



## **ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2020**

*January 24, 2021*

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# **ROLES**

## **CLERGY**

### **REVEREND STEPHEN M. CADY, SENIOR MINISTER**

Last year I told people to stay away from church, responded to crises, and grew in faith.

Our bicentennial year began well. We shared sermons about our history, held an ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service across the Pan-Methodist Rochester connection, and consecrated the Rev. Susan Shafer as Senior Minister Emerita. Then COVID-19 hit. “Beware the Ides of March.”

I could not be more grateful for the way in which the volunteers and staff of Asbury First adapted to the pandemic. What had once been a bonus for those who couldn't be in worship on a particular Sunday, suddenly became our lifeline. While streaming worship is not the same, week after week we found a way to remain connected and even bring new people into the fold. Plus, we've learned some things along the way that will help us long after we're back.

Just as we adapted for worship, we have managed to adapt our outreach and classes to continue to meet the needs of the community. Our Dining and Caring Center has remained open throughout the pandemic, though admittedly operating in a very different way. The Storehouse has served guests on an emergency basis throughout and has gotten back to sorting and serving less urgent needs. Our other outreach ministries have each done their part as well to continue to meet the most important needs.

In the midst of responding to COVID and trying to make the best decisions possible for the health and safety of our congregation, we faced two additional crises—one global and one local.

The death of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer in Minneapolis and other similar acts sparked outrage around the world. As so often happens, the illness revealed the deeper disease. I have tried in my ministry this year to faithfully respond to the racism in our community as well as to explore my own. Through preaching, reading, and conversation, I am attempting, however imperfectly, to become a part of the solution and less a part of the problem. As such, I have worked with the staff on anti-racism training, encouraged opportunities for congregational engagement, renewed friendships across racial divides, and worked to uncover and mitigate my own racism. This work will continue in the years ahead. I take Ibram Kendi's words to heart that being an anti-racist is an everyday, every moment choice.

At the same time as these global challenges, Asbury First has been facing a very personal one. In June, a claim was filed under the Child Victim Act against the church and the Upper New York Conference related to allegations about Raymond Fedje, who served as Senior Minister of Asbury First from 1969-1977. As I said previously, I am

mindful of the failure of churches in the past to handle these cases with transparency and grace and am committed to not further victimizing the complainant by casting doubt on the accusation. Though the events described in the complaint happened before I was born, I accept the veracity of the survivor's claim and am horrified by it. No person deserves to be sexually abused and I lament that someone charged with the care of a congregation could so egregiously and sinfully violate that sacred trust. Regardless of when it happened, however, the complaint has come during my tenure as the Senior Minister and has meant a great deal of time, conversation, and emotional energy. I anticipate that it will continue to do so through this next year as well. Just as I ask you to pray for the survivor, I ask you to pray for me and all of the leadership of our congregation as we do our best to find justice.

There were, of course, other hard things in the last twelve months, from a contentious political election to the economic impact of the pandemic. For all these reasons, the last year of ministry has been the hardest of my life. Every day I have been asked to make a decision between two or more bad options. I once heard leadership described as “disappointing people at a rate they can handle.” Prior to the pandemic, I laughed at that. During the last year, though, it has never felt more true. This year has meant virtually no time off, no time away, and no way to fully escape the moment. While I recognize I am not alone in that, it is nevertheless true. Fortunately, this has also been a moment when I have grown in faith.

In the Christian tradition, our Trinitarian language gives us a way to speak about God in three persons—Parent, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is still one, but also three. We are not meant to understand it. When we do talk about God, we tend to focus on the first two persons of the Trinity, because we don’t really know what to make of the last one. And yet, this year, it has been the Holy Spirit that I have felt in a more visceral way than ever before. Maybe joining along in the Bicentennial Bible Challenge and reading through the entirety of scripture last year opened my soul in a unique way. What I do know, is that in that moment when the light blinks on in the worship service and I know that we are live streaming, I can actually feel you out there. I have always believed that God exists in that space between you and me, but it has never felt more true than in the last year. As such, my faith has deepened. Thank God.

The typical parts of ministry have also happened this year, though in a very different way. I managed to do a few weddings and funerals, some baptisms and burials, though less than I would normally do. I still read broadly, made regular pastoral calls, and even managed to have some fun along the way.

I am not sure what the next year will hold, but my prayer is that at some point I will stop telling people to stay away from church, respond to fewer crises, and grow even deeper in faith.

May it be so.

Grace and Peace,  
Stephen

## **REVEREND KATHY THIEL, MINISTER FOR CONGREGATIONAL CARE**

To write that 2020 was an unusual year would be an understatement. Certainly, for anyone in a non-medical helping field, the restrictions of COVID made it frustratingly challenging to do the work we love to do: be with people. And yet, as we say in Memorial services and funerals, “We acknowledge our human loss, and we pray that God grant us grace, that in pain we may find comfort; in sorrow, hope; and in death resurrection.” This was so in 2020: within our human loss, pain, sorrow and death, we found ways to continue to connect with each other. Our love for each other did not waver, and the presence of God strengthened our community and ourselves.

As the year began it seemed like other years - hospital visitations, pre-surgery prayers, meetings in my office, pastoral counseling in my office, meetings in many other rooms all over campus, and worship three times each Sunday morning. There were memorial services and funerals, and lunches and breakfasts and dinners shared with parishioners. In late February, I spent a Saturday being interviewed by the Board of Ordained Ministry, and was approved for continuing on the path toward ordination. In October, I was officially commissioned at a service which took place in person, socially distanced, masked, and yet still meaningful.

As the reality of the restrictions from the pandemic began to sink in, it was clear that all of the home visits, hospital calls, nursing home worship services, and everything else that took place in person would have to be changed until the time it is safe to gather again in person. This was an adjustment, and a loss. I love the ministry of presence and the telephone is not the same. Zoom is not the same. Email and texting and cards in the mail are not the same. But we are an adaptable people and we are capable of change, and so I adjusted, and made the best of a frustrating situation. As usual, I found many blessings and saw God everywhere I turned. Within the pain of the worsening results of the pandemic, there was hope.

The greatest and most exciting result of 2020 was the outcome of so many small groups. These folks 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, and some began to meet where they had not, including the Greeters. Our group of Greeters were suddenly unable to welcome people into our church building as they love to do. Instead, they met each week on Zoom, getting to know each other, sharing stories, and at times, laughing quite a lot.

Cards, phone calls, emails and texts became our ways to stay in touch, remind each other we are not alone, and continue to spread the love of God throughout our community.

God’s love was shown and spread in Zoom meetings about praying, closely studying scripture, continuing (and completing!) the Bicentennial Bible Challenge, social gatherings of coffee hour after church and even a Dining & Caring Center volunteer team who still meets virtually each week until we can once again be together in person.

That is the theme of 2020: until we meet again. We pray until then for your well-being in body, mind and soul, and we look forward to the day when we can be together in person.

## **REVEREND JACQUELINE NELSON, MINISTER FOR OUTREACH**

To date, I have been a part of the Asbury First community for three years and four months; and what a joy it has been. I continue to thank God and each of you for trusting me with this role and for allowing me to be connected to such an impactful ministry here in Rochester, NY.

During my first couple of years at Asbury First, I spent time gaining a deeper understanding of the strategic plan for outreach and for our various outreach ministries, outlining action steps, walking our outreach programs through the gradual execution of the strategic plan; and educating and increasing congregational awareness about outreach and justice. This year, while much of that work continued, it took on a different shape as 2020 brought with it challenges and changes that required us to remain flexible and patient.

Throughout this year, as we confronted a national health-related pandemic, and racially-centered epidemic, much of our previously outlined plans for the year had to shift. This year was spent responding to issues of police brutality and unrest, creating and developing a racial justice advocacy group, identifying and applying for covid-relief funding for our outreach programs, and imagining unique ways to do outreach under present circumstances.

While this was a difficult year for all of us, I think we learned a lot as a result of all we had to face. We learned that ministry can take place even when it has to look differently than we've always done it, we learned how to work together and share resources, and we learned how to set priorities and focus on what is important. Because of this, I must say that I am extremely proud of all of our outreach program leaders and volunteers for the ways in which they too remained flexible and patient. Together, we have been able to continue to meet the needs of our neighbors and friends here in Rochester, and beyond. In addition, we have also utilized our creative and collective power to start new initiatives, attend many virtual meetings and seminars, participate in educational opportunities for personal and communal growth, and help our ministry areas succeed in the midst of uncertain times.

Personally, this year has forced me to confront change as well. Although disappointed by the number of conferences and outside ministry opportunities that had to be cancelled, I was able to make a significant educational shift that has proven to be perfect for me at this time. This year, I transferred to the University of Rochester, and began doctoral study in the field of Human Development. While experiencing a new school virtually and adjusting to this change in the middle of a pandemic came with its own set of challenges, I am happy in the program and eager to continue. Your continued prayers as I balance being a student would be greatly appreciated.

In this next year, in addition to my regular responsibilities, I hope to help our outreach programs transition and adjust to the new governance structure, continue our racial justice advocacy efforts, and imagine new ways to foster meaningful connections throughout the city of Rochester and beyond; even if we have to do so virtually.

I look forward to all that 2021 will bring.

With love,  
Jackie

## **MIKE MULLIN, MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP**

For reports on youth and discipleship, please see those particular reports.

My 2019 pastoral report began with an update on my ordination process in The United Methodist Church. Unfortunately, like so many things in 2020, the update for this year is not an improvement. In May, the District Committee on Ordained Ministry met via Zoom and voted to discontinue me both as a Licensed Local Pastor, and as a candidate for ministry in The United Methodist Church. My requests for conversation with the committee were rejected, and my relationship with the conference was severed on August 1. I have made myriad connections in an attempt to better understand how and why this decision was made. And I have exhausted the avenues available to me to challenge the decision. Unfortunately, the reality of our United Methodist polity is that Licensed Local Pastors and ministerial candidates have no recourse in these situations. The District Committee on Ordained Ministry has supreme authority, and the ambiguity of their reasons for discontinuance ensure that their decisions can remain unchecked.

This leaves me with some decisions of whether I continue to work to remain in ministry with The United Methodist Church, or if I pursue ordination in another denomination. One caveat of our system is that our DCOM is required to meet annually with everyone who is supported by a congregation as a candidate for ministry. For this reason, I am hopeful that Asbury First will recommend me to be reinstated as a candidate for ministry in the Upper New York Conference of The United Methodist Church. This will ensure that I get an audience with our DCOM so that we can work on communication and discern together if there might be a way forward.

In 2020, I have continued to meet monthly with the United Methodist Ecumenical and Interfaith Team: Young Adult Network. This is a cohort of eight young adult Methodists from around the world. Our cohort was scheduled to end in the fall of 2020, but due to the pandemic, we have elected to continue to meet for an additional year. In addition to the ecumenical and global networking offered by this group, each of the participants were asked to lead an ecumenical and/or interfaith project aimed at young adults in their contexts. This summer, I had the opportunity to work with a local Rabbi to put together A Minister and a Rabbi Walk into Your Home. Last spring, we had intended for this group to meet in a bar—which makes the pun just a bit punnier (your welcome). But with no end to the Pandemic in sight, and with the bars remaining closed for safety, we decided to go ahead with our adjusted plan anyway. We had a small group gather on Zoom for several weeks throughout the summer while we discussed some of the similarities and differences between Judaism and Christianity—and between Judaism and Judaism; and Christianity and Christianity. One big take away from these conversations was that neither Judaism nor Christianity can be viewed as a monolith. We each have myriad contexts, interpretations, and lived expressions of faith that vary widely across our globe.

One of the last major events I attended in 2020 was the Global Citizenship Conference at Nazareth College. I had the opportunity to lead a few breakout sessions with local

Rabbis and leaders of the Islamic community. I have also continued to be in conversation with the leadership team of the GCC as they have been planning for 2021. At present, the group is working to discern whether a virtual model of the conference is viable. In the midst of these conversations, I am encouraging the group to take this off-year to reconsider and re-vamp some of the foundations of the program. It is an incredible event that hosts almost 1,000 high school students each year; but as we work ever onwards towards perfection, we also know that there is always room to grow.

2020 was Asbury First's 200<sup>th</sup> year, and we successfully had over 200 individuals commit to reading through the entire Bible in one year. Did we have 200 people succeed in meeting this challenge? I suppose if we are being honest, probably not. However, we are still grateful to all that participated and for the meaningful engagement that we got to spend with one another and with our Bibles throughout the year. As we continue to work to highlight the importance of the Bible in our modern world, we are once again proposing a challenge. The 2021 challenge is a bit less rigorous, and it uses a curriculum that is already in place and is widely used. The Disciple Bible Study Curriculum. If you have not yet heard of our Dynamic Disciple Challenge (DDC to mirror the 2020 BBC), then I encourage you to check it out and sign up on our website. We plan to start group meetings in February. This spring, groups will work through the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament), and in the fall, these same groups will work through the New Testament.

We never know what a day (or year) may bring; but we know that we have this moment. If nothing else, I hope that 2020 has taught all of us the value of embracing these moments that we have together. As the minister of discipleship, I want everyone to have an opportunity to engage their faith critically in community. For everyone that is looking for a place to fit in and to come together, it is my hope that the church might help you to connect. If you have ideas, hopes, or dreams for what Asbury First might do as we continue to reach out and reach in, we would love to hear from you. From educational opportunities, to fellowship outings, to new connections, we are better together. I am thankful for all of your continued support both personally and professionally throughout this past year, and I am looking forward to seeing many of you in person once again in the year ahead 😊!

May there be Peace,

-Mike

**REVEREND ROBERT ALLAN HILL**

*Annual Statistical and Narrative Report  
Robert Allan Hill  
Boston University  
Dean of Marsh Chapel, Professor of New Testament and Pastoral Theology, and  
Chaplain to the University  
January 1, 2020—December 31, 2020*

*This narrative report to university and ecclesiastical leaders (BU and UMC), moves through the three principal parts of the work here: preaching, teaching and 'deaning'. The chief statistics for each are found below. Herein as well challenges, impacts and goals are noted, below. Challenges include the pandemic, the climate, the denomination, necessary budget cuts, the culture and many deaths, along with memorials and funerals (A 10) (I would be glad to talk through these, if more information would be helpful), and some staffing items and issues, forecasted in an earlier year's (4/19) review (C 8). Impacts include worship (A 1), religious life work and hospitality (C 7), and ceremonial leadership, though more limited and differently arranged this year (A 2f). Goals, at the top the level, involve 'voice' and 'visitation' (C 15): Voice (two books published 2020, An Addressable Community, and Salt City Prayers and 1 long term, perhaps decade long, research project on Biblical Theology launched); Visitation (More personal visitation (goal: pastoral conversation, 2 dozen a week). 2020 General Challenges: Pollution, Pandemic, Politics, Prejudice, Pain.*

*A. Dean of Marsh Chapel: Preacher*

1. Regular Sunday\Other Sermons and Services, both Marsh and elsewhere: 67 Marsh Chapel Sunday worship services are broadcast in New England on NPR to 20K-80K; in addition, another 20K (up from 4K five years ago) listen by livestream or podcast, Sunday or midweek; the services are streamed on the BU website, for all 300K living BU alumni and others around the globe (weekly listeners in Paris, Beijing, Sao Paulo, Juno); the service is provided for the 43,000 resident BU faculty\students\administration and staff, and for the 350,000 living BU alumni around the globe; 263 weekly average *school year* physical attendance (highest in September, December, April, and May).
2. Special BU Services: 26 (normally): ML King Observances (2), This I Believe, BU Baccalaureate\Commencement (8) (This year: Senior Breakfast, ROTC, This I Believe), Marsh and BU Matriculations (4), BU Alumni Weekend Memorial Service, Lessons & Carols (2), Annual Spring Term Prayers\Invocations (10). *1/20 5 Special Howard Thurman Center Events, including a special Sunday worship service at Marsh Chapel, 1/19/20.*
3. Guest Speaking Events 2020: 22; (almost all virtual\* this year, compared to 57 live occasions 2019): Hessler Hebrew Class, College of General Studies Matriculation Prayer, Marsh Writers' Forum with D Reeves, Jay Halfond Class, Daryl Healea Class on BU History\*, Senior Breakfast 2020 Prayer\*, Crystal Williams Program\*,

NEACUMC Book Evening\*, BU Plaza Matriculation Service, BU Matriculation, STH Authors' Panel for Alumni\*, AFUMC 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary video\*, SPH Covid Memorial\*, 4 Monthly 8am Sunday Plaza Morning Prayer Services, ISGC video\*, BU Thanksgiving Video\*, S Hall Retirement\*.

4. Regular Meetings: Weekly, Monthly, other: 19: Marsh Staff, Marsh Advisory Board, Marsh Development Group, Faculty BUSTH, Faculty Area A and Area D BUSTH, Dean's Council, University Leadership Council, University Leadership Group, BU Faculty Council, Religious Life Council, BU Chaplains, New England Annual Conference Foundation and Marketing Committee, Harvard Memorial Church Board of Visitors (*in hiatus*), Learning Project Board of Visitors, BU Hillel Board.

5. Visits: (office, home, hospital, other): 334 (not including daily 45min campus walk, which allows various brief, informal conversations, *plus, in COVID, 5 phone calls/day*).

6. 2020 New Marsh Chapel Chapter Members Received 0

7. Program Initiatives: 24: (*see term book on website*)

8. 2020 Baptisms (Eva Natalie MacDonald): 1

9. 2020 Weddings RAH officiant (brides' names: Thai): 1

10. 2020 Funerals, Memorials, or Pastoral Care, in person and/or zoom calls;(challenging year in this department): 22 Iris McDaniel, Molly Voorheis, J Rose Lee, TJ Eastman, CF Richardson, Lee Olson, Everett Johnson, Victoria Nelson, Shirley Courton, Lance Martin, Betty Ann Hegan, Levita Coleman, Peter Herbener, Marcia C. Hill, Eric Westby, David Hutchens, Carrie O'Connor, Mary Beaudry, Chris Cakebread, Shang Zhao, Travis Roy, SPH School Memorial.

### ***Professor, New Testament and Pastoral Theology: Tenured Full Professor STH***

1. STH monthly faculty meeting, annual STH Faculty Retreat
2. 2020 RAH Publications: 1. Sunday Sermons, BU website (at 2500 words a sermon, the collection for 2020 would be 125,000 words, or two 300 page books); 2. Autumn 2020 Sermon Series: on *Liberal Gospel*; 3. Lenten Series 2020: *St. Teresa of Avila*; 4. Dean Hill's Blogs monthly (deanhill.blogspot.com). 5. 16<sup>th</sup> Book: *An Addressable Community*. 8. 17<sup>th</sup> Book: *Salt City Prayers*. 9. W. Ritter *Nudging the Heart*, Introduction (chapter).
3. Courses 2020: Pastoral Preaching, The Gospel of John (since 2006 two courses/year offered *gratis* in STH, part of Hill family tithe);
4. Doctoral\Masters Defense Committees (4); including my own advisee now *Dr. Lynn Cooper*, Catholic Chaplain at Tufts. (Junker, Cooper, Rohr, Choi)
5. STH Methodism Committee (issues are coming in this area again in 2021)
6. STH Areas A and D Monthly meetings
7. One current doctoral student (DMIN, Rev. Greg McGonigle, current Dean of Religious Life, Emory University, due to graduate 5/21)
8. Pastoral contacts\calls with fellow clergy\others at Christmas: 56

### ***C. Chaplain to the University and Office of Religious Life: Pastor***

1. Daily 45 minute walks on campus and conversations. In Covid, 5 phone calls/day. (Also, see regular meetings list, above).

2. BU Today Articles, other Religious Life Articles and Interviews (several): (see Marsh Website, 'In the News' collection).
3. BU Matriculation, Service and Retirement Recognitions, Senior Breakfast, Baccalaureate, Commencement, Multi-faith Dinner, and other: 10 events every spring, normally.
4. 43 (mostly part-time) paid staff at Marsh Chapel; 41 Religious Life unpaid staff
5. Marsh Board of Advisors (29 persons), May and September. \*Giving through Marsh Chapel, excluding weddings, has grown from \$16,000 in 2006 to \$325,000 2020. Our income is down 2020, but so are our expenses.
6. Pastoral Counseling: 27(sacramental and personal moments, part of total visits above). Marsh Religious Life brings \$3M/year to BU in self-funded chaplaincies and campus ministries.
7. Annual Open Houses\Receptions\Dinners in 96 Bay State Residence: 1 (Valentine's Day). And 4 monthly zoom gatherings, September—December.
8. Student Deaths 2020: 4 (Sharat Nambiar, Jeonginian Rose Lee, Jie Je, Shang Zhao)
9. Administration: Oversight *through Chapel Director Bouchard* of 6 University Chaplains and 25 Campus Ministers, 43 internal Marsh Staff (see sign boards and web site). *New Roman Catholic University Chaplain, 5/20, Fr. Kevin Staley-Joyce.* Most Difficult issue 2012-2020 : Hillel (250 hours), now markedly improving. (As of 2013 all BU chaplains are new since my arrival). Annual Marsh income target set and met at 1/14 of expenses, 2015, w\Chris Goss, (after discussion retained at this level, 12/18 w\Pat Obrien). *In 2/18/20 we instituted an annual required written request for STH use of space, with needed signatures of STH dean or designee and Marsh Chapel director.*
10. Sampling of authors read in 2020: O'Brecht, Baldwin, Ellis, Bacevich, McCullough, Spansberg, Lamont, Brock, Leslie, Kendi, Ritter, Robert, Lougheny, Robinson, Putnam
11. December Christmas\Holiday events \*virtually attended BU: 5
12. Travel, personal and/or work: San Diego, Bradley Brook.
13. Tithe (details available on request).
14. 10 Continuing Education Events\Retreats Annually (virtual this year): 2 UMC Annual Conferences (UNYAC, NEAC), 2 AAR\SBL (national, regional), 2 NHTDG (spring, fall), 2 BU retreats (Provost, STH), 2 Marsh staff retreats (August, February).
15. *Goals*: Two 2021 Foci: Voice (1 long term research project on Biblical Theology); Visitation (More personal visitation (goal: pastoral conversation, 2 dozen a week).

# **ADMINISTRATION**

## **CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **Purpose:**

The Church Council of Asbury First United Methodist Church serves as the governing body of the church. Our purpose includes providing leadership in: creating, adopting and communicating the overall mission and vision statements for AFUMC, establishing strategic and operational goals consistent with the overall mission and vision of the Church, enabling programmatic leadership through the Program Lay Leaders, approving the annual program and operating plans for the program areas and approving the annual financial operating plan for the ensuing year.

**Our Mission and Vision:** Our mission at Asbury First is to **love God and neighbor**, to **live fully**, to **serve all**, and then to do it all again. Or said simply—**love. live. serve. repeat.** Our vision for the future does not take us in a radically new direction, but rather asks us to **do more good.**

### **Goals for 2021:**

- Approve 2021 financial Annual Operating Plan (AOP)
- **Support implementation of the new Governance & Ministry Model** that was voted upon and approved (for provisional implementation) at a special Church Conference session on Dec. 13, 2020. For details and background on the new model, see the AFUMC website at:

<https://www.asburyfirst.org/about/news/343-governance-taskforce-update>. The new Governance and Ministry model was developed in response to Dreamscape Goal 7.3

([https://www.asburyfirst.org/files/Dreamscape\\_6\\_22\\_17\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.asburyfirst.org/files/Dreamscape_6_22_17_FINAL.pdf)). The newly created Board, operating as both the Church Council and Trustees of Asbury First, will govern primarily by discerning mission, planning, partnering with the Senior Minister and staff, and holding leaders of the church, including its own members, accountable for their performance.

### **Accomplishments for 2020:**

- In January, approved the **Annual Operating Plan for 2020** for presentation to the congregation at the January Church Conference.
- In 2020, Timothy Johnson's role on Church Council transitioned from Chair of Worship and Arts to Member-at-Large.
- During this unprecedented global pandemic, Church Council held their slate of meetings as scheduled switching from in- person to virtual meetings.
- Continued to track and support progress of **Dreamscape Goals**. Ensured goals had 2020 action plans established that supported accomplishing the goal by 2022.
- Continued to support the **Governance Task Force's** (Dreamscape Goal 7.3) work on a new Governance and Ministry model which was approved for implementation by a special Church Conference session in Dec. 2020.

- Monitored, discussed and advised on **financial topics** such as: expenses, status of the annual budget and Capitol Campaign and Stewardship Committee activities.
- Continued to stay up to date on the UMC denomination issues resulting from the **Feb. 2019 Special Session of General Conference** as it impacted AFUMC. Denomination plans in 2020 were delayed/postponed due to the pandemic.
- Approved: *To have the current slate of Administrative Committees such as Trustees, SPRC and Church Council of AFUMC serve in their current positions until the pandemic situation is resolved. The current slate of candidates was set to expire on June 30, 2020 with a new slate of candidates starting in September of 2020 under a new governance structure. This extension will provide consistency, continuity of leadership for AFUMC during the challenging time and until the new governance structure can be approved.*
- Supported formation of a **Racial Justice Advocacy Team**
- Supported the pastoral staff, especially Rev. Stephen Cady through a very difficult and unprecedented year. Supported the many, many changes that needed to be made in all aspects of church life due to COVID-19.

During this very difficult year, thank you to all the members of Church Council and all the ministry areas for the time and effort you each put into living into our mission to Love. Live. Serve. Repeat.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth K. Rice  
Church Council Chair

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **Vision and Mission**

Vision: In support of Asbury First's achieving its vision of present and future ministry, the Trustees will be providing, maintaining and improving the necessary physical environment in which this vision can be pursued. We will be managing all the financial resources entrusted to our care in ways that preserve and grow these assets in support of our long-term ministry, and we will be pursuing creative means of growing these assets with new additions to principal. As one of Asbury First's leadership teams, we will be leading through dialoguing and communicating with the congregation on all significant issues and decisions with which we are involved.

Mission: The mission of the Board of Trustees is to manage the physical and financial assets of Asbury First in a way that these assets are preserved, enhanced, and enlarged over time so that our support of the total ministry of Asbury First can be maximized.

### **Board of Trustees: Goals for 2020**

#### **The Board of Trustee has adopted goals for 2020 that are consistent with Asbury First's Dreamscape Strategic Goals. The Trustees' goals are:**

1. Proceed with projects to ensure that our buildings are fully accessible to those with physical needs for all areas used in church activities (1.1 Being Open to All-Accessibility). Goal for 2020: 1010 and 1050 accessibility projects deferred until funds are raised.
2. Continue the Planned Giving discovery and education campaign with emphasis on making sure everyone has a will and estate plan as well as keeping them current.
3. Continue Investment Committee's focus on tracking progress toward the \$10M Endowment Goal.
4. Continue:
  - a. Supporting efforts by the Ministers and the Church Council to ensure the long-term vitality of Asbury First by growing the congregation in terms of size and involvement;
  - b. Reducing gas and electric usage to offset energy cost increases, and in keeping with responsible environmental stewardship;

- c.** Protecting and growing the General Endowment and setting long-term strategies for endowment growth, through the Investment Committee and the Planned Giving Committee; and
- d.** Protecting and growing Restricted Fund assets, while taking steps to ensure they are managed efficiently and used effectively.

### Property Care (David Strong)

In addition to some major projects, completed by contractors, addressing the ongoing maintenance/repair items and annual inspections, we were able to re-focus the work of our property care staff during a time when our campus has been completely or partially closed. There was a reduction in staff focus on daily cleaning and room setup/tear down tasks and an increase in focus on project-related work. Additionally, some project work completed by a subset of Trustees (Chuck Hanrahan, Scott Ross) and by members of the Monday Morning Crew (led by Dave Kennedy). Projects included, but are not limited to:

1. Installed Bell Tower Screening
2. Addressed 1040 roof flashing problems
3. Addressed 1010 slate roof issues
4. Finalized design of sanctuary balcony railings
5. Installed fan coil unit in 1050
6. Deep cleaned Dining & Caring Center. Stripped & waxed floors, repaired & repainted walls, and ceilings.
7. Installed new door in DCC Director's office.
8. Stripped and waxed all rooms, and hallways in 1040
9. Stripped and waxed kitchenette and storage room floors/Gathering Center.
10. Repaired, and repainted both kitchenette and storage room walls off GC.
11. Cleaned all rugs in Day Care (Education Wing).
12. Acquired new ballasts for the sconce lighting in Welcome Hall.
13. Installed new cabinets in Day Care classrooms.
14. Refurbished exterior signs for playground.
15. Painted a new fence in the playground.
16. Implemented enhanced cleaning/disinfectant protocols (response to COVID-19)
17. Replaced air handling unit filters.
18. Replaced all paper towel and soap dispensers in all three buildings (touchless automatic units). (response to COVID-19).
19. Upgraded public restroom faucets to touchless units in 1040 (response to COVID-19).
20. Replaced Storehouse intercom
21. Repainted Storehouse, walls, floors, and stairs, and re-stained furniture.
22. Repainted Eastside and northwest 1010 porches.
23. Repaired fence along Northside of parking lot.
24. Cleaned all gutters and downspouts – 1010 and 1050
25. Completed exterior walk-about (Trustee members and staff)

26. Addressed 1050 back porch issue (decaying post, porch, and steps) via inserting post. This is a temporary solution.

### **Property Usage**

The property usage agreements with our on-site tenants – Asbury Day Care (Education Wing), the Rochester Oratorio Society (1050), the District Office (Education Wing), and Epilepsy-Pralid (Education Wing) were reviewed and, if required, renewed. We learned in December that Epilepsy-Pralid needed to relocate, effective January 1, 2021, due to the impact of the pandemic.

### **Garden Committee**

Purpose: The Garden Committee maintains existing gardens on the Asbury First campus by coordinating with the Custodial Department and staff. Many of our efforts are in coordination with the Asbury First Furnishings, Renovations and Maintenance Committee (AFFRAM), through our representation. We also communicate with the Memorials Committee to draw on funds for memorials designated for the gardens.

Goal: The goal of the Garden Committee is to enhance the spiritual and welcoming ambience of the campus for all who come to worship and participate in the wide variety of ministries at our church.

Accomplishments:

Our work this year was impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

Maintaining existing gardens: Volunteers worked individually to maintain their assigned areas by weeding, pruning, watering, etc. Unfortunately, our usual spring and fall committee work days were canceled because of pandemic concerns. The summer was very dry causing stressful growing conditions. In the spring we may have to replace one or more shrubs near the East Avenue entrance. We maintain an on-going relationship with The Davey Tree Expert Company and their arborist toured the campus with some of us to evaluate the health of trees and shrubs, give advice and help set priorities.

Garden Tour: This wasn't possible, but in the future we hope to reschedule and once again invite all those interested in appreciating our beautiful campus.

Volunteers: Dick & Linda Butler, Deb Bullock, Peter Doerner, Julie Doescher, Jeff Edwards, James Flack, Bonnie Gregory, Carol Hardy, Greg & Kathi Johnson, Bonnie Kay, Susan Micros, Jeanne Ristau, Bev & Bob Schuman, Marilyn Soule, Trudy Starr, Cory Tylanda, Nathan Van Loon, and June Walters.

Peter Doerner and Bonnie Gregory  
Co-Chairs

### **Memorial Funds Committee (Sandra White)**

Sandra White is chairperson of the Memorials Committee. David Strong is the staff liaison. Ellen Williams works with the finances of the committee. Anne Justus is the liaison to the trustees. The present committee members include Nancy Adamus, who writes all the acknowledgements, Ginn Fitch, Jane Jeszenka, Anne Justus, Donna Latshaw who is the recording secretary, Sandra White and Ellen Williams.

The activities of the committee were limited this year due to the Covid Virus. The memorial gifts of 2020 will be dedicated in 2021.

2020 Report Prepared by: Sandra White

### **Investment Committee** (Patrick Fulford, Chair).

**Purpose:** The Asbury First Trustees have the fiduciary responsibility for the church's Endowment Funds. As in the past, the President of the Trustees appoints an Investment Committee which is responsible for overseeing these assets.

**Members of the Committee** are Patti Crawford, Andy Dutcher, Patrick Fulford (Chair), Anne Justus, Bob Schuman, Beth Wilkens and Mary Worboys-Turner. David Strong is our staff liaison.

**Goal:** The goal of the Investment Committee is to protect the principal of the Endowment Funds, have an investment return which will provide a substantial contribution to the Church's Annual Operating Plan, Capital Improvement Fund and other specific church activities and, after these distributions, have the assets grow to meet or exceed inflation over the long term.

**2020 Investment Results;** As of September 30, 2020, the market value of the Endowment Funds was \$9,975,947 a \$320,739 decrease from September 30, 2019. This decline totally resulted from a \$714,346 reduction in a fund that is holding capital campaign pledge payments pending their use in our 1040 renovation. The decline in this fund was due to withdrawals required to pay for the 1040 infrastructure project. In fact, our endowment funds grew by \$393,607 over the past year. This growth was due to solid investment results from all three of our Financial Advisors at 10%. While a bit less than our analytical advisor benchmark, this performance has been above our strategic benchmark of 6.5%.

It should be noted that this growth occurred while also enabling fund distributions in support of church activities totaling \$455,195, an all time high. A comparison to the prior year and our benchmarks is shown below (dollars expressed in thousands):

<b>Endowment Funds</b>	<b>9/30/20 Market Value \$000s</b>	<b>H/(L) 9/30/19 \$000s</b>	<b>Financial Performance Past 12 Months</b>
General Endowment	\$6,570	\$308	10.1%
Restricted Fund	2,500	85	6.7%
Money Held for Capital Campaign In Cash Account	905	(715)	2.7%
Total - % With & Without Capital Cash	\$9,976	\$(321)	9.2%/9.9%
Benchmarks - Strategic and Advisor			6.5%/12.7%

The **General Endowment Fund (GE)** represents assets invested for the benefit of the AOP, Capital Improvement Fund and other areas chosen by the Trustees. In 2020, the GE Fund distributed \$269,280 to these areas. In addition, the trustees distributed \$80,000 required to pay legal fees due to the pending legal matter.

The **Restricted Fund (RF)** represents assets invested for the benefit of the Dining Caring Center, Troubled Youth (Egel Fund), Susan Shafer Pastoral Care Fund, Serendipity Fund, Organ Fund, 1010 Elevator Fund, Ransford Wilson Fund for church maintenance, Craighead Fund to support the organist salary, Education Fund to support ministerial tuition, Storehouse Fund, Neyhart Music Fund to support instrumental music, Helen Fultz Music Fund and Doerrer Youth Music Fund. In 2020, the RF provided \$105,915 to these areas.

In addition, the committee has reviewed our Investment Policy and has made several changes to it. These change have been approved by the Asbury First Trustees.

The committee continues to monitor the Dreamscape Goal of growing the Endowment to \$10M within 5 years. We view this goal as being very supportive of our church's Mission and Vision. Achieving this goal will require continued reasonable and expected performance by our financial advisors. It will also require that gifts to the endowment would double from recent trends. The committee will support the Planned Giving Committee in actions to achieve this growth. Since there

has been virtually no recent focus on these types of gifts, the investment committee believes that the \$10M goal is attainable. Excluding the funds held for the capital campaign, the Endowment value is \$9.1M. Through 9/30/20, we are growing the endowment consistent with our plan track to reach the \$10M goal.

**2021 GOALS:** The Investment Committee will continue to meet each quarter with our investment managers. We will review their performance and investment style with a focus on the total returns being achieved as compared with our benchmarks. We will evaluate the utilization of an ESG (Environmental/Social/Governance) investing style for a portion of our portfolio to determine if it is in the best interests of the church. Using our Compliance Form, we will continue to ensure that our investment policies and practices are being followed by the advisors. The committee will continue to evaluate its policies and procedures to ensure that they are in the best long term interests of the church. We will revise those policies and procedures to be in compliance with the new governance policy with the trustee committee being eliminated. We will also encourage the new church governing board to reestablish the Planned Giving Committee and support PG in actions to increase gifts to our endowments.

### **Building Committee (Chuck Hanrahan, Chair)**

#### **Building Project Update**

Our contractors have completed their work in 1040. Here's a summary of what's changed as a result of our Better Together build:

#### **Focus of Project: Infrastructure**

- HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning)
- Electrical
- Lighting

#### **Boiler Room and Bell Room**

- Asbestos abatement
- Rooms combined for larger boiler room – needed to accommodate equipment which was previously suspended above the ceiling
- Two new boilers
- Three new air handlers for Sanctuary and lower level
- New electrical service to entire building (including Education Wing)
- Fire-rated wall amendments
- New lighting
- New kitchen exhaust fan and vent
- New stale air exhaust vent
- All new duct work
- New steel exterior doors for security

#### **Fellowship Hall Kitchen**

- Asbestos abatement
- New duct work
- New ceiling
- New lighting
- New epoxy floor
- New kitchen hood with fire suppression
- New copper plumbing
- Fresh paint
- Refurbished existing dishwasher
- Cleaned and high temp painted stoves, oven
- Cleaned all stainless steel surfaces
- Replaced one grease trap, cleaned out two others
- New electrical service
- New professional fridge and freezer

**Butler's Pantry** – *This room is underway with a local explorer group – High School students working toward careers in the Trades, working under professional supervision.*

- Asbestos abatement
- New floor
- New ceiling
- New lighting
- Fresh paint
- Refresh of existing cabinets
- New countertop adjacent to Kitchen
- Reconfigured for versatility - small dining room, meeting space, or prep space
- 

### **Northwest Stairwell**

- New ceiling
- New lighting
- Fresh paint
- Restored brass railings

### **Fellowship Hall**

- Asbestos abatement
- New ceilings
- New lighting
- Partial Air Conditioning
- New projector and motorized screen
- New speakers mounted in ceiling
- Removal of old equipment (wiring, mounts, clean-up walls, etc)
- New emergency lights and exit signs
- Fresh Paint
- Theatrical infrastructure

- Repair, cleaning and waxing of floor
- Cleaning of air returns

#### **Sub-Narthex Restrooms**

- Asbestos abatement
- New Ceilings in Toilet rooms
- New lighting
- Fresh Paint

#### **Lower Level Hallways**

- Asbestos abatement
- New ceilings
- New lighting
- New floor in back hall
- Cleaning and waxing floors

#### **Sanctuary**

- New chancel light fixtures and controls
- Retrofit of nave lighting and controls
- Partial Air Conditioning
- New electrical panels
- Organ refurbishment and upgrades
- Organ Screen installation
- New stained-glass window lights (in Gathering Center)
- New stale air exhaust through bell tower
- Cleaned existing duct work

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Communications Committee at Asbury First is charged with supporting and advising the communications strategy for the church. Our vision is to aid in a deeper level of community as a congregation through improved communication.

In 2020, the committee accomplished the following key strategic items:

- We worked with a larger group of the Bicentennial Celebration Team to come up with creative ways to celebrate our 200th Anniversary during a surging pandemic, which unfortunately canceled our plans for an in-person gathering. This included utilizing online avenues to collect submitted videos, pictures, and greetings, which were combined to make a pre-service video sharing the stories of Asbury First.
- We worked with the Tech Committee to update and increase our live-stream capabilities. We canceled our contract with our radio station and are now with on the nonprofit WRFZ 106.3 Rochester Free Radio.
- We have worked with an incredible team and a Website Update Task Force that includes ministers, staff, and lay members of the Communications Committee. We have a website design set and are currently working with the developer to create the new site and will launch in early 2021.
- Due to the pandemic, we kept the Visitor as a newsletter, but shifted it entirely online. It is now (usually) sent out every two weeks using Lucidpress to make it interactive.

In 2021, the committee is committed to accomplishing the following:

- Testing and launching the Asbury First website
- Continuing to explore different and creative ways to keep our congregation and volunteers connected during a world-wide pandemic

Thank you to this committee for all their work!

Danyelle Hildreth (chair)

Megan Crawford

Jeff Dugan

Peggy Lyons

Ruth Phinney

Barbara Eltinge

Matt Bielewicz

Deanna Varble

Sarah Brubaker (Communications Coordinator)

## **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

The mission of the Stewardship Committee is to foster a spirit of support for the ministries of Asbury First. This committee shares the vision of the upcoming year, communicates the financial goals needed to accomplish the vision, and invites members and others to participate in that vision by pledging for the upcoming year or years. Ultimately, the goal is to fund Asbury First's Annual Operating Plan (AOP) also known as the annual budget.

### 2020 Goals:

- Fund Asbury First's Annual Operating Plan (AOP) / annual budget
- Create and enact a strategic development plan to raise funds requested by the finance committee to support the AOP
- Partner with Finance committee and Leadership to continually monitor and respond to COVID-19 effects on Asbury's annual budget

### Values:

- Promotion
- Education
- Recognition
- Devotion

This year, our Stewardship campaign faced many uncertainties due to COVID-19. Even so, our campaign was extremely successful as we had to adopt a full virtual campaign! We continued to expand on our previous campaigns' strategy by targeting specific groups of contributors. We appreciate all gifts and support we have received this year for the campaign!

To all who have submitted pledges and support Asbury First – THANK YOU!

Respectfully submitted by:

Cory Tylenda, Chair

Patti Crawford

Stuart Mitchell

Joe Stankaitis

Jim Stinehour

Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady, Staff Liaison

David Strong, Director of Operations

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **PURPOSE**

- Provide oversight for church financial management including policies, budgets, systems, staffing and processes;
- Ensure that the church's financial processes and systems are appropriate for the evolving church structure, governance and needs, including the "Dreamscape" strategic plan;
- Advise on the implementation and integration of existing and new church financial and membership systems;
- Audit, as required, the finances and financially-related procedures of church committees and work areas;
- Oversee the process for the annual Operating Budget creation and approval including establishment of Stewardship goals, designated giving, and available cash flow from the endowment;
- Monitor actual revenue and expense variances from planned amounts as prepared by staff and highlight issues for discussion and action as appropriate;
- Ensure that appropriate financial information is communicated to leadership and congregation;
- Work with church staff, SPRC, Board of Trustees, external auditors, and church work areas and committees as appropriate;
- Participate in Church Council meetings and decision-making activities.

### **GENERAL UPDATE**

Church financial picture continues to be very sound.

### **UPDATE ON 2020 GOALS**

- Refined financial reports using new chart of accounts, with a focus on a comprehensive budget and financial report (annual and monthly) that includes both general operating and designated funds.
- Completed a multi-year reconciliation project.
- Implemented a monthly bank reconciliation project.
- Continued with Finance Committee evolution of operating methods to assign responsibility to church staff and to support emerging governance model.

### **CHALLENGES**

2020 proved to be a particularly challenging year. The operating budget was created prior to the arrival of the pandemic and the changes and uncertainty that followed. We were required to adjust expenses commensurate with the anticipated and real reduction in income.

Prepared by Al Swett and David Strong

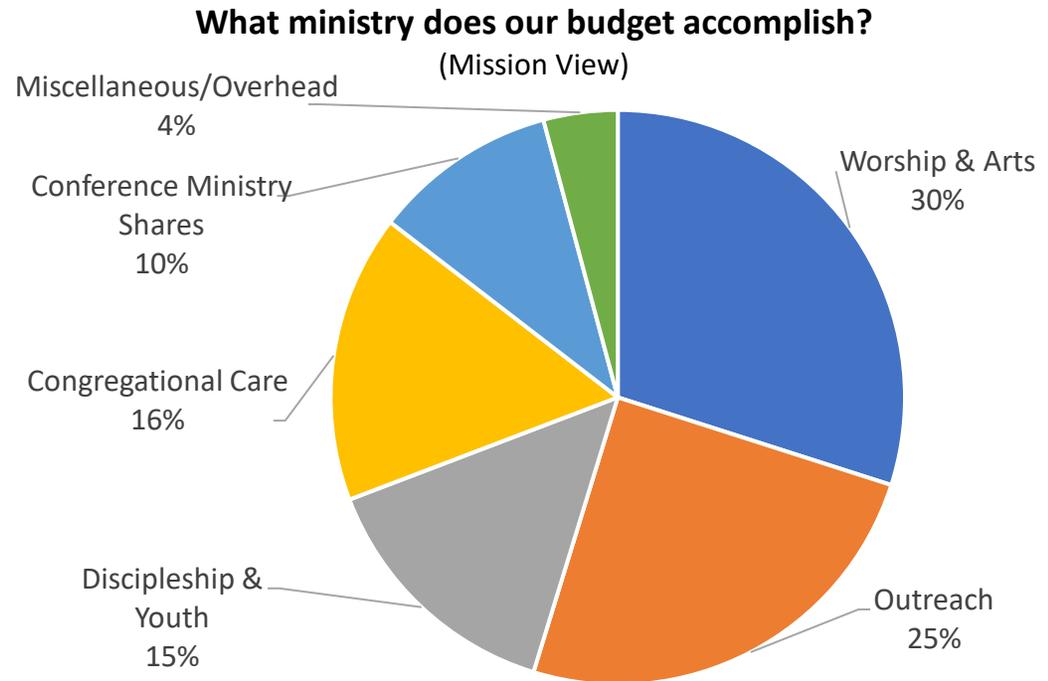
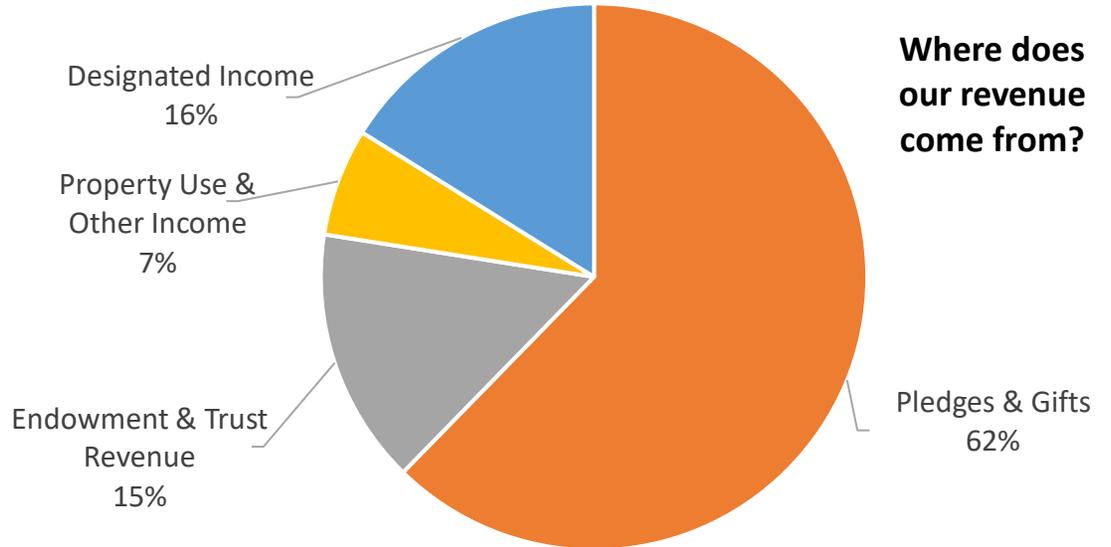
## 2020 Results (Total General Operations plus Designated Funds)

### 2020 Revenue

Pledges & Gifts	\$ 1,340,000
Endowment & Trust Revenue	\$ 326,000
Property Use & Other Income	\$ 137,000
Designated Income	\$ 347,000
Inter-fund Transfers	\$ (56,000)
	<b>\$ 2,094,000</b>

### 2020 Expenses (Mission View)

Worship & Arts	\$ 631,000
Personnel	\$ 385,000
Ministry Program	\$ 37,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 209,000
Outreach	\$ 523,000
Personnel	\$ 215,000
Ministry Program	\$ 176,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 132,000
Discipleship & Youth	\$ 305,000
Personnel	\$ 166,000
Ministry Program	\$ 8,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 131,000
Congregational Care	\$ 342,000
Personnel	\$ 181,000
Ministry Program	\$ 15,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 146,000
Conference Ministry Shares	\$ 219,000
Personnel	\$ 9,000
Ministry Program	\$ 194,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 16,000
Miscellaneous/Overhead	\$ 88,000
	<b>\$ 2,108,000</b>



\*Deficit due to timing of Designated Funding. Funds received in years prior to 2020 were applied to 2020 expenses.

\*\*Functional expenses, including personnel and facilities, are allocated to the Ministry Areas.

**2021 Budget**  
**(Total General Operations plus Designated Funds)**

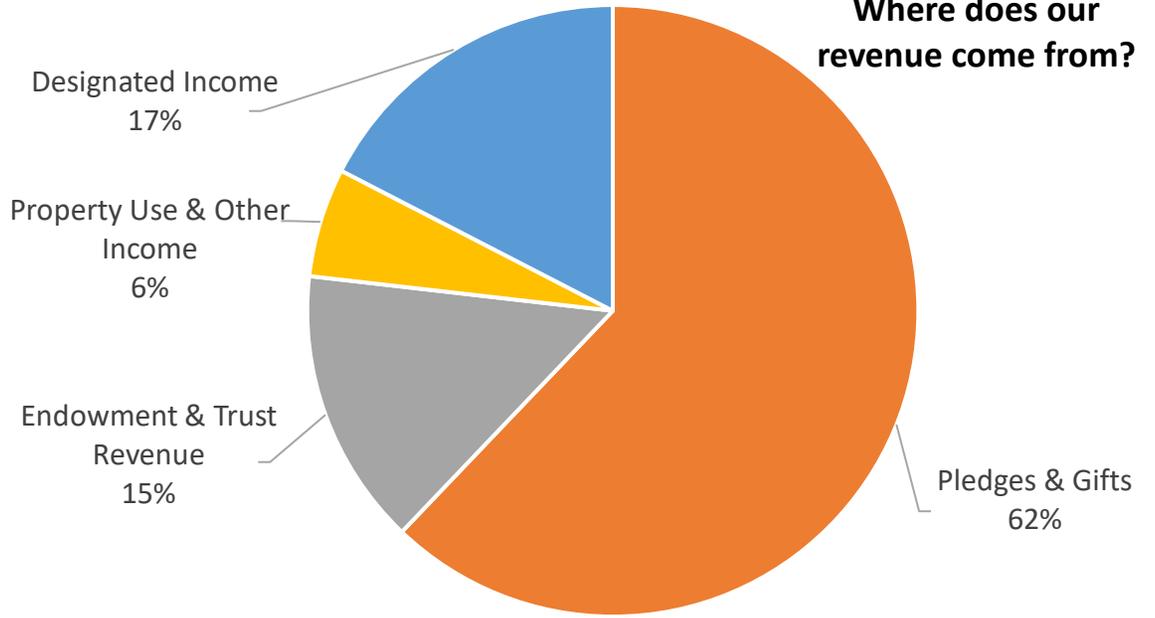
**2021 Revenue**

Pledges & Gifts	\$ 1,380,000
Endowment & Trust Revenue	\$ 326,000
Property Use & Other Income	\$ 128,000
Designated Income	\$ 387,000
Inter-fund Transfers	\$ (82,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,139,000</b>

**2021 Expenses (Functional View)**

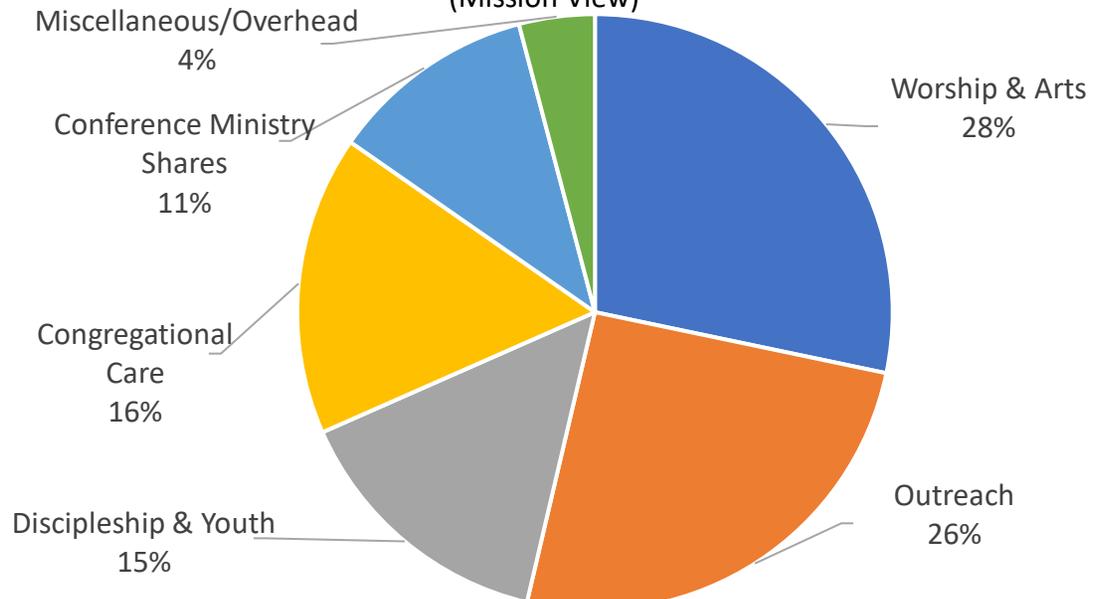
Worship & Arts	\$ 605,000
Personnel	\$ 390,000
Ministry Program	\$ 13,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 202,000
Outreach	\$ 543,000
Personnel	\$ 220,000
Ministry Program	\$ 188,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 135,000
Discipleship & Youth	\$ 315,000
Personnel	\$ 166,000
Ministry Program	\$ 14,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 135,000
Congregational Care	\$ 348,000
Personnel	\$ 185,000
Ministry Program	\$ 15,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 148,000
Conference Ministry Shares	\$ 240,000
Personnel	\$ 9,000
Ministry Program	\$ 212,000
Administrative & Facilities	\$ 19,000
Miscellaneous/Overhead	\$ 88,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,139,000</b>

**Where does our revenue come from?**



**What ministry does our budget accomplish?**

(Mission View)



## **TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

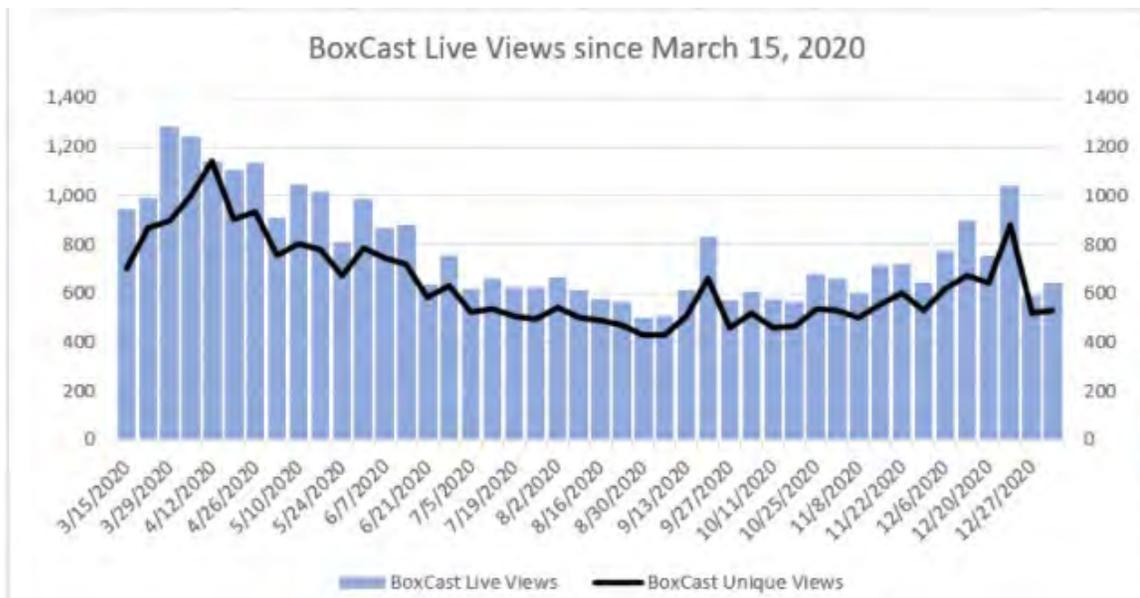
The AFUMC technology committee supports all aspects of technology use at Asbury, including audio-visual, sanctuary & event lighting, the sanctuary sound system, electronic signage, computers, software, security, and networks. We organize the broadcast ministry - streaming and radio – and assist with the church website.

During the pandemic, our efforts focused primarily on ensuring a stable and reliable livestream of our worship service each Sunday. Weekly Zoom meetings were held to ensure readiness for the upcoming service and ensure the details were in place. This team continues to demonstrate the dedication and commitment to deliver a high-quality online worship experience for the Asbury First faith community each week.

### **Accomplishments for 2020**

- **Broadcast Ministry**
  - **Streaming Services** – Due to the pandemic, and the resulting shut down of in person worship services, livestreaming became the primary vehicle for ‘shared worship’. In March, Asbury First invested in upgraded equipment (hardware and software) to provide digital stability and enhanced functionality to our livestreaming capabilities. This has served us well as the sanctuary has remained closed through the end of 2020.
  - Our **‘Digital Ministry’** has significantly expanded, with high quality production values, graphics overlay capabilities, multiple broadcast channel capabilities, and a loyal online viewing audience. Integrating of pre-recorded videos and images with the livestream provided shared virtual faith community experiences, highlights included:
    - A video compilation of member video submissions for the Bicentennial (200<sup>th</sup>) anniversary celebration in September
    - Numerous #asburyfirstathome hash tagged images shared on social media and included weekly in the pre-service and post-service livestream
    - Scripture readings by church members, pre-recorded, included in livestream
    - Advent Candle lighting readings, pre-recorded and included
    - Baptisms, Confirmation, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade bible distributions – pre-recorded and shared as part of the Sunday livestream
    - Christmas Eve pageant video pre-recorded with live animals outdoors
    - Multiple re-plays of pre-pandemic recorded musical numbers by the Sanctuary Choir and Bell Choir – included in livestream
    - Text check-in capabilities and email support in real time each Sunday
  - The current system provides state-of-the-art weekly livestreams viewing experience across the globe.
  - **Streaming Operators** – We have defined a job description and upgraded this role in order to provide consistent delivery of high quality video and audio. Streaming production quality is consistent and excellent.

- **Expanded our Broadcast Channels** – Our Sunday services are broadcast (live and replay on demand) on multiple online platforms, including: the asburyfirst.org church website, multiple Boxcast devices, YouTube, PhoneLiveStreaming, and rochesterfreeradio.com (WRFZ 106.3 FM)
- **Livestreaming Knowledge Sharing** – During the pandemic, AFUMC has received numerous requests from other churches for consulting and advice on how to set up/expand their own livestream capabilities. We are held as a high standard of excellence in this technology within the local community, and we have shared our knowledge and experience frequently.
- **Increased Web Attendance** – We track our online viewer analytics weekly, so that we can know how many people are tuning in, and from where. During the pandemic, we have significantly increased the number of online attendees on Sundays. **The chart below shows the number of ‘devices’ tuned in each week, since March, and very likely represents a fraction of the number of actual viewers.** The breadth of the viewership routinely spans multiple countries and states within the US.
  - Note: for reference, prior to the pandemic, our average online viewership was between 50 - 100 devices each week. The number of devices viewing has increased by 6-8-fold, and at times, more than 10x.



- **Computers and Network Accomplishments - 2020**

- **Phone System Replacement** – Installed Zoom telephone system for staff use on campus and remotely.
- **WiFi replacement** – Upgraded WiFi access points on campus
- **Bandwidth Management** - Implemented bandwidth management monitoring of devices to improve video streaming capabilities.
- **Broadcast Room Upgrade(s)** – Completed initial phase(s) of improvements and re-design of the broadcast room. Additional improvements have been approved and will take place in early 2021.

- **Upgraded Projection Technology – Fellowship Hall** – As part of the capital improvements made in the church basement, a new projection screen and projector has been wired and installed, for our enjoyment when we return to the church.
- **Church Management Software**
  - **System Implementation** – Successfully transitioned church operations to the ShelbyNext platform, keeping financials on PowerChurch due to its more robust system.
    - **Online Giving module** – Shelby Giving successfully deployed
  - **Streamlined working model - Tools** and processes enabled a smooth transition to allow much of the staff to keep working from home, during the pandemic, without losing effectiveness or productivity
- **Cybersecurity** – Initiated a sub-team to monitor, standardize and improve our cybersecurity tools and processes. Making good initial progress under the leadership of David Berg, this team will continue to play an important role in our efforts in 2021 and beyond
- **Website**
  - **Webmaster** – Sarah Brubaker, Communications Director, maintains the website beautifully. An upgraded design of the website is planned for early 2021 deployment.

Our Dreamscape goals addressed above, tracking favorably, and are on track to be accomplished by 2022.

Thank you to all whose faithful work made these accomplishments possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Rice

AFUMC Technology Committee Chair

**2020 Committee Membership:**

Kenny Bailey

Sarah Brubaker – Staff Associate

Deb Bullock-Smith – Staff Associate

Rick Church

Carolyn Curran

Connor Nelson

Jake Schwartz

Connor Nelson

David Strong – Staff Liaison

Ted Skomsky

Carl Johengen – Staff Associate

Justin Ocello – Technical Consultant

Stephen Cady – Senior Minister / Clergy Liaison

Dave Rice – Chair

**CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY AREA**

## **CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRIES**

### Congregational Care Ministries Annual Report 2020

God bless you. We love you and we miss you.

The year of 2020 started out with our usual carving, knitting, greeting, ushering, praying, welcoming and helping people find their way within our congregation, on our campus, and to a deeper relationship with God. When the restrictions of the pandemic hit us here on campus, we realized a totally different way of being together. We adjusted. We mourned our in-person gatherings. We brainstormed ways to recognize and honor our continued connection.

Groups wrote notes and cards, brightening the days of our parishioners. A group was formed to reach out by telephone, connecting and checking in with members. Zoom groups offered the chance to chat, to share, to pray, to study the Bible. Within each and all of these offerings has been the inimitable spirit of Asbury First, our eagerness to share the love of God with each other and with the world.

Though we have not been able to gather together in person, we have done some socially distanced deliveries of food, prayer shawls and crosses, by drop-off and by US mail. We welcomed new members into our congregation before and after the COVID restrictions. We have helped people find ways to use their computers to connect to each other and to our worship services, and we have mailed paper copies of information to those unable to access the information on our website.

There is so much that has gone on within our congregational care ministries, and it is heartening to witness to the dedication and love of each and every person who gives their time and heart to these ministries. We look to the future and though we don't know what it will be, we do know we will continue to be a loving, faithful community committed to bringing the Light of God and the Love of God wherever we know there is a need. Please keep in touch with us and let us know how we can best be there for you and for those whom you love. Call Rev. Kathy Thiel at 585-271-1050 ext. 106, or email Rev. Thiel at [kthiel@asburyfirst.org](mailto:kthiel@asburyfirst.org).

God bless you. We love you and we miss you.

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Asbury First Full Members as of 12/31/19	2307
Includes new members for this year	15
Deaths during 2019	15

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  
Thomas Cook  
David M. Closson  
Christopher Mergler  
Tracy Mergler  
Carole Mathews  
Katie Smith  
Gail Warner

### **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

## **WORSHIP AND ARTS MINISTRY AREA**

## **WORSHIP AND ARTS WORK AREA**

### **Music Ministry Annual Report - Dr. Carl Johengen, Director of Music Ministry**

What a difference a year makes. As I look back on my 2020 Annual Report I am struck by the enormity of the challenge we have faced together, and the extent to which the day-to-day and weekly routines of our entire staff were forced to adjust as we faced the pandemic. I'm very pleased to be able to report that Asbury First has accomplished something truly extraordinary over the past ten months - managing to provide uninterrupted opportunities for worship and prayer for its members while greatly expanding our reach, all with the help of technology and creative thinking.

This sense of wonder and pride in what we have achieved is offset by the many things we have been forced to put on hold. For our congregation's musicians, the losses have been substantial: having to forsake weekly rehearsals and the opportunity to provide musical leadership in our beloved sanctuary, in addition to the loss of in-person fellowship which we all share. One of the things I instituted immediately upon the mid-March shutdown was a weekly Zoom fellowship for members of the Sanctuary Choir and Asbury Singers. These hour-long Wednesday evening sessions have provided participants with opportunities for conversation, laughter, tears, and prayer. Singers who have rehearsed and sung together for many years have discovered many new things about each other, and friendships have been strengthened.

In the absence of our choirs and other musical groups, our organists, soloists, and occasional guest musicians have risen to the challenge in the face of considerable pressure. I'm sure I speak for the entire congregation when I express my sincere gratitude to Duane Prill, Principal Organist, our soloists Bess Phillips, Susan Huppé, Dan McNerney, Jordan Bachmann, and Brenda Nitsch, and Assistant Organist David Strong. Their dedication, professionalism, and good humor have made it possible for Asbury First to provide top-notch worship music each and every week.

In the autumn of 2020 we bid farewell to Susan Huppé, who after 25 years of service as Asbury First's alto soloist decided to retire in September. Susan has promised to retain ties to Asbury First, and has already been called upon to serve as a substitute. We thank her for her tireless commitment, her ready smile, and her expressive and communicative singing. In October we welcomed Brenda Nitsch to our Sunday morning team; she has made a wonderful addition so far, and we thank her for the grace and enthusiasm she has demonstrated from day one.

While it has been a priority to minimize risk by keeping the number of Sunday worship participants as low as possible, we were pleased to welcome back Annette Farrington, flute, in November, and Julianne Burch, clarinet, in December, to provide special music during worship.

I am incredibly grateful to Elizabeth Church, Carol Lamica, and Holly Temming for maintaining strong connections to the members of their musical ensembles despite having to discontinue in-person rehearsals for most of the year. Their reports are below, and they each outline the creative thinking that they have brought to bear in this strangest of years. Like them, I look forward to a safe and gradual return to regular music-making with our singers and ringers.

### **Workload Changes**

In my work as part of the Executive Team and staff as a whole, many of my responsibilities have remained the same over the course of the past year, including weekly staff meetings (over Zoom) and other administrative duties. Of course, the onset of the pandemic in March forced a number of changes to our customary working patterns. In my case, in 2020 I undertook a larger role in the planning and composing of weekly worship and the creation of the worship bulletin. This has provided some much-needed space for Stephen Cady and Sarah Brubaker, allowing them to focus on manifold other duties.

In addition, this year I joined the Technology Team (referred to colloquially as the “Tech Team”, or the “Live Stream Dream Team.”) This intrepid group of volunteers and staff have brought about the many enhancements to our infrastructure that have allowed us to successfully produce the live stream worship service each and every Sunday. At the outset, I took on the task of graphics pre-production, using software called “ProPresenter” to upload and input the graphic overlays which punctuate and caption the live stream service each week. It has been challenging but incredibly rewarding to work alongside Sarah Brubaker (who brilliantly designs these graphics) and principal camera operator Kenny Bailey to coordinate the overall look of the service. In December I also learned how to lend a hand with video production, and was able to work alongside Sarah in putting together the many elements of the Christmas Eve service.

Technology has also allowed us to be reminded of the richness of Asbury First’s worship tradition, even as we miss the physical presence of our choirs. Thanks to our video archives, we have been able to enjoy the singing of the Sanctuary Choir and the playing of Asbury Ringers on occasion.

My fervent prayer for 2021 is that circumstances with the pandemic will make it possible for all our groups to resume some form of rehearsing and a return to participation in Sunday worship. We are in no hurry, however; the health and safety of our musicians and congregation is of course paramount in our minds. In the meantime we hope and pray for a quick distribution of vaccines and a steep reduction of cases locally, so that we can find our way forward to the resumption of singing and playing together.

### **Pianos**

In 2020, Asbury First was the recipient of a generous donation, thanks to a referral by our long-time piano technician Joe Ross. A physician and Rochester resident was looking to donate a Steinway grand piano, and Joe recommended that Asbury First

would be a worthy recipient. This excellent instrument has taken residence in the Gathering Center, where (post-pandemic) it will be well-suited for small concerts and recitals. I'm sincerely grateful to David Strong and Duane Prill for their vigilant care for the pianos throughout our campus.

### **Organ - Duane Prill, Principal Organist**

Following the longer-than-expected period of protective hiatus during the basement construction in 1040, Asbury's landmark Austin pipe organ was finally recommissioned and premiered during Easter worship services on April 12, 2020. Later in the year the new decorative grillwork was installed, replacing 65-year-old curtains. All necessary maintenance projects have been completed. The organ sound is now clearer and more compelling, yielding very positive results. During this time of Covid-19, staff organists have taken comfort in sitting at the familiar console and feel blessed to make music for the great members of Asbury's congregation.

### **Children's Music - Holly Temming, Director**

Children's Music at Asbury was thriving at the beginning of 2020 as we were preparing our children's musical, "Esther", to be performed in early May. After shutdown in mid-March we continued to rehearse our children's musical via Zoom until the end of the school year. Sunday School has continued virtually via Zoom and has included musical games and songs.

The Christmas Pageant was videoed outdoors and we used pre-recorded children's music for the video. With much help from Larry Dugan and Sarah Brubaker we created a 15-minute video that was viewed by 600 devices.

My goal for 2021 is to maintain connection with our children, and to create a plan for virtual children's music for Fall 2021, in the event that we are still in shutdown due to COVID-19.

### **Asbury Ringers - Elizabeth Church, Director**

Asbury Ringers suspended in-person meetings along with everyone else in March, but we did gather on Zoom for fellowship on a number of Wednesday evenings during the year. In November and early December we resumed rehearsals on a limited basis (masked, socially distanced, with no more than 10 persons in the room at a time.) Once coronavirus cases began to surge in the Rochester area, we discontinued these gatherings. We will be ready and eager to resume once it is deemed safe to do so.

### **Youth Music - Carol Lamica, Director**

The Youth choir has been meeting regularly every Wednesday evening, via zoom, since last March. Our rehearsal time is quite different as we use the Google Classroom platform to communicate, and to post sheet music and rehearsal tracks. In rehearsal we run parts together and share in fellowship time together. As the singers are rehearsing, they are muted but can hear me playing their parts on the keyboard. When a singer needs a tricky part played for them, they raise their hand and direct me to the measure they would like me to go over. I have also uploaded rehearsal tracks to Google Classroom for the singers to rehearse with on their own.

Last spring and again in December, the youth recorded themselves singing their vocal part (unaccompanied) and submitted their audio recordings to me. I combined their recordings using a computer program that allowed me to digitally create the ensemble sound. In addition to submitting their recordings, they also sent me photos to be used in a photo montage. Carl Johengen graciously put together the videos and inserted the virtual youth choir anthem as the underscore.

## **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.

**Please note:** 2020 was a year like no other in our lifetime. Due to safety protocols issued by the State of New York and Asbury First United Methodist Church, much of the dedicated work of the Altar Guild was impacted by this pandemic. We embraced a new and simpler aesthetic still honoring our Sanctuary and Worship Services during this season.

### **During 2020, the Altar Guild:**

-Successfully conducted 2 business meetings and 1 Christmas Celebration and Installation of Leadership and New Members via Zoom – a first in the history of the Altar Guild;

-Installed 2 new Guild members;

-Coordinated and assisted with 1 Sanctuary wedding; *previously scheduled weddings were canceled due to COVID-19 or were handled off-site.*

-Provided support during 4 memorial services and 1 funeral; *all remaining services have been livestreamed with only family present.*

-Participated in services for Support and Affirmation, Ash Wednesday, The Longest Night, and Christmas Eve; *Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Christmas Day, and New Year services were modified or canceled and did not require the Altar Guild.*

-Created special altars for World Communion Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas (with trees), Easter, Palm Sunday and the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Sunday. *Special thanks to Barb Denigris for coordinating the special altar flowers and the weekly service flowers for months.*

-Filled altar candles with oil as needed during this year. *Special thanks to Ellen Williams and Nancy Adamus for their dedicated service.*

-Washed and pressed altar linens when needed;

-The annual spring chancel cleaning day was canceled due to COVID-19 – to be re-scheduled when appropriate;

-Provided an opportunity for Asbury members to remember/honor their loved ones through the memorial flowers; *again impacted starting in March due to COVID-19;*

-Devoted approximately 225 volunteer hours to the church and its members; *yearly average is 900+ hours, but safety protocols limited the overall volunteer hours in 2020.*

-Due to COVID-19, the Guild members unanimously voted to continue the 2020 leadership slate for a second year. The 2021 Guild co-presidents will continue to be Martha Tuke and Ellen Williams.

Respectfully submitted,  
Martha Tuke and Ellen Williams

## **OUTREACH MINISTRY AREA**

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

### **Asbury First UMC Outreach Mission Statement**

Developed by the Outreach Taskforce and adopted by the Outreach Committee in 2016

*As disciples of Jesus Christ, we cultivate hope and fullness of life.*

The Outreach Committee would like to thank the congregation for its generous support of our various outreach areas, and for the many ways you participate with and connect to our outreach programs locally and globally.

Annual Reports have been written by various outreach areas detailing their specific activities throughout the year. This report summarizes the activity of the Outreach Committee.

The Outreach Committee has the responsibility of leading and coordinating the outreach activities at Asbury First UMC. The committee consists of representatives from each of Asbury First's major outreach areas and at large delegates. The committee meets monthly on the second Tuesday of each month. The following is a list of committee members:

Co-Chair & Pastoral Liaison:	Rev. Jackie Nelson
Co-Chair & RAIHN:	Jonathan Carroll-Nellenback
Grocery Bag Ministry:	Jim Carter
Habitat for Humanity:	John Smalt
Dining & Caring Center:	Diana Carter
Project Chacocente:	Robyn Gage
Storehouse:	Cynthia Connell & Wendy Cohen
Miracle Garden:	Elizabeth Church
UR Well:	Carolyn Hamil
Community Garden:	Robert Castle
Schools 17 & 45:	John Smalt

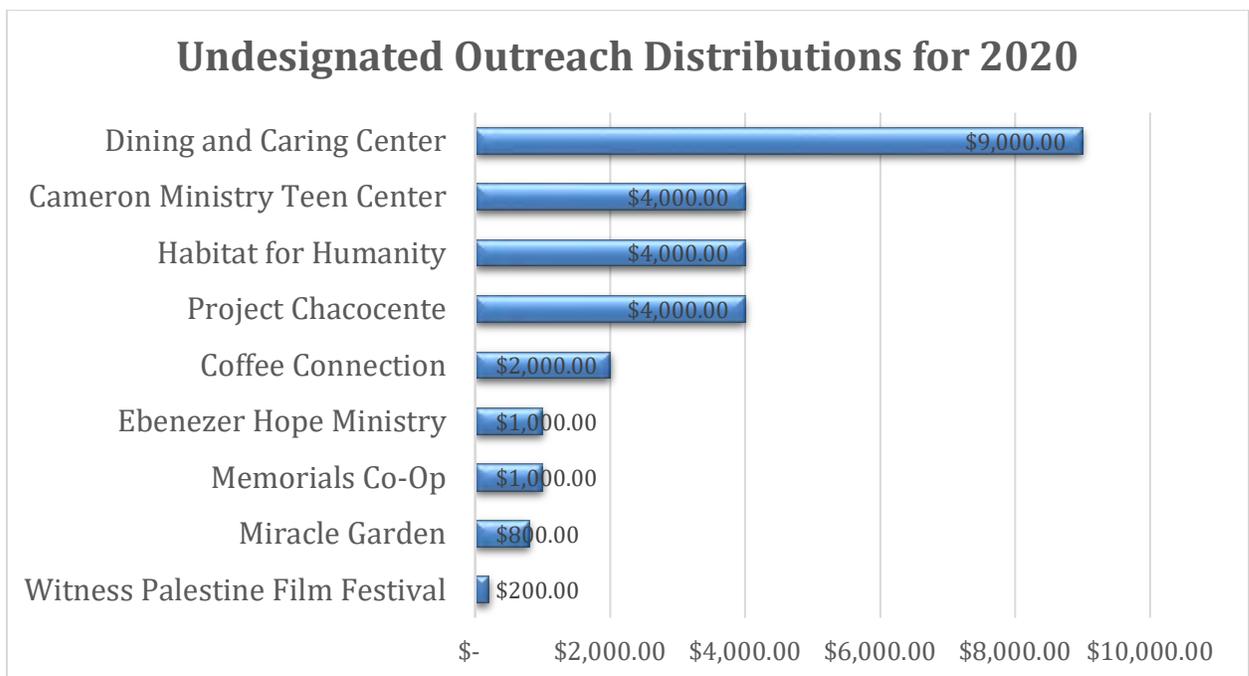
### **2020 Overview**

It goes without saying that this was a unique year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, early in 2020 many of our outreach programs had to temporarily close to abide by state guidelines. Our Dining & Caring Center remained physically open on a modified basis, serving packaged to-go meals and grocery bags to guests of the Rochester community. In addition, our Storehouse remained accessible and available for emergency clothing and household needs, responding to social service agencies, individuals, and families even while physically closed to shoppers and volunteers. Towards the end of 2020, the Storehouse was able to reopen to volunteers, who worked diligently over the span of two weeks to clean, reorganize,

and sort Storehouse items in preparation to respond to growing emergency and crisis needs in the community. The Grocery Bag Ministry, utilizing a skeleton crew of 2-3 volunteers, has been able to offer grocery bags to our community partners throughout the pandemic in a modified way, and our partner organizations have sent numerous thank you letters to note their appreciation. While COVID-19 restricted our ability to host families on campus, volunteers continued to provide support by shopping for and providing food to families in the RAIHN program. Our other outreach programs continued to communicate with one another and with our various partner organizations, which has kept our programs active in meaningful ways.

Three highlights of this year are perhaps the formation of a new community garden team, which has met throughout the last several months to begin planning and imagining how to make the community garden a meaningful addition to the Asbury First campus. In addition, we were able to plan and execute a successful Thanksgiving In-Gathering, which allowed our congregation and community to come out in socially-distanced fashion to give back to our outreach programs. Lastly, in an effort to continue supporting our neighbors in Rochester who are facing eviction and dealing with financial hardship due to this pandemic, the Outreach Committee voted unanimously to dedicate all *Joy of Christmas Giving* efforts to the COVID-Relief Fund.

In addition to the above-mentioned successes, the outreach committee has remained responsible for the allocation of undesignated outreach funds provided from the Annual Operating Plan and other sources. Funding requests are submitted to the committee throughout the year, and the committee reviews and votes on each request. The following is a list of approved requests for 2020:



**Dining and Caring Center:** \$9,000 for general operations including cost of security;  
**Cameron Ministry Teen Center:** \$4,000 to support general operations, and in memory of Fred Hamil;  
**Habitat for Humanity:** \$4,000 to complete Habitat for Humanity Home on Campbell St.;  
**Project Chacocente:** \$2,000 for Hurricane Relief and another \$2,000 to support ongoing needs;  
**Coffee Connection:** \$2,000 for general support;  
**Ebenezer Hope Ministry:** \$1,000 to support safe drinking water at the Nakivale Refugee Camp in Uganda;  
**Memorials Co-Op:** \$1,000 for their work with the chronically homeless;  
**Miracle Garden:** \$800 for emergency relief for students and staff;  
**Witness Palestine Film Festival:** \$200 for movie screening events and advertising;

This has been a difficult year, but we are grateful for the congregation's generous support throughout this year. Each of your gifts have helped keep our outreach ministry areas afloat, and have helped the committee imagine new ways to support the community during these unusual times.

As Co-Chair I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Rev Jacqueline Nelson for her ongoing efforts to keep the outreach programs running in this extraordinary year. I would also like to express thankfulness to our wonderful volunteers who continue to give of their time helping those in our community and around the world.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jonathan Carroll-Nellenback

## **ASBURY STOREHOUSE**

The Asbury Storehouse continues after 55 years to be an important outreach ministry of AFUMC. The year 2020 has proven to be a challenging year for all, including the Storehouse. The year started strong and in 2 ½ months, 746 adults and 611 children (total 1357) from the Greater Rochester Community received clothing and household goods from the Storehouse. Then the pandemic forced the Storehouse to shut-down on March 18, 2020. Over 250 appointments were cancelled for the next few months. Months went by with no volunteers, no shoppers and no donations coming into the Storehouse. Gradually, following parameters set by the church, a few volunteers entered the Storehouse. Much time was spent by co-chairs Wendy Cohen and Cindy Connell developing plans as to how the Storehouse might reopen safely for volunteers and donations and still be able to provide clothing and household items to struggling families in Rochester. By mid-October the Storehouse finally “re-opened”. About 1/3 of our 110 volunteers felt comfortable or were able to return. We began to reach out to agencies to let them know that we could fill requests for emergency clients. Word spread that the Asbury Storehouse was once again open. Since the end of October, volunteers have filled bags with requested items and arranged for contactless pick-up of requests for over 200 adults and over 300 children. Mid-November the Storehouse was once again allowed to accept donations.

In the past, the Storehouse has had a number of fundraisers. Due to the pandemic, the Storehouse had to cancel their geranium sale, Summer Sale and Christmas Treasures sale. This was about \$14,000 of income previously generated we would not have in 2020. We have, however, been blessed to receive \$4000 from the Rochester Female Charitable Society, \$2000 from Families of FANA Western NY, \$1000 from the ESL Charitable Foundations, over \$500 from ROC the Day, over \$2000 from the United Way of Rochester, over \$3200 from generous Asbury Members and Friends of the Storehouse and over \$3000 in memorial gifts. We received BOMBA socks for men, women and children shared by the DCC. Baby quilts, receiving blankets, knitted hats, scarves, mittens and afghans have been donated by individuals and groups. The members of the Miriam Circle of the Greece UMC once again help stock our shelves with items for our layettes for expectant mothers. Local hotels have continued to donate used sheets, towels and comforters to the Storehouse. Our AFUMC members and friends continue to be generous with donations. The Thanksgiving In-gathering provided the Storehouse with over 90 jackets (many new), new men’s underwear, new socks for men and children and blankets and gift cards to local stores. Car loads of donated clothes and household goods collected by Cook’s World were delivered just before Christmas. The generous monetary gifts have allowed us to purchase blankets, underwear and socks, hats and gloves, extra-large jackets and clothes from Goodwill to fill gaps in our inventory and keep our shelves full. We feel truly blessed for the generosity of the Asbury First UMC members and friends of the Storehouse who have helped to keep our shelves stocked so we can continue to help others.

As we enter 2021, we know that the Storehouse will continue to support the Rochester Community as best we can during this difficult time. Unfortunately, shoppers will be unable to return to the Storehouse for the unforeseen future. We will continue to rely on the generosity of the Asbury First UMC members and Friends of the Storehouse for donations of clothes, household items and monetary donations. One of our key needs for the Storehouse will be to increase our number of volunteers. We are working to have a referral form online for agency representatives to fill out as they request support for their clients. As the church transitions to its new governance model, the Storehouse volunteers will be looking forward to continuing their mission of community outreach with the support of the Outreach Center Committee.

The Storehouse would like to thank the church, its members, our volunteers and the community for their continued support of this important Outreach ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cindy Connell and Wendy Cohen  
Storehouse Co-Chairpersons

## **ASBURY DINING AND CARING CENTER**

Through the grace of God and our faithful staff and volunteers, the Dining and Caring Center operated throughout 2020 without interruption, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in late March, the staff changed operations to provide meals on a to-go basis, adding a bag of snacks and groceries to the daily breakfast. No more than three guests at a time were allowed into the center at one time, and all staff, volunteers, security guards and guests were required to wear masks while in the center. By year's end, we had served approximately 14,400 meals, representing a decline of 63 percent from the previous year. Director Michele Cooley has said that the guests who continue coming to the center -- some as often as five days a week -- are those who face the most challenges. Since May, when we began tracking guest frequency, we served 280 unique people.

Some other changes caused by the pandemic:

- Volunteers 65 and over were asked not to volunteer onsite for the time being.
- Rotating teams were suspended and a small crew of daily volunteers were employed. While the makeup of that small crew has changed several times, it usually ranges from two to seven people who come several days a week.
- Wednesday lunches and Saturday services (showers, laundry and continental breakfast) were suspended.
- Volunteers, staff and security guards undergo health checks every day that they work at the center.

Additional precautions have been considered and agreed upon several times this year, but changing conditions and practical issues had us stick with our original pandemic plan each time. Only two additional changes were made in the end. Firstly, we closed the center for two weeks in August to allow the volunteers and staff to use vacation and get rest. This brings us in compliance with other feeding programs in the area that also have an annual break. It also allowed for a deep cleaning of the center and some maintenance work. Additionally, at year's end we authorized purchase of plexiglas shields to further protect the workers.

Besides the attendance tracking mentioned earlier, the center has taken several steps to document its work. Michele fills out a daily spreadsheet summarizing activities of the day, including numbers of guests, names of volunteers, incidents of note and deliveries. Early in the year we also started compiling information sheets on our volunteers, allowing us to know how many we have, who they are and how to contact them. With a better handle on our data, we hope to be able to make stronger case to grantmakers in the future.

This year when it has been impossible to gather for fundraisers, the center has experienced great generosity from the Asbury community, individuals, and grantmakers. We received an overwhelming amount of donations when the board held a drive-thru food drive in June, and again in November during the annual in-gathering. We split a donation of approximately 3,000 pairs of Bombas socks with the Asbury Storehouse, we have been offered a memorial donation in the name of

Nina Shah, who was a volunteer at the center, and have received several significant individual donations in cash, gift cards and sleeping bags for our guests. COVID-related emergency grants have amounted to more than \$27,000. In December we got word that the Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation had approved a grant of \$20,000, which was \$5,000 more than requested. Other grantors were the Women's Club of Pittsford, Paychex, Rochester Area Community Foundation, Glover-Crask Charitable Trust, Greater Rochester Health Foundation, and the United Way.

We are greatly indebted to Len Davidow, who volunteered on a weekly breakfast team for some years and served on the board for four years before he left this fall. Our remaining board members were Diana Carter, Angela Burch, Maya Temperley, Bob Castle, Martha Neubert, Jeannette Creighton and Tim Mahan.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Carter, outgoing chairwoman of the Asbury Dining & Caring Center Board.

## **ASBURY FIRST COMMUNITY GARDEN**

### Our Goal

Build a raised bed, cooperative, community garden engaging a diverse team of volunteers to produce healthy food for our D&CC meals, guests and partner churches / organizations. In conjunction with the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District (MCS&WCD) offer educational programs to people of all ages and backgrounds.

### Purpose:

- **Provide fresh produce** for the Dining & Caring Center meals, D&CC guests, Grocery Bag Ministry partner churches & Keeping Our Promises (KOP) refugee program.
- **Build relationships** among garden volunteers including individuals from the congregation, D&CC guests, Grocery Bag partner churches, KOP refugees, neighbors and friends.
- Provide **education** workshops led by the Monroe County Soil & Water District for the congregation, community, guests, partner churches and refugees.
- Provide **hands-on learning** experiences for children during Daycare, Church School and Vacation Bible School.
- Provide meaningful **service** opportunities for the Youth Group, adult groups, scouts, partner churches and others.
- Bring **life and purpose** to a previously unused and neglected portion of the campus.
- Align with Asbury First's Mission: **To Love God and Neighbor, Live Fully, Serve All and Repeat** (annually).

In February of 2020, the Trustees approved the building of a Community Garden at Asbury First. By mid-March, Asbury First and the MCS&WCD were making plans for a community garden in 2020. The location and layout of the garden had been finalized (behind Building 1010, near the playground). Materials had been ordered. Three of the ten 4x8 foot raised beds were built and delivered. Starter seeds had been planted by the children's ministry. Volunteers from the Day of Caring had been organized to fill the beds with soil/compost. Meetings were held with Silvester (the Dining Center cook) and he was excited to take part in the project. Planting was scheduled to be completed by Memorial Day. An informational / recruitment meeting was scheduled with the congregation after church on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Then the world changed.....

With the closing of the campus, it became apparent that a garden during this season was not feasible. The necessary volunteers could not be brought on campus to tend and harvest the garden. In September we began planning the garden for 2021. There was a wonderful response from the congregation and there are now seventeen members of on the team. We have been meeting monthly in preparation for the next growing season. A proposal for the garden and tree removal has been submitted to the East Ave. Historic Presentation Board which will be voted on in February. The MCS&WCD is committed to continuing our partnership for the coming year.

We are looking forward to a bountiful harvest in 2021 and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Castle

## **RAIHN**

### **RAIHN at Asbury First United Methodist Church 2020 Annual Report**

Asbury has been a committed partner with the Rochester Area Inter-faith Hospitality Network (RAIHN) since its inception in April of 2004. RAIHN serves families in housing crisis and assists these individuals to transition into permanent housing.

The Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (RAIHN) is a not-for-profit, interfaith, culturally-competent organization of faith communities that work in collaboration to help homeless families to achieve sustainable independence. Support is offered to families by providing services that include shelter, meals, transportation, and personalized case management. A diverse network of caring volunteers, from forty-one congregations in the Rochester community network, provide sheltering, meals, and hospitality services.

Traditionally, families in the RAIHN program spend their days at work, school, or at the RAIHN day center's location on Webster Ave. Evenings are spent at host congregations for a meal, activities, and lodging. Hosting locations rotate weekly. As a host congregation for RAIHN, Asbury First provides a safe place to stay for the evening and coordinates the provision of food and volunteer companions, keeping the overall shelter cost of RAIHN comparatively low. The Asbury First Storehouse generously supports RAIHN and hosts our families to an evening of shopping during their stay on the Asbury First campus.

The year of 2020 was most unusual due to the Covid-19 pandemic and necessitated an evolving modification of how volunteer services were provided for the RAIHN guests. It was decided by the RAIHN program that families would be sheltered at the RAIHN Center on Webster Avenue for one family and in a hotel for additional families entering RAIHN for the calendar year. Congregation volunteers were, in general, under-utilized because of these program changes.

- The Asbury First RAIHN program hosted four rotations in 2020 (March, June, September, and November). The guests were hosted “off campus” for all four rotations. In March, lunches and dinners were provided by the Asbury co-coordinators, Greece Baptist Church, Baptist Temple, and Baber AME. Due to the escalation of Covid-19, only lunch and snack foods were delivered for the following two rotations with gift cards donated to provide for dinners. For the final rotation, only dinner gift cards were necessary. These donations were dropped off at the RAIHN Center and distributed by the RAIHN Center staff.
- Asbury First RAIHN received \$700.00 in monetary donations (excluding donated foods and gift cards) during the 2020 calendar year. Total expenditures were \$740.00.
- The previous Coordinators for Asbury First RAIHN were Chris and Doug Lee (Volunteer Coordinators and liaisons with the RAIHN program) and Timothy Johnson (Meal Coordinator). These individuals did an outstanding job of coordinating the program between Asbury First and the other cooperative host congregations. Chris and Doug attended the RAIHN meetings with other congregation coordinators, were in communication

with the outreach committee regarding RAIHN communications with the main program, purchased supplies, and provided services to the guests hosted at Asbury First. Timothy continues to serve as the meal coordinator and continues his exemplary volunteerism. It was decided to divide the coordinator responsibilities between several coordinators for the 2020 year.

- Reverend Jacqueline Nelson: Minister for Outreach
- Timothy Johnson: Meal Coordinator
- Anna and Jonathan Carroll-Nellenback: Communication and Liaison Coordinators
- Jennifer and Brian Conrow: Inventory and Supplies Coordinators
- Anne Marie Strivings: Hospitality and Scheduling Coordinator
- Becky Cox: Lead On Call Coordinator

Thank you to all who continue to donate to the RAIHN program throughout the year. These contributions allow us to meet the needs of our RAIHN guests and to fulfill our duties during our scheduled rotations.

### The Year 2020 in Summary

Month of Rotation	Number of Guests	Number of Families	Number of Volunteers	Total Volunteer Hours	Asbury First RAIHN Expenditures
March 3/22-3/29	3	1	2 plus groups to provide meals only Greece Baptist Church Asbury First Men's Prayer Group Asbury First Parables of Parenting Group Baber AME Asbury First Outreach Committee	10	Food and incidental supplies \$740.00
June 6/8-6/14	6	2	2	4	

September 9/7-9/13	13	4	4	5	
November/ December 11/29 -12/6	14	4	1	1	
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$740.00</b>

As RAIHN transitions into the New Year of 2021, it will be renamed as ***Family Promise of Greater Rochester*** to reflect a cooperation with similar Family Promise Programs in surrounding counties in Western New York. It is with humility and compassionate caring that our congregation continues to support the endeavors of this much needed and valued commitment to the “vulnerable” families in our community. As the year commences, Family Promise will adapt to the current pandemic crisis and provide services accordingly. We will pray for a brighter future for all.

“And do not forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.”

~Hebrews  
13:16 NLT

## **ASBURY UR WELL CLINIC**

Our Mission is to provide free, high quality preventative and health maintenance care to uninsured and underserved families and individuals. We aim to foster the health of the community of Rochester while promoting the spirit of education, social justice and collaboration.

The Asbury First UR Well Clinic is located in the lower level of 1040 East Avenue.

For the past decade the clinic had been open the first Tuesday of every month and every Thursday from 5:15 to 8:15 PM for physicals, medical concerns and dermatology.

### **2020 CLINIC INVOLVEMENT**

The clinic was seeing between 8 and 14 patients per night in January and February.

We also injected PPDs on Thursday evenings and had them read on Sunday mornings, primarily for work physicals. Martha Neubert continued to help patients who needed social services and Marian Schrader helped them apply for insurance. We scheduled a celebration in March for Ida Hickman, who had acted as clinic coordinator for the prior decade since its inception. The basement of 1040 was still undergoing construction, so only 3 of 4 clinic rooms were available at that time. Tasteful Connections was offering food on Tuesdays and Dr. John Hansen on Thursdays for the patients and students.

Jeanne Van Voorst coordinated greeters/hospitality. Clinic coordinators included Carolyn Hamil, Angela Burch, Libby Thompson, Kristie Pfaff and Robyn Gage.

As with the rest of the world we had to alter our plans in March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We had to postpone Ida Hickman's celebration.

The University of Rochester required its medical students to pull back from optional community clinic rotations, including UR Well in March of 2020. Under Jacqueline Nelson's leadership in Outreach we were able to continue UR Well committee meetings by Zoom to plan for limited reopening of the clinic on August 20, 2020.

We met with masks and social distancing for a walk through of the UR Well clinic area on July 7 to plan for our limited re-opening.

We had to ensure that the medical students and their preceptors, along with greeters and other volunteers had proper PPE. We also had to arrange for the safety of the patients coming to be seen and arranged for them to make appointments to be seen and screened for COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival. We acquired touchless thermometers, more pulse oximeters and masks, gloves and face shields to use for the staff and patients. We decided to start with a limited number of visits per clinic

night by appointment only and decided to be open only on Thursday evenings. We found that the medical team could see from six to eight patients each night they were open.

Reverend Nelson took on the responsibility of accepting all the phone calls of patients and scheduling them to be seen. We had to stop offering food due to the pandemic restrictions.

Although the students did see patients with medical complaints, one of the most requested services was doing work physicals, thus enabling people to obtain jobs. We are one of the very few places that people can come to get a free work physical. We started seeing patients on August 20, 2020 from 6 to 8 PM but had to stop again on November 19, 2020 as the increase in cases of COVID-19 once again surged. Initially we stopped placing PPDs, as we did not have enough volunteers who felt safe reading them for Sunday mornings. We were able to formulate a plan to start reading PPDs again with Lin Vanderstyn, RN coordinating PPD readings and Bruce Thompson, MD, Cheryl Kodjo, MD, Cindy Dennison, RN and Janice Killian, RN reading PPDs under COVID-19 protocols.

The clinic did see 59 patients this year and we had 60 unique student volunteers, 9 preceptors and 3 Asbury volunteers. Along with Jackie Nelson, Beth Rice and Angie Burch worked as greeters after the clinic reopened in August.

#### **WHAT WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH**

Most of what we hope to accomplish in 2021 depends upon the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, since we cannot reopen until the University of Rochester medical students and preceptors are allowed to again see people at UR WELL. We do hope to continue to offer work physicals, PPD readings, and enhance community outreach coordination with St. Luke's UR WELL and others. We would like to increase our ability to use translators for Spanish and other languages and enhance our social service programs. We will continue to expand our volunteer base.

The Asbury UR Well Team currently consists of Rev. Jacqueline Nelson, Dr. Bruce Thompson (Chair), Carolyn Hamil, Dr. Cheryl Kodjo, Martha Neubert, Dr. Jerry Svoboda, Lin Vanderstyn and the medical students.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bruce Thompson, MD

## **CAMERON MINISTRIES TEEN CENTER**

In 2019 Cameron Ministries opened its Teen Center in a renovated home adjacent to their main building. That year, the Asbury First Outreach Committee formally recognized the Cameron Ministry Teen Center as one of its primary ministries. The mission of the Center aligns with the goals and direction of AFUMC Strategic Plan “A Way Forward” by reaching out to those in need beyond our campus. The Center is an extension of Cameron Ministries After School Program and serves teens grades 7-12th. This program strives to bridge the academic and social-emotional achievement gap that teens living in poverty face. It is a safe place for teens to go after school and in the summer. Participants receive academic support through guided homework assistance and tutoring as well as leadership and life skills programming in order to promote individual growth. Because of Covid-19 and city school’s remote learning, the Center has expanded its programming to include the availability of Wi-Fi and support services for youth during the school day.

## **FLOWER CITY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY/HARVEST HOME FAITH COALITION**

In March, as New York State on pause was beginning amid the growing COVID-19 pandemic, Flower City Habitat for Humanity had multiple homes under construction. Partner families faced the prospect of being stuck in substandard, cost-burdening or unsafe homes during such an uncertain time.

With the homes being so near completion, our construction team worked hard to obtain certificates of occupancy to ensure that the families in need were able to move into a home of their own during a time of social distancing protocols.

All families involved had to go above and beyond to complete the FCHH Homebuyer program, move into their homes, and continue to be model partners. A maximum of 5 volunteers could work each day using Covid-19 limitations and social distancing. The Harvest Home Faith Coalition, which Asbury is part of, helped to complete a house at 96 Holworthy St. This house was dedicated on August 1, 2020.

This past year the Annual Habitat Pie Sale was not held due to the pandemic. We also did not have the Uno Dough Raiser.

Thrivent Financial partnered with Harvest Home Faith Coalition in 2020 and they have agreed to continue their partnership for 2021 to build another home. Construction is continuing on the house on 395 Campbell St.

## **GROCERY BAG MINISTRY REPORT**

Like all the other Outreach ministries at Asbury in 2020, the Grocery Bag Ministry program has adapted its operations, but continued to help feed hungry people in Rochester. We have continued to work with our eight partner churches in the city, as well as our partners at Harvest Ministries to facilitate supplying groceries and other food staples throughout the city of Rochester. And the Asbury community has once again stepped up to help support this ministry, both with funding and volunteer resources as feasible.

Meeting once a month (usually the 3rd Saturday), we typically assemble groceries into 60-80 bags for one or sometimes two partner churches, and another 20 bags of groceries distributed by the Keeping Our Promises refugee support program (formerly known as No One Left Behind). Each bag contains staples such as bread, eggs, tuna, peanut butter and jelly, soups, canned vegetables and fruit, pasta and sauce, as well as snacks like chips and cookies. This year, through our suppliers at Harvest Ministries, we piloted a program of also including frozen prepared meals, primarily from Wegmans. This involved acquisition of freezers at Asbury as well as additional delivery and storage considerations, both for us and our partner churches, but to our great delight, this program has been a big success, with our partner churches and their constituent families, so we plan to continue doing that in 2021.

We did standard deliveries from Jan through March but after the campus was closed down, we also took a break in April and May. Then in June, after working with church staff and the COVID response team, we determined that a small group of us could continue the GBM work in a modified capacity. Accordingly, a small group (2-3) worked in the subsequent months with our partner churches to deliver the food/supplies and bags in "bulk", and having the partner churches do the bagging as part of their distribution process. On-site Asbury interactions were minimized and all work was done in compliance with re-opening guidelines (masked, sanitized, distanced, etc). In this manner, we've been able to continue helping to feed the hungry in Rochester, especially needed in these challenging times.

In October, we had two unrelated blessings/opportunities present themselves. First, through Harvest Ministries, we became aware of a government sponsored program to deliver boxes of food from Farmers for Families, and were able to coordinate the involvement of most of our partner churches in these distributions of 40-pound boxes of food stuffs. Each Saturday in October, different church representatives worked with the Harvest team to distribute tens of these big boxes throughout their communities and it was much appreciated. And through our friends at Keeping Our Promises, we became aware of a delivery of a donation of 2000 pounds of food staples (from the Church of Latter Day Saints) that we were able to house at Asbury and use in our monthly distributions, which we have been incorporating into our monthly deliveries (and will continue to).

The annual In-Gathering in November was once again a Big success, and through modified delivery/drop-off, the GBM shelves were once again well stocked for the next few months with all our usual supplies, which gives us a great start into 2021.

This year, we also established a relationship with the Flower City Pickers organization, as a free source of fresh bread. The Pickers is well known throughout the city for connecting those w/ extra/leftover foods with organizations that need/use it. Primarily working at the Rochester Public Market, they have helped supply GBM with rich nutritious bread, which we collect each week and then store in our new freezers, and then deliver w/ our bags.

In addition, our team has actively participated in the Outreach committee meetings and discussions/planning for the new Outreach Center.

Our partner churches are:

Antioch Missionary Baptist Church  
Arc of Jesus  
Assembly of God  
Miracle Outreach Church  
Zion Hill Baptist Church  
Baber AME  
New Horizons (previously West Ave Methodist)  
Powerhouse Church

Our wonderful volunteers have been:

George Albright  
Jim Carter  
Eugene Fisher  
Edith Reinhard  
Lisa Haskins  
Sean Michaels  
Linda E Erle  
Betty Stewart  
Richard Irvin  
Joe & Janice Cygan  
Bob & Bev Schuman  
Alana Carrazo  
Bill Lisi  
Jim Reed  
Mason Fitch  
Pat Schwar

For more detailed information, including a map of the partner churches in the city, please see one of our flyers available in the church office and/or in the welcoming hall.

## **MIRACLE GARDEN HOME AND SCHOOL**

**Miracle Garden Home and School** in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India continues to be a shining example of God's love and man's work to empower and educate the poor in India. Founded by Asbury First UMC members John and Michelle Pandian, Miracle Garden was established in 2005 following the December 26, 2004 Asian tsunami. In that first year many Asbury members supported the orphan children that lived there through monetary gifts, individual sponsorships and eventually visits to the campus in south India by 12 Asbury members. (in the coming years)

Asbury members continue to support Miracle Garden Global Ministries through individual sponsorship of a boy or girl, support of the Miracle Garden Christian School and larger efforts supported by Asbury at large. Most of the initial orphan residents have moved back with extended family, moved on to occupational schooling or job opportunities. New orphans continue to come to Miracle Garden as it's reputation for caring for the poorest of the poor is known in the area. The school was started in 2010 with just the MG orphans. Most families pay a minimal tuition and some even pay for the transportation. MG is happy to announce that 60% of the school's budget is being met by the small fee collected from the families. The greatest need today is school furniture, tables, chairs, benches for kids to use.

During 2020, Miracle Garden was impacted by the pandemic as much of India was put on significant lockdown. The school year in India had to be completely suspended. The orphanage lost much of it's funding, as the small tuition many students from the area pay to attend, helps to keep the school and orphanage funded. The children have invested more time and energy in planting and cultivating fruits, and they were able to have some individualized schooling. Through careful attention to safety measures, and since Miracle Garden is an enclosed campus, not one child or adult have become sick with the CIVID-19 virus. There continue to be some needs to support the orphanage, including money to support the food budget, to purchase chicken and eggs, paint for the school rooms, and games both electronic and board to help keep the children stimulated. The children have been essentially locked on campus all year, and many have become sad and depressed. In April the Otoreach Committee responded to an emergency need for food at Miracle Garden by approving and sending \$800. from our budget.

Individuals wishing to sponsor an orphan can contact me directly at 461-9802 or [emchurch418@gmail.com](mailto:emchurch418@gmail.com). Monthly sponsorship is currently \$30 a month.

Having established Miracle Garden Tsunami Christian Home in 2005, John Pandian has worked tirelessly to support the orphans, build and grow the school and on occasion travel to the U.S. for family, church visits and fundraising.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Church

Miracle Garden Tsunami Home and School  
Miracle Garden Global Ministries  
John Pandian, Founder  
Pachapalayam Road  
Theethipalayam Post,  
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641010, India

## **PROJECT CHACOCENTE**

**OUR MISSION: With Christian discipleship as the foundation, Project Chacocente's mission is to advance the dignity and well-being of the people of Nicaragua by enabling them to lift themselves and one another out of poverty.**

We stay in close touch with our original families, but our main tasks now are:

- 1) to operate and continuously improve Chacocente Christian School
- 2) to provide our students and graduates with the guidance and financial resources they need to pursue degree or vocational programs that lead to fulfilling employment and a better standard of living
- 3) to instill in each student and graduate a lifetime habit of "giving back"
- 4) to assist the greater Chacocente community with sustainable development, especially of decent housing and access to clean water

The last three years have been especially difficult for the people of Nicaragua. The socio-political upheaval of 2018-2019 and the pandemic of 2020 have stalled an already fragile economy. Hurricanes Eta and Iota, each making landfall within a 15-mile radius only 13 days apart caused devastation in the remote villages along the Bocay River in northern Nicaragua.

Highlights:

- the distribution of emergency food relief during the worst months of the pandemic
- the renovation of 6 elementary classrooms that included the raising of the roof for better airflow, upgrading of the electrical system with improved lighting, and the installation of fans, tile flooring and glass windows
- the continuation of hybrid classes at Chacocente Christian School throughout the pandemic
- the successful completion of a 15 level Advanced English Course at the University of Central America by a recent Chacocente Christian School graduate
- the financial support of 8 college students and 3 advanced English students
- the high school graduation of 7 students
- paid a fair wage to Project Chacocente's 24 Nicaraguan employees enabling them to provide for their families
- a Brown University student is developing an introduction to computer programming for Chacocente Christian School students and is researching means to provide each with hardware and internet access
- the construction of a dignified home for a young family of 5 at Project Chacocente
- financial support to two missionary partners working in hurricane relief
- a successful but limited 2019 financial audit

Concerns:

- teenage pregnancy
- due to the pandemic, the Nicaraguan economy continues to suffer adding hardship and uncertainty for families and increased operational costs
- the suspension of delegations visiting Nicaragua and of church gatherings in the United States has severely limited fundraising

Hopes for 2021:

- completion of the school chapel
- renovation of existing home on the Chacocente campus that is currently unoccupied
- successful return of delegation teams
- plan to address the water needs of our neighbors
- hiring an additional English teacher

**SCHOOL #17 ENRICO FERMI AND SCHOOL #45 MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE**  
HELP ME READ PROGRAM

School year 2019-2020

This is the fifth year of Asbury 1<sup>st</sup> involvement. The Help Me Read Program is a partnership with the Celebration of Life Program and the Arc of Jesus Ministries. Volunteers work with students in schools from impoverished neighborhoods on reading skills. All volunteers that participate take a training session which explains how the program works prior to volunteering. Each session with students is about one- half hour with most people completing two sessions per week. All students are matched with volunteers through a Help Me Read Coordinator who is at the school.

Because of the COVID -19 Virus this program was stopped last February. All Rochester City Schools have been closed with students being taught by their teachers with a computer. Currently, there is a Pilot Help Me Read Program being used at school 17 with a few volunteers from Asbury 1<sup>st</sup>. Each volunteer works with one student for about 40 minutes. Volunteers usually work with two students in a session. The volunteers read an online story to students working on comprehension skills. Then, the student reads to the volunteer with a teacher selected book helping with decoding skills. In the last part of the session students work on a related reading activity. Before the COVID stopped school there were about 20 volunteers from Asbury 1<sup>st</sup> working with students each week. The COVID - 19 has greatly reduced the number of volunteers.

Last year the effect of the reading program showed how it was making a difference in the school. School 17 is no longer a receiver school as named from the New York State Education Department. Student's reading scores continued to improve. School 17 was designated as a neighborhood school from the board of education. Most schools in the city of Rochester are not. There is now a waiting list to get into School 17.

The Outreach Committee continues to support School #17 Tyshaun Caldwell Memorial Scholarship Awards. The scholarship is given each year to four sixth graders in memory of a highly talented student who was killed by a stray gunshot. Scholarship money is put into a college fund to be held till the students finish high school. The awards were given out this year in May.

Future Goals 2019 - 2020

We have met with the principal to see how else we could help in the school or neighborhood. We were working on a project to help with clothes for the school community. A reorganization of the clothing supply was started and needs to be completed. New shelves were bought and put together. Some additional shelving needs to be built with Asbury help. This was not able to be completed last year as the principal ran out of fund in her budget.

We were not able to do our yearly school supplies drive because of the COVID. It looks like the schools may reopen in February. That may be a good time to get help from the congregation for school supplies. Some additional needs that both schools have are coats, mittens and gloves for children in the winter. We will see how we can help.

JohnSmalt

School #17 and #45 Coordinator

## **DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY AREA**

## **DISCIPLESHIP TEAM**

The “Discipleship Team” is a group that came together in 2019 to begin organizing the discipleship ministries of Asbury First. We began by defining the term discipleship in our context:

- Discipleship” is the current term for what used to be called “Christian education”.
- Difference between “discipleship” and “outreach”
  - “Outreach” - community with those outside of the congregation.
  - “Discipleship” - community with those in the congregation.

With that in mind, we defined our team mission as follows:

- Generate and manage a portfolio of activities sufficient to engage as many members of the congregation as possible. (Ultimate goal is “all” members.)

To date, the team has developed a draft process flow and begun defining the nature of work for the various process steps in that flow. We anticipated deploying the new process on a trial basis in early 2020, but we took a hiatus when the Pandemic began shutting things down. This group looks forward to continuing its work in 2021.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

It was a year that we soon won't forget. A pandemic that physically kept us apart but didn't stop us from creatively finding ways to connect. Here below are the highlights of the year, followed by our goals for 2021.

- 1) Our annual Game Night was on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>. It was open to all, and was held in the Gathering Center due to the remodeling of Fellowship Hall.
- 2) This year's Winter VBS theme was Camp Kindness. We had a goal of completing 200 acts of kindness in 3 days to celebrate our church's 200 anniversary. We had over 60 children attend this 3-day event and we had 16 volunteers (6 adults and 10 youth) and one mascot Kirby the Kindness Kangaroo.
- 3) Then in March when we normally have our annual Pretzel Sunday, we had to go virtual. We created an eblast for families that included the recipe for pretzels, the history of why we make pretzels in church and a video of Mr. Rogers visiting a pretzel factory. We asked the families to share with us pictures of the pretzels they made at home.
- 4) During the following months of social distancing here are the ways we stayed connected:
  - Visiting each child on their birthday in a minion costume with a small present.
  - Weekly Zoom time with Miss Holly and Miss Paula, where we connected by playing games and singing songs.
  - During our live stream Sunday services, children's time is provided by us and a puppet named Jimmy
- 5) In June we took our annual talent show virtual and put together a recorded show that could be viewed by the congregation.
- 6) In August we had a virtual VBS called Camp 1820. The children lived life like it was back in the year 1820, the year our church was founded. We made videos for the children to watch at home. They learned to make candles, cornhusk dolls, and butter. Stephen Cady also made a video about the beginnings of our church.
- 7) In October we organized a churchwide Drive-In movie in our parking lot. We watched *The Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown* and *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. We had over 40 cars attend.
- 8) In November to celebrate our third graders we hand delivered Bibles to 18 children. Stephen Cady and Paula Dugan went to their homes. Then we presented pictures of these children receiving their bibles during our service.
- 9) In December we really thought outside of the box and were able to give the children a Christmas Pageant to remember. While maintaining social distancing and mask wearing we filmed the children acting out the Christmas story in staggered small groups at 2 different farms over 2 different weekends. We had over 50 children and lots of animals. The result was a sweet 15-minute

- video that was watched by over 600 households on Christmas Eve. We wrote an article about this different approach to the pageant for the Upper New York Conference of the UMC which was posted in their December newsletter issue about keeping Christmas traditions alive.
- 10) Also, in December we hand delivered 84 personalized ornaments to the homes of each of our Asbury children. We received multiple emails from families thanking us for the visit and telling us how great it was to see church staff in person.

### GOALS FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY 2021

- 1) Find creative ways to stay connected with the children and families during this pandemic.
- 2) Clean and purge all the classrooms.
- 3) Prepare to use Shelby Next software for sign-in and data management when the children are back in-person.

## YOUTH MINISTRIES

### COVID-19 Update

Just like everything else, our youth ministries were significantly impacted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. What began with calling off a youth group meeting in March led to canceled mission trips, fundraisers, and myriad annual gatherings. And while we mourn the loss of many of these programs and ministries, our youth ministry has continued. Even in the absence of being able to gather in person, we continue to offer weekly opportunities for our youth to engage via Zoom. This is not ideal, but it is something. And it has even provided us new opportunities like experimenting with baking nights; virtual gaming; and painting parties. Below, is our traditional annual report.

### PURPOSE

*Welcome. Celebrate. Serve. All.*

The youth program at Asbury First is open to all 6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> 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
- ⤴ Youth Vocal Choir
- ⤴ College-Age Fellowship
- ⤴ Annual Youth Outings

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2020

#### **Sunday Morning**

- ⤴ With the onset of the pandemic, and the already prolific onset of screen time, we decided to take a break from youth-specific Sunday school offerings. Youth continue to be invited to participate in worship and the [adult] Sunday school offerings.

### **Confirmation Class**

- ⤴ Eight confirmands were received into fellowship of AFUMC in the fall of 2020.
- ⤴ While this was pre-recorded on a Saturday for inclusion in the Sunday service, the rite of passage was still full of reverence and meaning for the families that participated in person.
- ⤴ Confirmation has continued for our 2020-2021 class, but has thus far been entirely on Zoom. We are hopeful that we might meet in person prior to confirmation in the spring.
- ⤴ Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady is once again leading the confirmation class in bi-monthly meetings.

### **Sunday Evening Youth Group**

- ⤴ Youth Leadership – Our youth gatherings have shifted a bit, but 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 twelve seniors who graduated high school in 2020. We also honored six college grads and one graduate degree recipient.
- ⤴ Youth Sunday – Our Youth Sunday service has a compilation of live-stream and pre-recorded videos. We had five seniors gather in the sanctuary the day before to pre-record their sermons, and we had numerous youth record readings in their homes to add in to other portions of the worship service.
- ⤴ Retreats – SOLID Youth Winter Retreat at Casowasco in January. All of our other retreats were canceled due to the pandemic.
- ⤴ Fundraising: Souper Bowl Soup Sale; Pie for Pi Sale. Our Pie for Pi sale happened in the midst of the shut-down, but because the pies are made and then immediately frozen, we were able to sell them in the fall.
- ⤴ Senior High Mission Trip – We were planning to head to Nicaragua to partner with Project Chacocente for a week. Instead, we put together a stay-at-home mission opportunity and encouraged youth to participate in daily projects and Zoom fellowship gatherings.
- ⤴ Middle School Mission Trip – We were planning to head to the Adirondacks to volunteer and spend some time in nature. Instead, we put together a stay-at-home mission opportunity and encouraged youth to participate in daily projects and one Zoom gathering at the end of the week.

### **Youth Music**

- ⤴ The Youth Choir has continued to meet during the pandemic and has even produced music for our worship services. Carol Lamica compiled individual recordings from each of the youth to put together a song for both our Youth Sunday service and for our Christmas Eve service.
- ⤴ The youth choir continues to gather and rehearse on Zoom on Wednesday evenings.

## **College-Age Fellowship**

- ⤴ The youth group put together and sent care packages to our 2020 graduates in October.
- ⤴ We had been working towards planning a college/young adult trip for both the summer of 2020 and for winter break of 2020/2021. Neither were able to happen, but we continue to look forward to future offerings for this age bracket.

## **General**

- ⤴ Connectional:
  - ⤴ Mike continues to be in conversation with local ministry leaders to think through how we can continue to offer interreligious offerings. Some of our youth were able to submit recordings for inclusion in an interfaith transgender day of remembrance service this fall.
  - ⤴ Mike has continued to be in contact with the leadership of the Global Citizenship Conference held annually at Nazareth College. Some of our youth had the opportunity to participate through their schools in 2020 just prior to our shut down.
  - ⤴ In the fall, we were able to offer monthly outings for our youth. One of these highlights included our annual trip to Long Acre Farms and the Amazing Maize Maze.
- ⤴ Outreach:
  - ⤴ Summer Mission Trips focused on local Rochester initiatives and communities.
  - ⤴ Instead of caroling this December, our youth sent out Christmas cards to various members of our Asbury First community. We had 40 youth commit to sending out Christmas cards to 375 individuals!

## Additional Comments:

- ⤴ 2020 was certainly not the year that we had planned for. The physical separation continues to be a challenge for our youth ministries. One of the most significant aspects of youth ministry is the ability to come together in fellowship. There is a different experience between gathering on Zoom, gathering in person at church, going on a weekend retreat, and attending a week-long mission trip. Each of these may be beneficial, but the general impact increases with each as well. A Zoom youth group gathering does not provide the same escape or function that an in-person gathering offers. And so, while we continue to offer ministry opportunities, we also look forward to rebuilding what has been lost in the past year once we are able to gather together in person once again.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Mullin – Minister for Youth and Discipleship

## **RESOURCE LIBRARY COMMITTEE**

**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.**

2020 WORK PROGRESS:

- The committee 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 continues to be reviewed in preparation for the move of the CSL collection from the building 1010 Meditation Room into the Church Resource Library spaces when the building use of 1010 undergoes change.
- We continue to periodically update our collection lists by title and author – housed 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 on-line listing of the church library collection enabling on-line 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.
- We continue 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 committee meetings (by zoom since March) to go over suggestions for new materials and plan for work days, book discussions, fundraisers, library usage, and special projects.
- A group from the committee continues to work on Saturday afternoons– 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. A Letter goes out to the ministerial staff each year and there are regular meetings and communication with staff.
- We continue a monthly book usage report adapting to the library closure since March due to the pandemic.
- The committee continues to plan our work in support of the children’s group and the youth group.
- The committee 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.

#### 2020 EVENTS:

Barnes and Noble Fundraiser–November 20-25 - Annual Book Fair with Barnes and Noble (held virtually this year) resulting in raising additional funds for our library collection development.

Asbury Christmas Sale Fundraiser– This activity was cancelled 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.

#### GOALS 2021

- Promotion of the usage of the library by all members of the congregation will continue to be an emphasis of the committee.
- We continue to work toward having library cards made for all library users and having more library staffing for assistance to users for additional hours.
- We signed up for an additional year of service that allows people to search the library catalog online. This will be continued again for 2021 with additional notices placed in the Visitor, web site, and the weekly 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 Committee 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.

Committee Members: Chris Burton, Monica Gilligan, Karen Hibbard, Bonnie Kay, Peggy Lyons, Carol Roote, Beth Woolever. Member Emeritus: Sharon Crouch.  
Submitted 1/21/21 by Peggy Lyons.