



“Celebrating God’s Presence, Serving All People”

January 21, 2024

United Church of Marco Island 2023 Annual Report

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Agenda

Sunday, January 21, 2024, 11AM

Welcome	John Campbell, Moderator
Verification of Quorum	Linda Fox, Secretary
Opening Prayer	Reverend Jim McKenzie
Approval of the January 22, 2023, Annual Meeting Minutes	John Campbell, Moderator
Treasurer's Report	Karen Hearn, Treasurer
2023 Year-end	
2024 Proposed Budget	
Remarks from the Chair of the Board of Trustees	Paula Carlson, Chair
Remarks from the Interim Minister	Reverend Jim McKenzie
2024 Slate of Officers and Ministry Members	George James, Past Moderator
New Business	John Campbell, Moderator
Adjournment	

**All church members were sent notice of this meeting ten days in advance,
in accordance with the church by-laws.**

Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes

January 22, 2023

Moderator John Campbell welcomed the congregation to the annual meeting and asked the Reverend Dr. Mark Williams to lead the congregation in prayer.

The secretary verified a quorum was present with approximately 96 church members in attendance.

MOTION I: Tim Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting. Kevin Hennessy seconded the motion. The congregants approved the motion without dissent.

Treasurer Karen Hearn reported that 2022 actual revenue and expenses are not final, but that the detail about 2022 and the budget for 2023 were in the information provided the congregation in advance of the meeting.

MOTION II: Karen made a motion to accept the budget as presented and approved by the Board of Trustees. George James seconded the motion, and the congregation approved the motion without dissent.

Paula Carlson, Chair of the Board of Trustees, reported on incidents that occurred earlier in 2022 to do with capital reserves funds. She closed her comments with thanks to the congregation for their generosity.

Pastor Mark thanked the congregation for their service in ministries and the Bargain Basket, and for their faithfulness, support and generosity. Mark also praised the trustees and officers for their wisdom and focus on the church and its missions.

Past Moderator George James referred to the listing in material provided of the many people currently serving on various committees and those who will serve as new appointees.

MOTION III: George made a motion to accept the slate of officers as presented. Tim Smith seconded the motion, and all attendees voted in favor.

MOTION IV: For the second year, Bill Flasche made a motion that captioning of hymns and responses be included in the Sunday morning broadcast of the service on Facebook and YouTube, to enhance online viewers involvement. Janet Watson seconded the motion. After extended discussion, the congregation voted the motion down.

John Campbell asked for a motion to end the meeting. Sheila Sawyer made that motion, as was seconded by Kevin Hennessy. The congregation voted in favor of adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Fox, Secretary

LEADERSHIP AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Interim Senior Minister

Dear Friends of UCMI:

It is with a heart full of gratitude and joy that I share with you the highlights of our journey together over the past five months as your Interim Minister. As I reflect on our period of transition together, I am struck by the strength of our community and the blessings we have experienced.

First and foremost, I want to express my appreciation for the warm welcome and open hearts that you have extended to Karen and me. Serving as your Interim Minister has been both an honor and a privilege. Your commitment to faith, fellowship, and growth is evident in your enthusiastic spirit that fills our worship services, bible studies, support groups, committee assignments, and all the various ways you serve (here's looking at you Judy Daye).

Over the past year, we have navigated the challenges of change and transition, seeking God's guidance all along the way. Together, we have engaged in meaningful conversations, discerned our shared values, and embraced the opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal. The unity and resilience of UCMI has been a source of inspiration and encouragement.

Our worship services and bible studies have been moments of profound connection and celebration. We have sought the truth of scripture for our lives, delving deeper to discover God's wisdom and guidance for our individual and collective journeys. I have been touched by the depth of your faith and your eagerness to learn and grow together as a church.

In addition to our spiritual endeavors, we have also made strides in our outreach and support of other nonprofits in the community. Your generosity and compassion have made a positive impact on the lives of those in need. Your commitment to being the hands and feet of Christ is a testament to the love that flows through our congregation.

As we look forward, I am confident that UCMI is well-positioned for continued growth and ministry. We have the programs, staff, and facilities in place and will have a new Settled Minister likely within months. The foundation we have built together, grounded in faith, love, and community, will serve as a solid base for the next chapter of our ministry. I encourage you to continue supporting one another, embracing change with grace, and seeking God's guidance in all things.

I am deeply appreciative of all the extraordinary talent that has surrounded me in this interim period. The lay leadership and office staff with which I have served has given me great inspiration and encouragement. I am truly blessed to have such servants in the faith. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

There is a high likelihood that I will not be here to write another Annual Report. You will have your new Settled Minister in place and will have welcomed him/her with the same gracious hospitality and open arms with which you welcomed me. We will have taken the opportunity to have said goodbye and grieved our loss. That's how life is. But we will also find an appropriate place for our memories of growing together and growing in God. I'll say it when we say goodbye, but I will also declare it now. I won't forget you. Nor will I forget the privilege of serving as your Interim Minister. I am grateful for the memories we have created together and the bonds that will endure beyond this time of transition. May God's grace continue to abound in this wonderful church. And may you move forward with faith, hope, and love.

Peace,

Jim

Membership

For the period January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023
United Church of Marco Island

NUMERICAL MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY

Total Active Membership, January 1, 2023	484
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Additions

By letter of transfer	0
Correction to records	0
Or reaffirmation of faith	0
Total additions	33

Dismissals

By letter of transfer	4
By death	5
Total dismissals	9

Total Active Membership, December 31, 2023	507
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Respectfully submitted,

Wanda Anderson, Administrative Assistant

Moderator

Well, 2023 was certainly an eventful year for United Church of Marco Island. Our beloved Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Mark Williams, was called to another church--departing in July 2023. Pastor Mark shepherded our congregation through many challenges, but left us with a thriving church, a remarkable staff, and a revived Bargain Basket.

A diverse 17-person search committee was formed that quickly identified an outstanding and experienced Interim Minister, Reverend Jim McKenzie, who joined us in July with his wife Karen. Church services, bible study, social events, and more have continued as usual. Six months later the committee engaged a church-specific search firm, Shepherd Staff, to assist us in finding the right Settled Senior Minister. All good news.

And there is more! The Disseler Hall renovation project is close to completion. This total and much needed redo features a new kitchen, updated landscaping and hardscape around the exterior, a safe and graceful entrance from the Sanctuary, and upgrades to our Memorial Garden (including access from inside Disseler) among many other wonderful additions like the new Mayflower Room. A grand opening is planned for February 11, 2024.

And there is even more good news -- after extensive due diligence we purchased the empty lot adjacent to the Bargain Basket. Plans are incomplete but will include additional parking. This purchase of prime commercial

property on Marco Island will be a solid addition to our Bargain Basket operations and a good long-term investment for our church.

Other 2023 highlights:

- Our church is fortunate to be in a strong financial position.
- The Bargain Basket ministry continues to grow and serve the Marco Island community. Through your Missions Committee, it contributes to many area non-profits, including Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, the Marco Island Fire Rescue Foundation, the Marco Island Dementia Respite program, and the Marco Island Police Foundation among many others. Many non-monetary gifts are also donated such as clothes and household items. All this could not happen if not for our Bargain Basket staff and the many volunteers who graciously donate their time and talent.
- Wanda Anderson continues to coordinate lending wheelchairs, walkers, scooters, and other equipment to those in need at no cost.
- The Congregational Care program headed up by Christy Gallup, continues to successfully provide support, comfort, and counsel to many church congregants.
- Our music program is now led by Chris Moore, Music Director with Barbara Wischmeier as Worship Accompanist, blessing us with inspirational music every Sunday. 2024 will bring a five-part concert series with performers from Artis Naples, the Purduettes, and the Paradise Coastmen. Many thanks to the Music Patrons for their support.
- The church technology program led by Mike Rojek is a reliable resource providing live streaming of our Sunday services, a dependable UCMI phone and tablet app, and one-on-one tech support as needed.

A special thank you to our deacons who are the back office of our church, providing critical support to our Senior Pastor ensuring that Sunday services run smoothly.

2024 will be filled with new challenges, but with God's presence and blessings, may we continue our faith journey and continue to serve. It has been a personal blessing and honor to have served as your Moderator over the past two years.

Respectfully submitted,

John Campbell, Moderator

Bargain Basket

It's been a year of impressive change and growth at the Bargain Basket. It all starts with our wonderful volunteers, with over 220 people actively donating their time. We are truly blessed with a dedicated team that continues to grow right along with operations.

The store has been updated and reorganized, allowing for wider aisles to better accommodate those with mobility issues and customer flow. New shelving and display cases have been added for enhanced merchandise displays. We were very fortunate to receive most of the shelving as a donation from a local business, which was

then installed by very generous volunteers working over multiple weekends so as not to disrupt operations. The flooring by the front door has been replaced for improved safety and trip hazard mitigation, the windows have been tinted to reduce glare and solar heating of the interior, the electrical has been updated and a new sink and refrigerator installed in the back room to provide improved amenities to the volunteers. Outside, the parking lot has been repaved and striped, new railings installed and the tile outside the front door repaired.

There have been many technological changes to operations in 2023. We now have a formalized electronic process for tracking and reporting volunteer hours. Additionally, we have implemented a major change in how we ring and track sales through the implementation of a bar coding system. This not only allows for more accurate reporting but allows for a quicker checkout process as well. We have digitized much of the financial reporting and operational forms for better access and transparency. To expand our sales reach, we began selling on eBay this past October and have had good initial success focusing on specialized items that would have appeal beyond the local market. With a renewed focus on social media, we have put additional emphasis on marketing ourselves digitally through an updated website, Facebook page, Google listing, TripAdvisor page and Yelp, and now have several new ways to market ourselves as well as receive customer feedback.

One of the most important goals of the Bargain Basket is to create a sense of community amongst our volunteers. So many have said that this is their "happy place" and there could be no better compliment given! We have instituted several changes to foster and promote this, beginning with holding a volunteer meeting the first Wednesday of every month to promote transparency and as a way for volunteers to come together, enjoy each other's company and receive the latest updates on the Bargain Basket. These meetings are now webcast live so those that cannot make it in person can still be connected all throughout the year. The meetings are also recorded for any volunteers that aren't available at the time of the meeting and notes summarizing the meeting are sent to all volunteers.

Our volunteers all have such interesting stories to tell, and in an effort for them to get to know each other better, we now feature one volunteer each month – telling their story and history. What wonderful stories they have been. We have volunteers that were teachers, doctors, nurses, mathematicians, pilots, businesspeople and have lived all over the world including on a sailboat. They have children that are so accomplished and include Olympians and world ranked athletes.

To celebrate our volunteers, we had a special Marco Princess sunset cruise in February which was such a nice event and appreciated by all. We also had our annual volunteer breakfast with a wonderful presentation by Dave Hare in January. We've had several BBQs cooked by the staff for the volunteers, celebrated milestone birthdays and will be participating in the Marco Island Parade

We permanently changed operating hours in November to close at 5 PM, Monday through Friday to better align with our mission to serve the community as many of our shoppers work at local hotels and restaurants and couldn't take advantage of the wonderful bargains at the shop. Early results have exceeded expectations and again were only made possible through the fantastic generosity of our volunteers who committed to giving more of their time to accommodate the additional store hours.

There were staff changes in 2023 as well, with Samantha Arago being elevated to Director of Operations, Bill Johenning to General Manager, Jackie Weiner has returned as the Floor Manager, and we added the dynamic Sweeney father daughter duo (Jim and Bridget) to do the heavy lifting out back as intake managers. We continue to be supported by Frida Hernandez, Judy Jandro and Barb Rojek. I am so very fortunate to have a supportive, knowledgeable, caring, giving and dedicated staff that does the heavy lifting every day.

Well, with all this change, what were the results? Through the end of November our revenue of \$1,476,798 has already exceeded 2022's annual sales and we forecast to come in around \$1.6 million at year end, which will be

a 14% increase. This is super impressive given that 2022 saw 28% increase over 2021. Our two-year sales growth has been 45.6%. We've expanded our volunteer base to over 220 individuals who have graciously donated over 30,000 hours this year. The success of the Bargain Basket has allowed missions to donate a record amount of funds building upon the \$8 million that's been donated since the inception of the store.

What's coming for 2024? UCMI purchased the vacant lot next to the store and it will be a busy year planning and strategizing on next steps to best utilize the property. To establish a benchmark and better understand both our volunteers and customers, we will be sending out satisfaction surveys to both groups. The annual volunteer meeting is slated for this February, and we will change the event to one that celebrates the volunteers and helps in establishing a vision for accomplishing the goals of the store. We will establish the annual Betty Ringler award to honor a volunteer each year that significantly contributes to the mission and best embodies Betty's spirit. A newly created "Brag Board" will be established for volunteers to share significant events in their lives and we will continue to find new ways to serve our customers and volunteers as well as support the mission.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Johenning, Bargain Basket General Manager

Board of Church Life and Growth

2023 was a year of transition. With the departure of Pastor Mark Williams and the arrival of Interim Pastor Jim McKenzie, the committees which comprise the Board of Church Life and Growth, along with our wonderful staff, have not only kept the ship afloat, but are steering us into an exciting future.

These committees are made up of over 70 church leaders who are committed to enhancing our ongoing ministries and membership growth. I would encourage you to read each committee's report contained in this Annual Report to get a feel for their vibrancy and steadfast focus on what it truly means to walk in discipleship with Jesus.

A special thanks to these committee chairs, and those asterisked (*) who are rotating off their three-year term:

- Deacons - Marcy Marinelli and Shannon Benedetti, co-chairs*
- Social Events - Jenn Reed*
- Music - Earl Witten
- Missions - Michele Hennessy
- Building and Grounds - Tom Whitlock*
- Bargain Basket - Bill Johenning
- Men's Fellowship - Russ Howald*
- Women's Fellowship - Carol Peterson and Linda Oulton, co-chairs
- Church Technology - Mike Rojek
- Congregational Care - Christy Gallup
- Director of Operations - Samantha Arago
- Nominations - George James*

Please especially take the opportunity to thank Marcy, Shannon, Jenn, Tom, Russ and George for their committee leadership.

As for the future, we all look forward to what God has planned for us in the years ahead.

“For I know the plans I have for you.” Jeremiah 29:11.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Hennessy, Vice Moderator
Board of Church Life and Growth

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Unlike the last few years, mother nature was relatively kind to UCMI this year, with no insect, iguana, woodpecker or hurricane problems. We had a staff loss when our custodian left for a higher paying position and little success finding a replacement, so the church contracted Collier Property Management to serve as our facility manager and handle many of the duties performed by our custodian.

The committee spent a significant amount of time on issues caused by aging buildings and infrastructure:

- Sanctuary HVAC. Due to ongoing concerns about humidity levels in the Sanctuary, we had a mechanical engineering company (Burgess Brant) evaluate the HVAC system in 2022. This year we took steps to implement their major recommendation: install commercial dehumidifiers. This required the addition of several new circuits to our electrical system. Casa Grande Electrical was hired to perform the work, and Accurate Air was hired to install the dehumidifiers. This equipment is on order, but supply chain issues have significantly delayed their arrival. At the time this was written, we still have not received the new equipment. When it is received and installed, our electrical costs should be reduced and humidity levels properly maintained in the Sanctuary.
- Disseler Hall HVAC. During the renovation of Disseler Hall, the two main air conditioners failed. The timing was excellent as these units are in the ceiling, and the ceiling had been removed as part of the renovation. The new units are subject to the same supply chain issues mentioned above and should be installed by the end of 2023. A smaller unit in one of the classrooms also failed and has been replaced.
- We seal-coated the asphalt in the front parking lot of the Bargain Basket and repainted parking space lines, upgraded electrical circuits in a portion of the store, repaired a portion of the front floor at the front of the building, and tinted all the front windows to reduce the morning heat from the sun there.
- The parsonage driveway and the apron leading into the overflow parking lot were replaced. As a part of replacing the apron, the city also required us to replace the entire sidewalk around that parking lot.
- Our insurance company recommended that we install a handrail at the exit door from the music room which has been completed.
- A vehicle apparently hit the handrail on the sidewalk from the south entrance door to the Sanctuary, significantly weakening the structure. We are in the process of getting a bid to repair that damage.

A special thank you to the members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee who dedicated time and effort to maintain our church property; and to Pastor Mark, Pastor Jim, Wanda Anderson, Hannah Anderson, Samantha Arago, and our Trustees for all your assistance and effort in supporting these projects and the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Whitlock, Chair

Congregational Care

As we come to the close of 2023 at United Church of Marco Island, I continue to feel a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude for all we have been able to accomplish and the ways in which we were able to continue to be a loving and caring community, despite a year of unexpected change and transition.

In January, I graduated from the Leadership Marco program and continue to be blessed by the connections I was able to make by participating in this valuable program that consistently helps me better serve our congregation and community.

In February, my Mending Hearts Together grief and loss support group ran for a total of six sessions with a focus on self-care practices to help participants as they travel through the grief process. Members of the group helped one another by sharing their stories and experiences of loss. The program has greatly touched and helped many people walking through the difficulty of loss.

The Card Caring Ministry grew to nine members sending cards and greetings to people going through difficult times or to mark a birthday or special occasion. This year, the ministry started sending welcome cards to new members of the congregation as well. Recipients of these simple notes continuously express how meaningful it is to know they are remembered.

In March, I represented UCMI at the Marco Dementia Respite celebration and fundraiser. This initiative is generously supported by our congregation and the response and growth of this program continues to amaze me.

As April rolled around and we learned of Pastor Mark responding to a new call, I felt it was important to be the steady support the congregation needed in dealing with this unexpected news and the grief and uncertainty that would follow. As a staff, we focused on being a positive and hopeful presence during a time of transition.

In May, in partnership with our Missions Committee and Women's Fellowship, we launched "Faith in Action" initiatives, putting our faithful congregation to work serving as the hands and feet of Jesus.

In June, I was honored to be asked to be an ex officio member of the Pastoral Search Committee. In this role, which I take very seriously, I am tasked to represent the congregation and to discern who would be the best minister to lead this church and to continue the momentum of growth, ministry, community and loving service. I know God has molded the perfect person to fill this position. In the interim, Pastor Jim McKenzie has been the perfect person to lead us. Pastor Jim's warmth, down to earth nature, sense of humor, wisdom and kind and caring spirit have been a breath of fresh air during a time of uncertainty. I am forever grateful that he is here and we walk shoulder to shoulder in service.

Some of the initiatives I am most proud of during this transition period are:

- Networking with area agencies on aging, senior and assisted living communities, home care and caregiver companies, addiction and recovery centers and Hospice and Palliative care programs.
- I was asked to be a member of the Collier Disaster Alliance Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee which is an often overlooked area of need during disasters.
- The Senior Blue Book University program is presenting monthly lunch and learn educational programs on topics that are relevant to our community.
- I regularly visit the Bargain Basket to connect with the volunteers and staff. The store is now equipped with Narcan in case of an emergency exposure, and in 2024 we hope to have a dedicated defibrillator donated to us soon.
- Pastoral care visits are often the most meaningful part of my ministry. To spend time with someone

either in their home, assisted living, memory care, hospital or hospice, is the time when I most feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. I am blessed in this role.

- In November, 10 congregants and I served at the Meals of Hope food packing event. In all, Marco Islanders packed over 200,000 meals for those in our community experiencing food insecurity. We also launched the Angel Food Ministry with the support of the Missions Committee and Women's Fellowship, under the leadership of Kathy Curtis. This effort will ensure that those going through difficult times will have meals provided for them.
- In November and December, I ran another five-week series of the Mending Hearts Together grief and loss support group. This session had a wonderful group and we explored tools of self-care as well as the importance of caring for our soul as we travel through grief. It is especially meaningful to run this group before facing the holidays.
- As always, in December we hopped on trolleys and sang our way around Marco Island. We visited three local condo communities and were able to serenade church members and the building residents with Christmas carols and festive outfits. There were smiles all around and the fellowship and joy of the event inspires happiness in all who participate.

In 2024, I have several goals I would like to accomplish:

- Grow the Faith in Action Initiatives
- Jumpstart and support the Angel Food Ministry
- Start a Helping Hands Ministry to help church members with small handyman jobs.
- Organize a volunteer transportation ministry to enable those who are unable to drive to get to church worship service, church and community events and appointments.
- Organize a list of church members who are willing to visit the lonely and homebound members.
- Continue to build relationships with the Bargain Basket volunteers and remain available for support.
- Continue to grow as a person and in my faith, to better serve this loving church family, Bargain Basket volunteers and our community.

As I reflect on 2023, it has been a year of growth and at times uncertainty, but the best word I can use to describe my experience as your Congregational Caregiver is grateful. I'm grateful that when I come to work it doesn't feel like work. I'm grateful for the beautiful people I am honored to care for and to serve. I'm grateful for the talented and dedicated staff that feels more like family than "co-workers". I am grateful for the ways in which this congregation loves one another and the ways in which you have helped me to grow. You encourage me, laugh with me and support me. For that I am forever grateful and honored to serve the Lord with you.

Respectfully submitted,

Christy Gallup, Congregational Caregiver

Deacons

Deacons are nominated and approved for service by the Nominations Committee. The Deacon Committee members are responsible for ensuring that congregants are welcomed into the Sanctuary and that everything necessary for service is to provide a safe, spiritual and satisfactory experience. Deacons ensure that everything is in order prior to service enabling our pastor to focus on the sermon.

As terms ended and new deacon members arrived, deacon chairs provided orientation for deacon committee members and covered all current procedures and policies. Deacon Manuals were updated by committee chairs as church service requirements changed. All deacons are always encouraged to provide input on how we can

improve our flow of duties during service to provide a welcoming and comfortable experience for our congregants and to support our pastor.

During (busy) season, deacons began serving communion to congregants in both the 8:15AM and 10AM services. To prepare the communion offering, our deacon team met at the church the Saturday before. Pastor Mark provided us with the words to use during our offering “this is the body and the blood of Christ given for you”. These words have added a feeling of emotion for both the pastor and the deacons who deliver the offertory, and the congregants receiving the communion.

Deacon members continue to support our congregant’s memorial services as requested and prepare the Sanctuary for events following our services on Sundays.

The deacon chairs managed the Deacon Sign-Up sheet for 2023 to ensure that every Sunday is covered by current and Emeritus deacons. In addition, the deacon chairs teamed with Dr. Sheila Sawyer to include the Youth Group in the candle snuffing at the end of service. The sign up for 2024 will be in the Narthex again. This will provide visibility to all current and Emeritus deacons to sign up for services as new deacons begin their terms.

Deacon volunteers worked with Wanda Anderson, Samantha Arago, Karen Phillips and Dr. Sheila Sawyer’s Youth Church members to decorate the Sanctuary for the holidays.

We started 2023 with 18 deacons and ended with 14. Seven deacons will end their three-year terms in January 2024, and seven will remain to welcome new deacon members. The outgoing team members are orienting the remaining deacon members for communion preparation to begin February 2024.

In HIS Service,

Shannon Benedetti and Marcy Marinelli, Deacon Co-Chairs

Disseler Steering Committee

The American philosopher, William James said “Great things are not accomplished overnight; they require time, patience and perseverance.” The Disseler project is a fine example of this quote.

The Disseler Steering Committee met for the first time on May 27, 2021, to start the design and development process. On February 14, 2023, UCMI and Surety Construction signed a contract to work together on the Disseler project.

As of this publication the Disseler Steering Committee anticipates that the Disseler project will be completed by late January 2024. There have been many hands involved in the heavy lifting and financial support of this initiative. Thanks and appreciation go to all involved for their contributions, patience and perseverance.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Smith, Disseler Steering Committee Chair

Endowment Committee

The purpose of the Endowment Committee is management of the Capital and Endowment accounts and communication of their status to the congregation. To enhance communication, we invited Naples Global Advisors (NGA) to present an informative “Giving and Receiving” seminar in April.

The committee is entrusted with the risk management of the Capital and Endowment Accounts. The Capital Account maintains an approximate ratio of 50/50% of equities to interest bearing instruments. The Endowment account is closer to a 70/30% ratio. The topic of “opportunity risk” is ongoing.

Both funds ended 2022 with a return of -10%, but there was considerable uptick in 2023. As of December 19, 2023, returns are a much improved +11.0% in the Endowment Account and +10.8% in the Capital Account.

There has been robust debate regarding passive portfolio investment versus active managed portfolio investment and the historic higher returns from most passive low-cost index funds/portfolios. The committee decided to stay the course with the NGA actively managed portfolio.

The church assembly recently approved a distribution of \$400,000 from the endowment to supplement purchase of the lot adjacent to the Bargain Basket.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Lill, Endowment Committee Chair

Men’s Fellowship

The United Church Men’s Fellowship program had a very successful year. Many have been attending our monthly breakfasts at the Smith House.

The Men’s Fellowship lecture series also enjoys very good participation. In 2024, lectures will take place in the Sanctuary from 1:30PM to 3PM, and all are welcome. With more topics and speakers than ever before, here is the schedule:

- January 31, 2024 – Nancy Maxwell will present “A Match Made in Heaven...or not?” – In Search of Aristocracy
- February 14, 2024 – Thomas Eastwood will present The Letter: 51 Former Intelligence Officials
- February 28, 2024 – Jeffrey Steinberg will speak on Unraveling Iran
- March 13, 2024 –Thomas Eastwood will give a talk on Spies and Espionage – Fact vs Fiction
- March 27, 2024 – Edward Grace will present Artemis: Return to The Moon by 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Russ Howald, Chair

Missions Committee

The United Church of Marco Island Missions Committee is responsible for highlighting the mission of the Church to the congregation and the community. We focus on addressing social concerns, encouraging generosity, and working with other Committees to provide opportunities for hands-on ministry. We are also responsible for determining which agencies or organizations will be supported by the annual Missions budget. In 2023, the Committee continued to focus on charities located within the Marco Island area and in greater Collier County that serve people who live and/or work on Marco Island.

Hands-On Mission Support – Faith In Action

In addition to monetary gifts, the church and its membership donate many hours of volunteer time to the Bargain Basket, Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, and other local outreach ministries. This year, we worked with Congregational Caregiver Christy Gallup and Kathy Curtis from Women's Fellowship encouraging members to put their "Faith in Action." Two examples: on November 19, UCMI Volunteers helped pack meals for Meals of Hope, and we launched an "Angel Food Ministry" where members can sign up to deliver meals to church members and volunteers at the Bargain Basket when needed. The congregation also donates thousands of hours to UCMI and various organizations on and around Marco Island: Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, the Bargain Basket, the Neighborhood Health Clinic in Naples, and many, many more!

Financial Support

The 2023 Missions Committee budget of \$125,000 comes from our congregation's support and efforts of the UCMI-owned and operated Bargain Basket Ministry. That amount, combined with additional charity-specific special offerings, summed to a total giving by UCMI for the 2023 year of approximately \$149,210. (This amount does not include the 2022 Christmas Eve offering designated to Marco Island Academy Lunch Program.)

This year, the Committee began the allocation process by identifying charities that match our congregational ideals. We asked a representative of the organization to meet with the Committee. In this way, we hear directly from the organization who they are, what they do, how they impact the community, clarify their mission and goals, and measure their alignment with our congregation's priorities.

The Committee designated the most significant contribution this year to Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, having determined that this group's goals and missions most closely aligned with the church's wishes, both in target recipients and geographic location. To honor this growing partnership, the committee continued its support of Our Daily Bread with \$50,000.

We also developed a Grant Request form for all organizations requesting money from the Missions budget. This will help the committee receive consistent information that will help in decision-making. This form is now available on the church website and will be required before any distribution from budgeted money.

2023 Missions Support (as of 12/10/2023)

Organization	Donation
Camp Able	\$5,210
Florida Conference of UCC	\$4,000

Marco Island Police Foundation	\$10,000
Marco Island Center for the Arts	\$10,000
Marco Island Dementia Respite Support Program	\$10,000
Marco Island Fire Foundation	\$10,000
Marco Island Historical Society (Conservation of Statue)	\$10,000
Sanibel UCC (Easter Offering)	25,000
National Association of Congregational Christian Churches	\$4,000
Neighborhood Health Clinic	\$10,000
Our Daily Bread Food Pantry	\$50,000
Wyldlife (Young Life Middle School Program on Marco Island)	\$1,000
Total Monetary Support Given	\$149,210

In-Kind Mission Support

Congregation members also contributed non-monetary gifts (food drives, Undy Sunday, etc.). Through November, the congregation has donated thousands of pounds of food, new underwear to Catholic Charities' "Undy Sunday" drive, not to mention donations to our own Bargain Basket. Through November 30, the Bargain Basket has given away \$42,124 worth of donated items to those in need.

In 2024, the Committee will continue to look for new organizations specific to Marco Island or who support those who work on the Island. If you would like to suggest a particular charity, please get in touch with a committee member or suggest that the organization go online and complete the Grant Request Form.

We will continue to look for new and different ways of putting our Faith in Action and supporting organizations financially.

We are honored to be part of and serve with a congregation where giving is such a high priority.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hennessy, Chair

Music Committee

OUR MISSION STATEMENT: The music ministry is not an object to be admired so much as an instrument to teach, comfort, inspire, motivate, and lift up the spoken word of God. **OUR PASSION:** Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:19-20.

Thank you to all who participated and gave to UCMI Music Ministry in 2023. Wonderful music was the result of that participation and giving as we saw in the growth of our choir and handbell choir and with the addition of our chimers and continued music from Sheila Sawyer, the Sandlin's as well as our four-programs concert series. We welcomed the Gulf Shore Opera, performers from two Artis Naples programs (Naples Philharmonic) and a Jazz Concert.

We faced a challenge with the resignation of our Senior Pastor and our Music Director in mid-2023. Thanks to our great church leadership, we were blessed by Chris Moore accepting the position of Interim Music Director and he has continued our fine inspirational music, leading those groups named above. A special thank you too to Barbara Wischmeier for her wonderful organ and piano music as well as her leadership. It would have been a difficult transition without Chris and Barbara.

The Music Patrons Program continued to grow under the guidance of Ginny Rapp, our Music Patrons Representative. Thank you Music Patrons! And thank you to our Music Committee members (those still with us and those who are now serving in other ministries): Ginny Rapp, Linda Nutting, Molly Rawlinson, John Mallen, Stan Gerdas, Sue Toussaint and Evelyn Case.

Respectfully submitted,

Earl Witten, Chair

Social Events Committee

The Social Committee at United Church of Marco Island is dedicated to making everyone who walks through our doors feel welcome and part of our warm and caring worship community.

As a committee we try very hard to make sure to serve up fun and fellowship for our church family by maintaining some of our traditional happenings along with adding new gathering ideas. We host and plan events and encourage all everyone to join us either as a member or as an extra pair of hands. We typically meet once a month, but no worries if you are off island, we can conference you in!

Following Sunday services each week, we offer coffee and a sweet treat to enjoy while catching up with our church family. And birthdays are special to us at UCMI, so every month we make sure to celebrate with a cake and sometimes a little surprise.

Again, this year God brought us a perfect Spring Day as we brought our furry friends to church for the Blessing of the Pets, yet another way to celebrate God's amazing gifts. It is always such fun to see our pets as they meet their "extended church family" and another opportunity for our church kids to show off their talents with personalized "You've Been Blessed" certificates for each pet. This fun event has become a tradition as each year more four-legged and gilled friends join in.

This year we had several unexpected opportunities to celebrate: a '70s Dance Party as we sealed the doors of Disseler for renovations, Hannah's engagement and wedding, a farewell to Pastor Mark and his family, and a welcome for our new interim minister, Jim McKenzie, and his lovely wife Karen.

Although summertime life slows on Marco, it revved up at UCMI when we hosted a festive 4th of July celebration, a Sundae Sunday party, Bingo and Dog Days of Summer feast, and we always look forward to Fall at UCMI as we welcome back our friends who have enjoyed their time away. The energy is contagious as friends reconnect and quickly make plans for the upcoming season.

We wrapped up 2023 with our very special holiday tradition, riding a trolley singing Christmas Carols and spreading holiday cheer in the Marco Island community. Afterwards, we hosted over 100 hungry carolers.

The committee has already planned several events for 2024, but we're always looking for new fun ways to enjoy our church family, so if you have an idea and/or some extra energy, please let us know. Give us a reason to celebrate and we are on it! Come join in on the fun!

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Reed, Chair

Treasurer's Report

2023 was a year of tremendous change and challenge for our congregation. The Trustees worked diligently to oversee the church operations and attended to each need as it was presented.

Many very important decisions were made to respond to the ever-present challenges that come needing careful attention. Some of the most pressing matters that involved the church finances were:

- The resignation of Pastor Mark Williams and preparing for our Interim Pastor Jim McKenzie to come and help us while the Search Committee looks for our new Settled Pastor
- Continuing to address the staffing needs of United Church and the Bargain Basket
- Funding our mission commitments
- Properly funding our capital reserve accounts and utilizing some capital funds for building and grounds capital projects
- Purchasing the vacant lot adjacent to the Bargain Basket.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Hearn, Treasurer

Women's Fellowship

Unlike other church boards and committees, Women's Fellowship is organized by "season" (November through April), not by calendar year. Throughout 2023, due to our Disseler Hall renovation, all meetings were held in the Narthex with a light luncheon organized by Kathy Curtis, and the 1:00 PM programs were presented in the Sanctuary.

In January, commercial pilot Paul Axelson shared "Secrets of the Skies" with Rev. Dr. Mark Williams as his interviewer. Paul revealed why and how the flying experience has changed both for the pilots and fliers, plus other interesting flying facts.

Following both worship services on the first Sunday in February, we continued our tradition of holding our Annual Habitat for Humanity Bake Sale, making \$1,272 thanks to the generous support of our congregation. Women's Fellowship matched those proceeds and donated \$2,544 to our church's annual Habitat for Humanity Campaign. At our February meeting, we enjoyed Judy Daye's original play and thoughtful performance as "The Woman at the Well."

In March, Marco Island author Mershon Niesner reviewed her book "Mom's Gone Now What," helping women who have experienced loss move forward in a healthy way. At our March Board meeting, we voted to donate \$500 to Baby Basics and \$500 to Marco Dementia Respite Program.

Then in April following our light lunch, the new 2023-24 Board was installed: Co-Presidents Carol Oulton Peterson and Linda Oulton; Vice President Judy Hattendorf; Secretary Sue Elsasser; Treasurer Yvonne Hall; Installation Alicia Purple; Hospitality Kathy Curtis; Welcome Alicia Rethage; and Angel Food Ministry Kathy Curtis. The April program was presented by artist Dave Fuller, who skillfully took us through his journey in art by using examples of his own artwork for illustration.

During the summer months the annual 2023-24 Women's Fellowship booklet was planned and written, published and printed. We deeply thank Samantha Arago for her publishing and publicity talents.

Our November program featured Dan Walden who shared his powerful story as a young Marine Corps infantry officer serving in Vietnam from December 1968 to 1969. He recalled memories from over fifty years ago, which included his story plus those of others who served with him during the Vietnam War.

In December, we enjoyed a special Christmas concert presented by Linda and Alan Sandlin which put us in the holiday spirit.

According to our Church By-Laws, Women's Fellowship is charged with "overseeing events and opportunities related to the relational and spiritual growth of the Church's women. This oversight includes fellowship opportunities and other programs beneficial to the entire congregation." We hope that our November through April monthly luncheons, meetings, and programs, plus supporting the year-round Ladies Who Lunch and the new Angel Food Ministry, a Faith in Action Mission Committee endeavor, promote Christian fellowship and provide a wonderful opportunity to meet and make new friends in Christian love.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol O. Peterson and Linda Oulton, Women's Fellowship Co-Presidents

2024 UCMI List of Officers, Ministry Chairs & Terms of Service

LEADERSHIP	MEMBERS	TERM
*New Nominations		
Executive Committee		Two Years
Moderator	Kevin Hennessy	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026
Vice Moderator	Linda Fox*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026
Past Moderator	John Campbell	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026
Secretary	Peggy Palmer*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Treasurer	Karen Hearn	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
Assistant Treasurer		
Assistant Treasurer	Gene Leman	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
Board of Trustees		Three Years
Trustee	Paula Carlson	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
Trustee	Bill Adams	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
Trustee	Art Emery	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
Trustee	Karen Hearn	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
Trustee	Jennifer Reed	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
Trustee	Gene Leman	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
Trustee	Jerry Barr	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
Trustee	Tim Smith*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Trustee	John Foster*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
COMMITTEES		Three-Year Terms
		Three Years
Bargain Basket	BJ Donaldson	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Marcy Marinelli	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Nicki Adams*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Buildings and Grounds	Kris Helland	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Fred Curtis	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Bruce Donaldson	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Richard Kostecka	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Tim Smith*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Susan Furek*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027

Deacons	John Sieff	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Nancy Healy	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Bruce Dalquist	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Peggy Dalquist	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Robert Long	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Sue Hannah	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Peter Zarate	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Khris Kuck*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Paul Kuck*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Carolyn Leman*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Gene Leman*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Bill Hulbig*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Bonnie Calvin*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Frank Sheley*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Judy Sheley*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Valerie Schmidt*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Education	Susan Ngondo	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Pamela Shudes	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Shannon Benedetti*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Zach Wolfe*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Susan Setter*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Endowment	Paul Fernstrum	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Jerry Barr	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Wesley Blackwell	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	John Campbell	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	John Foster*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Men's Fellowship	Chuck Jennings	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Bill Adams*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2025
	Brad Carlson*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Bruce Donaldson*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2025
	Dennis Eckels*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026
	Jack Miyamoto*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	John Foster*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026

* Designates New Nomination

Missions	Michelle Hennessy	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Carol Jennings	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Carol Peterson	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Virginia Rapp	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Margo Kostecka	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Gene Leman	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Ernie Stevens*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Nancy Healy*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Music	Earl Witten	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Linda Nutting	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Stanley Gerdes	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Virginia Rapp	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Ellen Stevens*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Brandon Swope*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	David Sorber*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Nominations	Joanie Fuller	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	John Campbell*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026
	Shannon Benedetti*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Marci Marinelli*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Tom Whitlock*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
Social Events	Deb Guido	February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025
	Judy Daye	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Trish Nash	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Carolyn Leman	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Nancy Healy	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Susan Ridyard	February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2026
	Jeanne Seacrest*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Claudia Foster*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Melissa Henderson*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Carolyn Cary*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027
	Marsha Whitlock*	February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2027

