



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

**First Presbyterian Church of Topeka
2022 Annual Report
Printed February 26, 2023**

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2022 Staff

Sandra Stogsdill Brown, Pastor and Head of Staff
Patrick Yancey, Commissioned Associate Pastor
Neil Weatherhogg, DMin, Pastor Emeritus

Melissa Ashwill, Office Manager (start date May 31, 2022)
Allison Brewer, Director of Family Ministries
Treven Broxterman, Videographer (start date March 11, 2022)
Becky Foster, Sunday Childcare Attendant
Will Hartner, Videographer
Mark Ingle, Director of Maintenance
Steve Johnson, Sunday Custodian
Kevin Kellim, DMA, Director of Music
Norma Pettijohn, Organist Emeritus
Mark Pudwill, MD, Assistant Organist (resigned effective December 31, 2022)
Christine Reeder, Sunday Childcare Attendant
Carrie Riordan, Director of Communications
Cynthia Neufeld Smith, DMA, Organist

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Pastor and Head of Staff

Dear Friends,

Just as every day of our lives is a gift to savor and enjoy, so each year is a gift for our church. In the pages of this report, you'll read of blessing after blessing after blessing as our staff, elders, deacons, and teams share about their ministries in 2022. It was a year of continued re-building in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, a year of celebrations and transitions, another year of embracing Matthew 25, and a year of courageously and creatively living out our mission of "Loving God, loving neighbors, and living with purpose."

Highlights for me in 2022 included:

- The energizing World Communion Sunday celebration on October 2 at Every Plaza with our neighbors from Grace Episcopal Cathedral, St. John AME Church, and Topeka First United Methodist Church, with the inspiring sounds of our combined choirs and a rousing message from the Rev. May Hall
- Working with our gifted staff, welcoming Melissa Ashwill as our new office manager, and celebrating 31 years of Kevin Kellim as our director of music
- Preaching series on relevant topics including Friendship, Healing in the Bible (with a special worship service of healing and wholeness), What Happens After We Die, Money, and more
- Leading adult Bible study during Vacation Bible School, re-launching women's ministry with our Celebrating Sabbath monthly study, and the continued blessing of our Widows, Tea & Fellowship group
- The resounding return of Noon Noels, with a full house each week and a record number of lunches served! In fact, the entire Advent and Christmas season was extra festive and full this year. I loved celebrating Christmas morning Sunday with our "Breakfast, Bathrobes, and Bethlehem" meal, worship, and fellowship time
- Little blessings like using real bread in communion again
- Acquiring a church van to support the growing youth ministry and FoodShare ministries of our church—thanks for the gifts that made this purchase possible!
- Training in the Art of Transitional Ministry in St. Louis, Mo., and attending the Stewardship Kaleidoscope in Savannah, Ga.

- Hearing from more and more people who are connecting with our church through our ministry of livestreaming worship services
- Marking 15 years of ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA) back in November—what a glorious, messy, challenging, and fantastic calling!

Along with all these things, the biggest blessing is getting to know more and more of YOU on a deeper level and walking with you through life's many joys and challenges. I'm so grateful for all the ways each of you gives—for your presence, your words of encouragement and wisdom, your laughter, your tears, your gifts, and your faith-filled efforts to help us better love God and neighbors. Together, we are the church, the body of Christ in the world. Thanks be to God!

Yours in Christ,
Sandra Brown

Commissioned Associate Pastor

In 2022, as COVID moved from being a pandemic to an endemic, and our world started to resemble something more “normal,” a wellspring of new opportunities presented themselves, and I started to view the future in a positive light. This past year had its share of challenges for sure, but a spirit of optimism is alive at FPC. I will celebrate my sixth anniversary as a staff member at FPC. I believe a bright future is ahead, and all we must do is envision what God has in store for us, grab hold of that vision, and pursue it with all that we have.

I have always found it worthwhile to look back at our accomplishments. This reflection is important to me because it’s helpful to look back and see how far I’ve come, and I gain a vision of where I’m headed. With that in mind, I’m reminded of the amazing ministry we’ve shared this year and I’d like to highlight some of that below:

- As you know, ministering to young people is something I’m passionate about and where I spend a good deal of effort. I’m thrilled to see the results of our work together and our young people are now engaging in many different areas of the church—in youth group, in choir, in small groups and IN WORSHIP! Having young disciples involved in the life of this church brings with it an abundance of energy, excitement, vitality, and yes, plenty of “fun chaos,” and I count it all a blessing to experience.
- At the beginning of 2022, I set a personal goal of becoming more comfortable in the pulpit and improving my preaching. Focusing on that, I used part of my continuing education budget to attend the Festival of Homiletics in Denver, Colo. I am grateful to this congregation for providing me with the time away to attend this conference. I learned new ideas and techniques by attending preaching seminars and watching really talented preachers demonstrate their craft. In addition, I attended the Leadership Institute, a large gathering of pastors and church staff, hosted by the Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kans. At this event I heard some great preaching and rubbed elbows with some very talented people. In all of this, I’ve discovered that I need to spend more time researching, pondering, reading, and praying as I plan worship and prepare a sermon. I think I enter 2023 a better preacher, and I hope to continue to focus on improving.
- Our Neighborhood Ministries team is simply amazing! As I’ve worked alongside them, I’ve been bowled over by their commitment to being the hands and feet of Jesus, as they seek ways to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the poor and care for the sick. They do all of this in a variety of ways, not the least of which is through our FoodShare Ministry, which has grown, both in terms of effort and in community need. During the Christmas season, as the NM team gathered to celebrate the season, I quickly and informally threw together some numbers related to the impact of what we do through the FoodShare ministry. Based on the food this congregation hands out each week, I estimate we served

3,800 families in 2022. Check out the Neighborhood Ministries report for more statistics on the impact this ministry has in our community.

- After a period of dormancy because of COVID, I was thrilled to re-establish a relationship with Presbyterian Manor, and we were once again able to visit residents in person. It was also heartwarming to experience the delight on the faces of people as our youth group went Christmas caroling there during the holidays. I've also been blessed to re-establish a pastoral relationship there and have filled in to lead worship and preach when their chaplain is absent.
- Our worship just keeps getting better and better and it is exciting to see many new faces in worship. Nearly every Sunday I'm meeting someone new. Our evangelism in 2022 was solid and we added new members. For 2023, the session has made congregational growth a priority and I'm excited to dream about our prospects for inviting others in to experience life in this beloved community.
- Our Faith & Flour small group isn't so small anymore, and we continue to find new recipes for bread, cookies, pastries, and anything else we can come up with. In fact, we're now offering two baking groups to keep up with the demand (I figured it was easier to add another group, than to build a bigger kitchen!). Is 2023 the time to expand our small group offerings beyond Bible studies, dinner groups, baking, needlework, and the arts? I think maybe so, and I'm now brainstorming new ideas. Comfort cooking anyone? How about you? Is there perhaps a passion you'd like to share with a small group of people, so that they can enjoy what you enjoy? Let's make it happen in 2023!

My look back only scratches the surface of what we've accomplished in 2022. The positive things that are happening could consume all the pages of this annual report. I trust this look back gives you an idea of how far we've come and how much higher we can soar!

As I examine the year just completed, I am humbled by the ways God has allowed me to partner with you in furthering the ministry of FPC. I'm equally humbled by the support I've received from you, the members of this congregation. I can't possibly know what 2023 will bring to me, but one thing I do know is that I am forever grateful for your love and care. In so many ways, you are God's answer to my prayers.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this amazing ministry in 2022. Now, let's buckle up and enjoy an even better ride in 2023!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Pat

Director of Communications

2022 began in an unconventional but rewarding way. From January 1 through May 31, a significant amount of my time was spent serving as office manager for FPC, in addition to contracted communications duties. After spending the month of June training the new office manager, I was able to return my full attention to communications activities.

Highlights of 2022

Communication with members, friends, and the public: In 2022, eleven issues of the FPC Messenger were produced (March/April dual issue). Friday emails were sent each week to members and friends highlighting church ministries and events. Sunday worship service videos were posted weekly on Facebook and on the church website. News releases and social media promotions were used to promote church activities, and the church sign remained a tremendous tool for communicating with the public. Callers often remarked “I saw it on your sign” when requesting additional information on church events. The sign reached people in ways we had not originally imagined. A young woman, grieving the recent loss of her father, was waiting at the stoplight when a Bible verse that had held special meaning for her and her father appeared on the sign. She said that at that moment, she felt her father was with her and she experienced an immediate sense of peace. We also received numerous comments of thanks for the “Jesus loves you and your tattoos” message that ran for several weeks in the fall. One message simply said, “Thank you, I really needed to hear that.”

Digital platforms: We selected PushPay/ChurchStaq as our mobile application (App) platform. The app is designed to help members engage more in the life of the church and will help staff and volunteers reach people both inside and outside of our church family. Staff spent November and December learning about the app and how it works. The target date to launch the app to the congregation is mid-April. ChurchStaq serves as our new membership database and staff are continuing to work through data integration as we transition from Church Windows.

WIWB moved their Sunday broadcast of the prior week’s worship service to the 9 a.m. timeslot. Our online viewership on Facebook, YouTube, and the website continued to rise with new viewers almost every week.

Plans to build a new website were postponed in 2022 and this project will most likely begin in late summer of 2023.

Work continues on efforts to maximize the available features of FPC’s digital platforms to tell the story of FPC and engage people in the life of the church. We continue to explore ways to communicate FPC’s Matthew 25 ministry activities with the larger Topeka community and use these efforts to invite people to experience the love of God through associated mission activities.

Efforts to reengage with our Instagram account and use it as a tool to reach new audiences were postponed to 2023.

Ministry support: Activities and events of the Fellowship Team, Neighborhood Ministries Team, Stewardship Team, Family Ministries Team, Youth Ministry Team, and the Worship Committee, were supported through creation of graphics, promotions of events, and hands-on work.

First Presbyterian led the efforts of two major new initiatives in 2022—the Easter Egg Hunt at the Capitol, and the World Communion Sunday Worship Service at Everyg Plaza. Communications efforts for both events were substantial and built a solid foundation for these events in 2023. It was fun and rewarding to work with staff and volunteers from our partner downtown churches to share the love of God with our community neighbors.

In September, I attended the Presbytery of Northeast Kansas Education Day in Salina and enjoyed learning and connecting with leaders from other congregations.

Grace and peace,
Carrie Riordan

Director of Family Ministries

Team Members: Allison Brewer (staff director), John Dorsey (elder), Becky Foster, Emily McGee, Susan Rowell, and Jennifer Wolff. The team met monthly in 2022.

The year 2022 was one of rebuilding and reinventing for the Children and Family Ministry Team. From Bible retreats to egg hunts, our team was busy building events to help our church connect with children, both within our walls and out in the community.

Sunday morning church nursery and childcare was staffed by Becky Foster and Christine Reeder. They provided care for children ages birth through Kindergarten during 9:30 a.m. Sunday School and 10:30 a.m. worship. They had one or two regular visitors each week.

Roger Basinger and Jessica Roberts led Sunday school for preschool through 5th graders with support from Allison Brewer, Jennifer Wolff, and several other adult volunteers. From January to May, Sunday school was offered in both online and in person formats. Attendance ranged from 12 to 20 students each week during this hybrid period. Sunday school was on break over the summer and in August returned to in-person only, with attendance ranging between four and eight students each week. Our Sunday school curriculum is Sparkhouse Publishing, and in the fall, the presbytery began providing free digital subscriptions to the Sparkhouse library of resources.

In February, Allison attended the Association of Professional Christian Educators (APCE) conference in Chicago. She networked with other church educators, participated in wonderful worship services, heard inspiring speakers, and learned strategies for helping children, families, and congregations develop faith formation strategies.

In collaboration with other downtown churches, First Presbyterian Church hosted close to 600 children and their families for a community-wide easter egg hunt on the capitol lawn. Attendees were greeted with popcorn treats from Cashmere Popcorn, the capitol lawn filled with more than 5,000 plastic eggs, and 80 volunteers who welcomed families, led games, handed out temporary Easter tattoos, facilitated pictures with the Easter Bunny, and distributed goodie bags for kiddos to take home.

During worship on Palm Sunday, we held an in-person palm processional of children and youth. On Easter, families participated in an egg hunt on the playground before worship.

Charlotte Brewer and Evan Roberts received their 3rd Grade Bibles during 10:30 a.m. worship on May 8.

In June, volunteers helped bring to life a winter castle themed Vacation Bible School, complete with a dragon and armored knight. Children made crafts, learned songs, completed science experiments, and played games on the capitol lawn.

Four families attended family camp at the Heartland Center in Parkville, Mo., in late June. They were able to bond over fun activities (and walks uphill both ways to and from meals). FIRST Families plans to make family camp an ongoing annual tradition.

In August, students and teachers were sent into the new school year with backpack tags and stickers with the “You Got This!” affirmation and the blessing of the congregation. FIRST Families continued the fun with a splash day and a science day before the return to Sunday school in September.

Brandon Adams, Julian Ford, Laurel Reser, Axley Wolff, Jacksyn Garinger, Dallin Fish, and Owen McGee received their Bibles in worship on August 21. After worship, students and their families enjoyed lunch and a showing of the movie *Clifford the Big Red Dog*.

In November, seven students in 3rd to 6th grades participated in an afternoon of learning the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of their Bibles. They also enjoyed pizza and a picture scavenger hunt.

Advent and Christmas Events:

- Parents’ Night Out: Parents were given a much-deserved night off while volunteers provided dinner, supervision and lots of fun for kiddos. Children made decorated wrapping paper and chose gifts to give to their parents as part of the fun.
- Nativity Parade: Children donned costumes of many characters of the Nativity Story and walked into worship to help share the story.
- Families celebrated Christmas morning by worshipping in their pajamas.

Submitted by Allison Brewer
Director of Family Ministries

Director of Music

As director of the Chancel Choir, I am very appreciative of the dedication by the members of the ensemble as they sing during Sunday worship and participate in special services, such as Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve. Kudos to our wonderful vocal soloists who, in addition to providing special music during the offering, serve as section leaders in the Chancel Choir. We were sad to say goodbye to tenor Lucero Padilla, who moved out of state, and we welcomed tenor Brendan Boyle to the fold.

The members of the Chancel Choir and soloists (*) in 2022 were:

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Katelan Albus	Anita Jacoby	Gordon McQuere	Scott Frost*
Melanie McQuere	Connie Baer	Lucero Padilla*	Jim Owen
Jane Owen	Mary Nichols	Bruce Perney	Walt Menninger
Diane Smith	Katie Keckeisen	Doug Exline	Jerry Foster
Marya Feldt*	Lauren Lewis*	Roy Knisley	Elliot Lauxman*
Jessica Crowder*	Julie Lady	Steve Crouch*	Bill Nichols
Sandra Willetts*	Jennifer Quanstrom	Brendan Boyle*	Hugh Clark
	Melissa Renick		Keith Brumley

The church served as host for various recitals during the year, and it was great to resume our Noon Noels services after the COVID interruption. Choral groups from Topeka West High School, Cair Paravel Latin School, and Highland Park High School were our featured guests.

A highlight for the choir during the fall was performing with choral singers from Grace Episcopal Cathedral, St. John AME Church, and Topeka First United Methodist Church during the combined World Communion Sunday worship service at Every Plaza on October 2. We look forward to future singing opportunities with these churches.

I feel very blessed to have served as your music director for more than 32 years. Thank you for the special recognition and gift that you gave me in April. I look forward to continued music-making as we worship together.

Kevin Kellim
Director of Music

Organist

I have had the privilege and challenge of serving as your organist for two and a half years. It has been wonderful to emerge, at least mostly, from the restrictions of the pandemic. During this past year we have returned to many aspects of “normal” that I hadn’t known before.

As many of you have heard by now, I have submitted my resignation as lead organist, effective in June, or as soon thereafter as a suitable replacement is found. I need to return to my Mennonite faith family and want a bit more freedom to travel, particularly to visit my twin grandsons. I hope to continue to serve here as the assistant organist, so let’s not say goodbye!

My new star word for 2023 is awareness. I continue to grow in awareness of the sincere desire of so many people here to be a caring, supportive community. I continue to grow in awareness of the huge amount of time and effort given by so many people to make worship meaningful. I continue to grow in awareness of how much I can learn from others, especially from people whose life experiences have been different from my own. I am aware of the gift of the friendships I have made here and am growing in awareness of the richness of your faith tradition.

One of the more behind-the-scenes aspects of my job is to oversee the maintenance of the organs and pianos in the building. I regularly add water to the humidifier systems on the three most-used pianos, and we are looking to replace the mechanism that plays the chimes on the sanctuary organ.

I continue to be grateful for this opportunity to be part of the FPC family and use my gifts in the service of God and this congregation.

Cynthia Neufeld Smith
Organist

Church Officers

SESSION:

Class of 2023

Leah Gabler-Marshall
Beth Johnston
Walter Menninger
Melissa Renick

Class of 2024

John Conlee
John Dorsey
Jerry Foster
Anita Jacoby

Class of 2025

Herman Jones
Bill Nichols
Jim Owen
Norma Pettijohn

Moderator: Sandra Stogsdill Brown

Clerk of Session: Melanie McQuere

Treasurer: Roger Basinger

DEACONS:

Class of 2023

Pam Carmichael
John Gould
Jeff Gustin
Claudia Perney
Warren Watson

Class of 2024

Andrea Conlee
Hank Ernst
Jason Fish
Gayle Hunter
Julie Jensen

Class of 2025

Susan Frydrych-Palmer
Julie Lady
Linda Mets
Kathy Pauls
Susan Rowell

Moderator: Jeff Gustin

Vice-moderator: John Gould, Susan Rowell

Secretary: Hank Ernst

Members Serving in Higher Governing Bodies

Presbytery of Northern Kansas

Sandra Brown Presbytery Council
Steve Crouch Commission on Ministry
Rick Friedstrom Committee on Representation
Resource Center Committee

Synod of Mid-America

Pat Yancey PNK Commissioner to Synod
Synod Treasurer and member of the Finance Committee

Church Membership Statistics

ADMISSIONS:

Profession of Faith:	7	Jeramiah Carlucci Sophia Carlucci Tony Carlucci Trinity Carlucci Tim W. McCoy, Nov. 27 Kelly Wilt-North, Nov. 27 Phil Wolf, Nov. 27
Reaffirmation:	2	Shirley and Jim Martin, Jan.30
Restoration:	0	
Certificate of Transfer:	2	Mac and Suzette Smith, Jan. 30
DISMISSIONS:		
Certificate of Transfer:	1	Debra Stufflebean Oliva, Nov. 21
Deaths:	11	Ila Jean Smiley Fisher, Jan. 5 Dale Sandberg, March 15 John W. (Jack) Collins, April 17 Jean McKenzie, May 4 Walter F. James Jr., May 21 Suki Hyon DeAnda, May 29 (ASK MELANIE) Mary V. Patterson, July 21 Lona May (Terry) Hafling, Aug. 20 Adrian Apel, Oct. 28 Ardith Pettygrove, Nov. 29 Marjorie Lois Nyquist Marrs, Dec. 10
Removed by Request:	2	Jessica Domme, July 21 Heather McKee, Sept. 8
MARRIAGES:	1	Mike Burns and Annie Powers, April 2
BIRTHS:	0	
BAPTISMS:	1	Tim McCoy, Nov. 27

Membership as of Jan. 1, 2022:	368
Admissions:	11
Deaths:	11
Dismissions:	3
Membership as of Dec. 31, 2022:	365

Dinners for Eight

Dinners for Eight is a fellowship opportunity that has been a part of the life of First Presbyterian Church for many years. It offers an excellent opportunity to meet and get better acquainted with members of our church family. Groups are formed every January and meet four times throughout the year in homes (with all sharing in providing the food) or at local restaurants. The members of each group set their own schedule of time, dates, and places. In 2022 there were three in-home groups and one dine-out group.

Submitted by Patty Foster and Norma Pettijohn

Tasty Tuesdays

Tasty Tuesday lunches resumed in 2022 after a pause due to Covid. The Tasty Tuesday lunches are the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at different restaurants around town and are a great time of food and fellowship. Each person pays for their own meal and the group is open to all. Part of what makes this a fun group is that there are different people each month.

Patty Foster, Coordinator

Deacons

Deacons serve in many ways. You'll see us at the fellowship table each Sunday after the 10:30 a.m. worship service, and on the first Sunday of each month we celebrate the month's birthdays with name badge stickers and a cake or cupcakes.

Through notes, telephone calls, and sometimes personal visits, a special committee of deacons and other church members known as Caring Friends works to express loving concern to those who are ill, hospitalized, or have had a death in the family. Notes of congratulations are sent when there are weddings, new babies, birthdays, and anniversaries to be celebrated.

We extend hospitality to bereaved families after funerals and memorial services. Prayer shawls knitted by deacon Kathy Pauls and fellow members of FPC's needlework group remind those who are grieving of God's unwavering love and care. Both full-size and pocket-size prayer shawls are available to all.

A wide variety of durable medical equipment, from wheelchairs to bathtub safety seats, is available for use by those who worship at FPC and their family and friends. Contact the church office or health ministry chair Andrea Conlee to see if your needs can be met. The ministry also maintains the sanctuary's FM listening devices. An automatic external defibrillator (AED) is strategically located near the first-floor restrooms. FPC staff members have been trained in its use and training will soon be offered to church members. First aid kits are strategically located around the church.

In 2022, the deacons served as hosts for one of the three Noon Noels services. We also participated in a Silver Wings dinner, with several of us introducing ourselves with the party game "two truths and a lie." You can't fool the Silver Wings folks, who more times than not, picked correctly.

Our transportation ministry helps find rides to church for those who need them. Members may call the church office to make a ride request, and we will do our best to identify a driver who lives close to the rider in need. While not intended to be a permanent relationship, several successful shared ride pairings have occurred. Each feels comfortable telling the other if a ride is not needed or a ride cannot be provided. Deacons also maintain the visitor welcome bags and the amenities baskets in the restrooms.

Your FPC Deacons are a diverse lot by current or past profession: principal, chemist, carpenter, teacher, mall manager, nurse, psychotherapist, medical equipment professional...you get the idea. And, our interests are likewise diverse: golf, knitting, baking, competitive tennis, camping, fishing, college and professional sports, quilting, glass fusion, singing in harmony, and relating scripture to our lives, just to name a few. What unites us is our Christian role as deacons serving fellow members of First Presbyterian Church.

Submitted by Hank Ernst

Needlework

Participants: Betty Baker, Jamie Corkhill, Linda Hall, Kathy Pauls, Marty Snyder, Marguerite Underhill, Melissa Ashwill, and Carrie Riordan.

Our mission is to share the love of God with each other, with our neighbors, and with friends near and far with items we have knitted and crocheted.

Gifted in 2022:

- 63 prayer shawls and 143 “pocket prayer shawls” (6 in. x 6 in. knitted square)
- 3 child-sized blankets
- 20 scarves
- 17 hats and 12 pairs of gloves

What a joy it has been to resume in-person gatherings after a two-and-a-half-year pandemic interlude. Jamie Corkhill expressed our feelings, “It is not easy to put into words the friendship and inspiration and hope and mutual support and goodwill that are generated in our little group, but it’s what keeps us all looking forward to our next gathering!”

In 2023 we meet the third Thursday of the month at 2 p.m. in the library, and the group is open to anyone interested in fiber crafts.

Submitted with gratitude,
Kathy Pauls

Fellowship Team

The Fellowship Team, more commonly referred to as the “fun team,” continued organizing, supporting, and providing opportunities for our church family to enjoy fellowship events throughout the year! Our budget was \$3,000 for the last year; however, with generous team members donating food and money, we spent under budget. Our team has requested \$4,000 for 2023 due to adding the Faith & Flour small group expenses to our budget (which was almost \$1,000 in 2022). We also want to be sure we have the funds to continue providing fun and fellowship to FPC of Topeka!

Our team consists of:

Carolyn and Dick Adams, Pat and John Dorsey, Becky Foster, Marlene Geysler, Chris and Jeff Gustin, Carlene (chair) and Herman Jones, Julie and Hal Jensen, Beth Johnston, Julie Lady, Shirley and Jim Martin, Norma Pettijohn (elder), Susan and Bill Rowell, and Marlou Wegener. We had staff support from Carrie Riordan and Patrick Yancey.

2022 allowed most of our activities to be back in person following the Covid-19 pandemic. Here is a brief review of 2022 activities:

- Prepared and served 150 soup lunches in January and delivered meals to all of our Silver Wings members who were not in church that day
- Provided breakfast for 75 people at the Annual Congregational Meeting in February
- Provided a drive-thru pancake feed for Shrove Tuesday in March and served 50 meals
- Prepared and distributed 100 St. Patty treat bags on a Sunday in March
- Hosted a Silver Wings dinner in April
- Helped with VBS meals in June
- Silver Wings dinner in July with a meal at church and delivered meals
- Provided a congregational breakfast on September 19
- Scheduled a fishing derby/outing at the home of Carol and Ken Sook that was canceled due to weather
- Silver Wings dinner in October with a meal at church and delivered meals
- October all-church Fall Fun Event at the home of Dick and Carolyn Adams with a hotdog roast, hayrack rides, and bonfire
- Helped with the downtown churches Trunk or Treat Oct. 31 at Grace Cathedral
- Prepared and distributed “Thanksgiving Blessings” treat bags in November with each person in attendance receiving one and then also delivered to Silver Wings folks who were not in church that Sunday
- Provided the lunch for Noon Noels on December 7, and many of the fellowship team also helped with Noon Noels on December 14

Under the fellowship umbrella we also have the following activities which are organized and led by others:

- Tasty Tuesdays monthly luncheons throughout the city
- Tasty 5th Tuesday Dinners
- Dinners for Eight
- Faith & Flour Baking Group
- Bicycling Group
- art + FAITH

Our team is always looking for new adventures and ways to improve our congregation's fellowship experiences and activities. If you have "fun" ideas, let us know, or better yet, join the fellowship team! We meet the first Tuesday of each month at noon in the conference room. Thank you to everyone who supported or attended one of our many events throughout the year!

Neighborhood Ministries

This past year proved to be the busiest year yet for our dedicated team of volunteers! Thanks to your generous support, 2022 was the best year yet for the Neighborhood Ministries Team (NM) as we lived into our mission of feeding those who are hungry, giving drinks to those who are thirsty, caring for the sick, and welcoming strangers. We sought to faithfully serve our calling as a Matthew 25 congregation.

If you consider our base of volunteers, financial support, and the donations of food and water, it's clear that the NM "team" is comprised of nearly everyone at FPC. Without you, we would not be able to provide our weekly Wednesday FoodShare ministry. This ministry provides much needed assistance to individuals and families who otherwise would go hungry. To get a better sense of the importance of this ministry, here are some impact numbers from the FoodShare ministry. During 2022, FPC provided food for 3,800 families in need, including:

- 8,000 apples
- 28,200 eggs
- 2,350 boxes of Cheerios
- 1,762 jars of peanut butter
- 1,762 jars of grape jelly
- 11,280 hot dogs
- 1,175 gallons of milk
- 26,320 Slices of cheese
- 2,350 loaves of bread
- In all, FPC provided enough food for 40,000 + meals.

And we didn't stop there. The NM team continued its support for young minds through our partnership with Williams Science & Fine Arts Magnet Elementary School. This support included financial contributions, a winter coat drive, and providing needed supplies to staff and teachers. In collaboration with other congregations, the NM team also purchased and distributed back-to-school book bags, crayons, and other supplies to students at the United for a Successful School Year event held at Highland Park High School in August. It's always a beautiful sight to see the happy faces of children receiving brand new book bags!

The team also supported Topeka senior adult community through continued financial donations to the LULAC, East Topeka, and Papan's Landing senior centers.

We're not resting on all the success and service to others we achieved in 2022, and 2023 is shaping up to be even busier! We are excited that Harvesters has asked FPC to partner with them by becoming a formal food pantry partner. Through this partnership, Harvesters will be providing more food to our FoodShare ministry and FPC will be asked to step up and provide more volunteer power to make this partnership work. Will we be able to fulfill this volunteer

need? Absolutely! Because the volunteers at FPC are the best, most dedicated, and faithful disciples around. And with that kind of people power, there are no limits that can hold us back. So, here is a huge shout out to our volunteers!

And let's not forget our Blessing Box Ministry which has lived up to its name by being a blessing to so many. Through your donations of pantry items and financial support, and the work of Jill Adams and her family to keep things organized, the impact of this ministry continues to bless our neighbors.

In short, it's been another amazing year of ministry to our community as a church! As members of FPC, these ministries reflect your faithfulness as disciples of Jesus. We couldn't do this work without you. Thank you for your support of the NM team! In the year ahead, may God continue to bless our community through the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church!

Leah Gabler-Marshall
Neighborhood Ministries chair

Personnel

The Personnel Committee meets monthly, together with our pastors, to make sure our staff is equipped, trained, and appreciated as they work hard to support the ministries of our church. The members of the Personnel Committee in 2022 were Bruce Cooper (co-chair), Linda Nantz, Sue Ohlde (co-chair), Claudia Perney, and Melissa Renick (elder). We offer a special thanks to Warren Watson, who rotated off the committee mid-year after several years of excellent service.

In 2022, we began with a vacancy in our office as we said goodbye to Lori Hennessey, who stepped back due to health reasons. We extend heartfelt thanks to Carrie Riordan, Director of Communications, who skillfully managed our office for five months while maintaining her communications role. We welcomed Melissa Ashwill at the end of May, and she is now helping our office run smoothly and efficiently. We also celebrated 31 years of having Kevin Kellim as our Director of Music and expressed our gratitude to Mark Pudwill for his years of playing the organ both as a substitute and, in recent years, as assistant organist (Mark moved back to Lincoln, Neb., at the end of 2022).

Our committee celebrated reaching the goal of having every member of our staff complete the Safe Gatherings certification and training process. We also completed the mammoth project of revising our Employee Handbook and adding an updated sexual misconduct policy, in accordance with our Presbytery's guidelines.

Our staff currently consists of: Melissa Ashwill, Office Manager; Allison Brewer, Director of Children and Family Ministries; Sandra Stogsdill Brown, Pastor and Head of Staff; Treven Broxterman, Videographer; Becky Foster, Sunday Childcare Attendant; Will Hartner, Videographer; Mark Ingle, Director of Facilities Maintenance; Steve Johnson, Sunday Custodian; Kevin Kellim, Director of Music; Cynthia Neufeld Smith, Organist; Christine Reeder, Sunday Childcare Attendant; Carrie Riordan, Director of Communications; and Pat Yancey, Commissioned Associate Pastor.

Without our dedicated, hard-working, creative staff team, our church simply could not do all the things we strive to do. On behalf of this congregation, thank you to each of our gifted staff members for everything they do.

Property Committee

The Property Committee is responsible for the oversight and maintenance of the church's buildings, equipment, grounds, and how our facilities are used. Our goal is to maintain the good condition and appearance of our buildings so they may serve as an effective tool for our service to God. The committee's members were Dick Adams, Jerry Foster (session liaison), Dean Hill, Mark Ingle (FPC Director of Maintenance), Ed Lakin, Jane Owen (chair), Bruce Perney, Gene Schoettlin, Pat Yancey (staff liaison), and Tamra Yancey. We gratefully acknowledge the suggestions, expertise, and work that committee members perform to accomplish the responsibilities needed to take care of our facilities and property.

Mark Ingle has done an excellent job on the challenges that our facility presents due to its size and the age of the main building. We appreciate that he prioritizes keeping the facility clean at the same time as he works to stay on top of the maintenance challenges of such a large physical plant.

The year 2022 was a year of challenges with some large investments need to ensure our church stayed in the best possible condition. Challenges aside, we were able to get numerous projects accomplished in 2022. The items listed below are in addition to the normal operations that Mark and the committee do on a regular basis.

- The committee and the newly formed security grant team met with Chuck Clanahan from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), for an in-depth review of the facilities to examine safety concerns as we prepare to apply for a grant in 2023 to help cover the costs of some needed upgrades to our facility-wide security.
- We acquired bids for repair and replacement of concrete areas on the north side of the church. This work will be done in 2023.
- We approved several applications for use of the church from external groups.
- We are blessed to continue working with Greg Wright on the annual contract with our gas supplier, Encore, to make sure we get the best price possible.
- We are continuing to make lighting upgrades around the church.
- We acquired multiple bids and then chose Samco to replace the boiler in the 8th Street Witherspoon building with a more efficient and smaller unit.
- We had the Tiffany windows in the sanctuary inspected. It was determined that the south medallion window needs repair. We have contracted with Willet Hauser for this repair which will be done in spring/summer of 2023.
- All boiler inspections were completed as required by the State of Kansas.
- After the complete failure of the blower motor for the Moller Organ, and a detailed evaluation, we asked session to approve a contract with Reuter Organ of Lawrence, Kans., to replace it. This was a significant expenditure, and a temporary blower was brought in for several months while we waited for the new blower to be built and shipped.

The major projects being considered for 2023 are:

- Crack fill and seal the parking lots
- Concrete repair and replacement
- Interior painting
- Replacement of exterior handrails on the north side of the church for safety and aesthetic reasons

Sincere thanks to the members of the property committee who utilized their personal skills and gifts and donated many hours of their personal time to accomplish the above projects as well as many others that are not listed here. Collaborating with these fine people is a blessing.

The property committee could not complete the projects it undertakes without the help of the congregation, the staff, and the guidance of our Lord. We are grateful for the congregation's support and assistance given to us in the form of prayers, volunteer time, ideas, suggestions for improvement, etc. The committee thanks you, the congregation, for all you have done to help our committee serve our church and our God.

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Foster

Stephen Ministry

The trained, active members of the Stephen Ministry Team in 2022 included: Stephen Leaders John Dorsey and Jane Owen; Stephen Ministry Consultant, Walt Menninger; Staff Liaisons Sandra Stogsdill Brown and Pat Yancey; Stephen Ministers: Sheryl Daniels, Jerry Foster, Julie Jensen, Carlene Jones, Julie Lady, Renee Messer, Daniel Pauls, and Diane Smith. Trainees in the class beginning in January 2023 include John Gould, Sue Ohlde, and Nancy Shaughnessy.

A Stephen Minister is there for you when you need care and support. They will walk beside you as you work to find the answers that only God can provide when no one else can.

In 2022, the Stephen Ministry:

- Continued care through phone calls to our congregational family
- Developed and maintained multiple one-on-one caring relationships in person, by phone calls, and through texting and note writing
- Continued our education on serving others and supporting each other during monthly meetings
- Hosted a Blue Christmas worship service in December that was attended in person and via livestream by 100 persons

In 2023, the Stephen Ministry priorities are:

- Supporting those in need
- Continuing education training for Stephen Ministers
- Increasing our church family's knowledge and awareness of what a Stephen Minister does
- Seeing the face of the Lord in those in need and in members of the Stephen Ministry team
- Training of new Stephen Ministers in the spring

"Remember, you don't have to fix things, and you can't anyway! All you need to do is be present in their struggles. Our Lord does all the work. Rejoice in this day and all the rest of our days!"

–Stephen Ministry training manual

Submitted by John Dorsey

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee consists of Bob Baer, Connie Baer, Sandra Stogsdill Brown (staff liaison), Deanna Heilmann, Anita Jacoby (elder), Sara Keckeisen, Kevin Kellim (ex officio), Gordon McQuere, Jim Owen (elder), Justin Roberts, and Cynthia Neufeld Smith (ex officio). The committee met multiple times over the year. It is responsible for supporting public worship including special occasions, supporting the music program, overseeing communion, establishing policies for use of worship spaces, and facilitating various forms of online worship.

Much of 2022 consisted of managing the progressive return toward more normal in-person worship. Guided by CDC recommendations, we relaxed mask guidance, resumed the previous offering process and passing of the peace, and resumed communion using a modified intinction process. We acknowledge and appreciate the work of Dean Hill in crafting beautiful wooden stands for our offering boxes, and new name tag racks. In addition to regular Sunday worship, the church again offered Noon Noels with excellent attendance, and joined with Grace Episcopal Cathedral, St. John AME, and Topeka First United Methodist Church for a community World Communion Sunday worship service at Everygy Plaza. With Christmas Eve falling on a Saturday, Sandra creatively offered Christmas Day Sunday worship with “Bathrobes, Breakfast, and Bethlehem” as the theme. Gordon and Sara have managed the paraments this year.

We continue to have a substantial online attendance with approximately 35 watching live and another 125 viewing the recorded service through YouTube. The combined attendance often exceeds our pre-Covid attendance. The team appreciates the work of Will Hartner and Treven Broxterman in providing video support. To improve the video program, we also undertook a training program for liturgists.

The music program remains strong under Dr. Kellim’s leadership and Dr. Neufeld Smith’s outstanding keyboard performance. We suffered a catastrophic organ failure this year when the 87-year-old blower that supplied air to the organ pipes abruptly failed. The Property Committee did an outstanding job of arranging a temporary blower and installation of a new blower system. We are sad to acknowledge that our excellent assistant organist, Dr. Mark Pudwill, resigned at the end of the year to return to his hometown of Lincoln, Neb. Dr. Neufeld Smith has also indicated her intent to return to her home church this summer, but we are hopeful she will be able to continue as assistant organist once a new principal organist is secured.

To coordinate with our new blue Christmas paraments, new gold stoles have been ordered for the choir. The team looks forward to further enhancements in worship in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Owen

Youth Ministry Team

These days, amazing is an often-overused word. As we ponder the revitalization of FPC's youth ministry in 2022 however, no other word fits as well, because 2022 proved to be an amazing year. During 2022, the youth ministry team grew, adding new volunteers as we expanded into new ministry opportunities and to keep pace with the amazing growth in the participation of young people. It was amazing to see what God is doing at FPC through our young people. Below are just some of the highlights of the past year.

- We experienced a two-fold increase in the number of young people to whom we minister. All the credit for this goes to our youth who have invited friends to join us. Those friends grew comfortable enough to continue to attend, even if the friend who originally invited them was absent. For 2023, we plan to continue to encourage the invitation of friends. The youth are modeling for us what great evangelism looks like, and it is exciting.
- We had five young people complete the confirmation class to become confirmed as members of the Presbyterian Church (USA). As 2023 ramps up, we are preparing for another confirmation class to offer membership to a new group of young people.
- Our middle-school and high school youth continued to meet every Sunday for food, fellowship, Bible study, and mission projects.
- Our group was very active in Presbytery-sponsored events during 2022. FPC sent nine youth and two adults to the Presbytery's mission camp in Parkville, Mo., for a week of work mission, outdoor relaxation, fellowship, and fun as we helped Heartland Presbyterian Camp prepare for the camping season. Beth Johnston and I served as part of the leadership team for the week. The group weeded flower beds, chopped wood, cleared trails, and painted. We also managed to have some fun with daily swims, fun on the high ropes course, and getting very dirty in the "mud pit." The week concluded with a day at Worlds of Fun. Our group also participated in the Presbytery's fall retreat at Rock Springs Camp and Conference Center near Junction City, Kans.
- The group engaged in a variety of local mission opportunities including volunteering at a parents' night out event at the church, yard work at the Ronald McDonald House, helping with the community Easter egg hunt at the capitol, and caroling and handing out homemade cookies at Presbyterian manor.
- 2022 was a year for multiple lock-in retreats and opportunities to stay overnight at the church and get little (or no) sleep.
- The youth twice helped plan and lead worship, adding to the diversity of worship experiences at FPC.
- Our senior high youth attended "Tri-Alt," a regional youth event in Allenstown, Colo., hosted by the Denver Presbytery. I also served as a speaker and worship leader for this event. As a result, the Denver Presbytery has invited more conversation on how we can work together in ministry. The collaboration and growth in youth ministry is awesome!

- We have the genesis of a young adult group as several of our former youth, who are now young adults, still gather (when their busy lives permit it) to stay connected and support one another. Linda Nantz and I absolutely love this group, and it is a joy when we can get together.
- Because of the challenges of transporting larger numbers of youth, the session approved the purchase of a church van.

With a focus on engaging with young people “in their world” the entire ministry team was intentional in meeting youth where they lived day-to-day. We attended their band performances, sporting events, plays, and musicals. We ate lunch with them at their schools. We of course also want them to be in church, however, we also realize that it is equally important that we be present in their lives on their “turf” as we share our faith.

2023 is off to a very fast start. The committee has made plans for another “amazing” year. Can we possibly top 2022? You bet we can, and we will, with the “amazing” youth ministry team of Becky Foster, Beth Johnson, Herman Jones, Linda Nantz, Marty Snyder, and Pat Yancey. And a special thanks to Allison Brewer, director of family ministries, who is always willing to lend a hand when needed. The leadership from this team, and from others, is vital to the growth of this ministry and conveys to the youth at FPC that they are important, valued, and loved.

Submitted by Pat Yancey
Commissioned Associate Pastor



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF TOPEKA
Loving God, loving neighbors and living with purpose