

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Year in Review
December 16, 2023

- Your Board of Trustees has been busy this year and we are blessed to serve this amazing Church and congregation.
- This past month, the solar panel installation project by Sunistics Energy secured all required permits and is scheduled to begin work in early 2024.
- Brian Cox Mechanical, our selected vendor for the HVAC system in the Sanctuary, has been on campus installing wiring, brackets and other hardware as we prepare for the installation of the equipment. We honor the memory and wishes of John Hermann, whose estate gift is funding this project.
- These projects require a high degree of hands-on oversight. We want to thank Phil Jeter for agreeing to serve as project manager to work alongside Chris Cain, Director of Facilities and Events. Chris, Andrew and the custodial team are pulled in many directions with daily tasks, so we appreciate Phil's involvement in ensuring these projects stay on schedule and budget.
- We know it is cold in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings! Hang in there with us since we are confident this new system will provide much welcome warmth in the winter and air conditioning in the summer months.
- In response to an ADA survey conducted by the BOT in 2022, the Trustees approved the installation of five automatic swing door operator systems: One on the west side of Linder Hall; and two on both the west and east entrances of the Sanctuary. A second phase of this project will be to add an automatic opener to Trotter Chapel. We honor the memory of Kathy Christensen and her dedication to unity in diversity as this effort was one of her wishes.
- At our October meeting, we approved funding to replace the deteriorated wood patio and walkway covers at the Children's Growing Center with alumawood shade structures. They come with a lifetime guarantee with minimal maintenance, upkeep and new lighting.
- Rebecca Luers, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the Trustees with a funding request to augment the operating budget. The Board approved a total of \$500K for Fiscal Year 2023 and \$500K for Fiscal Year 2024. This will provide our pastors and staff with a cost-of-living adjustment of 6% effective January 1, 2024. There were no pay adjustments for 2023, except for those required by law.
- We are grateful to the CREW for all they do; thank you Mike Sorce and our volunteers!

Respectfully submitted by the Board of Trustees of 2023:

Nick Hubsmith, Chair
Janice Lau, Vice Chair
Ray Henderson, Secretary
Woody Woodward
Cheryl Slavik
Mel West
Amy Moberly
Janice Roudebush

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Year in Review
December 16, 2023

Fiscal Year 2023 has been full of challenges and opportunities as Rev. Trudy has graciously led us through this year of discernment, task force meetings, and recommendations that will chart our path forward.

Operating Fund:

We are pleased to share that our Board of Trustees has agreed to provide an additional \$200K toward the 2023 operating budget to cover a projected deficit. In addition, they have voted to approve \$500K toward the 2024 operating budget so we can give our pastors and staff a well-earned cost of living adjustment. Thank you to Nick Hubsmith and the entire Board of Trustees for your support!

December will mark the end of the fiscal year and by mid-January, we will know how we ended fiscal year 2023. As of November 30th, total revenues are \$30K ahead of budget projections and total expenses are \$36,000 over budget. We are within \$6K of actuals compared to budget and looking forward to ending the year strong!

Children's Growing Center:

The Children's Growing Center continues to recover, following a difficult period dealing with pandemic related challenges. Tuition revenue has exceeded budget for July – November and the infusion of Employee Retention Credit funds partially offset the tuition shortfalls earlier in the year.

New Life Counseling Center:

The New Life Counseling Center is having a strong year with all the offices rented. The Long Fund continues to provide augmented funding to support the therapists in providing critical mental health and counseling services.

East Property and Ocean Beach Property Funds:

The East Property Fund is on budget for 2023, we will have to adjust due to the departure of Warren Walker Middle School in July of next year. We expect the Ocean Beach Property Fund to end in a deficit due to increases in utilities, property and liability insurance.

Respectfully submitted by the Finance Committee of 2023,

Rebecca Luers, Chair
Noel Haskins-Hafer, Vice Chair
Bob Hemstead, Co- Secretary
Katherine Stone, Co-Secretary
Lembi Saarmann
Shelby Secoy
Erik Holmgren
Tom Trujillo
Rick Cook

CHARGE CONFERENCE FORM #7: Annual Report of the Pastor

REPORT YEAR	2023-2024
I. ABOUT THE LOCAL CHURCH	
A. DISTRICT	South at southdistrict@calpacumc.org
B. LOCAL CHURCH/CHARGE	First UMC of San Diego
C. PASTOR AT LOCAL CHURCH	Trudy Robinson
D. PASTOR EMAIL	revtrudy@fumcsd.org
E. PASTOR TITLE	Lead Pastor
F. CHURCH OFFICE EMAIL	admin@fumcsd.org
II. REPORT OF THE PASTOR	
1. Have the membership rolls been audited for the current year?	Yes
1a. If NO, why not?	
2. IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR CONGREGATION “SEND PERSONS INTO THE WORLD TO LIVE LOVINGLY AND JUSTLY AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST BY HEALING THE SICK, FEEDING THE HUNGRY, CARING FOR THE STRANGER, FREEING THE OPPRESSED, BEING AND BECOMING A COMPASSIONATE, CARING PRESENCE, AND WORKING TO DEVELOP SOCIAL STRUCTURES THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE GOSPEL”?	<p>One of the most rewarding opportunities First Church has experienced this past year was in offering temporary shelter and hospitality for migrants coming from across the border. Under the organizational and administrative gifts of Rev. Dr. Hannah Ka, with the support of Rev. Brittany J. Hanlin, we were able to help over 210 refugees settle in permanent housing in the United States. Our guests were political and religious asylum seekers whose stories broke open our hearts and whose gratitude was immense. We have developed relationships with some that will continue even as they move into their own spaces. The mutuality of this experience has been an excellent model for ministries with others.</p> <p>The Sankofa Pilgrimage, developed and led by Rev. Brittany, provided impactful education and experiences about the history of racism in our country. The experience created a bond between the 19 pilgrims and strengthen our commitment to the work of anti-racism. As we shared enthusiastically the stories from the pilgrimage, others have become eager to join in this learning. We are already planning a second Sankofa Pilgrimage for 2024, covering different sites. The effects are changing the way we behave in the world.</p> <p>The Racial Justice Endowment granted monies to worthwhile organizations doing the work of anti-racism in San Diego yet again this year. We were able to host representatives from these organizations to share their work and recruit volunteers from our congregation to support this work. The networking event strengthened our awareness of both the need and the response.</p> <p>Rev. Hannah continued our work in building neighborhood groups through which people gather, share a meal, support one another, learn together and ultimately serve their neighborhoods in the name of Christ.</p> <p>Our continued ministries of providing food and clothes for the hungry through the Wesley UMC Food Ministry and the Ocean Beach Food bank have been augmented by a renewal of our Samaritan Store on the Mission Valley campus. The Showers of Blessing program allows multiple generations to serve together and meet the needs of those without a home and a place to shower.</p>
3. IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR CONGREGATION “CONTINUE THE MISSION OF SEEKING, WELCOMING AND GATHERING PERSONS INTO THE COMMUNITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST”?	<p>The Migrant Hospitality began in April 2022 when we opened doors to refugees from Ukraine. This past year, we responded to a Ukrainian family who reached out to us via Facebook as they were seeking a sponsor so that they can settle in America. We met the Zuiiev family and their spirit, initiative, and open-heartedness endeared them to us such that the church agreed to sponsor them. They have been active members of our faith community ever since.</p>

	<p>Several of the refugees this year, from Colombia, China, Ecuador, Iran and Senegal, requested baptisms as they wanted to be part of a faith tradition that exhibits the love and grace of Christ. Many were interrupted in their Christian catechism due to the persecution they faced in their countries and sorrowful that they were not yet baptized. We baptized 12 individuals into the body of Christ. Every week since their baptism they have been in worship and a part of our fellowship time, truly our brothers and sisters. We also officiated at a wedding for two of our guests, who were wanting the blessing of the church as they start a new life in this country.</p> <p>Rev. Hannah's work in neighborhood groups is particularly inviting for neighbors who have yet to meet other neighbors. For those who come to where we are on a Sunday morning, we have cultivated an open and welcoming spirit with greeters supported by a system of follow-up, an active New Beginnings member program, and weekly hospitality with coffee and donuts. We have online greeters providing hospitality for our online community and offer a zoom new Beginnings class for those wanting to become official members but do not live nearby.</p> <p>Our campus has seen an increase of outside organizations using our facilities, giving us opportunities to welcome them here on their terms, while providing gracious hospitality. The AA organizations that meet here feel the support and encouragement from our church.</p> <p>This past year, the San Diego School of Christian Studies was very successful in expanding participants' minds in identifying who are our neighbors, through lectures, panel discussions, field trips, and other events. The Re-Wilding Conference invited many from across Methodism, with representatives from both the Cal-Pac Conference and the Mountain Sky Conference, coming together to learn more about how to be the church God needs us to be in an ever changing world. The multiple task forces that First Church formed in the wake of the Re-Wilding Conference involved lay people having deeper conversations about what it means to be church in this age and discerning some recommendations for the church in moving into the future.</p>
<p>4. NARRATIVE REPORT OF THE PASTOR.</p>	<p>Last September, as the church was preparing the 2023 operating budget, it became clear that, while FUMCSD is blessed with many resources held in our Foundation and with many faithful givers, we do not have the means to sustain the operating budget, and haven't for years, without significant transfers from the undesignated funds in the Board of Trustees' purview. To be sure that we are using all of our resources in the most fruitful and faithful way, the church agreed to take time in 2023 to assess our ministries, to understand the cultural changes that have occurred over time, to discern where God is moving, and to determine how we can become the church for this time and place.</p> <p>The process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first step in our year of discernment was the January Leadership Training, where we looked over the history of the church in numbers, recognizing a gradual decline over decades in membership, attendance and giving, especially when considering cost of living increases. 2. The second step was a book study about Christian life and connection in digital culture, ("Church As Network" by Jeffrey H. Mahan). 3. The third step was the "Re-WILDING the Church Conference" (April 28-30 @ FUMCSD) where we heard from and spoke with scholars and authors about Christian history, cultural change, and our present world. 4. The fourth step was held on Thursday, May 11, where we looked at assessments of particular ministries and ministry areas in terms of number of participants, staff hours involved, financial impact, etc. (We held a potluck that evening to remind ourselves we do this together!) 5. The fifth step occurred from May through August when several task forces convened many times for conversation about how FUMCSD's ministries need to continue, shift, change, or be abandoned to serve effectively. On September 7th, we held another potluck and task force members presented their recommendations,

questions were asked and answered, and we prepared for the next step.

6. The Church Council met on September 16, for well over four-hours, to hear thoughts, concerns, support for the recommendations, and ultimately voted to accept all of the recommendations presented. We are currently in the process of preparing for next steps and keep performance indicators. Some changes and new ministries will begin as early as December 3rd such as a new worship experience and a different schedule for Children and Youth ministries, focusing on music.

This year of discernment has involved hundreds of people in varying degrees of participation, resulting in lots of understanding, and quite a bit of excitement for the future. That is not to say that some decisions were easy, and some changes heartbreaking. Specifically two things: the realization that the Water's Edge Faith Community at our satellite location in Ocean Beach is not sustainable. The recommendation is to pursue affordable housing possibilities for the campus and for the Wager's Edge people to return to the Mission Valley campus, while serving Ocean Beach as a neighborhood-focused group. The second: the realization that our clergy staff needed to be reduced. We have appreciated the loving care of Pastor Tamara Walker as the Pastor of Congregational Care. Her work in creating groups of people to care for one another will continue even in her absence, with the support of the remaining pastors. She will be missed, but we wish her and her family all the best.

While the impetus for this process was financial, it also had roots in one of our Five Points of Vision, namely, the online specific worship experience, Variations. In pursuing this, we realized there was much about the digital world that we knew nothing about. That ended up being an understatement!

The other four points in those Five Points of Vision are still underway. The Dream School of the Arts is anticipating a soft opening in January, after months of renovations to the space. The Racial Justice Endowment continues to support local organizations in their work of racial justice. The Small Group ministries formed around Neighborhoods continues to lift up leaders and connect people. And finally, the Affordable Housing initiative has expanded with possibility after the work of our discernment.

This is a lot of business for the church, but that did not prevent us from being the church. The opportunities to be in ministry with those who are sought refuge in the United States from Ukraine, parts of South and Central America, Africa, China and Iran, has been life-giving for all involved. We are reminded again and again that the church is not about maintaining itself, but rather living into the resurrection and bringing that resurrection hope to others.

It will be an exciting next year.
Rev. Trudy

Church Council Report (December 2023)
Rev. Brittany Juliette Hanlin, Teaching Pastor

September 1, 2023, was my year anniversary as an Associate Minister at First UMC. Serving as the **Teaching Pastor** for the Water's Edge Faith Community has been a challenging, yet faith filled experience. As aforementioned in my July 2023 Church Council Report, heavy and persistent rains this winter have impacted the **Water's Edge building**. On March 21, we were notified of flooding in the nursery/sanctuary. Worship was temporarily relocated to the chapel on Mission Valley's campus on March 26. Worship resumed in Ocean Beach on Sunday, April 2. We worshipped outside in the courtyard for Palm Sunday. On Easter Sunday we re-entered the sanctuary. Due to the immense water damage from the flood, we filed an insurance claim with The Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company and unfortunately, our claim was denied due to the pre-existing deterioration of the building.

The damage to the building coupled with the Water's Edge budget deficit of \$86,401.71 was discussed at length by the WE **Task Force** birthed out of the **Re-Wilding Conference**. In September, the WE Task Force recommendations were to discontinue worship on the Ocean Beach campus on December 24, 2023 and to pursue the Affordable Housing for the church property. These recommendations did not come without deep grief and sadness from the members of the task force after many months of discussion and brainstorming. These recommendations were voted on and approved by the Church Council on September 16. As expected, emotions were high for months with anger being the most palpable, however, while disappointment continues to be a reality for the Water's Edge Faith Community, their commitment to caring for each other throughout this transitional time has been ever-present. The months of September and October were also filled with public sharing of inaccurate information pertaining to the selling of church property, resulting in media attention both online and television. Leadership engaged at every opportunity, correcting misinformation and offering a more positive and faithful narrative.

Through all these challenges, worship continued each week with average weekly attendance of 40. Tavo Vega was hired as the **Music Worship Leader** in June and he has done an incredible job of reminding us that God is at the center of our worship in every stage our lives. His care, talent, and heart for service has been invaluable during this time and I am immensely thankful that he and his family have shared their time, talent, and treasure with us over six months. On December 3, we held a **Service of Remembrance and Celebration** for the Water's Edge Faith Community and our District Superintendent, Sandy Olewine was our guest preacher for the evening. The goal of the service was to honor the legacy of Water's Edge and Point Loma UMC, while also moving forward in faith for the new thing God is doing. With just two Sundays left on the Ocean Beach campus the church's closure is becoming more of a reality. While, it is my hope that WE congregants will transition back to the Mission Valley campus, I pray that wherever they go, they are greeted warmly by a community of faith who embodies the desires of their hearts, so that they may continue to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

In September, FUMC opened and operated an **emergency migrant shelter** for six weeks after Immigration and Customs Enforcement opened the borders for asylum seekers. Rev. Hannah and I worked together closely to operate the shelter and we learned a great deal through trial and error. While, Rev. Hannah spearheaded this ministry, I was fortunate enough to advocate for our

displaced migrant families, resulting in one reunion. In the midst of the church business, FUMC was able to do the business of Christ and I will forever cherish this opportunity for service.

My role of Teaching Pastor will shift to the Pastor of Connection and Care in January 2024. I am excited for opportunities to connect and care for congregants on the Mission Valley campus by building relationships across generations. **The Sankofa Class and Pilgrimage** continues to inspire my ministry and in July 2024, we depart for a new learning experience down the Northeast to explore history's impact on our faith and present-day realities. The pilgrimage in June was filled with the Holy Spirit as we laugh, cried, learned, and prayed together. I look forward to the new learnings and fellowship that blossom this upcoming year.

Lastly, I began a **Doctor of Ministry** program at Emory University in August 2023. My concentration is in **Church Leadership and Community Witness**. My cohort meets online twice a week for lecture and colloquy. I chose to pursue this program to enhance my pastoral leadership and theological imagination. While attending the General Synod for the United Church of Christ, I was inspired to learn more about the **United Methodist Church** to better understand UMC history and doctrine. In August, I also enrolled in a UMC history and doctrine class at Emory and I have been pleasantly surprised with how much my theological understandings align with Methodism and John Wesley's convictions. I will take the UMC History and Polity class in January to complete the educational requirements for ministerial transfer to the United Methodist Church.

The past 15 months as Teaching Pastor of Water's Edge Faith Community have both challenged me and strengthened me. I look forward to serving as one of your pastors as we discern together with God our path forward.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Brittany Juliette Hanlin

Report for Charge Conference 2023

Rev. Dr. Hannah Ka, Pastor of Discipleship

This year has been fast-paced, packed with learning, discerning and welcoming unexpected guests as well as changes. After journeying through this year with you all, despite my own doubts, relectuance, grief and uncertainties, I am personally emerging out of this year's discernment with more excitement, hope and faith in God, whose faithfulness will lead and shape us to be the Body of Christ needed for today's world.

Small groups continued to meet around neighborhood, by interests and age-demographics. Five **neighborhood groups** settled into rhythm of monthly or bimonthly meetings. Two additional groups (East County and College Area) were initiated by local organizers. Three book study groups are currently meeting—Spiritual Journey, the RIVER and young adults for discussion. The River group is about to have a Christmas party at Darrell Netherton's house. Parents Forum gathers on the second Sunday of the month to discuss questions raised by their children. More small groups emerge, merge, and diverge for learning, devotion, service, support and/or fellowship.

Existing small groups for mission and outreach continue to model what it means to be beacons of light in the world. With the recommendation of Engagement & Discipleship Task Force, some mission and outreach efforts will be transformed into montly church-wide engagement activities, featuring a group each month next year.

In May, we welcomed the Zuiev **family from Ukraine**. This particular family has been exceptionally industrious throughout the process and is now settled into their rental housing in North County. Their children are now integral part of our ministry with young children, one attending CGC, and the father continues to volunteer with CREW.

With the unexpected border crisis in September, First Church embarked on a journey as a landing pad for asylum seekers. We welcomed over 270 migrant guests during our 6-week operation, providing shelter, shower, food, clothing and transportation to the airport or train station, funding airfare for the most vulnerable, and most importantly God's love. First Church **emergency shelter** became a hub of traffic among our church families, small groups, choirs, new members and people from outside the church or within our United Methodist connectionm along with outside organizations like *Al Otro Lado*. We all rolled up our sleeves to provide hospitality to our migrant guests. After 6-weeks of operating migrant shelter, twelve individuals whose sponsorship fell through are now temporarily settled in San Diego areas working on their immigration application.

The four **quarterly church-wide gatherings** were held or planned in conjunction with introducing the Ukrainian family, learning about Sankofa Pilgrimage and asylum seekers. This effort will continue in 2024 to learn, grow, fellowship, serve, and reach out to the community together.

With all the vital ministry going on in this year of discernment, First Church continued to have a great number of **visitors** this year. Our staff and volunteers have been instrumental in welcoming those visitors and to move our repeating visitors toward **membership**. Lay volunteers are needed to expanding the **online and inperson** visitors and new members and to facilitate their spiritual connection with God and with one another.

Welcoming new members through **baptism** continued to be the highlight of my ministry. Along with our steady, planned baptism, we had the blessing of baptizing ten migrant guests annd reaffirming five persons' faith upon their requests. After experiencing the love of God during their short stay, many came forward to be in relationship with God and with one another.

This year, I enjoyed preparing for **preaching and teaching** even more than ever before, after getting to know you all better. Those time spent in conversation helped me better understand the congregation I am in ministry with. For that, I thank you for taking the time to be together with me and with each other. I thank God for the oppportunity to serve alongside you throughout this year. Your faithful service brings me the greatest joy

and keeps me going and going deeper. And I am confident that the feeling is mutual. We can't be the church without you. I **thank each and all of you** for your presence, prayers, service and leadership in this church.

As we broke bread with people we worship and serve together, we've come to know each other better. This year, I invite you to take a little more time and effort **to learn and grow together** wherever and whenever we gather together. **Join me in small groups and book studies for discussion**, and go and **serve wherever you are** to make the love of God known to the world. Stay tuned for learning groups, **both in-person and online for 2024**.

Tamara Walker yearend report 2023 Dec 14

Pastoral Care is my passion. This Pastor of Congregational Care position has suited me beautifully and I am so grateful to have been in ministry with each of you. My deepest calling, I believe, is to pastoral care and hospice care. I am a hospice chaplain. It was my privilege to embrace the role of hospice chaplain for 10 years. In this position, as Pastor of Congregational Care at First Church, I have expanded my understanding of and ability to care for multiple people with multiple needs. It has been an experience of learning how to manage and work with committees and groups committed to caring. As I return to hospice care in January, I thank you for your welcome and commitment to our work together. Thank you for embracing me with genuine love and First United Methodist Church signature hospitality!

You have a group of Stephen Ministers who are mostly assigned to care-receivers and are flourishing in their ministry. Your Stephen Leaders and I have been training a terrific group of motivated and exceptional new Stephen Ministers. The Stephen Leaders are hardworking and committed to their teams. They are wonderful leaders and devoted followers of Christ. They make a big difference in people's lives, for healing and for good.

The Caring Hearts Group, who together care for our shut-ins, which includes seniors restricted by weakness, poor eyesight or diseases that keep them (and their caregivers) at home and unable to attend church, as well as people in crisis at home or the hospital. The Caring Hearts Team meets each week to review the active and long-term list of folks that we keep in touch with. They send cards, make caring visits, make phone calls, and keep in touch through family and friends. Twice a year, at Easter and Christmas, Caring Hearts produces and assembles 150 Caring Hearts bags for those unable to be in church and 25 gift boxes for our online members. Caring Hearts folk take good care of their charges, they deeply care about them and the folk on the receiving end know that they are loved and prayed for by FUMCSD.

Prayers of the People is a prayer group that prays for the whole church and that enables us to know and triage more needs for Stephen Ministry and Caring Hearts in this large congregation. We also have a group of parishioners who pray each Sunday at 8:15am before the 9:00am service. They pray for the pastors, for the people and concerns of the church and for discernment from the Holy Spirit as we sojourn to grow in grace and reach out in love through continuing and new rewilding, ministries.

Prayers and Squares ministry offers prayer quilts to anyone in need of prayer. They are creators of beauty and comfort to every person who receives one. If someone is in need of prayer, anyone can be a sponsor, and can request one of these treasures.

I have learned that it is difficult to get to know a large church. Pastoral care is not just care of the community of faith but for the individual. It has taken me four years to get to know this church and the people. (Covid was not kind in this regard and face to face time was lost but not

connection.) It also takes time to earn the trust of the congregation and I sense that the many seeds that have been planted through the last five years are yielding a beautiful harvest of caring. Our congregation is growing in caring for one another. Spiritual growth and a genuine desire to grow in faith and in faithful action is alive and abuzz in our congregation. This church has had a great deal of change in the last 6 years and the healing of rifts and distrust are evident. There was a spirit of fear, sorrow and uncertainty about pastoral leadership and grief from loss of trust and hope, when I arrived. Healing is happening now; new leaders are working devotedly and I pray that it will continue into the future.

Funerals, Memorials and the follow up of grief work has been a large role for pastoral care in this congregation. I have officiated many services for our congregation members, their families and San Diego community families. We follow up our services with grief support in the form of calls, cards, four printed resources over the course of the first year of bereavement about grief and affirming their own process through it. We provide three grief support groups each year, two in person-Spring/Fall and one on-line - Summer. Our Fall group this year included 8 of our church folks from Mission Valley and Water's Edge Campuses. We have 6-12 meetings each session.

Memorial and Funeral services and follow up this year included the following beloved: Jack Radican, Ellie Ghio, Kevin Hardy, Chuck Safford, Carol Wagaman, Gary Clark, Genevieve Wylie, Audrey Blevins, Anna Tilger, Edward Dube, Mary Lou Diamond, Anna Gruzveda, Barbro Jensen, Ron De Fields, John Buesing, Jeanie O'Dwyer and Elizabeth "Deedy" Mills, David Castaneda, Mary Baker, Ross Stone, Bruce Barr, Gertrude Beach, David Gibson, Gary Furstenfeld, Mary Lee Dickerson, Richard Draz, Amy Fike, Nancy Fisher, David Gibson, Bill Huffman, Franklin Kerlick and Marilyn Ralph.

We initiated a support group last year, that meets monthly for the Caregivers of people living with Alzheimer's. This stemmed from a three-meeting presentation that we offered about Alzheimer's and Dementia. We learned a great deal about the disease, but also that far more people are facing this and caregiving now than we were aware. This group is attended by community members as well as our own First Church community.

We piloted a Divorce Care group this fall for anyone living with divorce. We hope to offer this again and add a support group for children living with divorce.

Thank you, one and all, for embracing me with love and respect as your Pastor of Congregational Care for almost five years. I will always remember and be grateful for this season of growth in my life and ministry.