

2015 Annual Report
The Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



Annual Meeting
January 31, 2016

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The Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
30 N Clinton St.
Iowa City, IA 52245

2015 Annual Report

Recipients of our Time, Presence, Resources and Building – 2015

Adult Education Sessions
Adult Literacy Program
American Guild of Organists
Blackhawk Chamber Festival
Chinese School
Church Women United
Church World Service Blankets
Common Fund
Community ID Program
Community Pastoral Counseling Service
Consultation of Religious Communities (CRC)
Crisis Center Collections
Crop Walk
Cuba Caravan Visit
Ecumenical Housing Corporation
Equal Exchange Sales
Free Lunch Program
Gifts for Parents (CRC)
Girl Scout Training
Individual Counseling
Iowa City Foreign Relations Council
Iowa City Pride Festival
Joan Buxton Children's Aid Fund
Korea Society Concerts
Lenten Musical Meditations
Mark Twain School Collections
Meditation Chapel
Nami Walk
Narcotics Anonymous
Papermaking Day
Project Holiday Meals
Reading Changes Lives - One Read
Russian Guitar Festival
Salvation Army Toy Drive
Scientists in Congregations Lecture Series
Shelter House Collections
Student and Community Recitals
Student Organ Practice
Student Welcome
Sundays at Four Community Arts Series
UI Choral Department
Voices of Soul Chorus
Winter Clothing Distribution (CRC)
Work Camp at Village Community

**The Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Iowa City, IA**

**Annual Meeting
January 31, 2016
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Mission Statement

We, as people of God joined together in the Congregational United Church of Christ, strive to be faithful to the call of Jesus Christ as we minister in love through worship, education, fellowship, service, and daily living. The defining center of our faith community is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the Spirit of Christ, we welcome all people into our community of faith. We respect each person's search for an understanding of the Christian faith and its meaning for our lives and for the issues of today. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we work and pray for peace and justice and fullness of life for all people.

Church Covenant

We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the Word and will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of Jesus Christ, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the reign of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 31, 2016

Agenda

Call for a Quorum

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Opening Remarks

Approval of 2015 Annual Meeting Minutes

Approval of 2016 Annual Report

Approval of Nomination Committee Report

Approval of 2016 Annual Budget and 2015 Financial Reports

Housing Allowance

The Congregational United Church of Christ, Iowa City, Iowa, has budgeted a \$30,000 housing allowance for its pastor, William H. Lovin in 2016.

New Business

Old Business

Announcements

Adjournment

**ANNUAL MEETING
THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FEBRUARY 8, 2015**

The meeting was called to order by moderator, Cynthia Kemp, at 11:15 A.M.

A quorum was met. 66 members were present.

Reverend Lovin opened the meeting with a prayer.

Cynthia Kemp expressed how the membership of the church are stewards in many ways. Not only do the members support the church financially, but support the church by serving on boards and committees and by helping in the local community as well. She also expressed thanks to all who served the church on committees and boards and the church staff. Reverend Lovin was also thanked for his steady leadership of the congregation.

John Fieselmann moved to approve the 2014 Annual Meeting minutes. James Robinson seconded. Motion passed.

John Fieselmann moved to approve the Annual Report. James Robinson seconded. Motion passed.

Barb Hanson presented the Nominating Committee report noting that there were still two openings on the Diaconate. Volunteers were asked to contact her. Donna Hirst moved to accept the Nominating Committee report. Jane Murphy seconded. Motion passed.

Ginny Clemons, Treasurer, presented the 2015 budget. Ginny pointed out the areas of the report which contained the income statement, general funds and special funds, benevolences and the proposed 2015 budget. She noted that there was an increase in the Christian Education budget which reflects the change to a full-time Christian Education Director. After discussion, John Johnson moved to accept the 2015 Operating Budget. Charley Platz seconded. Motion passed.

Sharyn Reitz spoke on the \$30,000 housing allowance. She stated that this was something that we haven't voted on in the past but should be voted on. She stated this was just a technicality.

Marge Hoppin moved to approve the housing allowance. Doug Parsons seconded. Motion passed.

Bryan Clemons spoke on behalf of the Stewardship Committee. He announced that the new directories are available. He gave thanks to all who contributed this year and asked the membership to consider how we can help with the shortfall for the Christian Education Director. It should be noted that last year we approved procedures to transfer funds from the Endowment Fund and procedures for this will appear in a future newsletter.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Church Council worked on Policies and Procedures for Restricted and Unrestricted Funds during 2014. This was done to improve organization and make the process transparent.

OLD BUSINESS: None

Ethel Bloesch moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

Respectfully submitted
Barb Sisley, Church Clerk

Moderator's Report

Church Council 2015

2015 has been a year full of changes, innovation, creativity and accomplishments. As you will see from the reports by our boards and committees, their commitment continues to be to give our congregation the best possible experience in worship and fellowship. How fortunate we all are to have such dedicated members every year to work toward a goal so wonderful.

This year, we have seen many physical changes in our facility. Hopefully, these will contribute to new activities, new ways to interact with one another and new ways for the community to use our building. It should be very interesting to see how we react as a congregation to all the changes. How fortunate we are to have been able to create this new environment. This is truly the work of many years and many hands to get us to this point.

The physical changes are easy to see. The sometimes unseen work of so many of our members needs to be appreciated. Thank you, thank you, thank you all for your hard work, your willingness to pitch in and help whenever called on—for saying “Yes” to taking on responsibility for projects large and small, for tackling issues that presented at unexpected moments, for making decisions wisely and thoughtfully.

I want to thank our staff. Nan has been a wonder in the office, doing the work so well and doing it happily and joyfully. I also want to thank Patrick for all his wonderful musicianship and guiding hand for the choir and children's choir. He is a wonderful asset to our music program and makes the members of the choir want to come and make something beautiful happen. Bill Crouch is just a marvel at every service—providing us with his wonderful music, guiding us through all our hymns with immense skill and generosity of spirit. We appreciate him so very much. Eddie is great at being flexible with our needs, coming when needed and keeping our church in great shape for services every Sunday. Patte will be a wonderful addition to our Christian Ed program. We can look forward to some new and exciting things from her during the coming year.

There is no way to say “thank you” adequately for the hours spent by members on church business. All of us benefit from the work of our volunteers. The list of jobs filled by volunteers is endless. We are always coming up with new possibilities for creative endeavors, a sign of a lively engaged congregation.

I also want to thank Bill Lovin for his patience and guidance through this past year. As always, it has been a real pleasure working with him. I greatly appreciate his understanding and wisdom with Church Council issues and his abilities with the congregation and worship. Thanks to Robin and Nat as well for sharing Bill with us. We are grateful to you.

I am looking forward to working with all of you who will be serving this next year. To those of you are leaving, you will be missed. For those of you just starting, welcome and we will keep things interesting for you, I guarantee!

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Kemp
Moderator, Church Council



Board of Christian Education 2015 Annual Report Christian Education Board Annual Report 2015

The Christian Education program experienced another year of transition and growth in 2015. The Christian Ed Board guided the children's programs while seeking a new Director of Christian Education and are thrilled to report that Patte Henderson was hired at the end of the year. We look forward to a great new year with Patte!

Sunday school had three age appropriate classes, PK/K, Grades 1-4 and Grades 5-8, in the spring that members of the CE Board taught. This fall this was condensed to two classes, PK, K-4th and eventually to one class, PK-4th, due to attendance numbers. In addition to Sunday School, there was Children's Church programming during worship that was lead by the CE board. This fall our Choir Director, Patric Zubiata, met with the children during the first portion of the Children's Church time to sing and learn songs for the Christmas Pageant. This was a great addition to the programming that we would like to continue into the new year. The CE Board continues to encourage members of the congregation to volunteer to assist with the Sunday School classes or Children's Church by contacting Patte.

The adult education Sunday morning programs were diverse and well attended in 2015.

The CE board sponsored some family events in 2015 including the Ash Wednesday Pancake Dinner and the Advent Festival in November.

This summer the CE board had Camp Courageous Vacation Bible School during Children's Church time on Sunday mornings.

We continue to encourage more participation, by offering quality programming, and hope to see a continued rise in attendance in the educational opportunities that our church has to offer. We have seen an increase in volunteers, and are also looking for more volunteers to participate in our education programs for 2016. This year has shown what a wonderful church and caring congregation we are a part of and we look forward to 2016 with hope and great excitement.

Respectfully submitted

Amy Lewis, Chair, Board of Christian Education

Board Members: Claire Ashman, Robyn Groff, Ruth Kuntz, Lauren Whitehead,
Tina Koepnick, Anna Mary Mueller, Carrie Whittaker

Deacons Meeting



Diaconate 2015 Annual Report

During the last year, the Diaconate focused on our primary responsibility of providing leadership with the pastor for worship and the spiritual life of the church. In addition to the established Sunday morning services, we assisted with Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, jazz, and Christmas Eve services. The goal is for a smooth worship service. Our work includes preparation and administration of the sacraments, training and providing ushers and greeters, and providing leadership for fellowship activities of the church. We also oversee the music committee, prepare the altar, and appoint an acolyte coordinator.

In addition to our regular duties, we support our young adults in several ways. We met with the confirmation class to listen to their statements of faith and ask questions to stimulate discussion. Our graduating senior was recognized at a special after-service recognition event and presented a gift certificate.

The members of the Diaconate continue to take responsibility for the greeters, ushers, and hospitality providers. This includes creating a system that provides trained ushers and greeters for all scheduled services of worship. Special thanks are due Fern Weir who has coordinated this effort as a Diaconate member and as an Emeritus Deacon. The duties of each group that assists with worship have been recently updated and are available for reference. The Diaconate would like to thank all who have served as greeters, ushers, and hospitality during the last year.

Of the sacraments, the preparation and administration of communion is a special responsibility. There is comradeship and bonding that occurs monthly with the preparation of the bread and juice. We take great pride in serving the congregation during the service.

Special thanks go to Edie Roberts for her superb recording of the minutes, Jane Murphy for coordinating the flower committee, Betsy Henson for her support of special events and liaison with the music committee, and Vernetta Knapp and Jim Savage for their support of the Christmas Eve fellowship.

We look forward to another year serving the church and its members.

Respectfully submitted,
John Fieselmann, Chair

Board Members: Jim Savage, Shelagh Hayreh, Vernetta Knapp, Betsy Henson, Hermine McLeran, Jane Murphy, Tarin Bell, Mike Myer, Edie Roberts, Kathy Fait, Marcy Kuechenmeister, and John Fieselmann

Mission Board **Annual Report** **2015**

The Mission Board continues to look for ways for the congregation to participate in projects that respond to Jesus' admonition to love our neighbors, especially the disadvantaged. These include social justice projects designed to translate our good intentions into effective action.

Projects are listed in 4 categories: the operating budget (pledge-driven), the directed gifts, the special collections, and volunteer activities.

Included in the operating budget were the Free Lunch Program, the Community Pastoral Counseling Program, Iowa City Compassion, and Pastor Benevolences.

Directed gifts from generous individuals (the Engagement Fund) included \$12000 each for the CRC Common Fund, the Crisis Center, and the Center for Worker Justice (CWJ, sponsors of the Johnson County Community ID, and promoters of a minimum wage increase). We distributed these funds in 2015, except for \$4000 in 2016 and 2017 for the Center for Worker Justice.

The list of special Sunday collections begins with the annual UCC benevolences for One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, and Strengthen the Church. Other announced collections supported Shelter House, the TEE College Fund in South Africa, the UNICEF AIDS fund, ToGatherTogether (school supplies for kids), and Nepal earthquake relief. Fund-raising projects also included the CROP Walk, the NAMI walk, Share the Harvest (for the Crisis Center Food Bank), the donations at the Sundays at 4 concerts, the Homecoming drink sales, and the Souperbowl.

Material gifts included the Ecumenical Winterwear Collection, the Shelter House Book Sale, care packages for the Domestic Violence Intervention Project, and food and diapers for the Crisis Center Food Pantry. Advent collections included the Coffee Project, Gifts for Parents, the Salvation Army-sponsored presents for children, CWS blankets, gift cards for Shelter House and Crisis Center, and the Mitten Tree.

In addition to organizing the above collections, volunteer activities included staffing a booth at the Pride Festival, the Cuba Caravan potluck and showing of the movie *Abrazos*, the Free Lunch Program, and the summer work camp with the Disciples to transform an old winery into a school. After discussing the book "Hotdogs and Hamburgers" about the challenges of adult literacy tutoring, the Mission Board recruited volunteer tutors from our congregation to work with students from the high school completion program at Kirkwood. We plan to grow this program beyond our current 3 students.

For January 2016, we are organizing a 5-week series for Adult Sunday School on how to recognize and combat hidden racism in our community. A list of additional volunteer activities of congregation members is being prepared so members can readily obtain advice about any activity that interests them.

Respectfully submitted

Bob Ashman, Chair

Board Members: Pam Willard, Megan Carnes, Erin Brown, Jane Kinney, Lee Wood, Paula Forest, Diana Coberly, Pat Goeldner,

TRUSTEES
2015 Annual Report
The blessing of the Lord be upon you:
we bless you in the name of the Lord.
Psalm 129:8 KJV

Circus (noun)

- 1) A traveling company of acrobats, trained animals, and clowns that give performances
- 2) A scene of frenetic and noisy activity

Based on this definition, I think life at the Congregational UCC could be defined as a circus.

Like all circuses, we have some stunts, acrobatic & otherwise, happening here.

Over the last couple years (under the direction of Charley Platz) the trustees were able to make huge improvements to our building with a new roof, new larger gutters, replacement of portions of the dentil board, outside painting, a new sign, sidewalk & driveway replacement, and a new sound system. These improvements were possible by your generous contributions to the Capital Campaign.

Like all circuses, we are a scene of frenetic and noisy activity.

Early in 2015, new windows from NeTom were installed in the CE wing, kitchen & nursery.

Also in 2015 we completed the replacement of many of the foundation stones with new mortar, which started in 2014. Duane Eash, our brick mason, and owner of the William Sewell Co., replaced 406 'spalled' bricks on the South & West sides of the CE wing. Spalled is the term used to define when the face of the brick falls away from the brick itself due to moisture collecting inside the brick from loose mortar and then freezing. In addition to that, Duane did a full tuck-pointing (grind out old mortar, replace with new) job on the South & West sides of the CE wing. (source of all the gritty dust, recently cleaned up).

In July/August, it was decided to upgrade (replace) our original vintage kitchen from 1957. This project, now complete, took about 4 months and includes cabinets, counter tops, flooring, along with much needed plumbing & electrical upgrades. Thanks to the watchful and helpful eyes of our general contractor, Marc Olson Remodeling, Jim Alberhasky of Bill's Plumbing and Emily of Chamber's Electric, we have the much anticipated kitchen. The comments have been very positive and very much appreciated.

One more little suggestion from Carroll Hanson created the new bathroom just off the nursery between the lower narthex and sanctuary. This bathroom, while it benefits our members, will also be enjoyed during special music and wedding events. The nursery got a spruce up as well. The final piece of the puzzle was the replacement of the twin '57's as we called them. We replaced the two furnaces (from 1957) that service the entire CE area, the kitchen, and the nursery. Air conditioning was added to these new high efficiency units.

Special thanks to Barb Hanson, Gloria Hanson & Marge Hoppin for their dedication and special attention to all the details needed to make this a smooth, well-designed project.

TRUSTEES 2015 Annual Report continued

Like all circuses, we know that the show depends on all of us working together and doing our part.

We are blessed to have the support of each other as we move through life.

Even though our life is noisy and frenetic and crazy at times, we are blessed to have the Giver of True Peace at the center of our lives, Jesus Christ.

Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" John 14:6

Happy New Year!

Your Board of Trustees – Doug Parsons, Carroll Hanson, Dick Kruse, Laurie Stunz, James Robinson, Derek Willard, John Reitz, Secretary, Rick Ruppert, Chair

Stewardship Board Annual Report for 2015

The Stewardship Board has concentrated its work in 2015 on four projects:

- 1) To manage the investments in the Parsonage Fund.
- 2) To achieve growth of the Endowment Fund and Parsonage Fund through investment management strategies.
- 3) To achieve growth of the Endowment Fund through bequests, wills, and charitable remainder trusts from church members.
- 4) To make funds available through grants from the Endowment Fund for church projects for which there is no other funding available.
- 5) To conduct the 2015 Annual Pledge Campaign.

Annual Pledge Campaign Results

The Stewardship Committee extends its thanks all of the congregation's members and friends who have responded to the stewardship campaign for the 2016 budget. Your response to our "Trust in the Promise" campaign will make the work of the Trustees possible. They will use this money wisely in the care and maintenance of our church and its mission during 2016.

I wish to thank the members of this board for their work toward the achievement of these goals.

Bryan Clemons, Chairman

Members of the Board: Charles Connerly, Cynthia Kemp, Chris Knapp, Tom Mittman, Cindy Parsons, Derek Willard

MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2015

This past year was a year of “more.” We had more funerals in 2015 than in any other year since I’ve been here. Those were solemn occasions of remembering and giving thanks. We received more new members than in any other year since I’ve been here. Those were occasions of great happiness and hope. We also did more work on our building—renovating, repairing, remodeling in several places, inside and outside.

We’ve done a lot of work on our building in recent years. It is important work that provides a foundation that will serve us for decades to come as we continue our ministry and mission in this place. Once again I want to thank everyone who has given to financially support the capital campaign and everyone who has pledged to give. And to those who are thinking, “Well, maybe I can give more,” I’d say go ahead. I thank the members who worked on the original campaign, those who have served as Trustees in the ensuing years, overseeing this work, and those who have monitored our use of our gifts so that the money has been very wisely spent.

For several months in 2015 we included a note at the bottom of the weekly church calendar that read, “Expect construction and plan accordingly.” That advice was necessary because of the major kitchen renovation we were undertaking. While that was on everyone’s mind, we also replaced two furnaces, installed a new restroom, had addition tuck pointing and brickwork done outside, and continued to try to get those front doors the way we want them. Anyone coming here could expect a lot of construction.

While the work is now over, perhaps we should have kept that warning at the bottom of our calendars. Through the prophet Isaiah, God says, “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” God continues to be at work in us and among us and through us. And we should plan accordingly, expecting upheaval, expecting delight, expecting inconvenience, expecting new possibilities.

A few examples of places where construction needs to start or is already ongoing:

- 1) In 2015 we confirmed four youth and welcomed them into full membership in our congregation. The number of children and youth who are younger than these confirmands is large and has been growing every year for many years. We need to develop new programs for the junior high and high school age youth in our congregation, passing on to them the faith and the values that sustain us in a changing world.
- 2) We need to make some wise decisions and take some bold action regarding our ministry to university students. With all the challenges of university life, a congregation can be both a home and a community of support. A church can provide needed renewal, helping students to refocus and reprioritize as they study and grow. Let us remember the great gift that we have and that we are as a congregation. Every day, every hour, countless students walk by here. Many need what we can offer, but are unaware of who we are and what we value. Part of our calling as people who have decided to stay in this place is to find new ways to minister to the students who are our neighbors.
- 3) We have, as you know, started a new adult literacy program here. We discovered that our congregation has not only writers but also those who know about teaching reading. We partnered with Kirkwood Community College. And we’ve started a program of adults working with adults to increase literacy.

MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT continued

4) On Wednesdays at noon a small group of members meets in the sanctuary to pray. And I know that in this congregation, that's probably the most unusual and controversial thing we do. Protest wars, support same-sex marriage, rally for worker justice, teach people to read—no problem. But just what do we think we are doing gathering to pray? Call it meditation. Call it mindfulness. Call it prayer. It is a group attempt to be still and know God. Everyone is welcome—and if noon on Wednesday doesn't work for you, let me know. We can add another time.

Through our actions we are signs of the love of God—to the rest of the world, to our community, even to ourselves. In many small ways we make the love of God visible in the world. We are signs that this world, as troubled as it is, belongs to the God of love. We are signs that we as a congregation, we as individuals, do follow in the way of Jesus Christ, who tells his followers: "Truly...as you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me."

In the coming year, continue to expect construction. God is still at work. Plan accordingly.

It has been a joy to serve as your pastor this year. I give thanks to God for this church and for each one of you.

Peace,

Bill Lovin

Church Library Committee Annual Report 2015

For 2015 the budget for the Church Library was \$420. Almost all of this amount was spent for books since this year we needed only a small amount for one periodical renewal. Periodical subscriptions currently in the Library are "Christian Century", "Sojourners", and "Stillspeaking".

The book display in Rockwood Hall has encouraged use of the Library. Books have been checked out from the display, but we also encourage use of the Library itself. Because of the kitchen remodeling, many items were moved and placed in Rockwood Hall. This, and Foreign Relations meetings, contributed to the book display constantly being moved. It has been difficult to keep the books arranged and in order on the bookshelves.

The Library continues to be used as meeting space by education groups, boards, and committees. The Library Committee continues to put reviews of newly purchased books in the monthly newsletters. We hope these reviews are useful to Church members to determine what they might be interested in reading themselves or selecting for their children.

Books purchased for 2015: Adult 12, Adolescents/Children 7. Recommendations for purchase are always welcome.

Committee Members for 2015 were Judy Doorenbos, Andrea Rauer, Edie Roberts

Membership Board Annual Report for 2015

This year's Membership Board focused on activities which support our mission statement, including developing ways to genuinely welcome others into our community of faith and to provide members and visitors with an opportunity to participate in fellowship activities and events. Our Board relied on all in the congregation for continued help and support with both our projects and events.

Projects accomplished during 2015:

Encouraged after worship greeters to extend hospitality to visitors and newcomers.

Continued the tradition of written cards of welcome to visitors and expressions of caring to members who are ill, etc.

We framed and hung a new photograph of bicyclists racing past the Church. It hangs above the newly refinished table in the entry Narthex. Lower Narthex improvements also included literature distribution and a nametag basket.

Updated, edited, and had the 'Welcome' brochure printed for placement in the pews.

Surveyed interior building signage and submitted a proposal – as a work in progress - to the Trustees for professional directional signs. Thanks to the support and leadership of the Trustees and the expertise of Robyn Hepker, we now have new signage, which is especially helpful to visitors/new members.

Events held during 2015:

July 19: 50+ attended our summer picnic in City Park.

August 21, 22: University Students were welcomed with drinks, cookies, & conversation.

October 9: Homecoming Parade potluck was held in conjunction with the Men's Fellowship and the Mission Board. Attendees brought a side dish, salad, or dessert, and then watched the parade from front row seating.

October 24: Progressive Dinner provided great fellowship with 56 participants attending.

December 6: The Advent event took the form of a potluck.

We look forward to 2016 providing the opportunity to start a larger conversation of space, staff, and funding for college age participants in the life of our church.

In the spring of 2016, we plan to host a reunion for members who have joined the church in the past year.

Women's Fellowship

Although the official Women's Fellowship ended in 2003, the women of the church continue to provide support and fundraising for various church activities. The fundraising done by the women of the church has paid for many kitchen supplies and equipment purchases, including fellowship hour coffee, sugar, and creamer, china, coffee pots, and two dishwashers. A large set of stainless steel flatware was purchased in 2015 with funds from the Women's Fund.

Barb Hanson, Gloria Hanson, and Marge Hoppin have watched over our kitchen for many years. They do an extra cleanup on Monday mornings and return nametags to the upstairs rack. They have provided hours of guidance, vendor visits and ordering, and church logistical support in this year's kitchen upgrade.

(Continued next page)

Women have volunteered to staff the kitchen for the numerous Foreign Relations Luncheons, providing a service to that group and raising money toward the kitchen upgrade.

The Women's Fund made a substantial donation toward the kitchen upgrade of 2015 – money raised by years of fundraising from FRC luncheons, garage sales, and card and plant sales.

Claire Ashman and Edie Roberts have continued our monthly luncheons for women of the church this year, a fellowship opportunity available during the weekday.

Our churchyard offers a bench for the weary and flowers and shrubbery to please the eye. The Womens' Fund continues to pay for churchyard maintenance and improvements, with Barb Hanson and Gloria Hanson our watchful gardeners.

Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship meets at various restaurants for breakfast once per month. The men of the church provide support and fundraising for various church activities.

The support and service of the Men's Fellowship makes the Easter breakfast a welcoming time for all.

The fundraising done by the men of the church through the Homecoming Parade sales has been utilized in a variety of ways. The Men's Fellowship contributed a substantial amount to the kitchen upgrade of 2015.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharyn Reitz and Phyllis Ruppert, Board co-chairs

Board Members: Mike Groff, Kevin Koepnick, Mary Lea Kruse, Daniel Morgan-Harris, Nicole Pearson, Sharyn Reitz, Phyllis Ruppert, Sue Wolken, and Steve Wolken; Honorary Board Member, Betty Mather

MUSIC COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

After a year of graduate school and a year at our church Patrick Zubiato continues to lead the music program in fine fashion. We feel fortunate to have Patrick who is following the church's tradition of quality music and special music programs. There has been some work with the youth this fall, taking a few minutes on Sunday mornings to teach a song or two.

Last spring our special music program was selections by English composers, *Te Deum in C* by Benjamin Britten and *This is the Day* by John Rutter, leaning on our fine organist, William Crouch, for accompaniment. Our special music for December was Camille Saint-Saens *Christmas Oratorio*, with organ, orchestra and harp accompaniment. Patrick will be allowed to use our presentation to fulfill part of his requirement for the DMA program.

The staff would like to thank church members for the support received by the music program and for recognizing their work through a salary increase. Their work blesses this congregation immeasurably.

Special Lenten meditations have been organized by Bill Dickinson for the past several years. This has varied attendance but those come to the short musical intervals very much appreciate this special time to reflect. Hopefully more people will take advantage of these offerings, a nice respite in a busy day.

A special edition of Sundays at Four is planned for March 13, 2016. Dr. John C Hughes will return to Iowa and his choir, Ripon College Chamber Singers, will give a concert in the sanctuary. The Ripon choir members need an evening meal and lodging. It will be a good chance to hear the fruits of John's degree. Thank you in advance for those helping to house singers and make this concert possible.

Choir members spend a lot of time preparing music for worship, enjoying the process and cheerfully (mostly) giving their time. There has been chatter regarding the choir robes, at least 50 years in service, requiring dry cleaning and falling apart even before getting to the cleaners. We are considering a fund raiser or checking on funds available, in search of new and washable alternatives.

Thank you for supporting the fine music and those who provide it.

Respectfully,

Marie Von Behren, Chair

Nominating Committee Report

Purpose: It shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to bring to the annual meeting nominations for all open elected positions. The committee is comprised of one member from each of the recognized boards and both at-large members of the church council.

A word of thanks: As always, we must pause to thank those who continue to serve the church by board membership, participation as delegates, and ecumenical representatives, and especially those who are rotating off of those services. Your service has been greatly appreciated, and critical to the success of the mission of our church.

Procedure: Reverend Lovin and the Members-at-Large have been working together to compile a list of nominees for the various open positions on the boards. Our aim is to develop a slate that is a good cross-section of the congregation. E-mail, rather than meetings, seems to be the best way to communicate with board chairs. With the list of prospective new board members each board chair works to fill the openings on his/her board. The completed slate of nominations is then brought to the Annual Meeting to be ratified by the members of the church. We are grateful for those who have agreed to serve.

Nominating Committee members:

Members-at-Large	Barb Hanson and Donna Hirst
Christian Education	Amy Lewis
Diaconate	John Fieselmann
Membership	Sharyn Reitz and Phyllis Ruppert
Mission	Bob Ashman
Stewardship	Bryan Clemons
Trustees	Rick Ruppert

Respectfully submitted,
Barb Hanson and Donna Hirst, Members-at-Large

Nominating Committee 2015 Annual Report

<u>Terms Expire in January</u>	2017	2018	2019
Diaconate Meets 1st Tuesday at 7:00 pm	Betsy Henson* Hermine McLeran* Jane Murphy Tarin Bell	Dean Logan Edie Roberts Kathy Fait Marcy Kuechenmeister	Shelagh Hayreh Ed Murph Tom Sandersfeld Vicki Thomae
Trustees Meets 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 pm	John Reitz* Derek Willard	Laura Stunz* Dick Kruse* Rick Ruppert	Doug Parsons Carroll Hanson James Robinson
Christian Education Meets 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 pm	Carrie Whittaker* Robyn Groff Ed Keogh	Claire Ashman* Ruth Kuntz* Amy Lewis*	Tina Koepnick Anna Mary Mueller Kristy Nabhan-Warren
Mission Meets 1st Tuesday at 7:00 pm	Megan Carnes Jane Kinney* Bob Jury	Bob Ashman Lee Wood Pat Goeldner	Pam Willard* Erin Brown* Paula Forest*
Stewardship Meets 3rd Tuesday at 4:00 pm	Tom Mittman* Cindy Parsons* Chris Knapp*	Derek Willard* Charles Connerly* Cynthia Kemp	Bryan Clemons* Deb Cobb Sharon Garton
Membership Meets 3rd Tuesday at 5:30 pm	Kevin Koepnick Phyllis Ruppert	Mike Groff Steve Wolken Sue Wolken	Mary Lea Kruse* Sharyn Reitz* Diane Jetter Connie Parsons
Church Council Meets 4th Tuesday at 7:00 pm	Moderator: Secretary/Clerk: Treasurer: At-Large Members:	Cynthia Kemp (2017)* Barb Sisley (2017)* Ginny Clemons (2018)* Donna Hirst (2018)* Barb Hanson (2017)*	
UCC Delegates	Delegates to Eastern Iowa Association: Ethel Bloesch, Betty Mather Delegates to Iowa Conference: Raven Rowe		
Ecumenical Representatives	Community Pastoral Counseling Service: Joan Buxton Consultation of Religious Communities: John Fuller, Pat Goeldner Common Fund: Kathy Fait, Marcy Kuechenmeister Ecumenical Housing Corp: Bill Hoefer (General Board) Charley Platz (Administrative Board)		

*denotes second term

Nominees with terms starting January, 2016

	2017	2018	2019
Diaconate		Dean Logan	Ed Murph Tom Sandersfeld Vicki Thomae
Trustees			
Christian Education			Ed Keogh Kristy Nabhan-Wareen
Mission	Bob Jury		
Stewardship			Deb Cobb Sharon Garton
Membership			Diane Jetter Connie Parsons
Ecumenical Housing Corporation			
General Board:	Bill Hoefer		
Administrative Board:	Charley Platz		
UCC Delegate			
Delegate to Iowa Conference:			

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Annual Report 2015

Purpose: According to the By-Laws of the Congregational United Church of Christ, the Pastoral Relations Committee “shall be a committee consisting of the Moderator, the Church Clerk, and the two Members-at-Large who meet at least quarterly or more often, if needed, during the year with the pastor to discuss issues that will strengthen the relationship between the pastor and the church.”

Meetings: The Pastoral Relations Committee met in 2015 on June 18 and November 12. These meetings provide an ongoing opportunity for free communication that allows Reverend Lovin to express his observations and perspective on church matters, to provide an opportunity to discuss his professional development, and to discuss confidentially any concerns that might arise.

Pastoral Relations Committee

Moderator Cynthia Kemp
Church Clerk Barb Sisley
Members-at-Large Donna Hirst and Barb Hanson

Respectfully submitted,
Barb Hanson and Donna Hirst, Members-at-Large

Iowa Conference United Church of Christ Annual Report to the Churches

A few weeks ago I stood in the magnificently traditional sanctuary of one of our churches and contemplated how things “churchy” have changed in the century or so since that building was built.

A century ago congregations like that one and many others in our conference were poised to enter a decades-long period of growth and prosperity. During the first 70 years of the 20th century our churches were filled to the gills with children and young people. Congregation after congregation built Christian Education additions to accommodate growing Sunday Schools and the influx of young families. It was a heady time – and as it turns out, it was an anomalous time.

It’s true, of course, that for most of church history communities of faith have more often been small and struggling than large and powerful. If a person came of age in the 1950’s and 1960’s it would be easy to imagine that the robust growth was typical for churches, but that conclusion would be wrong.

Among the oddness of that period was the degree to which society reinforced the church. The fact of the matter was, to be a “decent” member of American society only 40 and 50 years ago, one had to belong to a church. No formal law said so (there is the first amendment, of course), but blue laws and general practice conspired to contribute to churchliness. There were no organized sports on Sunday morning. Stores weren’t open. You couldn’t go the movies or go bowling. So....you went to church.

But the day of societally enforced religiosity is gone. And at least so far as the trained eye can see, it’s not coming back anytime soon. No one “has” to go to church any longer. It’s just as acceptable to stay home, drink coffee and browse the internet (or, for folk my age, read that quaint thing called “the paper”) as it is to go to church. In fact, going to church may make you a bit peculiar.

In the Iowa Conference, your staff is about the business of encouraging a attention to discipleship – we call it “Boldly following Jesus.” So far as I can tell, no church has much of a future except that it identify a compelling and clearly faith-based niche for itself and then go about filling that niche with enthusiasm and clarity and excellence and passion. Church for church’s sake won’t cut it any longer. No one cares. Period. But a community of people who bring honest and transparent commitment to the common good and to justice and fair-play; who care about the hungry and disadvantaged; who grapple with questions of meaning and life and death and forgiveness and mercy – will probably not grow big, but may grow strong. That may especially happen if they are willing to let go of long-beloved ecclesiastical habits and traditions.

**Iowa Conference United Church of Christ
Annual Report to the Churches continued**

The staff of the Iowa Conference is committed to helping your church find a compelling reason for the next few decades of existence. Are YOU interested in being purposeful, rather than merely being “around?”

By the way, thank you for your financial support of this work. My staff and I are only able to encourage this kind of ministry because you give so we can give ourselves back to you. Thank for your gifts to Our Church’s Wider Mission – OCWM. I am grateful and all those who benefit from our common ministry are grateful.

God bless you and your church!

Rich Pleva

Conference Minister

UCC in Iowa

EASTERN IOWA ASSOCIATION
2015 ANNUAL REPORT

The Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ is divided geographically into six associations. Our region, the Eastern Iowa Association, includes 31 congregations.

The annual program and business meeting was held Sunday, September 27, 2015 at Edwards Congregational UCC in Davenport. Present were the Associate Conference Minister Jonna Jensen, and clergy and lay representatives from member churches.

The meeting opened with a worship service led by Christine Isham, pastor at Edwards Church. A business meeting followed. The 2016 budget was approved, followed by approval of revisions to the Bylaws of the Eastern Iowa Association.

Recognition was given to nine association pastors on their special ordination anniversaries. Four churches are also celebrating special anniversaries this year.

Rev. Rob Leveridge presented the program segment. He demonstrated how songs and singing can elevate our experience of God and community, in worship and other gatherings.

The meeting continued with a report on the 30th General Synod of the UCC, held in Cleveland in June. At this national gathering, held every two years, delegates consider and vote on resolutions of witness to social issues, as well as matters of church structure and function.

The meeting concluded with remarks by Jonna Jensen and with the installation of the newly elected officers.

The local congregation served as hosts for the lasagna dinner that followed.

Respectfully submitted,
Ethel Bloesch
Betty Mather

**Congregational UCC, Representative to the Ecumenical Towers Board of Directors
Annual Report 2015 – January 22, 2016**

Ecumenical Towers provides affordable apartments for those age 62+ and for younger mobility impaired individuals. This studio and one-bedroom apartment community is located in the heart of downtown Iowa City on Washington Street, adjacent to the Johnson County Senior Center.

An onsite Resident Relations Specialist and Service Coordinator create a sense of community among the residents through monthly activities, movies and seasonal parties. The Service Coordinator position had been contracted through Elder Services, but to improve the efficiency and flexibility of service she now is an employee of Ecumenical Towers, linking residents to appropriate service providers within the community, provide information on benefits, serve as a liaison and advocate, provide educational programming, encouragement and support, which allows residents to maintain a self-reliant lifestyle. After years of planning, and re-planning, the much needed capital improvement project to replace all the windows on the south face of the building was completed. The residents are happy for their increased comfort and the Board is anxious to see the payback in the coming year's utility bills. I encourage you to drive or walk by on Washington Street sometime to see the facelift.

Government subsidies allow Ecumenical Towers' rents to be no more than 30% of adjusted gross income. Incomes must be verified at move-in and annually thereafter. Ecumenical Towers currently has a waitlist, but interested individuals are encouraged to complete an application. Stop by the leasing office at 320 E. Washington St. or call 338-7450 (or visit www.homzmanagement.com/ecumenical-towers.)

The Ecumenical Housing Corporation was formed in the late 70s by twelve church congregations: Congregational United Church of Christ, First Christian Church, First Baptist Church, First Mennonite Church, First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, St. Thomas More Catholic Church, St. Wenceslaus Church, and Trinity Episcopal Church. Each church currently has a representative on the Board of Directors that meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:30 a.m. Kathie Belgum, of Gloria Dei, is the Board President. 2015 was my sixth and final year on the Board. Charlie Platz has been nominated to take our church's position on the board, so Ecumenical Towers will continue in good hands.

Each church is also allowed to select up to six additional Members of the Ecumenical Towers Corporation. These Members may be called upon by the Board to help in various ways, but they are not voting members of the Board of Directors. Maile Sagen had served in this capacity for our church, and despite resigning my place on the Board I plan to continue as a Member of the corporation. The role of these other Members has generally been limited to possible attendance at the annual meeting, but the Ecumenical Towers Board has begun discussions on how to encourage and facilitate more involvement by its non-director Members, and the church memberships in general. So I hope to be a part of that renewed involvement of all Members of the corporation.

Bill Hoefler
Ecumenical Towers Board of Directors

THE COMMON FUND

Annual Report for 2015

The Common Fund is the fund of last resort that serves families and individuals with emergency needs and enables them to be responsibly involved in meeting their future needs. The Fund assists recipients in meeting the essential, basic needs of water, electricity, heat, and housing. As an assistance program of the Consultation of Religious Communities, the Common Fund is designed to meet these needs that may not otherwise be met through other social agencies. The program is administered through the Crisis Center where applicants are interviewed, counseled, and screened to determine eligibility for funds. Referrals to other agencies are made as appropriate. Requests for housing and utility assistance are prioritized based on the number of previous assists and available funds. Eligibility guidelines allow for two assists per 12-month period for households.

The Common Fund addresses immediate and critical needs for housing assistance to prevent eviction and for utility assistance to prevent disconnection of essential services. For example, without this assistance in 2015:

- a single mother with an autistic child would have lost her housing when she found herself out of work;
- a man would have lost his electricity while he recovered from back surgery and was unable to work; and
- a single mother who recently gave birth to a new child would have lost water in her home because she did not have paid maternity leave.

During the first nine months of this year, 285 households were provided assistance and a total of approximately \$38,000 was distributed. On average, \$134 was provided per assist during this period. Funds to support this important program come primarily from the CRC faith communities with some contributions coming from individuals. Our church is committed to supporting the Common Fund, and our contributions help to improve lives and strengthen our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Kuechenmeister
Church Representative, Common Fund Committee

Membership Statistics 2015 Annual Report

Deaths

James Allan Sangster
Darrell Wyrick
Maile-Gene Sagen
Priscilla Walker
Mike Romanowski
Pete Knapp
Glenna Cobb

New Members Received

March 8, 2015

Tarin Bell
Danielle Weipert
Brian Whitehead
Lauren Whitehead
John Holmes
Ruth Holmes

May 31, 2015
(Confirmation)

Benjamin Day
Emily Buck
Anna Whittaker
Grace Whittaker

July 12, 2015

Maggie John
Leah DeGrazia
Patricia Henderson
Jer McCarty
Tom Sandersfeld

October 11, 2015

Sharon Garton
Ed Keogh
Becky Keogh
Dean Logan
Jeff Schabilion
Lenore Maybaum
Nathan Morton
Dale Roberts
Patty Roberts
Stephen Warren
Kristi Nabhan-Warren

Removed by Transfer

Annette Michaels
Bruce Guither

Weddings

Noel Reading Carver and Jennifer Erin Hrabe
Lauren Paige Brusco and Keane James McCarthy
Nathaniel James Savage and Laura Elizabeth Linssen
Clearesia Ann Lovell-Lepak and Kara Marie Caspers
Carolina Warren-Collison and Thomas Wray Wade
Tarin Jo Bell and Danielle Marie Weipert

Baptism

Miriam Wickershan Foster

Summary

Membership – December 31, 2014	270
New Members received	22
New Members received by Confirmation	4
Members Removed	7
Membership – December 31, 2015	289

