

Faith United Church of Christ
575 Richmond Road
Richmond Heights, Ohio



Year 2017

The Annual Report

Annual Congregational Meeting
December 17, 2017

Faith United Church of Christ
Richmond Heights, Ohio

The Annual Congregational Meeting
December 17, 2017
11:30 a.m.

Agenda

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| 1. Call to Order | The President of the Congregation |
| 2. Prayer | The Pastor |
| 3. Approval of Previous Minutes | The Secretary of the Congregation |
| 4. Discussion of Ministry Reports | Ministry Chairs |
| 5. Treasurer's Report | The Treasurer |
| 6. Presentation and Approval of the 2018 Budget | The Treasurer |
| 7. Election of Officers and MLC Members | The President |
| 8. Other Business | The President |
| 9. Prayer | The Pastor |
| 10. Adjournment | The President |

Vital Statistics

Membership as of December 11, 2016 140

Changes in membership: Additions

New members:

Alicia Bruscano
Martha Clinger
Heidi Tobin

Total additions 3

Changes in membership: Losses

Death:

Earl Graham

Total losses 1

Total Membership as of December 17, 2017 142

Baptism:

Charlotte Lynn Lumley (June 4, 2017)
Claire Olivia Hughes (September 24, 2017)
George Galileo Maxime Simms (November 5, 2017)

2017

FINAL REPORT- Building and Grounds Committee

In late November carrying over into December of last year we had an issue with the lower level in-floor heat piping. No hot water was circulating. The circuit board controlling the proportioning valve regulating hot water flow was "fried"; necessitating the purchase of a new Honeywell modulating control box from plumber's supply. In the meantime the valve was artificially locked in the open position to allow hot water flow for continuing preschool operation. Duration of the problem was 16 days. It's an unproven possibility that this temporary condition allowed for fugitive water escape to the sewer thereby elevating the fourth quarter water bill. A repair/replacement invoice payment (\$548.00) was mailed in 2016 to **Deluxe H&C** but was not cashed in until January of this year.

Also, in December of the past year the purchase was made of a new 15 cu. ft. GE refrigerator to replace the old unit in which the freezer compartment failed. The vendor was **Snow Bros.** of Lyndhurst. The cost was \$469.00. The failed unit was removed upon delivery. At the same time a purchase was made from **All Brands, Inc.**, Lyndhurst, to replace the church vacuum cleaner which had also suffered failure due to age. The cost of the heavy duty commercial strength vacuum was \$307.93. Both purchases were debited to Special Repairs in 2016.

In early January a split copper coil in the sanctuary air handler required the services of **Deluxe H&C** to repair. The elbow had to be cut out and replaced, which required the unit be completely drained. This complication was resolved at a cost of \$430.00, charged to Special Repairs account.

During the 2016 Christmas season the entire ~75 ft. length of gutter along the east side of the social hall crashed to the ground due to the excessive weight of accumulated ice build-up failing to be supported adequately. Following several convoluted attempts to establish repair/replacement procedures, it was finally resolved by **Ken's Parkhill Roofing** agreeing to undertake replacing at their expense, Wednesday 1/25/17. Commercial grade gutter (as was the original) was mounted with additional support hangers at narrower spacing.

In February, a quote from **Signature Sign Co.** dated 2/9/17, to replace the weathered, sun-damaged south side top panel of the front yard church sign was approved by MLC explicit vote. The cost including installation amounted to \$827.48. Actual panel replacement was accomplished in August after an extended period needed to schedule the printing of the acrylic panel.

Also in February, discussion began on the parking lot island project to remove the asphalt surface on each side, north and south to an approximate 20 foot width.-the excavated areas to be filled in with organic mulch procured from special sources. Objective of the work was to increase "green" space and eliminate the tree root surface eruptions. A quote was received from **Surface Engineering, Cleveland**, (prior parking lot paving contractor of 2009), dated 6/19/17 for a total expenditure of \$18,875 including surface sealing, waste removal and line striping. The contract (under the \$20,000 cap specified by MLC) was signed by the church president on/or about 4/20/17.

On 6/1/17, **Advanced Asphalt Paving Co.** in partnership w/ **S.E.** arrived to excavate the asphalt areas involved. This was a first class operation with several pieces of modern equipment, working a crew of eight, covering 4 ½ hours. Continued progress of this project was intermittent. About twenty close-in parking spaces were eliminated as diagonal spacing will not be recovered.

In April, a new office copier/printer contract was entered into replacing the two (2) units reposing in the choir room for the past several years. This new machine is capable of computer tie-ins, tri-folding, and color reproductions. The leasing arrangement is significantly cheaper than those it replaces carrying an approximate \$200+ savings a month. The lease period is similarly at five (5) years. The unit is huge and for the foreseeable future is located in the office ante-room. Removal of the existing machines including expunging of the units' hard drives cost the church \$1149.00. Considerable time and effort were expended by church secretary R. Goss to coordinate this exchange.

In May, the problematic front door crash-bar mechanism again required a **Bass Security** technician to dismantle the left side (active) door hardware and replace it with the same from the other right side door which is so infrequently unlocked and/or cycled. This transformation was made without any disruption to the wooden door anchor blocks, already rather tenuously affixed. Full retraction of the locking latch has been restored at a cost of little more than \$200.00. As stated in previous reports, total replacement of this entranceway would run into several thousands of dollars and could not because of age be duplicated.

On 6/7/17, **McPhillips Plumbing** performed the mandatory testing of the church's city water connection back-flow valve to assure that direction of flow is always in the right direction into the church building. The cost of this annual requirement is minimally \$145.00.

Also, in June, The safety director of **Richmond Hts. Dept. of Building, Zoning & Housing** conducted the annual (again mandatory) fire and safety inspection required by the city. The walk-about accompanied tour went very well. Fire Marshall R. Sumrada was particularly impressed with the state of Faith's fire and safety attainment levels. Only minor corrections were required and quickly made. He will no longer require a personal inspection tour of our facility. We passed with flying colors (his words). In the future we simply mail in the required paper-work (i.e. honor system)- while fully recognizing the legal status of any signed documentation.

In mid-July workmen from the **Cuyahoga Sewer District** acted on response to my application for county inspection of the church's sanitary sewer underground line from the building to the street. This action was intended to assuage concerns that some random back-up occurrences experienced by the downstairs youth toilet facilities are not reasonably due to unseen breaks or natural obstructions along the line. Standard inspection procedures at the clean-out ports in the front yard including the use of indicator dyes revealed the passing flow after several repeated flush cycles. Normal, expected performance was achieved in each case to the satisfaction of the district technicians.

In August, the **Richmond Hts. Fire Department** visited the church along with six (6) fire fighters to verify the availability of door keys should an emergency occur in which they needed to gain entry to the building. A half-hour tour of the entire facility acquainted all present with the building layout and utilities control equipment locations.

Fleming Bros. Snowplowing of Richmond Hts. has again been awarded the 2017-2018 snowplowing contract at an annual price of \$2500. The contract price remains the same as last year and includes hand shoveling of main doors to church and lower level preschool door. Per standard procedure plowing begins 1st 2" snowfall to the last. New island footprint has been duly marked and curbing avoidance must be taken into account by the plow driver.

In late September, 100 cubic yards of hardwood mulch was delivered in two separate semi-truck loads to the parking lot island area. The purchase constituted a total expenditure of \$2395.00, tax exempt, and was borne by Capital Campaign funding. This considerable pay load was eventually spread in carpet fashion into the excavated north and south portions and leveled to a nominal depth of one (1) foot. (See parking lot island expansion project (p.1-this report). Volunteer efforts over several days were expended to complete the distribution. Curbing corners were painted yellow to enhance visibility. The plan is to next seed the areas with a mixture of native grasses.

Champion Fire Equipment Co. of Cleveland inspected and approved the fourteen (14) fire extinguishers scattered throughout the facility covering 2017-2018, as required by code. No expirations occurred this year. Total cost of this service was \$168.75, tax exempt.

Deluxe Heating & Cooling Inc. Mayfield Hts. conducted their normal annual boiler inspection and service efforts in October. Work included cleaning pilots and burners. Thermostat and pump operations of the entire heating system were cycled and confirmed as well as that of the air handler equipment (bearings greased, drive belt tightened, air filters replaced). Faith Routine Maintenance account was debited \$382.00, tax exempt.

Annual church boiler licensing by **FM Global** (by code) was conducted and renewed without incident on October 27, by licensed inspector. Faith Church is eventually reimbursed by **Mennonite Insurance Co.**, our insurer, for the \$53.50 cost, each boiler, for State of Ohio certificates.

McNulty Roofing Inc. of Highland Hts. again provided gutter cleaning service on a twice-yearly basis (spring & fall) at a charge of \$200.00 each visit.

The B&G committee acknowledges all contributions of Faith members and friends during the year, who contributed their time, labor, and talents to improving our physical facility. Special thanks to the volunteers who manually distributed the hardwood mulch over the expanded island surface areas.

Respectfully,

Submitted this Saturday, November 18, 2017.

Dave Vesey, Maintenance Director

Building & Grounds committee: Mike Nedrow, MLC Chair; Scott Dorey.

Dave Holtz, Don Wilson, Larry Huston Contributing.

From the Coordinator of Musical Life

This is not so much as a report as my reflections on the musical life of Faith Church.

I arrived to find a Chancel Choir and Bell Choir who are eager to work to enhance the worship life of Faith. Both groups have bravely taken on some challenges, and have acquitted themselves well. Both groups have lost a few members over this year, but we are always happy to welcome new members.

It is my intention to have the Bells play more frequently than in the past. They are a lovely addition to worship, and should be heard more often.

While the choir doesn't sing every week, they are always working hard to prepare for the times they do sing. For those "off weeks", I will be looking for others who are willing to share their talents in worship. I will occasionally bring in guest artists, as well.

The congregation is a strong singing body. Even though I am behind that wall most of the time, I can hear you singing. You are the primary musical ensemble of this body, and you sound pretty good!

When I auditioned, I was thrilled to have a pipe organ to play. After so many years of electronic organs, it's wonderful to have an acoustic instrument to play. This instrument, though small, has a lovely, warm sound.

Unfortunately, it has its limits; time being the worst. The console is nearing the end of its practical life, and will require some upgrades in the next several years. There are some other mechanical issues that will need to be dealt with in time, as well. I have gotten quotes on the work that will be needed and forwarded them to the appropriate people. In the meantime, routine maintenance will be done to keep the instrument in as good order as possible.

Over the course of the year I have done a survey of the music in the choir files, cataloguing, sorting, and removing anything that was in poor condition, or no longer practical for our worship life. Anything that was usable was offered to other choral groups.

This year I moved the choir back up into the choir stalls, using an electronic keyboard to accompany them. This has reduced the "travel time" needed to situate the choir in the chancel. As this has been working well, a very generous individual has donated the funds to purchase a new keyboard for the choir area. It has been purchased, and made its debut on November 26, 2017. The donor has asked to remain anonymous.

As we press forward, Gene and I will be developing plans to enhance our worship time. It is my sincere hope that the music I bring, both on the organ and with the choirs, is uplifting and meaningful.

Respectfully submitted,

D. Keith Stiver, MM

Pastor's Report 2017

Gene McAfee

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever.” – 1 Chronicles 16:34

Donna Nedrow read the verse above at the Thanksgiving service we held at Brookdale Assisted Living recently, and it captures my thoughts and feelings about Faith Church as I look over the past year and report to you what I see.

In a word, gratitude is what I feel most regularly about Faith. I am grateful for the members and friends of the church who continue, through their prayers, presence, leadership, and dollars, to keep our church vibrant as we move into a new phase of its life. That phase, in my view, is maturity, not decline. As more and more of our members cross the milestone of retirement in their professional lives, our church's personality increasingly takes on the characteristics of “elder,” that esteemed biblical personage to whom God's people looked for guidance and support for centuries. If we wish to be, we can be a church full of wise elders – people no longer pressed for time, no longer rushing from this obligation to that one, no longer beholden to the demands and expectations of others, and rich in experience and knowledge. Our culture is obsessed with youth, beauty, power, and money; our church can be an alternate reality and place of respite from those cultural obsessions. Elderhood is a stage in life that can be tremendously liberating and empowering for those who are willing to embrace it. It can also be a time of great creativity, as we continually discern how to flourish in ways we have not considered before, having had our attention largely focused in the past on programs spanning the generations. Whether we choose to recognize the valuable resources we have as elders or choose instead to view our life as relentless decline is largely up to us – it's a choice we'll all make individually and as a congregation. And that choice will determine to a very great degree what kind of life and future life we'll have.

I want to lift up a few of the other reasons I'm grateful to be the pastor at Faith.

First, a word of appreciation to the members of our Ministry Leadership Council for bringing to completion the first few phases of the parking lot island expansion project. I say “first few phases” since that project, while apparently finished, is actually just getting started. Yes, the broken asphalt has been removed and the mulch has been spread and will soon be sown with native plants. What awaits us now is the emergence and growth of those plants into habitats for God's creatures, the rejuvenation of the underlying soil, and a more beautiful landscape for us and our guests. With the careful planning and leadership of MLC, and especially our presidents Gail Yusko and Barb Holtz, we addressed a problem with our physical plant in a way that is cost-effective, environmentally responsible, and consistent with our stated values. That's good leadership and it's good followership. We did it. Well done.

Second, a word of appreciation for all those who support and coordinate our various outreach programs. We are both in the community and the community is in us.

On Nov. 19th, we welcomed the mayor and superintendent of schools from our community to a service of celebration and thanksgiving for Richmond Heights, just as we have been welcoming a group of high schoolers to our building for their monthly Culinary Club meetings. We also continue to feed hungry people through Loaves and Fishes, coordinated by Kathy Lorentz, and this year we plan to enhance that food program by giving away warm clothing on Dec. 29th to those who are our guests for those meals. While many churches might be contracting their outreach ministries as they reach maturity, we're expanding ours. That is a clear sign of church vitality and a reason to rejoice.

Third, as we did when we celebrated our fiftieth anniversary in 2007, we will be wrapping up our sixtieth anniversary celebrations with a special educational trip to Europe next summer to learn more about our Reformed Christian roots. That trip is in response to requests from members who participated in our earlier trips to the United Kingdom (2007) and New England (2012). On each of those occasions, we delved more deeply into our past in order to equip ourselves more fully to enjoy our present and meet our future as God's people. Our sixtieth anniversary also saw a celebratory evening in our Social Hall, coordinated by Alicia Bruscano, Sarah Harris, Kelly Holtz, Leslie Huston, and Donna Nedrow, and the publication of a commemorative cookbook, overseen by Kelly Holtz. The decade between our fiftieth and sixtieth anniversaries seemed to me to zoom by; I wonder if the next decade will speed by as quickly, productively, and happily?

These are just a few of the reasons I am thankful for the people who make up Faith Church, and this is what I see happening as your pastor. Will we have challenges ahead? You bet. Will we meet them? Absolutely. How? There is a spirit of confidence, hope, and joy at Faith that can help us continue to contribute to the world and rise to meet our challenges. Is that the Holy Spirit? I can't imagine its being anything else.

In the service of Christ and the church,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gene".

Gene McAfee

Pastor and Teacher

21 November 2017

Feast of St. Rufus of Rome, disciple of St. Paul (Romans 16:13)

Prayer Group Ministry Report 2017

A Prayer for Peace of Mind

“Almighty God, We bless you for our lives, we give you praise for your abundant mercy and grace we receive. We thank you for your faithfulness even though we are not that faithful to you. Lord Jesus, we ask you to give us all around peace in our mind, body, soul and spirit. We want you to heal and remove everything that is causing stress, grief, and sorrow in our lives.

Please guide our path through life and make our enemies be at peace with us. Let your peace reign in our family, at our place of work, businesses and everything we lay our hands on.

Let your angels of peace go ahead of us when we go out and stay by our side when we return. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

Prayer Group meets on a quarterly basis to pray for those who were brought up during worship on Sunday mornings, our friends and neighbors, ourselves, our community, our country and our world.

We assist the Prayer square ministry which is an interfaith outreach organization that combines the gift of prayer with the gift of a hand-tied quilt. To date we have dedicated and prayed over approximately 40 prayer squares. If you have someone who you think may benefit from a prayer square you need to ask this person if they would like a prayer square with the explanation above and then please fill out a request form and get the information to Sue Jaquet. It can take up to 2-3 weeks for a prayer square to be made and dedicated at Faith UCC.

We provide cards available during coffee hour for those in need for prayers of get well wishes, thinking of you and sympathy. Thank you to **Sharon Jakse** for supplying Faith with these cards.

We also go out to visit our members in need of companionship and a friendly visit in the hospital, at home or in Physical Rehabilitation facilities.

The prayer group also assists with the Monthly Brookdale Services on the third Tuesday of the month. This service is led by Rev. Gene, Donna Nedrow and many of the members of Faith Church. If you would like to be a part of the Brookdale services please join us the Third Tuesday at 11:30am

Thank you to our prayer group members: **Jill Dugovics, Sharon Jakse, Sue Jaquet, Roberta McGrath, Marilyn Glover, Jean Sinzinger, Sally Templar, Donna Nedrow and Gene McAfee.**

Submitted by: Donna Nedrow

The Worship, Arts and Spiritual Formation Ministry

Annual Report 2017

As I always begin this report I refer to the mandate that was established in 2002 for The Worship Ministry which helps remind us what this ministry strives to accomplish each year. The mandate states: *"The Worship, Arts and Spiritual Formation Ministries mandate shall be to enhance and support the worship experience and biblical and theological education of the congregation of Faith UCC, by creating an environment that promotes spiritual formation for all generations through the celebration of praise, the liturgical arts, music and education."*

This report begins with the liturgical calendar. The church year begins with Advent 2016. The Advent banners were brought in at the beginning of each Sunday of Advent by a youth of Faith UCC. We celebrated our Christmas Eve with a Pot Luck Dinner at 6:00 pm and then celebrated with one service, our Christmas Eve Service of Rail Communion and Candle lighting at 7:30 pm. This year 2017 Christmas Eve will be 4:30 pm a brief Communion and Candlelight Service, Potluck Dinner at 5:15 pm and a Candle Light Service at 7:00 pm.

Other special services we had during the liturgical year were: Ash Wednesday Service which began the season in Lent and Holy week services which began with Palm Sunday. We continue to pass out Eco friendly Palms for Palm Sunday each year. Eco-palms are sustainably harvested and fair trade. Lenten Studies continued the Wednesdays during Lent with a meal and study. We also celebrated services with Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service with communion at 7:30 pm in the Social Hall, Good Friday Stations of the Cross at noon joined with the Lyndhurst Community Presbyterian Church and Easter Sunday Morning Service after our potluck breakfast. We celebrated Pentecost, World Communion Sunday, Bread for the World Sunday, All Saints Sunday where we remembered Earl Graham who died the past year. Other services included welcoming new members on Aug 6th and the joy of celebrating the sacrament of baptism of 3 children throughout this year at Faith. We marked Faith Church's 60th anniversary with a celebration on Saturday evening, Sept. 16 and Worship Service on Sunday Sept. 17 with Rev. Candita Bauza de Mattos preaching. We had a Blessing of the Animals on Saturday October 7 and a Worship Service with the Richmond Hts. Community celebration of 100 years and finally ending the church year with the Reign of Christ on Nov. 26. Many of you may notice the change in the Altar Paraments which symbolize the change of seasons in the liturgical year.

We strive to promote spiritual formation and education by working alongside Rev. Gene, our liturgists, members of the church and the community. We continue to provide liturgist training to help the Sunday morning duties go smoothly. This year our liturgist education was offered throughout the year.

You may have noticed that communion is by intinction throughout the year. This is a change from pew communion which we use to have periodically. Intinction seems to go smoother and it is more active for the congregation.

With members of Faith we continue to provide a monthly Worship Service at Brookdale Senior Living across the street on the third Tuesday of the month at 11:30 am. We have had the joy of many of the residents at Brookdale join us for Worship here at Faith throughout the year.

Thank you to the members of this ministry: **Kay Gardiner, Marilyn Glover, Sue Jacquet, Roberta McGrath, Rose McIntyre, Donna Nedrow, Keith Stiver, Sally Templar, and Rev. Gene McAfee.** If you are interested in being a member of the Worship Ministry we would love for you to join us next year.

God's Blessing and Shalom,

Donna Nedrow

(Chair of Worship)