



2024-2025 Annual Report First Congregational Church of Greeley

**155th Annual Meeting
Sunday, May 4th, 2025
11:30 a.m. in Chadwick Hall**



Table of Contents

Page 1	Mission Statement & Staff
Page 2	Standing Rules of Order
Page 3	In Memory of the Saints Who Have Gone Before
Page 4	50+ Year Members
Page 5	Minutes of the 154th Annual Meeting
Page 7	Report of the Nominating Committee
Page 8	2025-2026 Church Leadership
Page 9	2024-2025 Membership Report
Page 10	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Moderator
Page 11	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees
Page 13	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Family Faith Formation Ministry Group
Page 14	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Fellowship Ministry Group
Page 15	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Outreach Ministry Group
Page 16	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Worship, Music, and Arts Ministry Group
Page 18	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Minister, Head of Staff
Page 19	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Minister, Head of Programs
Page 21	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Children's Minister
Page 22	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Music Director
Page 23	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Church Administrator
Page 24	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Youth Leader
Page 25	2024-2025 Annual Report of the Treasurer
Page 26	2024-2025 Budget vs. Actuals
Page 27	2025-2026 Proposed Budget



Mission Statement

First Congregational Church is a community rooted in God's love, nourished on our spiritual journeys, and growing as an inclusive Christian presence in Greeley and beyond.

Ministerial Staff

Rev. Ben Konecny (he/him)

Minister, Head of Staff

(revben@firstconggreeley.org)

Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern (she/her)

Minister, Head of Programs

(revtamara@firstconggreeley.org)

Administrative Staff

Laura Gurney (she/her)

Church Administrator

(laura@firstconggreeley.org)

Brooklyn McBride (she/her)

Communications Assistant

(brooklyn@firstconggreeley.org)

Children & Youth Staff

Tammi Van Drunen (she/her)

Children's Minister

(tammi@firstconggreeley.org)

Mike McBride (he/him)

Youth Leader

(mike@firstconggreeley.org)

Brittany Drake (she/her), Nursery

Zenith Maupin (she/her), Nursery

Jacque Kilber (she/her), Nursery

Angie Pierot (she/her), Nursery

Sarah Hulac (she/they), WNL Childcare

Kai Davison (they/them), WNL Childcare

Kaida Pierot, WNL Childcare

Music Staff

Nicholas Gilmore (he/him)

Director of Music

(nicholas@firstconggreeley.org)

Shona Royle-Grimes (she/her)

Pianist, Jubilation Choir Director

(shonaroylegimes@gmail.com)

Kathy Azari (she/her)

Rainbow Choir Director

(kathyazaria@comcast.net)

Katie Hughes (she/her)

Organist

(katiehughesmusic@gmail.com)

Eli Schamane (she/they)

Principal Choral Chair

Ryan Ostlund (he/him)

Tenor Choral Scholar

Facility Staff

Tyler Rossman (he/him)

Facilities Manager

(tyler@firstconggreeley.org)

Cole Jensen (he/him)

Kitchen Steward

Standing Rules of Order

A Note: The purpose of Parliamentary Law is NOT to dictate. Rules are meant to facilitate assistance in conducting business procedures in a minimum of time and a harmonious climate. In all business procedures:

1. The majority shall rule.
2. The minority shall be heard.
3. Those absent shall be protected.
4. Consideration of one item at a time.

The Articles of Incorporation as registered in the State of Colorado, the Constitution, the Bylaws, and the Standing Rules shall govern all proceedings. Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, shall be the authority in all cases not otherwise provided.

1. Five percent (5%) of the church membership, including a majority of elected officers, shall constitute a quorum.
2. Anyone wishing to speak will address the Moderator and be recognized.
3. Reports of officers and chairpersons shall be limited to five (5) minutes, except those of the Moderator, the Ministers, the Treasurer, and the Budget Committee.
4. Questions regarding reports are in order.
5. Individual reports need NOT be adopted. Past action is history.
6. Any recommendation requires consideration and may be processed when made except for those requiring major change or the expenditure of funds. The latter should come under new business.
7. If proceedings give rise to discussion, a member may speak to the same question a second time ONLY AFTER those present and wishing to speak have had the opportunity.
8. All discussion should be directed to the Moderator.
9. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of officers for election.
10. Nominations may be made from the floor provided the nominee is present and has given consent to serve if elected. Nominations do not need a second.
11. In a ballot election, plurality elects.
12. There being no further nominations to the presented slate, elections may be made by voice vote.
13. These rules, in case of need, may be suspended or amended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote.
14. Decisions depend upon those present and voting.

In Memory of the Saints Who Have Gone Before

Frankie Bunker

March 8, 1927

January 10, 2024

Nancy Jacobson

December 22, 1944

August 5, 2024

Beezie Clarke

November 26, 1929

February 14, 2024

Marilyn Salzman

November 13, 1964

August 16, 2024

Shirley Bernhardt

July 9, 1926

February 21, 2024

Brandon Curtis

December 13, 1980

August 16, 2024

Susanne Miller

May 13, 1940

March 3, 2024

Paul Roquet

December 25, 1960

August 28, 2024

Ron Heil

January 20, 1949

March 14, 2024

Wally Aas

July 22, 1930

September 7, 2024

Ron Roggy

February 6, 1935

May 6, 2024

Rex King

July 11, 1951

October 12, 2024

Bruce Broderius

February 8, 1935

June 1, 2024

Richard “Rick” Irl Mawson II

September 20, 1935

December 16, 2024

Marge Curtiss

March 9, 1931

July 11, 2024

Bob Mitchell

March 11, 1923

April 5, 2025

Bob Ruyle

April 17, 1935

July 27, 2024

2024-2025 50+ Year Members

1942 - 83 Year Member

Jody Wells-Gentry

1944

Patsy Zick

1950 - 75 Year Member

Margaret Rusch

1951

Irene Boettcher

1953

Stow Witwer

1954

William Farr

1955 - 70 Year Member

Annie May Pierce

1956

Cary Clough
Nancy Winters

1958

John Houtchens

1960 - 65 Year Member

Bob Tointon

1962

Chloe Childers

1964

Marty Noe
Jean Ward

1965 - 60 Year Member

Judy Tormey

1966

Anne Farr
Sharon Farr

1967

Al Cornebise
Jan Cornebise
Connie Green

1968

Michaleen Bagley
Bryan Cooke
Carolyn Cooke
Dolores Jamieson
Dick Jamieson

1969

Ann Aron
Kim Barbour
Mark Meilahn
Nancy Meilahn
Ann Rich
Barb Tokunaga

1970 - 55 Year Members

Jo Ann Hill
Carol Marston
Ann Sitchler

1971

Susan Conn
Joy Pickar

1972

Lola Fehr
Lori McCarty

1973

Gloria Johnson
Bob Miller
Diane Miller
Scott Royer

1974

Naomi Brungard
Kathie Holmes

1975 - 50 Year Members

Ed Endicott
Phyllis Endicott
Don Harris
Jo Harris
Larry Heinze
Colette Pitcher

**First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**

**Minutes of the 154th Annual Congregational Meeting
February 21, 2024
6:00 pm**

Moderator David Hulac called to order the 154th Annual Meeting of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Greeley, CO.

Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern led the opening prayer.

A quorum was declared present.

Lori McCarty moved, seconded by Lola Fehr, to adopt the Standing Rules of Order. Approved.

Lola Fehr will serve as our parliamentarian this evening.

Lori McCarty moved to adopt the order of business, seconded by Lola Fehr. The motion approved by unanimous consent.

Rev. Ben recognized and lit a candle for each of our 2023 Saints. Rev. Tamara recognized our 50-year members and Stow Witwer as a 70-year member. Ten new members were welcomed into membership in 2023.

Table Talk – David Hulac led this activity where small groups discussed “Hopes and Fears for the Coming Years. What am I willing to do?”

The 153rd Annual Meeting Minutes of First Congregational Church of Greeley, as they appear on pages 5 and 6 of your Annual Report were approved by the Cabinet on February 21, 2023.

Lori McCarty, on behalf of the cabinet, moved to amend Article 8 of our Constitution & Bylaws from “The fiscal year of the church shall be January 1-December 31” to “The fiscal year of the church shall be July 1-June 30”. Adopted.

Lori McCarty moved on behalf of the cabinet and Trustees the adoption of a 6-month budget for January 2024-June 2024. The motion is adopted.

Rev. Ben reported on the Capital Campaign. Completed projects include: Solar Installation Project is completed, 2 phases of landscaping are completed, Prayer Garden is completed, and the “Saving Water” project is complete. In addition, Security cameras have been updated, Sanctuary remodel and sound system update is complete, stained-glass windows have been cleaned and preserved.

Rev. Tamara acknowledged those who have completed their terms Moderator Yvonne Zack, David Hulac, Ashlyn Friend.

There being no nominations from the floor, David declared the 2024 slate, as presented by the Nominating Committee and found of page8 of the Annual Report, elected.

Moderator Lori McCarty offered congratulations to all those nominated and thanks to each for this commitment to leading our church in 2024.

Rev. Ben offered a closing prayer.

Moderator Lori declared the meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna Bawdon
Recording Secretary

2025-2026 Report of the Nominating Committee

Moderator (elected for a 1-year term, then proceeding to the Past Moderator role in 2026)
Kendra Villarreal

Moderator-Elect (elected for a 1-year term, then proceeding to the Moderator role in 2026 and the Past Moderator role in 2027)
Chris Muscato

Board of Trustees (elected for a 3-year term, renewable for an additional 3-year term unless otherwise specified)
Finalizing nominee, will be announced at annual meeting

Cabinet Members At-Large (elected for a 1-year term, 1 person must be a member for 2 years or less)
Kai Davison
Anthony Azari
Ryan Paul

Recording Secretary (elected to a 1-year term)
Barb Hines

Treasurer (elected to a 1-year term)
Lola Fehr

Personnel Committee (elected to a 3-year term, renewable for an additional 3-year term)
Kristin Muscato
Michelle Heiny
Joyce Best

2025-2026 Church Leaders

Board of Trustees

Melissa Gattis
Brandon Houtchens
Rick Ott
Christian Schulte
Karen Trainor
Becca Vaclavik
Tim Coons
(One pending nomination TBA)

Church Cabinet

Kendra Villarreal, Moderator
Chris Muscato, Moderator-Elect
Lori McCarty, Past Moderator
Barb Hines, Recording Secretary
Lola Fehr, Treasurer
Jenny Sterba
Nicole Passineau
Kai Davison
Anthony Azari
Ryan Paul

Family Faith Formation Ministry Group

Tammi VanDrunen, chair
Jo Harris
Libby LeFebre
Mary Hulac
Paige Baldwin

Fellowship Ministry Group

Jenny Sterba, chair
Betty Fowler
Brian Fowler
Bryan Cooke
Ron Brinkman
Lola Fehr
Michelle Gentry
Karen Trainor
Tim Kennedy
Pat Kennedy

Pastoral Relations Committee

Kendra Villarreal
Sandy Magnuson
Sandy Varley
Dominique Edgerly

Outreach Ministry Group

Nicole Passineau, chair
Josette Bond
Susan Bromley
Bob Lowenbach
John Bliss
Rok Kron
Carolyn Cooke
Aron Flynn
Jeannene Page

Personnel Committee

Lindsay Fulcher
David Hulac
Bob Lowenbach
Lori McCarty
Joyce Best
Michelle Heiny
Kristin Muscato

Worship, Music & the Arts Ministry Group

Jean Bruns
Bonnie Humphries
Dorothy Elder
Jane Weber
Karen Inglis

Delegates to the Rocky Mountain Conference

Kendra Villarreal
(Two pending nominations TBA)

Investment Committee

Judy Kron
Chuck Connell
Mike Frick
Larry Menefee
Lola Fehr, Treasurer

Safety & Welcome Team

Kristin Morgan Hughes
Brian Fowler
Jim Zack
Bob Lowenbach
Rok Kron
Tom Barbour
Lori McCarty
Bennett Edgerly

2024-2025 Membership Report

As of April 15, 2025

Over the past 18 months, we welcomed 42 new members to our congregation! We do not include children in membership numbers until children have been confirmed, but the ten new members brought with them a number of children and youth, as well. These are only those who have officially joined our membership; many others are participating in the life of the church on a regular basis!

Please be sure to check out the new members section of the Happenings Wall through the year.

Membership by the Numbers

Members as of January 1, 2024	401
Number of New Members Received	42
Number of Members Reinstated	2
Number of Members Deceased	11
Members Transferred Out	0
Members Removed by Request	5
Members Made Inactive by Cabinet*	0
Members as of April 15, 2025	429

**Article IV, section 2 of our Constitution & Bylaws allows the Church Cabinet to move members from Active to Inactive “who, for an extended period of time [at least 2 years], have ceased to show an interest in the work of the Church by not participating in the activities and support of the Church, or who are known to have left the parish without requesting a letter of release or transfer.” This was last completed in 2023.*

Attendance is booming!

At our staff retreat in January, we stopped to run the numbers and realized that First Congregational Church has seen 20% growth in attendance from 2023-2024 (125 average) and again from 2024-2025 (150 average). 2025 is on track to see the same kind of growth. We continuously hear that folks return after their first visit because they are warmly welcomed. Thank you for the myriad ways in which you continue to extend that radical hospitality to all who walk through our doors!

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Moderator

Lori McCarty

When I accepted the position of Moderator 16 months ago, it seemed that our church was in a place of transition, moving into new ways of being together while holding onto valued practices and customs of our tradition. I wasn't sure quite what to expect but had faith that our congregation would work together to pave the way forward and I was not disappointed. I believe we are in the middle of a solid recovery from the isolation of the pandemic. Unlike many other churches these days, our membership is growing and the energy on Sunday mornings and during our weekly activities is palpable and contagious. The Cabinet engaged in many lively discussions as we considered the congregational needs and priorities during this term.

Highlights from these conversations include:

- Gathering input from the congregation regarding the greatest hopes and fears held for our church
- Moving the fiscal year from January 1st - December 31st to July 1st - June 30th to better accommodate the church calendar and activities
- Ways for leadership to participate more actively in the annual giving campaign
- Focus on our mission to be a welcoming place, moving from a front porch church to a kitchen table church. Each of our ministry groups then worked in their own realms to accomplish this.
- Adaptations required to navigate and survive our interior renovation as well as planning and hosting a grand reopening celebration in February

Things I am looking forward to in the coming year:

- Recent Cabinet discussions have begun to center on how our members interact with each other and the covenant we hold with one another as well as the roles and responsibilities entrusted to those in church leadership positions. I am excited to see where these ideas take us.
- It will be a joy to support Kendra Villareal as your new Moderator.

You may recall me saying that as a third grader receiving my first Bible on the steps of the Chancel many years ago, I never would have dreamed that I would someday be asked to become Moderator. It has been such an honor to have done so. I could not have done it without the support of our terrific staff and leadership team, ministry groups and the congregation. Our church is a special place, a community of love and support. I encourage each one of you to explore ways you can engage in the work and community of our church.

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Trustees

Judy Kron, chair

Highlights from the past year:

- **Continued emphasis on Stewardship Campaign**
 - Abound** - Theme successfully used for the campaign
 - Chili Cookoff & Caberational** - again great events
 - 18 months** - a challenge and we are still doing follow-up but was necessary to get our pledging year in-line with our program year
 - Moved to November** - Necessary to prepare campaign and work with church calendar. Moved follow-up into January
 - Video emphasis on personal testimonials** - Very effective strategy and we hope to use it throughout this year
- **Outsourcing Bookkeeping & Simplifying Reports** - We contracted with Church Finance Pros to prepare our financial reports. We are still working through some formatting issues. A new format we will use for our 2025-26 should clear-up remaining issues.
- **Year Round Giving Campaign** - Important new strategy to emphasis other ways congregants can financially support our church (examples - King Soopers card, special offering envelopes, etc.)
- **Policies & Procedures** - We are finalizing updates to Trustee Policies & Procedures to align with current practices.
- **Construction Committee** - The amazing work of this Committee over the last three years has come to an end. The final projects, mainly the Library and Youth rooms, are being coordinated by Rev. Ben and Betony Coons.

Things we are looking forward to in the coming year:

- With a 18 month pledging campaign (January 2025 to June 2026) we will need to put more emphasis on year-round giving and new member pledges.
- While pledges are our single biggest revenue source, it is not enough to offset our expenses. Now that our interior renovations are almost complete, we are looking to increase rental of space for events and concerts.
- We will begin seriously looking at how we rent space on our lower level and what to do with our North Lot.

Other things or special thanks:

- **Special Thanks:**
 - Construction Committee** - We can not thank enough our Construction Committee who worked diligently for the last three years, putting in many, many hours overseeing the Capital Campaign projects. Thank You - Jim Zack, Chair, Melissa Gattis, Rick Ott, Ron Brinkman, Kate Norris, Tyler Rossman, Lola Fehr, and Betony Coons. An additional big thank you to Betony for her design work and oversight of the interior work and her continuing work on the final projects still in progress.

Stewardship Campaign- All trustees participated in several ways. A special thank you to Rick Ott for chairing the Chili Cook-off, Nicholas Gilmore for arranging the Cabarational, and Nate Miller for producing our video and all who gave testimonials.

Trustees who not only meet monthly but collect and count the offering each week, who planned and carried out the Stewardship Campaign and provide the Call to Thanksgiving once a month. Thank you to Tim Coons, Lola Fehr, Mike Frick, Melissa Gattis, Brandon Houtchens, Rick Ott, Christian Schulte, and Becca Vaclavik.

A special thank you to Rev Ben and Laura Gurney who support the work of the Trustees.

- **A Final Note:**

Over the last three years your Trustees have tried very hard to move our financial picture in a positive direction. For many years we have run deficit budgets. Until recently we did not feel the full impact of this strategy. However with limited increases in revenue and too large a building coupled with a downturn in the stock market our reserves are dwindling. We had hoped that by focusing on a more rigorous Stewardship Campaign, increasing rentals, and strong membership we could get closer to a balanced budget. Membership is growing and pledging and rentals are increasing, but expenses continue to outpace income and we are no closer to our goal of a balanced budget. We are asking you to again adopt a deficit budget but with the added pressure of a very unstable economy and stock market.

We will continue our work at increasing revenues and decreasing expenses, but we will need everyone to step up to the plate and support our church with your time, talents and financial support even as we know most of us are feeling financial pressure on our own budgets. We are a resilient and determined community with God's blessing and your support, we are *In Greeley for Good*.

Family Faith Formation Ministry Group, Tammi VanDrunen (chair)
2024-2025 Annual Report

Highlights from the past year:

- We worked on solidifying our events and making them workable for our small but mighty group.
- PreK-5th families got to go home with a summer adventure kit last summer. Several families participated and we celebrated with a big party to start the school year!
- The children's space opened!
- Mike McBride came on staff to lead youth activities.
- We offered Advent and Lent devotionals to the whole church community and they were well-received.
- Costumes & Community, our Halloween event, was held outdoors on the patio. Many adults stayed to mingle with the kids and we all had a wonderful time!
- Advent Workshop in the newly renovated Chadwick Hall was well attended with high energy from all ages.
- The Share the Joy egg hunt will be a great success!

Things we are looking forward to in the coming year:

- Trying a new family-oriented summer activity this year called "Slow Summer."
- Adding new people and new energy to an already wonderful team.
- Envisioning the next steps for our team.
- Continuing the tradition of offering at least one intergenerational event per quarter.

Ways to get involved:

- Pick one of our main events (Summer event, Costumes & Community, Advent Workshop, and the Easter egg hunt) to help plan and execute.
- Volunteer with children or youth.
- Join the FFF team! We're cool and we have snacks.
- Give us ideas of what you'd like to see FFF do to support the faith formation of the entire church. While a lot of our time is focused on supporting families with children and youth, we also want to continue to support intergenerational events.

Thank you to those who have served on our team this year:

- Jo Harris
- Libby LeFebvre
- Paige Baldwin
- Mary Hulac
- Tammi VanDrunen

Fellowship Ministry Group, Jenny Sterba (chair)
2024-2025 Annual Report

Highlights from the past year:

- We celebrated the grand reopening of our space in February with SO MANY COOKIES.
- We've hosted new member luncheons nearly quarterly and celebrated great growth
- Easter brunches have been provided for choir and staff
- Spring picnics have been filled with wonderful potlucks
- Fall picnics continue to be a congregation favorite
- Summer concerts have continued to build community and energy
- We keep ordering more donuts, coffee, tea, and fellowship hour supplies as attendance continues to grow!

Things we are looking forward to in the coming year:

- This summer we're excited to share a new summer movie series with you
- Our spring picnic is coming up on May 18 - a BBQ potluck!
- New members lunches are already on the calendar for the year
- Fellowship of the Grape Events continue to be a favorite way for folks to gather

Ways to get involved:

- Join us for the spring picnic on May 18 and sign up to help make BBQ picnic sandwiches & sides
- Host a FOG
- Bring or bake something for Fellowship hours on Sundays

Thank you to those who have served on our team this year:

- Tim & Pat Kennedy, Karen Trainor, Ron Brinkman, Betty Fowler, Bryan Cooke, Lola Fehr, Jenny Sterba, and Laura Gurney
- A special thanks to Betty Fowler who chaired our group through December 2024 and to Jenny Sterba for stepping into the chair role in 2025!

Outreach Ministry Group, Nicole Passineau (chair)
2024-2025 Annual Report

Highlights from the past year:

- Multiple coordinated volunteer opportunities at Habitat Re-Store and the food bank
- Refining OMG's mission and finding things we can do and offer that the congregation supports

Things we are looking forward to in the coming year:

- Partnering with Lutheran Family Services to help serve refugee families
- Connecting the congregation with opportunities to serve our community
- Welcoming new members Aron Flynn and Jeannene Page to OMG

Ways to get involved:

- Talk to any member of Outreach and watch for announcements of projects and opportunities in the bulletin, email Blast, and Bell.
- Attend a work day at the Weld Food Bank

Thank you to those who have served on our team this year:

- Bob Lowenback
- Susan Bromley
- Yvonne Zack
- Caroline Cooke
- Josette Bond
- Rev. John Bliss
- Rok Kron

Worship, Music, and the Arts Ministry Group, Lynn Waltman (chair)
2024-2025 Annual Report

Highlights from the past year:

- Lots of choral and bell music including two Music Sundays on December 8, 2024 and the upcoming May 11, 2025
- Bell choir members have maintained the bells, and their tables have new covers (thanks to a generous donor!)
- New rehearsal time and curriculum for the Children's Choir
- New format and renewed energy for the Youth Choir
- Completed a sequence of sorting, cleaning, and moving banners and flowers to make way for remodeling
- Over 40 Sunday Morning Hosts served over the course of the year, and helped to guide people through construction as well as their usual duties.
- The ritual of Communion has evolved to be more personal, and to involve servers of all ages.
- Readers have included people representing Trustees and Cabinet members.
- Dorothy Elder compiled notebooks about the art in our building for the use of volunteers at the Grand Opening and worked to produce the Art and Architectural Collection book.
- There have been two intergenerational Alternative Worship Services with another one planned for this coming June. They included a June outside service centering around fire, and the Hymns and Hops service on November 6.

Things we are looking forward to in the coming year:

- Increased inclusion of newer members
- More voices as readers
- Now that construction is complete, more involvement in the visual arts
- Continuing to welcome people and support the weekly worship services
- Offering more support to the volunteers planning alternative worship experiences

Ways to get involved:

- Scripture Reader
- Sunday Morning Host
- Communion Server
- Bread Baker
- Enhancing worship spaces, especially at Christmas and Pentecost
- Become a member of the Worship, Music, and Arts Ministry Team

Thank you to those who have served on our team this year:

- Team members have included Shara Billheimer, Jean Bruns, Dorothy Elder, Nicholas Gilmore (Music Director), Bonnie Humphries, Karen Inglis, and Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern, Jane Weber, and Lynn Waltman
- Regular supporting volunteers include Sunday Morning Hosts, Ron Brinkman, Sue Norris, Rick Ott, Betony Coons, Sandy Magnuson, and Kate Norris

- Special thanks to the creative people who brought to us alternative ways to worship including Nicole Passineau, Tim and Betony Coons, Kate Norris, Libby Lefebvre, April Randel, and Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Minister, Head of Staff

Rev. Ben Konecny

Highlights from the past year:

- Making it through a summer (and fall!) of interior renovations
- Grand Opening of our newly renovated space in February
- Nearly every Sunday having multiple visitors and returning guests and having 25 people at our Welcome Lunch in March
- Growing numbers - and energy! - in our children's program
- Increased participation in our middle and high school Youth Choir
- The continued strength of our Children's Choir
- Welcoming Katie Hughes as our Organist, Mike McBride as our Youth Leader, Brooklyn McBride as our Communications Assistant, and Cole Jensen as our Kitchen Steward
- Resuming Centering Prayer gatherings on Mondays in the chapel
- Publishing a new picture directory
- Music Sunday Performances of *Breath of Life* and *Patchwork Christmas* by the Chancel Choir
- Receiving our Inflation Reduction Act refund for our solar project worth \$152,000

Things I am looking forward to in the coming year:

- Strengthening our connection with immigrants and refugees in our community
- Increasing member involvement in weekly work of our church our capacity to live into God's calling to be an expression of God's love and care in our wider community
- Working on a "Community Covenant" that provides a framework for how we deepen in relationship together as a congregation
- Imaging new and creative ways to utilize our lower level space

Special thanks:

- Deanna Bawdon - retiring from the position of Recording Secretary after 27 years of serving in this role. That's over 600 cabinet meetings she took minutes for!
- Judy Kron - completing her time as Chair of Trustees after two years in this role. Judy has provided exceptional leadership helping our congregation become aware of the financial challenges we face and begin to chart a path toward financial sustainability.
- Lori McCarty - Lori is completing her term as Moderator. Lori has provided steady and wise leadership for our congregation during her extended 18 month term!
- Betony Coons - Betony not only cast the incredible vision for our renovation, but also worked closely with our contractor to make it a reality.
- Russ Doty - After spending countless hours assisting in the completion of our church's solar system, Russ spent countless more hours helping ensure that we received our Inflation Reduction Act refund for our solar project.
- Linda Johnson - Linda spent many hours completing the IRS paperwork for our IRA refund.
- Jim Zack - Jim is completing his time as Chair of the Capital Campaign Construction Team. Jim has spent countless hours preparing agendas and tracking data on excel spreadsheets. Additionally, Jim's many decades of experience in the construction world have been invaluable.
- Capital Campaign Construction Team: Melissa Gattis, Kate Norris, Ron Brinkman, Judy Smith, Judy Kron, Lola Fehr, Rick Ott, Jim Zack. This group has probably had more four hour meetings than any other committee in our church's history! Each member of the team contributed in significant ways to the success of our campaign.

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Minister, Head of Programs

Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern

Highlights from the past year:

This year has had a buffet of highlights, with the energy of the church continuing to grow month by month. Sequentially, here are some of the events that have stood out for me:

- In the spring of 2024 we took several wonderful Silver Circle Trips including one to the LINC where we got to hear the contributions of members to the vision, and two trips to different Water Treatment Plants to better understand water usage in our area.
- We continued to support our LGBTQ+ friends, family and neighbors at Pride 2024 at AIMS which had an incredible turn out, and the annual Friendsgiving Meal hosted by FCC.
- During Holy Week in 2024, we tried something new: footwashing in the garden, which was awkward, powerful and deeply intimate in the best of ways.
- For Pentecost the service featured stories of spiritual transformation by members of the congregation, which also deepened intimacy and vulnerability, breaking down walls between members and inviting authenticity.
- In June of 2024 I helped to lead the Youth Trip to Rosebud Reservation, which, in addition to our time on the Res, included side trips to CarHenge (ridiculous), the Badlands (beautiful), and Wounded Knee (heart breaking but powerful). Upon our return the youth helped to lead an incredibly impactful service about their learning and what they will carry away from the experience.
- Also in June, our Alternative Worship Team launched their offerings with a Summer Solstice Service, which included inviting participants to make offerings at different fires to hone their calling and sense of direction for the year ahead. The service was well-attended and memorable.
- This year we also held a Blessing of the Animals Service which, though chaotic and challenging for the staff, was joyful and meaningful for the many in attendance. We will tweak it and continue the tradition in future years.
- The Alternative Worship Team also offered the first annual “Hymns and Hops Service” which was a raucous, nostalgic and connective night of community. It also helped me imagine how we might leverage the back courtyard for similar community gatherings in the future.
- Kate Norris gathered a group of lay leaders to organize and facilitate the first Women’s Retreat in more than a decade. It was well-attended and much appreciated.
- With Judy Kron at the helm of the Trustees, we had an incredibly successful Stewardship “Abound Campaign” which served not just as a stewardship push, but as a time of energy and life for the congregation. Joyful events included the Chili cookoff, Congregational Caberational, a wonderful Stewardship video and more.
- Advent this year was pure joy. Numbers were up, which added energy to the Children’s Pageant (one of the best ever, thanks to Laura!), Music Sunday which was nostalgic and lovely, and Christmas Eve, where we saw super-high attendance and a sense of connection and belonging.
- We had a wonderful staff retreat at the beginning of February, highlighting the strength of our staff team and the ways we support one another’s program areas and the members of this church community.

- In February, after 3+ years of hard work, we celebrated our Grand Re-Opening of the space, inviting in dozens of community partners and neighbors. The space exceeded all expectations and beautifully mirrors the new life we feel in the space.
- Finally, I want to mention our Ash Wednesday Service this year which was intimate and emotional as people visited the various prayer stations and received individualized blessings alongside the imposition of ashes from Rev. Ben and me.
- On a harder note: I will note the impact of the loss of Rick Mawson, truly a guidestar for me as a mid-career minister. He sets a high bar for what a life always reaching towards God can look like. It was an honor to help officiate his memorial service.
- Finally, on a personal note, this year the “Queer Spirit” Podcast I worked on over many years with Rev. Dr. Marvin Ellison in Maine, was re-launched by the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network. It is an honor to know those interviews will be stored there and may bring comfort to others for years to come.

Things I am looking forward to in the coming year:

- My biggest (surprising) passion is for the work we are doing to define and refine our leadership structure and roles in such a way that we move from a staff-led church when it comes to visioning and program planning, to a lay-led church which incorporates more congregational voice and vision. By leveraging the gifts of our congregation with more intentionality, I believe we can grow our capacity and continue to expand our influence in the wider-Greeley community. Part of this work will also involve the work of relational covenant, so that we can, with more clarity, say what it means to be an actively engaged member of this church.
- I am looking forward to the Summer Youth Pilgrimage “Into the Wilderness” trip. Our youth are wonderful teachers, and I am deepened spiritually by the time I spend with them as they wrestle with spiritual meaning making.
- On that note: we are switching up our approach to Confirmation. We will offer it as a series of one-off modules. Youth can take them over the course of one or several years to add up to the full confirmation experience. We hope the a-la-carte approach might support youth accessing confirmation amidst their many other busy activities.
- Our Creative Worship Team continues has plans for a dynamic summer service focused on themes of color and light, and a reprise of the Hymns and Hops program later this fall.

Other things or special thanks:

- I want to offer special thanks to the generous members of this church. Each Sunday we acknowledge that the gifts you give, financially and with your time, are what make the work of this church possible. But I also want to offer a word of gratitude for the generosity of spirit I experience week after week. When I have been sick, you check in and offer well wishes. When I am away on vacation, you are eager to hear how it went, or how my family is doing. You offer thoughtful feedback on sermons and worship experiences. You show up and try new things, even when they make you uncomfortable. You take leaps of faith alongside the staff, regularly. And I know this generosity isn’t only extended to me. You show up to support one another: providing childcare, meals, housing assistance, compassion and forgiveness. I see the ways you are kind, gentle and curious with one another. I see how our church embodies its values, transforming lives. In a world where divisiveness and mistrust have become normative, this IS a sanctuary space, set apart. Each of you is part of the blessing that I receive in this community. Thank you!! – Rev. Tamara

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Children's Minister
Tammi VanDrunen

Highlights from the past year:

- We celebrated summer with a Summer Family Adventure kit. It had activities for the kids and faith tips for the parents. At the end of the summer, we celebrated with a big party in children's worship!
- We moved into our new, beautifully renovated children's worship rooms! Every week, I am grateful for how beautiful Betony Coons made our space. It's a gift.
- Nine 4th-6th grade students joined the Partners team.
- Partners began regularly leading prayer circles at the end of our worship time. It has been fun to watch them grow in leadership skills and in confidence!
- A consistent group of people have been helping in children's worship and it has been wonderful to get to know them.
- I was invited to a national UCC children's ministry conference specifically because of the innovative work we are doing at FCC. I was flown to Cleveland and got to meet several wonderful children's ministers in the UCC!
- After the conference, I was accepted into a Lilly Grant funded cohort of UCC Children's ministers called the Love of Children cohort. We are exploring ways to include children in corporate prayer and worship. I will also get to go to General Synod and visit some other innovative churches to continue my education. All of this is covered by the Lilly grant - so it does not cost FCC anything.
- I am also continuing work in a cohort of churches interested in intergenerational ministry through GenOn Ministries. This is also a Lilly grant-funded program, so I'm getting a delicious amount of continuing education at no cost to our congregation.

Things I am looking forward to in the coming year:

- Continuing to expand our children's worship Companion (adult volunteers) team.
- Continuing to deepen our commitment to the Partners program.
- Offering a training and care session for Companions early fall of 2025.
- Expanding the possibilities of what our Prayground in the sanctuary can offer and how what we are learning there can help worship for all ages.

Other things or special thanks:

- Serving the families and children of First Congregational is one of the biggest privileges of my life. Thank you!

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Director of Music

Nicholas Gilmore

Highlights from the past year:

- The choir presented a stunning performance of Dan Forrest's "the breath of life," an oratorio that both challenged and highlighted the FCC choir alongside a chamber orchestra in the spring.
- Our Christmas season featured a performance of Gustav Holst's "Christmas Day" and a collection of John Rutter works in "A Patchwork Christmas" featuring a chamber orchestra and soloists from the choir.
- The choirs, alongside members of the congregation, presented the second annual "Congregational Caberational!" featuring group and solo presentations to a full and exuberant crowd in Chadwick Hall.
- The church hosted a wide variety of recitals, concerts, and musical groups from around the community and the country including choirs, bands, vocalists, and instrumentalists.
- The Bell Choir performed several times throughout the year and has gained new members from our congregation.
- The choir collaborated with Tim Coons on a new arrangement of his "Shimmer, No Waves" that debuted at FCC.
- Eli Schamane presented the original song "Rainbow Colored Sea" for the Pride Service in June, and performed several vocal and instrumental solos throughout the season as our Principal Choral Scholar.
- The John Mills Orchestra played several concerts and provided Sunday morning music.
- Dorothy Elder presented an absolutely incredible 80th Birthday Celebration organ concert with a huge crowd, as well as a well attended advent organ concert.
- The church hosted a variety of concerts including organists, instrumentalists, the UNC Chamber Choir, Bethel College ensembles, and Frontier's Elementary School Choirs.

Things I am looking forward to in the coming year:

- Members of the choir will be singing on a tour of Ireland and Scotland this coming summer with members of the First United Methodist Church in Arvada.
- Looking forward to a continually growing choir and growing interest in being a part of our music program throughout the congregation and surrounding community.

Special thanks:

- Special thanks to our amazing organist Katie Hughes, who has taken the time and effort to do everything she can to make our program flourish and grow.
- A special thanks to Dorothy Elder, who is always available to play for sectionals and extra rehearsals along the way.
- The church continues to be the host of many community arts groups including the TransHarmonic Choir, the John Mills Orchestra, Greeley Harmonix Barbershop Chorus, The Labyrinth Theater, The Greeley Chorale, Beethoven in the Rockies, many UNC student recitals, the Greeley Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, and so many others.

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Church Administrator
Laura Gurney

Highlights from the past year:

- We made it through construction! The interior construction phase was a defining project and its completion was a milestone for the year. It is such a delight to see the life of our congregation and our people reflected in our space! We also completed phase 3 of our exterior landscaping project, having now converted more than 50,000 square feet of bluegrass to native or water-wise landscaping.
- We completed installation of our solar panels and are now solar powered! We also received a rebate of \$152,000 from the Inflation Reduction Act on the project.
- Our Safety & Welcome team and Cabinet have worked to find the balance of extravagant welcome and keeping the congregation safe. This work has not been easy, and it has been a joy to accompany those engaging it!
- We completed a transition of our fiscal year, which now runs July 1 - June 30. This better aligned our fiscal year with our program year, while also alleviating the year-end crunch in numerous ways.
- In July 2024, we outsourced our day-to-day financial operations to Church Finance Pros. This has proven to be an excellent partnership and has allowed me to shift a significant part of my day-to-day focus to other areas.
- Staffing Changes: This year we said goodbye to Whitney Janzen-Pankratz whose role as Community Coordinator supported many of our administrative functions. She has landed at UCC Longmont and is thriving there! We also said goodbye to our financial intern, Maria Orozco. She continues to look for her next financial role while working in her family's business. And just a short time ago, we welcomed Brooklyn McBride, our Communications Assistant! We have long wondered how Brooklyn might fold into our staff and when it all came together, we knew that it was exactly the next right thing for FCC.
- Rentals of our space and rental revenues continue to increase. Our building is always busy!
- Our administrative volunteer team continues to grow and hold essential pieces of our operations. We could not do all the work we do without them!

Things I am looking forward to in the coming year:

- In many ways, my role is shifting in this season from building and structuring to sustaining. I look forward to settling into a different pace for a bit!

Special thanks:

- Our Admin Volunteer Team: Deanna Bawdon & Karen Trainor - office volunteers; Michelle Heiny - bulletin maker; Jenny Sterba - worship slide producer; Sandy Magnuson & Dorothy Elder - Friday email blast team; Betty Meyer, Betty Fowler, and Michelle Gentry - Bell mailing crew; Kendra Villarreal & Lori McCarty - worship support wizards
- Ron Brinkman - for making sure I never have to think about the landscaping outside!
- Russ Doty & Linda Johnson - for your indispensable help in ensuring we received our solar rebate under the IRA

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Youth Director

Mike McBride

Highlights from the past year:

- This summer we were able to travel to South Dakota and help out with some work that needed to be done at the Rosebud Reservation. I loved the collaboration alongside Plymouth UCC and the relationships both FCC and PUCC have built and seeing it sprout into an awesome week of service and education.
- This was definitely a year of growing pains that turned into an energy that cannot be matched. I especially loved being part of a team that has worked so hard to bring joy, enthusiasm and memories into this space. We have made adjustments specifically catered to our youth and the fruits of our labor are starting to pay off. We went from a youth group size of 2-3 kids showing up consistently, to now a range of 7-10 showing up consistently. We are seeing more and more enthusiasm for our events coming up and cannot wait to see you all there!

Things I am looking forward to in the coming year:

- What I am most looking forward to this upcoming year is keeping the momentum going. We have an amazing group that has a high potential of being something special and most importantly, somewhere for the youth to have a safe space. We have an amazing opportunity this June to travel with the youth to Moab, Gunnison, and Grand Junction as part of our Wilderness Pilgrimage. I am also looking forward to the summer with the help of our gracious volunteers in planning out a stellar school year schedule.

Other things or special thanks:

- I cannot begin to describe the excitement I have for this upcoming year! I want to get a meeting with parents and students sometime in August organized so we can tell you all about the plans for the upcoming school year! I also want to shout out my partners in crime - I mean ministry - Hutton Ewert and Brooklyn McBride. We have all worked together for more than 5 years and this is truly our passion to make our youth group THE space to be yourself. We feel like this community at FCC is the dream-making space for a firm foundation for our youth.

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Treasurer

Lola Fehr

A Reflection on 2024

To say that 2024 was a year of change in the financial management of First Congregational Church would be an understatement. We adopted a six-month budget to transition to a July 1 fiscal year and then an annual budget to end on June 30, 2025. The Trustees annual stewardship campaign was an 18-month initiative to fund church programming through June 30, 2026. We also moved to outsource the bookkeeping function effective July 1, 2024. What have we learned?

We have learned that the 18-month pledge period was a little confusing and we continue to work at clarifying the pledge period. The transition of the budget proposal and approval process was successful and is now complete. We believe the decision to outsource bookkeeping was a move that increased office efficiency. Major changes such as this have their challenges, and we are all learning about this new partnership. One of the benefits has been the revising of the chart of accounts to present a more concise financial report. We have also adapted to receiving prior month's financial statements a bit later than when they were produced in-house.

This last schedule change impacts what reports will be available for the members at the annual meeting. The year-end closing financials will not be available until mid-July so the annual meeting financial report will be an interim one. A "Dollars and Donuts" event will be scheduled in August for the report to the congregation after the Trustees have done their review. This seemed like a better alternative than trying to assemble a quorum for a summer annual meeting.

Looking Ahead

The Trustees and the Cabinet have spent many hours pondering, analyzing, forecasting, discussing and amending the proposed budget for your consideration. The church continues to face the challenge of generating income needed to support the programs believed to be the core ministries of this congregation. We have said for several years that deficit spending cannot continue and all potential sources of revenue are being discussed. Meanwhile the members are again asked to approve a deficit budget which is presented with excitement related to the ministries supported and gratitude for the careful stewardship of those who have left us the resources to cover the deficits.

A look ahead cannot ignore the recent market uncertainty. As the church's investment portfolio, from which the deficits are funded, has been negatively impacted, we recognize that individual members will be facing some of the same challenges. A changing financial picture may require adjustments as we proceed through the year.

My appreciation for the generosity of this congregation knows no bounds. Thank you to those who hold elected positions of responsibility for the fiscal health of our community. Thank you to those who contribute as they are able through financial gifts or gifts of time to support the work of the staff and volunteers. Together we will assure that First Congregational Church is *In Greeley for Good*.

July 2024 - June 2025 Budget vs. Actuals
First Congregational Church of Greeley

Income

Line	Accounts	July 2024 - June 2025 Budget	July 2024 - February 2025 Actual (66% of Year)	Projection for 2025 Year End
1	40000 Pledge & Gift Income	\$500,000.00	\$360,120.28	\$510,000.00
2	40010 Bank Interest Earned	\$1,400.00	\$13,228.55	\$16,000.00
3	40100 Pledge Income - Prior Year	\$1,000.00	\$4,200.00	\$4,200.00
4	(This was combined into Account 40000 - Pledge & Gift Income)			
5	40500 North Lot Income	\$34,264.00	\$22,708.64	\$34,264.00
6	40600 Rental Income	\$19,000.00	\$20,406.67	\$25,000.00
7	40610 Sunshine House Rental	\$75,584.00	\$50,389.04	\$75,584.00
9	42100 UCCMA Income	\$7,000.00	\$4,635.77	\$6,953.66
10	42105 Mineral Royalty Income	\$25,000.00	\$9,096.80	\$13,645.20
11	40700 Income Related to Solar Project	\$13,400.00	\$10,573.86	\$15,860.79
12	45000 Misc Income	\$2,400.00	\$6,010.67	\$7,000.00
13	Total Regular Income	\$679,048.00	\$501,370.28	\$708,507.65

Expenses

Line	Accounts	Expenses Thru Jan 2024	July 2024 - February 2025 Actual (66% of Year)	Projection for 2025 Year End
14	Fellowship Ministry Group	\$4,500.00	\$5,169.59	\$7,754.39
15	Family Faith Formation Ministry Group	\$13,125.00	\$4,884.90	\$13,125.00
16	Outreach Ministry Group	\$9,000.00	\$6,914.40	\$9,000.00
17	Worship, Music, & the Arts Ministry Group	\$12,500.00	\$4,566.13	\$12,500.00
18	Operations	\$85,130.00	\$59,510.69	\$85,130.00
19	Building & Grounds	\$179,380.00	\$128,851.05	\$179,380.00
20	Personnel	\$498,295.00	\$335,158.56	\$498,295.00
21	Total Expenses	\$801,930.00	\$545,055.32	\$805,184.39

Deficit	\$122,882.00	\$43,685.04	\$96,676.74
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	Deficit Funding		
22	Restricted Reserves	\$48,075.00	
23	Unrestricted Reserves	\$74,807.00	

2025-2026 DRAFT BUDGET
(Approved 2025.04.15 by Cabinet & Trustees)
First Congregational Church of Greeley

Income 2025-2026 Budget Draft	
Category	Proposed Budget
Pledges & Gifts	\$501,000.00
Long-Term Rental Income	\$121,701.00
Short-Term Rental Income	\$25,000.00
Utility-Related Income	\$18,360.00
Bank Interest Earned	\$6,000.00
Other Income	\$14,500.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$686,561.00
Expenses 2025-2025 Budget Draft	
Category	Proposed Budget
Personnel	\$529,975.00
Operations	\$78,108.00
Building & Grounds	\$189,600.00
Outreach	\$10,000.00
Family Faith Formation	\$13,125.00
Fellowship	\$7,250.00
Worship, Music & the Arts	\$14,070.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$842,128.00
PROPOSED DEFICIT	-\$155,567.00
PROPOSED FUNDING SOURCES FOR DEFICIT	
PROPOSED USE	
Special Funds - Fellowship	\$242.00
Special Funds - Family Faith Formation	\$5,725.00
Special Funds - Worship, Music & Arts	\$12,541.00
Special Funds - Outreach Ministry Group	\$5,306.00
Special Funds - Personnel	\$3,600.00
Special Funds - Operations	\$4,000.00
Special Funds - Building & Grounds	\$28,468.00
Special Funds - Unrestricted	\$95,685.00
TOTAL RESERVES USED TO FUND DEFICITS	\$155,567.00