



Our Mission

To celebrate and share God's love through
dynamic worship experiences,
meaningful spiritual programs,
and nurturing leadership opportunities
as an inclusive Christian church

Agenda
"State of the Church" Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 12 pm

Virtual Meeting Via ZOOM and In person

- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Prayer
- III. Call for a Quorum (15% of Standing Membership –112 as of Feb 2, 2025 =17 members)
- IV. Appointment of the Parliamentarian
- V. Presentation and Approval of the December 8, 2024 Congregational "Business" Meeting Minutes
- VI. Review of Membership Statistics - see Annual Report pg
- VII. Nominating Committee - Mark Plumb
 - a. **MOTION: Council recommends we suspend the council and committee size requirements outlined in the Bylaws for the 2025 calendar year.**
 - b. Report on Committee Assignments
 - c. Nominations and Elections of Council and UCC representatives
- VIII. Presentations
 - a. Pastor Report - Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams
 - b. Financial Year End report
 - c. Committee Reports - Looking Ahead: Our hopes and dreams in 2025
 - i. Evangelism/Mission - Karin Haug
 - ii. Christian Education - Bonnie/Lynne/Anwar
 - iii. Properties - Brian Klabunde
 - iv. Endowment - Valerie Sauvé
 - v. Worship & Music - Chris Chance

(please see Annual Report or direct any questions to Committee Chairs/Liaisons)
- IX. Celebrations
 - a. Food Is Free
 - b. Capital Fund Loan completion
 - c. Leadership for 2025 - Thank you and Welcome
- X. Other reports and Open Discussion
- XI. Call for New Business
- XII. Adjourn with the Lord's Prayer - Pastor

NOTE for Current and Newly Elected Council Members: Immediately following our State of the Church meeting, **current and newly elected Council Members please remain for a brief organizational meeting** of the new 2025 Council for the purpose of electing officers.

Nominating Ballot

Nominations for 2025-2026 Council

Tom Derenne (1st term)

Anwar Jackson (2nd term)

Nominating Committee 2025

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Delegates 2025

SE Association

Paul Fried

Marsha Poulsen

WI Conference

Mark Plumb

Chris Chance

Committee Appointments

Properties - Karin Haug (2nd term 2025-2027)

Finance - Mark Plumb (1st term 2025-2027)

Endowment - Bonnie Andrews (2nd term 2025-2027)3

Meredith Anderson (1st term 2025-2027)

Christian Ed - Bonnie Andrews (1st term 2025-2027)

- Lynne Woehrle (1st term 2025-2027)

Worship -

Evangelism and Mission -

Minutes
"Business" Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, December 8, 2024 11:45 am
Virtual Meeting Via ZOOM and In person

1. Call to Order-Chris C, 12:07 pm
2. Opening Prayer-Pastor Sue
3. Call for Quorum (15% of Standing Membership. 115 official members = 18 persons) 26 members in attendance, 2 online
4. Appointment of the Parliamentarian-Mark Plumb
5. Approval of Minutes from:
 - a. **Jan 21, 2024 Minutes Bethel-Bethany State of the Church Annual Meeting:** Corrections proposed, Bonnie Andrews motioned to approve, Lynne Woehrle 2nd, motion approved
 - b. **June 30, 2024 Special Congregational Meeting:** no minutes taken, open forum discussion. There are mixed reviews on helpfulness of meeting, it has been discussed to keep dialogue open between membership, council, and pastor regarding concerns/questions going forward
6. Brief Updates
7. Discussion and Approval of the 2025 Budget. Betty Haas moved to approve budget, Kassius Whitmore 2nd
 - **Salary** - Brian Klabunde moves to amend budget to raise Finn (maintenance) to \$20/hour in 2025. Robert Bennett 2nd. Amendment approved (2 nays)
 - **Discussion** - Notes from members that discussions need to be had regarding membership and giving decline. This will be discussed fully at a future congregational meeting. The budget meeting is not the place for this discussion.
 - **Memorials** - Discussion needs to be had between Endowment and Council as to handling and accounting for memorials.
 - **Accounting** - Discussed accounting changes. Accounting Firm will be discontinued after alternate accounting software, Church Windows, and payroll processing are in place. Three hours per week will be added to Lisa's hours for accounts payable duties. Her rate of pay will be \$25 per hour. Motion Mark Plumb. Betty Haas 2nd.
 - **Antiracism line item** - Lynne Woehrle advocates for the antiracism budget being clear, perhaps the antiracism team could submit a plan to be included in the budget, to make clear that work is going forward. Amendment proposed by Lynne W to account for designated antiracism funds to be added to expenses under the antiracism programming line of the 2025 budget. Ruth Krymkowski 2nd.

- **Search committee other (line 19.4)** - proposed amendment to add \$1500 to pastor search - motioned by Cindy Krahenbuhl, 2nd by Caryn R.
- **Fund Balance sheet has been requested**; it will be attached to next week's weekly email.

Vote called on the 2025 Budget-approved (1 nay)

8. Open Discussion of Old Business

9. Call for New Business

Adjournment & Lord's Prayer

Respectfully Submitted,

Caryn Redemann



Church Staff

Pastor Rev. Nikkeya Berryhill (Jan—June)
Rev. Susan Schneider-Adams (Oct—)
Music Director David Melby-Gibbons
(Feb—Aug)
Admin. Asst. Lisa Quinn (June—)
Maintenance E. Finn Emmer

Membership Report

2023-2024

BAPTISM

- Theo Jackson—Nov 2023

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED

- Mark and John Horstmeyer (reinstated 4/10/24)

DEATHS AND FUNERALS

- Suzanne Rasmussen (not removed in 2022)
- Cindy Krause—Mar 2023—Pr Thad Winkle
- Gene Krymkowski— 2023—Rev. Ruth Krymkowski
- Joan Kutter—Dec 2024—Rev. Susan Schneider-Adams

REMOVED FROM MEMBERSHIP

1/1/2023 —133 12/31/2023 —128

- Suzanne Rasmussen
- Cindy Krause
- Darlene Kasta
- RuthAnn Kasta
- Helen Reinholz

1/1/2024 —128 12/31/2024—114

- Karen Kraft
- Megan and Ben Westra
- Valerie Esser
- Thad Winkle
- Brian Smith and Sarah Wynia-Smith
- Joan Kutter
- Angela and Ryan Jackson
- At Year End: Susan Burton, Amy Lingard, Kyra Lingard, Sarah Johnson Smith, Mary Williams, Lorrie Wilson

**ADULT MEMBERS AS OF
DEC. 31, 2024: 114**

2024 Council

Chris Chance*	President
Megan Westra*	Vice President (Jan—Aug)
Anwar Jackson*	Vice President (Oct—Dec)
Caryn Redemann*	Secretary
Kevin Wolf*	Treasurer (not on council)
Jeanne Fehr*	Financial Sec. (not on council)
Rev. Nikkeya Berryhill—Pastor (Jan—May)*	
Rev. Susan Schneider Adams (Nov-Dec)*	

(* denotes Exec Committee)

Meredith Anderson	F. Holger Foersterling (Nov-Dec)	Anwar Jackson
Ryan Jackson (Jan—Aug)	Brian Klabunde	Mark Plumb
Marsha Poulsen	Kassius Whitmore	

2024 Committees (at year end)

Christian Ed: Anwar Jackson, Jeanne Phillips, Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams

Endowment: Val Sauv  - chair, Bonnie Andrews, Cindy Krahenbuhl, Tom Payden, Marsha Poulsen, Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams

Evangelism& Mission: Karin Haug- chair, Chris Chance, Caryn Redemann, Susan Stuermer, Kassius Whitmore, Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams

Finance: Kevin Wolf—treasurer, Jeanne Fehr (staff), Cindy Krahenbuhl, Steve Komes, Val Sauv  (Endowment Chair) Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams

Properties: Brian Klabunde -chair, Mark Plumb, Karin Haug, Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams, Finn Emmer (staff)

Worship: Chris Chance (altar rep), Marsha Poulsen, Anwar Jackson (usher rep), Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams

2024 Teams

Antiracism Team - Bonnie Andrews, Anwar Jackson, Dave Redemann, Dr. Ruth Russell, Lynne Woehrl 

Food Is Free - Leads: Susan Stuermer, Marsha Poulsen, Chris Chance, Val Sauv .

Volunteers include (and more): Meredith Anderson, Bonnie Andrews, Sherry Dismuke, Valerie Esser, Tavi Foersterling, Paul Fried, Kellee Gustavson, Karin Haug, Steve Komes, Cindy Krahenbuhl, Jeanne Phillips, Riley Plumb, Fran Smith, Lynne Woehrl , Tariq

Council Report

Although change is certain in life, it is not necessarily our favorite thing to experience. We can tend to prefer our comfortable lives of sameness over the uncertainty of change, but change always brings great possibility. Transformation and Hope begin with change – both eagerly anticipated change and uninvited change.

Although the writer of Ecclesiastes proclaimed that there is nothing new under the sun, it was surely not a statement that change never happens. Rather, in the face of the constancy of change, humans are only consistent in their inability to see their true purpose and to approach the challenges of life with the resilience and openness that can transform us. We are, perhaps, destined to re-learn this lesson from generation to generation.

In the past year, in fact, in the past 5 years, our community at B-B has faced a lot of change - after the many hard challenges of a global pandemic, we bid farewell to two pastors in rapid succession, and also several staff, volunteers, and church members. Although our ongoing transformation has had its difficulties, we have continued to Live in Hope.

We had begun the year by hiring an Interim Music Director, and with Council and Pastor Nikkeya Berryhill planning and participating in a series of team meetings with the Conflict Transformation Team (CTT) from the WI Conference. In the absence of an administrative assistant, volunteers and the Music Director helped plan liturgy, select music and create the PowerPoint, leader guides and bulletins, and acted as liturgist during Worship. Volunteers from the Council took responsibility for bill paying (Cindy Krahenbuhl, Chris Chance), and an ad hoc Communications Team (Marsha Poulsen, Karin Haug, Anwar Jackson) edited and sent out the Weekend Update Friday news email.

When Pastor Nikkeya unexpectedly submitted her resignation with 3 weeks notice and moved on to an opportunity in the ELCA, our leaders on Church Council and the committees worked hard to provide the congregation with the worship services, communications and mission opportunities that you deserve.

In June we re-hired Lisa Quinn, Administrative Assistant. Lisa and the Worship Committee (Chris Chance, Anwar Jackson, and Marsha Poulsen) planned worship liturgies and music June through October. Lisa reached out to and scheduled weekly preachers using both the UCC and ELCA pulpit supply lists. In all, we had 20 guest preachers between June 9 and October 20. In August, David Melby-Gibbons, the Interim Music Director, declined the opportunity to renew his six-month contract. The volunteer musicians from the congregation also stepped down. Lisa and Chris searched our lists of available musicians, posted on job boards, and sent emails to the American Guild of Organists. They scheduled keyboard musicians through the end of the year from those that responded.

In July, Council leased the upper unit of 2866 N. 54th to Finn Emmer, our Properties Manager. On the recommendation of Finance Committee, Council approved the move of all investment funds in the Bethel-Bethany Endowment Fund from Morgan Stanley to LPL Financial, with a similar portfolio risk and the goal to increase ESG (Environmental, Social and Government) holdings from 50% to 70% within 3 years. Additionally, Finance Committee was to review fraud protection with our bank, and close the unused Memorial checking and savings accounts. And, as the E-giving account grows, funds should be transferred regularly to an interest-bearing Money Market account.

In August and September, two Council Members, Megan Westra, Vice-President, and Ryan Jackson, resigned from the congregation and the Council. Anwar Jackson was elected Vice-President. Holger Foersterling accepted the appointment to fill Ryan Jackson's seat until the next council election.

Throughout the summer and early fall, Council was also actively interviewing Interim Pastors, meeting with four different candidates, before negotiating a compensation package and offering the position to Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams to begin in the end of October. We also interviewed a music director candidate but ultimately did not offer the position.

In late October through December, and now working with Pastor Susan, the usual rhythm of Council work moved forward, activating the Nominating Committee, initiating a Stewardship Campaign, and recommending a 2025 Budget at the Congregational Business Meeting in December. We recommended to the congregation, and they approved, a \$5,000 commitment over 5 years to the Leadership Forward Campaign of the WI Conference. The campaign aims to support leadership within the Conference through the Damascus Project (Lay leadership), Catalyst Grants, and Ministerial Assistance.

Moving Forward into a new year, Council looks forward to a productive relationship with Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams. We plan to continue working with the Conflict Transformation Team, to reflect on our core goals and values as a congregation, to be more mindful of our purpose and more flexible in our thinking, and to nurture and prioritize our relationships with each other and our wider community.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Chance, Council President



Gospellers concert in July

Christian Education

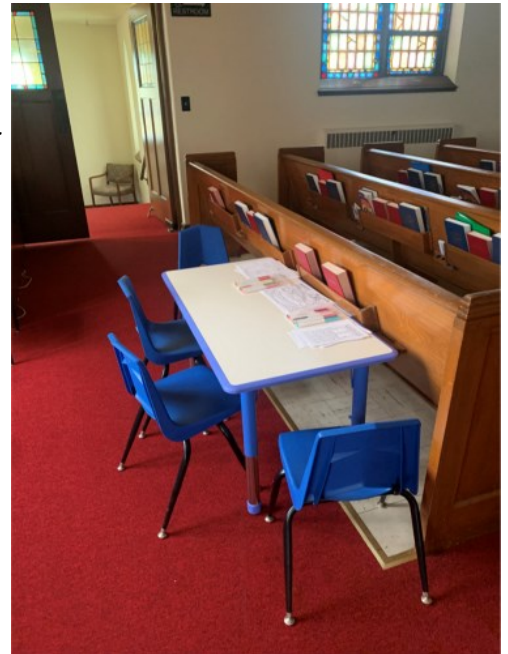
The Christian Education Committee suffered losses in membership this year, which have hampered activities. However, we were in the process of developing plans for a book club involving books that address social, spiritual, and religious concerns. We worked with the Antiracism committee to identify and form discussions on the book *How to Fight Racism*, by Jemar Tisby. We look forward to identifying more literature and continuing book discussions in the year 2025. We are also looking into bringing back Adult forum before worship service and incorporating that into these discussion.

Listening to concerns regarding children feel more welcome during worship service, we worked with Church Council to establish a children's workstation in the sanctuary. We are also looking into ways of incorporating "Children's Time" into service, as some other UCC congregations have done. Sunday School remains a vital part of children's Christian education, and goals for the coming year include recruiting more teachers willing to supervise Sunday School.

Last, but not least, one of our main goals is to increase our committee membership in 2025. We are currently down to 1 member, and finding additional members will make it easier to accomplish our goals for the coming year. As such, we do not currently have a meeting scheduled, but hope to do so soon after the Annual Church Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Anwar Jackson



Endowment

Through the use of the Endowment Fund Budget for 2024, we were able to award 2 college scholarships and 3 Church Camp scholarships for Bethel-Bethany members or their children. The remaining amount of budgeted funds is being set aside to pay for one half of the new kitchen flooring that will be installed in January.

In 2025, please let one of us on the committee know if you would like to apply for a scholarship for attending college, continued educational endeavors beyond high school, to attend Wisconsin UCC church camps, or other offerings such as those through The Damascus Project. We will assist you with that process.

Memorials and gifts received in 2024:

- Bethel-Bethany received bequests from the estates of Cindy Krause, Suzanne Rasmussen, and former members Judith and August Dascenzo.
- Bethel-Bethany was awarded a gift from the Ralph and Jeanne Houseman Family Fund in 2024.
- Many remembered and honored Joan Kutter's life (1930-2024) with memorial gifts to Bethel-Bethany.

I would like to graciously appreciate members of the committee who have made it a joy to do the work of this committee this past year; Cindy Krahenbuhl, Bonnie Andrews, Marsha Poulsen, and Tom Payden. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Sauv , Endowment Committee Chair



Planters purchased in memory of Cindy Krause

Evangelism & Mission Committee

In the past year, BBUCC continued ongoing outreach to our community in the following ways:

Outreach

Guest House: Baking for the birthday and graduation parties. A dedicated team of individuals share their homemade treats to make these monthly celebrations special. Thank you to Chris Chance, Betty Haas, Bonnie Andrews, Carol Darrington, Fran Hadley, Marsha Poulsen, and Debbie Payden for their continued commitment.

Community Dinner: On September 25, 2024, Bethel Bethany opened our doors once again for the first Community Dinner in a LONG time! Sponsored by the Sherman Park Community Association and Eco Housing, this “Green Community Dinner” provided food and fellowship, and a wealth of information on ECO housing resources – free home energy assessments, rebates through the Inflation Reduction act for home energy upgrades, how to promote environmental justice in Sherman Park, and more. More than 75 people attended! So many volunteers came out to cook, bake, serve, set up, clean up, and share conversation. Thank You!



Food is Free (FIF): This ministry continues as a vital and active part of our neighborhood. Through BB volunteer efforts, the pantry is stocked regularly, providing much needed food resources to our neighbors. FIF offers not only non-perishable items, but also meats, dairy products, fresh vegetables, fruit, household paper products, and personal care items.

All this is possible through your generous in-kind donations and financial support, and the hours of volunteer efforts by committed individuals. Thank you! Also, we were thrilled to receive a \$5,000 grant from the Elm Grove Junior Guild in 2024. We have applied for the 2025 grant and are

waiting to hear back. The Medical College of Wisconsin Orchestra raised \$900 for FIF at their concert in April. Thank you to Brian Smith and Sarah Wynia-Smith who are part of the orchestra and provided this connection. These financial resources provide the funds to offer so much more and purchase those much-needed perishable items.

In addition to the ongoing weekly stocking of the pantry, this year we offered Thanksgiving and Christmas Turkeys and Hams! We asked individuals to sign up in advance either online or by phone,

with the holiday meats available for pick up or delivery. This provided the centerpiece of holiday meals for approximately 12 families.

Since it first opened during Covid, our neighborhood pantry has made changes operationally (e.g., how shopping and stocking is managed) and in the year ahead, the Evangelism Committee will continue to evaluate and adjust practices to ensure our efforts make the greatest impact and reach as many people as possible.

INREACH

Fellowship: We often take for granted that there will be warm coffee and treats to go with our conversation downstairs after worship. It may be “just what we do” but it is an important part of inreach in our faith community, providing an opportunity for connection. Thanks to everyone who signs up to keep us fed and caffeinated!

While not organized by Evangelism and Mission, the following events took place in the past year and should be recognized as inreach for the positive connections they foster.

Silent Auction: A much-loved BB tradition, the silent auction not only raises money for our ministries, it also provides ways to repurpose things to new homes and share fellowship at hosted dinners. This year the auction raised \$1772.00. Thanks to Chris Chance and Mark Plumb for keeping the tradition going.

Annual Camping: Every summer since 1991, B-B campers have gathered at for a weekend of outdoor fun. This year 14 of us on 6 campsites at Kohler-Andrae State Park hiked, biked, swam, sunned, read, sat around the campfire, watched wax melt(?) and enjoyed God’s beautiful planet together. 2025 trip is set for July 25-27.



LOOKING AHEAD...

The New Year is a wonderful time to look back and recognize the ways that our outreach makes a difference in this small corner of Milwaukee and beyond and recognize the strong bonds we build through our inreach. The New Year is also a good time to look with new eyes on our Evangelism and Mission efforts to ask how we can make them even more impactful ... and then prayerfully consider how we, as Christ following people, might bring his message of love in new ways.

In the year ahead the Evangelism and Mission team will do just that. We’ll evaluate our outreach efforts and gather ideas and plan for reinvigorated inreach (maybe potluck dinners, game days, summer outdoor fellowship, making sandwiches on Second Sundays ...). Do you have ideas? Are you passionate about sharing God’s JOY with others? If so, please contact Pastor Susan or me so you can be included in the exciting journey ahead, a journey filled with possibilities!

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Haug, Evangelism Chair

Properties

The Properties Committee mission is to have B-B be a peaceful place of worship that is beautiful, welcoming and safe. Our responsibilities include maintenance and improvement of the church and The Community House buildings and properties. Together with our part-time maintenance employee Finn Emmer, we've accomplished a lot this past year, and it wouldn't have been possible without your efforts. Thank you!

And so, let us celebrate a few of our major accomplishments in 2024:

- Rainwater leaks into the steeple tower staircase ceiling through the north and east elevations of the exterior stone walls have finally been stopped! H. Froebel & Son masonry made the repairs, paid for by the Capital Fund. The damaged drywall ceiling will be repaired after a small leak into the middle of the balcony hallway is stopped, which we think will happen when a new roof is installed.



- Brian and Finn rototilled and removed the grass from the steep hill on the east side of the church along the alley, which is very difficult and dangerous to mow. Then, at a planting party on Oct 19, Bonnie Andrews, Chris Chance, Mark Plumb and Kris Gerke Komes, Meredith Anderson, and Tim Perkins planted dozens of perennials that had been donated, covering the entire hill. It'll be exciting to see the results in the spring!
- A battery-powered string trimmer was purchased, made by the same manufacturer (Greenworks) as the lawn mower, so batteries are interchangeable.
- Mark painted the ceiling of Fellowship Hall, in preparation for Brian and Finn converting the 24 fluorescent ceiling fixtures to LED.

- As part of Phase 1 of the Journey to Decarbonization project, Brian and Finn completed the conversion of ALL fluorescent and incandescence lighting throughout the church to LED. This has resulted in a 39% reduction in electrical usage and a 12% decrease in electrical costs (about \$300 annually).
- By the time you read this, we will have a new kitchen floor! Karin has led the project, coordinating the selection of the vendor (Straight Edge Flooring) and the tile. The new floor was installed Jan 13-17, 2025. The Endowment Committee is splitting the cost with the Properties Committee.

As Properties Committee chairperson, I'm also involved with several informal teams that I'd like to acknowledge and thank:

The **Lawn Rangers** are responsible for mowing and trimming the grass lawn at the church and The Community House during the summer growing season. Our team members are Rich Pine, Anwar Jackson, Steve Komes, Thomas Foersterling and Brian Klabunde. We are a great team that were always willing to switch weeks when someone had a vacation or other conflict. We got it done every week. We did that with a new battery-powered lawn mower that was purchased last year to replace our gasoline lawn mower and become more eco-friendly. And we've now added a battery-powered string trimmer to our arsenal. Thank you, Lawn Rangers!

The **Flower Power** group is responsible for maintaining the ornamental flower beds and bushes around the church, and the raised bed vegetable gardens at The Community House. Led by master gardeners Bonnie Andrews and Chris Chance, and assisted by Mark Plumb and other volunteers, they create the beautiful and welcoming landscape we all enjoy. This year's efforts culminated with a combination Lawn & Garden Cleanup and Planting Party on October 19, when not only were our flower beds cleaned out and prepared to face the long winter, but Chris and Bonnie and many volunteers planted the perennials that were donated by you on the steep back hill. Thank you, Flower Power group!



The **Snow Crew** is responsible for keeping our building entrances and walks clear of snow and ice during the winter season. For 2025, our team includes Anwar Jackson, Mark Plumb, Tim Perkins, Steve Komes, Valerie Sauvé and Brian Klabunde. The crew was always willing to switch weeks or help out when work or other responsibilities call. On December 20, Tim Perkins – with help from son Noah and son-in-law Noam – cleared the first heavy snow of the season. Thank you, guys! And thank you, Snow Crew!

The **Creation Care Team**, formerly the Green Team, is a group committed to sustainability, fighting climate change and global warming, and caring for God's sacred gift to us, the planet Earth. Our members include Scott Bennett (chairperson), Bob Ullman, Mark Plumb, Steve Komes and Brian Klabunde. We kept a low profile in 2024, but you may have heard of or participated in the past in the Wisconsin Conference UCC "Kairos: Call to Action", National Earth Day, Sustainability Tips, Sustainability Bingo, "Saving Us" book discussion, 4th Sunday after worship Green Team meetings, Plastics Free Milwaukee and Green Homeowners United.

Thank you again to the Properties Committee and all the volunteers that keep B-B beautiful, welcoming and safe. You are appreciated!

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Klabunde, Properties Chair
Committee members: Mark Plumb and Karin Haug

Worship

Jan - May

In February, David Melby-Gibbons was hired for 6 months as Interim Music Director. David, along with Megan Westra, Brian Smith and Sarah Wynia-Smith provided music every week, created bulletins and PowerPoint, and assisted Pastor Berryhill as needed in worship. After Pastor Berryhill's departure, they stepped up even more and did all the music planning and presentation through August 11. We celebrated the end of David's time with us and all of our volunteer musicians the first weekend in August.

Submitted by Lisa Quinn

June - Dec

The Worship Committee was reactivated in June after Pastor Berryhill's departure, consisting of Marsha Poulsen, Chris Chance, and Anwar Jackson.

In the Summer and Fall months, the three Worship Committee members rotated planning the Sunday services using various online resources. During those months, we relied on the assistance of our newly-rehired office admin., Lisa Quinn, to help us fill the pulpit each week. We also relied on David Melby-Gibbons (Interim Music Director) and volunteer musicians from the congregation – Megan Westra, Sarah Wynia-Smith and Brian Smith - providing all music selection, preparation, and performance. We are so grateful and miss them all! They had all left us mid August, and after that Lisa and Chris Chance retained outside musicians for each week. This has worked out very well and we continue to rely on Lisa to schedule our pool of three musicians: Craig Bodoh, Robert Gee, and Julia Derby.

After Pastor Susan Schneider-Adams became our Interim Pastor in late October, she stepped in as chair of the committee.

When Pastor Susan joined us, we all agreed to use the A Sanctified Art Advent-Christmas-Epiphany package of worship resources, which has provided a rich worship experience using the included liturgies, devotionals and visual elements. We ended our year with an Un-Rehearsed all church Christmas Pageant (pic at right), Christmas Eve Worship, and a Sunday of Lessons and Carols

The Lay members of the committee are deeply grateful to have Pastor Susan working with us. Her enthusiasm, commitment to collaboration, attention to detail and UCC background have been energizing and invigorating for us!

Looking forward, we hope to be able to hire a permanent Music Director, after taking some time to learn more about what the congregation wants from our music ministry. We also intend to explore new ways we can add creative and meaningful elements to worship.

Submitted by Marsha Poulsen,
Committee member



Antiracism Team

The B-B Antiracism team worked with Christian Ed committee over the summer to identify a book for a common read. During fall 2024, the congregation has been invited to join in discussion of the book *How to Fight Racism* by Jemar Tisby. While many people expressed interest in the discussion group, the typical attendance has been 4-5 people. The book discussion has been facilitated by Lynne Woehrle. We have used the book, the study guide/workbook, and the video series to dig deep into the practical guidance of Tisby. Those attending have really appreciated the book and the structure of the study. The book is highly accessible without being fluffy in content. The group discussions have been thoughtful.

The book discussion will continue in 2025 as the group decided it was very important to take just one chapter at a time and really give the book the attention it deserves. The book study group recommends that a few chapters and the videos that go with them be selected for all-church engagement, preferably as part of the service but if not that as a highly encouraged program of engagement during coffee hour or under the structure of some church tradition. We think that how Tisby shares his 15-20 minute clips by video is a really good tool to move the church to actually engage the topic and help prepare us to better work with the neighborhood that surrounds our place of worship.

We also would like to see a facilitator hired in 2025 to work further with the congregation to develop our better understanding of how the national policies of racism - past and present - have shaped who we are as an organization and how we practice our Christian faith.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Woehrle

Journey to Decarbonization (J2D)

The mission of the Journey to Decarbonization (J2D) project is: *to protect and care for God's sacred gift, the planet Earth, and all creatures that inhabit it; and to fight climate change through decarbonization and electrification of our church building and infrastructure.*

Decarbonization: *The process of reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced to heat, cool, and power buildings and vehicles.*

Electrification: Replacing fossil fuel energy sources with electricity:

1. *Reduces greenhouse gas emissions*
2. *Reduces energy costs*
3. *Improves indoor air quality*
4. *Enables better electricity grid management*

Bethel-Bethany's J2D project began on a cold Sunday morning in February of 2022, when our 35-year-old natural gas boiler needed repair. We were able to do an easy repair, which has given us time to look at alternative heat sources.

In May of 2023, B-B joined the Sherman Park Neighborhood ECO Team (SP ECO), coordinated by Tim Perkins and supported by the City of Milwaukee Environmental Collaboration Office (MKE ECO). MKE ECO is responsible for developing the Cream City Climate Challenge (C4) program, designed to inspire weatherization and electrification and improve health and safety outcomes for Milwaukee's historically disadvantaged communities. SP ECO meetings led to B-B being selected as the first church in the Cream City Climate Challenge & Green Congregations Initiative (C4/GCI) pilot program. The mission of the C4/GCI group is to implement weatherization, electrification, carbon reduction and green infrastructure improvements in houses of worship and other buildings throughout Sherman Park and other neighborhoods.

As the first step, in August of 2023, Dr. Victor Nino of EcoBalance Technologies, LLC completed a detailed, scientific, 74-page Energy and Indoor Air Quality Assessment of B-B's church building. From the Energy & IAQ Assessment a multi-phase **J2D Project Plan** (copies available) was created which, after all energy efficiency measures are implemented, would result in a significant reduction in B-B's harmful impact on the environment, while also saving energy costs!

J2D Project impact:

- Reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions from 33 tons of CO₂e to 9 tons of CO₂e (-73%)
- Reduce annual energy costs from \$6,701 to \$ 4,419 (-34%)
- Increase our ENERGY STAR rating from 27 to >50 (+85%)

J2D Project phases:

- Phase 1: LED Lighting, weatherization/insulation and a new roof in preparation for solar
- Phase 2a: A solar system sized to meet current electrical needs
- Phase 2b: Additional solar sized to meet future needs with electric heat pumps
- Phase 3: Electric heat pumps (replacing our 37-yo gas boiler) and air exchange ventilation

J2D Project estimated costs:

- \$234,000 cost to implement ALL phases
- \$ -55,500 in grants/rebates (Fed IRA/ITC grants, Focus on Energy rebates, other)
- \$178,500 net cost

We've already completed a part of Phase 1, LED lighting conversion. In May of 2024, Brian Klabunde and maintenance employee Finn Emmer completed replacing ALL the fluorescent and incandescence light bulbs throughout the church with LED bulbs, including the 48 in Fellowship Hall and the 3 large up lights in the sanctuary ceiling. The total cost of \$1,100 was offset by a grant of \$1,000 from the Wisconsin Conference UCC Creation Care Team, a \$500 grant from Interfaith Power & Light and a \$75 Focus on Energy rebate. These changes have resulted in an estimated 39% reduction in electrical usage and a 12% reduction in electrical costs (approx. \$300 per year). A great success!

In October of 2024, B-B applied for a \$100,000 Dept of Energy grant which, if received, would have reduced the project's net amount to \$78,500 and would have been a great way to kick-off a J2D fundraising campaign. However, we learned on Dec. 19 that we were not selected. So, it's time for a new strategy, which will likely involve looking at each phase individually and moving at a slower pace. Which may even be better; this is a large project and needs the support of the whole congregation.

The J2D Project team, consisting of Brian Klabunde, Bob Ullman, Scott Bennet and Lynne Woehrle, will be meeting in early 2025 to determine next steps. So, stay tuned! Your help will be needed to make a difference in the fight against climate change and to help us all be better stewards of God's sacred gift, planet Earth.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Klabunde, J2D Project Team Leader

Technology Report

We continue to stream, record, and archive each worship service, as well as project the responsive prayers on the large TV screens and control the sound system. The services are streamed live to three separate platforms:

- Zoom (via the link in the weekly email)
- Facebook (www.facebook.com/bbucc)
- YouTube (www.youtube.com/@bethel-bethanyucc8045/live)

Facebook and YouTube retain a copy of each service so that you can watch it later if you cannot watch it live. YouTube has the recorded services arranged by year.

Much thanks to the "Stream Team" for their hard work this past year as we adapted to different pastors as well as having the information put together by different people. Dave Redemann, Ted Finger, Ben Westra, and myself rotated responsibility for the tech each Sunday, and did our best to roll with the changes and challenges throughout the year. We have an opening for an additional AV Tech (or two!). If you are interested, even in just knowing what is involved, please let one of us know.

The church technology needs were minimal in this past year. We added a monitor and docking station in the pastor's office for any pastor to easily connect their laptop to the network.

The outdated Servant Keeper software was replaced with Church Windows for tracking membership information as well as financial contributions. Lisa is working on the migration to the new software.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Pine

Finance Summary

Financial Summary Highlights

For financial details, refer to 2024 Financial Reports pg 27-30

Income

2024 Total Income for all Funds was **\$212,523**

This Income included:

- 2024 Collection Plate (including on-line): \$137,399
- Capital Fund Contributions: \$28,129
- Food is Free: \$19,603
- Endowment (including memorials) \$14,425
- Fundraising and rental income \$ 9,493
- Journey to Decarbonization (J to D) \$ 1,575
- Misc. \$ 1,899

Subtotal Income: **\$212,523**

Other INCOME:

- Interest \$ 940
 - Market Gains \$ 51,092
- TOTAL INCOME** **\$264,555**

Expense

2024 Total expense for all Funds **(\$164,383)**

NET Income and Expense	\$100,172
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Expenses were down from budget expectations by \$62,013. This is explained in part by a \$39,917 reduction in staff salaries due to not having a pastor for six months and using pulpit supply for worship, and also to using church volunteers to fill the music director and administrative assistant roles for part of the year.

There were also significant savings in the budget for properties and other committee expenditures, as seen in the financial details. These are not savings that can be expected to be ongoing in 2025, however, but for 2024, they were a helpful offset to the \$8,000 decrease of total income budgeted.

Finance Report

Financial Procedures

This year we found that our financial procedures and the resultant reporting were not as nimble and transparent as we had hoped they would be when we first transformed the accounting procedures in 2022. In the interest of constant assessment and making improvements as needed, the Finance Committee and Council agreed that moving our accounting back in-house and making a change in the accounting software used would be in our best interest.

In the first quarter of 2025 we will begin to make the switch from QuickBooks Non-Profit to Church Windows. Our Finance Secretary, Pastor, and Administrative Assistant each have 20-30 years of experience with Church Windows, both as accounting software and as membership management software. All of Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable will be entered into the same program in real time rather than having to transfer donations monthly into QuickBooks from Servant Keeper. We will open a new position of Accounting Assistant who will be responsible for Bill Pay (Accounts Payable) and our Finance Secretary will continue to maintain Donations (Accounts Receivable). Lisa Quinn, our Administrative Assistant, will also now serve as the Accounting Assistant, by adding 3 hours/week to her availability. A Payroll Service will be retained to manage payroll and taxes, and the Finance Committee will be responsible for setting up a process to review payments made by the Accounting Assistant and Payroll Service.

Our hope is that reports produced for Council will be clearer and that processes will be quicker and cleaner. Reimbursement checks will be processed more quickly, and ready access to financial data will make Council's oversight simpler.

Again, as in 2022 when the first accounting changes were made, our goal is to make our accounting more streamlined, leaving more time for focus on mission.

Capital Debt Repayment

Thanks to all your years of faithful contributions, and a donation by a member family at the end of 2024, the Capital debt can be retired! The Loan with the Cornerstone Fund will be fully satisfied in January 2025. The Capital Fund began in 2012 with the Mission: Accessible Campaign to support the cost of \$585,000 to build the accessible addition to the church. In 2021 we refinanced the loan to pay for the tower roof and masonry repairs. The Capital Fund was used again in 2024 to make further extensive masonry repairs on the tower. Although we no longer have a mortgage, we will still maintain a Capital Fund, and we encourage you to continue to make donations to it as you are able. This will be key to our ability to keep our buildings in good repair in the future without having to borrow for large repairs.

Investments

Markets did exceptionally well this year, resulting in a \$50,000 gain in our investments. Each year, we plan to limit our expenditure of our investment money to only 5% of the 12-quarter average balance, which ideally protects the investment principal over time. However, due to the overall financial strength of our congregation over the past years, we have again not made any withdrawals from our investments in 2024.

In 2024, we also changed financial advisors and have moved all of our investment funds from Morgan Stanley to LPL Financial. Our financial advisor is Gregg Schaeffer at Richmond Investments, who we worked with at Morgan Stanley several years ago. This move to LPL will save us in management fees, and will also allow us to engage in socially responsible investing (or environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance investing). Finance Committee's goal is to reach 70% ESG investments in 2-3 years; we are currently at about 55%.

To meet our ESG goals, we are preferentially investing in companies involved in:

- Racial and gender equity – Businesses that focus on diversity within their Board of Directors
- LGBTQ rights
- Reproductive rights
- Environmental, to include “green” energy and decarbonization initiatives
- Labor/Employee/Human Rights

and we are Screening OUT companies involved in

- Tobacco
- Fire Arms/Landmines/Cluster Munitions
- Defense Spending – with any part or component that can maim or kill
- Child labor

On 12/31/24 the total in the Bethel-Bethany Endowment Fund was \$431,848.92

Additionally, our PNC Bank Accounts of operating funds hold \$28,000 in an interest-bearing Money Market account.



2024 Budget vs Actual

	2024 Budget	2024 YE Actual	Over (Under) Budget
INCOME			
Collection plate and Member Donations	\$ 171,584.00	\$ 137,399.00	\$ (34,185.00)
Fund Raising	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,768.00	\$ 268.00
Endowment Draw	\$ 17,278.00	\$ -	\$ (17,278.00)
Church Rental	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 75.00	\$ (925.00)
TCH Rental (Apartment and Lower)		\$ 5,725.00	\$ 5,725.00
Urban Immersion	\$ 1,200.00		\$ (1,200.00)
Other Grants	\$ 500.00		\$ (500.00)
Reimbursements	\$ 700.00	\$ 117.00	\$ (583.00)
Designated Income			\$ -
Food Is Free	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 19,603.00	\$ 4,603.00
Other		\$ 328.00	\$ 328.00
Journey to Decarbonization		\$ 1,575.00	\$ 1,575.00
Benevolence			\$ -
Food and Shelter	\$ 750.00	\$ 40.00	\$ (710.00)
UCC 5 for 5 offerings	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 894.00	\$ (356.00)
other	\$ 250.00		
Other income	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 445.00	\$ (1,055.00)
Capital Fund	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 28,129.00	\$ 22,129.00
Endowment			\$ -
Principal		\$ 3,708.00	\$ 3,708.00
Memorials		\$ 10,717.00	\$ 10,717.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 220,512.00	\$ 212,523.00	\$ (7,989.00)
			\$ -
EXPENSE			
Staff			\$ -
Pastor	\$ 91,934.00	\$ 56,639.00	\$ (35,295.00)
Music Director	\$ 6,770.00	\$ 350.00	\$ (6,420.00)
Office Manager	\$ 11,988.00	\$ 7,628.00	\$ (4,360.00)
Properties Manager	\$ 6,748.00	\$ 6,602.00	\$ (146.00)
Employer FICA	\$ 2,536.00	\$ 1,091.00	\$ (1,445.00)
Worker's Comp	\$ 924.00	\$ 1,430.00	\$ 506.00
Contracted Services			\$ -
Accounting Services	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 5,898.00	\$ (1,602.00)
Preaching and Music honorariums	\$ 3,800.00	\$ 12,645.00	\$ 8,845.00
TOTAL STAFF AND CONTRACTED SERVICES	\$ 132,200.00	\$ 92,283.00	\$ (39,917.00)
			\$ -
Additional Pastoral Expenses	\$ 2,600.00	\$ 1,618.00	\$ (982.00)
Office & Office Supplies	\$ 2,930.00	\$ 2,717.00	\$ (213.00)
Operations (Bank Fees, Insurance, Phone, Website, Software)	\$ 18,276.00	\$ 18,298.00	\$ 22.00
Properties	\$ 25,820.00	\$ 13,124.00	\$ (12,696.00)
Programs and Committees			\$ -
Christian Ed	\$ 3,135.00	\$ 1,163.00	\$ (1,972.00)
Council		\$ 164.00	\$ 164.00
E&M	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 348.00	\$ (1,252.00)
Endowment		\$ 2,048.00	\$ 2,048.00
Worship	\$ 2,070.00	\$ 1,636.00	\$ (434.00)
Fundraising		\$ 1,230.00	\$ 1,230.00
	\$ 24 6,805.00	\$ 6,589.00	\$ (216.00)

Benevolence			\$ -
Food and Shelter	\$ 1,950.00		\$ (1,950.00)
UCC Special Offering	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 763.00	\$ (487.00)
Other Benevolence	\$ 250.00	\$ 260.00	\$ 10.00
	\$ 3,450.00	\$ 1,023.00	\$ (2,427.00)
UCC and Community Support	\$ 6,404.00	\$ 6,963.00	\$ 559.00
Scholarships	\$ 6,911.00	\$ 5,655.00	\$ (1,256.00)
Food Is Free	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 6,813.00	\$ (8,187.00)
Capital Fund	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 9,300.00	\$ 3,300.00
Journey to Decarbonization		\$ 1,073.00	\$ 1,073.00
Misc Expense		\$ 2,275.00	\$ 2,275.00
			\$ -
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 226,396.00	\$ 164,383.00	\$ (62,013.00)
NET ORDINARY INCOME	\$ (5,884.00)	\$ 48,140.00	\$ 54,024.00
Other Income			
Interest income		\$ 940.00	
Market Gain/Losses		\$ 51,092.00	
TOTAL OTHER INCOME		\$ 52,032.00	
NET INCOME		\$ 100,172.00	

Balance Sheet 2024			
			Dec 31, 24
ASSETS			
	10-1001 · BB PNC Checking		31,670.41
	10-1002 · BB PNC e-giving Checking		36,321.26
	10-4004 · Richmond Investment Services		431,848.92
	10-4005 · Money Market		28,000.00
	Total Checking/Savings		527,840.59
	Other Current Assets		
	10-1005 · Deposit Holding Account		-879.30
	Total Other Current Assets		-879.30
	TOTAL ASSETS		526,961.29
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
	Total Liabilities		8,484.30
	Equity		
	30-000 · Net Assets		
	30-100 · Operating Fund		19,170.87
	30-200 · Next Century Fund		381,892.31
	30-500 · Special Worship Fund		1,045.72
	30-600 · Benevolence Fund		748.80
	30-800 · Capital Fund		7,461.25
	30-970 · Antiracism Fund		28,023.61
	Total 30-000 · Net Assets		438,342.56
	32-000 · Unrestricted Net Assets		-16,680.96
	Net Income		96,815.39
	Total Equity		518,476.99
	TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY		526,961.29

2025 Budget - Approved

			Annual Budget 2024	Approved Budget 2025	Change from 2024
Income					
1. General Giving					
	1.1 Collection Plate				
		1.1.1 Member	171,084.00	150,000.00	-21,084.00
		1.1.2. Non-member	500.00	500.00	0.00
	1.2 Fundraising				0.00
		1.2.1. Fair Trade	500.00	1,200.00	700.00
		1.2.2. Silent Auction	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
TOTAL 1. General Giving			175,084.00	154,700.00	-20,384.00
TOTAL 2. Endowment Draw			17,278.00	18,000.00	722.00
TOTAL 3. Facilities Rental			1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
TOTAL 4. Urban Immersion			1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00
TOTAL 5. TCH Income			0.00	9,000.00	9,000.00
TOTAL 6. Grants			500.00	500.00	0.00
TOTAL 7. Reimbursements			950.00	950.00	0.00
8. Designated Income					0.00
		8.1 Food is Free	15,000.00	6,500.00	-8,500.00
		8.4 Journey to Decarbonization	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
TOTAL 8. Designated Income			15,000.00	7,700.00	-7,300.00
9. Benevolence					
		9.1. Food, Shelter, and Commu	750.00	750.00	0.00
		9.2. UCC Special Offerings	1,250.00	1,250.00	0.00
		9.3. Other Benevolence	250.00	250.00	0.00
TOTAL 9. Benevolence			2,250.00	2,250.00	0.00
TOTAL 10. Other Income			1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00
TOTAL 11. Capital Fund			6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00
TOTAL 12. Endowment Income				0.00	0.00
		TOTAL INCOME	220,762.00	202,800.00	-17,962.00
Expenses					
13. Staff & Contracted Services					
TOTAL 13.1 Pastor			91,933.80	91,619.28	-314.52
TOTAL Other Staff			46,112.00	46,945.53	833.53
TOTAL 14. Additional Pastoral Expenses			1,700.00	1,750.00	50.00
TOTAL 15. · Office & Office Supplies			2,930.00	2,930.00	

TOTAL 16. Operations		17,736.00	24,789.00	7,053.00
TOTAL 17. Properties and Properties Co		25,820.00	17,450.00	-8,370.00
18. Programs and Committees				
	18.1.1. Curricula, Progra	1,250.00	0.00	-1,250.00
	18.1.2. Background che	100.00	100.00	
	18.2. CE: Adults	750.00	120.00	-630.00
	18.3. CE: Other	100.00	0.00	-100.00
	Total CE	2,200.00	220.00	-1,980.00
	18.2. Council		70.19	70.19
18.3. Evangelism & Mission Committee				
	18.3.1. In Reach	1,400.00	500.00	-900.00
	18.3.2. Outreach	1,400.00	800.00	-600.00
	Total Evang	2,800.00	1,370.19	-1,500.00
18.4. Endowment Committee				
18.5. Finance Committee				
18.6. Worship Committee				
	18.6.1. Worship Materi	1,000.00	500.00	-500.00
	18.6.2. Copyright Exper	720.00	290.00	-430.00
	18.6.3. Choir/Band Mus	250.00	0.00	-250.00
	18.6.3. Worship Other	100.00		-100.00
	18.7. Urban Immersion		1,200.00	1200
	18.9 Fundraising Expense		1,000.00	1,000.00
TOTAL 18. Programs and Committees		2,070.00	2,990.00	920.00
19. Search Committee				
	19.1. Pastor Search Expenses		300.00	300.00
	19.2. Candidate Travel Expense	1,500.00	800.00	-700.00
	19.4. Search Committee Other	1,500.00	0.00	-1,500.00
20. Benevolence				
	20.1. Food, Shelter, and Commu	1,950.00	750.00	-1,200.00
	20.2. UCC Special Offerings	1,250.00	1,250.00	
	20.3. Other Benevolence	250.00	250.00	
21. Wider Ministry Support				
	21.1. Common Ground	1,000.00	1,000.00	
	21.2. UCC Our Church's Wider N	4,000.00	4,000.00	
	21.3. UCC SE Wisconsin Associat	840.00	690.00	-150.00
	21.4. UCC Meetings			
	21.4.1. Registration	600.00	1,200.00	600.00
	21.4.2. Accomodations		1,500.00	1,500.00
NEW	21.5. WI Conf UCC Leadership Fc	0.00	800.00	800.00
22. Scholarships				
	22.1. School	6,911.00	7,196.00	285.00
23. Food is Free		15,000.00	6,500.00	-8,500.00
24. Antiracism			28,000.00	28,000.00
25. Capital Fund		6,000.00	6,000.00	
28. Designated Expense				
	28.1 Journey to Decarbonization			
	28.2 Phase 1 LED conversion			
29. Misc Expense				
TOTAL Line 19-29		40,801.00	60,236.00	19,435.00
TOTAL EXPENSE		234,102.80	250,300.00	16,127.01
NET INCOME		-13,340.80	-47,500.00	-34,089.01