



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

January 2023



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Roles

Rev. Dr. Stephen M. Cady, Senior Minister

I am grateful to be in ministry at Asbury First. As I speak with colleagues around the country, I am reminded of how unique we are. Like everyone, we have had to fumble our way toward a “new normal” coming out of the pandemic—an ongoing task—but we have largely avoided the deep pain caused by the ongoing schism within the denomination. Asbury First is clear in its mission and is taking steps to live that mission out in new ways.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the last year has been watching the Community Outreach Center slowly become a reality. I pray I never forget the experience of having sat in meeting after meeting talking about whether or not something could be done (the floor being lowered, a hallway being widened, etc.) only to walk over and see it completed. My word of caution to our staff and teams as the Center begins to open is that slow and steady wins the race. We do not want to rush the opening, but rather want to take the time needed to open in a sustainable way that helps us do the most good for our guests. This next year will be a thrilling time to see this new Center come to life and begin to make a difference in our community.

Outside of the Community Outreach Center, much of my last year was spent trying to navigate the strange new realities of a quasi-post-COVID congregation. Looking back over my monthly reports to the Governing Board, I am struck by how this past year felt like every time we took a couple of steps forward, we were forced to take one step back. Worship attendance has been something that I am watching closely. While we are now seeing about two-thirds of our pre-COVID in-person attendance, a strong online viewership means that we are still worshipping with more people than we ever have before. The challenge, of course, is that we don’t know all of the people who are out there watching as only a fraction of them check in with us. That said, we are exploring ways in the year ahead that we might strengthen our connections to our digital viewership.

Perhaps the greatest gift of the last year, came in the summer sabbatical that was graciously provided. Having the opportunity to spend some quality time with my family and worship as a parishioner in another congregation was restorative to my faith. I love my job, but there is a relentlessness to ministry that can be draining if not attended to. I am particularly grateful to my colleagues for the ways in which they helped to make it possible for that time off to happen.

A minister is said to have three roles: pastor, priest, and prophet. My pastoral role continues to be vitally important to me. I spend my week in regular visitations with members of the congregation and community, visiting with people who are ill or in duress, and providing pastoral counseling. I also devote time to praying for members of our congregation, the mission of the church, and the specific prayer requests that come in during any given week.



The priestly role of a minister is about ordering and administering the life of the church. Personally, this has meant continuing to develop the staff through regular retreats and team-building opportunities, meeting weekly with the other pastors and senior members of the staff, and helping to clarify direction and putting the right people in the right places for our mission to succeed. Outside of the staff, I continue to be grateful for the ways that the Governing Board is functioning. The strategic emphasis of the Board and its ability to set policy and discuss the big open questions of the church has allowed me to feel much more supported in my ministry. We have found a balance that seems to provide true guidance regarding the strategic direction of the church. I am excited to see how this will continue to grow in the next few years.

My prophetic role continues to be most acutely played out in the preaching moment. I love to preach and take the task seriously—though I hope I don't take myself too seriously. As happens in any given year, I have attempted to speak faithfully to the gospel and honestly about what is happening in the world. In the past year, I have felt particularly compelled to continue the conversation about systemic racism in our world, in our community, in our church, and in our lives. I have also spoken directly about issues of gun violence, LGBTQ inclusion, and poverty. We joined with our pan-Methodist siblings for our Ash Wednesday service and also participated in a joint service in response to the Buffalo shooting. Additionally, we hosted interfaith leaders in prayer service in response to Uvalde. All of these experiences contribute to our prophetic commitment to the gospel.

In addition to all of these, I'd like to highlight the following from the last year:

- We survived the Omicron surge in the winter in which our attendance dropped down to less than thirty at one point in January.
- We undertook a church-wide year-long read of 400 Souls that has been fruitful for keeping our commitment to addressing systemic racism in front of us.
- I was a guest preacher in Scarsdale, NY and at CRCDS.
- After three years, we resolved the Child Victim Act lawsuit brought on the church (related to a Senior Minister from the 1970s) in a way that both honored the experience of the survivor and safeguarded the financial integrity of the church.
- We successfully opened up Easter to include an early service and a sunrise service.
- I served on a clergy advisory board for the hiring of the new public defender.
- I became a trustee of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School
- We brought in more new members in one class (26) than at any other time in recent memory.
- I have joined with a small group of the staff throughout the year to regularly reflect on how we can confront white supremacy. This formed after we read *Me and White Supremacy* together.
- We hired a communication's assistant to share the burden of the communications office.



- We hired a Social Worker to ensure the success of our Community Outreach Center and to return to two full-time staff in the area of Outreach.
- We successfully created an early chapel service at 9am, for those who were longing for an early service at Asbury First.
- We navigated the Annual Pledge Campaign with the recognition of inflation related increases to our budget.
- I served as a delegate to the Jurisdictional Conference and participated in the electing of our new Bishop.
- I attended the first in-person meeting of “The Gathering” with ministers from large churches since 2019. It took place at the Cathedral of the Rockies in Boise, ID.
- We held our first Christmas Eve services without restrictions in three years and had excellent attendance.

I look forward to what 2023 will bring.

Grace and Peace,

Stephen

Rev. Kathy Thiel, Minister for Congregational Care

The year of 2022 brought many more opportunities to adjust to the wave of life in a pandemic. Our first and foremost prayer continues to be for the health and well-being of all people, and for the end of suffering.

The well-being of all people in body, mind, heart and soul continues to be the focus of the work that I do here at Asbury First. It has been a great joy to be able to visit you in person, to see you here in the sanctuary, the office, and even out for a meal in a restaurant. What a joy to share physical space, and also to have learned how to Zoom so that we can continue to be present to each other when we cannot be together in person.

I continue to lead small groups in prayer, in fellowship, and in study. The people in these groups are dedicated to the church, to God, and to each other. Most of the groups for which I am pastoral liaison continued to meet regularly in 2022, and relationships continue to deepen and strengthen. Cards, phone calls, emails and texts are still our ways to stay in touch, remind each other we are not alone, and continue to spread the love of God throughout our community and the world.



I was reminded in a new members class of one of my favorite parts of this community, and I offer this as an invitation to anyone who is reading this report: if you have an idea for something we are not doing and you think we should be doing, then please call or text or email so we can talk about how to get your idea off of the drawing board and onto our church schedule!

As always, we pray that you are well in body, mind, heart and soul.

*Love,
Kathy*

Mike Mullin, Minister for Youth and Discipleship

In 2022, I was once again honored by Asbury First United Methodist Church to be recommended to re-enter the process of ordination in The United Methodist Church. And once again, the Genesee Valley District Committee on Ordained Ministry refused to meet with me. This led to my construction of a petition that resolved,

“The Upper New York Annual Conference implores the District Committee on Ordained Ministry to commit to meet with all potential candidates for ministry who are duly voted upon, and recommended by, their local church’s Charge Conference.”

Unfortunately, this was amended on the floor of Annual Conference to include,

“Except for when a candidate has been discontinued by the District Committee on Ministry. In such instances after two years the candidate, after approval of the local church SPRC, may submit a letter to the District Committee on Ministry, requesting they be allowed to restart the candidacy process.”

It is my belief that the addition of this language is harmful to our conference, as it adds unqualified punitive language and consequences. Candidates may be discontinued for myriad reasons; adding an unqualified two-year probationary period fails to provide space for context and conversation. My petition was then further amended to include,

“If a candidate is discontinued from the process, they shall be informed in writing by the District Committee on Ministry of the Board of Ordained Ministry of the reasoning for their discontinuance. The reasons given shall be concrete, specific, reasonable, and actionable, and shall not be in any way vague.”

This was a very welcome amendment—particularly considering how it could have helped in the appeals concerning the lack of clarity in my own discontinuance letter. However, with the preceding



amendment still in place, the doubly amended petition was still fraught. The amended petition passed with a 53% vote.¹

On a more positive connectional note, I had the opportunity to travel to Bossey, Switzerland, and Taizé, France last summer with the United Methodist Ecumenical and Interfaith Team: Young Adult Network (UMEIT:YAN) that I have been a part of for the past four years. This was supposed to be a 2-year commitment that ended in 2020, but the pandemic invited us to continue meeting through 2021, and we were invited to join this UMEIT: Plunge trip in 2022. A group of about 15 young adult Methodists from around the globe met in Geneva, Switzerland to spend a week learning about and experiencing the intentionally immersive ecumenical educational community of Bossey², visiting the United Nations, and meeting with myriad faith leaders in and out of The World Council of Churches. We spent the second week in the monastic community of Taizé³, France to unpack and debrief our experiences and conversations of the previous week. One goal of this gathering was to help broaden the worldviews and perspectives of upcoming leaders in The United Methodist Church. It is always inspiring to see our church at its best—striving to be in constructive conversation with our ecumenical siblings across the globe.

In 2021, many congregants elected to embark on a journey of the Disciple I Bible Study. This is an intense year of reading, studying, and connecting with a small group of peers. In 2022, two groups elected to continue with Disciple II. Disciple II invited us into a deeper study of Genesis, Exodus, Luke, and Acts. These stories of political and proverbial liberation were especially poignant this year as we considered their connections to our modern contexts. Sometimes it is encouraging how texts that are thousands of years old may still resonate with us today—and other times it can be challenging. Many who continued on the journey of Disciple II, are now looking forward to the challenge of Disciple III. If you would like to jump in with a Disciple III class—or if you would like to see a new offering for a Disciple I class—please reach out to me.

2022 also saw the return of things like summer youth mission trips, Wednesday evening fall programming, and in-person adult education on Sunday mornings. We are looking forward to each of these programs continuing to grow throughout 2023. So, if you are looking for some opportunities to engage your faith through education and conversation, we encourage you to check out the upcoming offerings on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings—or reach out to The Rev. Rachel Dupont about connecting with the Discipleship Project and joining a class meeting!

As I look forward to 2023, I am not planning to revert back to all of our old “normal” practices. Instead, I am encouraged and inspired to continue to dream alongside my colleagues and congregants at Asbury First as we discern and discover what our new “normal” will be. I know that we are already doing great work, and that we have the potential to push ourselves even further. If you have ideas, hopes, and

¹ I am sorry not to include a link to the finalized resolution. The “2022 Upper New York Annual Conference Journal, Volume II,” where this amended resolution should reside, has not yet been published.

² You can learn more about the Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey here, <https://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/the-ecumenical-institute-bossey>.

³ You can learn more about Taizé here, <https://www.taize.fr/en>.



dreams for new programs and initiatives that Asbury First may take on in 2023 (and beyond), please reach out. I would love to connect with you to see how our visions might align. We truly are better together, and I am thankful for your continued support throughout this past year.

May there be Peace,

–Mike

*Rev. Rachel Ann Dupont, Minister for Christian Formation
and Director of the Discipleship Project*

The Discipleship Project

The last year of my ministry at Asbury First has focused primarily on developing the foundations and leadership for The Discipleship Project. We have 12 Class Leaders and 8 classes currently meeting weekly. In addition to leading several of these classes, I coordinate, support, and resource our Class Leaders. We meet monthly as a Leaders Team, and review the ongoing development of the small groups. I make myself available and accessible to support leaders and those within my ministry area.

This summer and fall I coordinated a series of community events where folks shared about their faith in a variety of ways, ranging from traditional testimonies to playing Jenga together. This represents some of the growth and excitement we have experienced in small groups. Our Class Leaders are doing really excellent work walking alongside those participating in small groups and supporting them in their faith journeys.

In the next year, I will be giving a great deal of focus toward developing reproducible materials, workbooks and discussion guides which use a developmental framework for spiritual formation. I am developing this 'curriculum' in a way that it can be used again and again to *deepen* the experience of spiritual formation. My goal is to make The Discipleship Project replicable, so that in the fall I can offer an expansion of the project beyond Asbury First.

Racial Justice Advocacy

For most of 2022, I led several small accountability groups, including one composed of staff members, focused on dismantling white supremacy. I have also recently taken on the responsibility of re-building the Racial Justice Advocacy ministry at Asbury First. This ministry started in 2020, but was on hiatus by mid-2021. I have met one on one with many of the folks who participated in leadership in this area and am working with a group to cast a vision for our work in 2023. I have several goals. One is to close out some of the work that was started by the original Racial Justice Advocacy team, in an effort to resource the congregation. I will focus on making achievable goals in one or two areas of justice work where we can make an impact in Rochester. I also believe it will benefit us to set institutional goals seeking racial



justice within our own organization and structure, and hope to begin this process with some form of audit.

Connectional Ministry

In addition to serving on the Genesee Valley district's Committee on Ordained Ministry, I am one of our Conference's delegates to the General Conference. As a delegate, I attended the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference this November, served as a facilitator for episcopal interviews, and participated in our historic election of Bishop Hector Burgos Nunez, the first hispanic-latino bishop elected in the NEJ, and the first Puerto Rican bishop in the UMC. I also experienced the NEJ's breakdown in the episcopal election process. This experience was at the same time amazing, heartbreaking, and informative, and I believe our denomination and jurisdiction are in for years of exciting, but difficult, change.

My key takeaway from NEJ for our local context is that, in order to be relevant in our UMC connection and in the city of Rochester, I believe Asbury First will need to deeply embrace diversity and create an experience that values many new or under-represented voices, as equal to that which has been the past and present experience at Asbury First.

Rev. Pat Dupont, Minister for Outreach

Reflection

As we enter 2023, the questions before us as a Methodist congregation engaging in outreach ministry are the same they have been for years: How do we work towards the transformation of our community? How do we pair works of compassion with works of justice? How do we ground our service in authentic relationships? How do we move beyond 'providing services' toward 'growing the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth?' While we have wrestled with these questions for years, I believe we may be better positioned than ever before to live out our answers.

The impending launch of the Community Outreach Center at Asbury First is such an exciting moment for our congregation. The bringing together of our various on-campus outreach ministries into one physical space will enable us to serve our community in a more coordinated and holistic way. The increased opportunities for volunteers, visitors, donors, guests, benefactors and neighbors to come together in this building will allow us to become a more full expression of God's beloved community. It is my hope that this Center can both meet the immediate needs of our ailing neighbors through works of mercy, and become an agent of change at the communal level. I pray that it can become a haven where God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds; where the gospel is preached through words and deeds; where spiritual practice, discipleship, and theological education occur; where the Church thrives and where the Kingdom of Heaven flourishes.



It is my prayer that in the coming year every member of our Asbury First community will support the Community Outreach Center in two ways: visitation and prayer. We believe as Methodists that our presence and our prayers matter. I invite you to pray for God to work through this Center and I invite you to visit the space. Your visit could be for a hot meal or a doctor's checkup, to volunteer in the Storehouse or to take a guided tour, to tend the garden or to attend a community conversation.

Over the last year, we have accomplished a great deal. There is much to celebrate. From here, may we move more fully into the Kingdom of Heaven together.

*Grace & Peace,
Rev. Pat Dupont*

Reports

The Asbury First Community Outreach Center

The renovation and expansion of the Asbury First Community Outreach Center continued throughout the 2022 Calendar Year. We dedicated the building for God's use in worship on November 20th. We had hoped this date would coincide with the opening of the Center, but supply chain issues delayed the construction. Construction is currently wrapping up and we are beginning to prepare the space for ministry. The word "Community" was added to the name to better reflect our hope that this building will exist as a shared community space and not simply a place where the church provides services. This language better aligns with the Center's mission of existing as "an outpost of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Our Community Outreach Center programs continued to operate throughout most of the year, suspending operations in the final months of 2022 in order to make preparations to relocate into the new space. In 2023 our **meal program** looks forward to returning to dine-in meals and reintroducing our hair care, laundry, and shower ministries for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. Our **clothing program** is looking forward to returning to a full model of in-person shopping. **The UR Well Clinic** is in the process of introducing dental services to our healthcare ministry. The **Community Garden** and **Grocery Bag Ministry** have continued mostly unencumbered by the construction or the pandemic and look forward to increased collaboration together and with the meal program as one holistic food ministry of Asbury First.

Off-Campus efforts

Our off-campus efforts continued to operate throughout the year, though in some cases volunteer engagement has lowered since the pandemic. We continue to consider **Project Chacocente, Miracle Garden, Habitat for Humanity, Cameron Ministries, Help Me Read, Keeping Our Promise, and Family Promise** our adopted off-campus ministries.



2022 was a difficult year for **Project Chacocente** in particular. In June the project was shut down by the Nicaraguan government. The sudden closure created a great deal of uncertainty around the future of the ministry, as well as the well-being of those involved on the ground. Supporters of the Chacocente community have managed to remain in communication and continue to offer support in new and different ways. While this shift in the ministry is heartbreaking, our volunteers' continued commitment to this ministry has been moving.

Staffing

We added a full-time social worker to our staff, Robin Manley. Robin has been a great addition to our team. Beginning in November, she has already made a huge difference both internally, helping us create clear policies and procedures for our assistance ministries, and externally, meeting with and offering support to our neighbors. Martha Neubert has been an enormous help as a volunteer social worker for years and we thank her for her hard work and dedication to our community, as well as her commitment to helping orient Robin to our ministry.

Pentecost

On Pentecost 2022 we held a lay-led celebration of outreach worship service. A number of volunteers representing all of our different ministries participated in the leadership of the service. Jim Carter and Robyn Gage testified to their experiences of God's grace through the Grocery Bag Ministry and Project Chacocente, respectively. I found the service powerful and I hope we can find more ways to celebrate outreach, lay service, and testimony in worship in the future.

Rev. Dr. Robert Allan Hill

Boston University, Dean of Marsh Chapel, Professor of New Testament and Pastoral Theology, and Chaplain to the University

January 1, 2022—December 31, 2022

Three major accomplishments of 2022: in preaching, the invitation to deliver the University Lecture at McGill University, 10/22; in professorship, Greylyn Hydinger's successful defense of his STH PhD dissertation, based in part on and advancing my own work over four decades on the Gospel of John; in pastoral ministry, the strongly positive five year review of decanal leadership at BU, 2017-2022.

A second tier trio: in preaching, a second invitation as preacher for the week at Lakeside Chautauqua in June; in teaching, the submission for publication of an eighteenth book, 'Salt City Prayers' in November; in pastoral ministry, the gradual return to near pre-Covid attendance in worship. (This post-COVID year 2022, like the last two Covid years 2020, 2021 was quite a challenging year, in preaching, teaching, and ministry.)



A. Dean of Marsh Chapel: Preacher

1. Regular Sunday Sermons and Services, Marsh and elsewhere: **66**.
2. Annual Special BU Services: **25**

ML King Observances (2), This I Believe, BU Baccalaureate\Commencement (8), Marsh and BU Matriculations (4), BU Alumni Weekend Service, Lessons & Carols (2), Annual Spring Term Prayers\Invocations (10).
3. Guest Speaking Events 2022: **25** Lakeside Chautauqua (7), Mugar Funeral, Hydingler PhD Defense, Union Chapel NH, UMFNE national broadcast Stewardship Sermon, McGill University Lecture (3), Service Recognition Luncheon prayer, Marsh Lenten\Advent Devotions, Harvard Memorial Church, BU Today interview, Supreme Court Decision, Rabbi Elie Lehman Retirement, STH Worship Greeting 9/22, STH Worship Preaching 10/22, Hillel Trustees' Dinner invocation, Everdisian\Chobanian Dinner invocation.
4. Regular Meetings: Weekly, Monthly, other: **26**
Marsh Staff, Marsh Advisory Board, Faculty BUSTH, Faculty Area A and Area D BUSTH, Deans' Council, University Leadership Council, University Leadership Group, BU Faculty Assembly, Religious Life Council, BU University Chaplains, New England Annual Conference Foundation (and Executive Committee), Harvard Memorial Church Board of Visitors (*in hiatus*), Learning Project Board of Visitors, BU Hillel Board.
5. Visits: **612** (office, home, hospital, other, not including daily 45min campus walk, which allows various brief, informal conversations, usually 5-8 a day); still below pre-Covid numbers, but moving upward.
6. 2022 New Marsh Chapel Chapter Members Received **1** (Clayton McClesky).
7. Seasonal Program Initiatives, largely Staff led: **24** (*see website*)
8. 2022 Baptisms **2** (Wesley Anthony Alfonse, Ari Alrick Simonson)
9. 2022 Weddings: **2** (Soh/Karst; Mossochi\Chevalier)
10. 2022 Deaths: **16** Funerals, Memorials (Jane Coons, Retired Teacher; Ed Mann, Marsh Congregant 1/16/22; David Graves Mugar BU Alumnus\Donor 2/7/22; Professor John Paul Riqueolme (CAS) 4/13/22; Dr.Chai-Sik Chung, STH faculty 4/19/22; Carmen Torres, Boston Educator, 5/8/22; Len Conte, Marsh Congregant, 6/5/22; Donald Bill Wynns, Marsh Congregant, 7/23/22. BU Student Deaths 2022: Zicheng Zao CGS 2/22; Ivanna Tavarez, sociology, CAS, 9/13/22; SPH January deaths, R Saitz, A Cupples; LAW alumnus, S Widiatutuka: 10/11 Vincent Lu, MET; John Albanese, Ken Parlee (The normal RAH\Staff\Marsh responses at death include: 1. Prayer. 2. T: Boss\Dean 3. T: Widower\Widow. 4. Flowers sent. 5. Counsel session. 6.Wake\Memorial (as requested).



B. Tenured Full Professor, New Testament/Pastoral Theology, STH: Professor

1. STH monthly faculty meeting, annual STH Faculty Retreat
2. 2022 RAH Publications: 1. Sunday Sermons, BU website (at 2500 words a sermon, the collection for 2022 would be 125,000 words, or two 200 page books); 2. Autumn 2022 Sermon Series, on St. Luke and 'Conversation'; 3. Lenten Series 2022: *Dorothy Day* (this is year 16 of the Lenten series, the first ten in conversation with Calvinists, this second ten with Catholics). 4. Ongoing work on *Exercises in Liberal Biblical Theology*. 5. Submission completed of book 18, *Salt City Prayers*, for publication in 2023, Wipf and Stock.
3. Courses 2022: Pastoral Leadership, The Gospel of John, and ITP (Integration of Theology and Practice (since 2006 two courses\year offered *gratis* in STH, part of Hill family tithe, this year 2.5 courses (ITP goes year long).
4. Doctoral\Masters Defense Committees 3
5. STH Methodism Committee
6. STH Areas A and D Monthly meetings 2 (though D irregularly attended)
7. Pastoral contacts\calls with fellow clergy\others at Christmas: 70
8. As noted above, at something of a late date in my academic career, some scholarly work is being based now, in part, on my own work in *New Testament* (e.g. Greylyn Hyding, STH 2022 dissertation (above) and in *Preaching* (e.g. Mark Baker, Centered Set Church), which is very gratifying. Jan and I are at that stage where our children are raising children, our students are leading churches and choirs, our assets are (sometimes!) producing assets, our writings are producing writings, etc., *the last of life for which the first was made!*

C. Chaplain to the University and Office of Religious Life: Pastor *Ministry (1)

1. Daily 45 minute walks on campus and conversations.
2. BU Today Articles, other Religious Life Articles (see Marsh Website, 'In the News' collection).
3. BU Matriculation, Service\Retirement Recognitions, Senior Breakfast, Baccalaureate, Commencement, Multi-faith Dinner, and other events (see above)
4. Pastoral Counseling: 43 (including sacramental and personal hours, part of total visits).
5. Annual Open Houses\Receptions\Dinners in 96 Bay State Residence: 8 (close to pre-Covid numbers)
6. BU Faculty\Staff Deaths 2022: Professor John Paul Riquelme EN 3/2/22 75, Jon Albanese, WBUR, 3/3/22, Ken Parlee, BG, 9/18/22
7. Sampling of authors read in 2022: McWorter, Frye, Baldwin, Stanley, Brown, Guide, Backhaus, Caird, Eby, Lende (Alaska Writer Laureate, regular Marsh listener)



8. December Christmas\Holiday events: **17**
9. Travel, personal\ work: Montreal, Cleveland, Lake Placid, St. Petersburg, other
10. Tithe (details available on request).
11. Regular Continuing Education Events\Retreats Annually **10**: 2 UMC Annual Conferences (UNYAC, NEAC), 2 AAR\SBL (national, regional), 2 NHTDG (spring, fall), 2 BU retreats (Provost, STH), 2 Marsh staff mini-retreats.
12. PhD, DMin, and other degrees, reader-advisor-committee-other: **1**.
13. This year also included the positive outcome of a five-year BU decanal review, with encouragement for further growth in two key areas: student outreach (including inter religious life and interfaith work) and continuous improvement in staff management. (*Note hence the new subdivision in this Part C, in this year's annual report, 1. ministry and 2. management*).
14. Goals 2022: *Voice* (a summative research project *Exercises in Liberal Biblical Theology*, in process); *Visitation* (personal visitation goal: pastoral conversation, 2 dozen a week); *both will continue as goals and foci in 2023*;
15. Events: 35 Pre Commencement and Commencement Events (back to normal, more or less). 70 Christmas telephone calls, 15 BU Christmas parties (calls back to normal, parties at about 2/3).
16. We are happily on the verge of filling our last open Marsh staff position, with finalist interviews in January, for the role of Associate Chaplain for Student Outreach (along the lines of the 5 year review suggestions).

****Management (2)***

1. Staff: **33** (mostly part-time) staff at Marsh Chapel; **25** Religious Life (self-funded).
2. Marsh Board of Advisors (**22**), meetings in May and September.
3. Administration: Oversight *through Chapel Director* of 6 University Chaplains and 25 Campus Ministers, 33 internal Marsh Staff (see sign boards and web site).
4. Marsh Chapel oversight of Religious Life brings **\$3M\year** to BU in self-funded chaplaincies and campus ministries. Also, as an administrative change, on 2/18/20 we instituted an annual required written request for STH use of Marsh Chapel space, with needed signatures of STH dean or designee and Marsh Chapel director.
5. Annual Marsh income target set (and annually met) at 1/14 of expenses, 2015, w\Chris Goss, (after discussion, retained at this level, 12/18 w\Pat O'brien).
6. Monthly meetings with direct reports (4) rather than semester only (10 rather than 2). Chapel Director, Monday; Music Director, Monday; Chaplains (2) Wednesday.



7. We need to make sure Religious Life Policy is communicated at least once each year, throughout the University (as done this September through the Provost's office).
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Administration and Property

Governing Board

In 2022 we began to truly live into our Governance Model, designed to help us carry out our mission as disciples of Jesus Christ to love God and neighbor, live fully, serve all, and repeat. In conversation with the congregation, the board sets policy and direction and empowers the ministry teams to carry out the work of the congregation. This year we have continued to streamline decision-making, articulated clear lines of authority, and fostered agency and action at the ministry team level.

In addition to its Disciplinary and Fiduciary responsibilities, the Governing Board focuses on the “Big Questions” that are vital to Asbury First’s mission and ministry. In 2022, the Governing Board continued to focus on how to best shift our mission and ministry in the ever-evolving pandemic to endemic environment – specifically how we can best connect and involve the growing community of participants who worship entirely remotely. In an effort to honor our commitments to inclusion and diversity, both locally and as a denomination, we expanded our outreach infrastructure, and increased our impact into the communities we serve. To live as responsible and honest Christians and citizens in our community, Asbury First favorably resolved litigation challenges, and continues to be a strong and positive influence on the UNY Conference and Denomination, as the United Methodist Church charts the way forward.

We strive to constantly increase transparency around discussion and decision-making. In addition to conducting two All-Church Information and Q&A sessions, efforts include direct mail communications to church membership to provide status on activity, as well as monthly board Summaries, which can be accessed publicly at: asburyfirst.org/governance/

Submitted by Valerie Benjamin, Chair



Finance Committee Report

Purpose

The Finance Committee is charged with providing strategic oversight of congregational finances, including assistance in development and monitoring of the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for the Governing Board to ensure that the church stays on track in fulfilling its missional goals and vision. Although management authority and participation in day-to-day financial decision-making resides with the Finance Team. The Finance Committee may establish annual goals for and provide direction to staff and the Finance Team.

The Year in Review

Following our commitment to transparency the Finance Committee provided summaries of the church's financial position in May (Jan to April 2022) and October (year-to-date through August) prepared by the Finance Team. Although individual donations to church operations (both pledged and unpledged) lagged behind the budgeted figure for most of 2022 they outpaced our year-to-date totals compared to 2021. Congregational giving in November and December of 2022 along with an increase in property usage income and the delay in the Community Outreach Center opening allowed us to outperform on the 2022 budget by reducing the anticipated reliance on previous year's restricted funds released for designated purpose in the current year from \$255,886 to an actual of \$181,224.

Due to dissatisfaction with the service provided by the firm contracted to perform our 2021 audit, the Finance Committee recommended the Finance Team engage in a search for a replacement. After an illuminating search, the Finance Team was able to identify a firm with the skill and experience we require to provide timely and accurate audit services. Despite the delay in the final results of the full 2021 audit the Committee remains confident that current policies and procedures follow adequate internal controls and financial statements do a good job in representing the financial position of the church. The Committee supports the Finance Team's plan towards a self-sustaining budget by 2027.

Prepared by Angie Burch, Finance Committee Chair



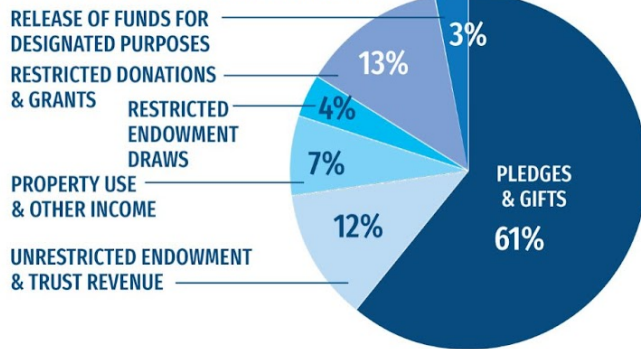
2022 Financial Results: Surprises and Learnings

1. Remarkably, 2022 was the first year in which total payments on pledges exceeded actual pledges. We usually receive about 97% of our pledges, but thanks to the generosity of this congregation received 103% of pledges. This allowed us to end the year in a stronger position for 2023.
2. Congregational giving was up 1.7% over 2021.
3. The congregation supported local rent assistance when eviction restrictions were eliminated in early 2022, and gave generously to UMCOR for Ukraine relief. Asbury First members gave over \$100,000 to these needs in addition to their support of the church and its missions.
4. Overall, total revenue from all sources was \$1,649 below budget – an unfavorable variance of just 0.1%.
5. Fortunately, total expenses were \$76,311 under budget – a favorable variance of \$3.2%
6. The expense savings were due primarily to having budgeted for a Social Worker to begin mid-year, but who did not begin until the end of 2022, and from various savings from not being able to run our outreach programs at full capacity due to the delayed completion of the Community Outreach Center.
7. The Child Victim Act Lawsuit was resolved in 2022 in a way that both honored the survivor and safeguarded the mission of Asbury First. All payments were covered by funds that had previously been set aside so there were no new expenses associated with this issue.



Missional View

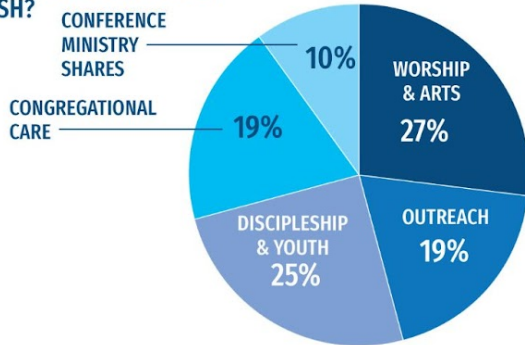
WHERE DID OUR REVENUE COME FROM?



2022 REVENUE

PLEDGES & GIFTS	\$1,391,000
UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT & TRUST REVENUE	\$283,000
PROPERTY USE & OTHER INCOME	\$120,000
RESTRICTED ENDOWMENT DRAWS	\$104,000
RESTRICTED DONATIONS AND GRANTS	\$196,000
RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR DESIGNATED PURPOSES	\$181,000
TOTAL	\$2,275,000

WHAT MISSION DID OUR BUDGET ACCOMPLISH?



2022 EXPENSES (MISSION VIEW)

WORSHIP & ARTS	\$629,000
OUTREACH	\$444,000
DISCIPLESHIP & YOUTH	\$573,000
CONGREGATIONAL CARE	\$405,000
CONFERENCE MINISTRY SHARE	\$224,000
TOTAL	\$2,275,000



Detail View

2022 Financial Results & Proposed 2023 Budget	2022			2022		
	Church Operations	Outreach Center	Budget	Church Operations	Outreach Center	Actual
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE *			\$ 392,805			\$ 392,805
Inflows						
Individual Donations (<i>pledged & unpledged</i>)	\$ 1,375,000		\$ 1,375,000	\$ 1,382,189	\$ -	\$ 1,382,189
Prior Yr Pledge "catch-ups"	15,000	-	15,000	8,875	-	8,875
Other Contributions: (<i>Livestream, Plate</i>) and <i>Joy of Xmas</i>	30,000	-	30,000	19,433	17,675	37,108
Other Income (<i>Int, Trns Fees, Haxton, Briggs, Misc</i>)	15,000	-	15,000	18,368	-	18,368
Endowment Draw - Unrestr.	282,744	-	282,744	282,744	-	282,744
Endowment Draw: (<i>Shafer, Craighead, Fultz, Neyhart</i>) and <i>D&CC</i>	65,886	38,099	103,985	65,886	38,099	103,985
Property Usage	85,000	-	85,000	101,878	-	101,878
Dining & Caring Center - Donations	-	35,901	35,901	-	14,390	14,390
Storehouse	-	39,000	39,000	-	30,733	30,733
Grocery Bag Ministry	-	4,000	4,000	-	2,630	2,630
Undesignated Outreach (Gen. Donations)	-	10,000	10,000	-	52,661	52,661
Other Outreach (Prog. Specific Donations)	-	35,000	35,000	-	15,000	15,000
Foundations/Grants	-	40,000	40,000	-	14,779	14,779
Memorials	-	-	-	-	14,580	14,580
Fundraisers/Consignment Sales (<i>VBS, Youth, Adult Ed & others</i>)	25,000	-	25,000	14,062	-	14,062
Release of Funds on hand for designated purposes **			255,886			181,224
Total Inflows	\$ 1,893,630	\$ 202,000	\$ 2,351,516	\$ 1,893,434	\$ 200,547	\$ 2,275,205
Outflows						
Personnel	\$ 1,349,018		\$ 1,349,018	\$ 1,299,569		\$ 1,299,569
Other Personnel Expenses	17,641		17,641	15,293		15,293
Worship & Arts	20,000		20,000	21,853		21,853
Youth & Discipleship	26,000		26,000	39,256		39,256
Christian Formation	-		-	-		-
Congregational Care	11,000		11,000	4,358		4,358
Outreach Center General Expenses	-	56,000	56,000	-	2,745	2,745
Dining & Caring Center	-	50,175	50,175	-	36,590	36,590
Storehouse	-	39,000	39,000	-	25,026	25,026
Grocery Bag Ministry	-		-	-	6,286	6,286
Memorials - Direct Expenses	-	-	-	-	2,144	2,144
Finance & Admin	177,950		177,950	203,601		203,601
Property Care	193,000		193,000	205,451		205,451
Utilities	90,000		90,000	109,699		109,699
Retired Pastor Health Ins.	17,724		17,724	16,540		16,540
Conference Apportionment <i>~14% of Conf. Revenue</i>	137,008		137,008	137,172		137,172
Xfr: Fund 01 --> Fund 08 for Capital Campaign	70,000	-	70,000	70,000	-	70,000
Xfr: Fund 10 --> Fund 01 Funds to Pay Legal Fees	-	-	-	(25,000)	-	(25,000)
Xfr: Fund 10 --> Fund 01 Music-related	-	-	-	(1,874)	-	(1,874)
Xfr: Fund 04 --> Fund 10 Funds to Johnston Ed. Fund					9,498	9,498
Xfr: Fund 01 --> Fund 04 for Community Outreach Grants	22,000	-	22,000	22,000	-	22,000
Xfr: Fund 01 --> Fund 07 for Capital Improvement Fund	75,000	-	75,000	75,000	-	75,000
Total Outflows	\$ 2,206,341	\$ 145,175	\$ 2,351,516	\$ 2,173,798	\$ 101,407	\$ 2,275,205
ENDING FUND BALANCE *			\$ 136,919			\$ 211,581

* The Beginning Fund Balance is made up of previous donations that were unspent as of January 1, 2022. Some of these donations were designated by donors for specific purposes while other were not. The Ending Fund Balance represents the same thing but after adding the results of 2022.

** Asbury First maintains careful records documenting that all funds are spent in keeping with the designations of its donors.



Key Elements and Assumptions for the Proposed 2023 Budget

1. In a testament to the faithfulness and generosity of Asbury First, this budget represents a remarkable total increase in annual giving of 6%, more than any other time in our records. Those who increased their pledge, did so by an average of 16%. Thank you for helping to make the mission and ministry of Asbury First possible.
2. This budget will allow us to maintain our current staffing level and includes funds for the re-hiring of a dishwasher for the Community Outreach Center.
3. While we lament that it does not keep up with inflation, this budget provides a 2% cost-of-living salary increase for our staff.
4. This budget represents a significant increase in expected foundation support for the Community Outreach Center. With the excitement generated by the opening of the Center and the commitments we have already received in January (approximately \$50k), we believe this to be an attainable goal.
5. In an effort to prevent deferred maintenance, the annual allocation to the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) will increase from \$75,000 to \$100,000. Combined with a \$25,000 recommended draw from the Wilson and Budney endowment funds, this will bring the CIF to a full 5% of AOP spending, as requested by the Property Stewardship Committee and supported by the Governing Board.
6. We continue with our annual allocation of \$22,000 to the Outreach Funding Team for response to missional outreach needs in the community.
7. The reliance on designated gifts given in previous years for appropriate current year budget expenses is reduced from \$181,224 in 2022 to \$66,466 for 2023. We have included a four-year plan to eliminate this reliance altogether by 2026.



Detail View

2023 Budget

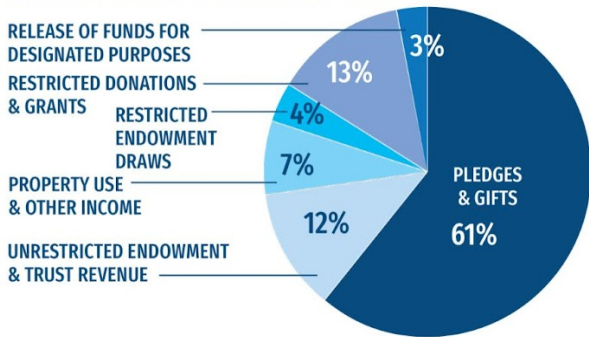
WHAT MINISTRY WILL OUR BUDGET ACCOMPLISH?



2023 EXPENSES (MISSION VIEW)

WORSHIP & ARTS	\$665,000
OUTREACH	\$465,000
DISCIPLESHIP & YOUTH	\$603,000
CONGREGATIONAL CARE	\$464,000
CONFERENCE MINISTRY SHARE	\$237,000
TOTAL	\$2,434,000

WHERE WILL OUR REVENUE COME FROM?



2023 INCOME

PLEDGES & GIFTS	\$1,496,000
UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT & TRUST REVENUE	\$291,000
PROPERTY USE & OTHER INCOME	\$164,000
RESTRICTED ENDOWMENT DRAWS	\$92,000
RESTRICTED DONATIONS AND GRANTS	\$325,000
RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR DESIGNATED PURPOSES	\$66,000
TOTAL	\$2,434,000



Detail View

Proposed Budget - 2023	2023 Proposed		
	Church Operations	Outreach Center	Totals
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE *	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 211,581
Inflows			
Individual Donations (<i>pledged & unpledged</i>)	\$ 1,471,250	\$ 110,000	\$ 1,581,250
Prior Yr Pledge "catch-ups"	10,000	-	10,000
Other Contributions (<i>Joy of Xmas</i>)	15,000	15,000	30,000
Other Income (<i>Int, Trns Fees, Haxton, Briggs, Misc</i>)	15,000	-	15,000
Foundations/Grants	-	180,000	180,000
Property Usage	120,000	-	120,000
Endowment Draw - Unrestr.	290,902	-	290,902
Endowment Draw - Restr. (<i>D&CC</i>)	58,179	33,335	91,514
Memorials	4,000	10,000	14,000
Fundraisers/Consignment Sales (<i>VBS, Youth, Adult Ed & others</i>)	25,000	10,000	35,000
Xfr: Fund 01 --> Fund 02 for Outreach Center Operations	-	46,142	46,142
Release of Funds on hand for designated purposes **			66,466
Total Inflows	\$ 2,009,331	\$ 404,477	\$ 2,480,273
Outflows			
Personnel	\$ 1,285,845	\$ 266,686	\$ 1,552,530
Other Personnel Expenses	15,906	2,169	18,075
Worship & Arts	22,100	-	22,100
Youth & Discipleship	23,000	-	23,000
Christian Formation	2,500	-	2,500
Congregational Care	4,200	-	4,200
Outreach Center Operations	-	70,000	70,000
Finance & Admin	138,960	15,440	154,400
Property Care	99,918	28,182	128,100
Utilities	78,000	22,000	100,000
Retired Pastor Health Ins.	19,306	-	19,306
Pastor's Discretionary	-	-	-
Conference Apportionment <i>~14% of Conf. Revenue</i>	147,920	-	147,920
Xfr: Fund 01 --> Fund 08 for Capital Campaign	70,000	-	70,000
Xfr: Fund 01 --> Fund 02 for Outreach Center Operations	46,142	-	46,142
Xfr: Fund 01 --> Fund 04 for Community Outreach Grants	22,000	-	22,000
Xfr: Fund 01 --> Fund 07 for Capital Improvement Fund	100,000	-	100,000
Total Outflows	\$ 2,075,797	\$ 404,477	\$ 2,480,273
ENDING FUND BALANCE *			\$ 145,115
<p>* The Beginning Fund Balance is made up of previous donations that were unspent as of January 1, 2022. Some of these donations were designated by donors for specific purposes while other were not. The Ending Fund Balance represents the same thing but after adding the results of 2022.</p>			
<p>** Asbury First maintains careful records documenting that all funds are spent in keeping with the designations of its donors.</p>			



4-year Forecast

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Donations (3%)		\$ 1,636,250	\$ 1,685,338	\$ 1,735,898	\$ 1,787,975
Fundraisers (5%)		35,000	36,750	38,588	40,517
Endowment Draws (2%)		382,416	390,064	397,866	405,823
Property Usage (5%)		120,000	126,000	132,300	138,915
Foundations/U.W. (5%)		180,000	189,000	198,450	208,373
Memorials (0%)		14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000
Total Revenues	2,093,981	2,367,666	2,441,152	2,517,101	2,595,602
Annual Rev. Growth Rate			3.1%	3.1%	3.1%
Expenses (2% Growth Rate)	2,275,205	2,434,132	2,482,814	2,532,471	2,583,120
Annual Exp. Growth Rate			2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Beginning Fund Balance	392,805	211,581	145,115	103,453	88,083
Reliance on Past Surpluses	(181,224)	(66,466)	(41,662)	(15,370)	12,482
Ending Fund Balance *	211,581	145,115	103,453	88,083	100,565

***Note:** We have applied for an Employee Retention tax Credit (ERTC) of approximately \$250,000. It is NOT included in the Ending Fund Balance values above because we cannot yet estimate when we are likely to receive it. Our understanding currently is that it is likely to arrive some time in late 2023. This will be a direct cash payment which will increase the Fund Balance of our Church Operations account.

Prepared by John Ormsbee, Financial Administrator



Investment Committee Annual Report

Role in Church Governance

The Investment Committee is charged with setting investment policies for the Church's General Endowment and Restricted Funds, subject to approval by the Governing Board. It also provides oversight as outlined in the policies, including for the General Endowment, thirteen Restricted Funds, and the Better Together capital fund.

Financial Overview for 2022

As of the end of the third quarter of 2022, \$5,598,208 was held in the General Endowment, an aggregate of \$2,647,356 was held in various restricted funds (ranging in size from \$14,076 to \$685,712). Accordingly, total General Endowment/Restricted Funds are valued at \$8,245,564. In addition, \$225,213 was held in the Better Together capital improvement fund pending their use during the construction phase.

Key Activities in 2022

The Committee uses three investment advisors, Manning & Napier, Alesco, and Canandaigua National Bank. It receives investment reports from the advisors at each quarterly meeting and each advisor meets in person with the Committee at least twice per year. The Committee monitors advisor performance against benchmarks, and performance is near benchmark targets, varying quarter by quarter among the advisors.

As of September 30, 2022 (our most recent data) vs September 30, 2021, the combined Endowments declined by approximately \$2.1M due to a dramatic, inflation driven market correction of \$1.7M as well as \$422K of distributions to the AOP & other Restricted Fund donor designations.

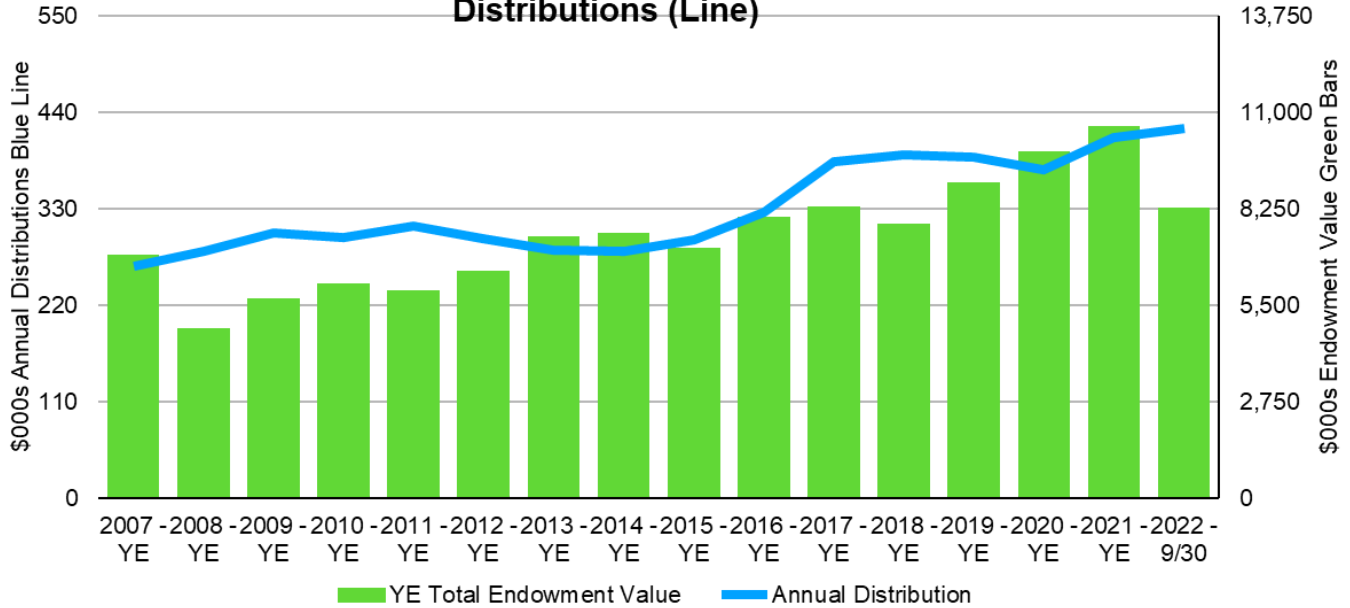
While painful, losses are realized from time to time with market swings. The Committee continues a long-term investment strategy that has returned well in excess of the Committee's strategic goal of a minimum 6.5% return over time. Studies of market swings over numerous cycles show that long-term market returns are dramatically better when investors ride out downturns rather than trying to time the market.

The Committee distributes 4.5% of the 20-quarter average balance of each fund (or the rough equivalent for newer funds) for the Annual Operating Plan, capital funds and restricted fund-designated purposes. This is a strategy generally accepted by endowments as a way to smooth distributions through market swings but also provide for long term principal growth. Thus, when the market spikes, distributions do not correspondingly increase, and when the market turns down, distributions are not decreased as much. The 4.5% rate used is more conservative than the 5% distribution rate most commonly used by endowments. As previously stated, these distributions totaled \$422K in 2022.

This year, we participated in a benchmarking study which examined the endowment withdrawal policies of other similar sized churches. We were satisfied that our approach was appropriate.



Asbury First Total Endowment Value (Bars) and Total Annual Distributions (Line)



ESG Discussion

Over the past year the Committee has been considering adding an ESG component to our Investment Policy. ESG stands for investments that are positive from an Environment, Social, or Governance perspective. This positive focus is in addition to investments in a number of areas (such as tobacco, alcohol, and defense) already prohibited by our policy. Although ESG is still an emerging field, heavily nuanced, and without broad market acceptance of standard measurements, the Committee is interested in using our investments in an ESG-positive manner to the extent prudent. In 2022 the Committee asked our advisors to report on ESG status within our portfolio on a pilot basis, using one available measurement tool. Our portfolio’s ESG scores have seen a modest upward trend. The Committee will continue to monitor progress and opportunities in this emerging field.

Dreamscape Goal

Several years ago, the Committee established a Dreamscape related Goal of an aggregate of \$10,000,000 for endowment and restricted funds. That goal was achieved in early 2021. Obviously, the 2022 market correction has taken us below that goal. The Investment Committee will continue to focus on managing our Endowment to support its return over time to the \$10M level and beyond.

Submitted by Patrick Fulford, Chair



Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC)

Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) Role in Church Governance

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) is the successor committee to the committee that was previously known as the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). As a standing Governance Board committee, the PPRC assists the Board in developing employee policies, liaising with bishops on clergy and pastor evaluations, ensuring compliance with applicable laws, and carrying out the staff grievance process as defined by the Governance Board policies. The PPRC has no staff management authority and does not participate in supervision of staff or staff decision-making. The PPRC's role and functions are guided by The Book of Discipline.

PPRC Activities during 2022

The PPRC wholeheartedly supported the Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady's request to take a "Renewal Leave" from Asbury First United Methodist Church (AFUMC) during the period from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend. During this "Renewal Leave," the AFUMC ministers and staff were able to provide the needed coverage and support to make this leave a reality and provide the Rev. Dr. Cady with the opportunity to rest and refresh himself during this time of rest and reflection.

In the course of its activities on behalf of the AFUMC pastors, during the first Quarter of 2022, the PPRC took action(s) to address inappropriate interaction by an AFUMC congregant toward clergy. Although individuals are certainly entitled to hold their own opinions and beliefs, it is the expectation that the expression of differing views must be expressed in a respectful and polite manner.

Rev. Pat Dupont assumed the role of Minister of Outreach with his formal installation in that role at the end of January. Dick Moncrief retired from his role as the AFUMC Financial Administrator and was successfully succeeded by John Ormsbee. Additionally, Paula Dugan assumed oversight for hospitality activities. After a long search process, AFUMC hired an outreach center coordinator with an MSW to assist in the management of the Outreach Center.

The PPRC has continued its unwavering support of Mike Mullin in his career aspirations for the ministry in the UMC. This has included the PPRC interceding on his behalf with the District Committee on Ministry and the Upstate New York Annual Conference's Board of Ordained Ministry.

To combat the issue of minister "burnout", the PPRC "resurrected" and revitalized its "Pastor-PPRC Member ("Buddy") Support Program." This program assigns a PPRC member/s to each of the AFUMC ministers to serve as a sounding board and to enhance communications with the ministers.

Rev. Jackie Nelson rejoined the AFUMC ministerial staff to assist in the Digital Ministry and to support the development and submission of grants for the Church (including those in support of the Outreach Center).

The 2023 budget process has been especially stressful given the rising costs due to inflation with an estimated increase in the 9 to 10% range. This increase continues to pose a challenge for closing that



gap for the budget by critically looking at both programs and staffing. A significant increase in giving pledges above the customary 2-3% year over year is needed to minimize the “pain” that might need to occur to close the budget gap.

Respectfully submitted,

*Pastor Parish Relations Committee:
Frances Bryniarski
Cassandra Jordan
Christy Lesher*

*Jonathan Carroll-Nellenback
John Nutter
Joseph Stankaitis (Chair)*

Community Outreach Center Committee

The renovation and expansion of the Asbury First Community Outreach Center continued throughout the 2022 Calendar Year and was largely completed by December. Our Community Outreach Center programs operated most of the year, suspending operations in the final months of 2022 in order to prepare to relocate into the new space. The word “Community” was added to the name to better reflect our hope that this building will exist as a shared community space and not simply a place where the church provides services.

The Committee advertised, recruited, and interviewed candidates for the position of Outreach Center Coordinator, a full-time position to support our neighbors with social work services. Robin Manley joined our staff in November and has already begun to make a positive impact on our operations and by developing connections with our neighbors. The Committee thanks Martha Neubert for her support over the years as a volunteer providing these services. Martha was instrumental in the recruiting and interview process as well as helping Robin to successfully be on board to our ministries.

In the Fall, members of the committee organized and supported our annual Dining In For Outreach fundraiser which raised over \$8,700 in support of our Outreach Ministries.

A Way Forward II

At the prompting of Outreach Committee Member Diana Carter, a task force was organized to review and update our strategic plan for outreach ministry. The document was originally written in 2017 and many of the stated goals have been accomplished, so an update was in order. This task force met several times in the second half of the year and conducted interviews with representatives and guests of our various outreach ministries. As the new year begins, we are in the process of writing the second report which will contain updated goals and suggestions for our outreach ministries.



Priorities for 2023

- Re-engaging and expanding our volunteer base to support the opening of the Community Outreach Center
- Providing updated training to our volunteer base in areas including values and mission, emergency procedures and safety
- Supporting the Leadership and Staff at the COC (Community Outreach Center) as they work to build further synergies and efficiencies across our Outreach Ministries
- Supporting and implementing the recommendations of the Way Forward task force

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Mahan, Chair, Outreach Center Committee

Giving Team

The Giving Team continues to meet to discuss various ways to encourage giving within the congregation and community as a whole, with an emphasis on the Annual Operating Plan. The team has been discussing the importance of submitting pledges and the impact on the next year's budget those pledges have. This year, the team has sent out various letters, emails and made phone calls to help facilitate giving.

The Giving Team has also been discussing and creating a new legacy program for Asbury First and looking into ways to help grow the endowment fund through planned giving. The team has begun to acquire information from various sources that have established programs to see what would be the best fit for Asbury. An informational meeting was held in the spring about legacy giving and steps to take to protect your family and assets. The Giving Team and senior staff hope that this will continue to be done in the future.

Submitted by Patti Crawford, Chair

Property Stewardship Committee (PSC)

Role in Church Governance

The Property Stewardship Committee (PSC) is charged with managing the physical assets of Asbury First in such a way that these assets are preserved, maintained, and enhanced in support of the total ministry of the church. Physical assets include the buildings and everything in them such as furniture,



equipment, etc. The PSC creates, manages and maintains a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which identifies and prioritizes expected projects. The CIP looks out a minimum of five years, and is presented to and approved by the Governing Board annually. All changes to church property must be approved by the PSC.

The PSC manages the Capital Improvement Fund to pay for on-going capital improvement needs and the prioritized items in the Capital Improvement Plan. Each year a small percentage of the church budget goes toward capital improvement, and is held in this fund. The PSC also oversees the church's insurance needs and serves as the Building Committee for the Better Together projects. Recently, the PSC took on oversight of IT infrastructure as well, which presents added funding challenges due to shorter life cycles

Activities in 2022

Our main focus was managing the construction of the Community Outreach Center at 1010. It was a challenging year faced with labor and supply chain issues, as well as high inflation. We were delayed in completing the project, however, all of the ministries will begin to move into the building in January 2023! All expenses incurred that were over our contingency budget were covered by additional pledges.

In addition to the Outreach Center, PSC oversaw the following projects:

- Boiler replacement in 1050 Office Building – replaced our 1989 boiler and improved heating to the entire building. \$35,000
- 1040 Education Wing Boiler Controls replacement – replaced the 1990s era boiler controls (the manufacturer went out of business a decade ago, and there are no spare parts or qualified technicians). \$32,000
- Replaced storm sewer drains and drainage lines in the main parking lot. These were original from the 1950s. They had deteriorated and with storm water not draining properly, sinkholes were forming in the parking lot. This project was unexpected, but urgent. \$40,000
- Approved a key-fob/camera system for 1040 and 1050 main entrance doors. This work will be completed in 2023, and will provide additional security for each building. \$13,000
- Continued investigation into the eventual replacement of the original 1960 Ed Wing windows – we expect to bring this to conclusion in 2023 with a recommended course of action.

Our projects range from very large and complex such as repair/replacement of the Education Wing windows, to smaller items such as replacing outdated circuit breaker panels. Just like in your home, things sometimes fail unexpectedly and we are faced with an unplanned repair, causing our priorities to shift. With two buildings over 100 years old, and one approaching 70 years old, there is a great deal of maintenance, repair and modernization needed. We have a full slate of projects planned for 2023!

Submitted by Chuck Hanrahan, Chair



Monday Morning Crew

The Monday Morning Crew is a group of men and women dedicated to doing repairs and maintenance to the buildings and furnishings on the Asbury campus. We consider all requests and tackle most of them using whatever skills and bravado we can bring to the job. We meet weekly on Monday's from 9:00 to 12:00. Everyone is welcome regardless of experience. Our to-do list is very long. We report our progress weekly to the staff and Property Committee.

Regulars: Jim Connell, Jim and Bonnie Nolan, Jim and Kathy Farrar, Dave Kennedy, Dave Kay, Ernie Dankert, Howie Holcomb, James Flack, Brian Donat, Zane Anderson and Rick Kuempel, Hal Carter

A sampling of our accomplishments for 2022 are the following:

- We remedied the problems with the rear porch of 1050. We removed the decaying stairs and installed a short perimeter "fence" to secure the porch from being a dumping place for donations.
- We installed energy-saving LED light fixtures in the Pastor's Study, Sacristy, & women's restroom.
- We solved the systemic failure of the (new) touchless faucets throughout 1040.
- We investigated and documented the heating system controls for 1050. We identified and resolved numerous problems with the system – by ourselves or via contractors.
- We refurbished a dozen window sashes from 1010 with fresh paint and restoration of brass hardware.
- We repaired crumbling plaster on walls of 4 different rooms in 1040. (More to go in '23.)
- We replaced the light bulbs high above the East Avenue entrance to the Sanctuary
- We converted the old music room cabinets & counter in Wesley Hall into a serving counter for the Gathering Space kitchen and a rolling counter unit for use wherever needed.
- We gathered left-over paint cans around the campus, cataloged & organized them in the paint closet.
- We repaired things for the daycare including the swing set, bulletin board, and gates.
- We installed shims and replacement weatherstripping on exterior doors to make doors more air tight.
- We adjusted the hydraulic door closers on many doors throughout the year.
- We tightened loose hand railings around the campus.
- We replaced lots of batteries – in faucets, soap dispensers, and light fixtures.



- We worked extensively to understand the controls on the Education building heating system. We'll continue this in 2023 in an attempt to reduce wasted energy.
- We repaired the tile floor at the daycare entrance to 1040.
- We repaired the Gathering Space coffee cart several times, most recently by installing new casters.
- We fabricated covers for the kitchen grease traps to bring them into compliance with new rules.
- We completed fabrication and installation of storm windows for the basement of 1050.
- We made covers for the wooden donation collection boxes in the Welcome Hall
- We installed mirrors in the women's restroom.
- We inspected toilet tanks for evidence of causes of excess water use in 1040.
- We determined the cause of a water leak beneath the 1040 dishwasher. Remedy in 2023.
- We washed the skylight windows (among others) in the Gathering Space.
- We cleared the leaves from the window wells of 1040 to prevent clogged drains and flooding.
- We tested the emergency exit fixtures and replaced those that were found to be broken.
- We inspected the roofs of 1040 and Sanctuary and reported findings to the PSC.

Submitted by Dave Kennedy (DAKennedy@Frontiernet.net)

Technology Team

The AFUMC technology team supports all aspects of technology use at Asbury First, including audio-visual, the sanctuary sound system, electronic signage, computers, software, security, and networks. We organize the broadcast ministry — streaming and radio, live and archived — and assist with the church website.

During the pandemic, starting in 2020, our live streaming capabilities were expanded and improved for increased stability and reliability. Since we have reopened the sanctuary (in Sept of 2021), many church members have returned to in person attendance. At the same time, our online viewership has continued, with viewership numbers significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. This report includes a graph of the weekly Boxcast and website linked viewers for the 2022 calendar year. Note: These numbers do not include viewers from YouTube, or those watching archived replays of the service(s).



The activities covered in this report include the following technology topics:

- **Digital Ministry** — enabling and expanding our worship experience through digital media, over multiple platforms
- **Computers and Network Infrastructure** — implementing and maintaining the hardware components needed to support the church community
- **Cyber Security** — The processes needed to safely utilize digital tools in 2022 and beyond
- **Church Management Software** — the applications needed for church staff functions to operate efficiently

The table below demonstrates the increasing reach of our digital ministries. We continue to reach viewers and members of the church community far beyond 1040 East Ave. Live stream views over the past three years:

	2020	2021	2022
Countries	7	28	27
US States	35	47*	47*
Worldwide Cities	142	572	1207

* (all US states with the exception of North Dakota, Alaska and Hawaii)

Summary Accomplishments for 2022

- **Digital Ministry**
 - Our Digital Ministry has stabilized and continually delivered high quality production values, graphics overlay capabilities, multiple broadcast channel capabilities, and issue monitoring in real time each Sunday morning. The current system provides state-of-the-art weekly livestreams viewing experience across the globe, in real time, and on demand at a later time, via the archived availability of the service(s).
 - In 2022, we **expanded our roster** of trained operators who can support streaming. This enables us to have a deeper bench of resources to draw upon, and also to offer streaming to a more diverse set of events beyond Sunday morning services, including memorial services, weddings and concerts.
 - **Streaming Operator Training** – A training curriculum has been created, led by David Berg. Four operator training sessions have been held, starting on October 1st, with new individuals interested in becoming operators in the Production Suite. Eight individuals have been trained to date, and a few have already shadowed current operators and started filling roles in the suite on Sunday mornings. Anyone interested in becoming a trained live stream operator is encouraged to contact the church office.
 - **Continue to offer multiple Broadcast Channels** – Our Sunday services is broadcast (live and replay on demand) on multiple online platforms, including: the asburyfirst.org

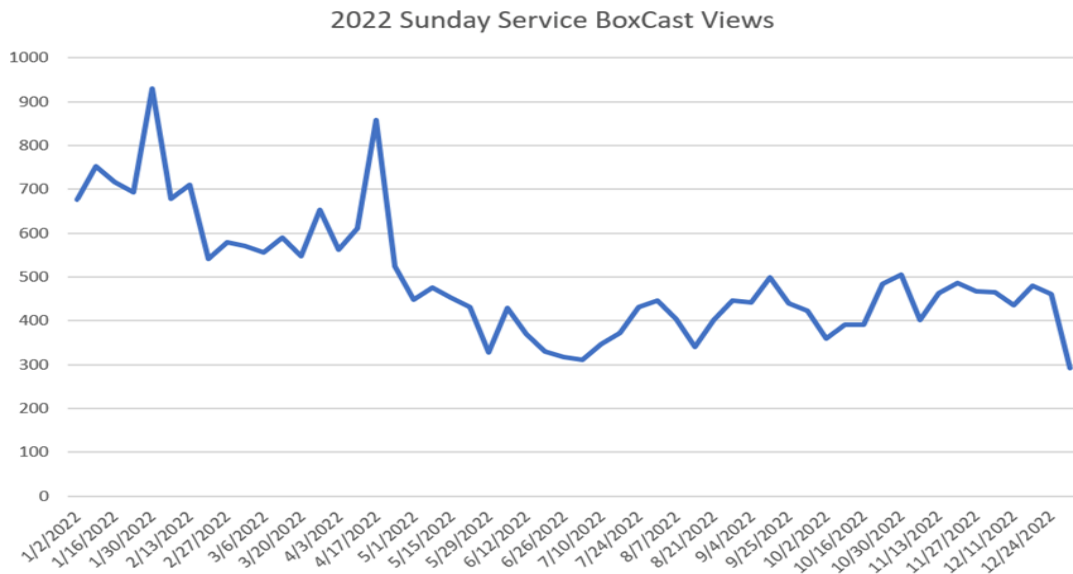


church website, multiple Boxcast devices, YouTube, PhoneStream, and rochesterfreeradio.com (WRFZ 106.3 FM)

- **Tracking Web Attendance** – We track our online viewer analytics weekly, so that we can know how many (and from where) people are tuning in. **The chart below shows the number of ‘unique devices’ tuned in each week.**

Notes:

- Prior to the pandemic, our average online viewership was between 50-100 devices each week
- The weekly numbers below also reflect an increase throughout this past year in the number of ‘in person’ participants each week, which offset the number of viewers tuning in via live stream.



- **Computers and Network Accomplishments - 2022**

- **Infrastructure Improvements**

- Wireless microphone system expanded and utilized for other than Sunday morning service cases (e.g., Youth musical, Community dinners, Tent week)
- Put the audio board to use outside of the Production Suite, for the first time. Providing a digital board with full functionality outside of the sanctuary. Used for: Tent week activities, Youth musical
- Utilized remote video feeds for elements of the service outside of the sanctuary, including Easter week, Community Outreach Center cornerstone laying, and a continuous live feed of the 1010 East Ave construction, viewable from the Asbury First website.



Thank you to all whose faithful work and ongoing dedication make these accomplishments possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Rice — Technology Team Chair

2022 Technology Team Membership:

- Kenny Bailey
- David Berg
- Aleeya Bourcy — Staff Associate
- Sarah Brubaker — Staff Associate
- Deb Bullock-Smith — Staff Associate
- Rick Church
- Carolyn Curran
- David Strong — Staff Liaison
- Ted Skomsky
- Carl Johengen — Staff Associate
- Justin Ocello — Technical Consultant
- Dave Rice — Chair

Membership Report

Asbury First Full Members as of 12/31/2022	2261
Includes new members in 2022	31
Baptized in 2022	16
Deaths during 2022	31

RE: Members Whose Addresses are Unknown

In accordance with the United Methodist Book of Discipline, the names of members whose addresses are no longer known, are listed below for entering in the minutes of the Annual Charge Conference. The requirements of The Discipline will be followed in that prescribed efforts to locate them will be made for two years.

Names Read for the First Time in 2020

- Emily Bajenaru
- C. Cary Baldwin
- Aileen Bardwell
- David M. Closson
- Thomas Cook
- Christopher Mergler
- Tracy Mergler
- Carole Mathews
- Katie Smith
- Gail Warner
- Barbara Burns Gannon
- Marcia Calos
- Wesley Clawson
- Lydia MacLaughlin
- Lil Mandl
- Jake Meyer
- Thomas Wilferth

Names Read for the First Time in 2021

- Charles Christie
- Linda Crowther
- Nancy DeWitt
- Debbie Erickson
- Paul Erickson



David Goethals
Jon Hansen
Kenneth Henderson
Robert Henning
Donnalee Kudla
Jack Mahaffey
Marion Merriman
Sharon Monaghan

Stephanie Peter
Madeleine Reynolds
Waltraud Siewers
David Stewart
Mark Warth
Anne Welch
Margaret Young

Names Read for the First Time in 2022

Lynne Boehm

Names Read for the First Time in 2023

Sarah Alaimo
Anamarie Bailey
G. Cary Baldwin
David Billington
Elizabeth Bleecker
Aaron Bonham
Marcia Calos
Wesley Clawson
John Coco
Devon DeLaughter
Emily Dennison
Robert Fuino
Robert Gompf
Erica Gongloff-Piche
William Hallings
Mary Hallings
Dorothy Hanner
Richard Hanson
Georgia Hanson
Robert Henning, Jr.
Aaron Horning
Geraldine Johnson

Lydia MacLaughlin
Robert McMinn
Easton McMinn
Ronald Merle
Harold Miltsch
Nancy Miltsch
Brandon Miltsch
Ryan Miltsch
Kiley Miltsch
Jessica Owens
Matthew Pulos
Eric Regna
Bob Remington
Madeleine Reynolds
Bethany Roland
Maureen Rosenbaum
David Stewart
David Terruli
Peter Van Brunt
Mark Warth
Thomas Wilferth
Chad Williams



Worship and Arts

Music Ministry

Dr. Carl Johengen, Director of Music Ministry

After the many challenges that Asbury First weathered during 2021, it was a joy to see the unfolding of 2022 and the return to relative normalcy. This was certainly true in the area of the Music Ministry, where the easing of COVID restrictions brought the return to regular rehearsals and participation in worship for many of our volunteer musicians. 2021 began with a spike in the Omicron variant, which brought about a temporary shutdown of choir rehearsals. Fortunately by mid-February we were able to resume our slow and steady reopening.

Throughout 2022 our organists, soloists, and occasional guest musicians continued to demonstrate their dedication on a weekly basis. I'm sure I speak for the entire congregation when I express my sincere gratitude to Duane Prill, Principal Organist, David Strong, Assistant Organist, our soloists Bess Phillips, Brenda Nitsch, Dan McInerney, and Jordan Bachmann, and our Choral Scholars Holden Turner and Kayla Sconiers. We continue to be fortunate beneficiaries of their dedication, professionalism, musicality, grace, and good humor.

During the summer, Bess Phillips announced that the time had come for her to retire. She graciously agreed to continue her service until a new soprano soloist was brought on board. In the beginning of September, we welcomed Sipra Agrawal Kolar to our team; she has already proven to be a marvelous addition.

Sanctuary Choir

With the exception of the temporary hiatus in January and early February, Sanctuary Choir returned to business as usual during 2022. During the spring months we continued to rehearse and perform in worship wearing masks for protection from COVID, but once we reconvened in September we operated under the church's wider "masking by choice" policy. I'm immensely pleased to report that Sanctuary Choir has enjoyed a steady influx of new members since September; no fewer than nine new members have come on board this fall!

Summer Choir

On Memorial Day weekend, throughout June and August, and on Labor Day weekend, Summer Choir enjoyed good and steady attendance, and provided lovely music for worship. During the month of July when I was on vacation, Duane Prill and our soloists ably held down the fort. We



also were privileged to welcome the Barnstormers Men’s Chorus for a guest appearance in concert on July 9, and in worship on July 10.

Personal Workload

Throughout 2022 I continued to accomplish weekly duties through a combination of remote and in-person work. Much of the work of preparing Sunday bulletins, producing captions for live stream worship, coordination with our live stream Production Suite crew members, and other routine tasks can be carried out online. My on-campus work consists of preparing for Sanctuary Choir rehearsals, attending meetings (staff, Executive Team, worship planning), and attending to other details that require my physical presence. I continue to be involved in the preparation for funerals and memorial services, as well as other special services and events. I continue to meet weekly with the Technology Team via Zoom to evaluate and troubleshoot the Sunday live stream, and to plan ahead for special events like the Thanksgiving In-Gathering and Groundbreaking, and Christmas Eve.

During the fall I joined three of our Technology Team members to form a Production Coordinators team, whose purpose is to recruit new live stream operators and to oversee the smooth staffing of our Production Suite for live streaming. This team, headed by David Berg and including Carolyn Curran, Kenny Bailey, and myself, has held three training sessions since October, and we look forward to expanding our pool of volunteers even further in the coming year.

I am grateful for my wonderful colleagues on the Asbury First staff for their generosity of time and overall collaborative nature!

Pianos

Our pianos throughout 1040 are in excellent care and continue to be well maintained and regularly tuned. It has become evident that the grand piano in Wesley Hall would benefit from the installation of a humidification system, which we plan to pursue as soon as possible in 2023.

Once construction work in the Community Outreach Center is thoroughly complete, we will need to consider whether the grand piano currently being stored in the sub-narthex should be returned to the Red Room. In addition, an “extra” upright piano currently being stored in Wesley Hall might also be moved to somewhere in 1010. It might find use there for special events, as long as it doesn’t take up valuable space.



Organ

Duane Prill, Principal Organist

2022 was a year of evaluating the heating/cooling system to make sure the organ was in as good a tune as possible (since the removal of the curtains). The instrument continues to serve well with very little maintenance. We did renew a tuning contract with Parsons Organ Co. but only paid for ½ of the year as Duane has done most of the organ “touch-up” tuning/maintenance and has not called Parsons in as of yet.

Our contract with the Eastman School of Music to allow students to practice on the organ during the week has been renewed; we will continue to reevaluate this agreement.

Asbury Ringers

Elizabeth Church, Director

The Asbury Ringers is the adult handbell choir at Asbury First UMC. We currently have 13 members. We had two new members join us in the fall of 2022, and a new member in January 2023. Our primary commitment is to participate and contribute to the worship services. We performed three times in the spring of 2022: March 13, April 17 (Easter), and May 15. In fall 2022 we played on October 23, November 20 (Thanksgiving In-gathering), December 18, and at the 7:00 PM Christmas Eve service. We often play from the balcony on Christmas Eve, but this year we played down front.

We continue to have a strong group of substitutes who can fill in as needed either in rehearsal or performance. This is a huge asset to the choir and our ability to perform and rehearse with a complete ensemble. Some of these subs are former ringers from Asbury First, youth and adult, while some come from other area choirs. Barbara Howell, a member of the Ringers, has worked with me to keep the music cataloged and filed.

As we were getting back into a full rehearsal and performance schedule after the COVID pandemic, we held back from playing any concerts at outside venues. I am looking to next year for new concert opportunities.

It is a privilege to work with this committed, enthusiastic group of musicians.



Children's Music

Holly Temming, Director

Children's Music has enjoyed being back in full swing in 2022. In the Spring, we chose to do a dramatic interpretation of the book "The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse" by Charlie Mackesy.

In the Summer our VBS theme was Under Construction and the kids sang "The Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock" in the 11 am service.

Fall enrollment in children's choirs increased to 6 in Hallelujah Kids and 10 in Wesley Singers & Ringers (from 4 in Hallelujah Kids and 7 in Wesley Singers & Ringers in 2021). Both groups sang and rang on Bible Sunday, November 13. The children really enjoyed singing the anthem "Let Us Talents & Tongues Employ" with congas, flute, and piano accompaniment. Christmas Eve Pageant participation was back to pre-COVID numbers with 54 children participating.

My goals for 2023 are to increase participation in our children's choirs and to present a Spring Musical again.

Youth Music

Carol Lamica

In September, auditions were held for the youth musical, *Snoopy The Musical!* Eighteen youth began rehearsing on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons. The production was held on November 11-13th. The production had a pit orchestra that consisted of two keyboardists, a bass player and percussionist.

The youth continued to rehearse on Sunday afternoons in preparation for singing at the 4:00 Christmas Eve service. The youth sang with piano accompaniment as well as conga, bells and triangle.

The youth began rehearsing bells and choir on Wednesday evenings on January 11th. We are preparing to sing in February and ring/sing in the spring for Youth Sunday.

My goals for 2023 are to secure regular attendance at bell choir rehearsal and increase participation in both the bells and choir. I will also be encouraging the youth to audition for "The Sound of Music". I am looking forward to being a part of the first intergenerational musical!



Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is instrumental in preparing the Sanctuary each week for Worship. Linens, flowers, and candles are placed on the altars. Chancel bibles and the pastor's hymnals are readied. After the services, the Pastor's study, Sanctuary and Sacristy are cleaned. Altar flowers are wrapped and delivered to those in need.

During 2022, the Altar Guild:

- Successfully conducted 2 business meetings. The annual spring chancel cleaning day was held in March.
- The Annual Installation of new Altar Guild members was postponed until spring 2023 until a complete leadership slate is in place and new members identified. An in-person Christmas Brunch was held in December.
- Coordinated and assisted with five Sanctuary weddings. The Wedding Committee provided 1-2 assistants for each of the five weddings. At this time, seven weddings are planned for 2023.
- Special Services provided support during 20 memorial services and 2 funerals as well as set-up for the following services – Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday/Saturday, an Interfaith Prayer Vigil, and the Older Adult Communion Service. Washed and pressed altar linens when needed.
- Participated in services for Support and Affirmation, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Taize, The Longest Night, and Christmas Eve.
- Created special altars for World Communion Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and Palm Sunday.
- Memorial and Altar Flowers - orders started again in November 2021. This year there was a slight decline in donors due to several long-time donors either leaving the church or passing away. The busiest month is still March and least busy is December.
- Altar candles - The oil in the Kerry candles on the three altars was maintained so that they burned properly for the 9 and 11 am services on 51 Sundays, for 6 weddings, for 23 Memorial services, and for 10 special services. The oil in the Kerry candles in the candelabra was maintained so that they burned properly for 5 weddings and 7 special services. A supply of wax candles is maintained for weddings, where requested, and for Christmas Eve, and special candles are ordered for the Advent Wreath and the Christ candle. The Candelabra were used for 8 services (Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Prayer Vigil, and 5 weddings).
- Provided an opportunity for Asbury members to remember/honor their loved ones through the memorial flowers. Floral solicitations resumed in November 2021. Congregant members were encouraged to come forth after service to take a bouquet to share with someone in need.
- Devoted approximately 578 volunteer hours to the church and its members;



- Due to ongoing challenges from COVID-19 and a shrinking membership, the Altar Guild members unanimously voted to continue the 2022 leadership slate through April 2023. The Altar Guild co-presidents continue to be Martha Tuke and Ellen Williams.

The Altar Guild aligns itself with the Asbury First Dreamscape goals in the following ways:

Hospitality: The Altar Guild provides hospitality to congregant members and guests attending weddings, funerals, special services, Sunday Worship, and a host of other events throughout the year. We warmly welcome all that come to Asbury and do our very best to make it a beautiful and meaningful experience for all.

Diversity: As our membership numbers have declined, we are working on encouraging any/all church members that would like to participate and serve. This is a unique opportunity to contribute and become an integral part of Asbury First. What a joy to support our pastors in regular and special services, bring cheer with floral bouquets, and share in fellowship with other members as we work together throughout the year.

Attendance: The special decorations committee creates beautiful altar displays throughout the year. Whether live streaming or in-person, many people look forward to seeing these displays. We would like to think that this in some small way, encourages members/friends to attend worship.

Respectfully submitted,

*Martha Tuke and Ellen Williams
Altar Guild Co-Presidents*

Discipleship

Youth Ministries

Mike Mullin, Minister for Youth and Discipleship

COVID-19 Update

Our youth ministries continued to be affected in 2022 due to the impact of COVID. While some mission trips and fundraisers returned, other retreats and outings were still unavailable. We are looking forward to a more complete return to youth engagement and activities in 2023.



Purpose

Welcome. Celebrate. Serve. All.

The youth program at Asbury First is open to all 6th–12th graders. We are UMYF; this stands for United Methodist Youth Fellowship. Our mission is to welcome all youth to celebrate a growing relationship with God and each other, while joyfully serving in the example of Christ. We are built on the foundations of Christianity and we take our United Methodist Church slogan seriously:

Open Hearts.

We want all youth to feel loved and accepted in our group regardless of age, gender, race, school district, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

Open Minds.

We want our youth programming to be a safe place where all youth feel comfortable with sharing what's in their hearts without being judged.

Open Doors.

We want all youth to know they are welcome— members and non-members alike participate in our programming.

Major Programs Supported

- Confirmation for youth in grade 8.
- Middle School Youth Group
- High School Youth Group
- Sunday Morning LGBTQ+ Youth Fellowship
- Youth Vocal Choir
- Youth Bell Choir
- Youth Musical
- College-Age Fellowship
- Annual Youth Outings
- Middle School Mission Trip
- High School Mission Trip

Accomplishments for 2020

Sunday Morning

- In the fall, we welcomed Evann Hasenauer, a Supervised Ministry Student from CRCDS. Evann had an interest and passion in working with youth and advocating for faith-based LGBTQ+ inclusion, and so we started a new LGBTQ+ youth offering on Sunday mornings. This is open to all youth in grades 6-12, allies and adherents alike.

Confirmation Class

- Three confirmands were received into fellowship of AFUMC in the spring of 2021.



- Asbury First is honored to have its Senior Minister, The Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady continue to excitedly lead our confirmation classes in monthly meetings.

Sunday Evening/Afternoon Youth Group

- Youth Meeting Times – This Fall, we shifted our youth group meeting times from Sunday evenings to Sundays after church. One reason for this was to help with the numerous commutes to and from church for families on Sundays. So far, this shift seems to be a positive for everyone.
- Youth Leadership – We continue to have a committed and interested team of youth leaders who work with the adult staff and volunteers to provide leadership and direction.
- Seniors – We honored thirteen seniors who graduated high school in 2022.
- Youth Sunday – Our Youth Sunday service was offered in-person on the front lawn and live-streamed in the sanctuary. We had seven seniors give sermons, and numerous youth participated in other areas of the service.
- Retreats – All of our retreats were canceled due to the pandemic.
- Fundraising – We held a modified Souper Bowl fundraiser, and a full Pie for Pi fundraiser in the spring. The Park Avenue Festival (which has historically been our largest fundraiser), has not returned since the pandemic, and it is unlikely to. We are currently looking for fun ideas for youth fundraisers that do not simply include selling items to friends and family.
- Senior High Mission Trip – 17 youth and 8 adults traveled to Kentucky in July to work with the Appalachia Service Project. We spent the week repairing roofs, building ramps, siding, etc. We also learned more about the systemic and historic poverty in the Appalachian region, and how ASP is continually working to do more than just put band-aids on a serious problem. One example was how ASP was able to react to the flooding that ravished the area shortly after we left. ASP already had relationships and connections throughout the area and the country to help provide food and shelter to residents and aid teams alike.
- Middle School Mission Trip – In August, 18 youth and 8 adults volunteered as leaders at Asbury First's vacation Bible school, and then volunteered with local Rochester agencies. Following the week of service, the youth had the opportunity to travel to the Adirondacks where they spent two days hiking, rock climbing, and caving as they experienced some of the wonders of creation.

Youth Music

- The Youth Musical this year was, Snoopy!!!, and it included a wonderful cast that helped bring in youth that had not previously attended Asbury First.
- The Youth Bells and Choir have continued to meet on Wednesday evenings with opportunities to share their gifts and talents at worship services throughout the year.



College-Age Fellowship

- The youth group put together and sent care packages to our 2022 graduates in December.

General

- **Connectional:**
 - Mike continues to be in conversation with local ministry leaders to think through how we can continue to offer interreligious and intra-methodist offerings. We have a few different leads and hopes for these interfaith gatherings to return in 2023. The confirmands did get to visit the Hindu Temple and Temple B'rith Kodesh in the spring.
 - Mike has continued to be in contact with the leadership of the District Committee on Youth Ministry and the Conference Committee on Youth Ministry to help continue our connectionalism as a youth group in the work of the conference. These groups have not been very active since the pandemic, but we remain hopeful for our United Methodist connections.
- **Outreach:**
 - High School Mission Trip to Kentucky
 - Middle School Mission Trip to Rochester
 - We are slowly returning to our monthly service opportunities/outings with youth group, with a focus in 2022 being on our Asbury First missions.
 - We were able to go caroling in December to three resident facilities. This was a wonderful opportunity to greet members of our congregation that we might not see on a regular basis.

Additional Comments:

- 2022 has helped us continue to settle into our new-normal of a waning pandemic. Most of us are no longer meeting in masks—though they are still always welcome, and some do still choose to utilize them. We have shifted some of our priorities and expectations to highlight those aspects of youth ministry that are especially important. Youth ministry—like all ministry—is relational. We want to ensure that each week we offer time for youth to connect in both structured and more open settings. We do this through service, education, games, meals, and free time. Each of these components helps us to ground our Youth Ministries in the core values of Asbury First—to live, love, serve, and repeat. We look forward to continuing to improve upon this groundwork in 2023 and to see how our programs continue to grow—not just in numbers, but in personal impact.



Library Team

Our mission is to offer a comfortable space and resources where the Asbury community can learn about God, spirituality, humanity, religion, inspiration and challenge through books and other media.

2022 Work Progress:

- The team continues to write regular summaries of books in our library collection for the Visitor, the bulletin inserts, the web site, and posters.
- The Center for Spiritual Life (CSL) Library has been moved from the 1010 Meditation Room into the Church Resource Library spaces. The books have been labeled as CSL books and incorporated in the Church Library collection in the 1040 building.
- The entire Church Library collection has been inventoried in preparation for updating the online collection of books and the notebook collection lists have been updated by title and author in notebooks that enable library visitors to find books even when a committee member is not available to help.
- Continuing this year has been the online listing of the church library collection enabling online access to the collection by the congregation. This effort provides remote access capabilities in order that the library collection information can be accessed from home, office, and other locations.
- Continue to promote knowledge and use of e-mail access to the church library for the purpose of seeking and providing information regarding items in the library collection.
- Continued to weed the collection of older books and those that are in poor repair, replacing them with the same or similar titles. This is a continuing process done on weekly work days.
- We hold monthly team meetings (by zoom when necessary) to go over suggestions for new materials and plan for work days, book discussions, fundraisers, library usage, and special projects.
- A group from the team continues to work on Monday mornings—processing books, creating seasonal book displays, shelving returned books, and other projects.
- We continue to reach out to pastors, staff members, and congregants for suggestions for new books to purchase.
- The team continues to plan our work in support of the children’s group and the youth group.
- The team has an emphasis on promoting library usage by the congregation through displays, participation in adult education, special events, use of ministry tables, book fairs, church basement sales, publicity in the church bulletin and newsletters.
- A major effort has been conducted this year to inventory, update, reposition, replace, or dispose of items in the collection with continuing work on organizing the collection for optimal display, use, and function.



- As this has been a year in which access to the library has been limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have concentrated on organizing, updating, and restructuring the library collection in preparation when more in-person use is possible.
- We purchased and had installed new signage for the library exterior and for the library window to promote access for library usage

2022 Events:

- Barnes and Noble Fundraiser—A highly successful day-long book fair was held November 12 at Barnes and Noble. This year’s annual event resulted in raising \$485.09 in funds for our library collection development.
- NOTA Summer Market Sale – The library team participated in the weekly Neighborhood of the Arts (NOTA) summer sale, selling donated and discarded books as a neighborhood service and a fundraising project.
- Asbury Christmas Sale Fundraiser— This activity was canceled again this year due to the pandemic. Ordinarily, we annually participate by selling library materials that were donated for sale or were duplicates of materials we already have. Proceeds from the sale are to be used for library expenses.

2023 Goals:

- Promotion of the usage of the library by all members of the congregation will continue to be an emphasis of the committee.
- We signed up for an additional year of service that allows people to search the library catalog online. This will be continued again for 2023 with additional notices placed in the Visitor, web site, and the bulletin to explain to users on how to access the site. This will give users even more access to the library when it is not physically open.
- We plan to continue to refine and upgrade our collection with new and appropriate materials and to promote the usage of library resources through providing programs and information on library resources.
- We will participate and promote any church-wide and church group reads in cooperation with the Outreach team and other church groups
- Creation of special displays for seasonal and spiritual holidays in the library with accompanying publicity emphasized for special holidays and events (Advent/lent/ MLK Day/summer).
- We look forward to another year of growth and continue to search for even more ways to be a vital resource for the congregation, youth and children. We invite all to visit the library and share with us any suggestions for new books or ways we can better serve the congregation.

Team Members: Chris Burton, Elise Carter, Monica Gilligan, Karen Hibbard, Bonnie Kay, Peggy Lyons, Carol Roote, Beth Woolever. Member Emeritus: Sharon Crouch. Submitted by Peggy Lyons

Asbury First United Methodist Church
Annual Church Conference
January 30, 2022

Due to COVID 19 restrictions, normal in-person requirements for the church conference and voting by written individual ballots is suspended for the purposes of this meeting. All voting will be online through Slido.com, and only members are able to vote.

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Ted Anderson, who opened the meeting with prayer.

Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady asked everyone to participate in a trial vote (a practice question) using Slido, our online voting tool.

Deb Bullock-Smith volunteered to be the recording secretary for the meeting.

Candidates for ministry: Mike Mullin was offered as a candidate for ministry.

- 134 voted to approve; 6 voted to not approve, and 5 abstained.

Bequests:

- Vevera Estate: \$225,122.44 - 149 voted to approve; 1 abstained
- Keenan Estate: \$48,866.20 - 149 voted to approve; 1 abstained
- Doerner Estate: \$63,634.16 - 149 voted to approve; 1 abstained

Nominations Report:

By Discipline, we are required to vote for the Board of Trustees, which is our Governing Board.

Valerie Benjamin (Class of 2024)

Angie Burch (Class of 2024)

Chuck Hanranan (Class of 2023)

Ike Jordan (Class of 2024)

Joe Stankaitis (Class of 2023)

Cory Tylenda (Class of 2025)

Beth Wilkins (class of 2024)

All of the above candidates were approved. Per NYS regulations, all ballots are kept in the church office.

Vote to accept the full Nominations Report:

146 voted to approve; 1 voted to not approve; 5 abstained

Pastor Parish Relations Committee: Dr. Joe Stankaitis, chair, spoke, with appreciation about the work that our ministers and staff have done during COVID to keep our congregation engaged in our ministry. With all of the social isolation in our community during this time, the stress levels are high and mental health for many has suffered. If anyone has a concern about any of the ministers, please reach out to Joe. That is part of his role as the chair of the PPRC. We hope to support our ministers as much as possible, as there has been a mass exodus of ministers over the past 2 years in our denomination because of the intense stress in their roles.

Finance Committee: Angie Burch, chair, spoke on behalf of the committee and presented the budget.

- We have adjusted the report this year to adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Some of the labels have been modified to reflect these updated principles. “Releases from Restriction” and “Excess Income/Releases/(Expenses)” are not perfectly comparable, but all other line items are comparable on a year-over-year basis.
- 2021 Operating Budget Results: giving lagged behind the budget (and 2020) levels through early December, then rebounded. December donations were \$80K more than any previous December.
 - Year-over-year giving is showing steady growth.
 - Designated revenue was \$74K above budget due, in part, to a \$50K donation received in December. We also received some pandemic-related grants in 2021, which are not expected to continue in 2022.
 - Expenses were \$49K over budget due to contracting services for housekeeping required more hours than budgeted and there were unanticipated tech and computer upgrades.
- **2022 Operating Budget:** assumes slower rate of growth in congregation giving and plate offerings are expected to stay below pre-COVID levels.
 - Staffing - covers incremental cost of healthcare and 3% cost of living increase; fills vacation Outreach position (reporting to Pat Dupont), keeps the Minister for Christian Formation (Rachel Dupont), and adds a part-time Communications position.
 - Total 2022 budget: \$2,350,000
- **Question:** How did we do in 2021 against our plan? The overall budget was \$80K over for income. The expenses were \$45K over the plan.

Vote on the 2022 Operating Budget: 127 voted to pass the budget; 3 voted against.

Vote to receive the 2021 Annual Reports: 129 votes to receive them; 1 abstained.

Questions from the congregation:

- How many members in the Asbury First congregation - 2300 to 2400; more people watching the services than ever before.
- What expenses do the PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) funds cover in 2022? They were received and used in 2020, and forgiven in 2021. They were used for personnel and payroll expenses.

The meeting was called to a close with the singing of the doxology.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Bullock-Smith
Recording Secretary

Asbury First United Methodist Church
Annual Church Conference
January 24, 2021 at 12:00 pm, via Livestream

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm and began the meeting with a prayer.

Electing a Recording Secretary: Stephen announced that Deb Bullock-Smith was willing to take minutes for the meeting. Those present voted unanimously to elect Deb Bullock-Smith as Recording Secretary.

Meeting Materials and Voting: Stephen directed the congregation to the information about the candidates for the Board, as well as to slido.com (keyword #Asbury), which we will use for questions and answers as well as voting. Since we are all watching via the livestream because of the pandemic, we will ratify these votes when we are able to meet in person again, since there is no provision for this situation in the Discipline.

Recommendation for Candidates for Ministry: Mike Mullin, is currently serving as our Minister for Youth and Discipleship, but was removed from the process of candidacy earlier this year. We are re-recommending him for ministry. The congregation voted to approve candidacy for Mike.

2020 Nominations Report and Vote: Stephen presented the 2020 Nominations Report for approval. This report is virtually the same as last year because we're working to come up with a new more efficient governance structure. There's a group of people who have been working, with the guidance of a consultant, Dan Hotchkiss for the last year and a half, under the co-leadership of Valerie Benjamin and Dawn Riedy, who shared an update from the Governance Task Force.

- Working towards goal 7.3 from the Dreamscape (Our structure and systems are organized in a missionally effective way.)
- Currently have 95 committees, task forces and groups; process to get things done is not always efficient, effective and often takes time to work through
- Group is proposing a smaller governing board, smaller number of committees and would empower the ministers and the staff to make decisions, based on Asbury First's mission, values and goals; we would be doing the same work that we're doing now, but just with fewer meetings!
- Val and Dawn will be meeting with groups in the coming months to provide a more in-depth explanation. In addition, there will be town hall meetings in the spring, followed by a Church Conference when all members will have the opportunity to vote to approve the new structure, with the intent of starting in September 2020.

Those present voted to approve the Nominations Report.

Trustee Ballot: Ballots were distributed to vote on the members of the new Governance Board. After the ballots were collected and tallied, all of the board members presented were elected, with each receiving 90% or more of the total votes.

2021 Budget and Vote: Al Swett, Chair of Finance, presented information about the 2021 budget. First, he thanked David Strong and Dick Moncrief for their time and effort in putting together reports and the final budget, and to Dave Kennedy for his volunteer work in the finance area.

We are essentially carrying over the 2020 Annual Operating Budget to 2021.

- Our campus is still only partially open, because of COVID-19 restrictions
- Ministers and staff continue much of their work remotely
- Sunday services will be via livestream only

In addition, we will implement a 3% wage and salary increase to address equity issues and increased benefit costs. We are also planning a .5 FTE (full-time equivalent) for the financial operations.

Challenges in 2021:

- We have lost a major “tenant” on campus, and other property usage income
- There was an increase in Conference Ministry Share payment
- Creating budget and managing finances during uncertain times

For our reporting purposes again this year, we have aligned our money with the mission/ministry areas, allocating operational expenses to those areas. Our 2021 projected income is \$2,139,000. The projected expenses are \$2,139,000.

Nominations Report: Available for download from our website, includes the nominees for the new Governing Board, the committees of the board, as well as the teams, although the report is not exhaustive. It has been difficult to pull this together this year since we have not been able to see everyone in person, and everything this year is new!

In many cases, for ease in transition, we have asked the previous chair to either remain as the chair for this time, or to remain on the committee for consistency.

Stephen, as the Chair of the Board, formally presented the Nominations Report to the congregation for a vote.

Questions (received via Slido):

- ***Is it likely that the District Committee on Ministry will accept Mike if we recommend him? What about the doctrinal issues he has with them?*** Stephen feels it is unlikely that the DCOM will recommend sending Mike forward, but recommending him again will allow him to meet with the board, which he was not able to do before they discontinued

his candidacy. There are some doctrinal challenges, but they are not unique, and if he was in front of a different DCOM board, he would have been allowed to move forward.

- ***When will we be able to go back to in-person worship?*** The leadership of the church and the COVID-19 task force is continuing to monitor the situation and will communicate changes as we get closer to being able to be in person.
- ***How much of the Conference Ministry Shares are spent on administrative costs?*** Stephen didn't have that information available at the moment but can provide it later.
- ***The finance presentation doesn't tell what we are spending money on. How much of that is for conference facilities and staffing?*** It is divided out into ministry areas (Outreach, Worship and Arts, Youth and Discipleship, Congregational Care). We have provide the numbers to those who are interested – email dstrong@asburyfirst.org
- ***In the 2021 budget, have we used up the \$26,000 surplus?*** We had a \$46,000 deficit (cumulative), and that \$26,000 surplus was used to balance the 2021 budget.
- ***How much money came from the Payroll Protection Program?*** We applied in April and it ran through June, and helped cover extra expenses during the beginning of the pandemic and make sure that we could cover payroll during that time. We are waiting to hear if that loan will be forgiven.
- ***When will the General Conference meet?*** It is scheduled for the end of August, 2021 to the beginning of September for 10 days. It is questionable because half of the delegates come from outside of the US. Travel and visas may be more difficult still because of the pandemic. It may be delayed, or it may be changed to a virtual meeting (which could be challenging because of varied access to internet).
- ***Is a directory available?*** We are hoping to have an online directory soon, but we can provide you with a printed directory, if you request one through the office.
- ***Where are retired clergy in the new governance model?*** They are essentially in the same place. If they are affiliated with Asbury First as their Charge Conference, they will be affiliated with Asbury in the same way under our new governance model. You will see updates from some of them in our Annual Report.

Voting was opened (via Slido):

Governance Board: all candidates were elected with a vote of 98% or more

Mike was approved for candidacy.

The budget was approved with a 98% vote.

Building Committee Update: Chuck Hanrahan, Chair of the Building Committee, provided an update on the 1040 projects, including sanctuary lighting, HVAC, electrical updates and Fellowship Hall updates. The vast majority of these infrastructure projects have been completed.

Better Together Update: Patrick Fulford, Co-Chair of the Better Together Committee, provided an update on the Capital Campaign. At the beginning of the campaign, the committee promised not to begin a project until we received 100% of the pledges required to complete the project.

The Outreach Center, Phase 2 of the campaign, requires \$4.5M, and we have \$1M left to raise to break ground. Our efforts to raise the last \$1M will be focused on 3 areas: a UR Well campaign, grants, and pledges from the congregation.

Question: *How do the final total costs for Phase 1 and the Outreach Center compare with the dollar amounts originally budgeted?* For the Infrastructure part of the project, the costs came in a lot higher, mostly due to increased building costs (pandemic related). The same is true of the Outreach portion of the project. We do have contingencies built in, and we have done our best to estimate the true costs.

The meeting was adjourned by Stephen at 12:56 pm, with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Bullock-Smith
Recording Secretary

Asbury First United Methodist Church
Church Conference Minutes
December 13, 2020 at 12:20 pm

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady called the meeting to order at 12:20 pm and began the meeting with a prayer.

Stephen talked briefly about how members are able to vote on the governance proposal using Slido.com. There is no provision in the Book of Discipline for virtual voting. However, the Council of Bishops, and District Superintendent have recommended that all Church Conferences be held virtually during this time. Our voting today is provisional. When we are able to be in person again, we will vote to ratify this and any other votes that have taken place in virtual Church Conferences during the pandemic.

Why are we doing this?

- In 2015, our dreams were distilled into the Dreamscape - our mission, vision, values and goals. Goal 7.3 – Our structure and systems are organized in a missionally effective way.
- Guided by “Inside the Large Congregation” by Susan Beaumont and “Governance and Ministry” by Dan Hotchkiss
- Workshop by Dan Hotchkiss attended by 80 people from Asbury in October 2018
- Church Council commissioned the Governance Task Force
- Members of the Task Force: Val Benjamin and Dawn Riedy – co-chairs; Al Swett, Beth Rice, Mary Worboys-Turner, Chuck Hanrahan, David Strong, Deb Bullock-Smith
- Governance Task Force members represent:
 - the last 3 chairs of church Council
 - 2 current Trustees
 - chair of Finance
 - 2 staff members
 - 1 member of Staff Parish Relations Committee

Stephen introduced Valerie Benjamin, one of the co-chairs of the Governance Task Force, who spoke about the governance model that has been developed, the feedback the group received through presentations to the leadership committees, 2 Town Hall meetings, and numerous conversations.

- This proposed governance structure follows the policies and requirements of the Book of Discipline.
- The Board will provide strategic and executive guidance for the Senior Minister
- Mechanisms are included for transparency for the congregation
- The Board members are representatives of the congregation and will make sure that they speak for the opinions and concerns of the congregation
- Diversity of perspectives will be represented on the Board.

Voting was opened on Slido. Stephen announced that we would abide by 2/3 majority vote and asked for only members of Asbury First to vote.

Do you support the provisional adoption of the new church Governance Plan as detail on the Asbury First website (asburyfirst.org/governance) until such a time as we are able to have an in-person vote to formally approve it with any necessary amendments?

- 166 voted yes (89%)
- 20 voted no (11%)
- These numbers include 7 people who were having difficulty voting with Slido and emailed their votes in.

The Governance Plan passed.

If people have additional questions or concerns, they are invited to let Stephen and the board know so we can address them.

The official Church Conference was closed.

Stephen opened the State of the Church portion of the meeting, asking for questions to be submitted via Slido or questions@asburyfirst.org. He offered the following updates:

- The General Conference of the United Methodist Church was supposed to meet in May but was delayed until August or September 2021 because of the pandemic. At that time, delegates will vote on The Protocol that will allow for the full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the UMC. If that vote passes, congregations that cannot abide by allowing LGBTQ persons to be fully participating in the denomination can vote to leave the UMC and start a new denomination.
- The ministers and staff have committed to continue the work of racial justice personally, in the congregation and in the community. The Racial Justice Advocacy Team, under the leadership of David Carr and Brennon Thompson, and staff leadership of Rev. Jackie Thompson, has done great work so far. Watch for updates from this group in the future. Thank you to all who took part in the 21-Day Equity Challenge through the Greater Rochester United Way.
- A lawsuit has been brought against the church through the Child Victim Act. The abuse occurred many years ago at the hands of then senior minister, Ray Fedyke. More information is available in the June 9th statement on our website. Unfortunately, Stephen is unable to share further information as they continue the process of mediation. We continue to pray for the survivor as well as for the congregation.
- Financial outlook: We are grateful to those who are able to sustain their contributions to the church throughout this year. While contributions have been lower because of the

pandemic, we have been able to keep our expenses low as well. The COVID Relief fund has generated over \$70,000 in donations that have been used to help those in need, and those needs continue. We were able to take the PPP loan, which helped us to sustain our staffing levels. We have done our very best to hold our budget flat year to year. Thank you to those who have pledged to sustain their giving through 2021 and those who pledged to increase. This will help to offset those who, for various reasons, have had to decrease their pledges. We have recently learned that Epilepsy Pralid, who has used our space for the last few years, can no longer sustain being in another location. We are facing the loss of that income, and other space usage, as well as an increase in the apportionment, for a total of about \$100,000. We are working to adjust our budget to accommodate these reductions in income and increases in expenses.

- At the Church Conference on January 24, 2021, more information will be shared about the capital campaign progress. We have raised over \$340,000 through grants from 11 foundations. The need for the Outreach Center is now more acute than ever and growing. We will do a final push in the new year to close the gap, so we can break ground in the fall.
- We are 9 months into COVID and are still not able to be present in the same space as a congregation. In the year ahead, we hope to be able to welcome everyone back into our worship space, but we don't know how or when. Once we are able to worship together in person, we will look for ways to continue to include those who worship with us virtually and are considering adding monitors in the sanctuary (in tasteful ways) such that we can share the worship space with those who are worshipping virtually.

Questions from the congregation:

- What is Mike Mullin's status? In the Spring, Mike Mullin was removed from candidacy with the United Methodist Church because the District Committee on Ministry didn't feel that his theology aligned with the UMC. He has been in the process of appealing that decision, and we have been advocating on his behalf. As of right now, the only difference is that he does not use the title "reverend", but still has the same role as minister for discipleship and youth.
- Why vote on the governance plan now? We are facing some challenges as a congregation and are in need of a different way to work on those challenges. The Task Force has been working on the new model for 2 years and were just preparing to bring it to a vote in June, when the pandemic changed everything. The vote of affirmation today allows us to begin implementing the new model as a trial run.

Stephen welcomed questions and suggestions about any of these topics and invites conversation to promote better understanding among all of us.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Bullock-Smith
Recording Secretary

**Asbury First United Methodist Church
Church Conference Minutes
January 19, 2020 at 12:30 pm**

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm and began the meeting with a prayer.

Electing a Recording Secretary: Stephen announced that Deb Bullock-Smith was willing to take minutes for the meeting. Those present voted to unanimously to elect Deb Bullock-Smith as Recording Secretary.

Continuation of Candidates for Ministry: Mike Mullin and Kathy Thiel were presented as continuing candidates for ministry. Until each is commissioned, we vote annually to approve continued support for their candidacy. Ian Urriola has decided to withdraw his candidacy as a protest for the denomination not allowing LGBTQ persons to be ordained. Because of the possibility of the divide in the UMC and the potential for this policy to change after the May General Conference, Stephen suggested that, although Ian didn't request it, that we keep him in this group of candidates for ministry. The congregation voted to approve continued candidacy for each of the three candidates.

2020 Nominations Report and Vote: Stephen presented the 2020 Nominations Report for approval. This report is virtually the same as last year because we're working to come up with a new more efficient governance structure. There's a group of people who have been working, with the guidance of a consultant, Dan Hotchkiss for the last year and a half, under the co-leadership of Valerie Benjamin and Dawn Riedy, who shared an update from the Governance Task Force.

- Working towards goal 7.3 from the Dreamscape (Our structure and systems are organized in a missionally effective way.)
- Currently have 95 committees, task forces and groups; process to get things done is not always efficient, effective and often takes time to work through
- Group is proposing a smaller governing board, smaller number of committees and would empower the ministers and the staff to make decisions, based on Asbury First's mission, values and goals; we would be doing the same work that we're doing now, but just with fewer meetings!
- Val and Dawn will be meeting with groups in the coming months to provide a more in-depth explanation. In addition, there will be town hall meetings in the spring,

followed by a Church Conference when all members will have the opportunity to vote to approve the new structure, with the intent of starting in September 2020.

Those present voted to approve the Nominations Report.

Trustee Ballot: Ballots were distributed to vote on the Trustees for the class of 2020 (all of the existing Trustees were presented in the class of 2020, because of the pending new governance structure). After the ballots were collected and tallied, all of the Trustees presented were elected, with each receiving 90% or more of the total votes.

Compensation Report: Beth Rice, Chair of Church Council, presented the staffing and compensation report on behalf of Pam Reynolds, Chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee, who was unable to be here today.

- **Staff additions:** Dr. Carl Johengen, Director of Music Ministry, Dale Griswold, Property Care Team Member, seeking an intern to work in communications, assisting with graphic design.

The total compensation package, which includes salaries and benefits for all staff is \$1,232,000. This includes maintaining all current positions and a 3% cost-of-living increase, as well as covering the increase in health care costs. This will also allow us to maintain a full-time Director of Music and add a Finance/Accounting assistant. We will vote on this compensation package as a part of the complete budget.

2020 Stewardship: Cory Tylenda, Chair of Stewardship, presented a Stewardship update. So far, for 2020, we have received pledges of \$1,087,311 from 431 participating households (or pledging units). 135 households have opted to give via EFT (electronic funds transfer), which provides dependable income throughout the year, while saving processing/data entry time for our staff and volunteers. Dick Moncrief, Financial Administrator, answered a question about the total number of households in our membership. We have about 800 giving units/households who give during the year, and he estimated that we have a total of about 1300 giving units/households in our membership.

2020 Budget and Vote: Al Swett, Chair of Finance, presented information about the 2020 budget. First, he thanked David Strong and Dick Moncrief for their time and effort in putting together reports and the final budget. He also thanked David Kennedy for his hard work (along with Dick) to create a new accounting system within our software, to make budgeting and ongoing accounting more streamlined.

In 2019, our expenses ended up within 1% of the budgeted amount (which equates to about \$10,000). We are optimistic that our pledge numbers are reasonable, and with years of experience, this has been true.

For our reporting purposes this year, we have aligned our money with the mission/ministry areas, allocating operational expenses to those areas. Our 2020 projected income is

\$2,190,000. The projected expenses are \$2,178,000, representing Worship and Arts, Outreach, Discipleship, Congregational Care, and Conference and Connectional expenses.

A question was asked about how many new members we typically have each year. Stephen answered that last year we had 60, but our hope is to increase that number, with the lofty goal this year of getting 200 new members in celebration of our 200th year as a congregation.

Another question was asked about how much we draw annually from the endowment. Stephen answered that we draw 4.5%, based on a 20-quarter rolling average.

Someone else asked about the availability of year-over-year reports. Al suggested looking at the complete information available in the annual reports, or contacting Dick Moncrief.

Those present voted to approve the budget, including the Compensation.

At this point, those present voted to close the formal Church Conference, to move on with updates from the Capital Campaign and the Building Committee. The vote passed unanimously.

Better Together Update: Stephen introduced Morgan Dornsife, Director of Development, sharing that after 4 years at Asbury First, she will be moving on to a position in development at RIT at the end of January. We are grateful for her hard work with Stewardship, the Capital Campaign, communications and more, and wish her well in her new role. She will be missed! Morgan presented an update on the Capital Campaign. To date, we have raised \$5,074,000. Our spending is on track for the 1040 projects, totaling \$2,143,000. We are so grateful to Chuck Hanrahan for the countless hours he has spent making sure the projects are on track and on budget.

Phase 2 of the Better Together Campaign has raised \$2,681,000 toward the new Outreach Center. As we committed at the beginning of the Capital Campaign, we won't break ground until we have pledges for the amount needed to complete the project, and we have about \$600,000 left to raise.

We have raised \$200,400 so far in grant funding and are continuing this work, having received a \$75,000 grant within the last month. Donor solicitations are continuing, and in December, we secured a pledge for \$100,000 from a donor. In addition, during the last capital campaign, we asked the Bishop for relief from a portion of our apportionment and dedicated those funds to the campaign. We're working on this again this time and are encouraged by the feedback we've received.

Building Committee Update: Patti Crawford, Trustee, provided an update from the Building Committee. The organ restoration and enhancements are progressing, and we hope to have the organ back by Easter. We had hoped to have it up and running before Christmas, but opted to wait until all of the 1040 construction work has been completed, rather than risking damage to the organ caused by dust from the projects. The Fellowship Hall projects that began in July are now 80% completed, including asbestos abatement and infrastructure work. The contractor

work is expected to be completed by the end of February. A huge thank you to Chuck Hanrahan and David Strong for their focus on assuring that the work is done, and done correctly.

The meeting was adjourned by Stephen at 1:32 pm, with everyone singing the doxology.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Bullock-Smith
Recording Secretary