



Riverside Community Church



**RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY  
CHURCH UNITED  
CHURCH OF CHRIST  
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

*“Do your little bit of good  
where you are; it’s those little  
bits of good put together that  
overwhelm the world.” –  
Desmond Tutu*

# RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

## 2024 Annual Meeting

January 26, 2024

### AGENDA

11:50	Buffet Line Open	
12:05	Welcome, Call to Order, Quorum	Doug Roof
12:10	Opening Prayer	Vicky Stifter
12:15	Set the Agenda	Doug Roof
12:20	Approval of 2024 Congregational Meeting Minutes	Doug Roof
12:25	Riverside Year-In-Review Video	Kathryn Murray
12:30	Celebration of Service Award	Jeannie Chance
12:35	<u>Roundtable Discussions of Leadership Reports</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasurer and Finance &amp; Development                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator &amp; Diaconate                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music &amp; Arts</li> <li>• Children &amp; Youth</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Adult Education / Spiritual Nurture                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice and Witness</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Building Committee / LTW Capital Campaign</li> </ul>	Doug Roof & Vicky Stifter
12:50	<u>Open Discussion</u> What captured your attention in your review? What did you hear that excites you? What do we need to watch closely in 2025?	Doug Roof & Vicky Stifter
1:05	Acceptance of Board and Committee Reports	Doug Roof
1:10	Presentation of 2025 Budget, and Vote	Michael McElwee
1:25	By-Laws Revisions explained and Vote	Doug Roof
1:35	Acknowledgement and Gratitude for those with expiring terms of service	Doug Roof
1:40	Nominations and Election of Leadership	Doug Roof
1:50	General Comments & Directives to Council	Beth Hartwell
2:00	Adjourn	

# RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

## 2024 Annual Report | Table of Contents

Agenda.....	page 1
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes January 28, 2024.....	page 3
Special Congregational Meeting – Meeting Minutes May 5, 2024 .....	page 5
Ceasefire Resolution May 5, 2024 .....	page 6
Annual Membership Report.....	page 7
Moderator’s Message.....	page 8
Pastor’s Report .....	page 9
Children & Youth Ministry Board Report .....	page 11
Adult Education & Spiritual Nurture.....	page 13
Building & Maintenance Committee Report.....	page 15
Communications Team Report.....	page 17
Diaconate Board Report .....	page 18
Justice & Witness Committee Report .....	page 19
Kitchen Team Report.....	page 21
Music & Arts Board Report .....	page 22
Giving Campaign Report.....	page 23
Capital Campaign “Lighting the Way” Report .....	page 24
Treasurers Report .....	page 25
Proposed 2024-25 Budget .....	page 27
Proposed By-Law Revisions .....	page 28
Nominations for 2024 .....	page 30

## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES | JANUARY 28, 2024

Called to order 12:00 p.m. Quorum established: 45 members present.

Prayer by Pastor Vicky

Commissioning of the Lighting the Way Capital Campaign Team by Pastor Vicky

Approval of the minutes

Annual Meeting Jan 22, 2023: --- Unanimous approval

March 5, 2023: --- Unanimous approval

May 7, 2023 --- Unanimous approval

We watched a video of the past year prepared by Yvonne Arbogast.

Anne Harris presented the Celebration of Service award to Gary Rains.

Small groups gathered at 10 tables of six to discuss specific board and committee reports.

Some of the feedback from groups:

- Appreciation for the leadership team, large amount of work and projects on the building and all the people who volunteered;
- Appreciation for having the downstairs safe and ready for the school due to the new entrance;
- Excitement about Katie and what she's doing with the youth;
- Appreciation for the Current newsletter;
- Appreciation for the Kitchen Team;
- Appreciation for the new weavings;
- Appreciation for Sacred Wild program, meaningful to many;
- How important the new music minister is, bringing specific focus to music;
- Importance of managing the money and projects in this next year;

## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES | JANUARY 28, 2024

- Katie is looking for ways to connect with teens;
- Surprise at how much efforts the communication team makes to get the word out to the community for RCC events;
- Excitement that we have a balanced budget for the first time in years. Challenge for the budget next year when we spend all the PPP money;
- 80 pledges this year; largest number ever, including 10 new pledgers.

### **Leadership reports as presented in the annual report are voted for acceptance**

- Motion to approve leadership reports passes unanimously.

### **Michael McElwee and Stu Watson presented annual budget**

Highlights in the budget: Additional pledges; one more year PPP funds available after this year.; increased building use has helped the budget; Board of Finance and Development will be reviewing endowment fund investments; budget includes 2-3% cost of living raise for staff, which does not keep up with inflation; one unpaid month sabbatical by Pastor Vicky helps the budget; Board of Finance and Development invested checking account funds in CDs; music minister position is only funded for 4 months of 2024 (six month total project) so if we determine to make it permanent we will have think about ways to pay for it.

- Motion to approve budget passes unanimously.

### **Bylaws Reviews**

Changing name of childrens' board and adding an adult education board; reducing the minimum number of board members from six to three or four.

- Motion to approve bylaw changes passes unanimously.

### **Nominations for new slate of officers**

- Motion to approve slate of officers passes unanimously.

### **Directives to Council**

- Kim Vogel asks that we try to be leaders in the Gorge for young people who think suicide is an option.

Pastor Vicky leads everyone in a standing ovation thanking moderator Doug Roof.

Pastor Vicky leads us in a closing prayer.

**Meeting is adjourned at 1:41 p.m.**

## SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES | MAY 5, 2024

Quorum is determined to be present

Call to Order and Prayer 12:18

### **Proposed Ceasefire Resolution**

John Boonstra discussed what it is and is not with 3 major points:

1. Killing is wrong
2. Our faith urges peacemaking
3. Never be silent to injustice

The congregation heard many arguments in favor with rationale and few against.

The objection was to the last point calling to suspend military aid to Israel until a ceasefire is declared.

Tom Hackett moved to amend the resolution deleting that point.

This was seconded by Charlie Warren.

The motion was not passed and then the resolution went to a paper vote.

The resolution (attached) passed with a 31 YES and 3 NO.

### **Capital Campaign Update**

Gean Rains presented the new figures of \$755,417 representing 94% toward the \$800,000 goal.

### **Capital Projects Update**

Gary Rains Updated progress on 3 near term items

1. Carpet installation happening the end of this month
2. Landscaping
3. Explore feasibility of installation of a sprinkler system in building

Ann Harris took the opportunity to present the Celebration of Service award to Gary in person.

Doug Roof announced the vote count of 31 to 3.

Closing prayer and circle

Adjourn 1:30

### **RESOLUTION for a Ceasefire in Gaza**

*Even as we deplore Hamas' vicious attack of October 7th, we decry Israel's response, resulting in the deaths of more than 34,000 Gazans, the displacement of nearly 2 million, and the specter of widespread starvation and illness. We cannot sit idly by while this tragedy unfolds.*

*As The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."*

*We choose not to remain silent.*

*As a people of faith committed to peace with justice for all, who deeply mourn the historical and current violence and injustice in Israel and Palestine, we call upon the United States government to:*

- Publicly call for ceasefire, de-escalation, and restraint by all parties;*
- Expand readiness and capacity for a desperate humanitarian response;*
- Call on all parties to abide by the laws of war, including the Geneva conventions, customary international law, and international human rights law;*
- Prioritize steps to secure international protection for civilians and the immediate release of hostages and prisoners unjustly held; and*
- Suspend military aid to Israel until a ceasefire is declared and a political solution guaranteeing security and autonomy for both Israel and for Palestine is pursued by all parties.*

As presented by the Justice & Witness Board of Riverside Community Church

# RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH | ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT

**ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP | JANUARY 1, 2024** **112**

**NEW MEMBERSHIPS RECEIVED** **10**

Tammy Alcott | Adam & Joy Brake | John Head

Lucia Orth | Mary Magdalena | Kathy O'Neil

Dana Pricher | Megan Sturdy | Kristen Warnock

**ACTIVE MEMBERS LOST** **2**

**BY DEATH**

Dick O'Bannon | John Wright

**BY TRANSFER**

Patricia Mitchell

**1**

**BY OTHER**

**ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP | DECEMBER 31, 2024** **119**

**PASTORAL ACTS**

**BAPTISMS**

Odin Olsen

**1**

**MARRIAGES**

**FUNERALS/MEMORIAL SERVICES**

**6**

Fran Cody | Gregory Gilbertson | Dick O'Bannon

Helmut Riedl | Vic Pavlenko | John Wright



## MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

Doug Roof, Riverside Moderator

“The Spirit is A Movin’ all over, all over, this land.”

That’s the refrain from a Christian folk song written in 1969 by Carey Landry. We used to sing it on church retreats and other gatherings as members of a Methodist church back in Delaware. As my term as Moderator at Riverside has been wrapping up, that melody keeps coming back to me.

The first verse of the song is:

“People are gatherin’, the church is born. The Spirit is a-blowin’ on a world reborn.”

The song reminds me of what Karen and I wandered into when we first visited Riverside in 2016. This church was alive. The people, the pastor, the programs, the music all combined to create a palpable energy. While the pandemic did put a temporary damper on things, this congregation came through it in good health. The Spirit was still A Movin’.

We are a congregation that provides the financial strength, through annual giving campaigns and the recent capital campaign, to support the physical and human resources required for a robust presence. We are a congregation that steps out into the community to lift others up. We are a congregation that invites everyone to enter and welcomes them when they do. We are a congregation that lovingly nurtures our children and youth. We are a congregation that strives to take care of our own spiritual health.

Looking back over the past twelve months, we’ve grieved as a community over the passing of some lovely members, while rejoicing in the “life” each brought to Riverside. We have welcomed new members, and many have jumped right into our work, as well as our play.

The nominations slate you are being asked to approve at this Congregational Meeting deserves your attention. It is an impressive list of a diverse set of leaders. I’m sure they share my belief that this church - this congregation - true to our mission, is a “vibrant, Spirit-filled community” that stands on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Our members and friends have consistently chosen to support Riverside Community Church in so many ways, and we owe a special debt of gratitude to those who have accepted nominations and have boldly said, “Yes, I will serve.”

The Spirit is A Movin’ all over this land, and we are blessed to be tuned in. We can’t take anything for granted as we strive to deepen our spiritual awareness and build a better world. May we continue to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with the Spirit.

- Submitted by Doug Roof, Moderator

## PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor Vicky Stifter

### **Foundation: noun**

foun-da-tion

*: a basis (such as a tenet, principle, or axiom) upon which something stands or is supported*

*: an underlying base or support*

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My word for 2024 is “foundation.”

Amid turbulent times, guided by God’s grace and goodness, we turned our attention to our foundations—those people, places and practices that ground, sustain and strengthen us.

**Lighting the Way:** With the implementation of a successful capital campaign, we committed to equip our building to be a place of ministry, mission and community connection for decades to come. The generosity of Riverside members and friends underscored the foundational role that our historic building plays in our Gorge community.

**Grief & Gratitude:** We experienced significant cracks in our foundation this year with the death of a number of beloved community members, including: David Warnock, Helmut Riedl, Dick O’Bannon, Vic Pavlenko, and John Wright. In the midst of our grief, we also gave thanks to God for these precious lives.

Our hearts were also shattered by suffering in the broader world. Along with several other Riversiders, I’ve continued to play a leadership role in Gorge Gaza action, a group committed to stand with our siblings in Gaza and bring an end to the U.S. funded genocide.

**Worship:** We found strength and solace in our weekly worship services, both inside and outside of the sanctuary. Outdoor services included a sunrise Easter service at Rowena Crest, a joint service on the banks of the Columbia with friends from the Unitarian fellowship & Bethel UCC, and an August campout and service at Toll Bridge Park. The members of the Diaconate and Music & Arts Board have played a vital role in caring for the foundations of our worship experience.

**Music Ministry Plan:** In turning our attention to Riverside’s music ministry, we were reminded, once again, of the foundational role that it plays in the life of this congregation. A music survey revealed a great love and respect for traditional offerings, as well as a desire for diversity. The passion and strong opinions led to some conflict and difficult conversations. Guided by the Spirit, we were able to work our way through these challenges, establishing a Music Ministry Plan that includes a regular rotation of three gifted musicians, a strong corps of volunteer vocalists, and a variety of guest musicians.

## **PASTOR'S REPORT, cont'd**

Pastor Vicky Stifter

**Spiritual Nurture:** We launched the *Adult Education and Spiritual Nurture Board* in 2024, with the goal of creating a stronger & broader foundation for our education and nurture activities. With leadership from Chair Dana Pricher, the Board has become a vital piece of our mission and ministry, and a welcome partner in my work.

**Community Building:** The Spirit continues to call new friends and members to the Riverside Community. The depth and diversity of these newcomers was evident at the three Inquirer's Gatherings held during the year. As Vic Pavlenko so aptly described, we are blessed with "seekers," ten (10) of whom joined the church as new members.

Our community building efforts were also strengthened by our annual retreat at Camp Adams, where more than 45 people (including 17 children) gathered for a rich weekend of connection.

**Staff:** The foundational heart of our community continues to be nourished and strengthened by Kathryn Murray and Katie Cook, who demonstrate again and yet again the creativity, tenacity and compassion of our God.

I am blessed to be in ministry with each and every friend and member of this beloved community of faith and give thanks for the journey ahead.

**God is indeed good....all the time!**

- Submitted by Pastor Vicky Stifter

## **CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY | BOARD REPORT**

Katie Cook, Youth Director

### **Church School and Nursery Care**

Church School lessons are based on the lectionary and often include a reflection time, a game or outside activity and a craft project. Each week is different depending on which children are present. Kristin Daly is a great asset and is flexible about helping out with both the older and younger kids depending on what is needed.

### **Babysitting Night**

The theme for this year's babysitting night was St. Patrick's Day. Fun-filled activities included making leprechaun traps, decorating four-leaf clover cookies, playing games like a "potato roll relay race," finding magical lucky charms and enjoying a pinata. The adult volunteers are always much appreciated, and the pizza dinner is always a hit too.

### **Easter**

Hunting for Easter eggs after the church service is popular especially since Dave Kaplowe is such a good sport about being the Easter Bunny. Two egg hunts were coordinated- one for ages five and under and one for ages six and older. Riverside teens are great about filling and hiding the eggs as well as helping with the hunting process. An Easter craft was made available for kids who needed a quiet activity to occupy them during the worship service since there is no church school on Easter Sunday.

### **Quilts for Seniors**

Everley Boonstra was gifted with a stunning quilt which was made with great love by Kim Vogel. This year's masterpiece included some of Everley's favorite colors as well several carefully stitched butterflies. The quilt was truly a heartfelt gift-Thank you Kim!

### **Earth Camp**

This title for this year's Earth Camp was The Magic and Mystery of God's Creation. For Magic Monday, a professional magician named "Shoelaces the Clown" performed mysterious magic tricks as a way to illustrate that God is present in our lives in ways that are not always easy to understand. Tuesday was four-legged friend day and several Riversiders brought their dogs and other animals to share stories about their beloved pets. Keith Harding, Steve Chance, and Zac Lytle helped everyone on habitat day learn how to build an outside emergency shelter out of large branches and pine boughs. In addition, everyone enjoyed making magical fairy houses using natural materials which included flowers, small twigs and acorns. For Galaxy Day on Thursday, activities included hunting for moon rocks, watching a star/planet slideshow, making galaxy slime and creating edible fruit rocket ships. Each day ended with music and a closing reflection with Pastor Vicky.

Many thanks to Ann Becker, Tertia King, Gail Lyon, Bonnie New, Christy King, James Holloway, Frank Haskell, Nancy Johansen Paul, Susan Bell, Lorene Murray, Sarah Lyon, Karen Roof, Zac Lytle, Steve Chance, Keith and Karen Harding for all their good help!

## CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT, cont'd

Katie Cook, Youth Director

**OWL (Our Whole Lives)** This year's OWL program served twenty-one 8th and 9th graders who were split into two cohorts. The OWL curriculum provides developmentally appropriate workshops which helps teens make healthy decisions about relationships and sexuality so that they can safely navigate their teen years responsibly by being well informed. A social justice component is included in this curriculum as well so that teens can be educated about important gender identity issues. OWL started on the Wednesday evening after Labor Day and concluded on December 18th. A highlight of the program includes an LGBTQIA+ panel which always proves to be a powerful and educational experience. The cohorts are taught by a rotating team so that each session is facilitated by at least two trained adults for each workshop. Guest speakers included Deputy Pete Hughes who made an important presentation on social media, sexuality and safety and McKenna Carter from the Public Health Dept. who provided educational information on different methods of birth control. Many thanks to Angela Harr, Ann Becker, Laura Bergner, Robin Henson, Judie Holt-Mohar, Tom Hons, Lisa Kosglow, Gail Lyon, Lekadia Mattson, Elaine Thompson and Daron Ryan. Thank you also to Ann Harris and Zac Lytle who were willing to step in as substitutes.

**Fall Fundraiser** For this year's fall fundraising event, a separate outing was created for Riverside's young people. The outing included a trip to G. Williker's Toy Store and Pietro's Pizza. Special cupcakes provided by Melissa Tokstad were enjoyed as well. For this event, it was helpful to have several adult chaperones since it involved going downtown and into public venues.

**Pumpkin Carving** After worship, families with kids enjoyed the annual pumpkin carving and spooky themed finger foods event. Some of the carved pumpkins are saved for Diana Beterbide's Howling Dog Halloween Concert and others can be taken home to be enjoyed.

**Camp Adams** This year's campers included almost as many kids as adults! This treasured UCC camp is in the foothills of the Cascades on 216 acres of rainforest. The natural beauty of this unique environment lends itself to creating a meaningful experience for all and everyone was especially grateful for being able to go crawdad fishing with Gary Rains since it was not possible the year before due to atmospheric river weather conditions. Other activities included a magical nativity creation project that was led by Heather Lytle and Charissa Callison which everyone enjoyed during this year's advent and Christmas Season.

**Christmas Play** This year's Christmas play, entitled, "The Christmas Story: A Modern-Day Rendition" provided great enjoyment for all. In this highly participatory event, many Riverside families joined in the fun to help Mary and Joseph navigate their way through White Salmon and Hood River while searching for a safe place to give birth. Mary and Joseph, hilariously played by Andrea and Dave Kaplowe, and Alyra Elliot as narrator. The script was created such that any family could join in the fun with very little preparation.

- Submitted by Katie Cook, Youth Director

## ADULT EDUCATION & SPIRITUAL NURTURE | BOARD REPORT

Dan Pricher, Board Chair

The Board met a total of eleven times this year on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 10:30 am in Ruth Wells room.

We started off the year by reviewing the Board's purpose and looking at all the ways Riverside is currently providing adult education and spiritually nurturing activities. Our goals for the year were: 1) to bring "wood" to the places where spiritual fires/passion exist within the congregation and listen/look for sparks that we might help nurture, 2) Recognizing and celebrating how we nurture our own spiritual connection as well as providing opportunities for our community to nurture their spiritual growth.

The year started with a Lenten book study in coordination with Bethel and Spirit of Grace on "The Land is Not Empty" with the author, Sarah Augustine, which explores the Doctrine of Discovery. After the series ended, we looked for ways to continue the conversation through participation in GNAC and supporting Justice and Witness activities with the Round Dance, Trunk or Treat, and Christmas giving. There was also a follow-up book discussion on another of the author's books called "So Our Children May Live" through the regular book group.

In April, we hosted a film and discussion group about Israel/Palestine in support of J&W Friday Gaza action group. The film was titled "Israelism" and focused on changing views of Jews towards Israel. This was followed by a discussion with members from the group "A Jewish Voice for Peace" which is the world's largest Jewish organization that stands in solidarity with Palestine. These efforts culminated in the passing of a church resolution on May 5 by the congregation.

In June we focused on LGBTQ+ support and education activities. These included presentations on pronouns in church along with stickers for name tags, a discussion panel similar to that in the OWL program including folks from a local support group for parents of trans children, a film titled "For the Bible Tells Me So", participation in the Pride parade, and a sermon from Tyler Connelly.

Doug presented a "Depolarizing Ourselves" discussion through Braver Angels in July which focused on examining our own bias in political interactions and beliefs.

We hosted the first summer camp out at Tollbridge Park in August in coordination with the outdoor sermon. We had a 12-people campout and held a sermon at the group campsite which got a lot of positive feedback.

Stu hosted a drumming circle using Vic Pavlenko's drums which performed during a church service.

In September a survey was sent out to the congregation to collect information on education topics of interest as well as dates and times that might work for people.

## **ADULT EDUCATION & SPIRITUAL NURTURE REPORT, cont'd**

Dan Pricher, Board Chair

The Fall spiritual nurture series “Nourish and Nurture” was held in Oct and Nov over 5 weeks and featured dinner, a rotating art offering, and a virtual garden design class called “Sanctuary Within”. We had between 10-15 people every week and many positive comments.

Also, in October there was a film viewing with several other local churches of “Bad Faith,” a documentary that reveals how Christian Nationalist leaders have spread fear and anger for decades, distorting political issues into Biblical battles between good and evil.

During and after the Camp Adams retreat in Nov, two conversations around post-election actions were facilitated by John Boonstra. “Grounding and Preparing for Unsteady Times” took place in December and was well attended.

In November and December, Vicky led an Advent book series on “All Creation Waits” before church service.

Throughout our meetings we strived to identify communication and information channels within the church as well as how we interact with the larger community through our website, social media, and other avenues. We discussed ways to improve and make communication more efficient.

We look forward to working with the other Boards and Committees in the year to come to continue to engage and support our congregation and community.

- Submitted by Dana Pricher, Board Chair

## BUILDING & MAINTENANCE BOARD REPORT

Gary Rains, Board Chair

2024 started as a very busy year. Putting the wrap on the **FIRESIDE EXIT** and getting a **CHANGE OF USE** which made leasing the space legal. This allowed Bright Beginnings to move back into the space. This project required the assistance of eight contractors, Joe Smith's able assistance and management, and help from numerous Riverside members. One area of note was Eric Bingener's help welding and installing the handrails on the stair and reinstalling the handrails along the walkway.

Chinook Plumbing gave us an **EAST SIDE HOSE BIBB** which made it possible for Greta's Gardens to then **LANDSCAPE THE EAST SIDE** of the church to the satisfaction of the County. We were also able to eliminate an old phone line that was pulling the back porch roof apart and remove a large elm tree that was undermining the sidewalk.

Affordable Floors **RECARPETED THE SANCTUARY**. The last time this was done was in 1990. A large group of Riverside members removed pews and then put them back.

**SANCTUARY PAINTING** was last done in 1992 by GL Clark. When we looked for a new painter, we received three bids and settled on Nate Clark, GL's grandson. Nate was a young child when his grandfather and father last painted our church. Nate's crew completed this before Thanksgiving. While moving scaffolding around they accidentally broke one ceiling light which they repaired and reinstalled. They also installed the new **CEILING FANS** which should insure more air movement on hot days. Joe Smith was also able to replace and repair a couple of the can lights.

Land Electric stepped up to provide much needed new **KITCHEN ELECTRICAL PLUGS**. We continued to work on a **FIRE SUPPRESSION AND ALARMS**. Charlie Warren has taken on working with Wyatt Fire and several fire alarm companies. We requested plans and costs for everything. The result is fire suppression (sprinklers) are difficult, if not impossible. Riverside does not have sufficient water unless we add a 4" waterline from Sherman St... an additional cost of over \$50,000, making the total cost more than \$200,000.

After weighing all the options, we recommended that we only put in an **ALARM SYSTEM**. The local fire chief agrees. This will give Riverside coverage 100% of the time with the fire department only 5 minutes away. We have contracted with Point Monitor to begin this installation in late May/June. To facilitate this decision, we recently installed **KNOX BOXES** on both the front and back of the church. These make it possible for the fire department to get into the church at any time of day or night without breaking-in. Total cost is estimated at less than \$40,000.

In October we applied for Architectural Review by the City of the **JACKIE LIGHT BALCONY**. The city is requiring our appearance on January 22. If goes well, this project should be approved in March. The next step will be a request-for-proposal and to establish a real budget and timeline, with construction late this year or possibly in 2026.



## **BUILDING & MAINTENANCE BOARD REPORT, cont'd**

Gary Rains, Committee Chair

For over a year we've been investigating adding **AIR CONDITIONING** to the Sanctuary. We looked at several alternatives and determined the least expensive is also perhaps the best. Oregon Equipment plans to replace three of the existing furnaces and add air conditioning. The existing units are 32 years old and are near the end of their lifespan. This will give us new units that should be good for the next 25-30 years. We are not replacing the one which serves the Fireside Room. This installation project is planned for this May. Total cost is less than \$60,000. We continue to work on small projects as they come up.

### **FUTURE 2025 PROJECTS**

**Stain glass** - Hauser will inspect and give us an estimate to repair and clean on their next visit to Portland. Their rep is out of Idaho.

**Southside Landscaping** - Keith is considering changes to the southside planting beds, etc. to create an attractive sitting area. Greta has been asked for a plan. This is slated for next Spring.

**Outside Sign** - Leonard is working on this.

**Additional Painting** - Need trim on exit doors, touchup of closets, exterior doors. We will try to get to this later this month. Minimal \$.

- Submitted by Gary Rains, Board Chair

## COMMUNICATIONS TEAM REPORT

Kathy Watson, Committee Chair

Committee Members: Kathy Watson, Chair, Stu Watson, Gean Rains, Kathryn Murray, Melissa Tokstad, Molly Fauth, Marin Smith, and Yvonne Arbogast.

The Communications committee is charged with ensuring Riversiders and the broader community are informed about what's happening here, and most important, how they can be involved.

Our most well-known communications tool is the weekly Riverside Current, which goes out to 250 people. Kathryn Murray, as part of her work in the office, also posts regularly to Facebook and manages content at the Web site, [www.riversideucc.com](http://www.riversideucc.com). We also submit news releases to local media and often help prepare and distribute posters about upcoming events.

However, we have determined that more time is needed to keep our connections fresh and new. The church Council has approved in the 2025 budget an additional part time contractor who can assist with these many tasks, so that we might better achieve one of our two Mission Priorities, focused on building relationships with our broader community.

- Submitted by Kathy Watson, Chef & Kitchen Team Chair

## DIACONATE BOARD REPORT

Alison Betzing, Board Chair

The Diaconate Board has been busy this year filling the weekly schedule to ensure that someone is present at both doors and the Sherman Street elevator. We want to make sure everyone is greeted with a welcoming smile for all who come to join the Riverside family each Sunday. The Diaconate Board continues to strive to provide a warm and peaceful space for all who enter Riverside.

Thank you to Sandy Spellecy, Betty Shalhope, Bill Light, Sharon Stone, and Donna McCoy for leading a wonderful year of service. Betty will be leaving the Diaconate, but she will continue to beautify the sanctuary with her talents. Thank you, Betty, for your dedication, time, and love of the church and willingness to serve.

Greeting at Riverside is an amazing opportunity to meet new attendees and see the wonderment of the children's faces as they enter our historic church. Our hope is for everyone entering to feel at home in this sacred space. Our hope is for all to feel the warmth of our greetings, to feel the sense of peace and hope with the lit candles, and to feel the calm and the inspiration within the music that fills the sanctuary.

Weekly with the help of Katie's guidance, we are lucky to have assistance from the children for our weekly offerings. It is always wonderful to see their pride in participation.

Each week the Diaconate Board enlists the help of the Riverside family to greet at the doors and both elevators. Our good news this year is that the elevator has been consistently working. The cold causes the door to close a bit slowly, but it is working, and we will get you up/down safely whenever needed. I am happy to report a slight increase in elevator use this year.

Behind the scenes the Diaconate keeps track of weekly attendees, we ensure the space is clean and inviting with candles/lights/set up as needed, we provide monthly communion, and most importantly we are your first smile as you enter this amazing welcoming space.

The Diaconate Board would love anyone to join us in our weekly greeting duties. It is a wonderful family friendly chance for interaction, and we welcome you all to sign up or to answer our call of help.

Thank you for the wonderful year! The Diaconate Team is eager to welcome you and all from our community in 2025!

Submitted by Alison Betzing, Board Chair

# JUSTICE & WITNESS BOARD REPORT

Elaine Thompson, Board Chair

Members: Jeannie Chance, Elaine Thompson, Mike Hendricks, Heather Lytle

The committee was faced with restructuring after the first of the year when chairperson Ann Harris joined the newly formed Adult Education committee. These were big shoes to fill! We shared the duties, rather than have one chairperson. Elaine Thompson and Mike Hendricks officially joined the committee in January. Heather Lytle and Jeannie Chance remained while Jennifer Hackett stepped down from the committee. We remained a small group. Beth Hartwell offered to attend meetings when she could, as well as Pastor Vicky.

Ann Harris finished her amazing tenure with the 2024 MLK Day, which has culminated into a multi-faith event and handled by various faith communities in the future. Over 150 attended. We are grateful for her service.

Justice and Witness is currently involved with these projects that were supported with

## 1. A Pockets of Plenty offering:

Date	Recipient	Amount Donated
January	FISH	\$398.00
February	CASA	\$685.00
April	Gorge Ecology Outdoors	\$741.00
May	Welcome Corp	\$623.00
June	Gorge Pride Alliance	\$356.00
July	Seasonal Migrant Farmworkers	\$907.00
August	Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$713.81
September	Gorge Sustainability Project	\$472.00
October	Black in the Gorge	\$737.00
November	Trunk or Treat	\$236.00
December	Books for Kids	\$409.00
December	Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$1,309.00
	TOTAL	<b>\$7,586.81</b>

**2. Plastic Collection:** continues the 3rd Sundays of each month, and we've learned what works and what doesn't. With a wonderful team of volunteers, contacted monthly by Elaine to help clean and sort plastics, we continue to build the program: La Juan Jecker, Kathy O'Neil, Pamela Krause, Beth Hartwell, Sandy Spellecy, Michelle Beaman, Barb Dworschak, Dana Pricher and Gary McFarlan (who transports plastics to Gorge Sustainability).

Service opportunity for RCC members: If you would like to be on the email chain and can volunteer any 3rd Sunday, please let Elaine know. You don't have to be there every time!

## JUSTICE & WITNESS BOARD REPORT, CONT'D

Elaine Thompson, Board Chair

**3. Photo Directory:** With LOTS of help from Kate Murray, we collected and solicited photos from everyone at the church and came out with the new online photo directory (and available in print for a small fee at the office) We felt this was an important tool for members to get to know one another.

Service opportunity for RCC members: Send in your photo to the office, if you haven't already, and feel free to keep your photo current.

**4. Gaza Action:** We were joined at our December meeting by Brooke Anderson, who encouraged more of us to attend the actions. JW gave \$225 of funds from our 2024 budget to sponsor musician David Rovic at Riverside, on 2/22/25. Warren Goodnight attends the Gaza Action Events and has needed help with promotions. David Stefan Rovic is an American indie singer/songwriter. His music concerns both topical subjects such as the 2003 Iraq war, anti-globalization, anarchism, and social justice issues, and labor history. Proceeds will benefit [Healpalestine.org](http://Healpalestine.org)

**Service opportunity for RCC members:** Please let JW know if you would like to help organize or publicize the event. Ideas always welcome

**5. Giving Tree:** This year we chose two non-profits: Helping Hands Against Violence and the Gorge Native American Collaborative. We had the most presents ever donated under the tree. Thank you, Riversiders! We were aided by Bright Beginnings and Millie's Place, and it took three carloads to deliver the gifts.

**6. Celebration of Service Award:** TBA at the annual meeting  
We received more applications this year, as Jeannie Chance distributed nomination forms at Council and we had a display with applications in the Riverview Room. The award is given to a member or friend of RCC to honor the recipient's Christian witness of service to others.

- Submitted by Elaine Thompson, Board Chair

## **KITCHEN TEAM REPORT**

Kathy Watson, Committee Chair

There are currently 15 Riversiders on the Kitchen Team. We are so thankful for all the hours put in by these dedicated volunteers. And we can always use MORE volunteers, so please let Kathy Watson know if you are interested in tying on an apron!

This year the Kitchen Team has prepared and served food for three events that have raised money for Riverside: The annual meeting of the Columbia Gorge Orchestra Association, the annual awards ceremony for the Soroptimists, and Riverside's Fall Ball. Kitchen Team members Beth Hartwell and Kathy Watson also planned, shopped for and led prep for the annual free Community Thanksgiving dinner.

The team has also prepared and served food for four memorial services, and for several other Riverside events including Easter Brunch. Kitchen Team members also led or participated in two events off-site to support Native families: The Round Dance in The Dalles, where we helped prepare and serve dinner for 500; and the Trunk or Treat event for Native children.

This year the Riverside kitchen is also, for the first time, licensed as a restaurant kitchen with Hood River county. This gives us the ability to cater food offsite, such as for the Trunk or Treat event, and for the home-delivered Thanksgiving meals.

We use funds we raise to provide upkeep and replacement of items in our wonderful kitchen. In 2025, we will be celebrating 10 years since Scott and Elaine Johnson made our new kitchen a reality. It has been such an asset to Riverside and the community, with even more exciting years to come. That said, all the equipment in the kitchen is now ten years old, and we will have to plan to begin replacing it in next few years.

- Submitted by Kathy Watson, Committee Chair

## MUSIC & ARTS BOARD REPORT

Karen Harding, Board Representative

To increase musical variety and diversity offered at church services, 2024 was a year that was rich with musicians (staff and guests) and types of music. This process of increasing musical variety created strong feelings among staff and congregants, and there was some conflict involved in discerning the best path forward.

Riverside has been fortunate to be able to add Kristen Warnock to our musical staff. Diana Beterbide took a leave of absence this year and Kristen and other musicians were able to step in so Diana could step away. We are incredibly fortunate now to have 3 talented musicians rotating through services each month.

Early in 2024 Church Council created a music survey that was sent out to members. The response was strong, and two members of the Music & Arts board collated the results. Results in brief: music is important to congregants, diversity and variety in types of music presented is desired, congregational singing is loved (and some support is needed to make it easier for the congregation).

This year saw increased opportunities for members to sing in groups with a variety of rehearsal commitment.

Diana Beterbide continues to lead the Chancel Choir two Sundays per month.

The Gospel Choir sings once a month under the leadership of Kristen and Tim Mayer.

Kristen has also taken responsibility to direct smaller ensembles one Sunday each month.

Riverside is continuing to offer livestreaming of Sunday services, so the Music & Arts board continues to talk and plan ways to make the remote experience more engaging. Efforts included: collecting and organizing a cabinet for storage of decorations for the altar (and prayer table) ongoing discussion on how to lead congregational singing to best support the congregation (in the building and livestreaming).

### **To improve planning:**

the Music & Arts board has increased scheduled meetings from 4 per year to 8 per year (the extra meetings are "musician optional" to continue to focus on general music and visual elements during services at Riverside).

Karen Harding agreed to co-chair the board and is attending monthly council meetings as the Music & Arts board representative, Barb Dworschak is facilitating meetings.

Music Reparation Sundays have begun and will happen quarterly on Gospel Choir Sunday's.

The goal is to increase awareness of music created by enslaved people. Tithes are collected to benefit the Black in the Gorge scholarship fund.

A variety of community concerts ("Howl O Ween" concert directed by Diana, Advent Concerts organized by Janet and Leonard Wood and sponsored by the Walton Music Trust) took place in 2024.

- Submitted by Barb Dworschak, Board Chair

# GIVING CAMPAIGN REPORT

Kim Vogel, Committee Chair

**Committee Members: Kim Vogel, Chair, Vicky Sifter, Joellen Bingener, Kathryn Murray**

The *Let's Be More Together* giving campaign began on November 17, 2023, and concluded on December 8, 2024 with a Dedication Ceremony. Pledge materials were distributed on the first Sunday with the remainder being mailed the following week. Members and friends of Riverside were encouraged to make a 5% increase in their pledge from the previous year.

As in the past, congregation members shared why they financially support Riverside during worship. The *"Let's Be More Together"* campaign highlighted how we can pray, thank, sing, help, and give more by working and dreaming together.

**As of January 13, 2024, 82 pledges had been received for a total of \$195,735. This is \$375 more than the 2024 final pledge campaign and an average pledge of \$2,382 for 2025.**

## Highlights of the 2023 campaign:

- We had four new donors this year accounting for nearly \$5,400 of the total pledges
- Over 60% of last year's donors increased their pledges and 33% pledged the same amount as in 2024.
- The average pledge of \$2,382 is the highest average in the past 6 years.

Below is a recap of the past 5 years of giving campaigns:

Year	Total Pledges	Total Amount	Average Pledge
2020	76	\$164,394	\$2,163
2021	79	\$169,028	\$2,134
2022	77	\$169,172	\$2,197
2023	75	\$168,822	\$2,251
2024	92	\$194,364	\$2,123
2025	82	\$195,735	\$2,382

We wish to again thank everyone who contributes so generously to the ministry and mission of the Riverside Community Church. We are indeed ***"Being More Together!"***

The Giving Campaign Committee, submitted by Kim Vogel



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN | LIGHTING THE WAY

Gean Rains, Campaign Chair

At Riverside's 2024 annual meeting the congregation launched the Lighting the Way Capital Campaign: the largest fundraiser in the history of the church. The campaign was the result of a strategic planning process which examined the vision for Riverside's future and what it would take to bring that vision to fruition. A top priority was to ensure the ongoing viability of the church building. A list of needed capital campaign projects was developed and organized into the categories of Growth, Safety, and Welcome with a total cost of \$800,000, which became our campaign goal.

Thanks to the contributions from Riverside members and friends, we have received to date \$760,798 in pledges to the Lighting the Way campaign. Eighty pledges ranging from \$10 to \$150,000 resulted in this success. And, since this is a three-year campaign, there is still time and opportunity to get us to the goal of \$800,000.

A huge amount of gratitude goes to the 20+ members who volunteered their time and talent to make this campaign a success. We had teams dedicated to campaign communication and publicity, printed materials, hospitality, planning and organizing group and one-on-one meetings, distribution of materials, administrative support, record keeping, and follow-up with those who had questions. Overseeing the campaign was Pastor Vicky, Moderator Doug Roof, and Jill White of the UCC Building Fund who provided us with invaluable guidance.

Your contributions went to work immediately! The church now has a new roof, the Riverview Room has been restored with new flooring and paint, a new emergency exit has been built in the Fireside Room, new carpet has been installed in the sanctuary and stairway, the sanctuary was painted and new fans installed, a security system has been put in place, the parking lot has been repaired, and more is planned for 2025 and 2026. See the report from the Building Committee for a detailed list of completed and planned projects.

As Pastor Vicky said at the beginning of the campaign, "We see the building not as an object, but as a full partner in ministry." By restoring the Riverside building we are positioning ourselves to continue our ministry to our community, and for that we say "thank you God for bestowing your blessings on Riverside Community Church."

- Submitted by Gean Rains, Campaign Chair

## TREASURER'S REPORT | FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Tom Rietmann, Treasurer | Michael McElwee, FDB Chair

A major decision this year was to change investment accounts. After careful study and consideration, we chose the United Church Funds, an investment service of the United Church of Christ. \$557,300.62 will be transferred from the Charles Schwab account to be invested in the UCF Beyond Fossil Fuels Balanced Fund.

Funds from which we had borrowed for capital projects were restored. All extra church funds are earning 4.75% interest at Key Bank.

Our members and friends have been generous while our expenditures have been careful, resulting in revenue exceeding expenditures. This is remarkable because Gean Rains, Joellen Bingener and their crew also raised nearly \$800,000 for capital improvements.

Michael completed the financial policy handbook, and it was approved by the committee. The 2025 budget has been prepared, and we encourage review by anyone interested as there are some changes.

A big thanks to Michael for continuing to chair the committee and all our members, especially Tom Hackett who did extensive analysis of our investment portfolio.

- Submitted by Tom Rietmann, Treasurer

Riverside Community Church  
Balance Sheet  
December 31, 2024

ASSETS	
KeyBank Checking/Savings Accounts	
Operating Account	11,290.01
Savings Account	461,171.23
Pastor's Discretionary Account	1,849.41
Total Checking/Savings Accounts	<u>474,310.65</u>
Investment Accounts	
Charles Schwab Endowment Account	558,129.12
Total Investment Accounts	<u>558,129.12</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>1,032,439.77</u></b>
LIABILITIES & FUNDS	
Current Liabilities	
KeyBank Credit Card Payable	887.17
Employee Payroll Tax Withheld	2,226.55
Employer Payroll Taxes	433.32
Prepaid Pledges	6,658.00
Long-Term Liabilities	
Capital Campaign Loan	67,177.29
Total Liabilities	<u>77,382.33</u>
Funds	
Operating Fund	92,618.96
Designated Funds	
Art Procurement Fund	4,240.25
Camp Adams Retreat	5,042.60
Camp Adams Scholarships	800.00
Chancel Choir Fund	624.00
Communications Fund	791.76
Disabled Access Fund	241.03
Graduation Gifts Fund	103.20
Grants Fund	10,000.00
Guest Speaker Fund	674.73
Kitchen Fund	4,981.75
Music Memorial Fund	0.00
Personnel Reserve Fund	12,607.00
Riverside Memorial Fund	9,374.54
Thanksgiving Meal Fund	(208.60)
Capital Outlay Funds	
Capital Improvement Fund	0.00
Durringer Audio Visual Fund	11,448.41
Jacquelyn Light Fund	98,289.46
Lighting the Way Fund	137,360.15
Organ Fund	6,089.67
Endowment Fund	558,129.12
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	1,849.41
Total Funds	<u>955,057.44</u>

# TREASURER'S REPORT - 2024 YEAR END | 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

Tom Rietmann, Treasurer

	2023 Actual	2024			2025 Proposed Budget	
		Jan-Oct Actual	Nov-Dec Projected	Year End Actual		Budget
<b>Total Income</b>	324,293	296,670	48,297	352,859	320,419	331,361
<b>Total 6100 · Worship &amp; Ministry</b>	3,292	2,833	1,230	3,711	3,700	3,400
<b>Total 6200 · Christian Nurture</b>	31,195	18,244	5,486	24,063	34,946	32,930
<b>Total 6300 · Outreach</b>	10,785	8,732	1,025	4,932	4,475	9,835
<b>Total 6400 · Music</b>	12,751	15,170	3,124	18,437	17,164	13,865
<b>Total 6500 · Administration &amp; Office</b>	54,169	45,955	14,625	54,707	53,377	53,982
<b>Total 6600 · Property Maintenance</b>	79,692	56,360	13,589	70,462	74,895	75,389
<b>Total 6700 · Pastoral Leadership</b>	129,117	103,385	22,306	125,938	127,562	137,360
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>334,583</u>	<u>252,930</u>	<u>62,225</u>	<u>304,503</u>	<u>320,419</u>	<u>341,361</u>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<u><b>(10,290)</b></u>	<u><b>43,740</b></u>	<u><b>(13,928)</b></u>	<u><b>48,356</b></u>	<u><b>0</b></u>	<u><b>(10,000)**</b></u>
<b>INCOME SUMMARY</b>						
Endowment				23,450	23,450	24,035
Personnel Reserve				20,619	20,619	12,607
Pledged Contributions				212,830	190,000	199,469
Unpledged Giving				10,427	11,000	11,000
Interest Income				10,677	3,100	8,000
Fund Raising				14,894	20,000	16,000
Pockets of Plenty				6,947	0	5,000
Building Use				49,138	41,700	44,700
Our Whole Lives				7,005	10,150	10,150
Program				630	400	400

**\*\* Lake foundation grant will offset**

## RCC BY-LAW REVISION CONSIDERATIONS 12/15/24

By-Laws referenced in the following refer to the RCC By-Laws adopted by the Congregation and dated January 28, 2024. The proposed changes have been accepted by Council as of 12/15/24.

### Article IV Membership

#### PARAGRAPH A (**CURRENTLY**)

All persons who have been duly received into the communion of the church by confirmation, letter of transfer, or by confession of faith shall be members of this church and shall be entitled to all its rights, privileges and responsibilities as defined below

#### PARAGRAPH A **PROPOSED**

All persons who have participated in an orientation session, commit to support the ministry and mission of this church, and are introduced & welcomed during a worship service shall be members and entitled to the rights and responsibilities as defined below.

#### ARTICLE IV.D.3 (**CURRENTLY**)

##### A. Membership Change and Status:

1. A member may be granted a letter of transfer to any Christian church, provided the church is named in the letter; or may be removed from the rolls of this church as the member's request.
2. Active members who, for compelling reason, i.e. incapacity of temporary relocation of specific duration, may, upon request, be continued on the active membership roll for as long as such condition continues.
3. In the event a member has discontinued his/her attendance, participation in church affairs, and support for a period of one year and an attempt to secure his/her active engagement with the church has been unsuccessful, he/she may be placed on the associate member roll.
4. Any change in the membership status of any member shall be first considered by the Diaconate and upon recommendation of that body, shall be decided by vote of the Council.

##### *Proposed for 3 & 4:*

3. Any change in the membership status of a member shall first be considered by the Pastor and Moderator, who will bring proposed changes to the Council for approval. The Council will review the list of active and inactive members on an annual basis and make necessary status changes as defined by Article IV.B.

#### ARTICLE V.C.1 (**CURRENTLY**)

The Council may authorize and/or recognize the formation of church ministry groups or organizations in addition to those provided by action of the membership which shall be responsible to the council.

## ARTICLE V.C.2

The council may appoint such special ministry groups as may be necessary for the performance of council responsibilities.

*Proposed:* Replace both V.C.1 and V.C.2 with:

The council may authorize the formation of church ministry groups, committees, and task forces as may be deemed necessary for the performance of council responsibilities.

## ARTICLE VIII - COUNCIL MEMBERS - AREAS OF FOCUS (*CURRENTLY*)

Building and Maintenance Chair shall be a standing member of the Board of Finance and Development and shall oversee maintenance of the church, including the contents. This member shall make recommendations to the Board of Finance and Development regarding selling, buying, renting, leasing, or mortgaging any physical assets of the church.

- A. Special Projects Council member shall coordinate and act as council liaison for all approved special ministry projects and groups.
- B. The Personnel Committee is appointed by the Council and acts in an advisory role to Council and the Pastor with respect to personnel policies and issues. The Council delegates to the Pastor the responsibilities of supervision of daily operations consistent with these policies.

*Proposed:*

Delete Article VIII and renumber subsequent Articles.

Amend Article V.C.4 as follows:

*(Currently):*

The council has authority to hire employees, other than pastoral leaders, as may be necessary to carry forward the program and conduct the business of the church.

Authority to terminate such employment shall also reside with council.

*Proposed:*

The council has authority to hire employees, other than pastoral leaders, as may be necessary to carry forward the program and conduct the business of the church.

Authority to terminate such employment shall also reside with council.

Council delegates to the pastor the responsibilities of supervision of daily operations consistent with the personnel policies of the church.

## ARTICLE IX - THE MINISTRY BOARDS OF THE CHURCH

*Currently* this Article lists and describes the function of each of the ministry Boards.

*Proposed:*

Add a new paragraph and a new Board (changing the Building and Maintenance Committee to a Board and giving it a vote on Council), as follows:

Building and Maintenance Board. A minimum of three members shall constitute the Board with responsibility for developing and overseeing long and short-term construction and maintenance plans and projects.

## RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH | NOMINATIONS FOR 2025-26

Expiry of Service	Diaconate Ministry	Council at Large	Children & Youth	Justice & Witness	Music & Arts	Finance & Development	Adult Education & Spiritual Nurture	Building Maintenance
2025	Sandy Spellecy Donna McCoy	<b>Gean Rains</b> Zac Lytle	Steve Chance Eric Bingener	Heather Lytle Jeannie Chance	Jo Herring Barb Dworschak	Michael McElwee	Karen Roof Stu Watson	<b>Charlie Warren</b>
2026	Bill Light Sharon Scott	Yvonne Arbogast Tim Foley	Christy King Open	Mike Hendricks Elaine Thompson	<b>Charissa Callison</b> <b>Karen Harding</b>	Joellen Bingener	Ann Harris	<b>Leonard Wood</b>
2027	<b>Alison Betzing</b> <b>Pam Riedl</b>	<b>Gail Lyon</b> <b>Adam Brake</b>	<b>Dave Kaplowe</b> <b>Tertia King</b>	<b>Lynne Davidson</b> <b>Brooke Anderson</b>	<b>Paul Hirschberger</b> <b>Betty Shalhope</b>	<b>Melissa Tokstad</b> <b>Barbara Grant</b>	<b>Dana Pricher</b> <b>Keith Harding</b>	<b>Gary Rains *</b>

**Notes:**

Terms begin and end with annual meetings

Bold Type Indicates new Candidates

\* Indicates membership on Finance & Development Board

Moderator **Beth Hartwell**

Moderator-Elect **Bob Dorband**

Treasurer **Tom Rietmann \***

Secretary **Ann Becker**