



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

**ANNUAL MEETING  
JANUARY 28, 2024**

Avon Lake United Church of Christ  
32801 Electric Blvd.  
Avon Lake, OH 44012

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**AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Sunday, January 28, 2024**

INVOCATION	The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brill
CALL FOR A QUORUM	Kyle Rose, Moderator
MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING (Approval)	
STAFF REPORTS	
Senior Minister	The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brill
Minister for Children & Families	The Rev. Beau Dansizen
Director of Youth Ministries	Nate Taylor
Director of Membership & Media	Tim Schulz
Good Neighbor Thrift Shop	Kristen LePrevost
REPORT OF THE MODERATOR	Kyle Rose
FINANCIAL REPORTS	
Treasurer	Sandra Gerhan
Endowments	Shelley & Scott MacDonald
OLD BUSINESS	
NEW BUSINESS	
Proposed Budget for 2024 (Approval)	Tim Penton
Nominating Committee Report (Approval)	Amy Nasr
Search Committee Report	Mallory Reinking
Recommendation to Congregation- Listing for Sale Rt83 Parcel (Approval)	Derek Harley
BENEDICTION	The Rev. Beau Dansizen

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## SENIOR MINISTER

Dear Members and Friends of Avon Lake UCC,

I am writing this report from the Senior Ministers' Conference, an annual meeting I have attended on and off since 1995, my first year at ALUCC. I find the speakers to be interesting and worthwhile, but equally valuable are the collegial friendships within this group. Over the years, I have learned so much from my colleagues – ideas to try, books to read...last year at this time, I was asking questions about best practices for leave-taking. What seems to be working well in congregations when a minister retires?

I spent much of the first half of 2023 thinking about my retirement announcement – meeting with the Personnel Committee, Moderator **Kyle Rose**, our Association Minister Nayiri Karjian, and others, as together we discerned what kind of transition plan would be best for ALUCC.

I have often given thanks for this church's leaders – I have worked with hundreds of dedicated, talented, faithful, inspiring volunteers in my time here. At this moment, I am especially grateful to the six members of the Personnel Committee, all of whom have served several years past their original commitment: my thanks to **Tom Coy, Bonnie Fraser, Jill James, Phil Johnson, and Jeff Omslaer**...and a huge thank you to **Stephanie Harley**, committee chair. Their counsel was vital this past year.

Kyle Rose is the perfect Moderator for our church at this time. I have told many people about his wise words at our town hall meeting the Sunday after my retirement announcement, when he said, "When you get on a plane, you hear the pilot say – 'We will encounter some bumps on this flight, expect some turbulence along the way, but we will arrive where we are supposed to, and we'll get there just about at the right time.'" A brilliant apt analogy for our transition year.

You, the congregation, elected an amazing Search Committee – please continue praying for them over the next several months.

I am excited to be working with the Transition Team: **Cindi Dansizen, Debbie DeMars, Sara Follmer, Lynn Miller, and Cheryl Updegraff**. Our focus is to help all church members feel engaged in and confident about the church's future direction. Their first job was to help create and distribute the church survey (thanks to all who participated!) and host the leadership retreat with Allen Hilton. We will share details about two new projects soon – one is a Member Recognition Sunday on April 28.

My thanks in advance to **Kim Rose** and all who are helping her plan our Legacy Gala (November 16, 2024); it is sure to be a fun evening – a time to celebrate all that we have accomplished together over 30 years of Growing People to Serve God and Others.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

**Our worship life:** It has been wonderful to see our worship attendance grow. We do not have the numbers we had pre-pandemic, but we are on the upswing. Thank you to those who make worship participation a priority, and thank you to those who invite friends. Thank you to those who worship regularly online, and to all who make that ministry possible, especially **Tim Schulz, Dinah Hunt**, and all the A/V volunteers. It is a joy to plan worship collaboratively with **Scott Ewing, Beau Dansizen**, Tim Schulz and others; our goal is to create transformative worship experiences each week through the careful consideration of musical choices, visuals and lighting, liturgy and preaching. I remember with gratitude many moments of transcendent awe in our sanctuary and chapel during this past year.

**Our mission and outreach:** I often think of the church as moving in two directions at once. We look outward to see how we can best embody the compassion and justice of Jesus to the world around us, and then we look inward to see how we can reach out to those in need in our own community. Our mission and outreach is funded in large part by our Good Neighbor Thrift Shop – their phenomenal success is detailed elsewhere in this report, but I want to express my personal thanks to everyone who makes it possible. To manager **Kristen LePrevost** and the entire staff, to **Scot McNutt** and the entire Thrift Shop Team, to all volunteers, donors and all who spread the word about the shop. My thanks to the ad hoc team who reviewed grant applications and had the fun job of distributing over \$167,000 – **Deborah Bracy, Karen Francy, Manoj Kumar**, and Scot McNutt.

Mission Team members are in close contact with our mission partners and communicate opportunities for hands-on projects. Most people don't realize how difficult it is to find those projects, especially for one-time volunteers, but we always try to respond to those requests! I hope you will browse the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall and see the many thank you notes our mission partners have sent us. You can tell, I hope, that they are grateful not just for our essential financial support, but for our ongoing partnership. When members of the Mission Team check in on them, they know that we care. It is a tremendous boost, especially to the staff members of agencies and organizations – they are most likely underpaid and overworked, and they tell us it really helps to know that we are a source of encouragement. To give just one example – **Chris Gee** serves on the outreach board at St. Paul's Community Church. Tim Schulz helps St. Paul's with their IT needs (sometimes **T.J. Frie** provides expert assistance.). I have become friends with the pastor of St. Paul's and regularly meet her for lunch – those in urban ministry have a unique set of challenges and I am honored to offer her a listening ear.

**Our caring ministries:** If you or someone you know is in need, the first call can be to our office manager, **Angela Oleksiak**, to me or Beau, or to our parish nurse **Cheryl Updegraff**. Beau and I are available for pastoral care conversations – we do not offer (and are not trained to offer) long-term counseling, but we can refer you to professional counselors or, where appropriate, to a Stephen Minister. Our Stephen Ministry group was very active this past year with most Stephen Ministers connected to a care receiver. I'm delighted that a new class of ten has just begun their 50-hour training sessions.

Stephen Ministry has been an integral part of our congregational life for well over 35 years.

We care for one another through Doorstep Dinners (thank you to **Lee Girman** who has offered to coordinate this program for this year!) and we try to provide other assistance (such as transportation) as needed. Cheryl is the lead coordinator of all our caring ministry programs, including the monthly caregivers support group led by **Connie Hippler** and the support group for mental health caregivers led by **Mike Carr**. Contact me or Cheryl if you have questions about any of these programs.

We have begun a relationship with Hospice of Western Reserve, making available a grief support group, and we offer other grief-related resources.

Cheryl and I have worked together to bring a new program to our community, and we are both very excited about the LIFE Memory Cafe program for those with dementia and their caregivers.

**Connecting to one another:** It has been a joy to see our men's ministry programming, our women's ministry programming (LIFT), and our PrimeTimers group all evolve and grow over the past year. Many members get to know each other through participation in CrossTraining classes, weekly Bible Study, participating in our music ministry, volunteering at the Thrift Shop, and service on teams.

As I think back over 2023, I remember, with joy and gratitude:

The Sundays we commissioned our Senior High and Junior High Service Trip participants – it is always impressive to see the numbers of adults who give a week of their time, and heartwarming to see the students who step out of their comfort zones to go on the trip for the very first time...AND I remember the Sundays when the students talk about the ways these trips have changed their lives. Profound thanks to **Nate Taylor** for the program he has created and the love he pours into our youth.

The palpable excitement in the building the week of Vacation Bible School;

The worship experiences Beau and Scott create together in the Chapel during CrossTraining;

The solstice concert with beautiful lighting, music and readings;

Many “goosebump moments” on Sunday mornings as Scott plays, sings, conducts and leads music, bringing both musical talent and a deep spirituality to our worship experiences;

Probing thoughtful conversations in meetings, on retreats, and in classes as we are unafraid to ask questions and become more vulnerable with each other;

Meeting with prospective members, welcoming them to membership, and seeing them connect with one another and with ministry opportunities;

Fun and laughter throughout the year, throughout the building – we are a church that knows how to have a good time!

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

To the Nominating Committee and to all who say “yes” to service...thanks to those completing terms of service, including Jill James who served many years on the

Personnel Committee and **David Dibbell** who served many years as our Financial Secretary!

To members of our Finance Team (including chair **Tim Penton**) and members of Church Council for faithfully wrestling with some difficult financial challenges this past year.

To **Sharon Dixon** who has retired after over a decade as our Bell Choir Director – it was a pleasure to work with Sharon and play for her! (And welcome to our new Bell Choir Director, **Annie Rasor**!)

To all who offer faithful support to the church, many in quiet ways, through sacrificial giving, through stepping up to help (sometimes doing the jobs no one else wants to do!), through sending notes of encouragement – I can tell you it makes a real difference!

To **Mark Spaetzel**, who has concluded his term as head of our Safety Team; Mark has done a beautiful job helping us be prepared for emergency situations. (And I offer my hearty congratulations to Mark as he begins his term as Mayor of Avon Lake; your church family is praying for you, Mark!). I am thrilled that **John Braun** has agreed to serve as the next chair of our Safety Team; thank you, John!

To my colleagues...I give thanks every day for the incredible privilege of working with so many dedicated, talented, helpful, truly collegial friends.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

I shared some “exit interview” thoughts with the Search Committee when they held their second meeting, and I know there will be other opportunities this coming year for similar conversations that might be helpful, as I reflect on my experiences at Avon Lake UCC over the past 29+years.

Many ministers are leaving the profession, and many others are teetering on the edge of burnout. This congregation has supported me, encouraging me to take my days off, continuing education, sabbatical and vacation time, allowing me to find a healthy work-life balance. I am wholeheartedly grateful for that gift, and I mention it here as a way of ensuring that the same gift is extended to my successor.

I want all of you to know how careful this church's leadership is with its resources. I am proud of our stewardship — we take care of our building and grounds (thank you, **CJ Jasany** and your volunteers; thank you TJ Frie, **Derek Harley**, and the Trustees!). I assure you that our financial resources are carefully tended, as well (thank you to our Business Manager, **Kelly Smolik** and all who work with her!). Every day, we consider decisions about purchases, staffing, and programming, hoping to be as wise as possible. As you might imagine, a church needs to spend in order to provide the kind of programming that attracts new members and greater participation...yet we also know that the income is entirely dependent upon our members' ability and willingness to give.

One of my hopes for my successor is that he or she does not have to immediately worry about money. There will be a lot for the next Senior Minister to learn – a lot of history,

tradition, culture, a lot of names and stories...I hope that he/she is able to focus on ministry, spend time in prayerful conversations discerning what God is calling this church to be and do in the future...and not feel anxious about each month's income and expenses.

So I ask you to prayerfully consider your giving. Those who aren't currently giving: are you able to begin, even giving a small amount per month? Those who aren't currently pledging: are you able to make a commitment that will help the church's ministry and mission? Those who could give more, on a regular or one-time basis, know that your money will be well used. I encourage you to consider a gift to the church when you inherit money, and/or remember the church in your estate plans (please contact **Scott** or **Shelley MacDonald** from our Endowment Team for more information.)

Finally...as I begin my last year as your Senior Minister, I look forward to sacred conversations and "good goodbyes." And I encourage you to begin now to prepare yourself for change. I have always appreciated this congregation's ability to change – we have made many changes over the past three decades, from building projects to programming to staff to worship...like all living things, we're either growing and changing or we're dying! The next Senior Minister will have a different style of leadership and preaching, and new ideas – as it should be! I encourage you to welcome him or her with the same warm hospitality I have enjoyed. I know that God will continue to guide this congregation to be a place where hope and love are found and shared.

Yours in Christian love and service,

Kelly B. Brill, Senior Minister



## MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

ALUCC Friends,

In the world of congregational ministry, the health of any church centers around the active participation of members throughout all aspects of the church. In 2023, we saw some of the ministries begin to bounce back, while others remained dormant. As I write this on the threshold of 2024, it is exciting to see numbers in worship and cross training back up to 2019 levels and holding steady for the most part. There are still some ministries, such as the children and family ministry, which have not quite resurged fully, but there is a promising upward trend in numbers that leaves me optimistic that 2024 will be the year when we do see a full recovery.

As anticipated, in 2023 we saw a shift in the worship patterns and practices of many of the church's families with children. When I began here nearly seven years ago, worship itself was different, with a somewhat equal number of children at both the 9am and 11am worship services. As families mature and needs change and new families arrive on the scene, the behaviors also change. In 2023 there was a dramatic shift to the 11am worship service as the primary service for most families with children. This was no surprise, but can seem disconcerting to those who attend the 9am service exclusively! Rest assured, our number of children is still in a phase of growth following the drop in numbers during the pandemic. Our larger programs, such as the Christmas Pageant and Vacation Bible School, still have strong participation numbers. The need to adapt and be dynamic is a trait that many churches do not possess, but we have done our best. Together with the help of our **Christian Education Coordinator, Eileen Zakel**, we can modify the existing Sunday School program in a way that really serves our church community. Eileen is an asset to the Children and Family ministry program as she brings a level of expertise other churches would be envious to have on their staff.

One of my goals in 2022 was to examine our preparedness for **ministering to families with children who have more significant developmental challenges**, so that we can be sure to be prepared to serve these families if and when the need arises, and I am happy to report that we far exceed the readiness of other churches in the immediate area. Being ready to meet the needs of such a community is a constant effort and an instrumental part of who we are as a welcoming church.

The **Drama Program** has continued to grow and has surpassed the numbers, when it comes to participation, we had at any other time since its inception. When something becomes successful, it is important to nurture these programs so that they can thrive. In 2024 I hope to increase focus on the Drama Club program, which serves as an outreach program to the community through both the **Christmas Pageant and Vacation Bible School (VBS)** programs. The Christmas Pageant Sunday attendance was strong, with nearly equal attendance numbers to the 11am Easter service and the 5pm Christmas Eve service – only the 9pm Christmas Eve service showed higher attendance in 2023! Vacation Bible School is one of the largest in the area. In 2023 I shifted the focus of VBS to be a multi-tiered program that now also helps preteens and young teens develop leadership skills working with the children of the church. While historically not the largest VBS in terms of participation, the new format offered more opportunities for the new

program to grow. In 2024 I am hopeful that we can further develop the mission aspect of VBS, offering free or reduced registration fees for families in need.

2024 will also see the reemergence of the **Faith Formation Advisory Team**. As I look through the names of those who have graciously offered to serve on the committee, I am excited about the future of Children's Ministry here at ALUCC. The new team will meet to discuss ways to enhance and bolster the existing Children's Ministry programs here at the church.

Though Minister for Children and Families is my title, my responsibilities extend well beyond this singular area of focus. Leading Cross Training worship, facilitating the annual ALUCC Men's Ministry Retreat, leading a book study, preaching and leading worship, developing ways to enhance the worship experience through lights and projection, helping with computer support for the church database, leading portions of the confirmation retreat, were all part of my duties in 2023, in addition to regularly filling in as needed for pastoral care along with leading the Children and Family Ministry program. I am also finishing up work on my Doctor of Ministry degree on the care of church in crisis, which will continue in the coming year. My plate is certainly full, and though I absolutely love what I am doing, I am hopeful that this year will see an increase in volunteer participation to help with some of these tasks.

Our 2024 theme, "**Rooted**," will take the church through the process of examining ourselves so that we can look ahead toward the incredible things to come. I have been through 4 different transition periods in my 15 years in church ministry – some were certainly easier than others, and each one was different. Change can be difficult for any community, but *anticipating* change is actually the greater challenge. No one knows what will happen and we do our best to prepare ourselves for what is to come. In my experience, those communities who remained focused on the ministry of Christ in the community fare far better when the winds of change finally do arrive. I think that when that time does come here at Avon Lake United Church of Christ we will find that our roots are strong and we will be ready. Trusting in God's providence can be a challenge for many, but I believe this community will exceed expectations and emerge with a renewed sense of self.

And so, I look ahead to 2024 with cautious optimism and anticipation. I am thankful for my years here at ALUCC and how it has really helped me to grow into my vocation as a pastor. I am grateful for the experience of working with such a skilled group of people on staff here at the church. In particular, I want to thank **Pastor Kelly Brill** for being an incredible mentor and guide, helping me to hone my own pastoral skills so that I can better serve the community. The experience I have gained by working with such an accomplished leader these past 7 years has been more valuable than any leadership conference or pastoral care class I could have ever attended!

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention how grateful I am for the love and friendship I have received from **the congregation** itself. Your dedication to the success of the Children's Ministry program means that this church will continue to develop caring and compassionate people who serve the community and those in need.

If there are any other areas you feel we can serve the community better when it comes to Children and Family Ministries, or really any ministry, please reach out to me.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beau Dansizen  
Minister for Children and Families

## **FROM THE PASTOR'S RECORD BOOK**

We celebrated the following baptisms in 2023:

Mila Nadine Pompeani  
Charles Wen Yi Lavriha  
Josephine Mae Currie  
Molly Kendra Paradis  
Colton Joseph Smith  
Willow June Branco  
Olive Canley Kartson  
Everly Mae Cheesebrough

## **IN MEMORIAM**

We mourned the passing of the following members and friends in 2023:

Scott Jancura	Hugh Meabon
Betty Davis	Debbie Skuggen
Elaine Consolo	Harry Flint
Pete Barth	Gladys Kisselle
J. William Kauffman, Jr.	Eleanor Murray
Thelma Morningstar	Jodi Holmes
Bucky Kopf	Lois Davis
Helene Stone	Kathy Purks

## **WEDDINGS**

The following couples were united in Holy Matrimony in 2023:

Timothy James Penton & Jay Philip Gardner  
Jonathon Alan Gonzalez & Stephanie Marie Sell  
Scott Carson Ewing Jr. & Kristen Ashley Mazur  
Katherine Ann Kotori & Michael Steven Carillon  
James Stobe & Melissa Belas  
Grace Ann Hasenstaub & Brandon Lee Dalton

**Avon Lake United Church of Christ**  
**AGM**  
**January 29, 2023**

This meeting was held in-person and a quorum was in attendance.

Meeting Called to Order: 1:04 pm

Rev. Dr. Kelly Brill opened with an invocation.

Moderator, Mark Spaetzel declared that a quorum of 50 attendees had been met.

2022 AGM Minutes: Mark Spaetzel called for a motion to approve the 2022 AGM Minutes as submitted.

Motion: Jonathon Whittlesey

Second: Barry Cummings

The 2022 AGM Minutes as submitted were approved by unanimous voice vote.

STAFF REPORTS:

*Senior Minister:* Kelly Brill thanked all her amazing colleagues and thanked the congregation for their support and for supporting the community. She stated that our church is the envy of all surrounding churches.

She gave personal thanks to Tim Schulz on his birthday today and all meeting attendees sang, "Happy Birthday", to Tim!

Kelly thanked everyone who served on teams last year and those who will continue to serve and those who said, " Yes!", and are starting on teams.

She thanked finishing team leads; Jason Anderson (Endowments), Bruce Noll (Finance), CJ Jasany (Trustees co-chair), Maureen Johnson (clerk). She thanked Mark Spaetzel (Moderator) who was always so calm and never surprised due to his past as Police Chief of Bay Village & gave him a gift.

Kelly said she forgot to mention during the mornings sermons that the switch to the new software system – Realm – has been harder than expected, so please contact the church if you are having problems with it or are not receiving church emails.

Kelly thanked the personnel team & lead Stephanie Harley.

She thanked her husband, Doug.

And she gave a huge thank you to Dave Witzigreuter (Facilities Manager) during transition as he leaves this job to work & help with a family business.

(Please see Kelly's full report in the 2022 Annual Report)

*Minister for Children & Families:* Beau Dansizen echoed everything that Kelly said except the Doug Brill part!

He said that this church is so blessed; especially compared to others; and he is so glad to be a part of this congregation.

Post Covid-19, he feels numbers are not such a useful metric and we need to change how we measure church success & how kids participate in church. We now have a very large drama group of kids & adults at church. The Mid-High Mayhem group is up & running. Primary Pandemonium group will start soon.

Beau thanked Eileen Zakel for taking care of the Education wing, her capable hands allow him to relax with this area.

He hopes to kick start the Faith Formation team again.

Mission 101 will restart. Kids and families have been missing this time to serve together especially the one week of mission.

Beau said it's his goal that children who enter our church feel loved and accepted for who they are & strive to be the best they can be. To associate church with fun & joy so that they want to experience all that God has to give them. Where they can develop good spiritual habits, that will comfort & guide them during difficult times in their lives. He thanks everyone for being a part of this.

(Please see Beau's full report in the 2022 Annual Report)

*Director of Youth Ministries:* Nate Taylor thanked this year's Confirmation students, their adult mentors, and all volunteers for executing the Chili Cook-off at this AGM.

He said it was a privilege to be a part of this church community. The staff and volunteers that he serves with are deeply invested in the church mission and are all genuinely good people.

He thanked the SH student leadership team (SLT), 19 students, for their help planning & developing what the teens will do this year.

2022 was a comeback year, especially regarding Mission Trips! A highlight for him was the SH Trip to Maine & finally meeting our Seacoast Mission partners since he couldn't make the last trip to Maine due to his daughter's birth. The opportunity to help people we'd never met, create community & memories, build friendships & life-long bonds, bring hope & laughter and experience first-hand the power of serving. Nate had forgotten how powerful it is! What the kingdom of heaven can truly look like, how different people can come together & give of themselves to make the lives of others better. It is incredible & life changing and Nate thanks everyone for their unwavering support so that our youth discover what it means to be a Christian!

Nate is looking forward to all the events in 2023: Senior Excursion, JH Mission Trip, SH Mission Trip, Cornhole, Sports Camp, Confirmation Road Rally & Spring Retreat, Dirty Dog 5K, and much more.

Nate is inspired by the congregation & gave thanks for their encouragement, prayers, friendship & faithful help & support.

He extended special gratitude to Dave Witzigreuter – for his impact on so many lives, for the privilege to serve with him, and for future adventures together. Nate will miss him greatly & our church owes Dave a deep debt of gratitude for the countless things he has done for the good of our church & the well-being of others

The congregation gave a standing ovation for Dave!

(Please see Nate's full report in the 2022 Annual Report)

*Director of Membership & Media:* Tim Schulz said he sent an attendance report to UCC head office so they can monitor numbers & trends. We are still experiencing the aftereffects of Covid-19. Generally, attendance has been lower than in 2019, but more people are using Facebook & Vimeo, so there's been a change in the way we worship.

Attendance figures: January to Memorial Day in-person average=233.

Summer in-person average=199.

Labor Day to December in-person average=253.

All 2 Service Sundays in-person average = 243 (9am=110, 11am=133).

Single Service in-person average=135 (10am).

All 2 service Sundays online averages=58 (9am=36, 11am=22).

Single Service online =37 (10am).

We welcomed 26 new members to the congregation and 17 students to the Confirmation Class.

We welcome new people via all our church activities. Tim thanked all the Membership & Outreach volunteers but reminded us that we are all outreach volunteers when we share photos, emails, stories or invite friends, we are sharing the Good News!

There are lots of new programs & events coming up to get involved with and Cross training for Lent is coming up!

Tim considers it a privilege to serve our church & thanked the staff, leadership & congregation.

(Please see Tim's full report in the 2022 Annual Report)

*Chair of Good Neighbor Thrift Shop Team:* Scot McNutt reported that the Thrift Shop had beaten its 2021 sales record and made \$392,000 in 2022, a 22% increase! Mission giving was also a record \$151,000 plus an additional last-minute gift of \$10,000 to Love Inc. following a break-in & vandalism.

He gave a recap of the Mission Team's annual & year-end giving to mission partners & charities.

Scot mentioned the store's new recycling service, Simple Recycling, who help to increase revenue & reduce waste.

He thanked, Kristen LePrevost, the Thrift Store Team, all the volunteers, Rev. Kelly & Mark Spaetzel, Kelly Smolik for financial report assistance, Dave Witzigreuter for the many projects he's been involved with, and all people who have helped & supported the store.

(Please see Scot's full report in the 2022 Annual Report)

Kristen LePrevost, Thrift Store Manager, thanked Scot, the Thrift Store Team & all the amazing volunteers who make the store both fun & successful.

REPORT of the Moderator: Mark Spaetzel called for an additional round of applause for all the Staff. Having read all the reports, it's clearly the staff, volunteers & all the congregation that enable us to reach out positively & touch so many lives

Mark feels our church is in very capable hands if we continue to work together, serve together & make a difference.

He considers his life more rewarding due to the church, its members & the work we do. He believes in giving to the church & investing in human capital; both youth & adults. By giving of your time, talent & treasures, the return on your investment is significant!

Mark wanted to recognize Dave Witzigreuter in particular. Dave has served for more than 20 years and is retiring & stepping down as our Facilities Manager (TJ Frie will be taking over this role). Mark's not alone in admiring Dave's knowledge, experience & work ethic – Dave is our most skilled Mission Trip volunteer & outworks people half his age! Dave has gone out of his way to reach & help our youth and he is a role model, inspiration & example of a servant-leader!

(Please see Mark's full report in the 2022 Annual Report)

## FINANCIAL REPORTS:

*Treasurer:* Sandi Gerhan thanked Kelly Smolik and Dave Dibbell.

We are in great financial shape! We were a little over budget on offerings & pledges compared to 2019. But we also spent 6.5% more than budgeted.

However, due to leveraging the government payroll tax rebate & receiving 2 bequests from former members we were able to end the year with a positive General Fund. So, we can present a balanced budget going into 2023.

(Please see Finance Team & Dave Dibbell's (Financial Secretary) full reports, and the balanced budget p.65-67, in the 2022 Annual Report)

*Endowments:* Jason Anderson reminded us that this is a long-term fund used to support mission & ministry while at the same time ensuring the health of the church.

It is a diversified fund (61% stocks, 38 % bonds, 1% cash) with \$862,671 in assets at the end of 2022. Independent, outside entity – Sequoia Financial Group – manages the fund; overseen by the church Endowment Fund Committee. This is their first full year and despite world challenges they have done a good job.

Jason thanked the Endowment Team members and welcomed new co-chairs Shelley & Scott MacDonald.

In 2023 we are at \$862,671 which is down from the \$1,052,557 of last year mostly due to pandemic fallout in financial systems. Jason summarized the downward trends in various investment markets.

The fund distributed \$33,444 to the church for operating expenses. 5% of the fund's unrestricted average assets were returned to the church as has been usual for the last several years. Advisory fees were \$7,416. He thanked Joyce & James Hall for their gift to the fund.

Despite a challenging year, the Endowment Fund is still healthy, diversified, has good over-sight & a good 3<sup>rd</sup> party advisor!

(Please see Jason's full report in the 2022 Annual Report)

#### OLD BUSINESS:

None.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

*Proposed Budget for 2023:* Bruce Noll (Chair) stated that the Finance Team of 2022 was pleased to present a \$1.3 million balanced budget for 2023.

Bruce directed us to the Finance Team report & the balanced budget in the 2022 Annual Report. The pie charts show that pledges & offerings comprise 75% of the revenue which almost offsets the 78% cost of Personnel & Operating the church facility. Ministry & Missions comprise 17% of revenue and 21% of expenses. Youth Program & Funds represent 68% of the Ministry & Mission revenue and approximates the Youth expenses, which represent 56% of the Ministry & Mission expenses.

Bruce thanked the congregation for their support and asked for their approval of the 2023 budget.

Mark Spaetzel called for a motion to approve the Budget for 2023 as presented.

Motion: Bonnie Fraser

Second: Dave Updegraff

The 2023 Budget was approved by unanimous voice vote.

*Nominating Committee Report:* Amy Nasr (Chair of Nominating Committee) directed us to the Nominated Slate of candidates for church Teams & Committees (See 2022



Annual Report p.56-58). She thanked the members of the Nominating Committee and the congregation and presented the slate for approval.

Mark Spaetzel called for a motion to approve the Nominated Slate of candidates for church Teams & Committees as presented.

Motion: Valerie Tanzilli

Second: Dave Updegraff

The Nominated Slate of candidates for church Teams & Committees was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Approval/Adoption of our Statement of Welcome & Inclusion: Meghan Burmeister (Council at Large) thanked the congregation for the opportunity to serve and said she wanted to be involved with drafting our statement of Welcome & Inclusion due to the awesome welcome she received when she first came here church shopping 17 years ago!

She gave personal thanks to Rev. Kelly and Nate Taylor. She stated that this church works due to the hard work of all the people involved & the Holy Spirit acting within them!

She read aloud the Statement of Welcome & Inclusion.

(A paper copy of the Statement of Welcome & Inclusion was available on all the tables at the AGM & will be sent out to the congregation afterwards)

Mark Spaetzel called for a motion to adopt & approve our Statement of Welcome & Inclusion as presented.

Motion: Jasin Kessler

Second: Dave Witzigreuter

The Statement of Welcome & Inclusion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Mark Spaetzel confirmed with Rev. Kelly that our Statement of Welcome & Inclusion will now be an official document of our church and will be sent to head office of UCC.

*New Moderator for 2023:* Mark Spaetzel introduced Kyle Rose as the new Moderator for 2023.

Kyle added his thanks to out-going and in-coming members serving on church teams. He said that like other organizations at this time of year we are reflecting on the past year and we often hear people say, "We did this in spite of the pandemic/politics/inflation/challenges", but we do our church work, "because of", these things and he feels this makes our church special in the community. He looks forward to serving with us & appreciates our support and trust. Please contact him as needed.

*Chili Cook-Off:* Students from the Confirmation class (Kyle & Alex) thanked the congregation and all the chili chefs and announced the winners of the Chili Cook-off...

Best Vegetarian Chili – Beware the Vegitnator! Rise of the Veggies! – Deborah Bracy  
Spiciest Chili – Some Like it Hot! – Doug Brill

Best Name – All in. Today's pantry surprise...Recipe dependent upon the pantry...If it fits, it goes in chili! – Susan Hay

Best Overall – Taste No Further! – Kurt Zbin  
Rev. Beau Dansizen closed the meeting with a prayer.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:58pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Zoe Cummings, Church Clerk

## MODERATOR

In preparation for submitting the Moderator's report for 2023, I went back and read through the Annual Reports of several years past. Tim Schulz has digital records, the earliest of which is from 1978, which is where I started. I was five years old then. I'm 50 now.

Over those past 45 years, I think we can all say for certain that changes in our world and in our own personal lives have been massive and oftentimes swift. That's life, and "life comes at you fast," as they say.

Maybe it's because of these current times of *especially* rapid change, I was struck by something while reading those historical Annual Reports: consistency. Here are some of the consistent themes that jumped off those pages as I read, and I drew parallels to the state of our church today:

- **Our structure.** The staff, teams and the congregation as a whole consistently collaborate to fulfill our mission. Leadership positions, staff members and volunteers may rotate, come and go. But the transitions are done seamlessly, maintaining momentum and continuity of our church. We have a sound church structure that has many established operating processes and engaged personnel in all areas.
- **Our service offerings.** There were consistent themes in service over the years, like a growing Thrift Store, inspiring music ministry, youth outreach and engagement, and innumerable examples of how we are called (and show up) to help those in need. Service remains at the core of our church, and we continue to positively impact others, guided by scripture and having commitment to strive and live His word every day.
- **Our legacy and new members.** I read of longstanding familiar names, like Tanzilli, Dibbell, Dunford, Turner, and Reich – just a few of the many who (often through multiple generations of members) form the foundational bedrock of our church's strength today. Each report also listed dozens of families and individuals of all lengths of membership, as well as brand new members who enthusiastically join our church each year, providing diverse ideas and new perspectives to help us thrive.
- **Our losses.** The names of members, friends and family who have passed away were also consistently recognized each year in Annual Reports, instilling a sense of celebration for their lives and contributions. That was certainly again the case in 2023, as we grieved together and payed tribute to some remarkable members and their many contributions.
- **Our challenges.** Global conflicts and wars, political divisiveness, financial gaps to fill, a pandemic and major congregational decisions. Our church has brought people together during important and challenging times, serving as a place for

support, respite and hope. While these are often situations that don't always have readily available solutions, I felt a sense of assurance knowing that this is a place we safely join, in our "big tent," to help make sense of things and persevere.

So, why do I offer this little retrospective, as my letter to the membership in this year's Annual Report? Because amidst the change in the world, and the change in our church, let's not forget consistency that is an unmistakable quality we have and share with others through the Avon Lake United Church of Christ. This balance is truly a blessing.

In terms of our lookback on 2023, our many successes are best told by those staff, team and committee leads representing the countless members and friends of the church who do the work. I encourage you to read this report carefully. Feel grateful to have helped make that impact, and find inspiration to do even more in the future.

I would like to offer my thanks to you for the opportunity to serve as Moderator this past year. It has afforded me a front row seat to the countless ways we are helping so many people, among us and beyond us, feel the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

In the year ahead, I ask that we continue to pray for our church and those we serve. Give thanks for our consistency...and for our changes ahead. Let's continue to give of our time, talent and treasures – more than ever – as we fulfill our mission of "growing people to serve God and others."

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Rose  
Moderator

Dear Friends,

As we begin 2024, the Search Committee is pleased to provide an update to the Senior Minister Search process.

Our first task was a meeting with UCC representatives to learn about and discuss the process to select a new Senior Minister. We have spent the last three months writing our Church Profile. The Church Profile is an important piece in our Senior Minister search as it provides an overview of Avon Lake UCC to interested candidates. It reflects valuable data, assesses our ministry practices, includes input from the community we serve, and helps advance the calling of the congregation.

To accurately represent all of you, we are using the results of the Church Survey to compile certain sections of the Church Profile. We reviewed the survey responses in detail and discussed them as a group. As you might expect, the major themes in the survey were the welcoming and inclusive nature of Avon Lake UCC, having a Senior Minister focused on growth and empowering others on their spiritual journeys in a “big tent” church, and maintaining our mission focus and our vibrant youth program. In addition, many mentioned that they hope the church does not grow so large that we lose the family atmosphere.

We expect to have the Church Profile completed in February, which is consistent with the process discussed with UCC leadership. Upon its completion, we will share the Church Profile with the congregation before we publicize it.

Once the profile is complete, the next steps in the process will include:

The association office will advertise our open position to UCC clergy across the country. The association office will review candidates to ensure baseline requirements are met. The Search Committee will begin receiving ministerial profiles that meet the baseline requirements, which we will review and discuss. After reviewing the pool of candidates, we will conduct interviews and check references.

We are very aware that the congregation is extremely interested in this important process. However, we want to be clear that much of our work going forward is confidential in nature, and we will not be able to provide many specific details. When possible, we will provide updates to our progress as we journey toward the selection of a candidate to present for approval by the congregation.

The tradition practiced in the United Church of Christ of “calling” a Senior Minister affirms the active presence of God’s spirit in the search process. We will prayerfully seek a Senior Minister with particular gifts and skills while recognizing that candidates are also engaged in their own Spirit-led discernment process. We understand that Avon Lake UCC is a special place, and we are committed to finding the right fit to continue to offer that extravagant welcome and to continue to be a beacon of hope for our community. We are honored to represent all of you throughout this process and will do so in a thoughtful and spiritual manner.

Please stay connected with us throughout this process by visiting the Avon Lake UCC website under the “Pastoral Transition” tab.

Warm Regards,

Mallory Reinking  
Chair, Senior Minister Search Committee

## FAITH FORMATION

The Faith Formation annual report supplements my Minister for Children and Families report, so please refer to that for additional programming details. In this report I will highlight some numbers and changes that happened in 2023:

**Sunday School** continues to operate at both the 9am and 11 am services, though there are more children at the 11am service. As a result, the 9am Sunday School is more combined. We have a team of around **10-15 volunteer Sunday School teachers** who teach on a rotation.

Primary Pandemonium our youth group for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade children and Mid-High Mayhem for grades 4 and 5 is event-based rather than recurring.

Drama Club has become a major fellowship group with kids in grades 4 and up. The Drama Club focuses on two events as the cornerstone of the program – Vacation Bible School in the summer and the Christmas Pageant in December. The Drama Club has around **40 children/kids** who are active in one way or another.

2023 Vacation Bible School had an attendance of **86 children, 50+ volunteers including many teens and preteens.**

Fall Cross Training took place in October and November as a 4-week program with about **80 participants in 5 different classes.** Worship was led by Rev. Beau Dansizen and Scott Ewing.

The Christmas Pageant took place on Dec 17, and featured more than **40 children** with designated parts, plus **several children** who participated on the day of the event.

The 2023 Christmas Eve “Family Service” (5 pm) included the contemporary worship band led by **Scott Ewing and Beau Dansizen.** The service was led by the children of ALUCC, who also shared their musical talent before the service. There were about **325 people** in attendance.

**Eileen Zakel** continues as our **Christian Education Coordinator.** She has been an asset to the program both in development and implementation.

The Faith Formation team was on a brief sabbatical beginning in 2021 and will be reformed in 2023 to begin serving in 2024. I would like to thank all the teachers who have volunteered their time to do the work of the church, raising our children to understand the ways of Christ. The value of our volunteer and paid teachers cannot be overstated. Thank you for all you do for our children.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Beau Dansizen; Minister for Children and Families

## DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

Looking back at the last year, I find myself continuously grateful to be a part of this community and a part of this church. It has challenging days and challenging moments and far more rewarding days and rewarding moments. Doing life with each of you is a blessing I don't take lightly. I still consider it a distinct privilege to minister to your children and students. Being a small part of their lives is life-giving and exciting and brings me hope. We are cultivating a generation of young leaders that have compassion, grace and mercy etched into the very fabric of their beings...because of this church, because of you. We are celebrating and affirming the individuality and uniqueness of each and every young person...because of this church, because of you. Our young people are being lights in and among a sometimes dark & dreary world...because of this church, because of you. There is still so much work yet to be done, memories to be made, lives to be touched and people served. Here are some highlights from the past year....

Our youth groups continued to meet on a weekly basis over the past year. I believe firmly that being a constant for our young people – whether they came once a week or every week...is so critical and so important. This past year the Buoy turned 10 years old. Every May we invite our graduating seniors to write a word of advice on the basement stairwell for students coming after them. I sometimes stop and read some of the names on that stairwell and think of them and who they were and where they are today. The Buoy has been a place of refuge and community and fellowship for so many students. I am grateful to so many who made this space possible and continue to care for it week after week. We are grateful to the Bowersox family for their generous donation to the Buoy that allowed us to purchase some new arcade games, TV's and other equipment for the Buoy last year. Last year was the first year we had our JH and SH groups meet on the same night. It provided some challenges and also provided some opportunities for me to be home with my young family one more evening a week and for that I am forever grateful.

Our youth groups happen because of the awesomeness combined with the gigantic hearts of a certain team of individuals who pour into our young people week after week. This church is special in many ways and one of the most special characteristics is the amount of adults who are crazy and wonderful enough to serve in this capacity directly working with teenagers. I am grateful to each of them for all they give and all they bring to the table, more importantly though, I am deeply fortunate to call each of them my friends. Our Youth Ministries Adult Volunteer Team consisted of the following individuals:

Bill Calkins	Tyler Andrews	Jim Stobe	Austin Rice
Chris Gee	Mackenzie Vargas	Regan Pore	Ashley Paradis
Jasin Kessler	Jen Buck	Beth Gee	Owen Paradis
John Braun	Amy Nasr	Isaac Rice	Chris Steinman
Kellie Poling	Evan Taylor	Dan Walther	Gabbie Sterling
Maddie Stiles	Rachel Gates		



This September we celebrated the Rite of Confirmation for 21 young people. I have always enjoyed our Confirmation experience immensely. Each class takes on a completely different personality and it always makes for an interesting and exciting year as we explore so many topics and wrestle with so many questions. Each student is required to author their own Statement of Faith. These statements are only meant to describe where they are at that moment. These statements are a chance for students to express their own personal faith experiences, the questions they still have, the moments in their lives where they needed God or felt God. It is a privilege to read each of their statements. Each student is also asked to design and create their own stole to wear on Confirmation Sunday. Their stoles are meant to reflect their individuality combined with imagery and symbolism that showcases their own personal faith journey. These students are guided through their Confirmation experience by an adult member. Each student is paired with an adult member of our church family who is not one of their family members. I am beyond grateful for the work these adults do throughout the year and working with these young people and helping them unpack their questions and put it all into words.

Our 2022-23 Confirmation students were:

Kyle Anderson	Micah Braun	Bri Droke	Reid Elbert
Catherine Fazio	Mallory Haley	Chase Hamilton	Olivia Hanratty
Alyssa Jones	Drew Kandra	Jeff Kessler	Julia Kudrna
Kieran Kumar	Emmit Lotz	Molly McElwain	Abby Omslaer
Kayla Omslaer	Isabel Schilens	Alex Schulz	Finn Stiles
Izzy Wilson			

Our 2022-23 Confirmation mentors were:

Ty Wolfe	Jim Stobe	Jen Fazio	Maddie Stiles
Jeff Banks	Alison Anderson	Emily Lotz	Katie Schulz
Mackenzie Vargas	Chris Gee	Regan Pore	Stephanie Harley
Rev. Beau Dansizen	Beth Henry	Tyler Andrews	John Lorince
Jason Anderson			

In March we hosted our 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Cabin Fever Cornhole Tournament. This event has served as the primary fundraiser for our SH Summer Mission Trip. This year's tournament was back on its normal 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of March date and we had another incredible turnout. The event raised close to \$14,000 and was a wonderful event for the entire church. I am so grateful to so many who serve on this team to help make this event possible each March. Especially those on our planning team: Jasin Kessler, Beth Gee, Kim Kramhoeller, TJ Frie, Tim Schulz, Katie Schulz and Tom Coy.

This year's winners were as follows:

#### **YOUTH BRACKET:**

Champions: David Murnan & Nate Doglio

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Eddie Rogers & Caleb Waltz

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Grant Dietz & Hayes Dietz

**BACKYARD BRACKET:**

Champions: Chris Fazio & Jerry Kuchenbrod

2<sup>nd</sup> Place : Greg Holzaepfel & Matt Dunson

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Amber Korey & Steve Korey

**OPEN BRACKET:**

Champions: Ray Wingate & Rusty Tobel

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Brandon Evans & Mike Yates

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Shawn Garrison & Steven Kincaid

We had another incredible and life-changing summer. By far one of the most important pieces of that puzzle was the return of our longtime summer youth ministries assistant, Maddie Stiles. Maddie's presence alone among our students and leadership team provides comfort, encouragement, and support. Beyond that though she worked tirelessly to ensure that all of our summer programming went smoothly and that we were able to provide each and every student with experiences that were top-notch. Maddie's final summer as our summer assistant was one of our best ones ever. It is hard for me to express my gratitude and appreciation and admiration for her on these pages. We are forever a better church and a better youth group because of the things – both big and small, that Maddie has done over the past five years. We are both fortunate and grateful that she remains in the area and is actively serving on our SH Volunteer team and as part of our SH Student Leadership Team advisory team.

This past June we traveled to Johnstown, PA and spent a week serving alongside our friends at Hosanna Industries. For over 20 years, we have been in relationship with Hosanna and over the time I have been a part of our church, many of these individuals have become dear colleagues and friends. We are always excited and grateful when the opportunity arises for us to work with them. They are by far one of the finest mission outfits in the country. They are led by a deep conviction to answer the calls of Hosanna and to do all they can with every last penny they have to make the lives of those around them better. Our week in Johnstown was awesome. We were graciously hosted by the Greater Johnstown School District at the high school. The hospitality from the entire school staff was simply second to none. They provided us with all the space we could possibly ever need, a full-service kitchen and gave us full run of their facilities. We partnered with the 1889 foundation in Johnstown who recently provided a grant of \$500K to Hosanna Industries to rehabilitate homes in their community. We sided and cleaned up and worked day after day at the homes of complete strangers. We took an epic trip down the lower Youghiogheny River on our final day in PA. We gathered each night for games and worship and small groups. We spent a week doing life together and falling completely in love with the idea of serving others. My deep appreciation and gratitude to Brian & Becky Hetzer, Katie Dejournette, Rev. Donn Ed, Norman Ed and the rest of the team at Hosanna Industries for all of their work coordinating our projects and answering all 235,612 of my questions over the past year.

Later in June it was time for another week at Sportscamp. Our contingent of campers and counselors from Avon Lake UCC at Sportscamp was somewhere between 55-60. It was a special week to have Max & Nora there along with two of my nephews. I always find

myself smiling when I see children and young people and high school students fully relaxed, at peace, being themselves. This happens for a short week in June. We cultivate and create a place and an experience where our young people can leave the worries and stresses of the real world behind them for a few short days. It's not the amenities or the food that attracts so many to summer camp. It's this...a real-life cheat code. A place and a week where they can go and just be kids. I hope we can all appreciate this simple reality and let it challenge our way of thinking, reasoning, prioritizing and scheduling. Throughout the week we hiked and played and laughed and made countless memories and countless new friendships. I will always be appreciative to our church for their long-standing commitment and support of Outdoor Ministries.

In mid-July we sent a team of four vans, 27 junior high and 10 brave adults to Cincinnati to spend a week serving with our friends at Washington U.C.C. The students were there to serve as part of the summer children's program that the church hosts every summer. Throughout the week they served a meal to the homeless, they handed out blessing bags, learned about poverty and racism and probably had way too much fun. This trip is designed to serve as an introduction to service work. Under the guidance and leadership of Dan Walther and the other adults that make up our leadership team, this trip continues to be a very important part of the work we have been called to.

In August we made our annual trek to the Allegheny National Forest for our Senior Excursion. For these young people especially, having this final trip was incredibly important and incredibly meaningful. For the past six years I have had the privilege of spending a weekend with a small group of newly graduated high school students. Our Senior Excursion is an intentional weekend designed as a capstone experience to one's time participating in our youth group over the course of their JH and HS years. We travel east about 3 ½ hours to the Allegheny National Forest and we spend our time hiking, kayaking, exploring, climbing waterfalls, stargazing and camping for the better part of 4 days. Each day has a theme: Relax, Reflect, Recharge & Recognize. The theme is brought to life through journal activities, trail discussions, daily devotionals and our campfire chats.

Once again, I found myself on the other side of another summer – absolutely exhausted and loving everything about it. It continuously reminds me of what joy there is in serving others. It showed me the depth and the wonder of God's beauty in creation. It made my heart overflow as we gathered around a campfire and had conversations that ranged from the deepest of topics to the loudest of laughter. There's something deeply special witnessing two of your own children find so much joy and friendship in the experience that shaped your own childhood and calling. I hope that somehow through this report and through the voices of our young people and everything we do, that all of us can appreciate how special our young people are and how worthy of an investment they truly are. Building a church like ours takes constant care and a deep commitment from so many. Maintaining what we have created, in my humble opinion is even harder. I say all of this as a way of saying thank you for your continued investment, belief and support of this work we have all been called to.

Late this Fall we began accepting applications for our Senior High Student Leadership Team. We had 25 students apply and we invited each of them to be a part of our team

this year. We just returned from a daylong retreat at Templed Hills doing some team bonding activities, goal setting and making plans for the upcoming year. This year's Student Leadership Team Members are:

Gus Brekke	Otto Burmeister	Nola Banks	Kristina Cline
Kam Danielson	Ava Deeks	Kenny Dietz	Braden Elbert
Catherine Fazio	Lincoln Garrett	Jack Haley	Mallory Haley
Rylan Haley	Abby Henry	Emmit Lotz	Olivia McDermott
Claire McElwain	Bizzy Paflas	Lincoln Rose	Alex Schulz
Kelsey Sheehan	Savannah Stobe	Sydney Williams	Claire Zakel
Rebecca Zakel			

I am also grateful to Regan Pore, Jasin Kessler, Maddie Stiles and Ashley Forbes for all of their help in leading this team of young people. Each of the students has been assigned to a sub-committee to assist with the planning of some of our major fundraisers and trips.

That's the highlights from the past year...that I can remember. I am looking forward to so much in 2024 and I am grateful to this church for their continued support of our youth ministries programs and the young people who participate in so many of the things that we offer.

Here's a brief preview of what's in store in this year...

We kicked off the year by taking a group of young adults for a very quick and productive trip to Cincinnati to replace all of the mattresses on the bunk beds at Washington U.C.C. I am grateful to T.J. Frie & Tim Schulz for making this trip possible. Spending that quality time with a group of young adults who once were junior 25igher was very special. Washington U.C.C. Pastor Melissa Stephens led us on an evening devotion experience and shared her hopes and dreams for this special church. I look forward to all the ways we can continue to partner with them in the years to come.

In late March we are hosting our first annual churchwide Euchre Tournament. Registration opens on Friday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. You can sign-up to play as an individual or with a partner. All proceeds benefit our summer camp incentive fund.

We are gearing up to host our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Cabin Fever Cornhole Tournament on Saturday, May 11, 2024. Prayers for good weather are always appreciated. There are LOTS of ways you can get involved and support this event. Play, Volunteer. Donate, Sponsor. Please check out [www.cabinfevercornhole.com](http://www.cabinfevercornhole.com) for all the latest.

Confirmation church visits and field trips and the Road Rally and a spring retreat to Templed Hills. I am so excited to offer so many of the things that make our Confirmation program stand out...once again this year.

Our SH students are going to spend a week serving with Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS from June 9-17, 2024. We had 70 students register and five more on our waitlist in just over a week of our registration opening. We are excited to once again serve with this organization that our church served with years ago.

Later in June we will have the opportunity to spend another week at Templed Hills hosting another week of SportsCamp. I pinch myself every June that I still get to go to summer camp. For the past 30 years it has been an instrumental and transformational part of my life. I pray that all of you will consider this gift to your children and introduce them to this special ministry. A week in the woods is good for any of us, but it can be life-changing and life-saving for a young person. Please consider summer camp for your children. You will not regret it. Plus we will pay ½ the cost. That's how much we believe in it. Visit [heartlanducc.org](http://heartlanducc.org) for more information.

We are once again looking forward to another awesome JH Service Trip in Cincinnati. Our JH students will spend a week at Washington U.C.C. assisting with their summer children's program and learning about poverty, homelessness, systemic racism, gentrification and so many other things. I don't have the words to express my gratitude, appreciation and admiration for Dan Walther and his continued commitment to this trip. We are all so fortunate to have someone like him in our community who cares as much as he does about our young people and equality and justice for all. Don't delay in signing up – space is very limited for this trip. Check out weekly email for more information on getting registered.

We are on the books for another Dirty Dog 5K & Dog Wash set for Wednesday, July 24. This event serves as the primary fundraiser for our JH Mission Trip. We appreciate your continued support of this event. This year's race will be mid-week and offered in the evening. We look forward to having you join us!

In August we have seven soon-to-be graduated high school seniors signed up to spend a weekend camping, hiking and exploring in the Allegheny National Forest for our 2024 Senior Excursion. I thoroughly enjoy this capstone experience with our young people each and every summer. We are currently on a waitlist for this experience.

This fall we will be hosting our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bunks & Bunkers Open benefiting our summer camp incentive fund. Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at Thunderbird Hills in Huron, OH.

I am grateful to our personnel team for their ongoing support and advocacy for each of us. I am grateful to my colleagues who make ministry fun and exciting. We are surrounded by so much talent among so many beautiful humans. I hope none of us take that for granted. I am grateful to so many who say yes in so many different ways to support this church and our young people. I am grateful for our mighty Good Neighbor Thrift Shop that does wonders year after year and supports so many worthy causes. I am grateful to Diane Velez, CJ Jasany & T.J. Frie for their love and care for our property and the Buoy. I am grateful for this journey we are all on together and for each of you.

Earlier this summer, Rev. Kelly announced her plans to retire at the end of 2024. 17 years ago she took a chance on a young man who was still sorting out life. She invested in me and poured into me and cared for me through those early years of ministry together when we'd have two students show up to youth group. She has been so much more than a supervisor. Her constant presence in my life is something that I can't appropriately

measure. She has been there as my ideas got bigger and sometimes crazier. She has been there as we navigated changes in our own church and in the wider church, changes in the world and changes in our own lives. I think we all know how insanely blessed we all are to have had her be there for all of us for so long. She has made a mark on so many of our lives and on this church that will echo for many, many generations. As we move towards this transition, I am soaking up each conversation and every day that we are fortunate to be in ministry together. My prayers and thoughts are with our search committee as they do this most important work.

With that I pray that this new year is one that challenges us to expand beyond our comfort zones and commit to the on-going work that God has called us to. I pray that we find the many ways we are all rooted together and that those strong roots guide into this next chapter of our church with anticipation and hope. I look forward to all the laughs, all the hearts moved, all the lives changed, all the games, all the pizza, all the happygrams and bug bites and car rides and euchre games and ping pong matches that create the background for another year of doing ministry with so many of you.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nate Taylor – Director of Youth Ministries

## PARISH NURSE

As I complete twenty years of service as Parish Nurse, I continue to be grateful to serve. It is truly a privilege; combining my nursing background and my Stephen Ministry training as part of our caring ministry outreach has been a special experience. Together with our pastors, Stephen Ministers, Mission Team, and church family we are responding to church family needs as well as identified needs outside our church family.

We continue to utilize the support of the Mercy Parish Nurse Program, whose mission it is to “make a fundamental difference in the health status of the community we serve”. The Mercy Parish Nurses continue to be provided with the opportunity to be a part of several meetings throughout the year with Dave Covell, Lorain County Public Health Commissioner, by Zoom, who continues to keep us updated on important health concerns in Lorain County. The hospital also provides regular educational opportunities. The North East Ohio Parish Nurse meetings also provide the opportunity for education and networking with other church Parish Nurse programs.

I was recently reminded of an article I once read that said the motto of a Parish Nurse is to “maintain absolute rigid flexibility”. How true --- sometimes a carefully planned day changes in a minute by a text, email, or phone call! One simply has to be where He guides us to be. And that is possibly the most important role of the Parish Nurse: simply to “be present” as needed. I continue to spend most of my time responding to the needs of our church family. My response this year allowed visiting hospitalized members, nursing home and home visits, Tuesday morning and Wednesday afternoon office hours as well as availability on Sunday mornings and evenings by appointment; I also am available and provide support and education re availability of services, programs, and health screenings and remain involved with the mission outreach and caring ministry programs.

It is a privilege to have a small part in the following programs:

Caregiver's Support Group: this group meets monthly to support each other on the challenges of caregiving and share resources. The group is facilitated by Connie Hippler. They meet at the church on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Mental Health Caregiver's Support Group: this group is a support group for those with family members or loved ones currently dealing with a family member with a mental health concern. The group is facilitated by Michael Carr, a clinical professional employed by The Cleveland Clinic. This group meets monthly on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the church.

Grief Support:

We hosted Circle of Hope, an educational support group for those on the grief journey, provided by Hospice of Western Reserve. There were two six-week sessions, one in February and another in October. The group was facilitated by Amy Boyd Kirksey.

I continue to do my best to regularly share our Stephen Ministry booklets (a series of four provided throughout the first year following a loss).

A grief support session was provided in November prior to the holidays, led by Kelly. Our goal for this session is to provide support for those on the grief journey prior to the holidays.

Our church, beginning January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, will host a monthly grief support group for those who have lost a spouse, partner, or significant other. This group will be facilitated by Amy Boyd Kirksey – Hospice of Western Reserve. They will meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Garden Room.

AED/CPR Training: provided by University Hospital in April.

Giving Tree: approximately 430 gifts were provided in response to the wishes/ needs of our church family and five of our Mission partners (Genesis by the Lake, Haven Center, Resource Mother's, Denison, and The Village). Special thanks to Molly Dunford, who does a wonderful job of organizing the wishes, Lynn Miller and Joyce Olson for arranging delivery of gifts, and special thanks to all who helped in any way, whether you took a tag and shopped for and returned a gift, helped with the sorting and bagging of gifts for delivery, donated dollars, or helped deliver the gifts. This wonderful caring outreach could not be done without many hands.

Jammie outreach: as a result of Paul and Marsha Wisser's continuing a pajama ministry that had been in existence for many years, we were able to have a tiny part in providing pajamas to each of the children on our Giving Tree; it is a privilege to be a small part of this wonderful outreach.

Tree of Remembrance: an important part of the Holiday Season is reminiscing and remembering loved ones who are deceased. Our beautiful new tree was again located in our Vestibule and all angels from prior years were placed on it.

Service of Remembrance: this service of prayer, scripture, readings, special music by Scott and a brief meditation by Kelly is designed to help those grieving enter the Advent season with a sense of hope. A 'together time' was held following the service and as part of the service, members and friends, were invited to add their ornament to our tree. Special thanks to Marsha Wisser, who made angels for the tree as well as an ornament gift for each who attended the service. Marsha is also the provider of the prayer squares we love to share. She is a special blessing to many.

Doorstep Dinners: this outreach is actually a Mission Team outreach, coordinated by Parish Nursing: members caring for members by providing a meal when needed (after surgery, hospitalization or injury). Special thanks to all in this group that say "I can do that" when we are aware of a need.

Heavenly Helpers: also a Mission Team outreach, coordinated by Parish Nursing. This group responds to member needs by providing transportation to appointments and additional needs.



Planning is in place to add a wonderful program to our church calendar. Every Wednesday, beginning February 21, we will host a L.I.F.E. program from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., lunch included. L.I.F.E. is a dementia friendly foundation: Linking Individuals and Families through Education and Engagement. It focuses on education for the caregiver while providing engaging activities (physical exercise, music therapy and arts and crafts) for their loved one living with dementia. L.I.F.E. builds a community and breaks down social isolation for those facing similar life situations and challenges. Services are offered at no cost to participants due to rich community support. Carole Klingler, RN, BSN, is the founder, a 501©3 grassroots outreach program. She became a Certified Dementia Practitioner in 2016.

I love being a part of our church staff and our very caring church family. It is wonderful when help is needed someone is always there to respond. Our Parish Nurse program would not be possible without the support of many. Very special thanks to Kelly, who is always there to provide leadership, support, and guidance; special thanks to Angela for the many ways she supports me and to Tim Schulz, who provides much support in communication of programs every week. Thank you to the members of the Doorstep Dinner and Heavenly Helpers and all who have said “I can help”; you have responded to so many requests. And finally, special thanks to my husband for his continued patience and understanding.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Updegraff

## STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry is an international organization based in St Louis MO. There are over 13,000 enrolled congregations from 190 different denominations and 30 countries with 75,000 Stephen Leaders and 600,000 Stephen Ministers offering spiritual Christian caregiving to millions of care-receivers world-wide.

Stephen Ministers are congregation members who have received over 50 hours of training by our Stephen Minister Leaders, prior to their commissioning. They continue to receive education and training, and meet in supervision groups while they are assisting those in need. The program is completely confidential; no names of care-receivers are ever shared. Caring relationships are always with persons of the same gender. All assignments are made by Pastor Kelly Brill.

Stephen Ministers are not professional counselors. They are Christians who are trained in active listening and whose role is to walk with a person during a crisis or life transition. For nearly 30 years Stephen Ministers (see ACTS 6: 1-6) at ALUCC have cared for people dealing with illness, death or illness of a loved one, grief, job loss, divorce and depression, among other situations. In short, Stephen Ministry helps carry out the mission of our church.

For 2023, our Stephen Ministry team consisted of active members **Jim Browning, Diane Clark, Sandy Dibbell, Kris Purdy, Judy Reich, Penny Simmelink, Maggie Stark and Bill Stives**. Active Leaders at this time consist of **Susie Donovan, Teri Ann Jasany, and Cheryl Updegraff**. We were pleased to welcome back to the group, out of retirement, **Laurie Henrichsen**.

For 2023 we introduced our theme “**Rekindle Your Flame**” and the idea was that we cannot rekindle others’ flame if our own inner light is dimmed. A quote from the philosopher Dr. Albert Schweitzer: “In everyone’s life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.” (which is exactly what we are called upon to do as Stephen Ministers!) It was our hope that as we entered into 2023, that we continued to serve our church family and grow our own inner lights so that we could rekindle the light within those we care for. In addition, we hoped that all Stephen Ministers felt valued and that we helped grow their faith, as we believe it would help make **their** light shine brightly. Topics covered: *Self Compassion; Journaling, for personal reflection; Asking for Help; Being a keeper of **Hope** and scattering it widely for others to see (Introduction to Paul Wesselmann, The Ripples guy); The Ripples of Hope and The Ripples Reflection of Light and Love books were shared ; Attended a SM Day Retreat with Kim Langley on the ‘Science of Happiness and Spirituality’ and finally, Assigned Prayer Partners, where we hoped everyone would make a deeper connection with someone on our Team.* We also continued our goal from last year with the continuation of the publication of the Stephen Ministry Corner in the monthly congregational email to improve the visibility of our program. It was agreed that we have had a wonderful and busy year.

Our Stephen Ministry is funded by an endowment from Catherine and Ernest Walker and their family, and by other caring, generous church members. We are grateful for their generosity which provides funds for caregiving training and extensive leadership training from headquarters in St Louis as well as continuing education and materials. We thank you for your continual support of this ministry. Anyone interested in Stephen Ministry either in becoming a Stephen Minister or being helped by the program can reach out to Pastor Kelly.

Respectively Submitted,

Teri Ann Jasany and Susan Donovan

## WORSHIP TEAM

The 2023 Worship Team consisted of 12 Deacons and 2 adjunct Deacons: **Jamie Clemons**, Chairperson, **Cindi Dansizen**, **Debbie DeMars**, **Gary DeMars**, **Nelle Doyle**, **Beth Garrett**, **Dale Garrett**, **Sandy Garrett**, **Cathy Harvey**, **Sue Hay**, **Gail Salco** and **Jim Tanzilli**. **Dinah Hunt** and **Val Tanzilli** served as adjunct deacons.

It was another successful year for the Worship Team. As always, the Deacons are tasked with making sure that everything is ready before each service. At our monthly meetings, we circulate a Deacon on Duty schedule during our monthly Worship Team meetings. We updated the checklist that Deacons can use each week. This also helps when training new Deacons.

We continue to recruit Ushers and Greeters using Sign Up Genius and a paper signup sheet. On Communion Sundays, we need at least 6 Ushers; the other Sundays we need two or three. If you have an interest in ushering or greeting for an upcoming service, please let one of the Team members know.

The Worship Team prepares the elements for the services on the first Sunday of each month. We also assist **Kelly Brill** and **Beau Dansizen** with serving communion.

The Worship Team currently oversees the Safety Monitor volunteer signups each week. **Mark Spaetzel**, **Beau Dansizen** and **Jamie Clemons** led a second training session and church tour early in 2023. Volunteers who have gone through the training process can volunteer using a Sign Up Genius. The Safety Monitor's main responsibilities are ensuring the church grounds are safe and secure during worship service and monitoring the church cameras on an iPad. We will have a refresher training session in 2023 and open this up to any new volunteers.

The Worship Team would like to thank all of the volunteers who signed up as Ushers and Greeters, and to those serving in the Safety Monitor position. We anticipate 2024 being another busy year for the church and look forward to serving.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Clemons  
Worship Team Chair 2023

## **DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES**

2023 was a great year for the Music Ministry at ALUCC. Our ensembles have continued to work at high levels, enhancing our worship services from week to week, and offering individual members opportunities for growth and new musical experiences. This report will outline activities from each of our main ensembles, guest musicians, and recap the many special music events held in 2023.

### **Choir**

2023 brought some new voices into the ranks of our chancel choir, and we continue to strive to be an ensemble that welcomes all. Attendance for rehearsals and worship services remains fairly steady. With several strong leaders in each section, this is an ensemble that anyone should be able to join and feel comfortable right away. The choir prepared several new pieces of music in 2023, and continued improving on old favorites. Our choir continues to impress me with their skill, professionalism, and sense of comradery. It's a joy to work with this group.

### **Bell Choir**

Bell Choir has continued on a steady schedule of regular rehearsals and offering music during 9am worship approximately once per month. This ensemble's offerings during worship are always special and memorable. There have been many successful collaborations in 2023 with guest soloists and with the chancel choir. This fall, long-time bell choir director Sharon Dixon announced her retirement. This whole community is so grateful for Sharon's skillful leadership of the bell choir for many years. For 2024, we welcome our new Bell Choir director Annie Rasor, who has been playing in the choir since September.

### **Worship Band**

Our Worship Band has had a great year, adding several new songs to our catalog, and creating a lot of energetic and moving moments at the 11:00 worship service. We welcomed a new guitarist in Frank Mottola, and Jim Kotora has taken on the role of keyboard in addition to his work as vocalist. My vision for this group has always been a collaborative process where we make each of the songs, we play feel like our own. Every week we get a little better at this. I hope that our creative progress, and the joy we all feel playing together, are evident to all who worship with us.

### **Gospel Quartet**

The as-yet unnamed quartet consisting of Pete Cavano, David Doyle, David Schindler, and myself has started to become a mainstay at the 11:00 worship service. We play music from the gospel and spiritual traditions with a bluesy, folk-influenced style. This group of musicians is top-notch, and we have an absolute blast playing together. Looking forward to more from this group in 2024.

### **Guest Musicians**

Many guest musicians joined us for worship in 2023:

The Bowersox/Kessler Family; Mary Beth Ions, violin; Lauren Boudon, cello; Richie Celestina, vocalist; Carol Sue Beck, piano and organ; SOLID BRASS quintet; Anne E. Dechant; Kurt Striffler; Pete Cavano; Nolan Cavano; Beau Dansizen.

I hope I haven't forgotten any! It's such a blessing to be in a community so full of wonderful musicians who so graciously give their time and talent to offer music during our worship services.

### **Special Music Events**

The frequency of special concerts increased in 2023. All have been successful and well attended. 2023 events included:

- 1,000 Years of Sacred Chamber Music presented by a string quintet led by Cleveland Orchestra Violinist Isabel Trautwein, February 2023.
- Baroque Orchestra Apollo's Fire performed three concerts in our Sanctuary in April, June and November 2023.
- The Cleveland Pops Chorus, under the direction of Bill Zurkey, performed a concert in the sanctuary in May 2023.
- In August 2023, Pete and Nolan Cavano played a special and intimate concert in the chapel, raising approximately \$1000 for ALUCC Mission Partners Road to Hope.
- Considering Matthew Shepherd, performed by the Cleveland Chamber Choir in October 2023.
- Guest artist Mary Beth Ions and Scott Ewing performed Music and Words for the Longest Night, December 2023.

The plan for 2024 is to continue growing and offering opportunities to participate in the musical life of our community. I'm giving special focus to developing our concert offerings, with several plans in the works already for this year. I'm so grateful to be a part of such a welcoming and supportive community, and looking forward to continuing the rewarding work we're doing together.

-Scott Ewing

## CELEBRATION RINGERS

The Handbell Choir had another wonderful year of making music together. We really enjoyed when we played “Meditation on Beautiful Savior” that was a commissioned piece in honor of Ross Kingman and Martha Twining’s mother. Ross was our director on that piece, and we played it at both services. It was a very moving piece for us to do. We also did “Above All” with choir; “You Raise Me Up” with Kathy Wainwright, cello; “Breathe” with Choir; and the spirited “Siyahamba” in October. We also enjoyed playing many of the 12 handbell pieces this past year.

With Christmas Eve being on a Sunday this year, the bells played the morning worship service at 10:00am (including hymns/carols). We also played the 9:00pm Christmas Eve Service that included a beautiful rendition of “Away in the Manger” with piano/choir and Lauren Boudon, cello.

On August 26<sup>th</sup> Area 5 had an event called The Great Rep Ring which was held at Rocky River United Methodist Church. Karen, Susan, Val, Chris, Judy, Ken and Sharon all enjoyed the morning with arranger/composer Brenda Austin. We learned so much and really enjoyed a lot of sight reading.

Avon Lake Bell Choir is blessed to have many ringers including: Susan Ganyard, Cynthia Kotora, Jennifer Davis, Karen Klein, Chris Funkhouser, Judy Reich, Susan Fleming, Valerie Tanzilli, Ken Hunt, Martha Twining, Lynn Kingman, Ross Kingman, Kelly Smolik, Kelly Brill and Carol Zakel.

I’m excited to announce Annie Rasor, who has been hired to take over the Celebration Ringers Handbell Choir on January 1, 2024. She graciously took on the job and came to rehearsals and actually played as she got to know ALUCC and its bell choir.

It has been a joy to work with staff of Avon Lake United Church of Christ for the last 13 1/2 years. I have been truly blessed and am looking forward to retirement.

Sharon Dixon  
Handbell Director  
September 1, 2010 – January 1, 2024



## DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP & MEDIA

As I look back at 2022, for purposes of reflecting on the church year, it is impossible to not look back at the past four years. Comparing our attendance or events year to year easily brings reminders of pandemic and quarantine. 2023 was the year that we escaped most of that. Things may not be the same as they were in 2019, but we've seen ourselves through hard times and made positive changes towards a brighter future.

Hopefully you've noticed while in attendance on Sundays, or maybe when you are trying to park your car minutes before worship begins – attendance is up! On the following pages you'll see that our Attendance Report reflects a strong rise in worship attendance in all the various ways to look at it.

We saw this energy and increased participation in many of the social events, classes, and service opportunities our community participated in throughout the year. What a joy to have full classes and a packed Chapel at Cross Training in October! Back in February, Fellowship Hall was "sold out" for a night of bingo with a great dinner. The Cabin Fever Cornhole Tournament, held in March and supporting our Sr. High Service Trip, was back to looking like it had years before with over 130 teams competing.

Hundreds of people, members and non-members, enjoyed a sunny afternoon of live music, cornhole, a petting zoo, inflatable obstacle course, the pie eating contest and more at Fall Fest.

Speaking of live music – we are blessed to have our own amazing musicians leading us in worship, but also fortunate to experience visiting musicians. The world-famous Apollo's Fire continues to make the Avon Lake UCC Sanctuary a regular stop for their northern Ohio performances. In February, Isabel Trautwein and a string quintet of Cleveland Orchestra performers coordinated a concert with Scott featuring sacred music.

The Cleveland Pops Chorus packed the Sanctuary for their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert in April. In October, Cleveland Chamber Choir brought their moving artistic concert, *Considering Matthew Shepard*, to the Sanctuary. December's Winter Solstice Concert was a beautiful sensory experience with poems, environmental lighting and projections creating a backdrop to the heavenly sounds of Mary Beth Ions on violin and Scott Ewing on piano.

2023 was also the first full year for both our LIFT (Living in Faith Together) women's group and Men's Ministry. Both groups are still growing and hold evening meetings and events that help us make social connections and grow spiritually.

Men's Ministry held their second retreat at Bellwether Farm in October. Many members of this community lost a dear friend in Pete Barth in May. I'll never forget Pete and how kind he was to everyone he met and how much energy and time he devoted to finding a way to improve someone's life each day. Pete continues to come up in my conversations, meetings, and photos. Like many others, I know I was blessed to work alongside Pete Barth. Pete and Bill Cowles started our Men's Ministry in 2022 and this church is forever



grateful for their efforts. We are also proud to have Bill Calkins and Jasin Kessler step into the leadership of Men's Ministry in 2024.

With such a vibrant church comes many social events. Including many of those mentioned above, the Membership Team organizes and assists on concerts, picnics, outreach, staffing our Welcome Center and providing hands on help for our Inquirers' Classes. Thank you to all of those that serve on the Membership Team and to Kim Rose for leading that team and collaborating with me.

Not many churches can say that they welcomed 46 new adult members and confirmed 21 students in 2023! What a blessing and proof of the ongoing mission and ministry of our congregation.

I've said it before, and I may never stop saying it. Everyone one of us is a greeter and welcoming part of our membership team. You make a connection every time you hold a door or say hello or shake hands during the passing of the peace. When you greet as an usher, help at the Welcome Center, serve at the Thrift Shop, or teach a child – you represent the extravagant welcome of Avon Lake UCC.

Every week. Every single week Dinah Hunt prepares and displays worship projections including the lyrics, scripture, and prayer texts you see. We work together during the week with Kelly, Beau, and Scott to coordinate the order of worship and share ideas, images and text. Dinah's mastery of our projections has allowed me to be flexible to other needs that arise on Sundays and to monitor our livestream. Dinah also has put together The Lighthouse newsletter, which features highlights from church programs and ministries. There is an issue for each season of the calendar, and I invite you to look back to see the many accomplishments and joys of the past year. All issues are on the events page of our new website.

Yes, we added a new website in 2023! The new [avonlakeucc.org](http://avonlakeucc.org) was a bit of an undertaking, but past due. I am so happy to share more user friendly and certainly better-looking site for our guests and members. The pages are keyed towards welcoming and educating people about ALUCC, more than it is a place to host registrations and information for members. Though there is always new info for our members, including the calendar, worship videos and the Pastoral Transition update. The website, as well as your Realm Connect app, are easy places to make a gift or event payment to the church.

We continue to be so fortunate to have the technology to be able to provide worship online, to communicate effectively, to join a meeting or bible study from home, and to enhance the experience of a concert, VBS, Cross Training and youth group. Every worship service, plus weddings and funerals would not be possible without our Audio Video team. They are amongst the first to arrive and the last to leave on Sundays.

I always thank our Audio Video team volunteers (and hope you do to) and remind them that their efforts are an important part of the church's wider ministry. On the surface, it appears to be pushing buttons and making things sound or look good. There is a lot to learn and maintain, but more importantly it is a ministry. We bring worship to people at

home. Kelly and Beau's messages, the good news of our mission work, our talented musicians, weddings, and memorials are shared all over the country!

Thank you to these members of the Audio Video Team that assisted with our technology and ministry in 2023: **Trey Bell, TJ Frie, Dinah Hunt, Greg Kandra, Jasin Kessler, Chris Rollins, and Jim Stonebraker!** Big welcome to **Andrew Boudon** who joined us for training in November and December and is now in the regular rotation!

One Sunday morning in June, I awoke and came to church while having some trouble with my vision. It got worse while I was in the TV room and I found out later that day that my retina detached. I had surgery the next morning and was forced to lay around for the next month, plus continued restrictions for 9 weeks. I only say this because it was a difficult stretch and missing the Sr. High trip to Johnstown was an additional low point – BUT this faith community supported me and my family in many ways. Thank you for the cards, the phone calls, for picking up my slack, and asking how I was recovering. I often wondered what people without a church and wonderful neighbors do in these situations.

It is my pleasure to be able to serve this faith community and to be witness to the mission and ministry that happens year-round. What an honor to work with a team that gives so much of themselves and cares so deeply in the mission. I wish everyone could see what efforts you all put forward each week to assist families and individuals while creating meaningful worship, music, studies, and events.

As always, thank you to my best friend and wife, Katie, and my boys, Nick and Alex, for putting up with odd work hours and my requests for help. Your gracious support and belief in our mission means everything to me. Thank you to this church community and our youth ministries for helping us to raise these two young men.

I look forward to growing and serving with you in 2024,

Tim Schulz  
Director of Membership & Media

## **ALUCC ATTENDANCE REPORT**

This page historically is where we include statistics based on attendance numbers provided by our Worship Team (ushers count) on Sunday mornings. One part of my job is to track attendance data for our church, and we typically report some of these numbers to the UCC annually.

It is my pleasure to report an increase in attendance across the board compared to 2022. Not just an increase, but a statistically significant number of people attending worship in person at all Sunday services and special services too!

For 2023, we had an average attendance of 122 at 9 AM (+11%, 110 in 2022) and 164 at 11 AM (+23%, 133 in 2022).

### **2023 Average Attendance**

#### **Spring = January 8 to May 21**

9 AM Spring = 118

11 AM Spring = 160

9 & 11 Spring = 279

#### **Fall = September 10 – December 17**

9 AM Fall = 127

11 AM Fall = 168

9 & 11 Fall = 295

#### **All Year**

9 AM all year = 122

11 AM all year = 164

9 & 11 all year = 285

Our average in-person worship attendance for all Sundays with two services was 285, an increase of 17% over 243 in 2022.

Average of all two service Sundays = 285 (+17%, 243 in 2022)

Two service average January 8 to May 21 = 279 (+20%, 233 in 2022)

Two service average September 10 to December 17 = 295 (+17%, 253 in 2022)

Our average attendance at 10:00 AM worship in the summer (Memorial Day to Labor Day) was 244 (+22%, 199 in 2022).

The average of ALL individual services for the year = 167 (24%, 135 in 2022)

On Christmas Eve, we had 325 people at 5:00, 430 at 9:00 and 145 at 11:00.

Avon Lake UCC's online presence is a vital part of our connections and worship. Through our television ministry, each service is livestreamed and recorded. The recording is edited and uploaded to [vimeo.com/avonlakeucc](https://vimeo.com/avonlakeucc) for playback or download at the viewers convenience. **We had 7100+ views on our Vimeo page for 2023.**

Tracking online viewership is difficult. One account may be 2, 3, 4 people viewing in a household. Facebook counts engagements and reaches as well, but you are counted once if you were there for 5 seconds or 50 minutes. Engagement and reach are always a much higher number than we count.

We can see the number of accounts viewing our live stream of service on Facebook at that moment. I try to record the highest number I see during each service on Facebook Live. **For Sundays with one service at 10:00, we averaged 34 viewers. 9:00 AM averaged 33 viewers and 11 AM was 18.**

In addition to online options, the City of Avon Lake has provided us with a live cable broadcast on ALC-TV since 1984! We appreciate the city continuing to allow us to broadcast our 9:00 (or 10:00) live, as well as showing repeats daily. We do not know viewership numbers for ALC-TV.

On Sunday, September 17, we held our Service of Confirmation and **welcomed 21 students** into the membership of Avon Lake United Church of Christ.

Three Inquirers' Classes for prospective new members were held in February, May and October. The staff really enjoys these opportunities to meet new people, introduce them to more of the church programs and facilities and find out about the faith journey that brought them to Avon Lake UCC. **We welcomed 46 adults, representing 31 households, as new members in 2023.**

Tim Schulz  
Director of Membership & Media

## OUTREACH AND CONNECTIONS COORDINATOR

This year my annual report is starting out much differently than the past three years. We have moved on from a pandemic that I feel happened decades ago. Because of that I have learned to be more flexible, and I've learned to just let ideas play out. They often have a way of working out for the best and I'm usually pleasantly surprised at the outcomes.

Instead of recapping each month/event that happened over the past year, I will instead talk about the overall themes that I noticed. Each time we gathered, we gathered in droves of people. Most of our events in 2023 had well over 100 people in attendance. BINGO night, all church picnic, Fall Fest.... You name the event and there were plenty of people there to tell you about how it went.

At these events I noticed a feel of "lightness" with the crowd. People seemed to be smiling and talking and just plain old enjoying themselves. I didn't see anyone who was feeling rushed to be at church. It wasn't just a box they felt they needed to check off for the week. They were there because they WANTED to be there. I think that is what we are supposed to be feeling right now. We, as a society, know first-hand what it feels like when we are not able to do these fun things. Since this was our first year of "normal" and "all systems go", our church took full advantage of what we have to offer. And I couldn't be more proud of us.

I also felt a sense of closeness with one another. We have heard Pastors Kelly and Beau talk many times about relationships. It's the relationships we form in this church that allow us to support one another in a time of need. We are blessed to be a part of a community that are at the ready to dive in when a helping hand is requested. I feel like our events felt more like a family reunion as opposed to an awkward mixer.

Even though we had numbers upwards of 125 at most of our events, I then felt the tenderness of the moments shared with people. I noticed a warm, "I'm so glad to see you" hug given at the All-Church Picnic. I saw the smiles from the kids, and adults, while perched on a pony being lead around a small corral. The progressive dinner offered small groups a chance to chat and unwind after a busy summer. A time where a little bit of rain washed away the jitters of sitting in a stranger's home.

These are the moments I want people to remember. Not necessarily the event, but how you felt when you left. As the Outreach and Connections Coordinator, I want to have more of these experiences. I always want people to feel welcome to attend any event we put on, and walk away with a sense of wanting more.

This church has always come together and supported one another. I have felt that personally, and this year was no exception. As we embark on a year of change, I have no doubt that our foundation here is a strong one. Our teams are led by some of the most committed people you could find here in this little town called Avon Lake. And I am lucky to belong to one of those teams.... The Membership Team. This group is full of exciting ideas and are always willing to throw a great party.... With a smile and usually a spatula in hand too.

I will forever be grateful for Pastor Kelly and her staff here. She has been the captain of our journey here at ALUCC, but each one of her staff also plays an essential role. It's an honor to work alongside them. I say this every year, but I am inspired here. When you work with people who inspire you, goodness and joy are the end result.

Thank YOU for supporting us, believing in us, and loving us.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim Rose

## **NEW MEMBERS**

We officially welcomed 46 adults to membership at ALUCC in 2023. We are happy that they have found a new home on their faith journey and look forward to active involvement in our church's ministry.

Susan Hay	Ben Branco	Jackie Branco	Nicole Cheon
Kristen Mason	George Hertzell	Diane Graves	Ed Graves
Diana Jancura	Larry Loffman	Patricia Loffman	Lou Stark
Ann Stark	Steve Mason	Sharon Behringer	David Behringer
Cindy Martz	Jamie Curry	Brandon Curry	Tom Clark
Beth Clark	Jean Niedzwicki	Shaye Chiorazzi	Laura Smith
Alison Hawkinson	Ken Hawkinson	Allen Smith	Marie Myers
Karen James	Frank Mottola	Mary Tolaro	Jess Duda
Connie Hippler	Elaine Curtiss	Pitt Curtiss	Diana Conrad
Rosemary Keener	Lauren Boudon	Andrew Boudon	Kriss Ann Loughman
Susan Cucuzza	Tom Cucuzza	Tracy McDowell	Mike McDowell
Gerry Reynolds	Ellie Reynolds		

## **CONFIRMATION CLASS**

On Sunday, September 17, we welcomed with joy 21 students from our Confirmation Class into the membership of Avon Lake United Church of Christ.

Kyle Anderson	Micah Braun	Bri Droke	Reid Elbert
Catherine Fazio	Mallory Haley	Chase Hamilton	Olivia Hanratty
Alyssa Jones	Drew Kandra	Jeff Kessler	Julia Kudrna
Kieran Kumar	Emmit Lotz	Molly McElwain	Abby Omslaer
Kayla Omslaer	Isabel Schilens	Alex Schulz	Finn Stiles
Izzy Wilson			

## MISSION TEAM

Last year was an exciting time in the life of our church. It was especially gratifying to see what we were able to accomplish as we worked by faith together. The money that was made by the Good Neighbor Thrift Shop allowed us to help our Mission partners meet the many needs that they have. Whenever there was a need, You, our congregation came forward and made the difference to meet our goals.

There were many ways as to how this was accomplished:

- Our spring and fall food drive raised over \$16,393.00 for our 7 agencies providing food, cleaning products, and personal hygiene items.
- Due to vandalism to the Love, INC. facility, a \$10,000 donation from the GNTS was made to help with the repair.
- The Giving Tree provided approximately 430 gifts to support our ALUCC families, Genesis House, Genesis by the Lake, Haven Center, Resource Mother's, Denison Avenue, and The Village/Road-to-Hope.
- Heartland Conference UCC 2023 Bucket Challenge - collected \$2,346 and were able to pack 40 personal hygiene kits, and 40 cleanup kits.

Additional donations were made:

- Primary Purpose - In addition to the \$25,000 to purchase a van from the GNTS year-end giving, \$4,550 was provided for vacuums, sheets, pillows, blankets as well as bed platforms and encasements.
- Neighborhood Alliance facility, Rising Titans Childcare- \$1,300 for mulch to improve their playground.
- Genesis House - \$2,500 for a new refrigerator and \$500 for tires to help a resident.
- Good Knights - \$550 congregation donation along with 28 sets of twin sheets, 9 blankets, 6 pillows, and 28 hand-made twin pillowcases.
- CRS – along with ongoing food and financial support, we provide them with 119 Easter baskets and 100 snack bags for their summer program.
- Supported Cornhole by donating 2 baskets from Sweetbrier Golf Club.
- Second Harvest of Lorain – we provided 4 volunteer opportunities throughout the year to help sort and pack food packages.
- Sponsorships to fundraisers - \$500 to St. Paul's, \$250 to Clothe-a-Kid, and \$250 to Empty Bowls. \$500 was granted for an adult mission trip for the final Bike and Build event and \$500 to support a college student with supplies for fall 2023 who lost her mother to cancer in middle school and had been shuffled around, living with various family members.
- A member of the Mission Team, Jamie Wise, was very involved with the Ukrainian family that our church sponsored. Jamie was able to secure a place for them to live and obtain employment and medical coverage. The Thrift shop provided them with clothing, household items, and furniture.



A special thank you to the new Good Neighbor Grant Application Committee which had the privilege and task of reviewing and granting \$167,250 to various agencies. Please refer to the Good Neighbor Thrift Shop report for further details.

Lastly, we would like to give a special shoutout to the Mission Committee volunteers as they were always there when needed. As well as Mary Pease and her team for continually providing monthly meals to Haven Center. To Dorothy and Russ Henderson for voluntary food delivery every month and weekly pickup and delivery of Thrift Shop drop-off donations. And we can't forget about our Jammie angels, Marsha and Paul Wisser who never forget about providing pajamas to each and every child on the Giving Tree.

All of this would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of the team and church family.

Thank you for your continued support.

Candy General & Janice Bell  
Co-Leaders Mission Team

## **GOOD NEIGHBOR THRIFT SHOP**

After a good 2022, The Thrift Shop looked forward to 2023. The year exceeded all expectations with new records in sales and mission giving. Revenue was \$514,411, an increase of 31% compared to \$392,398 in 2022. More importantly, mission giving totaled \$292,327 compared to \$151,745 in 2022.

In 2023, a grant application process was initiated which resulted in \$167,250 in end of year giving distributed to 16 organizations.

Following are the Thrift Shop Grant Process Allocations:

Denison UCC \$5,000  
Resource Mothers \$10,000  
Ohio Guidestones \$2,500  
Primary Purpose \$25,000  
Hosanna Industries \$5,000  
Washington UCC \$6,750  
Neighborhood Achievement Hub \$10,000  
Second Harvest Food Bank \$10,000  
We Care/We Share \$5,000  
Good Knights \$10,500  
St. Paul's \$20,000  
Haven Center \$10,000  
Margeau House \$10,000  
Life Program/Dementia Institute \$17,500  
CRS \$10,000

These results have been achieved through the hard work of Manager Kristen LePrevost and her talented staff, our wonderful volunteers, the Thrift Shop Team, and all who donate and shop at the store. I would also like to thank Pastor Kelly and moderator Kyle Rose for their valuable guidance and support, and Kelly Smolik for her help and accounting expertise.

Our Thrift Shop has been serving our community for over 40 years. We recognize all past and present volunteers and staff that have been so instrumental in building this mission outreach program. We hope to continue this legacy for many years to come.

Respectfully Submitted

Scot McNutt-Chair Good Neighbor Thrift Shop Team

## **FINANCE TEAM**

The 2023 Finance Team was comprised of the following church members: Jeremy Kirsch, Bruce Noll, Tim Penton, Joe Poplstein, Ray Salco, Chris Steinman, and Bruce Stevens. (also non-voting team members – Sandi Gerhan, Dave Dibbell, and Kelly Smolik)

The primary responsibility of the Finance Team is to oversee the financial resources of the Church through 1) monthly monitoring of financial reporting; 2) management of the annual giving campaign; and 3) development of the Church's annual budget.

Our 2023 fiscal year ended on a strong, upbeat note, however, the year was not without a few concerns along the way. We began the year with a balanced budget that included the use of one-time monies (ERC funds) in the amount of \$45K. This created discussion about sustainability in future years once the ERC funds were gone. We were also faced with two unbudgeted capital improvement needs – phase two of the parking lot paving (\$62K) and an unplanned furnace replacement (\$14K).

Throughout the pandemic and post-pandemic years, our contribution income has maintained, but has not grown in proportion to pre-pandemic levels (i.e. it has flattened out). Meanwhile, our operating expenses have increased and the need for capital asset repairs (i.e. gas line repair, HVAC replacements, parking lot repaving) continues to persist. We have been blessed and all of our current financial needs have been met. It has just been a more challenging job to manage the budget within these existing financial constraints.

To that end, this year our moderator challenged the finance team to create a 2024 budget that did not rely on any one-time monies. (i.e. do not use any of the remaining ERC funds to balance the daily operating budget of the church). We have met that goal by judicious review of each line item of the budget and by redirecting some 'other fund' balances back to the general fund. The final version of the 2024 budget reflects a (\$11,817) that will be covered by the \$35K carry-over balance from 2023.

Kelly S. reviewed our banking relationship with Huntington Bank this year. She was able to establish an interest-bearing sweep account which netted the church an additional \$10,500 in unbudgeted interest earnings this past year. Good job Kelly!

The Finance Team wishes to thank the Church Members for their continued strong support of the Church's mission through their donations and offerings. In addition, we give special thanks to Dave Dibbell, Sandi Gerhan, and Kelly Smolik for their assistance and guidance for all that was accomplished this past year.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Penton, Finance Team Chair

## **FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

Year four of the pandemic era continued to show mixed results.

While Sunday morning worship attendance continued to lag 2019, total Pledge and Offering income at \$966,522 was high by 12% compared to the 2019 number of \$862,666, but dropped off from the 2022 number of \$1,027,908, representing a decline of 6% year over year.

Total income in 2023 of \$1,427,560 dropped by 9% compared to the 2022 figure of \$1,558,786.

With the Federal Government's rebate of Payroll Taxes in the third quarter of 2022, the church was able to start 2023 with a relatively strong balance sheet.

While spending down the church's cash assets by only \$7,287 during 2023, it was possible to pave a portion of the driveway (\$61,000) and establish the Welcome Fund (\$16,000) through excellent stewardship of the church's resources and continuing support of the congregation.

Mission-specific giving (e.g., Christmas, Easter, Food Drives, etc.) remained strong even as in-person worship slowly returned to some degree of normalcy.

If you haven't already returned to Sunday morning worship, we hope to see you soon!

Respectfully submitted,

David A. Dibbell  
Financial Secretary

## TRUSTEES

### Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the members of the 2023 Trustees team and thank them for their work and dedication: Ryan Dietz, Russ Henderson, Dean Henrichsen, CJ Jasany, Erik and Kim Kramhoeller, Paul Kress, Joe Peachman, Paul Ruben, Mark Spaetzel, Dave Updegraff, Dave Witzigreuter, and Larry Bowersox (adjunct). They all gave of their time and unique talents throughout the year, including at our Saturday morning meetings where together they provided judgment and insights on the issues and questions before us, and in assisting with the projects and ongoing work required to maintain our facilities.

I want to thank Kelly Smolik for her support and help with the budget, invoices, and research. Diane Velez also deserves special mention for her work throughout the year keeping the church clean and welcoming. Last, I want to thank TJ Frie, our facilities manager, who has stepped in to replace Dave Witzigreuter in managing our facilities and performing repairs and regular maintenance as needed.

### 2023 Projects/Work – Facilities

While not meant to be exhaustive, the following is a list of the notable work and projects completed and/or begun in and around the church's facilities in 2023:

Ed Wing Furnaces. Replaced two furnaces in the Ed Wing and equipped both for future air conditioning capability.

Windows in the music room and parish nurse office. Purchased replacement windows for the music room and parish nurse office. Installation planned for CY2024.

Back woods. Continued efforts to work on the back woods to maintain and "rewild" the area. Some areas have been completed, but the work is ongoing. A special thanks are due to Mark Spaetzel and the Back Woods Committee for their time on this project.

Parking lot. Completed phase 2 of parking lot plan with resurfacing of 25,000 sq feet of blacktop and sealing. Phase 3 of the project, e.g., what's remaining, is tentatively planned for 2025.

Continued to use Road to Hope volunteers to assist with general maintenance.

Addressed minor flooding issues caused by the heavy rains in August.

### 2023 Projects/Work – Grounds

Again, while not meant to be exhaustive, the following is a list of projects and/or work done on the grounds of the ALUCC under CJ's leadership:

- Memorial Garden. This summer, CJ gave a moment for mission during Sunday worship presenting an overview of the church grounds and the Memorial Garden. This also provided an opportunity for CJ to thank all the volunteers that serve on the Property Brother's Team for all their help maintaining the grounds.
- Trustees coffee hour. After worship, The Trustees and the Property Team hosted an outdoor coffee hour and walk through of the Garden to showcase

this amazing outdoor space. This was a successful event and an overwhelming turnout for coffee hour. Please see the Memorial Garden Annual Report for more details on this space.

- Continued Work/Maintenance. Regular grounds maintenance continued throughout the year, including mowing, trimming, fertilizing, mulching, weeding, edging. CJ would like to thank the Property Brothers and crew for giving of their time and talent to help maintain our beautiful church grounds. CJ would like to recognize the following individuals for their work and help throughout the year: Paul Burik, Paul Cox, Leslie McNutt, Lynn Miller, Meg Reinking, Cheryl Roberson, Mary Wright, and Moses Yonkers
- Landscaping Projects. A Redbud tree was planted in memory of Pete Barth in circle island in front of the sanctuary. Thanks to the Missions Team, Trustees, and The Men's Ministry for donating gifts to support the purchase of the tree. New plantings were installed at the Buoy Youth Center around the front sign and the bed across the walkway. This year CJ plans to spruce up landscaping in the back of the Buoy along the deck. CJ continued replacing/planting trees throughout the grounds. CJ believes that trees are an asset and an important part of maintaining the aesthetics of our church property.
- Tree Maintenance/Removal. Maintaining the trees on our property is a priority, and CJ took steps throughout the year to address concerns. CJ and Arborist, Alan Hopp, frequently walked the church property for any trees that needed to be trimmed or removed. This year several trees were removed next to the Buoy and along the Sanctuary for safety concerns.

#### Other 2023 projects

Trustees spent part of this year focused on preparing a parcel of ALUCC-owned property, the "Route 83 property," for a potential sale. The Route 83 property is a narrow – approximately 60 feet in width at the street – piece of the church's property, located along Route 83 and spanning to the creek that abuts the ALUCC property on the east side. The property provides limited value to the church, and the efforts that must be undertaken each year to document the church's continued ownership to avoid any potential adverse possession claims require time and attention. Trustees decided in 2022 to consider a potential sale to benefit the church. The process began in 2022 with the preparation of a survey of the entire ALUCC property and a "split plat" drawing to delineate the Route 83 as a separate parcel. We then retained a local attorney, Jay Marcie, to prepare an application to the Avon Lake Zoning Board of Appeals to obtain two variances to create a separate, buildable lot. One variance would allow for the parcel to be separated, e.g., split, from the main property; the second would allow for an exception to the zoning rules that typically require a minimum lot width of 100 feet. The church was granted the variances at a ZBA hearing in late October. With the variances in hand, Trustees approved a motion to recommend to Council that the church offer the lot for sale. Council approved the offer of sale in November, with the proceeds to be dedicated to a reserve account for future church improvements. Trustees is awaiting further guidance from the congregation on whether to move ahead on offering the parcel for final sale. We believe based on discussions with local real estate agent that the list price is reasonably

estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$70,000, though we are hopeful for more based on current market conditions.

### Year Ahead

Next year will undoubtedly bring new, unforeseen challenges and projects, in addition to regular maintenance and upkeep of our grounds and facilities. Alongside ongoing work, Trustees also expects to consider and address the following in 2023, through continued consultation with Church Council and ALUCC members:

- Route 83 parcel. As mentioned above, based on guidance from the congregation, we expect to continue to explore the potential sale of the Route 83 parcel to benefit the church and our mission.
- Back woods property. As conditions permit, Trustees, working in coordination with the Back Woods Committee, will continue working to “re-wild” and restore the backwoods.
- Continuing to resolve encroachment issues in the back woods. As part of the restoration of the backwoods, we will continue working with neighboring landowners to resolve and address ongoing encroachment issues.
- Parking lot sealing. We expect to seal the entire lot in 2024, though Phase 3 of the paving work will be slotted for 2025.
- Window installation. We expect to complete the window installation work in the parish nurse and music rooms.

I want to thank the church membership for the opportunity to serve and to be a part of the tremendous work the ALUCC does in serving God and our local community. Sound stewardship of our church’s facilities and grounds is integral to the church’s larger mission. We couldn’t do that work without the dedication of our Trustees team, our many devoted volunteers, and the ALUCC employees who offer their talents to preserve and enhance the quality and appearance of our physical resources.

Respectfully submitted,

Derek Harley  
Chairman, ALUCC Trustees

## **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

The Safety Committee had a quiet 2023. We began a new safety endeavor for Sunday services. A trained group of safety monitors assisted during each service. They acted as additional greeters and were solely assigned to monitor the building and grounds during the service. They were available to greet anyone coming in before, during and after services, assist with medical or security needs, provide extra eyes and ears for our Sunday school, and assist with any potential evacuations or lockdowns.

This new safety effort continues to be spearheaded by Jamie Clemons, who has put forth great effort establishing the program and working with the Worship Team for scheduling trained volunteers. Additional volunteers are always welcome as we work to provide a safe and secure environment for our congregation.

We will continue to conduct risk assessments and make recommendations to keep our church family safe and our assets secure.

Our many thanks to the congregation, volunteers, committee members and church staff for their continued awareness of our safety and security needs.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Safety Committee,

Mark Spaetzel, Chair



## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

2023 was a big year in the life of our church with respect to “personnel.” After thirty years of leading and serving our congregation, Pastor Kelly announced her retirement date of January 1, 2025. I know the entire congregation joins me in wishing her a very happy and healthy retirement and many years of relaxation, fun, and travel with Doug and their family and friends.

When a pastoral transition occurs, there are many tasks delegated to various committees. The Personnel Committee is devoted to supporting our existing staff and assisting in the hiring process when a position needs to be filled. However, our By Laws specifically describe the process of seeking and calling a new Senior Minister, which is the responsibility of a special Search Committee, not the Personnel Committee.

In October of 2023, our congregation voted the following members to serve on the Search Committee: Chair Mallory Reinking, Emily Lotz, John Rice, Jonathon Whittlesey, Jasin Kessler, Maureen Johnson, Teri Ann Jasany, Bill Cowles, Tim Harris, and Judy Reich.

The year 2023 brought some changes in staffing. Sharon Dixon retired from her position as our Bell Choir leader, and Annie Rasor was hired to fill that role. We will always be grateful for Sharon’s musical and leadership ability, as well as the way she made the Bell Choir feel like a family. Annie has hit the ground running and has become an indispensable member of our team.

Our Thrift Shop had another phenomenal year in 2023 and added staff members Craig Cowles, Allison Arnold, Angie Luca, and Rachel Fatzinger to its ranks. They have already contributed so much to our beloved shop. The Shop said “good-bye” to Jill Eston who has served in several staff roles over the years, as well as given countless hours of volunteer time.

Like we do every year, the Personnel Committee will conduct end-of-the-year evaluations of staff members in early 2024. We also reviewed and revised staff policies where necessary.

It is with mixed emotions that I share the news that Jill James concludes her term on the Personnel Committee. She and Gus have a very busy time ahead with his high school graduation and post-high school plans. We welcome Patsy Coniku to the committee as of January 1, 2024 and are looking forward to her participation.

We are so blessed to have such an incredibly strong foundation in our staff who have supported one another and our congregation throughout all of the changes we experienced since 2020 and beyond. With the support of our congregation and the Personnel Committee, our outstanding staff will continue their hard work, seen and unseen, as we enter this year of transition.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Harley, Chair of the Personnel Committee, on behalf of members Tom Coy, Bonnie Fraser, Jill James, Phil Johnson, and Jeff Omslaer.



## **MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE**

Of all of our outdoor spaces on the church grounds, my favorite is the Memorial Garden. This incredible outdoor sanctuary is in our own backyard and is a sacred space where memorial services are officiated, and ashes of loved ones are spread throughout the garden. It also provides an opportunity for prayer, for meditation and to be outdoors with nature. There are pathways and benches, and a water feature and even Corinthian Wind Chimes. There are beautiful trees planted in memory of loved ones: Birch Trees, Evergreens, and Red Bud Trees. We have butterfly bushes in a designated butterfly area as well. I invite you to come and enjoy the wildlife, the playful sounds of chickadees as they flutter from tree to tree, or to listen to the serene rhythm of the water from the fountain. There are bird houses and bird feeders and so much wildlife to enjoy. We have our very own nature preserve - Right here at church!

This summer I had the opportunity to present a Moment for Mission during Sunday worship to showcase this beautiful garden and take an opportunity to recognize and thank all of the volunteers that help throughout the year. We invited everyone to enjoy our first outdoor coffee hour in the garden, hosted by the Trustees and the Property Brothers' Teams. We had an overwhelming turnout and a great day. My hope for this event was to bring attention to our outdoor spaces and invite everyone to visit often.

Thank you to those many volunteers who spend countless hours helping care for the garden: Jim Tanzilli, Lynn Miller, Mary Wright, Paul Burik, Paul Cox, Leslie McNutt, Meg Reinking, and Cheryl Roberson. It is a great pleasure to work alongside my fellow committee members Margie Fehlner, Jim Tanzilli, Dave Witzigreuter and a big welcome to our newest member, Leslie McNutt.

The names of those whose ashes were scattered in 2023:

**Scott Jancura, J William Kauffman, Gladys Kisselle, and Debra (Debbie) Skuggen**

- \* A garden bench was donated on behalf of the church in memory of Thelma Morningstar.
- \* A Norway Spruce was planted in memory of Sandy Garrett's husband, Pat Garrett.
- \* A Blue Bird House was donated by Margie Fehlner in loving memory of her daughter, Deborah Darnell.

***The memorial garden committee is grateful for the monetary donations that help us maintain the garden.*** This year, along with the regular maintenance of the garden, which includes mulching, fertilization, etc., we began plans to expand the garden on the south side. If you would like to donate towards the Memorial Garden Fund or discuss Pre-Planning, please see Rev. Dr. Kelly Brill or Margie Fehlner. If you are interested in volunteering in the garden, please see CJ Jasany.

*“The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature.” ~ Anne Frank*

Respectfully Submitted by C.J. Jasany

## REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE ELECTIVE POSITIONS ALUCC 2024

It is amazing, once again, to see how many people are excited to serve our church. My thanks to Reverend Kelly Brill & the Nominating Committee members Megan Dietz, Paul Dunford, Beth Gee, Holly Kessler, Ron Pallinger, Jana Peachman, & Deanna Walther for a job well done.

The Nominating Committee presents the following 2024 slate of dedicated individuals consenting to serve as officers, council delegates, team or committee members, or delegates to the Heartland Conference or Living Waters Association for the Avon Lake United Church of Christ.

### **OFFICERS**

Moderator  
Church Clerk  
Treasurer  
Financial Secretary

Kyle Rose (2023)  
Zoe Cummings (2022)  
Sandy Gerhan (2020)  
Walt Henry (2024)

### **COUNCIL DELEGATES**

Deborah Bracy (2023)

Manoj Kumar (2023)

\*Team Lead

### **FAITH FORMATION** (newly formed in 2024)

Deborah Bracy  
Beau Dansizen\*  
Amanda Lavriha  
Laura Smith  
Adjuncts: Meredyth McKenzie

Kevin Bracy  
Ann Hasenstaub  
Beth Rollins  
Renee White  
Jennifer Pilkington

Melinda Coffey  
Jenn Judkins  
Chris Rollins  
Eileen Zakel (ex-officio)  
Elizabeth Knoepp

### **FINANCE TEAM**

Andrew Boudon (2024)  
Tim Penton\* (2022)  
Joe Poplstein (2023)

Tom Clark (2024)  
Ray Salco (2018)  
Chris Steinman (2022)

Alison Hawkinson (2024)  
Bruce Stevens (2022)

### **MEMBERSHIP TEAM**

Lynne Barth (2020)  
Carolyn Coy (2023)  
Kim Rose (2020)  
Rob Turner\* (2016)  
Adjuncts: Holly Kessler (2024)

Tricia Bowersox (2023)  
Emily Lotz (2023)  
Kendra Kumar (2023)  
Colleen Kane (2024)  
Sharon Parsons (2018)

Jennie Calkins (2023)  
Ellyn Nicholas (2019)  
Pam Omslaer (2023)  
Sharon Jermstad (2024)  
Carol Zakel (2023)

### **MISSION TEAM** \*Team Co-lead

Janice Bell\* (2020)  
Chris Gee (2023)  
Kathy Kamps (2024)  
Elaine Newlin (2018)  
Sid Stech (2023)

Christine Carr (2020)  
Candy General\* (2016)  
Amy Malloy (2023)  
John Rice (2024)  
Cheryl Updegraff (2014)

Sara Follmer (2024)  
Nancy Geschke (2022)  
Lynn Miller (2023)  
Judy Srail (2019)  
Joyce Young (2012)

Jamie Wise (2024)	Karen Francy (2023)	Eric Olsen (2023)
Adjuncts: Craig Cowles (2023)	Kurt Zbin (2022)	
Joyce Olsen (2023)		

### **TRUSTEES**

Ryan Dietz (2022)	Derek Harley* (2020)	Russ Henderson (2012)
Dean Henrichsen (2003)	CJ Jasany (2012)	Erik Kramhoeller (2023)
Kim Kramhoeller (2023)	Paul Kress (2023)	Joe Peachman (2023)
Paul Ruben (2012)	Mark Spaetzel (2023)	Dave Updegraff (2001)
Dave Witzigrueter (2001)		
Adjunct: Larry Bowersox (2023)		

### **WORSHIP TEAM**

Jamie Clemons (2020)	Cindi Dansizen (2019)	Debbie DeMars (2018)
Gary DeMars (2018)	Beth Garrett (2023)	Dale Garrett (2023)
Sandy Garrett (2014)	Diane Graves (2024)	Sue Hay (2023)
Gail Salco (2018)	James Tanzilli (2016)	Cameron Taylor (2024)
Adjunct: Nelle Doyle (2018)	Cathy Harvey (1999)	Dinah Hunt (2014)
Valerie Tanzilli (2018)		

### **THRIFT SHOP TEAM**

Beth Clark (2024)	Bill Cowles (2021)	Sandy Drickhamer (2021)
Paul Dunford (2021)	Beth Gee (2024)	Kristen LePrevost (2021)
Scot McNutt* (2021)	Chris Peachman (2022)	Chris Spaetzel (2019)
Lou Stark (2024)	Cheryl Updegraff (2023)	
Adjuncts: Chris Carr (2022)	Rachel Keberle (2024)	Jenn Miller (2024)

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Tom Coy (2019)	Bonnie Fraser (2017)	Stephanie Harley* (2018)
Phil Johnson (2019)	Jeff Omslaer (2018)	Patsy Coniku (2024)

### **ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE**

Doug Gates (2024)	Jim Stobe (2020)	Shelley MacDonald* (2022)
Scott MacDonald* (2022)	Bruce Stevens (2022)	

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Megan Dietz (2022)	Paul Dunford (2014)	Beth Gee (2022)
Heather Ferguson (2024)	Kevin Kane (2024)	Holly Kessler (2022)
Amy Nasr* (2022)	Ron Pallinger (2004)	Jana Peachman (2022)
Deanna Walther (2018)		

### **HEARTLAND CONFERENCE**

Judy Reich (1988-89; 2016-present)

### **LIVING WATERS ASSOCIATION**

Judy Reich (2005)	Doug Rider (2008)	Sandy Rider (2008)
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Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Nominating Committee.  
Amy Nasr, Chair

## ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

The Avon Lake UCC Endowment is a long-term fund used to support mission and ministry while at the same time ensuring that the church is here for future generations. The fund is invested in a diversified portfolio of financial securities principally consisting of stocks and bonds. Its income is distributed regularly and is used to support church, member and community needs. The endowment is managed by an outside independent investment manager (Sequoia Financial Group) and overseen by the church endowment committee.

The endowment committee meets quarterly, or on an as needed basis, to monitor the fund's investments as well as oversee the general health of the endowment. Committee members have a fiduciary responsibility, which includes but is not limited to, acting in good faith, giving reasonable effort in understanding the fund's investments and respecting the mission of the church.

The committee also has the responsibility of keeping Church Council informed on endowment actions, including investments, distributions and other relevant activities. Not only is it the committee's responsibility to update council on these happenings, but it is also their duty to keep the congregation fully apprised of these activities.

Gifts are assigned as either unrestricted or restricted depending on the wishes of the donor and acceptance of council. These categories are defined as follows:

*Unrestricted Gifts:* Both the principal and interest may be spent for general church needs as determined by council and/or a membership meeting.

*Restricted Gifts:* Both the principal and interest must be spent as specified by the donor.

Unless absolutely necessary, it is the intention of the committee to preserve the principal over the long run and only distribute income.

Following challenging years in both 2021 and 2022, the Avon Lake UCC Endowment Fund, driven by rebounds in both the stock and bond markets, increased by 14.33% and ended the year with \$941,081 in assets. This was an increase from the 2022 year-end level of \$862,671.

In 2023 the Fund's performance tracked well against its benchmark, the 60/40 MSCI ACWI Investable Net/Bloomberg US Aggregate Index. The benchmark was up 15.09% in 2023 while the Fund's investments were up 14.33% (net of fees).

At the end of 2023 the endowment fund remained diversified across various investment classes (stocks, bonds and cash), styles (growth and value), sizes (large, mid and small) and geographies (domestic and international). This diversification is a mainstay of the endowment's investment strategy as it helps reduce volatility while providing competitive long-term returns. The fund's asset allocation ended the year with approximately 59.5% in stocks, 38% in bonds and 2.5% in cash.

The total outflows from the fund in 2023 were \$50,806; \$33,681 in quarterly transfers back to the church, a \$10,050 transfer to the church from the Stephen Ministers Fund to help fund the creation of the Garden Room, and \$7,075 in advisory fees paid to our investment manager. The fund received a \$1,500 gift in the first quarter.

The committee distributed 5% of the fund's unrestricted average assets back to the church. These funds are being used to cover operating expenses through the General Fund and to help pay down the principal on the mortgage.

Sequoia attended two quarterly endowment committee meetings to provide their market insights and views. In addition, the committee created two new forms this year: a contribution form to specify a donor's intentions and a request form for the church to complete when seeking a distribution from a restricted fund.

We were pleased to receive a gift to the fund this year. Thank you to Patricia Belcastro for her \$1,500 gift toward continuing education for the church staff.

2023 Endowment Committee members were Shelley and Scott MacDonald (co-chairpersons), Jim Stobe, Bruce Stevens and Maggie Stark.

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott and Shelley MacDonald



## MAJOR ENDOWMENT FUND GIFTS

**George and Edith Featherstone** - The Featherstone's were close to the life of this church over many years, Edith especially being active in a Discovery Group. They first met in a church youth group in Cleveland and always had an interest in Christian youth programs. George died in 1974 and Edith in 1977.

**Eda Weilemann** - Following the death of her mother, this church became Eda's "family". She simply loved to worship, volunteer, and fellowship with us. She planned for her estate to be used by the church following her own death to meet the challenges of our new building and program. Income from her bequest has greatly helped our Building Expansion.

**Ella Handy** - Once a librarian, Ella's interest came to be in the Avon Lake Historical Society and the establishment of the Peter Miller House. Ella was a friend of this church for many years.

**Eva M. Dickson** - Eva and Neil ("Dick") lived in Bay Village but worshipped here when they were not in Florida. Both had the gift of humor and friendship and some of their closest friends were young people.

**Quentin and Jean Cahill** - Both devoted to this church over many years. This gift was designated to the Music Endowment account in accordance with their own wishes. Each waged a valiant struggle with cancer, and their courage inspired us all.

**Paul and Lillian Folino** - Paul was the beloved pastor of this church from 1947 to 1963 and Lillian was a leader in our Christian Education program. The endowment represents love gifts from many members and friends.

**William McKinley, Megan McKinley, Neil Conant** - This gift memorializes William McKinley, a sports enthusiast who established a company his family now continues; his granddaughter, Megan, who died as an infant, blessing her family with immeasurable love; and Neil Conant, a leader in our parish who struggled over many years with a rare disease, teaching us both how to live and how to die as a Christian.

**Katherine Walker** - The devoted wife of Ernest, mother of Lain and Fiona, and grandmother of Joshua. Katherine was active in our church, particularly in the library. Her quiet but warm and caring love is now memorialized in the full support of the church's Stephen Ministry program.

**John Watterson** - John was a technician in the B.F. Goodrich Chemical Company and a long-time faithful member of the church, particularly in the Men's Breakfast

fellowship, but he and his wife Charlene came to enjoy attending the Saturday Vespers. He is also survived by a son, John, and a daughter, Terry Holstein.

**Melinda C. Neuenschwander** - Melinda had been the church organist for many years. She retired in 1964 and moved to Eugene, Oregon, where she lived until she passed away in 1990 at the age of 102.

**Helen (Nazel) Krumwiede** - Helen was active in our church over many years, providing leadership especially in our Discovery Groups and with the Women's League and Golden Agers. She enjoyed writing poetry and often led devotions for various church groups. Though she suffered a severe hearing loss, her church loyalty and attendance were always sustained.

**Vera C. and Edwin Mast** - Vera and Ed were loyal members of this church since joining in 1949. Both were quite active and supported many church projects over the years (often anonymously!). Vera was a leader of the Career Women, a group of Women's Leagues made up of business and professional women. One of her hobbies was taking homemade goodies to people who were sick or shut-in. Ed's many involvements included participating as a Deacon and a Trustee and serving on committees such as the Debt Retirement, Personnel and Planning Committees. The Mast's were always interested in the expansion and beautification of our sanctuary.

**Robert S. Luce** - Bo's interests included boating, fishing, transportation - a love which he pursued as a career in the car rental business - and servicing the needs of others. Even during the last months of his illness, the biggest joy was found in sending gifts to friends. Bo is affectionately remembered by all who knew him for his charisma, warmth of friendship, compassion, genuine spirit of caring and concern for the well-being of others.

**Deborah L. Darnell** – Debbie was a young woman who loved children, people, her church and life. She was everyone's best friend because she cared for them. Her love of nature, reading and quiet moments led to the desire to establish a fund to support the Memorial Garden for the benefit of our church members and the community.

**Ruth Dobosy** – Ruth was an active member in our church from the time she joined on December 18, 1949 until she passed away in 2005. She served on many boards and committees and was active in the Women's League over the years and was Moderator in 1975 and 1976. She was also active in PTA and served as PTA Council President in 1965-1967.

**Nancy Bower** – Nancy was an active member from the time she joined the church in 1982. She served on the Board of Christian Education and the Board of Deacons. She was a psychiatric social worker at Community Health Partners.

**David and Sandy Dibbell** – Dave and Sandy have been long standing members of our church. They have both been very active. Dave as a past Moderator and is currently serving as Financial Secretary. The Dibbell's are the first active members to make an Endowment gift in a long time. We are hoping that other active members will follow their lead. Their gift will be the Bailey-Dibbell named fund, as a way to honor their family, including Sandy's mother, Alice Bailey.

**Richard Turner** – Richard Turner was an active and committed member of the church from the time he joined in 1958 until the day he died in 2017. He served as Moderator, Stephen Minister, and on countless boards and teams. He left money to the church in his estate for the Endowment Fund and also for our music ministry which he loved and appreciated.

**Thomas and Isabelle (Isy) Beal** – Tom and Isy were longtime active members of the church. Tom was a devoted member of the choir. Their gift supports the music ministry of the church.

**Bob Marimon** – Bob was an active 70-year member of the church and a former Moderator. His unrestricted gift to the Endowment Fund will help support ministry and mission.

**Don and Mimi Cruse** – Don and Mimi were not active members of the church long, but they loved Avon Lake UCC and especially its inclusive ministry. Their unrestricted gift to the Endowment Fund will help support ministry and mission.

**Patricia Belcastro** – Proceeds from Patricia's endowment will help support continuing education for church staff.

<b>Avon Lake United Church of Christ</b>	
<b>Balance Sheet - Church</b>	
Accounts	Year End Balances
<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Cash Assets</b>	
Church Checking	64,143.43
Petty Cash	250.00
Sweep Money Market Account - Church	457,729.66
<b>Total Cash Assets</b>	<b>522,123.09</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
Land	194,000.00
Building-Church	3,052,000.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>3,246,000.00</b>
<b>Endowment</b>	
Endowment	885,904.00
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>885,904.00</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>4,654,027.09</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Credit Cards</b>	
US Bank	6,838.97
Citi Bank	9,050.99
Lowes Credit	78.56
<b>Total Credit Cards</b>	<b>15,968.52</b>
<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>	
Mortgage-Hunt Nat Bank	427,268.31
<b>Total Long Term Liabilities</b>	<b>427,268.31</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>443,236.83</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
<b>Capital Improvement Funds</b>	
Capital Improvement Funds	26,250.46
Capital Improvement Funds - Restrooms	
Capital Improvement Funds - Music Wing	812.64
<b>Total Capital Improvement Funds</b>	<b>26,067.49</b>
<b>Operating Funds</b>	
General Operating Fund - Church	54,866.89
<b>Total Operating Funds</b>	<b>54,866.89</b>
<b>Memorial Funds</b>	
Memorial Funds Music	7,078.80
Memorial Funds Undesignated	10,068.35
Memorial Garden Fund	1,612.43
Flynn Memorial Fund-Cap Improvement	8,500.00
Morningstar Memorial Fund-Transition Costs	25,050.00
<b>Total Memorial Funds</b>	<b>52,309.58</b>
<b>Pastoral Funds</b>	
Mission, Ministry, Outreach Fund	21,586.79
Welcome Fund (report cont.on next pg)	16,222.01

Pastoral Emergency Fund	10,810.22
Pastoral Wedding/Funeral Fund	1,723.90
Stephen Ministry Fund	6,222.43
<b>Total Pastoral Funds</b>	<b>56,565.35</b>
<b>Faith Formation Funds</b>	
Children's Ministry Fund	18,593.10
Mission 101 Fund	500.00
<b>Total Faith Formation Funds</b>	<b>19,093.10</b>
<b>Music Funds</b>	
Music Fund	6,280.95
<b>Total Music Funds</b>	<b>6,280.95</b>
<b>Tech &amp; Media Funds</b>	
Tech & Media Fund	4,345.99
<b>Total Tech &amp; Media Funds</b>	<b>4,345.99</b>
<b>Youth Funds</b>	
Youth Fund	2,940.54
Youth Fund Pop	1,353.52
Youth Fund Mission Scholar	4,852.48
Jr High Service Trip Fund	2,866.65
Jr High Service Trip Fund Dirty Dog 5K	305.06
Sr High Service Trip Fund	57,705.25
Sr High Service Trip Fund Cornhole	5,000.00
Summer Camp Fund Bunk & Bunkers	5,106.08
Summer Camp Fund Camp Incentive	3.24
Summer Camp Fund Washington UCC	559.36
Sportscamp Fund	1,962.64
Sportscamp Fund Cap Imp Camp	9,902.25
<b>Total Youth Funds</b>	<b>92,557.07</b>
<b>Mission Appeals Funds</b>	
Food Drive Fund	948.52
<b>Total Mission Appeals Funds</b>	<b>948.52</b>
<b>Reserve Funds</b>	
Cash Reserves - Church	110,744.69
ERC Credit Fund	82,374.94
<b>Total Reserve Funds</b>	<b>193,119.63</b>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	
Endowment Fund	885,904.00
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>885,904.00</b>
<b>Owner's Equity</b>	
Owner's Equity	2,818,731.69
<b>Total Owner's Equity</b>	<b>2,818,731.69</b>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>4,210,790.26</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>4,654,027.09</b>

Avon Lake United Church of Christ			
Summary Statement of Activities - Church - General Fund			
Accounts	Actual 2023	Budget 2023	Budget 2024
<b>Revenue</b>			
Operating Income	966,522.73	981,000.00	965,700.00
Miscellaneous Income	19,623.47	11,000.00	20,100.00
Interest Income	10,709.00	90.00	13,212.00
Pastoral Income	12,970.00	8,470.00	9,550.00
Worship Income	4,512.51	2,315.00	3,050.00
Faith Formation Income	2,964.00	4,000.00	3,000.00
Youth Program Income	6,720.00	7,800.00	7,240.00
Membership & Outreach Income	624.00	7,800.00	2,000.00
Mission Appeals Income	4,901.00	2,470.00	4,200.00
Endowment Income	54,674.24	41,200.00	44,400.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	1,084,220.95	1,066,145.00	1,072,452.00
Other Fund Transfers	106,684.43	107,786.00	40,000.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	1,190,905.38	1,173,931.00	1,112,452.00
<b>Expenses</b>			
Operating Expenses	201,902.78	232,272.00	170,930.00
Service Charge Expenses	8,389.56	9,525.00	10,300.00
Mortgage Expenses	85,247.97	85,248.00	85,248.00
Office Expenses	27,843.83	26,277.60	27,190.00
Pastoral Expenses	15,729.02	9,075.00	9,950.00
Worship Expenses	6,148.71	8,905.00	9,100.00
Faith Formation Expenses	18,115.93	14,400.00	15,900.00
Music Expenses	8,976.44	9,780.00	8,900.00
Tech & Media Expenses	17,391.56	17,436.00	19,925.00
Youth Program Expenses	45,491.32	32,700.00	20,700.00
Membership & Outreach Expenses	4,146.29	9,902.00	6,900.00
Mission Appeals Expenses	3,561.94	3,660.00	4,200.00
Personnel Expenses	712,162.51	732,293.56	735,026.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	1,155,107.86	1,191,474.16	1,124,269.00
<b>Net Total</b>	35,797.52	(17,543.16)	(11,817.00)

Avon Lake United Church of Christ			
Summary Statement of Activities - Church - Other Funds			
Accounts	Actual 2023	Budget 2023	Budget 2024
<b>Revenue</b>			
Capital Improvement Fund Income	33,395.26	-	-
Memorial Fund Income	42,330.22	3,200.00	6,700.00
Pastoral Fund Income	28,972.01	20,400.00	55,400.00
Music Fund Income	6,341.95	-	4,000.00
Youth Funds Income	109,222.39	138,280.00	148,600.00
Mission Appeals Fund Income	16,393.00	15,000.00	12,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	236,654.83	176,880.00	226,700.00
Other Fund Transfers	-	-	179,600.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	236,654.83	176,880.00	406,300.00
<b>Expenses</b>			
Capital Improvement Fund Expenses	17,674.16	-	26,000.00
Memorial Fund Expenses	7,663.75	2,000.00	33,800.00
Pastoral Fund Expenses	29,037.07	20,400.00	120,600.00
Faith Formation Fund Expenses	2,195.07	2,500.00	19,000.00
Music Fund Expenses	1,426.00	-	10,000.00
Tech & Media Fund Expenses	4,492.98	-	4,300.00
Youth Fund Expenses	81,176.45	118,069.00	179,700.00
Missions Appeals Fund Expenses	21,954.04	15,000.00	12,900.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	165,619.52	157,969.00	406,300.00
<b>Net Total</b>	71,035.31	18,911.00	-

Avon Lake United Church of Christ	
Balance Sheet - Good Neighbor Thrift Shop	
<u>Accounts</u>	<u>Year End Balance</u> <u>2023</u>
<b>Assets</b>	
Thrift Checking	32,093.28
Sweep Money Market Account - Thrift	83,077.76
<b>Total Assets</b>	\$ 115,171.04
<b>Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Credit Cards - Thrift	1,173.30
Gift Cards Unused	2,081.09
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	\$ 3,254.39
<b>Net Assets</b>	
General Operating Fund - Thrift	41,843.50
Cash Reserves - Thrift	50,000.00
Capital Reserve - Thrift	17,061.87
Emergency Mission Fund	3,011.28
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	\$ 111,916.65
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	\$ 115,171.04

Avon Lake United Church of Christ			
Summary Statement of Activities - Good Neighbor Thrift Shop			
<u>Accounts</u>	<u>Actual 2023</u>	<u>Budget 2023</u>	<u>Budget 2024</u>
<b>Revenue</b>			
Operating Income	514,411.01	327,700.00	410,000.00
Interest Income	29.13	-	24.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$ 514,440.14	\$ 327,700.00	\$ 410,024.00
Other Fund Transfers	24,787.22	8,000.00	47,500.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$ 539,227.36	\$ 335,700.00	\$ 457,524.00
<b>Expenses</b>			
Capital Reserve Fund Expenses	15,926.34	5,930.00	47,500.00
Operating Expenses	19,570.97	20,190.00	30,775.00
Utility Expenses	14,924.85	16,585.00	10,560.00
Rent Expenses	42,300.00	42,000.00	43,200.00
Sales Tax Expenses	27,661.13	19,835.68	25,460.00
Service Charge Expenses	10,421.59	6,288.00	7,720.00
Personnel Expenses	111,313.60	115,508.34	125,000.00
Mission Expenses	126,077.11	108,800.00	108,800.00
Grants	167,250.00	-	58,031.21
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 535,445.59	\$ 335,137.02	\$ 457,046.21
<b>Net Total</b>	\$ 3,781.77	\$ 562.98	\$ 477.79

<b>Good Neighbor Thrift Shop</b>	
<b>2023 Mission Giving</b>	
<u>2022 Profits Given in 2023</u>	<u>Amounts Given</u>
Genesis House-New Fridge	2,500.00
Neighborhood Alliance-Playground Mulch	1,300.00
Genesis House-Gift Cards, Christmas	2,500.00
Community Resource Services - Gift Cards	3,125.00
Neighbors in Need	1,000.00
One Great Hour of Giving	500.00
Love Inc	10,000.00
	\$ 20,925.00
<u>Inventory Donated</u>	
To Local Groups	306.00
	\$ 306.00
<u>2023 Gifts</u>	
Miscellaneous	750.00
Primary Purpose	4,550.13
Clothe-a-Kid	250.00
Adult Mission Trips	500.00
Haven Center Dinners	3,375.76
Giving Tree	300.00
Empty Bowls	250.00
Mercy Medical	500.00
Genesis House	500.00
St Paul's Community Church	500.00
Community Resource Services - Snack Bags	478.52
Recovery House	750.00
Avon Lake UCC -Youth Service Trips	30,000.00
AA Groups Rentals	6,000.00
Our Church's Wider Mission	48,000.00
	\$ 96,704.41
<u>2023 Grant Funding</u>	
Ohio Guidestones Lorain County Office	2,500.00
Denison Avenue UCC	5,000.00
Hosanna Industries Pittsburgh area	5,000.00
We Care We Share	5,000.00
Washington UCC Cincinnati	6,750.00
Resource Mothers	10,000.00
Genesis House / Safe Harbor Domestic violence program	10,000.00
Neighborhood Achievement Hub - Cleveland West side	10,000.00
Second Harvest Food Bank	10,000.00
Haven Center	10,000.00
Margeau House	10,000.00
CRS	10,000.00
Good Knights - beds for Lorain County Children	10,500.00
LIFE program for those with dementia and their caregivers	17,500.00
St. Paul's Community UCC	20,000.00
Primary Purpose - Sober living facility	25,000.00
	\$ 167,250.00
<b>Total Given in 2023 *</b>	<b>\$ 284,879.41</b>
*Difference from Mission Giving & Grant Expenses on Financials is Gifts purchased in 2023 from Funds given to Resource Mom's in 2022 totaling \$8,447.70	



<b>Avon Lake United Church of Christ</b>	
<b>2023 Benevolent Giving</b>	
<u>Good Neighbor Thrift Shop 2023 Mission Gifts</u>	\$ 284,879.41
<u>Support from the Avon Lake UCC - Church Funds</u>	
Avon Lake UCC - Financial Assistance to members	5,326.33
Clean Up Bucket Challenge (Appeals)	2,706.94
Good Knights (Appeals)	605.00
Mission Food Drive (Appeals)	21,954.04
Mission Giving Tree	150.00
Mission Giving Tree*	19,750.00
St Paul's Community Church - Computer Assistance	1,070.50
Washington UCC - Young Adult Service Trip	1,132.84
Saturday Work Crew & Property Brothers	Priceless**
	52,695.65
Total Given in 2023	\$ 337,575.06
* Estimated value of member donations which includes clothing, boots, toys, gift cards, household items more	
**A value impossible to calculate. Every year, time and talent is generously given by those who work hard to improve our church; picking up and maintaining the grounds, repairing the building and doing a multitude of jobs, that would cost the church an insurmountable amount of money.	

## **MODERATORS OF THE AVON LAKE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1943-1950	J.I. King	1995-1996	Paul Dunford
1951-1952	John Brunn	1997-1998	Lenore Marken
1953	James Van Boven	1999-2000	David Dibbell
1954-1957	J.I. King	2001-2002	Jack Kneiss
1958-1959	Fred Lott	2003-2004	Thomas Coy
1960	Howard Hoxie	2005-2006	Joseph Poplstein
1961-1962	Art Gerhan	2007-2008	Lynn Greene
1963-1964	Ken Birnbaum	2009-2010	T.J. Frie
1965	Don Armbrecht	2011-2012	Maureen Johnson
1966-1968	John Clarke	2013-2014	David Wilhoite
1969-1970	Verne Nygaard	2015-2016	Richard General
1971-1972	George Morningstar	2017-2018	Robert Miller
1973-1974	Howard Flynn	2019-2020	Timothy Harris
1975-1976	Ruth Dobosy	2021-2022	Mark Spaetzel
1977-1978	Richard Turner	2023-	Kyle Rose
1979-1980	David Weaver		
1981-1982	Robert Marimon		
1983-1984	James Tanzilli		
1985-1986	Helen Marimon		
1987-1989	Robert Fitzsimmons		
1989-1990	Robert Turner		
1991-1992	Donald Marken		
1993-1994	Thelma Morningstar		