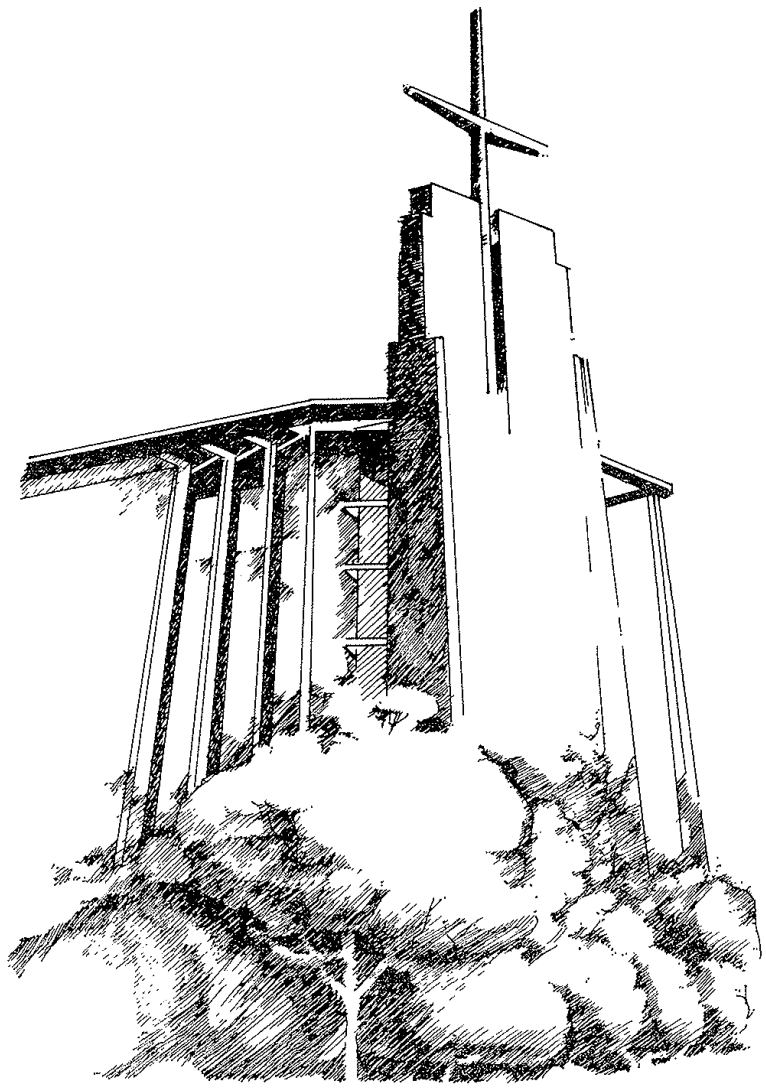
ANNUAL MEETING
JUNE 7, 2026



First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Palo Alto, California
website: www.fccpa.org

AGENDA
FCCPA Congregational Meeting
June 7, 2026
Immediately Following Worship
In Person and on Zoom

Call to Order	Karen Routt
Opening Prayer	Dave Howell
Minutes of April 12, 2026	Karen Routt
Stewardship Campaign Update	Kim Bomar
2026-27 Budget	Kim Bomar
Proposed Slate for 2026-27 Fiscal Year Officers, Board Members, and Committee Members	Karen Routt
Senior Minister's Report	Dave Howell
Moderator's Report	Karen Routt
Closing Comments and Prayer	Eileen Altman
Adjournment	Karen Routt

Next Congregational Meeting: September 27, 2026, 11:15 am

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
Excerpts from Bylaws re Annual Meeting/Staff		2
Nominations for 2026/2027 Officers, Board Members, and Committees		3
Moderator's Report	Karen Routt	6
Membership Status	Diane Churchill	7
REPORTS OF MINISTERIAL STAFF		
Senior Pastor	David Howell	8
Associate Pastor	Eileen Altman	9
Director of Music	Joe Guthrie	10
REPORTS OF MINISTRY BOARDS		
Deacons	Cammy Sunde	11
Education	Laura Lindstorm	12
Outreach	Lisa Carr, Tom Kellerman	14
Trustees	Kim Bomar	16
Treasurer	Peggy Brinkmann	20
Worship	Nancy Mayo & Jennie Heckman	22
REPORTS OF AFFILIATES		
Community Grants Committee	Alan Stivers	24
Peace and Justice Task Force	Steve Ketchpel	25
Mental Health Allies	Beate Teufel	27
First Congregational Church Nursery School	Marisa Cajbon	28

EXCERPTS FROM EXISTING BYLAWS REGARDING ANNUAL MEETING

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS AND NOTICE

6.1 ALL MEETINGS TO BE OPEN; EXCEPTION: All meetings shall be open meetings, except when sensitive issues are being discussed (e.g., contract negotiations, personnel matters, or conference with legal counsel).

6.2 PRESIDING OFFICER: Unless otherwise voted at any meeting, the meetings of the Congregation and Council shall be presided over by the Moderator, or in his or her absence by the Vice Moderator. Unless otherwise voted at any meeting, Boards and Committees shall be presided over by their respective Chairpersons.

6.3 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: An annual Congregational meeting shall be held in June of each year, as called by the Church Council. At this meeting the Congregation shall:

(a) Accept a written annual report presented by the Church Council which shall include, but not be limited to, summaries of program and financial activities of the Church Council, all Boards, the Membership Officer, the Ministers the Ministerial Program Staff and of such other officers, staff and committees as the Church Council may deem appropriate to fully inform the Congregation of the year's activities. Also included shall be a written report (program and financial) from all affiliates of the Church, such as: The First Congregational Church Nursery School; Tuesday Fellowship and the Community Grants Committee.

(b) Accept the annual report of the Treasurer and act upon the Church budget for the forthcoming fiscal year as approved by the Church Council.

(c) Accept nominations and elect Church officers and fill Board and committee vacancies as presented. Nominations are permitted from the floor to fill any vacancy; and

(d) Conduct such other business as may be brought before it.

STAFF

Senior Pastor	David Howell
Associate Pastor	Eileen Altman
Director of Children's Ministries	Todd Erickson
Director of Youth Ministries	Sam Putney
Music Director	Joe Guthrie
Choral Director	Jenny Matteucci
Director of Finance and Operations	Rita Tetzlaff
Office Manager	Dipali Prabhu
Bookkeeper/Web Admin	Simone C.

Officers, Board, and Committee Nominations 2026-2027

Officers (Elected Annually)

Moderator	Todd Stewart
Vice Moderator	Karen Routt
Clerk	Marty Dreher
Treasurer	Peggy Brinkmann
Assistant Treasurer	TBD
Membership	Diane Churchill
Councilor-at-Large	Cathy Gauthier

Deacons

Cammy Sunde	2021-2027
Cindy Truam	2025-2028
Einar Sunde	2024-2027
Janet Vanides	2025-2028
Jim Vanides	2025-2028
Kevin Omi	2024-2027
Kim Robins	2025-2028
Marilyn Chow	2026-2029
Mary Marsh	2025-2028
Mikal Bacchues	2025-2028
Nancy Peterson	2024-2027

Outreach

Andrea Ward	2025-2028
Beate Teufel	2023-2029
Colleen Gormley	2024-2027
Elizabeth Moragne	2024-2027
Gina Parks	2023-2029
Lisa Carr	2024-2027
Maria Daehler	2025-2028
Rodney Click	2023-2029
Stuart Fiske	2025-2028
Tom Kellerman	2023-2029

Worship

Bethany Ball	2026-2029
Carol Barriger	2024-2027
Georgia Stewart	2026-2029
Kirsten Essenmacher	2023-2029
Krista Bowman	2024-2027
Lucinda Lenicheck	2024-2027
Mike Mayo	2023-2029
Marilee Moy	2025-2028
Nancy Mayo	2022-2029

Education

Amy Click	2026-2029
Carol Thomsen	2026-2029
Cheryl Bac	2024-2027
Elizabeth Trumbull	2022-2028
Jen Luetgens	2026-2029
Lindsay Green	2024-2027
Meredith Tan	2024-2027
Sally Loverro	2021-2027
Vivian C. Collins	2026-2029
Audrey Erickson	Youth Representative
Kate Lindstrom	Youth Representative

Trustees

Allan Bedwell	2024-2027
Blake Putney	2024-2027
Brian Larson	2026-2029
Bruce Whitson	2026-2029
Carol Chivers	2024-2027
Chris Thompson	2026-2029
Georga Kadifa	2024-2027
Jess Parks	2023-2029
Kim Bomar	2020-2027
Michael Luetgens	2026-2029
Mike Crager	2024-2027
Nathan Arora	2022-2028

Budget Policy Committee

Allan Bedwell	2025-2028
Anne Campbell	2027-2030
Ben Roberts	2027-2030
Philip Ho	2024-2027
Wes Chow	2027-2030
Peggy Brinkman	Treasurer
Rita Tetzlaff	Director of Finance & Operations
Todd Stewart	Moderator

Community Grants Committee

Adriene Pierce	2022-2028
Alan Stivers	2022-2028
Ariane Erickson	2026-2029
Colleen Gormley	2025-2028
Geoff Baker	2022-2028
Glenn Edwards	2021-2027
Karen Routt	2022-2028
Lisa Daly	2023-2029

Investment Committee

Bing Heckman	2022-2028
Clay Corvin	2022-2028
Jeff Barnett	2026-2029

Nominating Committee

Ariane Erickson	2021-2027
Blake Putney	2021-2027
Gina Parks	2021-2027
Laura Lindstrom	2026-2029

Planned Giving Advisory Group

Linda Baker
Cathy Gauthier
Steve Ketchpel
Bing Heckman

Nursery School Representative

Marisa Cajbon

Contacts for Other Groups

Peace and Justice	Steve Ketchpel
Political Action Group	Tricia Dolkas
Bay Area Native Allies Project (BANAP)	Maria Daehler, Marty Dreher
Mental Health Allies	Beate Teufel
Caregiver's Group	Linda Eckert
Fair Trade	Nancy Peterson

Delegates to Association and Conference

Anne Campbell
Marty Dreher
Cathy Gauthier

Karen Routt
Alan Stivers
Carol Stivers

Ministerial Evaluation Committee

Megan Fogarty	2025-27
Steve Ketchpel	2025-27
Ben Roberts	2025-27
Anne Campbell	2025-27
Karen Routt	Moderator

Pastor Parish Committees

Members selected by Ministers

For Dave Howell
Anne Campbell
Megan Fogarty
Cathy Gauthier
Laurence Baker

For Eileen Altman
Leon Beeler
Carrie Jeffries
Steve Ketchpel
Scott Souter
Elizabeth Wolf

Annual Report of the Moderator

Dear Members and Friends of FCCPA,

It has been my deep honor to serve as your Moderator this past year. The vibrancy and warmth of this congregation never cease to move me. I've seen visitors and longtime members alike feel it the moment they arrive. That spirit is a reflection of each of you.

Your Church Council — 17 members, including the officers, representatives of our Boards and committees, and other church officials — meets monthly to serve the nearly 700 members of this congregation. At today's Annual Congregational Meeting, your vote will confirm those who will continue this work in the year ahead.

On behalf of the Council, I offer a wholehearted thank you to our ministers, staff, and volunteers for their extraordinary dedication since June 2025. The detailed reports that follow paint a beautiful picture of the challenges navigated and victories celebrated — spiritual growth, generous sharing of resources, and rich community life remain the cornerstones of who we are.

Looking ahead, my heart is full of hope. We carry forward everything we and those before us have built together. We will continue to deepen our spiritual life, strengthen our community bonds, and welcome all who find their way to us. The messages we carry — in worship, service, and fellowship — are as alive today as they have ever been. I am so grateful to be on this journey with you.

With deep gratitude and joy,

Karen E. Routt
Moderator

P.S. You are welcome to attend the Church Council Meetings. Most take place on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm. You can confirm the details on FCCPA's calendar.

Annual Report of the Church Membership

May 1, 2025 - April 30, 2026
Reported by Membership Secretary Diane Churchill

Number of Church Members on May 1, 2025 - 752
Number of Church Members on April 30, 2026 - 776

Total Additional Members: 27

Confirmation of Faith: 6
- Caroline Beery
- Deacon Gibbs
- Orlando Jimenez
- Micah Satterthwaite
- Oliver Soparkar
- Emma Tseng

Confession of Faith, Affirmation, or Transfer: 21
- Jimmy Trigg-Stoyell
- Alyssa Trigg-Stoyell
- Candy Pelissero
- Brian Larsen
- Russ Larsen
- Beth Ball
- Jim Vanides
- Janet Vanides
- Ernie Sapigao
- Lori Hammar Sapigao
- Christa Enns
- Greg Enns
- Erin Herrero
- Krista Bowman
- Eddie Bowman
- Margaret Beery
- Angela Rogers
- Chris Thomsen
- Carol Thomsen
- Amy Click
- Ann Freeman

Total Losses of Members: 3

Death: 3
- Anna Yee
- Janice Anderson
- Lynn Mitchell

Removed at Own Request, Moved or Lost Contact: 0

Wedding of Church Members: 1

Lexi Gauthier and Francisco Perez Leon in Calistoga

Baptisms: 5
- Caroline Beery
- Oliver Soparkar
- Grace Cooper Youle Parents: Jenni (Putney)and Thomas Youle
- Margaret Beery
- Neeharika Vangavaragu

Annual Report of Senior Pastor David Howell

This has been another incredible year in the life of our church. I continue to be inspired by the faithfulness and commitment of this congregation, and I am deeply grateful to be in ministry with you. You have continued to make this church a place of welcome and service, where we are committed to compassion and justice.

This year, we completed our beautiful new courtyard. When disease required the removal of our beloved trees, we decided to do something new, creating a renewed space for all people to gather, to reflect, to celebrate, and to worship. I am so grateful to Diane Churchill who led the construction phase of this project and to all who helped make it happen. We will be worshipping in our courtyard throughout July and August.

In October we celebrated our Quasquicentennial, the 125th anniversary of the founding of the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, United Church of Christ. We had guest preachers, including former Associate Pastor Jim Burklo, Conference Minister Davena Creer-Jones, and PSR President David Vasquez-Levy. We also invited former staff and long time members to share their stories. The culminating celebration was on Sunday, October 26, and it was a joy to be a part of it!

Bible Study was also central to this past year. I led a Disciple Bible Study journey though the entire Bible, from September through April, and over 50 participants were a part of it. I strongly believe we need more progressive Christians who are biblically literate and can speak from their knowledge of what the Bible actually says, not what someone has told them it says. Even when we got to challenging passages, the message of love always came through. I last taught this in 2019, and I am sure that I will again.

We revived a beloved spring musical this year, as well. Kristin Aker Howell, my wife, came up with the idea over 20 years ago, and this was our third revival of the show, revising it each time. Joe wrote the original music, and Kristin and I created the script for *Matthew, Mark, Luke & John*. A cast of over 50 children, youth, and adults brought to life this story of the four narrators of the gospels competing to tell their version of the life of Jesus.

I also led my fourth religious art tour in Europe this year. A group of 28 of us traveled from Berlin to Prague to Vienna this month, learning history and finding meaning in art together. The history of fascism and oppression in Europe felt all the more relevant with all that we are facing in the world today. Our next trip is planned for October of 2027, when Joe Guthrie will lead a small tour to the Netherlands to learn about and experience some of the beautiful organs there.

Teaching remains a passion for me, and in addition to the Bible Study, I led Faith in Film classes and art talks. Vacation Bible School is always a highlight, and this year's Arctic VBS will begin in just two weeks with 110 children, over 30 youth, and many more adult volunteers having a great time singing, doing art, learning stories, and meeting all kinds of puppet friends.

Our music program, led by Joe Guthrie and Jenny Matteucci, also continues to be a highlight, and I am grateful every Sunday for our amazing choirs. The Chancel Choir, the Men's and Women's Ensembles, the Bell Choir, and the music program for children and youth are all continuing to grow and flourish.

Our church is blessed with a truly remarkable staff that helps to lead us in service to our community and the world. I can't capture the incredible breadth of all that we do as a congregation in my report, so I hope you will take time to read the about the accomplishments and plans of our remarkable staff and boards throughout this packet. Thank you for all you do to help make this church a thriving community of faith, and I look forward to all that we will do together in the coming year!

Annual Report of the Associate Pastor – Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman

On July 2, I will mark 19 years of ministry with this congregation. It is one of the greatest gifts and blessings of my life to be on this journey of faith with all of you.

For many years, one of my great hopes was to lead a pilgrimage to the South for members of our church. As you may know, I come from a multi-generational Southern family. My family roots are in Georgia and Tennessee, but I spent most of my childhood in Mississippi. There is so much to learn about our nation from visiting my home region, encountering the history there, and meeting the amazing people who are working faithfully to build Beloved Community. After several years of frustrations around making such a journey happen, 16 of us journeyed from New Orleans, to Jackson, to Selma, and Montgomery in April with the TELOS Group. It was a moving journey and I am deeply grateful to my fellow travelers for the spirit and energy they put into making it so meaningful. I hope to lead other such trips in the years to come.

In February, we had another weekend Women's Retreat. It was a joy to be together again for deepening our connections with each other and with God. Winifred Ernst and Julie O'Grady did an amazing job coordinating a great group of women in developing the program and the other many details with me to make it all work.

The confirmation program for our 8th graders was delightful, as usual. My approach to the program is to help our young people see the world through the eyes of our faith tradition. In addition to didactic sessions at the church, we go on several field trips and reflect together on our experiences. At our closing retreat, we plan worship together and then experience the worship we planned. We had six youth participants this year. Thank you to their sponsors for walking with them as they explored the big questions of our faith tradition.

Boards and committees I support include the Deacons Board, Outreach Board, Community Grants Committee, the Heart and Home Collaborative leadership team, the Peace and Justice Task Force, Mental Health Allies, the Bay Area Native Allies Project, and the Political Activism Group. I am grateful to all of these groups for the ways that they are nurturing community and connection among us and working on raising our consciousness and building our capacity to act together to support each other in our efforts to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. A special thanks goes to the Political Activism Group and the Peace and Justice Task Force for bringing forward the Statement of Conscience that our congregation passed unanimously this April and has been publicized widely in our community.

My outside-church commitments this past year have included serving on the board of Project Safety Net (PSN), on the Council for the Northern California-Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ (NCNC-UCC), and on the Steering Committee of Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice. In whatever ways I am in service in the community, know that I seek to represent the ministry all of you live out in the life of our church and in the Palo Alto community.

Peace be with you, Eileen

Annual Report of the Music at FCCPA

The music programs at FCCPA continue to expand and thrive, led by Joe Guthrie and Jenny Matteucci. Section leaders Emily Bender, Debra Lambert, Nathan Wilen and Daniel Lockert lead the choir sectionals.

The women's ensemble rebranded last year under the name of "Good Treble", average 15-20 singers, and purchased new stoles. The men's ensemble rebranded under the name of "Inspiritus", led by Daniel Lockert with a steady 12-15 singers. Both groups sing monthly for worship services and rehearse weekly.

The Bell choir, led by Raf Ornes, has maintained a steady group of 20 members which play monthly. They attended the all-day "Spring Ring" master class with other bell choirs for a second year. This group rehearses weekly and will continue to rehearse during the summer months due to additional interest.

The Congregational Concert Series offered 7 concerts on the 2025-26 series, with free admission thanks to our generous "Friend of Music". The Congregational Concert Chorale sang diverse programs, from Bach Cantatas to a new Bluegrass mass, complete with accompaniment by a bluegrass band. Guest musicians included the Ives Consortium with a program of Mozart and Schumann, and the Encore Chamber Ensemble with guest pianist Makiko Ooka from Japan. The opening outdoor courtyard concert featured our in-house jazz ensemble of Mike Crager, Tyler Cobbett, Kurt Taylor and rising local jazz stars on saxophone. Jenny Matteucci and Daniel Lockert performed a special Christmas concert with seasonal music in many languages.

In February, the chancel choir gathered for a Saturday all-day retreat with composer Joan Szymko, who led the workshop. They sang 7 of Joans compositions, incorporating each anthem during Lent. The Chancel choir led services on Christmas Festival Sunday and Easter with brass and timpani, as well as a choral led service on Maundy Thursday. Good Friday was led by our soloists, with art curated by Kathy Terry. The men's plainsong ensemble led weekly Lenten services every Tuesday, chanting the Psalms and prayers in candlelight.

This was our 30th spring musical at FCCPA, an original show "Matthew, Mark, Luke & John", with music and lyrics written by Kristin Aker Howell, Dave Howell and Joe Guthrie. The intergenerational cast of 50 included 3 generations of participants for some families. The cast rehearsals are weekly February - April and are family friendly, fostering musicianship and community.

Thanks to the generous bequest from former choir member Ed Acton, we were able to purchase a new Steinway piano for the sanctuary with a small portion of the donation.

Dedicated volunteers continue to make it all happen behind the scenes, including technical expertise from Mike Mayo, Ben Roberts, David Hsiao, Steve Terry and Chris Beer. Library, robe management and reception help are thanks to Stina Miller, Lois Fowkes, Judy Roberts, Marilyn and Bill Stocker, Lee and Mike Crager, Joan Young, Scott Johnson, Ann McCown.

We are fortunate to make music in such a supportive environment and are excited about planning the 2026-27 program year.

Respectfully submitted, Joe Guthrie, Music Director; Jennie Matteucci, Choral Director

Annual Report of the Board of Deacons

Eileen Altman – Ministerial Liaison
Deacons Board Members in 2025-2026 were:

Mikal Baccheus (2025-2028)
Mary Marsh (2025-2028)
Kevin Omi (2024-2027)
Nancy Peterson (2024-2027)
Kim Robins (2025-2028)
Cindy Traum (2024-2027)
Cammy Sunde (2021-2027)
Einar Sunde (2024-2027)
Janet Vanides (2025-2028)
Jim Vanides (2025-2028)

Stated Role of the Deacons Board:

The purpose of this Board shall be to help the members of the Congregation to demonstrate the Christian spirit in serving one another within our Church family. The Board shall promote connection and reconnection to prospective, new and absent members and provide pastoral assistance (such as transportation organization, distribution of Christmas and Easter flowers) to Church members with special needs.

Ongoing Activities:

- Organizing Breaking Bread groups each year. The 2026-27 year had the most participants ever – **108**!
- Staffing the Welcome Table, where Sunday visitors are offered information and a Welcome Bag
- Coordinating the distribution of Christmas and Easter flowers to Church members in their homes
- Sending birthday cards to members and friends
- Hosting a New Members Reception biennially, also attended by their sponsors, clergy and Church leaders.
- Receptions with refreshments - Christmas Eve after the 10 o'clock service and Easter between–church services, where congregants are encouraged to gather and socialize
- Mr. Softee Ice Cream Truck events after church services in the fall and spring

The New Church Directory was published on March 20, 2025. As many new members have joined the congregation since then, we hope to update this directory in the fall of 2026.

During our last meeting, one of our members said she felt it was a particularly dynamic and engaging year, with great participation by our board members, as we pursue our mission of serving the congregation and friends of FCCPA!

Cammy Sunde
Board Chair (2025-26)

Annual Report of the Education Board

Education Board Summary

The 15-member Education Board remained active throughout the year, primarily in the Fall/Winter months hosting and co-hosting seven family-friendly, all-ages events. Once again, in addition to event planning, the board continued to present new opportunities to the FCCPA Board for partnership with Outreach, Worship, and Deacon, fostering deeper connections among families and encouraging ongoing involvement in church life.

Fall Highlights:

- **Homecoming Sunday** (September): In collaboration with the Outreach Board, the Ed Board helped host the 4th Annual Homecoming Sunday. This event welcomed the congregation back after summer, introduced community volunteer opportunities, and featured a courtyard potluck. The Ed Board contributed hot dogs, drinks, and logistical support. It has become a beloved tradition to launch the program year.

- **Harvest Weekend** (October): Held in the courtyard this year for the first time, this cozy Friday evening featured the movie, *The Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown*. Hosted by Sally Loverro and Elizabeth Trumbull, the event welcomed around 50 people - both preschoolers and adults. Activities included cookie decorating, popcorn, pizza, and hot chocolate, with songs led by Todd before the movies began. This event continues to be a meaningful way to connect with preschool families and nurture community. This year pumpkins were available for purchase to families that attended the Friday event.

The 6th Annual Pumpkin Patch took place in the courtyard on a Sunday in mid-October after services as part of the weekend of Fall festivities. The event continued to wow families with pumpkins, a pumpkin carving contest, refreshments, and the band *Trio de Garth* played as families lingered in the courtyard. Looking ahead, we hope to continue this event in 2026 with a Fall weekend event.

Advent & Winter Events:

- **Advent Wreath Making** (December): This well-loved tradition was held on a Sunday afternoon in the courtyard. Families of all ages attended and enjoyed cookies, hot chocolate, tea, and carols. Feedback on the time change to an earlier slot has remained positive, making it easier for young families to participate. We plan to continue this timing and schedule it for Thanksgiving weekend in 2026, aligned with the first Sunday of Advent.

- **Jesus' Birthday Celebration** (Early December)**:** Celebrating during church services and continuing with kids in Backyard Sunday School, we celebrated the upcoming birth of Jesus with stories, songs, games and cake. This was an opportunity to reflect on Bible stories and what the Christmas celebration is all about.

- **S'mores & Song** (Mid-January): About 40 participants gathered in the courtyard to enjoy a chilly evening of singing around the fire with Dave and Todd, along with s'mores. Due to the busy nature of November, this event moved to January and was welcomed by an uptick in attendance. Soup and chili were provided as well as a few other treats and everyone loved the sing-a-long!

- **Disco Bingo Night** (February) This repeat event was amped-up a bit this year by including a Disco theme. Party-goers dressed up, enjoyed dinner and snacks while playing bingo all while taking breaks to stand up and dance to favorites like Donna Summer and The Bee Gees. A favorite for families of all ages, we look forward to 2027 Bingo Night, we will keep you guessing on what the theme will be!

Spring Celebration:

- **Mothers Day cake celebration** (May)**:** Cake was served as we honored Mother's, this event was not combined with Church Family Sunday this year due to an appearance from Mr. Softee. (although cake and ice cream go well together!)

- **Church Family Sunday** (May): Traditionally, our final event of the year celebrating milestones such as Confirmation, the 3rd Grade Bible presentation, and expressions of gratitude for teachers, the children's choir director, and the many Backyard Sunday School volunteers and all the joyful celebrations of Spring! We will look to revisit the Ed Board participation in 2027.

Youth Ministry:

Under the guidance of Sam Putney, our Director of Youth Ministries, the middle and high school youth groups continued to thrive. Weekly meetings, held on Tuesdays and select weekends, provided space for fun, reflection, and connection. High school gatherings on occasional Sundays added to the momentum. Sam continues to actively engage teens and grow participation across age groups.

Board Leadership and Looking Ahead:

Sally Loverro and Laura Lindstrom continued to serve as co-chairs, with Laura stepping aside next year to be replaced by Lindsay Green. The Education Board currently includes about 15 part-time members, with Todd Erickson serving as advisor. We've also benefited from the leadership of student advisor Kate Lindstrom, who has been instrumental in teen engagement. Next year we welcome Audrey Erickson as a co-teen leader along with Kate Lindstrom who will continue.

We currently have many new members confirmed for 2026–2027, and our experienced team remains committed, with additional help to include volunteers from the congregation that are interested in family-focused events. We aim to build on our existing activities with an even greater focus on community, creativity, and meaningful engagement for families of all ages. By blending cherished traditions with new ideas, we hope to keep families connected and inspired in their church journey.

Annual Report of the Outreach Board

From the FCCPA by-laws: "The purpose of this Board shall be to engage in and encourage service to our local and global community. The goals of this Board are to enable the Church to support with our resources carefully chosen projects and/or agencies that address matters of human need, justice and peace."

In 2025-26 the Outreach Board had eleven members: Lisa Carr, Rodney Click, Maria Daehler, Chris Ernst, James Stuart Fiske, Colleen Gormley, Tom Kellerman, Elizabeth Moragne, Gina Parks, Beate Teufel and Andrea Ward. Lisa Carr and Tom Kellerman served as co-chairs.

The Outreach Board is blessed by our congregation's financial support through its operational budget process. We work to faithfully allocate a portion of our congregation's tithe. This year we distributed our $42,000 budget equally among the following 16 non-profits: Acterra, Ada's Café, Adolescent Counseling Services, Canopy, Counseling and Support Services for Youth, Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy, Ecumenical Hunger Program, Heart & Home Shelter, Pacific School of Religion, Puente de la Costa Sur, Ravenswood Classroom Partners, SpiritCares Ministries, WeHOPE, United Christian Campus Ministry Stanford, UCC Open and Affirming Coalition, and Youth Community Service. Each of these supported agencies represents a connection between our congregation and our community. Many of them offer extensive volunteer opportunities. Outreach Board members serve as liaisons with each one of these non-profits in order to better engage our congregation.

The Outreach Board is allocated a portion of its Designated Fund each year for additional donations. This fiscal year we chose to fund our Gaza Dinner fundraiser, and provided an additional $3,200 in support to the selected agencies referenced above, principally to the following agencies: Adolescent Counseling Services, Ecumenical Hunger Program, Puente de la Costa Sur, Ravenswood Classroom Partners, and WeHOPE. The Gaza Dinner funding paid for the food, so all donations from the congregations would go to the chosen charity, Rebuilding Alliance.

The following activities at FCCPA are led by congregational volunteers with liaisons to the Outreach Board. All of these benefit from member donations.

• CROP Hunger Walk: Steve Ketchpel led this year's event, held in October. The Walk raised close to $26,000. 25% of the total remains local and is given to the Ecumenical Hunger Program. Our congregation donated about $4,000. See additional details in the Peace and Justice Task Force report.

• Ecumenical Hunger Program: Outreach Board members regularly delivered food and clothing donations from congregation members.

• Giving Tree: Elizabeth Moragne and Andrea Ward managed this annual holiday event where 150 gift requests of gift cards and physical items were filled with support from Congregation members. The participating agencies were: Ability Path, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, Ecumenical Hunger Program (EHP), LifeMoves, and Puente de la Costa Sur. Next year the program will likely support an additional 30 gift requests for EHP, as that organization needs the additional support.

•Heart & Home Shelter: Hotel d'Zink is no longer operating so we decided to replace it with Heart & Home Shelter. In January, FCCPA hosted an average of 15 women each night in our Community Hall and provided

dinner and overnight shelter. We plan to host Heart and Home again next January. Thanks to Eileen Altman, Tricia Dolkas, Alexis Crews-Holloway, Steve Ketchpel, Ken McIntire, Canny Sunde, and Beate Teufel for organizing and coordinating this important project this year.

• Thanksgiving Food Drive: Congregational donations of food were sorted by FCCPA Youth and delivered by Outreach Board members to the Downtown Food Closet, Ecumenical Hunger Program and the South Palo Alto Food Closet. This year we also solicited cash donations and received close to $1,250, which was evenly divided among the organizations. The cash donations were used by the organizations to buy food.

• On September 7, FCCPA celebrated its 4th annual Serves Day alongside Homecoming Sunday, combining the traditional FCCPA Workday with community service projects. The energy was high, and attendance was phenomenal, with approximately 180 people participating in nine projects supporting both local organizations and church beautification efforts. Volunteers prepared 180 trail mix bags for unhoused neighbors served through "Dignity on Wheels," assembled more than 175 hygiene kits for WeHOPE, filled 48 backpacks for Family Giving Tree, created 60 gift bags for seniors at Palo Alto Commons, assembled 80 grief packets for the Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy, and volunteered off-site with the Ecumenical Hunger Program by organizing clothing and bookshelves and assembling grocery bags. Additional projects focused on indoor and outdoor church beautification, including the Sanctuary, Casaday Library, Celtic Cross Garden, and Backyard Sunday School area. A special visit by Mary Poppins helped increase donations threefold and close the funding gap. Thanks to Gina Parks and Beate Teufel for leading this successful and energetic day of service.

• As discussed above, the Peace and Justice Task force organized a fundraiser for Gaza for May 30, 2026. The Outreach Board is funding the food and chef, so all proceeds will go to support the mission. Thanks to Steve Ketchpel and James Holloway for their leadership.

The Outreach Board is grateful to our congregation for its trust in us and its long-standing commitment to the people we serve on your behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Carr

Tom Kellerman

Annual Report of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees had nine members, with the number reduced to eight after the tragic passing of our friend and trustee Rob Lenicheck. Kim Bomar was its chair during the FY2025-2026 term. The Trustees have 5 active committees (Buildings and Grounds, Finance, Stewardship, Risk Management and Insurance, and Personnel), and also provide legal support. The Technology Committee was not active this year, and the Legacy Giving Committee no longer has a member reporting to the Board. During the year, the Trustee Board oversaw operational and investment finance and the annual stewardship campaign, assisted with personnel issues, provided leadership and financial support to the Church's buildings and grounds, and helped Church staff with contract negotiations and reviews.

Buildings and Grounds Committee: (George Kadifa, Trustee Liaison)

George Kadifa served as the Board of Trustees' liaison to the Buildings and Grounds Committee this year. The Committee was led by Steve Terry and Ben Roberts, with valued assistance from a number of dedicated church members. Together, they oversaw the ongoing maintenance and care of FCCPA's facilities and campus throughout the year — work that encompasses janitorial, landscaping, and general maintenance services funded through the operating budget.

Much of what this group accomplishes happens quietly and without fanfare. Most members of the congregation may not fully appreciate the time, skill, and dedication that go into keeping our buildings and grounds safe, functional, and welcoming. The following offers a brief summary of their work this year.

Member-Led Projects

- Wes Chow and Steve Terry addressed drainage and puddling issues in the Cornerstone School children's play area to reduce flooding risk during heavy storms.
- Mike Mayo, David Hsiao, Cedric Hughes, and Ben Roberts replaced components and restored full lighting in the Fellowship Hall.
- Steve Terry assembled an AV cart to support Zoom capabilities for courtyard services and Social Hall meetings and performances.
- Mike Mayo and Steve Terry replaced the batteries in all sanctuary exit and emergency lights, which had been found fully depleted.
- Steve Terry and Ben Roberts Continued progress on the church's planned electrical upgrade, including power and equipment relocation associated with the T-Mobile agreement.
- Steve Terry, Ben Roberts, Wes Chow and others supported the completion of the Courtyard project, along with that dedicated committee.

Additional Services

The Committee also supported or led the following initiatives:

- Termite treatment of the church facility
- Procurement and installation of blackout curtains throughout the facility as needed
- Participation in lease discussions for Cornerstone School
- Parking lot restriping
- Management of plumbing issues caused by root intrusion in sewer lines

- Replacement of a failed zone control valve in the nursery hot water heating system
- Irrigation system repairs and improvements by Jensen Co., the church's landscape contractor
- Repair of a drainage problem at the schoolyard drinking fountain
- Oversight of installation of a new T-Mobile antenna cupola on the sanctuary roof, completed with minimal disruption to church operations
- Repair of the door between the Social Hall and storeroom, including replacement of two door closer arms
- Ministerial housing maintenance and repair

Finance Committee: (Jess Parks, Finance Liaison for Trustees)

This year, Trustees did not have a member on the Finance Committee, but Jess Parks served as Finance Liaison and participated in Finance Committee meetings, monitoring:

- The work of the Treasurer who regularly reports FCCPA's financial condition to the Trustees at Board of Trustees meetings;
- Administration of the Church's financial operations reviewed in Board of Trustee meetings; and
- Conduct of the annual Stewardship campaign
- Development of the 2025-2026 Operating Budget

As of April 30, 2026 FCCPA total expenses of $1,529,984 exceeded revenues by $23,689, or 1.6%. FCCPA's overall financial position remains strong, due to the generous annual contributions from the congregation, several dedicated funds and reserves that have been built up over the years, and strong investment performance.

Stewardship Committee: (Blake Putney, Chair of 2025-2026 campaign)

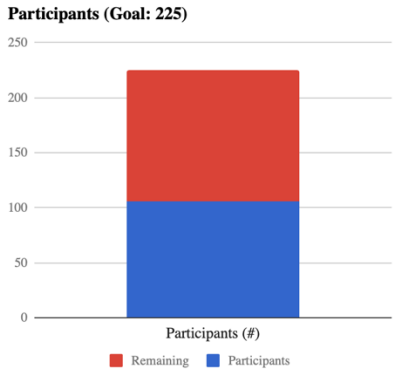
The stewardship campaign committee chose as its campaign theme **"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." - Matthew 6:21**" Committee members included Kim Bomar and Blake Putney (with assistance from members of the Putney family). Blake recruited long term stewardship committee leaders (Marilyn Putney, Bing Heckman, and Greg Evans) to help stuff envelopes. The asking budget approved by the congregation in April established the goal for the campaign: collect within a two-month spring campaign pledges totaling $1,047,000.

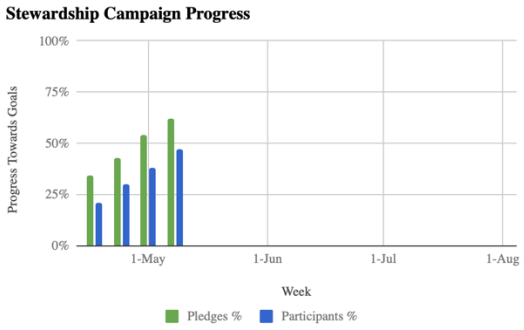
Scheduled stewardship speakers are the Satterwaites, Jim Vanides, Marilyn Putney, Steve Terry, Laura Lindstrom, and Audry Errickson

As of May 14, 2026, we've reached 58% of our pledge goal and 46% of our participation goal. Ahead of last year at this time. This year committee members will not make phone calls to members and friends who have a history of giving but from whom we have not heard from this year. Dave will be doing this. Calls will occur prior to the annual congregational meeting so that we have a better picture of the situation when the congregation is to meet to vote on the budget.

Progress Toward Reaching Our Goal

The following charts show our progress toward reaching our goals for pledges (dollars) and participation (number of families who have pledged).





Risk Management and Insurance (Cedric Hughes, Ex Officio Chair)

Cedric Hughes conducted another "master class" on risk and briefed the Trustees on FCCPA's strengths and vulnerabilities and received approval on the church's insurance coverage and premiums. Cedric also provided the following risk management support:

- Reviewed and commented on risks associated with the church's agreement with Heart and Home, the new shelter that the Church is hosting in January of each year; and
- Continued the work related to the earthquake "damageability" and "$ loss" calculation, with the goal of reducing the church's risk, and thus, allowing additional reduction in limit, and accordingly, insurance premium cost.

Personnel Committee (Kim Bomar, Chair)

During 2025-2026, the Trustees continued to provide high-level, administrative oversight of the Church staff and to review and determine personnel decisions. Noteworthy changes were the following. Rafael Ornes' contract as bell choir director was extended to an annual contract and Casie Walker was hired as the church's new Youth Choir Director.

Legal Support: (Kimberly Bomar and Nathan Arora for contracts, plus Cedric Hughes for risk issues)

Trustees have reviewed and provided legal guidance for several legal documents and addressed legal matters including.

- New lease for the Nursery School;
- Agreement with Heart and Home shelter;
- Proposed agreements to buy the Church's cell tower leases;
- Proposed amendments to the current cell tower leases (T-Mobile and Verizon);
- Legal review of employee and personnel matters; and
- Contract with Brightview, the Church's new landscaping contractors
- Review of congregant request to store and administer medicine on-premise
- Review of contracts for the capital campaign's new courtyard area construction and landscaping

Annual Report of the Treasurer

Operating Results

- Our budget goal for the fiscal year 2025-2026 was to achieve a nearly balanced budget.
- April, May, and June pledge payments will be key to achieving budgeted income.
- Additional expenditures by the Community Grants Committee and for a new piano have been offset by additional withdrawals from Directed Funds.
- The piano was recorded as a Trustees expense. Excluding the piano, the Trustees expenses as of 3/31/2026 were $528,599 (79% of budget).

	Budget	Actual as of 3/31/2026	Actual - Budget	Actual % of Budget
Income				
Pledge	$983,000	$739,252	($243,748)	75%
Other Gifts & Bequests	99,000	87,305	(11,695)	88%
Rents, Fees, and Other Income	319,368	264,560	(54,808)	83%
Fundraising	22,500	24,164	1,764	108%
Bank Interest	1,963	1,180	(783)	60%
Support from Directed Funds	107,002	220,320	113,318	206%
Income Total	$1,532,733	$1,336,782	($195,951)	87%
Expense				
Council	$632,900	$475,627	($157,168)	75%
Worship	11,200	7,325	(3,875)	65%
Music	65,500	47,567	(17,933)	73%
Deacons	2,500	1,014	(1,486)	41%
Education	29,500	15,483	(14,017)	52%
Outreach	122,800	153,640	30,840	125%
Trustees	667,407	660,872	(6,535)	99%
Expense Total	$1,531,857	$1,361,683	($170,174)	89%
Net Change in Assets	$876	($24,901)		

Capital Loan

- Loan for Social Hall project negotiated in November 2019 for $1,029,000 at 3.75%/year (after rebate of 0.5%) for 10-year renewable loan amortized over 25 years. As of March 31, 2026, the outstanding loan balance was $863,550.
- Loan payments are about $67,000 per year.
- Will need to refinance or pay off estimated outstanding balance of $740,000 in October 2029.
- We are planning to use a portion of the 2023 Capital Campaign funds to pay down or pay off this loan.

Operating Reserves

- Operating Reserves are a buffer for unexpected/unbudgeted expenses and/or loss of income.

Directed Funds

- Budgeted withdrawals from Directed Funds are used to help fund operations and grants.

- Directed Funds also are a secondary buffer for unexpected/unbudgeted expenses and/or loss of income.
- A very generous bequest was received from Ed Acton. We distributed a portion of the bequest into the into the Music Fund and Fund for the Future and opened a new Directed Fund, the Ed Acton Fund.
- The Community Grants Fund, Ministerial Housing Fund, and Fund for the Future are invested in the Domestic Core Equity Fund at United Church Funds (ucfunds.org).
- All other funds invested in the United Church Funds Balanced Fund (40% fixed income/60% equity).

Fund Name	Balance as of 3/31/2025	Balance as of 3/31/2026	Budgeted Withdrawal	Actual Withdrawal as of 3/31/2026	Expected Total Withdrawal
Operations Fund	$44,153	$47,801	$2,200	$0	$2,200
Facilities Fund	52,231	56,375	2,600	0	2,600
Music Fund	283,203	527,359	21,300	0	21,300
Ministerial Housing Fund	652,549	732,683	34,300	0	34,300
Outreach Fund	81,022	88,945	4,100	0	4,100
Community Grants Fund	922,589	990,430	39,400	88,047	107,447
Fund for the Future	295,099	831,343	3,102	0	3,102
Ed Acton Fund		1,237,180	0	132,273	142,428
Total	$2,330,846	$4,512,117	$107,002	$220,320	$317,477

Submitted by Peggy Brinkmann

Annual Report of the Worship Board

In line with Church by-laws, the Worship Board sought to enhance and support the religious and spiritual ministry of the Church, with focus on particular aspects of the worship experience for the congregation (primarily communion and altar flowers). Members of the Worship Board for 2025-26 were Nancy Mayo (Co-Chair), Jennie Heckman (Co-Chair), Mike Mayo (Secretary), Lynnette Carey, Kirsten Essenmacher, Carol Barriger, Krista Bowman, Lucinda Lenicheck, and Marilee Moy.

During 2025-26, the Church continued to hold hybrid worship services, allowing participants to attend either in-person or via zoom. We greatly appreciate the reliable team of at least two AV volunteers who worked during every Sunday Worship Service and made it unnecessary to hire staff to run the Zoom broadcasts.

During the year, the Worship Board continued to serve as a sounding board for ministerial staff, and it is always a pleasure to have Pastor Dave Howell and our Music Director Joe Guthrie join our monthly (usually via Zoom) meetings.

Throughout the year, we continued to assess how best to support Communion. About half of the congregants continued to prefer the "loaf (Challah bread) and cup (grape juice)" served by both ministers at the front of the Sanctuary. Other congregants have chosen to receive communion at the back of the Sanctuary (cut-up gluten-free bread and small compostable individual cups of juice). Two WB members (or one WB member and one choir volunteer) serve gluten-free bread and juice to the choir. Several WB members attended the Lenten Services and assisted with set-up and clean-up. The courtyard reconstruction project was completed in time for August 2025 outdoor Worship Services; WB members supported the serving of Communion in the Courtyard similarly to as in the Sanctuary.

We remained mindful of budgetary constraints and looked for ways of reducing spending on sanctuary decorations for Christmas and Easter flowers, which are our major expenses. For Christmas, we ordered 65 poinsettias (6" pots). [Note. We discovered in 2023 that 8" pots resulted in large plants that obstructed movement around the Chancel.] For Easter, for the second year in a row, small potted flowering plants were used to decorate the altar (and around the Sanctuary) in addition to Easter Lilies. Thirty Easter Lilies (6"pots, with gold foil and clear saucers) were purchased from Wegman's Nursery in Redwood City; the plan had been to pay an additional $100 to have the pollen removed prior to delivery to FCCPA (the Saturday prior to Easter). As it turned out, because the lilies had not opened prior to delivery, Wegman's did not remove the pollen (nor charge us the $100). (One choir member had a very strong reaction to the pollen during the service and needed to leave the Sanctuary.) It was discussed that perhaps next year, some WB members could come in Easter morning, prior to the fist service, to remove the pollen from the lilies. (Final decisions were not made regarding how to address the pollen in the future.) A few days prior to Easter, WB members, Nancy and Lynnette, selected and purchased (then were later reimbursed), 14 potted flowering plants (4" and 6") from Summerwinds in Palo Alto. Because the Summerwinds plants did not come with "foil', Nancy wrapped each pot in iridescent cellophane. On the Saturday morning prior to Easter, WB members arranged the flowers on the altar table, on the shelves behind the choir, and at various spots around the church. Feedback was very positive. More would be better for next year so that at least 45 plants are available for distribution by the Deacons Board.

The choir regularly has 35-40 members during Worship Service, and also accommodates Men's and Women's Ensembles. The Handbell Group now has about 10 active members. The Worship Board worked with all of these groups to assure that the floral arrangements in the altar area didn't get in their way or hamper their visibility. The handbells & ensembles presented at least once each month.

We continued to decorate the altar and sanctuary as appropriate for the seasons. Mike built hidden shelves on the wall behind the choir, so our Christmas Poinsettias and Easter Lilies put on a spectacular and popular showing there and other places, so that choirs didn't feel hidden behind an over-crowded altar table. During the 2024-25 fiscal year, Mike worked with Scott Souter on improving the suspension method for hoisting the large wreath easily from the floor, and Mike also modified the pew-end torchieres (used in candle-light services) for easier mounting of candle and hurricane, resulting in a more secure attachment to the pew. There are now twelve torchieres. The candelabra were not used this year.

Many members (and former members) of the Worship Board made important contributions to the work of the Board and deserve special thanks. Mike served as Secretary this year and prepared concise and accurate minutes of Worship Board meetings. Jennie and Nancy led a great WB team effort in planning, purchasing, preparing, and serving communion each month, and in accomplishing many Worship Board activities. Lynnette, Krista, Mike, Nancy, and Kirsten frequently tidied and restocked the pew racks. Mike and Nancy lightly scraped clean and waxed the altar table. Jennie took responsibility for seeking volunteers to create altar floral arrangements for non-communion Sundays; primarily Board members, along with Kathy Terry (prior Board member) provided the arrangements. (Thank you to all for your contributions!)

Again, thanks to all members of the Worship Board for their dedication, fresh ideas, hard work behind the scenes, and consistent devotion to serving our congregation.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mayo and Jennie Heckman, Worship Board Co-Chairs, 2025-2026.

Annual Report of the Community Grants Committee

The Community Grants Committee (CGC) grants money to local charitable organizations in a way that complements our Outreach Board. Instead of consistent and unrestricted funding for operations, the CGC grants only for capital expenses or start-up costs. Organizations send us grant applications and we respond appropriately and faithfully.

During the current fiscal year (FY2025-26) the CGC made five grants:

- $75,000 to the Ecumenical Hunger Program for capital improvements for a newly acquired property adjoining EHP's current location on Pulgas Ave. in East Palo Alto. This acquisition doubles EHPs space for storage of food, clothing and furniture for distribution to its clients. The needed improvements include installation of utilities and fencing and improvements to the existing building.

  The FCCPA has a long history of supporting EHP. It started in our church in 1975. In 1986 CGC's predecessor, the Congregational Foundation, donated $30k for the purchase of EHP's first HQ in East Palo Alto. The equivalent in 2025 dollars is $88.5k.

- $8,800 to Peninsula Family Connections, a charity that supports pre-K child development with emphasis on underprivileged families. The money was used to convert a 700 sq ft area at their East Palo Alto site from dirt to a play area with artificial grass, with the necessary sublayers, plants and general clean-up. This benefits 100 children and caregivers.
- $4,247 to Animal Assisted Happiness, a charity founded in 1999 with a farm in Sunnyvale Baylands Park. This farm has a wide variety of animals that are used for animal assisted therapy for ill and traumatized children. The grant funded a WiFi-based security system to prevent theft, vandalism and fires. It will also enable Zoom visits to the farm.
- $7,120 to the East Palo Alto Robotics Foundation, aka Churrobots, an East Palo Alto educational charity that teaches STEM by having students design and build robots to win competitions. Thirty to forty students and eleven volunteer mentors have participated. The grant funded the purchase of 8 refurbished Chromebooks, 4 MacBooks and 1 iPad.
- $5,000 to the Scleroderma Kids Alliance, a new nonprofit formed to assist children with scleroderma, a rare autoimmune disease causing the skin and connective tissues to become hard and tight. It can affect the skin, but also internal organs in its more aggressive forms. The funds will partly establish the Alliance as a 501(c)3 charity. They will connect children and their families in Northern California and nationwide using social media, a website and direct mail. They have plans for a camp, Zoom parties and education and in-person regional meetups. To date they have filed articles of incorporation, obtained an EIN, applied for nonprofit status, established a board of directors and launched their website and social media.

Due to the total amount granted this year, each of these grants were approved by the CGC and Church Council.

CGC grants are paid from its Designated Fund, not from our Operating Budget. The grants pass through the Operating Budget (equal income and expense) as part of our overall expense controls. Also, due to a church bylaw change made this fiscal year, up to 2% of the CGC Designated Fund can be contributed to our Operating Budget each year. Not only do the CGC grants not take from the Operating Budget, but CGC contributes to the Operating Budget.

The CGC Designated Fund has benefited from a strong stock market. Its balance was $1,020,810 as of 6/30/25 and $990,430 as of 3/31/26. During those nine months we granted $88k, but our balance decreased by only $30k.

Annual Report of Peace and Justice Task Force

Overview & Highlights

The Peace and Justice Task Force met monthly throughout the 2025–2026 program year to organize forums, support partner organizations, plan congregational responses to current events, and steward the church's public witness. Key activities during the year included:

Statement of Political Conscience (with Political Activism Group)

Proposed as initiative by Laura Wilson, adapted from Niles UCC and refined by the Peace and Justice Task Force and the Political Activism Group, the Statement of Political Conscience was unanimously approved by the Task Force at the February meeting. The Church Council ratified the statement, which was then placed prominently on the church website and brought to the congregation for a vote on April 12 where it passed unanimously. The statement's visibility quickly drew recognition from outside speakers and partners as a sign of the church's public witness.

Civil Rights Pilgrimage (April 11–18, 2026)

Led by Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman and organized through the Telos Group, the "ReStory" US Civil Rights Tour took participants to New Orleans, Jackson, Selma and Montgomery. The trip included museums (Whitney Plantation, Montgomery Legacy Museum, Mississippi Civil Rights Museum), nonprofits (Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development, The Ark, Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth, and Reconciliation; Freed 'em Foundation), historical people and places (Edmund Pettus Bridge, COFO Center). Travelers debriefed the congregation in an after-worship share-out on May 31.

Gaza Fundraising Dinner (May 30, 2026)

Continuing a tradition that dates back to 2009, Ruth Carleton organized a fundraising dinner on May 30. Chef James Holloway and Cammy Sunde worked their magic in the kitchen while Rebuilding Alliance founder Donna Baranski-Walker delivered the keynote. Thanks to financial support covering the event's costs from the Outreach Board, all of the proceeds were given to Rebuilding Alliance to provide food for people living in Gaza.

Book Studies

The Task Force sponsored two book studies during the year. In November, Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman led a one-night discussion of *For Such a Time as This*. For the summer, the group selected Mike McFaul's *Autocrats vs. Democrats: China, Russia, America, and the New Global Disorder*, with hybrid sessions scheduled for June 23 and 30, led by Steve Ketchpel.

After-Worship Forums and Programs

The following is a chronological list of the after-worship forums, screenings, and special programs offered through the Task Force during the 2025–2026 program year.

Date	Speaker / Program
Aug 24, 2025	Stanford Prof. David Grusky — Poverty and Inequality
Aug 31, 2025	Weijia Cheng — Artificial Intelligence Forum
Sep 21, 2025	Margaret Kadifa — Local Journalism and the Sanctuary Movement (
Oct 12, 2025	James Williams — Santa Clara County Executive
Oct 19, 2025	Rev. Jim Burklo — guest preaching and discussion
Oct 26, 2025	Nevida Butler — Ecumenical Hunger Program / CROP Walk
Oct 28, 2025	Francisco & Tomás Jiménez — film The Unbroken Sky and Q&A
Oct 28, 2025	Film: There Is Another Way (Israel/Palestine)
Nov 3, 2025	Book Discussion: For Such a Time as This — led by Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman
Jan 18, 2026	Stanford Prof. Bill Gould — labor rights and memoir
Feb 22, 2026	Civity — civil discourse session led by Malka Kopell
Mar 15, 2026	Dr. Lerone Martin (Stanford Martin Luther King Jr. Institute)
Apr 11–18, 2026	Telos ReStory Civil Rights Pilgrimage (New Orleans, Selma, Jackson, Montgomery)
Apr 19, 2026	Green Empowerment forum (Adrian Pierce group)
Apr 26, 2026	Prof. Marcella Alsan (Stanford Health Inequality Lab) — Health Care Inequality
May 30, 2026	Annual Gaza Fundraising Dinner — keynote by Donna Baranski-Walker
May 31, 2026	Civil Rights Trip share-out
Jun 23 & 30, 2026	Summer Book Group: Mike McFaul, Autocrats vs. Democrats

The Peace and Justice Task Force meets online, typically the third Tuesday of the month at 12:30. New members are always welcome. For additional information, please contact Rev. Eileen Altman or Task Force Chair Steve Ketchpel.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steve Ketchpel (ketchpel@post.harvard.edu)

Annual Report of Mental Health Allies

Overview: The Mental Health Allies (MHA) continued its mission of promoting mental health awareness, education, and compassionate support within our church and wider community. Throughout the year, the group met ten times to provide ongoing opportunities for planning, collaboration, discussion, and mutual encouragement. Through forums, worship participation, educational resources, and community engagement, MHA worked to reduce stigma and foster a culture of openness, understanding, and care surrounding mental health.

Members: Regular members included Ann Freeman, Lee Crager, Lucinda Lenicheck, Mali Mann, Mary Marsh, Marilyn Chow, Karen Morrison, Beate Teufel, and Laura and Ted Wilson. Throughout the year, the group also welcomed guests and visitors who joined meetings to seek support, learn more about mental health resources, and share personal experiences and stories in a safe and compassionate environment.

Forums:
During the year, Mental Health Allies hosted two public forums open to the congregation and wider community, as well as one internal educational forum for members and volunteers.

- **September 2025:** In observance of Suicide Awareness Month, MHA hosted a forum titled *"Aiding Family and Friends with Mental Health Struggles."* The forum featured community speakers and mental health professionals from our congregation. Discussions focused on supporting loved ones experiencing mental health challenges, understanding the 988 Crisis Hotline, and learning practical ways to encourage individuals to seek help and access resources.
- **May 2026:** As part of Mental Health Awareness Month, MHA organized the forum *"Growing Up Anxious: Understanding & Supporting Childhood Anxiety."* The event included presentations from mental health professionals and a young adult sharing lived experience. Participants explored how to recognize early signs of anxiety in children across developmental stages and learned practical strategies for providing support at home, in schools, and within the community.
- In addition, MHA facilitated an internal educational forum focused on mental health medications and their use. The discussion provided members with greater understanding of common psychiatric medications, treatment considerations, and ways to support individuals navigating mental health care.

Worship Participation: MHA actively participated in worship services during both Suicide Awareness Month and Mental Health Awareness Month, including services held on September 14, 2025, and May 3, 2026. In collaboration with pastors and music program directors, worship services incorporated mental health themes through sermons, special music, and Prayers of the People. Following each service, MHA hosted educational forums and provided literature, flyers, and mental health resources to congregants and visitors.

Books and Media Reviews: MHA participated in and reviewed the Virtual Movie screening "Anxious Nation" and Live Panel with NAMI-SCC (National Alliance on Mental Illness, Santa Clara County) on May 12, 2026. The group also expanded the church's mental health library resources and updated the Mental Health Allies information page under the "Serve" section of the church website.

Annual Report of First Congregational Church Nursery School

"First Congo"

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

- We offered three programs this year: Nursery program for 2-3 year-olds, Youngers program for 3 -4 year-olds, and Olders program for 4-5 year-olds.
- We provided a preschool experience for 61 children during the school year.
- 48 of 61 children are from Palo Alto and Menlo Park.
- 7 nursery school families and 2 teachers are church members or attend church at FCCPA.
- 19 families were new to First Congo this year.
- $24,202 was used for tuition assistance this year.

STAFF

Executive Director: Marisa Cajbon
Director of Operations: Katherine Cherry
Nursery Program

- M/W and T/Th Teachers: Amity Hodge and Kellie Schmitz

Youngers Program Teachers

- Melissa Goldman – Yellow Tail Snack Teacher (2 days)
- Miè Nakamura – Yellow Tail Snack Teacher (1day)
- Robyn Miller – Red Tail Snack Teacher
- Emily Hedge, Erika Krugler, Celina Tracy – Resource Teachers

Olders Program Teachers

- Miè Nakamura – Purple Tail Snack Teacher
- Lori Sevcik – Blue Tail Snack Teacher (3 days)
- Marisa Cajbon – Blue Tail Snack Teacher (1 day)
- Janine Rocha and Emily Hedge – Resource Teachers

HIGHLIGHTS

We continued our relationship with both the Palo Alto Art Center and the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo with 13 of our 16 Olders students participating in one or both offerings per week. This year, several school families were involved in our mission to strengthen community. With the love and financial support of those families, our community was able to enjoy three different Pick-a-Parties. The Wardle and Siddarth families hosted "Costume Party in the Park", the Palani, Collins, Hyatt, Branson-Vesom, and Barnes families hosted our annual "Transportation Party", and the Herrero, Gupta, and Tsoong-Lue families hosted a "Pizza and Wine" party for adults. The teachers led the annual "Drive-In Movie" pick-a-party for the Olders, which was attended by 15 of our 16 students! Our pick-a-parties raised approximately $3000 which is used to fund our annual picnic and other community events at the school. Additionally, the Tsoong-Lue and Park-Tan families hosted the Adult Social for all families at the lovely Vina Enoteca in Palo Alto. In the spring, First Congo partnered with the Center for Children and Youth to offer two online parent education opportunities for First Congo parents. All parents were invited to attend at no cost and 11 families participated between the two sessions. The nursery school covered the cost for those who participated. During the summer of 2025, our garden was remodeled with the use of funds generously donated by two families the previous school year. New garden boxes were installed including a new drip sprinkler system, a mud pit with water source, and a garden playhouse. The newly renovated space was well received by our students and our gardening expert, Teacher Emily, kept the garden curriculum exciting and engaging with fruits, vegetables, and unique plants growing all year long. During the summer months, we also installed a new outdoor shed and collaborated with the church to share the cost of the backyard drainage project.

ENROLLMENT

This year our nursery program was full with 11 students enrolled in each class. The Youngers program was full with 22 students enrolled and the Olders class had 16 students enrolled. For the 26-27 school year, 21 of 22 nursery students have registered for the Youngers program. Unfortunately, we lost approximately 50% of our incoming Olders to local TK programs. In response to a lower demand for our Olders program next school year, we opted to create an additional Youngers class on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for the 26-27 school year. The creation of this new class allowed us to invite families from our waitlist that would not have had the chance to join our M/W/F class. It also increases our number of students on campus on T/Th/F, ensuring that both Olders and Youngers on T/Th/F have a meaningful amount of social opportunities. We will have 12 students in the Olders class and 10 students in the Youngers class on T/Th/F.

TEACHERS

This year we hired two new teachers. Teacher Miè, preschool teacher and former director, came to us with 30 years of experience. We were thrilled to welcome her to First Congo. She was immediately embraced by our families, students, and staff. She brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the team, and her great sense of humor is an added bonus. We also welcomed Teacher Celina this year. With over 16 years of experience working with preschoolers and families (and even longer in education) she was a natural fit! Celina brings her creativity and artistic gifts to First Congo and we're always excited to hear her new ideas and implement them. Teacher Erika announced that she will be retiring at the end of this school year. Erika's service and dedication to First Congo for the last 18 years (and even more as a parent) has been invaluable. With over 30 years in education, she has been an incredible resource to our school and community. We will miss her immensely, but she has promised to substitute when she can. Teacher Sue, who is on leave this year, has confirmed that she will be returning for the 26-27 school year. The 25-26 school year marked the fourth year with Marisa Cajbon as director.

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (EBOD)

This school year, our board of directors included Marisa Cajbon, Executive Director, Loren Gordon, President, Dave Howell, Vice President, Carrie Jeffries, Treasurer, Kevin Wang, Secretary, and Julia Chandler, Member at Large. In August 2025, Megan Fogarty-Sweezy concluded her term on the EBOD. We are deeply grateful for her years of commitment to our school. In August, we enthusiastically voted Julia Chandler as the newest member of our board. Julia has an extensive history with the school. Her grandmother, Mae Kenrick, taught at the school for 32 years, Julia is an alumnus herself, her daughter recently graduated last year, and her youngest daughter is currently in our nursery program. The EBOD met three times this year in August 2025, January 2026, and March 2026. The EBOD is currently working on marketing strategies in preparation of enrollment challenges due to free transitional kindergarten offered to all four-year-olds in the state.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

In addition to our mandatory orientation/parent education evening, we offered three additional evening parent education opportunities which included hot topics, an evening with an occupational therapist (self regulation), and pre-academics through play. Two online parent education opportunities were offered though the Center for Children and Youth. This year we offered 11 community events, which included the Welcome party, Halloween parades, Donuts and Donations food drive, Bedtime Stories, Winter concerts, Christmas Tree Lane Walk, Scholarship Bakesale, Gott's night out, Open House and book fair, Older's parents scrapbooking night, and the All-school picnic. Additionally, we held occasional coffee hours on the patio for parents. We were strategic in our planning, offering many evening and weekend events so that all families could be involved. On April 16th, we closed the school for one day and all teachers participated in a professional development day with Brenna Craig, OTR/L.

Respectfully submitted by Marisa Cajbon, Executive Director, First Congo Nursery School