were very understanding of our plight and did what they could, but they were as much in the dark as we were. Finally on July 13th they told us that their gut feeling was that the parks would remain closed indefinitely, and we sadly cancelled the camping trip.

On October 12th we were thrilled to have Calvin Hardy join us as our new Director of Youth Ministry! Several members of the board helped him and his wife Gracie move in, and did what we could to introduce them to Boulder before COVID restrictions made most excursions too risky. The board also made sure to show our gratitude to the many volunteers who kept the program running between Matthew's departure and Calvin's arrival.

December is normally a very busy time with the Boulder Lights of December Parade, the Jingle & Mingle party, and the Christmas pageant. By this time, information about the spread of the disease was becoming more formalized and we were able to decide early on that the parade and party were too risky. The pageant, on the other hand, seemed like something that could still happen in some form. The initial plan was to record the scenes of the pageant on the Skaggs' farm to be edited together later, and the board drew up plans to keep the youth safely distanced and to stock the "green room" with the necessary snacks. As the time approached, COVID rates spiked and it was decided even that plan was not feasible. Deb figured out how to do the pageant over zoom and the result was adorable!

With the cancellation of the summer camping trip, the board considered having some kind of winter get-away for the congregation and looked into using the Barclay cabin at the Estes Park YMCA. Plans were discussed for how to keep families properly distanced and how to serve food properly, but in the end with COVID rates going up it was decided there was no way to do it safely and the plans were cancelled.

At this point the board is looking ahead to 2021 and trying to prepare for what will come. The virus is always a wild card, but at this point we believe that Sunday School will remain virtual through the spring, Arts Camp will again be held in some kind of outdoor space, and Work Camp is unlikely to happen. As summer approaches we will consider the progress of the vaccinations and the status of the parks and decide if some kind of campout is possible. It's very unclear at this point whether church will be "in person" in the fall, but we have discovered one unexpected silver lining in the pandemic cloud. The virtual Sunday School zoom calls have very good attendance, and quite a few youth show up much more often than they did in person. Whether this is because they are more comfortable having deep discussions while in the safety of their own rooms, or because they are more used to interacting with an electronic intermediary, or just because they get to wear their pajamas, we do not know. But this is an exciting discovery and we will be exploring how to use this new path to serve our youth.

Chris Shearer Cooper, chair

Board of Spiritual Life

The first meeting of the Board of Spiritual Life was in April on Zoom. Peter Oakes volunteered to be the Chair, and Judy Schilling to be Secretary. Later in the year, Carol Hasselbacher volunteered as Co-Chair.

The BSL is responsible for assisting in many activities throughout the year. At that first meeting, consisting of eleven new members to the Board, we spent considerable time establishing sub-committees with each member volunteering to take an active role. Among those sub-committees were a Communion Coordinator, Jingle-Mingle director, Usher Coordinator, Dinner Church Coordinator, to name a few. Little did we know that every meeting thereafter would also be held remotely, and many of those activities would be cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus. However, that would not be a deterrent to participate effectively as a Board, focused on assisting our Pastors Chris and Pedro and Music Director Kajsja in any manner that we could.

The BSL met regularly throughout the year. We acted as a sounding board for our pastors as they suggested more and more creative ways to offer Sunday services, as well as other week-day special services. Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday were streamed with large participation from the congregation. Sunday services were held remotely, with the opportunity to attend coffee hour. In summer, socially-distant Sunday services were offered on the plaza with BSL members helping with testing and seating. As the fall approached, committee members enthusiastically volunteered to help with setting up luminaria for Thanksgiving expressions of gratitude, helping with interior holiday decorations for the Advent season, setting up luminaria and acting as “ushers” for three outdoor Christmas Eve services.

As the committee Chair, I warmly acknowledge the constant support and volunteer spirit of all the members of the Board of Spiritual Life as we stayed focused under such unusual circumstances.

Peter Oakes and Carol Hasselbacher, co-chairs

Board of Community Life (Board of Parish Life)

The board's name was changed to Board of Community Life from Board of Parish Life to be harmonious with the "Invitation to Community Life" during service while also making the name more relatable and descriptive of our function.

Before the shutdown due to COVID-19 in March 2020, BPL hosted 9 Sunday Fellowship Hours with food donations from church members. In normal times, each Sunday a Board member acts as a host for the fellowship hour, assisting Nick, our Sunday porter.

Meal, Care and Ride Trains: BCL organized three Meal Trains in response to members' need for delivered meals. Board member Joanne O'Keefe, with direction from Pedro, sent out requests for cards to be sent to numerous church members several times this past year. This was done in partnership with the Visitation Ministry.

BCL took over the creation of and responsibility for distributing "Grace Gifts," a program begun in April. We envisioned and assembled, and with the help of church volunteers, delivered 60-80 bags to church members and friends in November (Native American/Thanksgiving theme), December (St. Nicholas, Christmas theme), and February (St. Patrick, Valentine's theme).

Caroline Douglas, chair

Membership Committee

1. Welcome and follow-up: March 8 was our last in-person Newcomers Coffee. We were scheduled to receive new members the following Sunday, but that was postponed as worship moved online. Thanks to the website and the continued vitality of church life and worship, visitors continued to find us online and wanted to be more involved. We developed new ways of welcoming them. Using an online visitor sign-up system, we captured contact information. We welcomed visitors via email, answered questions and added them to the church email list. We gave them information about ways to get involved in safe and virtual activities, and delivered welcome gift bags to their doorsteps. Our occasional Newcomer Coffee Zoom gatherings after church were pretty well attended. We got to learn about our new visitors and tell them about our church and denomination.

2. New Members: In 2020 we had two Joining Sundays (Aug. 9, Oct. 25), at which we received a total of 16 new members. There were nine confirmands. Ministers had to invent a process for receiving members remotely and joyfully, which we have done by recording the liturgy ahead of time on Zoom and including that in the online service. We also took new member gift bags to the new members, had them record little videos introducing themselves for the start of the service, and celebrated and introduced them at the online coffee hour after the service. When we can meet at church again, we will introduce them all to the congregation in person as we normally do. We have also continued to make new member posters, though they aren't posted at church. They will be, eventually.

3. Information about the church: Visitor and prospective member information is much easier to find now that the website has been updated. The idea of information sheets for the Link is in abeyance since nobody can go there. Instead, we are making sure people have easy access to small group information and the weekly update emails.

Julie Griffitts (Chair)

MacKenzie Lectureship Committee

January of 2020 found our committee in the home stretch of preparations for the lecture and workshop by the Anita Sanchez on February 21, 2020. In preparation for Dr. Anita Sanchez, a small group studied her book, *The Four Sacred Gifts: Indigenous Wisdom for Modern Times*, and several of the Committee got the pleasure of meeting informally with her while planning, since she lives locally. Dr. Sanchez's lecture topic was ***Indigenous Wisdom for Modern Times***. The lecture attracted about 200 people, and the workshop was attended by 50.

Dr. Sanchez is a leadership consultant, coach and author of several motivational books, including the 2017 book on which her presentations were based. Theologically she has found common ground among many indigenous and mainstream spiritual traditions in her life, based on a fundamental respect for the welfare of the earth, and the interdependence of all the plant and animal species. The Four Sacred Gifts that she discussed are – forgiveness, healing, unity and hope. These are considered fundamental to indigenous elders and can foster transformations. In addition to her personal stories, Dr. Sanchez encouraged participants in her Saturday workshop to discuss one of these for gifts specifically in a small group, which many found quite meaningful.

This was the only community in-person offering of 2020 by the MacKenzie Committee, but recognizing that the climate crisis became one of four priorities for the congregation in our 2019 mission discernment process, the committee sponsored Dr. Larry Rasmussen as a second MacKenzie lecturer for 2020. He spoke remotely from his home church in Santa Fe, NM on November 15. He gave a Sunday sermon entitled: "In the Midst of New Dimensions," bookended with verses of the hymn "In the Midst of New Dimensions." Over 100 people participated on Zoom that evening, when Dr. Rasmussen gave an interactive lecture based on a letter he has written to his grandson entitled, "A Love Letter from One Geological Age to Another". Kajsia played music and Dr. Kirk Nordstrom moderated a response from two members: Dr. Patricia Limerick and Dr. Marty Hoerling, followed by open discussion.

The committee firmed up details of the 2021 lecture to be held February 19, 2021, with a workshop the next day, and Sunday sermon by the Rev. Traci Blackmon, the Executive Minister of Justice & Witness Ministries of The United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO. Because of the pandemic, speakers for the 2022 (and beyond) Mackenzie lectureship have not yet been secured.

Andrew Nicholson served as chair of the MacKenzie Lectureship Committee in 2020, and Jean Abbott served as vice chair and recorder. Members included: Rev. Chris Braudaway-Bauman, Carol Green, Drew Schwartz, Andrew Nicholson, Ann Smith, Kirk Nordstrom, Amy Volda, Tom Stiers, Louisa Mathias, and Jean Abbott.

It has been a distinct pleasure to continue the legacy of the Rev. Bruce and Jeanette MacKenzie as we organize lectures in their memory.

Jean Abbott, for the MacKenzie Committee

A2A/ Mental Health Ministry Report

2020 (A2A/MHM members): Anne Weiher (chair), Alma Alber (secretary.) Carole Jones, Louisa Young, Kevin Petit, Margaret Perez, Christine Miller, Eric Malmborg, Kristen McCullough, Marie Schaffner, Pedro Silva, II (staff)

As with most of the congregation, the Accessible to All/Mental Health Ministry (A2A/MHM) changed focus and direction due to COVID. We had planned a forum on the trauma of adoption for March which was cancelled. We hope to offer that program in the coming year.

The Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health and Wellness, an integral part of our ministry, was particularly active during the year. In response to the changes, we all encountered as we followed the “safe at home” guidelines, we offered the support group weekly rather than just twice a month. It became clear after two months, that we didn’t need to meet as often and have gone back to meeting bi-monthly. Because of Zoom the outreach of the group has grown tremendously. We have had people come from the east and west coasts, the Midwest, and even Canada. Many of our attendees report that they were drawn to the group because of the spiritual component. This group remains somewhat unique as very few communities, congregations, etc. offer such a group.

On June 28th we celebrated Access Sunday. Kevin Petit designed the service and also offered the message. His inspiring sermon, *Many Gifts, One Spirit*” reminded us that all of us, the temporarily able and those with disabilities are part of God’s creation and have a place in the life and work of the church. The music chosen for the day was all written by individuals with some type of disability and the scripture readings touched upon the contribution we all can make to having our church be accessible to all.

Sunday, August 30th was Mental Health Sunday. Ann Price, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, gave the message entitled: "Loss, Grief and Change: Ideas for Coping". She presented ways in which we can deal with the changes we are forced to make during the time of COVID. She expanded on the concept of the nature of grief to include finding meaning in our time of loss and change.

Members of the ministry, both formally and informally, have been involved with Mindful Works: making masks and delivering masks and helping them cope with the tremendous challenges presented by COVID.

We continued to provide financial support for Hope Coalition’s “Hope Lights the Night”. This program honors those who have lost their lives to suicide.

Anne Weiher, chair

Ministry of Last Things

First Congregational Church initiated a Ministry of Last Things in the Fall of 2016 under the guidance of our Ministerial Staff and the Board of Spiritual Life. We are dedicated to facilitating discussions, providing spiritual support and encouraging planning around how we approach death and dying as mortals and as Christians.

2020 Activities:

Many of the planned activities this year were scaled back due to the pandemic and loss of in-person activities, as well as to the many other important activities related to our church's commitment to study and act around racism, the election and other urgent issues.

The following activities did occur:

February 9: Rev. Lorraine Leist, sermon and presentation on "What is Palliative Care?"

Three Fall Sunday Forums on: "Grief," "Hope," and "Loneliness."

Survey to the congregation (Fall) with 59 responses on a wide variety of end-of-life and serious illness planning topics – all of which felt to be interesting to the respondents.

Most respondents have been good about completing documents and even talking to their families – these need to be renewed periodically.

Topical interests will guide future presentations.

Several one-on-one conversations with members about planning for serious illness and dying.

Note: The Columbarium initiative is currently on hold due to the pandemic and roof replacement.

Very importantly, links to multiple resources and documents for members and friends are now available on the church website: <https://firstcong.net/ministry-last-things/> (Under "connect")

1. Introduction to Ministry of Last Things
2. Overview of Planning for a Graceful Ending
3. First Congregational Church: Thoughtful Endings Planning Document, 2019
4. Conversation Project Starter Kit (short version)
5. Conversation Project What Matters to Me? 2020: Worksheet for Serious Illness and Conversation Guide
6. Your Right to Make Healthcare Decisions (Colorado Hospital Association) blue/green book
7. ABA Proxy Tool: Who Should I Choose As a Spokesperson (Agent)? (from the American Bar Association)
8. ABA Proxy Guide: How to Be a Proxy – What should I know?
9. Questions and Answers for Doctors (modified from Alzheimer's pamphlet)

10. Conversation Project: Conversation Starter Kit for Families and Loved Ones of People with Alzheimer's Disease or Other Forms of Dementia
11. Videos about End of Life and Discussion Triggers

Members of the Ministry are always available for one-on-one conversations as people do some of the important work of having conversations and using documents in planning and expressing their values, particularly during this pandemic time.

Jean Abbott

Safe Church Task Force

The purpose of the Safety Team is to continually examine procedures at the church to ensure that the building itself is as safe as possible for members and visitors, and that activities within the building are carried out in the safest possible manner. To accomplish this a Safety Team was formed, both to participate in numerous brainstorming sessions, and to provide leadership at the Sunday services in the event of an emergency. Safety Team members rotate for the Sunday services, wearing red lanyards for identification, ready to direct evacuation or other emergency procedures if needed. A fire drill was planned during the 10:30 service one Sunday but had to be cancelled due to a power outage. That will be rescheduled when we are free to hold in-person worship services again.

We have held two de-escalation trainings for members of the congregation led by officers from the Boulder Police Department, who have also suggested safety procedures.

Plaques have been posted at the major entrances warning people that firearms are not permitted. The purpose of the plaques is to give fair notice to people so that anyone seen carrying a firearm can be asked to leave. If they refuse, they become a trespasser, and we are able to call the police to have them removed from the premises.

Safety Team members include Kelly McDevitt and Bob Matthias as co-chairs, and Brett Angell, Beth Cross, Holly Hultgren, George Jones, Rodger Lucero, Sidway McKay, Deborah Voss, Julie Griffiths, and Carol Green. We have a set of safety procedures largely assembled by Karen Cumbo.

During the Covid shutdown, we have a smaller team dealing with issues around safe-health practices for building use, including Kelly McDevitt, Jean Abbott, the Moderators and Chris B-B. That group has been monitoring the Governor's restrictions and their application to our church, creating Temperature Tracking boxes, and assisting the staff in hosting outdoor worship on Sunday evenings and Christmas Eve, with temperature checks and ensuring safe distancing is maintained.

Kelly McDevitt and Bob Matthias co-chairs

Personnel Committee

Personnel Committee continued its work behind the scenes to support Chris Braudaway-Bauman as head of staff. A few accomplishments in 2020 include:

- Monitored the Family First Coronavirus Response Act to ensure the church was complying with the new law.
- Added a Medical Leave Policy to the Employee Handbook.
- Supported Deborah Voss in the exploration of creating learning pods for First Cong families.
- Approved plans for upcoming Parental Leave.
- Recommended salary increases for staff.
- Approved new Flex Spending accounts.

Jessica Austin - chair

McMane Arts Ministry

The pandemic greatly affected the McMane Arts Ministry. During the spring and summer months, very little activity took place.

At the beginning of the year, we hosted the North Boulder Art District group show which included works from 120 artists using various mediums. In addition, during the same period we hosted the Via Dolorosa paintings of Trine Bumiller in the church sanctuary.

In the fall, we were fortunate to have Barbara Olson fabric art displayed. It is nice to have art back on the wall.

The Arts Ministry took on outdoor decorations for PrideFest in the fall, decorating the outside of the church with rainbow-colored ribbons and flags.

During December, we decorated with traditional Christmas lights and greens. In addition, we supported the Advent Pilgrimage by designing, making and installing prayer stations.

Cindy Mueller - Chair

Mindful Works Ministry

2020 (Mindful Works Ministry members): Linda Roan-Yager, Chair, Karon Johnson, Marie Schaffner, Phil Baudaway-Bauman, Susan Williams, Tom VanDeBogart, Anne Weiher, Pedro Silva, II (staff)

First Congregational Church members have responded and continue to respond to needs expressed by Susan Williams, the Executive Director of Mindful Works.

Assistance/training has been offered in numerous areas, which include: bookkeeping/accounting, grant writing, coaching program participants in time management, etc., product production, sewing, organizing various aspects of a volunteer mask making project, delivering fabric and other products, training in the safe use of kitchen appliances, and baking instruction, to name a few.

Although volunteer activity has been ongoing between the congregation and Mindful Works, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on staff retention, production, sales, and most areas of the social enterprise non-profit, along with the extraordinary precautions required to maintain a safe, yet vital environment, called for flexible assistance from time to time. Church members have responded every time a call went out for volunteers.

Linda Roan Yager – Chair

Nominating Committee

The Nominating committee submits the following slate of names for election to membership on boards, committees, and ministries – the leaders of the church – for 2021. Proposed new members' names are in italics. Continuing members' names are also listed, but do not need a vote. Where appropriate, the final year of a member's term is also listed. All Term Ends are in March unless otherwise specified.

**Jessica Austin, Past Moderator
Chair, Nominating Committee**

Officers

Name	Title	(Term End)
Karen Cumbo	Moderator	(2023)
Charley Rastle	Past Moderator	(2022)
<i>Chris Shearer Cooper</i>	Moderator Elect	(2024)
Beverly Nelson	Treasurer	(2023)
Kathy Minter	Clerk	(2023)
Cindy Meyer	Co-Historian	(2023)
<i>Gail McDougale</i>	Co-Historian	(2024)

Boards – Members serve three-year terms

Board of Management

The Board shall consist of twelve (12) elected members and three ex-officio members (Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer).

Name, Term Ending

1. Roy McCutchen, Chair 2023
2. Susan Bryant 2022
3. Scott Allman 2022
4. Karl Kurtz 2022
5. Bob Cutler 2022
6. Stewart Leach 2023
7. Eric Nickell 2023
8. *Jeanne Lounsbury 2024*
9. *Bill Gilbert 2024*
10. *Jill Schaefer 2024*
11. *Daphne Mendel 2023*
12. *Ed Byrne 2024*

Board of Christian Education

The Board shall consist of at least six (6) members along with the Associate Minister(s) or Program Staff working with children and youth.

Name, Term Ending

1. Jeremy Reynolds, Co-chair 2022
2. Tara Cone, Co-chair 2022
3. Katie Wilkerson 2023
4. Garrett Steed 2023
5. *Melanie Whitehead* 2024
6. *Ann Thomasset* 2024

Board of Community Life

The Board shall consist of fifteen (15) elected members.

Name, Term Ending

1. Joanne O'Keefe, Co-chair 2022
2. Jane Thomas, Co-chair 2023
3. Margaret Perez 2022
4. Jim Knopf 2023
5. Margaret Drury 2023
6. *Karon Johnson* 2024
7. *Rhonda Fadum* 2022
8. *Stephanie Angell* 2024
9. *Molly McElroy* 2023
10. *Carol Polston* 2022
11. *Lisa Birnbaum* 2022
12. *Wendy Hall* 2022

Board of Spiritual Life

The Board shall consist of sixteen (16) elected members.

Name, Term Ending

1. Peter Oakes, Co-chair 2022
2. Keith Lance 2022
3. Gigi Birkeland 2023
4. Mailand Edlin 2023
5. Celeste Fenton 2023
6. Marj Fowler 2023
7. Carol Hasselbacher, Co-chair 2023
8. Matt Hess 2023
9. Andi Larson 2023
10. Mary Jane Longanecker 2023
11. Kevin Pettit 2023
12. Judy Schilling 2023

13. William Malling 2023
14. Wesley LeMasurier 2024
15. Susan Pfretzschner 2024
16. Cathy Woods 2024

Board of Missions and Christian Social Action

The Board shall consist of twelve (12) elected members.

Name, Term Ending

1. Amanda Brown, Co-chair 2022
2. Amy Shoffner, Co-chair 2022
3. Darren O'Connor 2022
4. Don Reed 2022
5. Kim Kanas 2023
6. Linda Roan Yager 2023
7. Sherry Leach 2023
8. Steve Whitehead 2023
9. *Laura Riihimaki, Treasurer 2024*
10. *Karen Hoover 2024*
11. *Allison Hamm 2024*

Standing Committees – Members of Standing Committees may hold office longer than three years, subject to re-nomination and approval by the congregation.

Investment Committee

The Committee shall consist of four (4) elected members plus one (1) member from the Board of Management (BoM) who chairs the committee.

1. Bob Cutler, Chair (BoM)
2. Jean Nelson
3. Neil Palmer
4. Eric Nickell
5. *Michael Rollins*

Personnel Committee

The Committee shall consist of seven (7) members: The Senior Minister, Moderators, and three (3) members at large from the Congregation.

1. Charley Rastle, Past Moderator, Chair
2. Karen Cumbo, Moderator
3. *Chris Shearer Cooper, Moderator Elect*
4. Chris Braudaway-Bauman, Senior Minister
5. Janet Beardsley
6. Tania McEvoy-Champlin
7. Kristen Aldretti

Stewardship Committee

The Committee shall consist of six (6) or more elected members.

1. Libby Black, Chair
2. Betsy Barrett
3. Nancy Stevens
4. Jon Hinebauch
5. Jeanne Lounsbury
6. Laura McCutchen
7. Nicole Speer
8. Allison Hamm

Membership Committee

The Committee shall consist of six (6) or more members.

1. Julie Griffiths, Chair
2. Linda Nordberg
3. Jon Hinebauch
4. Diana Shellenberger
5. Keith Lance
6. Carol Polston
7. Gail McDougle
8. Julie Kamrath

Endowment Committee

The Committee shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) members.

1. Jon Hinebauch, Chair
2. Nancy Stevens
3. Louisa Young
4. Libby Black
5. Tom Stiers
6. Bob Patoff
7. Linda Whitehead
8. Bev Nelson
9. *Tom Lounsbury*
10. *Dean Fowler*

Ministries

Some ministries operate with defined members but are also open to all members of the congregation. Others do not have defined members, are open to all and only list chairs or contact people.

Arts Ministry

1. Melody Fuller, Chair
2. Cindy Mueller, Co-chair
3. Alma Alber, Executive Committee
4. Louisa Matthias, Executive Committee
5. Bonney Forbes, Executive Committee
6. Allison Hamm, Treasurer, Executive Committee
7. Kathryn/Peter Oakes, Liaison to BSL
8. Christopher Gard
9. Susan Allman
10. Marj Fowler
11. Cathy Woods
12. Garrett Chappell
13. Elisa Burnor
14. Carol Hasselbacher
15. Karon Johnson

A2A/Mental Health Ministry

1. Anne Weiher, Chair
2. Alma Alber
3. Carole Jones
4. Louisa Young
5. Kevin Petit
6. Kristen Mcculloch
7. Eric Malmborg
8. Christine Miller
9. Margaret Perez
10. Marie Shaffner
11. *Heidi Lindeman*

Climate Action Team

1. Sarah Schulte, Co-chair
2. Bill Young, Co-chair
3. Ann Thomasset
4. Bob Matthias
5. Calvin Hardy
6. Carol Bennington
7. Carolyn Gard
8. Chris Shearer Cooper

9. Christopher Rozoff
10. Debbie Alexander
11. Elise Burnor
12. Jean Nelson
13. Jessica Austin
14. Joanne O'Keefe
15. Kajsa Teitelbaum
16. Kelsey Grant
17. Laura Riihimaki
18. Liz Hinebauch
19. Louisa Matthias
20. Margot Pickett
21. Mark Pickett
22. Patricia Whitaker
23. Patty Limerick
24. Pedro Silva

MacKenzie Lectureship Committee

1. Andrew Nicholson, Co-chair
2. Kirk Nordstrom, Co-chair
3. Louisa Matthias
4. Ann Smith
5. David Bearce
6. Drew Schwartz
7. Tom Stiers
8. *Patty Limerick*

Mindful Works Ministry

1. Linda Roan-Yager, Chair
2. Anne Weiher
3. Marie Schaffner
4. Susan Williams
5. Jon Hinebauch
6. Karon Johnson

Safety Team

1. Kelly McDevitt, Co-chair
2. Bob Matthias, Co-chair
3. Brett Angell
4. Karen Cumbo
5. Stephanie Angell
6. Beth Cross

7. Holly Hultgren
8. George Jones
9. Rodger Lucero
10. Sidway McKay
11. Deborah Voss
12. Julie Griffiths
13. Carol Green
14. Jean Abbott, Consultant

Visitation Ministry

1. Sue Wilkinson
2. Dean Keller
3. Kevin Pettit
4. Stephanie Angell
5. Betsy Barrett
6. Elena Burton
7. Laura McCutchen
8. Kathy Minter
9. Heather Lemasurier
10. Caroline Douglas
11. Gail Chadwell
12. Linda Nordberg
13. Margaret Perez
14. Susan Rose
15. Monika Rutkowski
16. Carol Green
17. Marj Fowler
18. Patty Goward
19. Liz Hinebauch
20. Nancy Stevens
21. Rebecca Flintoft

Ministry of Last Things

1. Jean Abbott, Chair
2. Janet Beardsley
3. Tom Stiers
4. Louisa Young
5. Heather LeMasurier
6. Eric Malmborg
7. Bob Patoff
8. Linda Nordberg
9. Carol Young

Adult Education

1. Charley Rastle, Chair
2. Julie Griffiths
3. Jon Hinebauch
4. Mark Meyer
5. Kevin Pettit
6. Chuck Smith

Communities of Calling Team

1. Julie Griffiths
2. Matt Hess
3. Amy Ostwald
4. Charley Rastle
5. Laura Riihimaki
6. Linda Roan Yager
7. Nancy Wade
8. Chris Braudaway-Bauman

Conference Delegates

1. Jane Strohm
2. Gail McDougale
3. Kevin Pettit
4. Stewart Leach
5. Thomas Riis

Investment Committee

Investment Performance:

2020 was obviously a very volatile year, with the stock market dropping 34% in the spring, but 2020 ended as a good year for the stock markets. For the year 2020 our Endowment accounts were up 9.20%-9.71%, and over the past five years the annualized return of these accounts was up 6.99%-7.86%/per year. Returns over the next 10 years are expected to be materially lower than we have seen recently.

The Investment Committee was active this year:

1. We agreed to a Buy Low/Sell High policy of adding when markets go down and selling when markets go up, subject to reaching certain targets.
2. We eliminated our 'satellite/alternative investments' (real estate, high-yield bonds, and commodities), which had not performed well.
3. We made material changes to our investments, including in U.S. and International equities and in our bonds. I am feeling very good about where and how our investments are invested and positioned.

Our SRI/ESG (Socially Responsible Investing/Environmental, Social, and Governance) investments have generally been doing well and as of the end of December make up 60% of total investments.

Distributions for 2020, to be distributed in 2021: The committee approved a 4% distribution from the endowments for 2020. Of the 4% distribution, 3.75% will go to the various committees and 0.25% will go to the church's operating budget. The total to be distributed is \$151,860.46.

First Congregational Church Baird Accounts – December 31, 2020

ENDOWMENT ACCOUNTS

FCC Benevolence	\$1,440,171
FCC Capital Needs	\$2,307,484
FCC MacKenzie Lecture	\$145,620
FCC McMane Arts	\$227,718
FCC Music	\$97,142
FCC Sawyer Organ Concert	\$143,252
TOTAL ENDOWMENT BALANCES	\$4,361,389
FCC BOM Project (NotEndowment)	\$122,939
FCC New Initiatives (NotEndowment)	\$128,356
FCC Renewable Energy (NotEndowment)	\$40,949
TOTAL INVESTMENT BALANCES	\$4,653,633
FCC Operating	\$210,267
TOTAL BAIRD BALANCES	\$4,863,900

We have a fantastic committee and we appreciate their service: Eric Nickell, Jean Nelson, Neil Palmer (and Chuck Smith for 2020), in addition to myself.

Bob Cutler, Chair Investment Committee

Endowment Committee

Members: Nancy Stevens, Jon Hinebauch, Libby Black, Bob Patoff, Louisa Young, Chuck Smith, Tom Stiers, Linda Whitehead, Bev Nelson, Charley Rastle, Chris Braudaway-Bauman

The role of the Endowment Committee:

- Encourage members of the congregation and non-members to make gifts to the FCC Endowment Funds through education and consultation; in particular through Legacy Giving.
- Recognize both privately and publicly those donors who have made gifts or are contemplating making a gift to the FCC Endowment Funds.
- Increase the public awareness of the many activities and non-profit organizations funded by the FCC Endowment Funds.
- Make recommendations to the Board of Management and Church Council on how to allocate non-designated donations to the Church.

In 2020, the Endowment Committee:

- Finalized plans to launch “Miss Jessie Legacy Circle” in 2021
- Refreshed the Endowment Brochure with new testimonials
- Wrote devotionals on legacy giving
- Worked to include the following language in all programs, posters and flyers:
This program is made possible by the Endowment Funds of First Congregational Church, UCC Boulder

As of 12/31/20, the FCC Endowment Funds managed by the Investment Committee were:

FCC Benevolence	\$1,440,171
FCC Capital Needs	\$2,307,484
FCC MacKenzie Lecture	\$145,620
FCC McMane Arts	\$227,718
FCC Music	\$97,142
FCC Sawyer Organ Concert	<u>\$143,252</u>

Total Endowment Balances \$4,361,389

Nancy Stevens - Chair

Stewardship Report

2020 Stewardship Annual Report

FCC Boulder had a remarkable pledging year in 2020. We truly came together to accomplish an ambitious goal that included a 4.2% pledge increase to support a 3% increase in our budget as well as to make up some ground we lost in 2019. Our faithful congregation pledged 6 ½ % *beyond* our goal of \$756,831. This enabled us to do several important things:

- meet our budget goals;
- support an increase in our Music Director's salary to a competitive market level;
- increase our giving to Our Church's Wider Mission of the national UCC.



Our outstanding witnessing stewards, speaking to the deep meaning of their personal giving, inspired many of us to consider our church giving in new ways. We remain grateful to Karen and Stewart Hoover, Laura Rihimaki and Nicole Speer. Members also enjoyed the small house gatherings that the Stewardship Team convened to share joys and concerns about the church, learn about our pledging challenge and ask questions and make suggestions.

The total group of pledgers in 2020 who also pledged in 2019, we saw a generous overall 17% increase in pledges. We were very pleased to have a record number of 30 new pledges which included 11 new members. As is typical, we also lost some pledges for a variety of reasons, but met our goal of keeping our gains above our losses.

	Dollars Pledged	# of pledges	Average	One Time Gifts
2020	\$807,651	243	\$3,324	\$0
2019	\$727,778	236	\$3,084	\$35,000
2018	\$773,941	260	\$2,977	\$0
2017	\$735,498	257	\$2,812	\$100,000

Finally, during the pandemic year of 2020, the church fulfilled 99% of our pledge income. Truly remarkable! Our Church is forever indebted to those who give so much, in so many ways. Thank you. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

2020 Stewardship Committee: Libby Black, Chair

Betsy Barrett, Chris Braudaway Bauman, Allison Hamm, Jon Hinebauch, Jeanne Lounsbury, Eric Malmborg, Bob Matthias, Laura McCutchen, Nicole Speer, Nancy Stevens

Treasurer's Report

Balance Sheet 12/31/20

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1st Bank - Operating	293,594
1st Bank - Supplemental Checking	1,000
Chase- Gibbons White	19,000
Operating - Baird	210,268
Baird Investments	<u>4,653,631</u>
Total Cash and Investments	5,177,493
Other Current Assets	
Prepaid Expenses	12,804
Total Other Current Assets	<u>12,804</u>
Total Current Assets	5,190,297
Fixed Assets	
Building & Improvements	
Building & Improvements	10,393,777
Construction in Progress	<u>364,017</u>
Total Fixed Assets	10,790,136
Other Assets	
Mortgage Receivable	300,000
Total Other Assets	<u>300,000</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	16,280,433

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	12,942
Security Deposits	5,828
Flow Through Accounts	64,713
Mission Partners	13,294
Prepaid Pledges and Contributions	58,090
Relocation/Sabbatical	44,349
Accrued Property Taxes	8,289
Payroll	2,355
SBA PPP Loan	<u>101,000</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	310,860
EQUITY	15,969,573
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	16,280,433

Revenue and Expenses 12/31/20
Budget vs. Actual

	Jan - Dec 20	2020 Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
Donations-Operating	850,837	834,130	102%
Building Use	74,111	101,001	73%
Capital Needs Transfer	0	64,740	0%
Grant Receipts	2,000	1,500	133%
Endowment Admin. Receipts	9,475	9,200	103%
Investments income	647	0	100%
Other Income	941	500	188%
	938,011	1,011,071	93%
Expenses			
PASTORAL MINISTRY	2,759	7,500	37%
MINISTRY OF MUSIC	9,786	18,810	52%
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION STAFF	1,143	3,000	38%
C. E. PROGRAMS	7,733	17,901	43%
SUPPORT SERVICES	88,028	95,590	92%
FACILITIES EXPENSE	188,256	221,215	85%
BOARDS AND COMMITTEES	4,512	9,451	48%
UCC Participation	44,097	44,097	100%
INVESTMENT FEES	1,874	0	100%
Salaries & Benefits	582,989	593,451	98%
	931,177	1,011,015	92%
Net Income	6,834	56	12,204%

Membership Statistics Report

New Member Gains:25

- Confirmands 9
- New Members 14
- Returning Members 2

Deaths:..... 2

- Roger Easton 3/16/2020
- Kay Shafer 6/14/2020

Transferred Out:.....1

Baptisms:..... 0

2019 Membership - 822

2019 Total	822
Losses	- 3
<u>819</u>	
Gains	+25
2020 Total	<u>844</u> (Members, Associate Members and Friends)