

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

2016

Annual Report

Congregational Church
Of Austin



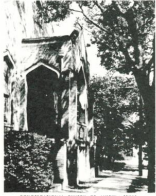
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

2016 Annual Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

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Annual Meeting Agenda

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

January 29, 2017

1. Invocation
2. Minutes
3. Pastor Report
4. Financial Secretary Report
5. Treasurer
Report
Adoption of Budget
6. Nominating Committee
Report
Election of Boards, Officers, and Representatives
7. Trustees Report
8. Deacons Report
9. Outreach Team Report
10. Christian Education Report
11. Moderator Report
12. New Business
Creating a Process to Discern How to Prepare for Our Future
13. Adjourn

One verse of "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Annual Meeting Minutes

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

January 31, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 12:26 pm by Bill Beardall and opened with the congregation singing “Blessed Be the Tie That Binds.”

The minutes from the previous annual meeting and congregational meeting were approved.

It was noted that in the annual report the Christian Education report is mislabeled and that there is no report from the Christian Outreach Coordinators.

No discussion was necessary for the Pastor’s report, Deacon’s report, Clerk’s report or Christian Education report.

Trustees’ Report:

As chairman of the trustees, Don Brown introduced Pam Tucker to give the Financial Secretary report as well as the Treasurer’s report in the absence of Gail Christeson.

Pam began by strongly stating we are not a church in decline even though our current budget situation may not allow us to do all the things we want to do.

Financial Secretary Report:

At the end of each of the preceding 3 years, our income from pledged, unpledged, and loose plate contributions has been flat. Our predicted income for 2016 is lower by about \$18,000 based on current pledges. We have increased our budgeted items beyond our incoming funds so that with our current predicted budget we have roughly a \$45,000 deficit.

We do have assets in various funds which are not usually used for yearly expenses. Over time we have had growth in sources of income which were not present years ago. For example, the income from Lifeworks has risen steadily although a delay in payments between 2013 and 2014 make that trend less clear.

Points made during discussion:

- It was noted that if we were to meet our financial needs strictly by an increase in pledging by members, everyone would need to increase their pledge by about 25%.
- The need to increase our membership has been a topic the Coordinating Council has been addressing.
- Our membership numbers are steady with new members replacing those members lost. However, new members are often younger and probably not able to pledge at the level of older households. We may need a net gain in numbers to keep even financially.

- We have knowingly passed deficit budgets for the past number of years, using a healthy general fund to supplement our income. Only in the past year did this become a problem and we are now at a point where to continue to do this would be unwise.

Treasurer's Report:

Most Church Funds are down with the General Fund down \$18,000+ and the Capital Fund down \$10,000+.

Pam reviewed accounts and expenditures for 2015 and noted how closely our budget matches how much we actually spend; we do a good job of neither over nor under spending in comparison to our budget.

Clarification on capital expenditures vs building maintenance spending was requested. As Financial Secretary Pam Tucker was not able to clearly delineate which spending on the building was considered part of maintenance. Servicing the air conditioning unit or plumbing, for example might have been counted as maintenance but this is not certain. Over the past year, most money spent on the building was used for the following: insulation of certain rooms, exterior lighting to reduce crime problems on the property at night, lighting in sanctuary, water-proofing to decrease water penetration, reinforcement of the Fellowship Hall floor, water mitigation (following flooding), obtaining mechanical and electrical drawings of our complex systems, window tinting and LED light conversion. We are expecting some reduction in utilities and hopefully less damage from flooding because of some of these things.

The question of whether we should expect further large expenditures for the building is unknown. We still could have catastrophic loss of the Air Conditioning system, for example. Some flooding could still occur in spite of the steps already taken to try to stop this. Ultimately don't know what will come.

Pam reports that the budget proposed by the Trustees is a 6 month budget with no cuts suggested although employee raises were kept lower than recommended (2% rather than 3%, for example)

Specific items of discussion included:

- The Office Manager's salary is a 9% increase because to fill the open position this year we had to increase the offered salary to get anyone to take the job. This 9% increase includes a 2% increase for the position even though the current manager has not been here for a full year.
- The point was made that we should not give employees a salary increase which we potentially will need to take away later in the year. We should keep employee salaries flat for now and give an increase later if it is possible. However, this change would only net about \$5,000, not enough to make a big difference in our shortfall.
- There was long discussion about how cuts should be made. One position was that the Trustees should assume responsibility for cutting items in the budget. The other position was that the congregation needs to consider each line item which has been our custom in the past.

Fran Briggs offered a motion to reject the proposed budget and send it back to the Trustees for revisions based on the discussion during annual meeting today.

Discussion of the motion raised the following points:

- Giving Trustees the authority to cut items without express direction by the congregation is very different from past practice.
- The point of having a 6 month budget is to allow the Congregation and the Trustees to further investigate the problem and do the necessary work to create a well-considered budget.

- The Trustees aren't comfortable making decisions about what to cut when the sentiments of the congregation are not really clear. The point of offering a 6 month budget is to give us all time to have more serious meetings and conversations about the budget.

A statement against the motion was made, asking what would happen if the trustees made decisions greatly disliked by the congregation.

Following this discussion Fran Briggs withdrew her motion.

A new motion from David Ross was put forward to adopt the 6 month budget without the 2% employees raises and go through the 6 month process the Trustees feel is needed.

It was noted that not all raises are actually 2% so that the motion needs to be amended to reflect that.

The final motion was to approve a 6 month budget without any staff salary increases, allowing the Trustees to lead us in discussions about how we can deal with our financial situation.

This motion was seconded by John Goff. The question was called.

A voice vote passed the motion by a majority.

Pam Tucker ended the discussion of the budget by encouraging the congregation to consider not only how to decrease our spending but also how to increase our funds. She reported that we have a member who will match pledge increases up to a certain amount.

Church actions regarding new legislation governing open carry of hand guns:

Bill Campbell reported for the Trustees on possible responses to legislative action to allow open carry of hand guns (not long guns). Concealed carry laws are unchanged. The new legislation extends the right of those with a concealed carry license to openly carry their guns in a wide variety of places. If landlords do not want guns on their property, the landlords must provide notice that open carry is not allowed on their premises (which refers to buildings, not necessarily outside space).

The Trustees recommend that we vote to prohibit the open carrying of hand guns on our premises as an official statement of policy made by the congregation.

Under the law there are 3 methods of providing legally sufficient notice that it is not permissible to have a gun on the premises. These three methods include:

1. a sign at every entrance to the church building that fulfills specific requirements in terms of wording, font size, and language. An example of the sign was shown.
2. a person (or persons) can be empowered by the church to use all required terms and wording to state to any person carrying a gun that it is not allowed on the premises.
3. a paper written notice with all the required wording may be given to anyone openly carrying. We have volunteers already who are willing to present those notices and this is the option recommended by the Trustees.

Discussion provided the following information:

- Lifeworks has been using the demonstration sign at their one entrance when they are open.
- The safety for the office manager should be considered as she may be in the building alone. It is possible that APD can be called to give notice on our behalf to a person carrying a gun.

The motion from the Trustees was not intended to be a choice among the three options. It simply asks for a congregational vote confirming our desire to prevent open carry on our premises. An amendment was suggested by Jaime Hadley that we vote on a statement indicating we do not want guns of any kind on the premises; the amendment was accepted by the Trustees.

The final motion states the congregation adopts a policy against the possession of all firearms on the premises of this church.

Motion passed unanimously

Report from the Nominating Committee:

No further nominations were put forward.

Corrections were made to the term length for Outreach Coordinators; the terms are written as 3 year terms but they are 1 year terms.

Clarification is needed with the Micah 6 delegate in regard to length of term. Micah 6 needs a 3 year commitment and our term for the election of a delegate should be the same.

The slate has 2 empty slots on the Board of Trustees.

The slate was voted in unanimously with the corrections to the length of term for Outreach Coordinator (one year instead of three) and the Micah 6 delegate (3 years instead of one)

New business:

A task force is being formed among area religious organizations to make a statement reflecting support for Muslims in our community. The proposal involves hanging a banner on our building, the exact wording or design yet to be determined, indicating our support. If the congregation agrees with this sentiment Tom will be actively involved.

A motion to approve in principle the hanging of a banner offering support to local Muslims was passed.

The motion to adjourn was made by Sarah Ross with proxy authority from Pat Oakes and seconded by Nodie Murphy.

The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 2:04 pm following the singing of "Blessed be the Tie that Binds."

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Bodman, Clerk



Meeting Minutes

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

Congregational Meeting

February 28, 2016

Meeting was called to order at 12:28 pm and began with singing “Blessed Be the Tie that Binds.”

Don Brown expressed gratitude to Pam Tucker for doing the lion’s share of the work to prepare for the discussion of the budget.

Pam Tucker reviewed our current situation which has changed since annual meeting.

At annual meeting we approved a 6 month budget of \$248,828 which deletes any salary raises.

Since annual meeting, pledges have increased by more than \$25,000 which reduces our shortfall to \$15,818.

Loose plate income, other income, endowment income, and rent from Lifeworks have all been added in.

Some of these amounts are “guesstimates”

Referencing the handout provided by Pam Tucker, the budget can be balanced either by increasing income and/or decreasing expenditures. To increase income we may:

- Increase pledges: balance would be achieved if all pledges (including those already increased) increased by 9% OR if those not yet increased went up by 15%
- Obtain more rental income
- Seek out more endowments
- Temporarily divert capital income to budget. This could only be temporary since capital funds are necessary to maintain the building.

To decrease expenditures we must reduce our financial commitments to cooperative/local programs. Four possible plans of reductions were given as examples which may bring us to within 2% of our proposed budget.

Plan 1: all reductions are taken from cooperative responsibilities by line item. Some items would be deleted entirely.

Plan 2: a combination of capital income being added to the operating expenses AND cooperative responsibilities being reduced (but by less).

Our Capital Fund is currently just under \$26,000. The Fund grew over the past 10 years because of the addition of Capital Campaign money and rental income. Normally some of our income (such as a portion of Lifeworks rent and rent from Gracepoint) has been reserved to use for capital expenses; these funds are kept in the Capital Fund. In recent years we have been drawing from (rather than significantly increasing) the fund due to necessary building repairs.

Plan 3: again a combination of capital income going into the budget but at a lower amount, a decrease in cooperative responsibilities AND the elimination of workers’ compensation and increasing our building insurance deductible to get a lower rate. (The amount of \$1200 estimated as a reduction in the cost of insurance is not a firm number.)

There are significant problems with canceling workers' compensation both for the church and for any workers injured on the job. If the church were to be sued and found negligent for a work related injury, we would be responsible for compensation. Any uncovered injured worker would face the possibility of significant financial hardship due to lost wages and medical bills which might not be covered by their personal medical insurance.

Plan 4: increase total pledges by 10% = balanced budget.

Each line item was discussed with the goal of getting information about each item. No decisions about cutting specific items were expected today. It was noted that we should consider cuts with an eye to not hurting ourselves in the long-run. For example, not maintaining the building may give us with an unappealing first impression for potential new members.

Line items were noted as follows:

Cooperative Responsibilities

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) normally gets \$14,500, an amount unrelated to the size of our congregation. This is the required amount to stay in good standing. Most of the contributions go to support the salaries of the local South Central Conference. Another portion goes to the national UCC.

Question: How would reducing OCWM money impact us?

Answers: It would be demoralizing to the conference but Tom reports the conference is not helpful or responsive to him on a day-in-day-out basis. The conference is large and the conference minister is overworked. We do need and receive the help of the conference to deal with other than our daily concerns - as with those in-care.

Comments:

It is possible that new members of the conference will make up any cut we make but the conference has constant budget problems just as we do.

Other churches have left the conference over the past years for reasons such as disagreement with the UCC stand on gay marriage. If we reduce our support, do we want to lump ourselves with those churches?

The amount we give to OCWM seems very high given the minimal help we get from them.

This group reflects our involvement in the larger UCC organization which is important for us.

Micah 6: This group is the primary way we relate to other university area churches and is the center of strong and important relationships. Micah 6 is important for our local missions which are often accomplished in conjunction with other churches (freeze night, for example). Budgeted funds were not all used this year because it has been a warm winter with fewer freeze nights; last winter we spent it all.

Austin Interfaith: this is a faith based political organizing group we work with on local issues. Typical issues include living wages, construction worker safety, utility rate hikes for churches and the homeless. This is the most diverse, grassroots group in Texas which works toward equality and prosperity in the state. Not many in our congregation are actively involved with this group but our involvement gives our church visibility.

This group may be open to reducing our financial commitment because they would like us to stay in the group but they also have budget problems.

Comment: The choice for both Micah 6 and Austin Interfaith may be between money and volunteer hours. Volunteer hours may be more valuable than money to them both right now.

Back Bay Mission: This is a robust UCC ministry in Biloxi, Miss., doing housing renovation, creating affordable housing and working with homeless. It is an excellent ministry with which we have a strong emotional connection. Back Bay may not miss our relatively small contribution, but it gives us a chance to participate in an important ministry.

Comments: Individuals can give directly to this organization if we cut funding. Should we be using the money we send to them locally?

Labyrinth: This is a student ministry conducted in conjunction with other area churches. Although there are many student religious groups in the area, few offer the progressive religious perspective found in Labyrinth. Our contribution is very small but it gives us a chance to participate.

Austin Interfaith Environment: This group is currently inactive. We could cut this contribution. Interfaith Action Central TX: this group is known as iACT and has a number of programs including work with refugees, Hands on Housing and the Red Bench Program. It is a dynamic and active group which is well established in the area.

Religious Coalition to Homeless: This is paid in lieu of the city drainage fee at a rate set by the city. This money will be paid one way or another and this is a good option for how to spend the funds.

Equal Justice Center: This group always struggles with finances and is grateful for the church's contribution. Our major contribution to the center comes by our sponsoring a hole at the annual putt-putt golf fundraiser rather than the budget line item.

Huston-Tillotson University: We have a strong historical and emotional connection with this school. We have members who have been the University president and members of the Board. The UCC contribution to the school has dropped greatly and we currently have no one directly connected to them.

Regional Seminary support: "Regional" is a misnomer as the support goes to the CUE seminaries – Chicago Theological, United Theological in St. Paul, and Eden Theological in St. Louis. The suggestion is that this can be cut.

Brazos Association dues: These funds are calculated at \$5 per member. The money goes to support the Heart of Texas Association which includes the salary of Liz Nash, the Association Minister. The amount is non-negotiable if we want to be part of the association.

Slumber Falls Camp: Our local retreat site for both adult and youth.

UCC Open & Affirming Coalition: This is a national level group which holds conferences and events across the country. Churches who are O & A are encouraged to contribute.

Green Team: This has not been active.

National Council of Churches: This is a long standing national ecumenical organization. They are currently doing a lot of work on mass incarceration. They also work on issues such as racism and inter-faith dialogue. A church member is a committee member in this organization

Texas Impact: This group lobbies on behalf of religious organizations in Texas. It has grown greatly in the past 10 years and conducts very professional lobbying for Christian, Jewish and Muslim groups. They work to help religious groups understand and act within the political process to affect legislation. This group has been very effective in holding back legislative action which could have many negative impacts. A church member is President of the Board of Trustees for this group.

Local Church Programs

Salary considerations:

The hours for the office manager could be reduced; vacation pay for part time people could be eliminated; the Sunday School teacher could be employed only during the school year.

Arguments against these choices include:

1. we had trouble hiring anyone for the office manager's position at 20 hours/wk and we had to increase the salary offered to find someone to take the job.
2. our musicians (part-time workers) are not paid competitively now; reducing the small perk of vacation pay could mean they don't stay with us.
3. if we only employ the Sunday School Teacher during the school year, we would be trying to hire a new teacher every summer.

Comment: These cuts may save a minimal amount of money but lose employees we may have difficulty replacing. We should consider the growth of the church, what our musicians add to our worship experience as well as the issues we are involved with and passionate about. We shouldn't choose short term gains which result in long-term losses.

Speaker Stipends cover the cost of guest speakers especially while Tom is gone. Some coverage by volunteers might be possible as a temporary measure.

Youth Teacher: This item was not spent.

Parking: We began paying the Coop for parking spaces years ago and have been hesitant to re-visit that arrangement for fear they might increase the cost. The Coop does not bill us; we send the agreed upon fee.

UCC Meeting: This item goes to help defray the cost for anyone attending.

Fun and Fellowship: The amount funded comes out to less than \$13/week to provide refreshments after our service. Getting volunteers to cover has been difficult.


Music for worship refers to the purchase of sheet music for the choir and musicians.

Supplies: There is no tracking of how this money is used

Options for insurance – a higher deductible policy – was addressed in Plan 3 above

The Admin Expenses item includes the payroll service which is critical to our treasurer's work

There were not specific comments in regard to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, Christian Education, Deacons' Discretionary Fund, or Utilities



There was a suggestion that individuals could voluntarily cover any decreases in funding for specific items they valued. However, it was pointed out we had decided against this practice since it would allow those with more funds to choose the areas the church as a whole supports.

We should keep in mind that we are working on a website that will communicate to visitors who we are and what we value. People should be able to see the organizations we support on the website and know what we care deeply about.

Pam will accept e-mails for suggestions for our next meeting. Our cooperative responsibilities have been suspended until we make clear decisions about the budget.

At our next meeting we should start to make decisions about how to increase funds as well as decrease expenditures with the goal of having a provisional consensus budget at the end of the meeting.

The next meetings will be April 10, then May 15.

The meeting was adjourned following the singing of “Blest be the Tie that Binds.”

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Bodman, Clerk



Meeting Minutes

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

Congregational Meeting
April 10, 2016

The meeting opened with singing *Blessed Be the Tie that Binds*.

The Treasurer, Gail Christeson, reviewed the new budget proposal (see attached). In the original budget the shortfall was roughly \$45-46,000 but because of an increase in pledges and donations, that gap has been significantly reduced. Today's proposed budget includes roughly a \$10,550 cut in expenditures to further balance income and expenditures.

The majority of cuts come under Outreach. These reductions are difficult since every item has its particular meaning and history so it is hoped that reductions may be mitigated by special offerings throughout the year. Gail reviewed each proposed change in donations. The largest single cut is to the OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) though other small donations to some organizations were omitted entirely. Gail read a letter from Liz Nash in regard to the cut to OCWM. The letter described some of the work of OCWM and what that work contributes to our church. The concern was noted that we are dramatically cutting our funding to this organization without any warning, impacting their ability to plan and meet their own budget demands.

Questions and Comments:

Question: Do we have provisions in place for special programs and donations for the items we are cutting?

Answer: Outreach Coordinators John Goff and Reuel Nash are planning specific Sundays throughout the year to focus on those programs we are cutting and ask for special donations.

Question: Would a special donation be expected for every item that has been reduced or cut?

Answer: No. We could probably anticipate about 4 special offerings throughout the year for the reduced budget items. It will remain in the hands of the Outreach Coordinators to arrange these special offerings with the understanding that some items which are being cut would receive no further funds. We should remember that there are also other special offerings throughout the year unrelated to our current budget work.

Question: With such a large cut for OCWM, was there an analysis of how much pledges would need to be increased to make up the OCWM shortfall?

Answer: That calculation was done for the entire budget shortfall, but not for the individual items that were reduced or cut.

Question: Do we have an idea of what portion of our donation to OCWM actually goes to our area?

Answer: No.

Question: Do we have an idea of what amount is suggested or expected from us for OCWM?

Answer: Unsure. We are one of the higher givers in our conference.

Comments:

It is likely we will be in the same situation and what we adopt now will be our starting point for future budgets. We have given OCWM no warning for this year's cut, but they should be made aware this cut may reflect our

new normal.

In regard to the national UCC organization, anyone can give to them at any time. There is always a way to give to the national organization or to the local conference. Tom also mentioned the Friends of the Conference program which allows individuals to donate directly to the conference. More information about OCWM would be helpful.

Question: As a departure from previous practice, should we allow individuals to contribute to programs they particularly love?

Answer/Comments: We should continue with our practice of having our budget reflect the will of the congregation as a whole. Anyone can always give to any program as an individual, separate and apart from any donation that comes from the church as a whole. Our church budgeted contributions should reflect our collective decision. Otherwise, people with more funds could essentially dictate the entire church's financial priorities.

Question: What happens to the money from holiday flower sales?

Answer: The money donated for the flowers is simply used to purchase the flowers. It isn't a fundraiser.

Comments:

We need to look again at salaries. We give no raises this year and if we are using this budget as a base for the future we will have to reconsider this position.

Don Miles handed out a sheet of suggestions of possible volunteer led activities that could raise funds to close the shortfall. More information and thought about these possibilities was suggested. It was noted that some businesses routinely augment their income with fundraisers.

Two programs that could bring in money for the church include Amazon Smiles and Randall's/Safeway which will give us a percentage of purchases if we put in the church as a preferred charity. Tom will add information about both these programs in our e-news.

A new website is in the works which may bring in more visitors and potential members.

Nodie Murphy mentioned our long standing connection with Huston-Tillotson and the hope we could maintain that connection.

Vote:

The Trustees brought the motion to approve the new budget proposal.

The motion passed with one nay vote.

Pat Oakes moved for adjournment which met universal agreement.

The meeting was closed with a singing of "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds."

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Bodman, Clerk



Meeting Minutes

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

Congregational Meeting
November 6, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 12:17 p.m. by moderator Barbara Burnham.

The first order of business was a motion by the Nominating Committee that the following people be added to two boards: Victoria Li is nominated for Board of Trustees and Joy Penticuff for Board of Deacons. The motion, which required no second, was passed unanimously.

The meeting was then turned over to Gail Christeson and Pam Tucker for an update on our financial situation. Two handouts were distributed which are attached at the end of these minutes.

Referring to the handout titled "Church Financial Update", Gail noted our current income total is greater than last year's at this time and our 2016 income is greater than our 2016 expenses. One caveat to this encouraging news is that some pledging units have already paid their entire yearly pledge amount so we won't necessarily continue to have this positive balance.

The projected income total is \$241,474. Our projected expenses will be slightly less and we will probably underspend the budget by about \$10,000. Factors contributing to this include:

- building expenses have been low this year
- some salaries are under budget since our Sunday School teacher took a break this summer and the nursery attendant will not be finishing out the year
- discretionary spending by all boards is down

In regard to the church's investments, the general fund, which is used to pay regular expenses, the capital fund and the endowment fund have all increased. The increase in the endowment fund was thanks to a matching challenge of \$10,000 which was met, so increasing the endowment by \$20,000. There was also a bequest to the fund by Marie Scheel's estate. Each year, this endowment fund will contribute 4% of its 5-year-average worth to help pay expenses. No endowment fund money is included in the budget figures on today's handouts. Additionally, the special gift given several years ago is not included in the figures; it has been committed and is being spent on the on-going bathroom renovation.

A question was asked about our contribution to the UCC's OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission). Although precise figures are not at hand, we have committed roughly \$10,000 for the year, down from \$14,500.

Tom VandeStadt took time to inform the congregation about changes in the rental income and use of the church building. He reports that, at the end of this year, Lifeworks will no longer be renting space in our building because of a loss in federal funding. However, another group called Street Youth Ministry, run by Terry Cole, will be renting the space. Mr. Cole was in hi-tech, interned with Lifeworks and then began his own ministry in this neighborhood. Some of his work has already been taking place in our church building. He has a good budget with 2 years worth of rent in hand now. As we already have a good relationship with him this should work out well for us. The current timeline is that when we move Lifeworks' furniture in the Appel Room to

accommodate Christmas Dinner, Lifeworks will be gone and Terry Cole will move in.

These changes do not cause an immediate financial loss for us but there will be changes in our work since Front Porch Lunch and Freeze Night Shelter were closely paired with Lifeworks. Hopefully we will find new opportunities to work with Terry Cole.

Aside from Lifeworks, The People's Community Clinic will also no longer use our building for their work. The city's increased efforts to move the homeless population away from our area has reduced clients for them, as it has for Lifeworks.

Freeze Night Shelter will be different this year but not because of the Lifeworks changes. Micah 6 will have all freeze night food at UBC and house people overnight. If they reach capacity, we may house any spill-over here for younger clients with help from Lifeworks, but this still needs to be worked out.

Tom would like to have a Sunday service in December be devoted to thanking Lifeworks for their efforts and to welcoming Terry Cole.

Questions and comments followed:

1. What is Terry Cole's funding source? Answer: not known. He seems to have some wealthy donors.
2. What will become of all the furniture and other items in the Appel Room? Are the chairs we normally use for Christmas dinner ours or Lifeworks'? Answer: Tom will need to clarify with Lifeworks what will happen to their furniture and determine if the chairs we use will be gone.
3. Might we be able to re-claim some storage space once Lifeworks vacates the area? Answer: Tom expects Terry Cole to use all available space and doesn't expect us to get any storage space back .
4. Will Terry Cole have anything happening on Sundays? Answer: He has drop-in on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and he may want to have weekend events. He may also want to cook in the church, to allow clients to cook and eat together.
5. What is the age group served by Terry Cole? Answer: Terry goes to higher age than Lifeworks, but the upper age limit isn't known.

Finally, Tom points out that we don't know how long our relationship with Terry Cole will last. The reality is that the situation in this neighborhood for young homeless people has changed dramatically since the murder of the UT student and the subsequent increased police activity. This may mean that Terry Cole will find our location is not going to work for him because of fewer clients in the area. However, we are very financially dependent on this rental income. Terry Cole's coming in to replace Lifeworks gives us some breathing room, but we can't continue to expect this rental income to go on forever.

Our final piece of business was to congratulate Tom on his upcoming birthday.

Pat Oakes moved to adjourn; motion was seconded and passed and the meeting was ended at 12:36 p.m. with the singing of "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds."

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Bodman, Clerk



Clerk's Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

Total membership, January 1, 2016 **102**

Received into membership by confirmation, affirmation of faith or letter of transfer:

Joy Penticuff
Robert Garrett

Total additions 2016: **+2**

Losses from membership by death:
-3

Doyle Pinkard
Chuck Jackson
Suzanne Vanderpoel

Losses from transfer of membership:
-1

Beth Gleason

Total losses 2016: **-4**

Total membership December 31, 2016 **100**

Total members living outside 100 miles of the church: 13

Funerals:
None

Baptisms:
Preston Lynn Farrington, officiated by Jo Jensen

Memorial Sundays:
Two Sunday services were dedicated to remembering Doyle Pinkard and Chuck Jackson

Marriages:
None

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Bodman, Clerk



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Pastor Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

In 2016, my ministry consisted of the usual things I do, which includes preparing and leading worship, meeting with people to discuss spiritual or other personal issues, visiting with people in the hospital or while recovering at home, working with various justice-advocacy and climate change groups, and addressing the on-going homelessness issue.

I'll highlight several things that stand out for me. Right off the bat, you'll see that the homelessness issue consumed a fair amount of my attention.


The April murder of University of Texas student, Haruka Weiser, was a tragedy for her family, the UT community and the homeless young people who lived in the West Campus neighborhood. After the murder, there was a strong backlash against the homeless young people, even though none of them were responsible and the murder didn't occur in West Campus. Some people also targeted the churches in West Campus, particularly our own, University Baptist Church and University United Methodist Church, criticizing our ministries to the homeless and claiming our churches were responsible for the murder.

As a result of the public blaming, the Austin and UT Police cleared the homeless young people out of the West Campus neighborhood. Many of them ended up in the Barton Greenbelt or the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless, where some of them became ensnared in sex trafficking. Some of the homeless young people continued to venture into West Campus during the day to access services at Lifeworks, Street Youth Ministry and The People's Community Clinic (all located in our church), but the number of young people to whom these organizations provided services dropped significantly.

Until this spring, West Campus was a relatively safe place for homeless young people to live, but once they were forced to leave, they ended up in places that were far more dangerous and their ability to access services became more challenging. We'll see how this situation unfolds in 2017.

I regretted seeing Lifeworks leave our building at the end of 2016. Not only did they collaborate in ministry with our church for many years, I personally enjoyed having their staff around during the week. When they announced their departure, this raised immediate concerns regarding our finances, since our church depended on the rent they paid to help fund our budget. Luckily, we had developed a good relationship with Terry Cole and Street Youth Ministry over the past several years, and they were waiting in the wings to rent the space and expand their ministry in our building. We're now in a transition period as we learn how to develop some new ministries with Street Youth Ministry, who officially moved in after the New Year.

Finally, our Freeze Night Shelter ministry has been more challenging than usual this winter because of on-going funding, programming and administrative issues we've been having with Micah 6. I'd like to thank the "Freeze



Night Team” for hanging in there and facing these challenges with grace and integrity.

As for other public ministries, our participation in the We Stand with Our Muslim Neighbors banner project brought our church into a closer relationship with the Nueces St. Mosque and other community groups that are supporting our Muslim sisters and brothers in the face of Islamophobia. I hope we can continue to deepen these relationships in 2017.

One of the greatest joys in my ministry in 2016 was meeting with people for mutual support in our spiritual lives and Christian discipleship. I met with a number of people one-on-one throughout the year, and in small group settings like the Discipleship Group, the small group that met with Chuck Jackson, and the Lenten reflection based on the work of poet, Christian Wiman.

Throughout 2016, I had some conversations with the Coordinating Council and other church members about the future of our church, conversations that raised questions about our financial health and viability over the next 5 to 10 years, the changing nature of the West Campus neighborhood, the potential our property may hold, cultural transformations and how they will affect people’s spiritual lives, and the different possible forms church may take in the future. I’m hoping that in 2017, we as a church can develop a process that will enable us to have a more intentional church-wide conversation around these issues.

I’ll end by thanking everyone who serves on a Board, Committee or Team, and in particular, the Chairs or Coordinators. Serving in this capacity takes a great deal of time and energy. I want you to know that I recognize and appreciate your commitment to the church. The same sentiment goes to Nodie Murphy, the Choir, and the Trio. It also goes to Gail Christeson (Treasurer) and Pam Tucker (Financial Secretary). And to all of you who, week after week, keep the wheels of the church turning by doing those things that just need to get done.

Blessed by God, let us be a blessing to our neighborhood, city, nation, and world in 2017.

Tom VandeStadt, Pastor



Financial Secretary Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

INCOME	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	
BUDGET	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Predicted	
Pledged, Unpledged, Loose Plate	205,514	205,682	203,145	221,705	217,000	based on pledged amount and 2016 unpledged and loose plate
Lifeworks/Street Youth Rent	22,350	26,650	24,600	27,000	27,600	
Endowment Income				1,604	2,438	
Misc Rent & Rebates	4,485	5,603	1,215	1,611	0	
TOTAL INCOME TO BUDGET	232,349	237,935	228,960	251,920	247,038	
BUDGET EXPENDITURES	237,145	243,313	248,162	224,516	241,647	Proposed
Difference	-4,796	-5,378	-19,202	27,404	5,391	
 NON-BUDGET						
EXPENSE RECOVERY						
Lifeworks Utilities		2,215	1,652	1,492		
Reimbursements (background check, etc.)		319	139	25		
Subtotal		2,534	1,791	1,517		
 DESIGNATED LOCAL						
Capital (Lifeworks, other rent)		7,850	7,800	6,000		
Memorial, Flower & other funds		15,758	6,125	55,798		
Subtotal		23,608	13,925	61,798		
 DESIGNATED OUTREACH						
Christmas Fund		347	536	220		
El Salvador				498		
Equal Exchange				1,060		
Equal Justice		716	1,181	730		
Neighbors in Need		0	739	439		
OCWM		450	0	1,710		
OGHS		570	302	336		
Strengthen the Church		175	522	281		
Youth Mission Trip				1,597		
All other pass through items		6,306	1,700	1,526		
Subtotal		8,564	4,980	8,397		
 TOTAL INCOME		 272,641	 249,656	 323,632		

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Tucker
Financial Secretary



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Endowment Fund

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

Over the past several years, the Congregational Church of Austin, UCC, has received several generous financial contributions that have enabled our church to begin a CCA Endowment Fund. In 2016 an anonymous donor matched \$10,000 in new donations to the CCA Endowment Fund! We gratefully acknowledge these contributions to the CCA Endowment Fund by, in memory of, or in honor of:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| John McNeely | Mabel Lee Hinson |
| Isabelle Cole | Chuck Jackson |
| Bert and Mary Margaret Miller | Larry Jensen |
| Marie Scheel | Florence and George Jordan |
| Gordon and Alta Bennett | Minerva Miles |
| Jesse and Lolita Binford | Nodie Murphy |
| Taffy and Herb Bodman | Elizabeth, Sara, and Margaret Oakes |
| Matt Blackstock | Julia Pantermuehl |
| Jean Castle | Hudson and Dorothy Phillips |
| Robin Chapman and Tom VandeStadt | Doyal and Tommie Pinkard |
| Paul Deisler | Betsy and Rollin Russell |
| Louise Froehlich | Mary Elizabeth Scott Smith |
| Olean and Andy Garrett | Vee, Norma, and Vanessa Tucker |
| Jordan Geer | Ben White |
| Ann Bergstresser Graves | |

The Endowment Fund strengthens our church’s ministry and presence in the world, now and in the future. In 2015, the Board of Trustees implemented a policy that annually transfers 4% of the 5-year average balance in the CCA Endowment Fund to the church’s General Fund to support our church’s operating budget.

Year	Value	New Contributions	5-Yr Average Balance	4% Payout
2014	46,376		38,108	1,524
2015	58,020	15,000	40,105	1,604
2016	119,832	55,074	60,955	2,438



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Treasurer Report and Budget Proposal

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

We ended 2016 with a big comeback from the 2015 deficit, with income to the General Fund ahead of budgeted expenses by about \$22,000. Compared with 2014 and 2015, income was higher and expenses were lower.

The church has a checking account and investments with the United Church Funds (UCF), which invests in socially responsible stocks and bonds.

	2014	2015	2016
Offerings/Rent/Misc to Budget	\$237,793	\$229,390	\$244,886
Endowment to Budget	\$0	\$1,524	\$1,604
Total Income to Budget	\$237,793	\$230,914	\$246,490
Budget Expenses	\$237,908	\$241,745	\$223,496
Sabbatical Transfer	\$1,020	\$1,020	\$1,020
Total Budget Expenses	\$238,928	\$242,765	\$224,516
Difference	-\$1,135	-\$11,851	-\$21,974

Assets (12/31/2016)

Checking Account	\$25,905
<u>UCF Funds</u>	<u>\$256,910</u>
Total	\$282,815

Liabilities (12/31/2016)

Lifeworks Security Deposit	\$2,100
<u>Payroll Liabilities (IRS)</u>	<u>\$1,508</u>
Total	\$3,608

Fund Balances	2014	2015	2015
General Fund	\$52,359	\$37,215	\$59,145
Capital Fund	\$36,960	\$26,508	\$33,635
Endowment	\$56,376	\$58,020	\$119,832
Sabbatical	\$6,050	\$6,835	\$8,324
Special Donation	\$44,744	\$41,123	\$42,587
Memorial Fund	\$15,813	\$12,213	\$13,093
Music Fund	\$2,710	\$2,619	\$2,866
Fine Arts Fund	\$774	\$748	\$796
Deacons Emergency	\$1,403	\$1,350	\$770
Deacons Remembrance	\$329	\$317	\$285
Equal Exchange	\$86	\$295	\$732
El Salvador	\$1,562	\$0	\$498
Youth Mission Trip	\$0	\$0	\$252

2016 Major Non-Budget Expenditures

Expenditures	Amount	Fund
Building Repairs/Improvements	\$1,380	Capital
Improved Website	\$1,063	Special Donation

2016 Pass-Through Items

Organization/Offering	Amount	Comment
Christmas Fund	\$510	UCC Offering
Neighbors in Need	\$439	UCC Offering
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$336	UCC Offering
Strengthen the Church	\$410	UCC Offering
OCWM	\$1,710	Special Offering
Equal Justice Center	\$830	Mini-golf Sponsorship
CUE	\$400	Gleason Ordination Offering
Hope Food Pantry	\$400	Gleason Ordination Offering
Slumber Falls	\$400	Gleason Ordination Offering
Youth Group Toy Purchase	\$326	Pumpkin Auction
Youth Mission Trip	\$1,345	Participant Fees

2016 Budget vs. Expenses

Expenses for 2016 were \$13,761 under budget (expenses were 94% of budget). In Cooperative Responsibilities, Ministry to Homeless was under budget because of fewer Freeze nights than in past years (owing to a warm winter). Savings in Local Church Programs included 1) low building maintenance expenditures; 2) some salaries under budget due to fewer hours worked than expected; 3) low discretionary spending; and 4) utility savings from energy improvements.

Item	2016 Budget	2016 Actual	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Pastoral Leadership				
Pastor Salary	62,823	62,823	0	100
Pastoral Housing Allowance	25,000	25,000	0	100
Pastoral Annuity	12,295	12,295	0	100
Pastoral Family Insurance	1,317	1,317	0	100
Pastoral Education & Travel	1,760	1,760	0	100
Pastoral Leadership Subtotal	103,195	103,195	0	100
Cooperative Responsibilities				
Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)	10,000	10,000	0	100
Micah 6	3,300	3,300	0	100
Ministry to Homeless	2,400	1,839	-561	77
Austin Interfaith	1,600	1,600	0	100
Labyrinth	1,000	1,000	0	100
Back Bay Mission	700	700	0	100
Religious Coalition Homeless	525	525	0	100
Heart of Texas Association Dues	510	510	0	100
Interfaith Action Central TX	400	400	0	100
Equal Justice Center	350	350	0	100
Texas Impact	100	100	0	100
Cooperative Responsibilities Subtotal	20,885	20,324	-561	97

Item	2016 Budget	2016 Actual	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Local Church Programs				
Office Manager Salary	18,720	18,045	-675	96
Custodian Salary	16,432	16,361	-71	100
Musician Salaries	13,587	13,637	50	100
Choral Director Salary	7,922	7,922	0	100
Sunday School Teacher Salary	5,500	4,880	-620	89
Nursery Attendant Salary	2,470	1,825	-645	74
Payroll Expenses	4,906	4,538	-368	92
Workers Compensation	1,709	1,427	-282	83
Choral Director Continuing Ed	800	386	-414	48
Speaker Stipends	900	450	-450	50
Pastors Discretionary Fund	750	192	-558	26
Adult Education Coordinator	300	300	0	100
Christian Education	1,250	31	-1,219	2
Deacons Discretionary	1,000	200	-800	20
Fun and Fellowship	650	478	-172	74
Music for Worship	450	386	-64	86
UCC Meeting	700	473	-227	68
Parking	3,600	3,300	-300	92
Utilities	13,010	11,978	-1,032	92
Insurance	9,046	9,046	0	100
Property Maintenance	6,000	1,985	-4,015	33
Supplies	2,500	1,397	-1,103	56
Admin Expenses	975	740	-235	76
Sabbatical	1,020	1,020	0	100
Local Church Programs Subtotal	114,197	100,997	-13,200	88
Total Budget	238,272	223,516	-13,761	94

2017 Budget Proposal

The Local Budget is administered through the General Fund, which had a balance on December 31, 2016 of \$59,145. Making use of input from all boards, teams and the Coordinating Council, the Trustees offer the 2017 budget proposal. Most budget items are flat, but raises are offered to all continuing employees (note that we expect to hire a new Nursery Attendant).

Item	2016 Budget	2017 Request	\$ Difference	% Change
Pastoral Leadership				
Pastor Salary	62,823			
Pastoral Housing Allowance	25,000			
Pastoral Annuity	12,295			
Pastoral Family Insurance	1,317			
Pastoral Education & Travel	1,760			
Pastoral Leadership Subtotal	103,195	106,291	3,096	3
Cooperative Responsibilities				
Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)	10,000	10,000	0	0
Micah 6	3,300	3,300	0	0
Ministry to Homeless	2,400	2,400	0	0
Austin Interfaith	1,600	1,600	0	0
Labyrinth	1,000	1,000	0	0
Back Bay Mission	700	700	0	0
Religious Coalition Homeless ¹	525	523	-2	0
Heart of Texas Association Dues ²	510	500	-10	-2
Interfaith Action Central TX	400	400	0	0
Equal Justice Center	350	350	0	0
Texas Impact	100	100	0	0
Cooperative Responsibilities Subtotal	20,885	20,873	-12	0

¹Paid in lieu of the city drainage fee; rate set by city

²Dues are \$5/member for 100 members

Item	2016 Budget	2017 Request	\$ Difference	% Change
Local Church Programs				
Office Manager Salary	18,720	18,907	187	1
Custodian Salary	16,432	16,925	493	3
Musician Salaries	13,587	13,995	408	3
Choral Director Salary	7,922	8,160	238	3
Sunday School Teacher Salary	5,500	5,665	165	3
Nursery Attendant Salary ³	2,470	2,470	0	0
Payroll Expenses	4,906	5,020	114	2
Workers Compensation	1,709	1,400	-309	-18
Choral Director Continuing Ed	800	800	0	0
Speaker Stipends	900	900	0	0
Pastors Discretionary Fund	750	750	0	0
Adult Education Coordinator	300	300	0	0
Christian Education	1,250	1,250	0	0
Deacons Discretionary	1,000	1,000	0	0
Fun and Fellowship	650	650	0	0
Music for Worship	450	450	0	0
UCC Meeting	700	700	0	0
Parking	3,600	3,600	0	0
Utilities	13,010	12,500	-510	-4
Insurance	9,046	9,046	0	0
Property Maintenance	6,000	6,000	0	0
Supplies	2,500	2,000	-500	-20
Admin Expenses	975	975	0	0
Sabbatical	1,020	1,020	0	0
Local Church Programs Subtotal	114,197	114,281	285	0
Total Budget	238,277	241,647	3,370	1

³New hire



Nominating Committee Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

Position	2019	2018	2017
THREE YEAR TERMS			
Moderator	<i>John Goff</i>		
Clerk	<i>Jaime Hadley</i>		
Board of Trustees	<i>Reuel Nash</i>	Jim Howicz	Don Brown
	<i>Open</i>	Kevin Dietz	Victoria Li (p)
Board of Deacons	<i>Barbara Burnham</i>	Marilyn Vache	Joy Penticuff (p)
	<i>Betty Bodman</i>	Jo Jensen	Debby Kohrt
Outreach Coordinators	<i>Open</i>		<i>Open (p)</i>
Nominating Committee	<i>Jen Howicz</i>	Jaime Hadley	Cecile Adam
ONE YEAR TERMS			
Treasurer	<i>Gail Christeson</i>		
Financial Secretary	<i>Pam Tucker</i>		
Coordinating Council Member-at-Large	<i>Bill Beardall</i>		
Christian Education Coordinator	<i>Lynne Lemley</i>		
Youth Sunday School Coordinator	<i>John Burlinson</i>		
Historian	<i>Pat Oakes</i>		
University Area Partners	<i>John Burlinson</i>		
Delegate, South Central Conference	<i>Kristen Parkhill</i>		
ONE YEAR TERMS (with external terms of two or more years length)			
Delegate, Heart of Texas Association	<i>Sara Ross</i>		
Delegate Micah 6	<i>Whit Bodman</i>		
(p) - serving a partial term			
<i>Italics - Positions being voted in at the Annual Meeting</i>			



Board of Trustees Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

The purpose of the Board of Trustees is “. . . to provide for the care, custody and growth of the assets of the Congregational Church of Austin,” and to be responsible for all legal, financial and related matters.” The membership of the Board consists of the Pastor, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and six members elected from the Congregation.

LifeWorks lease transition to Street Youth Ministry lease. For many years, LifeWorks has leased a large part of the CCA’s space in order to provide outreach programs to homeless young people. In October, LW learned that the grant program used to support the programs in our space was not going to be renewed. That, in turn, forced LW to notify us that it would have to discontinue its lease no later than December 31, 2016.

Fortunately, Street Youth Ministry proposed that it lease all the space that LW had been using at the same level of rent. A new lease agreement was negotiated which became effective January 1, 2017.

Care of Facilities. The Board continues to arrange for repairs of the church structure as needed to maintain its integrity and energy effectiveness. Given the age of the facility, this is a difficult task. The good news is that it appears that energy efficiency improvements including new ceiling insulation, transition to LED lights, installation of solar film on windows, and reprogramming of thermostats have reduced our energy consumption bills, and that reduction of rainwater penetration has limited damage to the building.

Several months have passed in an effort to find the best way to repair the two restrooms in the Appel Room and outside the choir room. It is expected that work on the Appel Room restrooms will begin in February 2017.

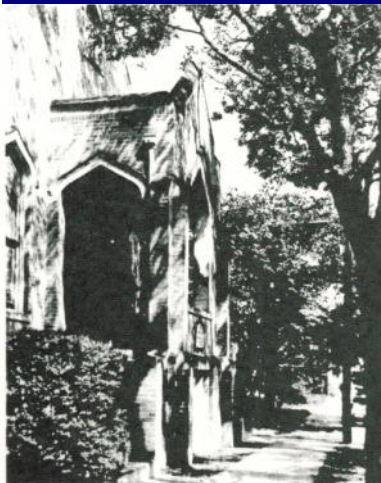
Endowment. As previously reported, over the past several years the church has received several generous financial contributions that have enabled our church to begin a CCA Endowment Fund by which contributions can be made in someone’s memory or in honor of someone. In 2016, trustees promoted the Endowment and received numerous donations. The principal value of the endowment has more than doubled in two years to reach almost \$120,000. Each and every contribution to the Endowment is greatly appreciated. The endowment provides an additional source of operating revenue from the transfer of 4% of the 5-year average balance in the fund to the church’s General Fund to support the operating budget.

Annual Budget Recommendation: Each year, the Trustees recommend an annual operating budget based on expected income and expenses. A year ago, based on a 2015 budget deficit and projections that income would decline in 2016, the Trustees recommended that we adopt only a six-month budget so that we could find ways to bring income to budget into line with projected expenditures.

The budget shortfall was discussed at a congregational meeting in February, after which the Trustees prepared a revised and balanced budget that was adopted at a congregational meeting on April 10. Since then, as reported by our Treasurer, we finished 2016 with a comeback from the 2015 deficit. That has enabled the Board of Trustees to recommend a balanced budget for 2017 that includes employee raises that is described in the Treasurer's 2017 Budget Proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Trustees: Gail Christeson (Treasurer); Kevin Dietz; Lynne Lemley; Victoria Li; Pam Tucker (Financial Secretary); Tom Vandestadt (Pastor); Don Brown; Chairperson.



Board of Deacons Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

The Board of Deacons continued to support the church in 2016 through our weekly work in hosting fellowship, and assisting our pastor, Tom VandeStadt, with communion every month.

The Deacons hosted receptions celebrating several special events this year, including: the marriage of Ellie Nash and Louis Rodgers, the 30th Anniversary of Marilyn Gattis and George Carruthers, the dedication of a stained-glass window honoring Clark and Cathy Hubbs, and Faye Dierksen's graduation from Chadron College with a Master's Degree. We helped Jaime Hadley in hosting the reception for Beth Gleason's ordination in April. With the help of many in the congregation, we enjoyed a wonderful Father's Day potluck over the summer, and celebrated the annual Christmas Party in December, this year made even brighter with the return of the party's original and long-time hosts, Pat and Mel Oakes.

Three farewell receptions were held during the year honoring former Deacons Board Chair, Janet Parsons; church cellist Colin Ferguson; and, nursery teacher Tiffany Garland. In December, we said farewell to longtime tenants, Lifeworks, and welcomed Terry Cole's Youth Street Ministry as our new tenant.

The congregation suffered the loss of members Doyal Pinkard and Chuck Johnson this year. Sunday services were dedicated to each.

We welcomed four new members in 2016: Andy and Faye Dierksen, Joy Penticuff and Bob Garrett. Deacons Jo Jensen and Marilyn Vache have been sending cards of support to members of the congregation facing challenges as lifted in Joys and Concerns.

The Board of Deacons was delighted to welcome Joy Penticuff to the Board in December.

Going forward, the Deacons are working to strengthen membership recruitment by improving our visitor follow up.

The Deacons would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have helped with fellowships and celebrations this year, and specifically Jaime Hadley and Betty Bodman, who have jumped in to help on a regular basis, and whose hosting talents have brought elegance and fun to the fellowship hall. We are also very grateful to Tom VandeStadt, for his time and counsel throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Howicz
Board of Deacons



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Outreach Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

The church's Cooperative Ministries budget took a significant hit at last year's annual meeting, a result of the significant shortfall in pledged funds. The OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) contribution, by far the largest line item in that budget, took the brunt of the cuts (reduced to \$10,000 from \$14,500). However, at that meeting there was a strong sentiment expressed to try to alleviate these cuts through a special offering at some point during the year. Liz Nash made a special appeal on November 6, which resulted in \$4,500 in extra donations for OCWM, fully making up the prior cuts.

The church's homeless ministry experienced considerable turmoil owing to three events. The first was the on-campus murder of a student by a homeless youth. This prompted a major community backlash against the presence of homeless around the UT campus, with the Austin Police eventually deciding to strictly enforce camping and loitering rules in our area. This effort greatly reduced, but did not eliminate, the number of homeless who would come to our area for outreach services, including the Lifeworks drop-in shelter and our Front Porch Lunches. The second was that Lifeworks, owing to the cancellation of certain grant monies, was forced late in the year to close the drop-in center and cease leasing space in our building. However, in what can best be described as a Christmas Miracle, Street Youth Ministry, operated by Terry Cole, decided that they would like to take over the space for their base of operations, and reopen the drop-in center. For the moment, the Front Porch Lunch ministry is on hiatus until the Street Youth Ministry has its schedule worked out and we work with Terry to determine how we can best contribute with nutritional assistance. We do remain fully committed to this ministry. The third big event was the Micah 6 decided that they would prefer to operate the Freeze Night shelter meal from a single location. In the past, two fully separate shelters were run – a youth shelter in our basement and an adult shelter at the Baptist Church. After a lot of negotiation, it was decided to serve a combined meal at the Baptist Church, and then escort the younger guests to our basement for the overnight part of the shelter. Our church will now be responsible just for preparing a meal on Saturday nights. But there is one thing that did not change: we once again served a fabulous meal for the homeless (or anyone who wanted it for that matter) on Christmas day; 94 meals were served.

This past year has also been a very challenging one for our interfaith ministries, as the presidential election stirred up a terrible amount of anti-Muslim sentiment across the nation. Tom and other members of our church have been active in local efforts to combat such sentiments. Whit Bodman and Tom Vandestadt served on the team with Bonnie Tamres-Moore from Interfaith Action for Human Rights, Rev. Sid Hall from Trinity Church, and Rev. John Elford from University United Methodist Church, to ask churches and synagogues in the Austin area to hang banners that say We Support Our Muslim Neighbors, and ~20 did so. Our church hung the banner on Saturday, April 2 with a ceremony in which Shaykh Mohamed-Umer Esmail from the Nueces St. Mosque spoke, and then we processed down to the Mosque for a community open house. Whit and Tom also participated in the banner press conference at Uni-

versity United Methodist Church on Thursday April 28. John Elford and Tom followed up with an effort to build a relationship with the Nueces St. mosque by going to a number of Iftar dinners there. On November 18, Jen and Tess Howicz and Tom (along with about 100 others) participated in solidarity action in support of the Nueces St. Mosque.

A few new members have getting involved with Austin Interfaith, and some of our church members went to the AI Candidate Forum on October 16. Tom also went with a contingent of area clergy on October 4 to meet with Mayor Adler, where I raised the homelessness issue. We participated in the Texas Impact Health Care Sabbath by having Regina Rogoff, Chief Executive Officer of People's Community Clinic, speak at our church on November 20.

Respectfully submitted,
John Goff and Reuel Nash, Christian Outreach



Christian Education Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

Sunday School and Nursery

Amy Rivera continues to create a positive and nurturing environment in the Sunday school classroom. Amy and the children kicked off the 2016-17 Sunday school year with an Olympic--themed back-to-Sunday-school party, where party attendees participated in a variety of "events", including a sit-ups station and a competition to see who could hold their breath the longest. Competitors were awarded gold, silver, and bronze medals made by the children. Great fun was had by all. Another highlight of the year was making a mock documentary news video about the Syrian refugee crisis. Children took turns playing different roles, including newscaster, journalist, and Syrian refugees. While there has been a lull in attendance starting in the fall, children who attend Sunday school continue to enjoy a rich and meaningful learning experience.

The children in the nursery were cared for by Tiffany Garland. With her kind and nurturing demeanor, Tiffany easily formed bonds with the children. Tiffany resigned in December to better meet family responsibilities and the demands of a new job. A core group of volunteers was formed to staff the nursery starting in December and continuing until a new attendant is hired.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Dietz, Christian Education



Moderator Report

Congregational Church Of Austin, United Church of Christ

For 2016, the Coordinating Council met almost monthly with representatives of the Boards and Teams of the church: Trustees, Deacons, Outreach, and Christian Education, as well as our Pastor. We continued to support these ministries and provided suggestions as appropriate.

Again this year, the topic of homelessness in the University area was a main topic of our meetings, along with recent changes in the Freeze Night Shelter program. Primarily because of the tragic murder of a UT student on the east side of campus, UT parents, police, and the Austin Police Department made extra efforts to disperse gatherings of homeless youth in our neighborhood, including our Lifeworks clients. This has reduced the number of youths congregating around our church, but also the outreach of Lifeworks. As most of you know, the homeless youth now congregate in other areas, though they continue to be served by our church and other University area churches. In addition, Lifeworks lost a major part of their funding and will no longer be renting space from us, though Street Outreach Ministries will be taking up the lease for at least two years. As covered in the Outreach Team report, we are now collaborating with University Baptist Church in keeping our shelters open during freezes.

The Coordinating Council continued to discuss our Welcoming Ministry, though progress in that area has been slow. The Council identified needs for us to present our beliefs and views to interested people, through our website, perhaps through recorded interviews, and in person. Members also expressed a desire to learn from others in approaching our visitors and making them feel welcome. It is our hope that this will be continued by the next Coordinating Council.

For the past three years, the Council has identified several “visioning” projects for discussion and action. This year began with discussions about the future of our church—its building, programs, and in fact the very nature of the Church. Although any changes may be many years away, we recognized that we are housed in an aging structure, and that church trends into the future may create new paths to service. This will be offered for discussion at our Annual Meeting.

We have enjoyed serving on the Coordinating Council and thank all who have been a part of keeping our church on track and keeping an eye on the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Burnham and Bill Beardall, Co-Moderators