



ANNUAL REPORT 2008

FIRST UNITED CHURCH *of Oak Park*



Julie R. Harley, *Lead Pastor,*

Mamie Broadhurst, *Associate Pastor,*

Kelly Brouwer, *Associate Pastor,*

Marylen Marty-Gentile, *Director of Children & Family Ministries,*

William Chin, *Director of Music Ministries,*

Cathryn Wilkinson, *Organist,*

Judith Loevy, *Operations Manager,*

Julie O'Shea, *Financial Administrator*

Joan White, *Nursery School Director,*

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Church Council

Laurie Jolicoeur,
Moderator
ljolicoeur@lths.net

Church Council, the governing body of First United Church, is actively engaged with the life of the congregation on many levels. The Council supported our pastoral leadership transition as we celebrated the completion of Rev. Jim Brasel's interim ministry with us and joyously welcomed Rev. Julie Harley as our new Lead Pastor.

We paid a great deal of attention to the congregation's Wildly Important Goal (WIG). The WIG states: *"creating and maintaining a framework that nourishes the spiritual welfare of the congregation."* We integrated this into our work by beginning each meeting with a member's sharing of a personal spiritual moment or practice and by closing our meetings with a discussion of God's presence.

The Council handled many items of business. We approved a new personnel manual prepared by the Personnel Committee. We accepted the Nominating Committee's recommendation that we broaden the opportunity for service on church committees by installing a system of term limits.

Finally, we authorized a limited search (posting the opening for a called ministerial position on both the Presbyterian Church USA and United Church of Christ web sites) to fill the vacancy in the position of Associate Pastor for Youth and Adult Education. This opening will result from the expiration of Kelly Brouwer's current contract on August 31, 2009. We encouraged Kelly to apply for the ongoing position.

Deacons

Bud Hayes, *Chair*
bud.w.hayes@gmail.com

The Deacons fostered a culture of caring in the congregation, providing a variety of services and introducing new ways for members to enrich and deepen relationships. We reactivated the parish brunches to help First United members connect with their neighbors. We supported the launch of PrimeTime, a fellowship group for members age 60-plus. We began to explore the importance of generational differences in the life of our church.

In addition, we continued to hold all members of the congregation in prayer and to provide care in the form of PALS notes, flower delivery, transportation, CPR classes, home visits, and other services.

Pastor Nominating Committee

Jane Barker, *Chair*
jbark59@yahoo.com

The Committee merrily disbanded in October 2008 after completing our work. Having for a full year reviewed candidate profiles, interviewed prospects, and sought God's guidance, we unanimously arrived at our candidate for Lead Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Julie R. Harley. She preached her candidating sermon on August 24, and the congregation quickly registered its near-unanimous approval of the invitation to Julie to join us.

Christian Education

Youth Committee

Lou Valsoano, *Chair*
lvalsoano@ameritech.net

The Youth Committee serves with the associate minister assigned to youth activities. The Committee's purpose is to ensure a healthy, safe, nurturing, spiritual environment for the youth of First United, primarily FUJI (Junior Highs) and FUSH (Senior Highs). In addition, the Committee seeks ways to involve youth, both individually and as members of FUJI and FUSH, in the life of the greater church. The Committee serves as an advisory and sounding board for the minister as programs are planned and decisions are made.

3 Biggest FUSH (Senior Highs) accomplishments according to Youth Moderators:

1. Work Camp in Holland, Michigan.
2. Welcoming in a new class of freshmen, and showing them the power of the FUSH community.
3. Getting the ping-pong table back to church without killing anyone.

Children's Ministry Committee

Audrey Todd, *Chair*
audrey.todd@exeloncorp.com

The Children's Ministry Committee provided many forms of support to the Church School. We served as "room parents" for Sunday school classes, coordinated Gathering Day as activities resumed in September, and organized activity materials for children's use during worship services. We showed the congregation's appreciation for Church School leaders by hosting the Leader Breakfast and by supplying other gifts and goodies.

Adult Education Committee

Melinda Haag, *Chair*
mshaag@yahoo.com

The Committee provided a variety of programs on current topics led by our pastors, members and outside spiritual leaders. We ensured that adult education activities addressed issues and concerns identified by our staff and members. We created and distributed a calendar of adult education topics and leaders. We experimented with a variety of presentation models and formats, hoping to appeal to diverse ways of learning and diverse needs in the congregation.

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Faith in Worship Committee

Scott Haldeman, *Chair*
shaldeman@ctschicago.edu

The Faith-in-Worship Committee supports the staff as they lead the congregation in prayer and song, in telling the stories of our faith and in preaching. The major accomplishment of 2008 was, then, a year of rich and engaging worship, led by Julie and Mamie, Kelly, Marylen and Bill and Cathryn—and also by Jim and members of all ages, guests musicians representing a broad range of genres, and the dedicated choir. The decision to hold three services on Christmas proved a fine one and that “tradition” (of one year) is taking root! Our conversations at the beginning of 2008 revolved around the annual congregational meeting and the wealth of data about our worship life that was collected and analyzed. We have done our best to honor what we heard even as we continue to seek to hear and respond to the entire congregation about what makes worship a time and place of spiritual nourishment, growth and challenge. We ended 2008 by pursuing, and are implementing in 2009, a new effort to enhance lay participation in the planning of worship in addition to continuing to fill important roles each Sunday.

Faith in Action Committee

Bob Hahn, *Chair*
bobpathahn@sbcglobal.net

In answer to God’s call to help those in need, support those who are less privileged, and seek justice for all, Faith in Action supported three focused mission efforts and provided time, talent, and money to many other mission partners.

Globally, we focused on Colombia. Two First United visits to Colombia deepened our understanding of the injustices prevalent in the country and strengthened our resolve to help. We hosted a conference for U.S. Presbyterians interested in Colombia, supported a visit to Chicago by the Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia, participated in adult education forums, and held a day of prayer.

Locally, we supported Sister House, a transitional facility for people moving back into everyday life after successfully completing drug rehabilitation. We helped paint and clean their facility and provided money for simple necessities. In our Resident Mission within the First United walls, we provided tutors and space to the Cluster Tutoring program. We helped a Cluster Tutoring college-bound student with a grant to support her education.

Communications Committee

Connie Henderson-Damon,
Chair
hendamonc@earthlink.net

The Communications Committee has actively spread the word about First United. We worked with a web designer to rebuild the church’s web site, and we expect the new site to go live early in 2009 (www.firstunitedoakpark.com). We developed a liturgical calendar theme and color scheme for the new reusable exterior banners hung at the Lake Street entrance to the church. We established bulletin boards in the lounge for Church Council Minutes, information about upcoming events, and news about First United and its members. We began work on a new First United brochure for potential members and other information-seekers.

Music

Bill Chin,
Director of Music Ministries
bill@firstunitedoakpark.com

Music was alive at First United during 2008. The Sanctuary Choir and organist Cathryn Wilkinson contributed to its success. Selections from Buxtehude's cantata cycle *Membra Jesu Nostris* were featured during Lent and the John Rutter *Requiem* on All Saints Sunday. Music at First closed out the year with the spectacular third annual Sing We Joyous! Concert, partially benefiting the Cluster Tutoring program.

Cathryn Wilkinson, *Organist*
cathryn@firstunitedoakpark.com

I am continually grateful to God for the musical resources of this congregation. Chief among them is the 88-rank Casavant organ – superb tonal quality and variety, mechanical reliability and responsiveness, an ongoing inspiration to explore the beautiful musical sounds of organ pipes. Added to this: our concert Steinway piano, nearing 110 years old, 1 baby grand piano, 5 upright pianos, and 5 octaves of handbells with accessories.

Personnel Committee

Melinda Robinson, *Chair*
sonatainjmkr@aol.com

Acting as the congregation's representative in the relationship with staff, the Personnel Committee accomplished one major system-improvement project and dealt with several individual employment matters. Our extensive revision of the Personnel Guidebook received Council approval, becoming official First United Policy. It simplifies and strengthens our operations in many employment-related areas.

We successfully dealt with contractual matters in the employment of the Interim Lead Pastor, the temporary Director of Children's Programs, and the new Lead Pastor. We secured Council approval to change the position of Associate Pastor for Youth and Adult Education from a limited contract position to a called position. We have begun the limited search to fill that position.

New Member Committee

Karen Christopher, *Chair*
karen@sachemco.com

The New Member Committee created a more formal process for informing, educating, and involving new First United members. In a four-week structure, we organized presentations from several ministries and committees, designed to help new members know First United, begin to connect with the life of the church, and give expression to their own faith journeys. Through this process, repeated in February, June, and October, First United gained 38 new members and their families.

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**First United
Church of
Oak Park**

Combined Operations

Statement of Financial Position

Assets	Dec 31, 2007	Dec 31, 2008
Cash	\$ 148,274	\$ 115,027
Investments at cost	3,002,043	2,834,887
Unrealized Investment Gains (Losses)	561,367	(357,979)
RISA Loan	25,000	25,000
Chicago Community Trust Loan	40,000	40,000
Pastor Housing Equity Note	33,000	33,000
Presbyterian Foundation Gifts	51,955	51,955
Total Assets	\$ 3,861,639	\$ 2,741,890

Liabilities

Building Loan - Park National	\$ 685,000	\$ 375,000
Restricted Operating Funds	86,293	84,766
Net Capital Project Unfunded	(638,780)	(370,228)

Endowment Funds at Market

General Endowment Fund	\$ 1,136,282	\$ 795,873
Special Mission Endowment Fund	1,794,196	1,259,583
Pastoral Housing Fund	411,622	294,823
Building Fund	23,933	1,089
Women of the Church Fund	35,390	26,675
Priebe- Nursery School Support Fund	24,813	18,723
Gebhard-Christian Mission Travel Fund	75,340	55,355
Alice Flowers-Music Fund	62,571	47,149
Harrison-General Program Support	29,253	22,032
Harrison-Forest Home Cemetery Care	35,271	26,574
Memorial Fund-General Fund	18,151	13,700
Haines- Jr Hi Scholarship Fund	5,000	5,000
Haines- Sr Hi Scholarship Fund	5,000	5,000
Presbytery Foundation-Memorial Gift	11,408	11,408
Presbytery Foundation-Charitable Interest	40,547	40,547
	<u>\$ 3,708,777</u>	<u>\$ 2,623,531</u>
Fund Principal & Net Activity	\$ 20,349	\$ 28,821
Total Liabilities	\$ 3,861,639	\$ 2,741,890

Operations of the First United Nursery School and First United Evening Division are not included here.

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Sources and Uses of Funds

General Operations	Actual 2007	Approved Budget 2008	Actual 2008	Approved Budget 2009
Sources of Funds				
Pledge Income	\$ 560,871	\$ 601,000	\$ 597,319	\$ 603,103
Mission Endowment Draws	234,688	176,877	183,377	158,342
Other Endowment Draws	88,005	100,074	100,074	91,686
Other Income	188,525	138,500	146,947	123,500
Total Sources of Funds	\$ 1,072,089	\$ 1,016,451	\$ 1,027,717	\$ 976,631
Uses of Funds				
Pastoral & Admin. Staff	\$ 555,605	\$ 552,130	\$ 540,810	\$ 540,284
Other Personnel Costs	16,015	19,900	17,129	4,100
Admin & Building	211,551	207,554	210,901	214,100
Faith in Learning	34,383	28,790	22,062	25,885
Faith in Worship	29,832	18,600	15,200	19,600
Faith in Community	7,376	12,600	9,511	11,820
Faith in Action	196,978	176,877	183,283	160,842
Total Uses of Funds	\$ 1,051,740	\$ 1,016,451	\$ 998,896	\$ 976,631
Net General Operations Fund	\$ 20,349	\$ —	\$ 28,821	\$ —

Endowment Operations

Sources of Funds	2007	2008
Investment Income	\$ 227,724	\$ (818,046)
Endowment Funds Received	10,000	—
Investment Expenses	(10,537)	(9,245)
Total Sources of Funds	\$ 227,187	\$ (827,291)
Uses of Funds		
Draws from Endowment Funds	\$ 360,113	\$ 257,954
Total Uses of Funds	\$ 360,113	\$ 257,954
Net Uses of Endowment Funds	\$ (132,926)	\$(1,085,245)

Gifts were received in memory of the following in 2008:

Susan Cross	<i>Memorial Fund</i>
Nancy Lovell	<i>Memorial Fund</i>
Florence Hamilton	<i>Memorial Fund</i>
Alma Pennington	<i>Memorial Fund</i>
Jean Bonthron	<i>Memorial Fund</i>
Beulah Newman	<i>Memorial Fund</i>
Varina Bronnock	<i>Memorial Fund</i>
Naomi Hamilton	<i>Music Fund</i>

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Building & Grounds Committee

John Zaruba, *Chair*
Zaruba@bmttoys.com

The Building and Grounds operation was active in preserving and improving our church building. We accomplished many minor repairs and refurbishments, improved operational systems, and prepared for major work on the sanctuary roof. Projects included the standby boiler, water pipes, water treatment, sump pumps, the Music Room, the Narthex, and hallway tile replacement. The sanctuary roof work will begin in the spring of 2009.

Finance Committee

Justin Lewis, *Chair*
justin.lewis@comcast.net

The Finance Committee and the congregation of First United maintained our commitment to a balanced budget. For the fourth year in a row, during uncertain economic times, we not only have a balanced budget, but we have ended 2008 with a small surplus. During the fall stewardship campaign, we set an ambitious goal, aiming to secure 2009 financial pledges from at least 50 households that had not pledged in 2008. We exceeded our goal. As an additional element in our financial system, we recommended that First United member Dale Sorenson be appointed for a 3-year term as Treasurer. The Council approved the appointment.

First United Nursery School

Megan Lewis, *Board President*
meganhlewis@comcast.net

The year 2008 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the First United Church Nursery School. We celebrated the occasion during Sunday worship on October 19th, hosted a reception, and created outdoor banners announcing the event. The school developed a new web site with a new logo and tag line, "More Than Just a School." The Board of Directors' fund-raising efforts once again exceeded the previous year's results.

Membership Report

Members January 1, 2008	746
New Members Added	38
Confirmands	7
Members Removed by Death	5
Members Removed by Transfer	7
Total Members December 31, 2008	779



FIRST UNITED CHURCH *of Oak Park*

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