

2023
ANNUAL REPORT

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST,
CONGREGATIONAL**

VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

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PROPOSED AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

January 28, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER by the Moderator, Jessica Messersmith
2. DECLARATION OF A QUORUM (At least 40 members constitute a quorum.)
3. INVOCATION
4. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING
5. ACCEPTANCE OF THE REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP
6. ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER’S REPORT
7. ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANNUAL REPORTS - Moderator, Pastor, Music Team, Church Administrator, Boards, Committees and Others
8. OLD BUSINESS
9. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. 2024 Budget Report
 - B. Election of 2024 Boards and Officers
 - C. Other Business
10. SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF FORTY-YEAR MEMBERS
11. “IN MEMORIAM” - To recognize those members who have died during 2023
12. INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES
13. REMARKS by Jessica Messersmith, Moderator
14. INTRODUCE NEW MODERATOR, Susan Hackemer
15. BENEDICTION
16. ADJOURNMENT

**OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES
AND OTHER POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP FOR 2023
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL OF VERMILLION, SD**

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

PASTOR: Rev. Katie Miller (June – December)
 INTERIM PASTOR: Rev. Jean Morrow (January - Mid-April)
 VISITATION PASTOR: Rev. Elaine Miller (January - June)
 TREASURER: Joanne Ustad
 ASSISTANT TREASURERS: (Appointed by Cabinet) Deb Thomas, Karon Fuller
 MUSIC TEAM: Gretchen Burbach, Anthony Burbach, Diane Van Den Oever
 MEDIA DIRECTOR: Paul Ebsen

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

PASTOR (Ex Officio): Rev. Katie Miller
 TREASURER (Ex Officio): Joanne Ustad
 MODERATOR: Jessica Messersmith
 MODERATOR-ELECT: Susan Hackemer
 DIACONATE: Becca Jordre
 EDUCATION COORDINATOR: Kari Jensen
 STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR: Kathy Chandler
 TRUSTEES: Rhonda Hulkonen
 OUTREACH COORDINATOR: Lana Sven
 MEMBER-AT-LARGE: Jama Christopherson
 MEMBER-AT-LARGE: Katey Ulrich
 MEMBER-AT-LARGE: Jackie Hendry

MEMBERS OF CHURCH BOARDS

Diaconate

Dennis Nelsen	2024	James Walker	2025
Doug Tuve	2024	Becca Jordre	2025
Cleo Edeburn	2024	Connie Nelsen	2026
Mecia Graham	2024	Bruce Gray	2026
Anne Bottesini	2025	Pat Armstrong	2026
Diane Leja	2025		

Board of Trustees

Rhonda Hulkonen	2024	Keith Thomas	2025
Jake Kerby	2024	Julia Kleinschmit	2026
Ross Dickenson	2025	Tyler Messersmith	2026

EDUCATION COORDINATOR	Kari Jensen	2024
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STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR	Kathy Chandler	2024
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OUTREACH COORDINATOR	Lana Svien	2024
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COMMITTEES

(Endowment Committee)

Susan Tuve	2024	Greg Redlin	2027
Kathryn Birkland	2025	Darwin Van Den Oever	2028
Dave Carr	2026		

And by Virtue of their Church Office: Moderator, Chair of Trustees, Church Treasurer, Pastor

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

<u>Organist</u>	Diane Van Den Oever, Henrique Fortunato, Intern
<u>Pianist</u>	Anthony Burbach
<u>Adult Choir</u>	Gretchen Burbach
<u>Children's Choir</u>	Gretchen Burbach, Ali Guilloz, Intern; Accompanist, Anthony Burbach
<u>Bell Choir</u>	Anthony Burbach

EDUCATION

B.C.	Lauren Meyer, Kari Jensen
Confirmation	Kari Jensen, Pat Flanigan
Loaves and Fishes	Christian Education Team
Adult Bible Study	Jean Morrow, Katie Miller

OTHER POSITIONS OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR – Joanne Ustad

CHURCH SECRETARY – Barb Weyhrich

MEDIA DIRECTOR – Paul Ebsen

CUSTODIANS - Barbara Jacobson, Kathleen Hasenbank

INTERNS

(Spring 2023)

Ali Guilloz	Arts Intern - Choir
Carson Lee	Media Intern
Lauren Meyer	Education Intern - Youth
Ellis (Elli) Kruse	Pastoral Intern - Visitation
Elle Hoops	Educational Intern - LAF
Libby Brust	Educational Intern - Preschool
Henrique Fortunato	Arts Intern- Organ & Piano
Adam Lange	Arts Intern- Choir
Kevin Phillips	Arts Intern- Choir
Elizabeth Peirce	Arts Intern- Choir

(Fall 2023)

Shaelyn Laferty	Arts Intern - Choir, Alto
Jozie Kumm	Media Intern
Lauren Meyer	Education Intern - Youth
Calli Barnick	Pastoral Intern - Visitation
Elle Hoops	Educational Intern - Preschool
Libby Brust	Educational Intern - LAF
Henrique Fortunato	Arts Intern- Organ & Piano
Sam VanGerpen	Arts Intern- Choir, Tenor
Josh Styskal	Arts Intern- Choir, Bass
Elisabeth Peirce	Arts Intern- Choir, Soprano

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL
VERMILLION, SD
January 29, 2023

Moderator Jake Kerby called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm. Joanne Ustad announced that there was a quorum of 47 members in the sanctuary and 5 members on Zoom.

Pastor Jean Morrow led us in prayer.

Jake Kerby asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting. Jerry Bartels made a motion to approve the minutes. Dave Hulkonen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jake Kerby asked for a motion to accept the Report of Membership, Treasurer's Report and annual reports contained in the 2022 Annual Report. Jerry Bartels made a motion to accept all the reports. Mecia Graham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: No old business.

NEW BUSINESS: Rhonda Hulkonen gave an overview of the budget for 2023. In mid-December, we were about \$56,000 short of the budget total. We were looking at many cuts to meet the budget. The good news is that we didn't have to make any cuts. We received an additional \$15,000 in pledges for 2023, and \$15,000 from the Endowment Fund to pay the interest on our loan. Pastor Jean Morrow's last Sunday with us is April 16. That way there will be a gap before Pastor Katie starts on June 1 and will also save money on salary for six weeks or so. There were two lines in the budget that were higher than expected, there was a large increase in insurance for our building, and the music budget. Funds from the music endowment and gifts were designated but not yet received, so the music budget did not go over. Towards the end of 2022 the pledge deficit was printed in the bulletin. Sandy Dickenson asked how close we came to catching up with those pledges, and Rhonda said we came out okay. Jake asked if everyone accepted the budget, and everyone said yes.

Jake then asked if there was a motion to accept the election of the boards. Julia Kleinschmit made a motion to accept the people elected to the boards. Jerry Bartels seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jake asked Rhonda Hulkonen as chair of the Trustee board and Joanne Ustad as the church administrator to come and sign the contract for our new pastor, Katie Miller. Jake Kerby also signed the contract as moderator. After the signing, Jake went to the back of the church where we had the checklist hung and marked the last box. Katie's salary was decided by the guidelines of the Tri Conference guidelines. Her salary and benefits package, including a housing allowance, will be \$92,175.

Pastor Jean recognized the long-standing members of our church. She asked those members attending to stand. We have quite a few long-time members that are active. Pastor Jean also recognized our members that we lost in 2022. Ed Flanigan passed in May, and Thelma Raines passed in July. She also installed the members that were elected to the boards and all that attended the meeting as we have our missions.

Jake Kerby gave remarks as the outgoing moderator. He thanked everyone for working together during this year of transition and said it was a lot of work, but an honor to serve as moderator. He then turned it over to the incoming moderator Jessica Messersmith. She is excited to be the new moderator. Jake asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kari Jensen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Becca Jordre seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara A. Weyhrich, Clerk

ANNUAL REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

Baptisms (4)

Oakley Ryan Gortmaker, daughter of Jaida and Drew Gortmaker, June 25, 2023

Holden Gene Gauer, son of Alexa and Broc Gauer, July 2, 2023

Harrison Rist Ebsen, son of Taylor and Paul Ebsen, July 30, 2023

Bowie Amundson, daughter of Devin and Tom Amundson, October 29, 2023

New Members

Confirmation April 16, 2023 (9)

Lydia Claire Anderson

Josephine Clair Askew

Skylar Lee Gilman

Georgia Kay Johnson

Wilson James Jordre

Addelle Ro Mahowald

Ella Jean Messersmith

Tessa Marie Peterson

Mya Audrey Welch

New Members

February 6, 2023 (3)

Ed Allen

Adam and Laura Chandler

New Members

October 15, 2023 (3)

Cleo Anderson

Kacie Hall

Hilda Larbi

Confirmation October 15, 2023 (1)

Gary Dennis Merkwan

Members Transferred(0)

Deaths (member) (2) (*non-member) (3)

*Loren D. Anderson, July 6, Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion, SD

*Lowell Macy, July 15, Graveside service at Bluff View Cemetery, Vermillion, SD

Kay Powell, deceased July 20, United Church of Christ, Vermillion, SD, burial in Kingsley, IA

*David Brian Armstrong, Memorial Service, August 4 in Prentis Park, Vermillion, SD

Peg Amant, December 5, 2023, No service as requested by Peg.

Marriages (3)

Alyssa Gregg and Matthew Hirsch, August 6, 2023, United Church of Christ, Congregational, Vermillion, SD

Randi Miller and Tim Washburn, August 11, 2023, Junto Winery, Seward, NE

Madison Schallmayer and Chris Olarasu, September 6, 2023, United Church of Christ, Congregational, Vermillion, SD

Active Members January 1, 2023	671
New Members	16
Deaths	-2
Members Transferred	<u>0</u>
Active Members December 31, 2023	685

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIACONATE

In 2023 the diaconate served to support our annual meeting lunch, two new-member welcome breakfasts, our Easter vigil and sunrise service, the farewell event for our interim pastor in April, our welcome Sunday for our new pastor in June, and the installation/homecoming event in September along with other small events throughout the church year. We continued our weekly tasks to support Sunday services and the distribution of communion. We were short one deacon this year and have three members who completed their terms in 2023. We look forward to welcoming four new members to the diaconate this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Becca Jordre, Chair

ANNUAL REPORT TROOP 66

NO REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MODERATOR

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the year summarizing the significant events, achievements, and challenges faced by our church community. It was an honor to serve as the moderator during this year of transition and new beginning. The past year represents progress for the UCC Vermillion, and this report provides the opportunity to reflect on the collective efforts that have shaped our shared journey.

At the beginning of 2023, our church was grateful to be under the spiritual leadership of our Interim Pastor Jean Morrow. Through the first four months of the year, the comprehensive leadership of the church occurred through a combination of efforts by Jean, Elaine Miller, Barb, Joanne, Kari, and lay leadership. During this interim period, some church programming was reduced. Still, the core of the UCC Vermillion (e.g., music and youth programming) continued as excitement grew for a new settled pastor.

The Settled Pastor Search Committee identified a candidate for our settled pastor in early January. This candidate, Katie Miller, spent the weekend of January 21st and 22nd, 2023 with the UCC Vermillion. During this visit, Katie met with the search committee and church members, explored the community, and provided a sermon to the UCC Vermillion congregation on January 22nd. At the conclusion of this service, the congregation of the UCC Vermillion unanimously voted to invite Pastor Katie Miller to join our church community as our settled pastor. Pastor Katie graciously accepted this call and her first day was identified as June 1, 2023.

Pastor Jean continued in her interim role until April 16th, 2023, which was also the day we welcomed this year's confirmation class to church membership. Our congregation was joined by individuals from the Tri-State Conference on April 16th to release Jean from service to the UCC Vermillion. We were very thankful for Jean and her willingness to support our church during our time of transition. She was a beloved member of our community for several years before her return as our interim Pastor. It was wonderful to have her as a member of our community again.

Between Jean's release as our interim pastor and Pastor Katie's arrival, church lay leadership led church service, provided sermons, led bible study, and carried out other church functions. Kari Jensen, Barb Weyhrich, and Joanne Ustad, as their usual wonderful selves, took on a particularly heavy lift during this time. The UCC Vermillion cannot fully express our gratitude for these amazing people. The UCC Vermillion is eternally grateful for them and thankful they continue to be willing to serve our church.

On June 1, 2023, Katie Miller joined the UCC Vermillion and led her first church service on June 4, 2023. Katie brought with her energy, new ideas, and light, everything the UCC Vermillion hoped for. With Pastor Katie's arrival, the church returned to full church programming in the fall of 2023. We kicked off the fall season with a Homecoming Sunday Community Carnival on September 10th. A highlight of this day, which will live on in the lore of the UCC youth, was the placement of a full-sized bouncy house in the front of the sanctuary. Following the Community Carnival was Pastor Katie's installation service. Our church community was joined again by members of the Tri-State Conference and members of Katie Miller's family, friends, and life community. At the

conclusion of this service, Pastor Katie officially joined our congregation as our settled pastor. Pastor Katie has already become a beloved member of our church and our community. We are thankful to have her with us and excited for what our shared future holds.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Messersmith, Moderator

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UCC MEDIA DIRECTOR

The year 2023 marked a period of significant growth, adaptability, and innovation for the Media Team at the United Church of Christ. Amidst key transitions and new additions to the team, we navigated through challenges and embraced opportunities to enhance our digital presence and community engagement.

Key Highlights:

Welcoming Jozie Kumm, Media Intern:

In May, our former intern Carson Lee graduated from USD. The Media Team welcomed the new intern, Jozie Kumm. Jozie brought fresh perspectives, enthusiasm, and technical skills that enriched our projects and expanded our capabilities.

Transition to Pastor Katie Miller:

June witnessed a pivotal transition as we welcomed Pastor Katie Miller. The Media Team played a crucial role in facilitating a seamless introduction of Pastor Miller to the congregation. Through engaging multimedia content and live broadcasts, we ensured the congregation felt connected and familiar with our new pastoral leadership. Katie has also stepped up and has made significantly more engaging social media posts than we have had in previous years, bolstering our Facebook community.

Collaboration with Music and Pageant Teams:

Working in synergy with the Music and Pageant Teams, the Media Team undertook the challenge of bringing the essence of live music and pageants to our online audience. Through innovative video production, sound engineering, and creative storytelling, we succeeded in delivering an immersive online experience, replicating the ambiance and emotions of these events virtually. During the Christmas Pageant, we supported the dialogue by putting up a projection screen and projecting the words on screen. This helped support the overall understanding of the pageant. We also used 10 microphones to capture the radio style Christmas Pageant, as well as incorporating an extra camera to catch everything.

Enhanced Meeting Spaces and Streaming Equipment:

An essential upgrade involved moving the bible study/meeting streaming equipment to the library, creating an improved space for classes and meetings. This move not only facilitated better organization but also provided a conducive environment for learning and interaction.

Improvements in Nursery and Church Connectivity:

The installation of a TV in the nursery, along with enhanced Wi-Fi connectivity at the back of the church, enabled a more inclusive experience during services. Families with children in the nursery could now watch the live stream, ensuring they felt connected to the congregation despite being in a different part of the church.

Support for Outdoor Services:

Acknowledging the importance of outdoor services, the media team provided sound reinforcement, ensuring clear audio transmission and an enhanced experience for congregants attending these services. Outdoor services included a funeral and the pet blessing.

New Headset Microphone:

After a couple of years struggling to have the pastor's mic stay firmly over their ear, we decided to purchase a double over the ear microphone. This not only helped the presenters feel more comfortable, but we received multiple praises that the speakers are heard more clearly as well. We now have 2 double over the ear microphones, with the single ears as a backup.

Conclusion:

The year 2023 has been a testament to the United Church of Christ Media Team's resilience, adaptability, and commitment to fostering a connected and inclusive community. The successful integration of new team members, seamless transitions in leadership, innovative technological upgrades, and collaborative efforts with various church teams have strengthened our digital presence and community engagement.

Acknowledgments:

The Media Team extends sincere gratitude to Pastor Katie Miller, the Music and Pageant Teams, and all members of the congregation for their unwavering support, trust, and engagement. The success and growth of the Media Team would not have been possible without their collaboration and encouragement.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Ebsen

ANNUAL REPORT FOR WORLD SERVICE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS
NO REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees have had very little business this year. The building upgrades of the recent past have kept us from having to spend much money on repairs to our building. We upgraded some appliances--a new dishwasher that was primarily funded by donations toward that specific goal, and a new refrigerator purchased through an anonymous gift.

In the spring, a clean-up day was held. Volunteers weeded, raked, and generally cleaned up the grounds surrounding the church building.

Financially, it was a tough year. We ended the year having spent more than we received. Some expenses were higher than we anticipated. Some of the income we expected, including pledges, did not come in as planned.

As the Trustees prepared the budget for the 2024 year, we had to make some very difficult decisions. We realize that coming back after the events of the past few years (COVID, losing a long-time pastor, general inflation) means that the congregation will need to look at finances a bit differently, at least temporarily. It is our hope that the cuts made this year will not be permanent and that next year we will be in a better financial position.

Respectfully submitted,
Rhonda Hulkonen, Chair

ANNUAL REPORT OF STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

“In the Midst of New Dimensions” from Ecclesiastes 3:11 was the theme for our 2023 stewardship drive.

This has been a year of new dimensions. We are thankful to now have a full-time pastor and are trying to get all our programming up and running at full speed again. With ongoing costs, and the increasing costs of inflation, we asked our members and friends for an increase in their financial gifts.

The cabinet approved a careful budget of \$338,583 with a pledge goal of \$293,758. This was a 16% increase over last year. We were unable to reach our pledge goal. The Trustees then had the difficult task of cutting about \$24,000 from some of the programs to balance the budget. On behalf of the church and personally, I would like to thank everyone who pledged for 2024. With each of us stretching our financial gifts and offering to help in areas where cutbacks were necessary, we will hopefully be able to continue all the wonderful programs we all enjoy and appreciate so much!

I would also like to extend a special THANK YOU to all those that participated in making contacts with our members and friends this year. Without your hard and dedicated work, we would not have been able to accomplish nearly as much as we did.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Chandler

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATOR

The Loave and Fishes (LAF) program has had another successful year with the addition of the evening supper being added again the fall of 2023. The meal is served on Wednesday evenings from 5:30 - 6:00 pm. Our volunteers have been serving on average 35-50 people. Then from 6:00-7:00 pm the children meet together in the sanctuary for songs and fellowship. At 6:15, the children disperse with different age groups for their various activities. Pre-school - 1st grade, 2nd-5th grade and the BC group of 6th and 7th grade students. Pastor Katie wrote and directed a wonderful Christmas Pageant for the children. The same interns were with us once again. Lauren Meyer worked with the BC students. Ellie Hoops and Libby Brust helped with LAF. We had another successful Bible School in May that was well attended. 35-45 children spent a week doing crafts, learning new songs, and sharing fellowship. We confirmed our current freshman class of students, and our Confirmation I class has been meeting on Sunday mornings. They had a successful fundraising event at the Star lighting soup supper. They also entertained 25 homes with their Christmas Caroling talents. I am constantly reminded of the amazing generosity and goodwill that our church family has to offer. I am truly blessed to be a part of the UCC family.

Respectfully submitted,
Kari Jensen

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl ministry is a remarkable source of comfort to folks in need of caring, soft, thoughtful care. The shawls continue to be appreciated and used by the folks they have been presented to. A small group of women crochet and/or knit these shawls in a variety of material and colors to be distributed as needed. We also have fleece lap robes. We have many on hand at the church and Cyndy also has a variety at her home. If you know of someone who needs one, please contact the church office.

Respectfully submitted,
Cyndy Chaney

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRAYER TEAM

NO REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

The Endowment Fund Committee is charged with oversight of the investments for the Endowment Fund. We also determine the annual payout from the two accounts comprising the Endowment Fund.

The endowed funds are invested with the United Church Funds, the organization that invests money for many churches and organizations of the United Church of Christ. We began working with the United Church Funds in 2006. Our assets are invested in the UCF Balanced Fund which provides a 60% exposure to diversified equity markets and a 40% exposure to high quality fixed income vehicles and cash. Because this report is produced before calendar year numbers are available, and because we provide payout information at the time the budgets and needs of our congregation are formalized, we report annual numbers on an October 1-September 30th year.

It has been a year of ups and downs for the financial markets. The UCF Balanced Fund had a +4.89% return from January-September 2023. From October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023, the return was +11.99%

It was another challenging year for our congregation. The trustees came to us requesting money to pay down the loan that had been taken out for needed repairs to the church property. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that governs how the payout from the Building and Property Account is to be spent clearly states the payout is not to be used for ongoing maintenance. After discussion the committee agreed a partial pay down of our loan to make capital repairs was in line with the MOA.

The next question was how much should the payout be in light of the challenging investment year. It is of note that any payout is based on a rolling 12 quarter average of the market value of the endowment. Endowment management is covered in the MOA and it states that in adverse market conditions the committee may elect to use endowment principal to fulfill the account's purpose as deemed prudent by the committee. Among the criteria for such determination "will be the preservation of principal, protection from the long-term effects of inflation, current and future funding necessary to fulfill the designated purpose of the fund, continuity in funding the designated purpose, expected total return on investments over the long term, and other relevant economic conditions." After discussion we agreed a 4% payout totaling \$17,460 was prudent. Market performance in the short term cannot be predicted, but long term a balanced approach to the markets should serve us well.

The payout from the Building and Property account was \$16,276.

The payout from the Music account in support of the 2023 Advent service was \$1,184

On September 30, 2023, the market value of the Endowment was \$ 411,060.09

On September 30, 2022, the market value of the Endowment was \$ 381,202.42

The Building and Property Account	Market value 9-30-2023	\$ 382,492.12
	Market value 9-30-2022	\$ 354,709.50

The Francis and June Armstrong Account	Market value 9-30-2023	\$ 28,567.97
	Market value 9-30-2022	\$ 26,492.92

The current members of the committee are David Carr, Greg Redlin, and myself. In 2023, both Kathryn Birkeland and Darwin VanDenOever resigned as they moved away from Vermillion.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Tuve, Chair

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MUSIC TEAM

The 2023 music team started the year with Anthony Burbach at the piano, Diane Van Den Oever at the organ, and Gretchen Burbach, directing the Adult and LAF choirs. Returning to the team was organ intern, Henrique Fortunato, a USD graduate piano student from Brazil. We finished the spring semester with USD Chamber Singer choir interns Ali, Busy, KJ, and Adam.

Diane, Henrique, and Anthony share responsibilities accompanying for Wednesday evening choir rehearsals and take turns preparing service music: Prelude, Offertory and Postlude. Diane plays for two Sundays, and Henrique and Anthony play one Sunday each. Anthony also directs the bell choir which rehearses in 6-week blocks prior to their featured services in the spring and Advent. Anthony continues to represent the music team at cabinet meetings and schedules the regular piano and organ tuning twice a year- spring and fall. Also, to be noted, we upgraded the organ bench to one that is easily adjusted to the needed height.

The 2023 choral season began the 1st weekend of January with a service featuring music of the USD Chamber Singers following their weekend choir retreat at the church. The UCC choir resumed rehearsals in January and on January 22nd, we were excited and honored to share Dan Forrest's, "Work of Christmas", for a special service led by our Pastoral Candidate, Katie Miller. The choir continued to sing for each Sunday service through the middle of May, with special selections for Lent, Palm/Passion Sunday, and were joined by brass for Easter. On Sunday, April 16th, the UCC choir, Bell choir, and LAF youth, shared special musical selections and a sung blessing for Jean Morrow's final service as our interim pastor.

Gretchen worked with LAF session music throughout the year, preparing and sharing youth music for LAF celebration Sundays and for Vacation Bible School. VBS 2023 was themed, "Earth Keepers", and music sessions explored music and instruments made from and inspired by nature. The VBS Sunday service on June 4th invited the congregation to participate in making a rainstorm in the sanctuary and featured VBS songs, "We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands" and "Put Your Roots Down". Following VBS, Gretchen and Diane worked to continue special music throughout the summer. Diane organized and led a "New Songs Group" that rehearsed Sunday mornings and Gretchen organized musical offerings from local musicians/bands.

At the end of August, we were again honored to host Dr. David Holdhusen and USD Chamber Singers for their retreat and enjoyed a Sunday service featuring their talents. The UCC choir resumed rehearsals in September and prepared music to welcome our new permanent pastor, Rev. Katie Miller, to our church. Sunday, September 10th, we celebrated with an afternoon carnival and live music from Paul Ebsen's pop-up band called, "Soulful Sanctuary". For Rev. Katie's installation service, the choir shared, "In Christ Alone", with brass and "The Lord Bless You and Keep You". We also welcomed a new group of choir interns for the fall 2023-2024 choir season: Elisabeth Peirce (soprano), Shaelyn Laferty (Alto), Josh Styskal (bass), and Sam VanGerpen (tenor). In October, the music team sadly accepted the resignation of Diane Van den Oever. We thank Diane for her time, talents, and friendship at UCC and wish her the best in her new position in Sioux Falls. We are blessed to welcome Michail Chalkiopoulos to the UCC music team and UCC family.

The music team was busy throughout Advent. The 1st Sunday of Advent featured the UCC Bell choir. The 2nd Sunday of Advent featured the 81st annual Christmas Carol service- sharing congregational carols and the beautiful, 2016 choral work "Small Dancing Light" by Taylor Scott Davis with 20-piece orchestra. Christmas Eve featured special music for the morning service and music from the UCC choir and guests, a vocal duet, and service music from the piano and organ for the evening candlelight service. The final Sunday of 2023 featured congregational carols and a special music solo.

We are especially grateful to have worked with Pastor Jean Morrow and organist, Diane Van Den Oever. We are excited for the renewed energy, creativity, and talents of Rev. Katie and are blessed for the privilege to work with all singers and instrumentalists who share their talents with us throughout the year. With gratitude for the unwavering support of our congregation, we will continue to thoughtfully and prayerfully select music which enriches our services and endeavors to fill the hearts of those who listen.

Respectfully submitted by the UCC Music Team,
Anthony Burbach, Pianist and Bell Choir Director
Gretchen Burbach, Adult and Youth (LAF) Choir Director

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

For many years, there was a very consistent cadence to this job. The last few years not so much. This year's journey began with Pastor Rev. Jean Morrow filling the role of Interim Pastor, and Rev. Elaine Miller assisting her with visitations. Our New Beginnings started in June when we welcomed Rev. Katie Miller as our new settled pastor.

Homecoming was our welcoming kick-off to Pastor Katie, and although the rain showers moved everything inside, the carnival with bouncy house, cotton candy, popcorn and live music went on!

In the fall we brought back the LAF dinner with a kitchen crew creating meals for kids, parents, and any others who would like to join on Wednesday during LAF. A new dishwasher and parents helping after the meal has been wonderful.

We continue to coordinate the Bell Ringing around Vermillion community during holiday season and appreciate everyone who went out in the cold to ring and gave to the Salvation Army Bell Ringing Campaign. We raised more than \$16,000 which will assist those in need. The volunteers do a great job working with the individuals to provide them with the help they need and provide additional resources for them as well and we always welcome new volunteers to share in this mission.

As always, a shout out to the rest of the staff, cabinet, and boards along with the many volunteers, who help keep the church systems running effectively and efficiently, providing services to those in need, assisting at LAF, and helping with Sunday worship and answering the call whenever we need. I am appreciative and continue to say it is a wonderful, caring place to work and our new beginning is off to a great start.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Ustad

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PASTOR

Greetings, Church, and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As I write this report, I am entering my 8th month here as minister of United Church of Christ Congregational in Vermillion. I am so incredibly grateful for the welcome that my small family and I have received here in our new home. What a wonderful and spirit-filled community and church family!

-HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR-

JUNE-AUGUST: We moved here! In my first few days, I was able to witness a joyful and well attended VBS at the church, with families from all over town. We spent the first months ironing out all the things that come with being a new member of a community, and in order to better get to know the congregation, I began holding regular coffee shop office hours downtown at the Bean. These sessions were very well attended, and I got to know many of the local church members better, as well as their names and faces. We provided breakfast for the Sundance folks, and I was moved to witness some of the ceremony. Gary Merkwon decided that a good use of his summertime while he was laid up with an injury would be doing an independent study Confirmation, so we met

weekly on that account. Much of this time was also spent prepping for the fall LAF sessions and establishing curriculum for them, as well as getting into the rhythm of weekly preaching and worship planning. We also decided to do a “supply drive” for the nursery here at church, it was very successful. A number of folks cleaned out the nursery, getting rid of old products, accepting donations of new ones, rearranging the room, and setting up a small playroom for the kids to enjoy.

SEPTEMBER: September was a very busy month, as we began all of our school year church programming, including LAF, Confirmation, and Bible Study. We decided that our LAF program for the year would consist of a 5:30 pm meal and classes from 6-7 pm, and all of them were very well attended, particularly for being the first year back for a meal post-covid.

Early in September, we held a Homecoming Celebration as well as my Installation as minister here at church. What a wonderful time we had, complete with carnival activities and a live band!

Late in September, we held a Pet Blessing on the lawn west of church, with around 15 dogs receiving blessings along with their guardians.

The following Sunday, we were honored to host a group of Tibetan Monks from the Gaden Shartse Monastery, who had spent the week creating a design in the Lee Med Building.

September also brought the knowledge of the departure of Diane Van Den Oever, longtime organist here at the church. We put out feelers to the Organ professors at USD and were pleased to welcome Michail Chalkiopolous in October.

OCTOBER: LAF, Bible Study, and Confirmation 1 continued, including our first LAF celebration in church, where the kids shared much of what they had learned over the course of the first session.

We enjoyed witnessing our first D-Days in Vermillion, which was, indeed, quite the event!!!

On October 9, I attended the annual South Dakota Conference gathering in Pierre, and was able to spend time with new colleagues across the state. There are many things at work in the SD Conference of the UCC, and it was wonderful to see all the goings on as I got to know my new state.

I spent a morning down at the CCC cooking a meal for the Red Road commemoration at the Armory with the Wase Wakpa community and was able to spend a little time witnessing the event.

NOVEMBER: LAF began work on our Christmas Pageant! What fun we had, and what a wonderful cast of characters participated in the journey!

November also saw the arrival of the new dishwasher at church, which the LAF folks and everyone was very excited to have and would come in very handy over the next few months.

On Nov. 12, we held a Harvest Dinner that was very well attended and cooked for. As it fell on the day that we hosted the Vermillion Children’s Choir in service, many folks were able to participate and try some foods they might not otherwise have been able to try.

We began our Stewardship campaign – In the Midst of New Dimensions – this month.

DECEMBER: Advent! Christmas! All the things!

I spent a lot of time prepping for the Christmas Pageant, which happened with rousing success on December 17th. Over 45 young people participated, with many adult helpers contributing. We are blessed here to have such dedicated families and kids who give so much time and energy to the church. It is a truly wonderful thing.

I also participated in the VCT Christmas Carol Dinner as a caroler and managed to not get covid in the meantime! It was one of the odd years, where Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday, making it the 4th Sunday of Advent. We had a service in the morning for the 4th Sunday of Advent, and a service in the evening for Christmas Eve.... And I look forward to next year when we can celebrate both instances on their own day!

GENERAL:

Since arriving here at UCC Vermillion, I believe I have done 5 funerals, 4 baptisms, and 3 weddings – most of which were in the summer! I regularly attend the Vermillion Ministerial Association meetings with my ministerial colleagues here in Vermillion and have enjoyed getting to know those folks greatly. This area of UCC churches in South Dakota is currently mostly served by female-identifying clergy, and I attend monthly lunch

check-ins with that group as well. I look forward to continuing involvement with these groups, as well as looking for new ways to be involved in the wider community and the conference.

I feel deep gratitude for all that this church is for the people who call this community home. We do the work, and we live out our commitments. I am excited for what the future will hold for us all as we continue to follow where the Spirit leads us in all that we do and all that we are!

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Katie Miller

RECOGNITION OF LONGTIME MEMBERS

Annual Meeting – January 28, 2024

MEMBERS FOR 40-44 YEARS

Dave Moen	09-30-84	40 years
Julie Moen	09-30-84	40 years
Tom French	5-25-80	43 years
Steve Ward	5-25-80	43 years
Richard Foltz	04-29-79	44 years
Frank Main	04-19-79	44 years
Mary Main	04-02-79	44 years

MEMBERS FOR 45-49 YEARS

Dale Husby	05-14-78	45 years
Stanley Lewison	04-30-78	45 years
Charles Thatcher	11-20-77	46 years
Sharon Teigen	01-25-76	47 years
Norman Kaufman	05-18-75	48 years
Alice Barnes	11-10-74	49 years
Nancy Zuercher	11-10-74	49 years

MEMBERS FOR 50 OR MORE YEARS

Robert Fuller	04-15-73	50 years
Michael Marek	05-16-71	52 years
Mary Lou Monfore	01-17-71	52 years
Karen Ferris	02-22-70	53 years
Dorene Becker	02-23-69	54 years
Cynthia Chaney	04-28-68	55 years
Sue French	04-28-68	55 years
Mardell Ebsen	11-17-68	55 years
Julia Chaney	04-17-66	57 years
Marilyn Gors	04-17-66	57 years
Mike Armstrong	11-27-66	57 years
Don Dahlin	12-4-66	57 years
Jeanne Dahlin	12-4-66	57 years
Molly Walters	12-4-66	57 years
Karon Fuller	04-15-62	62 years
Fern Kaufman	02-26-61	62 years
Mary Edelen	04-10-60	63 years
Sandy Lavin	04-10-60	63 years
Martin (Mike) Chaney	11-29-53	70 years

“WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT”

Your loyalty and service are precious gifts to the life of our Church.

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL
OF VERMILLION, SD
2024 BALLOT**

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Incumbent</u>	<u>Expires</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Expires</u>
Moderator	1 year	Jessica Messersmith	2024	Susan Hackemer	2025
Moderator Elect	1 year	Susan Hackemer	2024	Mel Ustad	2025
Treasurer	1 year	Joanne Ustad	2024	Joanne Ustad	2025
Assistant Treasurer	1 year	Deb Thomas	2024	Deb Thomas	2025
DIACONATE	3 years	Anne Bottesini	2025	Pat Armstrong	2026
		Diane Leja	2025	Lydia Anderson	2026
		James Walker	2025	Sarah Gregg	2027
		Becca Jordre	2025	Cleo Anderson	2027
		Connie Nelsen	2026	Hilda Larbi	2027
		Bruce Gray	2026	Dennis Nelsen	2027
TRUSTEES	3 years	Keith Thomas	2025	Tyler Messersmith	2026
		Ross Dickenson	2025	Becky Rider	2027
		Julia Kleinschmit	2026	Kacie Hall	2027
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR (1 year)				Kari Jensen	2025
STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR (1 year)				Kathy Chandler	2025
WORLD SERVICE/SOCIAL CONCERNS COORDINATOR (1 year)				Lana Svien	2025
MEMBERS AT LARGE (3 years)					
		Katey Ulrich	2025	Pat Flanigan	2027
		Jama Christopherson	2026		
ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE (6 years)					
		Don Dahlin	2025	Adam Chandler	2028
		Dave Carr	2026	Jake Kerby	2029
		Greg Redlin	2027		

Terms of office expire at the January annual meeting in the year listed.

**United Church of Christ Congregational, Vermillion, SD
2023 Treasurer's Report and Proposed 2024 Budget**

	<u>2023 Actual Income and Expenses</u>	<u>2023 Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>	<u>Proposed 2024 Budget</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
40100 · Annual Pledges	233,091.85	255,361.00	91.28%	259,349.55
40110 · Last Year Pledges	1,800.00	4,500.00	40.0%	4,500.00
40130 · Plate/Non-Pledge Contributions	12,553.84	19,000.00	66.07%	18,402.74
40140 · Prepaid Pledges and Gifts	13,169.00			
40160 · Bldg. Endowment Contribution	15,000.00	15,000.00	100.0%	15,000.00
40165 · Music Endowment Contribution	1,300.00	1,300.00	100.0%	1,300.00
40180 · Church Use Income	250.00	1,700.00	14.71%	1,000.00
40190 · USD Parking Lot Income	1,200.00	1,200.00	100.0%	
40200 · Interest Income - 1st B&T	22.36	100.00	22.36%	25.00
40230 · Holiday Offering	737.00	2,000.00	36.85%	2,000.00
40240 · Gifts	5,262.80	2,000.00	263.14%	13,000.00
Total Income	<u>284,386.85</u>	<u>302,161.00</u>	<u>94.12%</u>	<u>314,577.29</u>
Expense				
50100 · Staff Salaries				
50110 · Pastor	46,414.06	46,414.06	100.0%	70,212.01
50112 · Social Security Offset	3,042.06			5,371.22
50115 · Assistant Pastor	5,509.00	4,722.00	116.67%	
50120 · Parish Steward/Church Admin	31,620.00	31,620.00	100.0%	32,568.60
50125 · Secretary	12,240.00	12,240.00	100.0%	12,607.20
50130 · Organist	7,831.35	7,548.83	103.74%	7,775.29
50132 · Media Director	7,548.84	7,548.83	100.0%	7,775.29
50135 · Choir Director	7,548.84	7,548.83	100.0%	7,775.29
50140 · Bell Choir Director	7,548.84	7,548.83	100.0%	7,775.29
50160 · Custodians	14,500.08	14,500.00	100.0%	14,935.00
50170 · Interns	13,325.00	12,000.00	111.04%	9,800.00
50195 · Assistant Custodian	561.60			
Total 50100 · Staff Salaries	<u>157,689.67</u>	<u>151,691.38</u>	<u>103.95%</u>	<u>176,595.19</u>
50200 · Employee Benefits				
50210 · Annuity X 15.5%	14,162.29	15,425.67	91.81%	9,829.68
50215 · Health Insurance	4,707.46	5,000.00	94.15%	7,626.00
50220 · Dental Insurance	355.75			400.00
50225 · In-Service	0.00	1,545.00	0.0%	1,545.00
50290 · FICA Tax Contribution	7,680.78	6,993.45	109.83%	7,727.42
Total 50200 · Employee Benefits	<u>26,906.28</u>	<u>28,964.12</u>	<u>92.9%</u>	<u>27,128.10</u>
50300 · Professional Reimbursement				
50310 · Travel Expense	0.00	1,500.00	0.0%	1,500.00
50320 · Pastor Relocation Expense	352.76	4,000.00	8.82%	

50325 · Cont. Ed				<u>1,000.00</u>
Total 50300 · Professional Reimbursement	352.76	5,500.00	6.41%	<u>2,500.00</u>
51000 · Program Expenses				
51100 · Music				
51110 · Choirs (music/child care)	2,724.29	2,500.00	108.97%	2,000.00
51115 · Organ/Piano/Bell tuning	2,737.51	3,000.00	91.25%	3,000.00
51120 · Special Music (guests)	<u>2,375.00</u>	<u>2,500.00</u>	<u>95.0%</u>	<u>2,000.00</u>
51125 · Music Endowment				<u>1,300.00</u>
Total 51100 · Music	7,836.80	8,000.00	97.96%	<u>8,300.00</u>
51200 · Board Expenses				
51210 · Christian Education	3,773.98	4,000.00	94.35%	4,500.00
51225 · Diaconate	<u>2,773.27</u>	<u>2,000.00</u>	<u>138.66%</u>	<u>2,000.00</u>
Total 51200 · Board Expenses	<u>6,547.25</u>	<u>6,000.00</u>	<u>109.12%</u>	<u>6,500.00</u>
Total 51000 · Program Expenses	14,384.05	14,000.00	102.74%	<u>14,800.00</u>
51300 · Church Operation Exp				
50540 · Telephone/Internet Expenses	4,184.25	3,700.00	113.09%	3,700.00
50550 · Audit	0.00	1,000.00	0.0%	
50560 · Service Contracts-Office	5,977.11	4,800.00	124.52%	5,500.00
51310 · Office Supplies	1,730.11	1,500.00	115.34%	1,500.00
51315 · Computer	1,540.02	3,000.00	51.33%	3,000.00
51317 · Media Equipment	115.02	500.00	23.0%	
51320 · Kitchen Supplies	624.34	1,000.00	62.43%	500.00
51340 · Church Use -add'l custodial	<u>0.00</u>	<u>300.00</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	
Total 51300 · Church Operation Exp	14,170.85	15,800.00	89.69%	<u>14,200.00</u>
51400 · Grounds				
51410 · Lawn, Snow, Mulch , Seed	1,055.19	3,000.00	35.17%	2,000.00
51415 · Property Tax	<u>192.73</u>	<u>288.40</u>	<u>66.83%</u>	<u>250.00</u>
Total 51400 · Grounds	1,247.92	3,288.40	37.95%	<u>2,250.00</u>
51500 · Building Operations				
51510 · Service Contracts-Building	2,781.72	2,700.00	103.03%	3,680.00
51515 · Natural Gas	4,606.52	6,000.00	76.78%	5,500.00
51520 · Electric, Water, Sewer, Garbage	8,404.75	7,500.00	112.06%	7,500.00
51525 · Custodial Supplies	<u>430.60</u>	<u>750.00</u>	<u>57.41%</u>	<u>500.00</u>
Total 51500 · Building Operations	16,223.59	16,950.00	95.71%	<u>17,180.00</u>
51600 · Building Repairs & Maintenance				
51620 · Misc. Repairs	<u>2,933.34</u>	<u>2,543.08</u>	<u>115.35%</u>	<u>2,000.00</u>
Total 51600 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	2,933.34	2,543.08	115.35%	<u>2,000.00</u>
51700 · Insurance - Building Liability				
51710 · Building Liability Insurance	14,566.75	14,767.00	98.64%	14,767.00
51720 · Workman's Compensation	<u>1,775.00</u>	<u>1,407.00</u>	<u>126.16%</u>	<u>1,407.00</u>
Total 51700 · Insurance - Building Liability	16,341.75	16,174.00	101.04%	<u>16,174.00</u>

52500 · Outreach				
52600 · South Dakota				
52610 · Two Rivers Association	0.00	1,000.00	0.0%	500.00
52615 · Placerville	0.00	250.00	0.0%	250.00
52620 · Food Pantry	1,000.00	1,000.00	100.0%	500.00
52625 · Discretionary	253.66	500.00	50.73%	500.00
52630 · Welcome Table	1,000.00	1,000.00	100.0%	500.00
52635 · VMA Emergency (Sal. Army)	<u>1,832.76</u>	<u>2,500.00</u>	<u>73.31%</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>
Total 52600 · South Dakota	4,086.42	6,250.00	65.38%	3,250.00
52700 · National & World				
52710 · Our Church's Wider Mission	<u>6,500.00</u>	<u>6,500.00</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>4,000.00</u>
Total 52700 · National & World	6,500.00	6,500.00	100.0%	4,000.00
52800 · State Conference				
52810 · Conference Delegate	<u>230.43</u>	<u>500.00</u>	<u>46.09%</u>	<u>500.00</u>
Total 52800 · State Conference	230.43	500.00	46.09%	500.00
Total 52500 · Outreach	10,816.85	13,250.00	81.64%	7,750.00
60000 · Other Expenses				
60220 · First Bank and Trust Loan	<u>31,132.20</u>	<u>34,000.00</u>	<u>91.57%</u>	<u>34,000.00</u>
Total 60000 · Other Expenses	31,132.20	34,000.00	91.57%	34,000.00
Total Expense	292,199.26	302,160.98	96.7%	314,577.29
Net Ordinary Income	-7,812.41			

**United Church of Christ, Congregational
Vermillion, South Dakota
Statement of Financial Position
January 1, 2024**

First Bank and Trust Interest Checking account \$43,550.10
First Bank and Trust Memorial account \$11,082.56

First Bank and Trust Building Improvement Loan
180 month note, Maturity Date 2/20/35
Beginning Balance 2/27/2020 \$375,000.00
Current Balance 1/1/2024 \$274,769.41

God, We Thank You for Our People

God, we thank you for our people, roots dug deep within the soil,
Hardy spirits, rich in loving, strong for struggle, bold for toil.
Faithful rock of generations, you whom parents' parents praised:
Here in hope as we remember may our song to you be raised.

Thank you, God, for gentle pleasure: lessons learned, and secrets told,
Hopes and memories saved as treasure, passed to young ones by the old,
Pranks and glories, songs and stories, food by loving hands prepared.
God, we bless you for your presence in our tears and laughter shared.

By your Spirit of creation keep us bold for risking still,
Eager in anticipation, ever strong to do your will.
Bind us close to one another, sharing life and death and birth,
Welcoming as sister, brother, all your children on the earth.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure,
Sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame,
From everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Still be our God while troubles last, and our eternal home!