



FIRST FREE

CHRIST CENTERED + CHRIST SENT

AN EFCA CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023

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CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."
Matthew 18:20, ESV

This past year has been a year for the First Free Church family to focus on reconnecting and rebuilding relationships after two years of challenging pandemic conditions. We continue to live out our mission to help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together. We made the decision to move to a single service in January, and it's been a real blessing to worship together as a church family every Sunday morning.

Once again, so much of our ministry happens because of the leadership and service of our church staff. Please join me in thanking Pastor Joel Sutton for his continued faithfulness in his pastoral ministry, and his partnership with me and the rest of the Council. There have been some challenging situations that Joel has helped us navigate over the past several years, and I'm so glad for his steady and faithful shepherding of this church body.

We welcomed three new ministry staff members this year: Allie Danielson as Faith Community Nurse, Doug Nelson as Middle School Director, and Emma Delisi as Worship Associate. Also, Stacey Urbanz's role was expanded to Children's Ministry Associate. The rest of our ministry staff, Pastor Jay Pound, Pastor Paul Anleitner, Pastor Jason Pensa, Carrie Boyum, and Jeanine Bruen, continue to serve faithfully and lead in their areas of ministry. Our amazing support staff continues to keep everything working smoothly; thank you Scott Beckett, JoAnn Burns, Dan Fergus, and Sarah Olson for your support to our church's many ministries. Finally, this past fall we thanked Maureen Juarez for her many years of service as a Faith Community Nurse, and earlier we also said goodbye to Jodi Wiken as Business Administrator.

I'd also like to thank my co-laborers on the council, who give their time to serve the church as overseers and leaders. Thank you to Tim Audette-Vice Chair, Joel Burns-Treasurer, Jon Boyum-Secretary, and the other council members: Hong Gu, Becki Kobielush, Lindsay Robinson, and John Symington. We will say goodbye to Hong on Council as he steps down later this year.

I will wrap up my message with a final thanks to all of you in the congregation who pray for me and the rest of the Council. I appreciate you and your faith in me and my fellow Council members. Thank you, and may God continue to bless First Free Church as we seek to do His will here in South Minneapolis.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Olson
Council Chair

SENIOR PASTOR ANNUAL REPORT 2023

*"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end.
They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."
Lamentations 3:22-23*

This past year has been a reminder to us all of God's faithfulness and His steadfast love. He has seen us through one of the toughest periods, we as a church, and I personally, have faced in my 21 years as Senior Pastor at First Free. I thank God every morning for his new mercies.

This winter in January 2023 we went to a single worship service at 10:30 a.m. so that we could all worship together as one church family. The excitement, energy and enthusiasm in our worship has been felt as we all are gathered together. Currently, we have been averaging about 310 total on Sunday mornings (including children and youth)—with an average of 220 adults in the sanctuary. Additionally, we are averaging 140 viewers a week online.

One of the biggest changes this year has been in the area of our financial bookkeeping. Both our church treasurer and church bookkeeper stepped down last winter. So last spring, Joel Burns took over the role as our new church treasurer and we hired an outside firm to handle our bookkeeping. Overall, this has been a positive change, but it has taken a lot of work—especially from Joel Burns and from our office administrator, JoAnn Burns. A great thanks to both of them.

Staff has continued to be one of our strengths. Last summer, we made the decision to invest in our middle school ministry and our worship ministry, adding Doug Nelson as our part-time middle school director, and Emma Delisi as our part-time worship associate. These new staff have allowed Pastor Jason to focus more on developing student leaders, and Pastor Paul to step into other roles on staff as we go forward. Last fall Maureen Juarez stepped down as one of our Faith Community Nurses and hired Allison Danielson in her place. I can't express how thankful I am to Maureen for her great partnership in the ministry over the years.

As we have come through this pandemic, God has been faithful. He is continuing to work. We have added 14 new members this year and seven children have been dedicated. We baptized four last summer and 18 this Easter. Our livestream worship services have reached people here in our own backyard and around the world. On Wednesday nights we have an average of 15 that participate in our Zoom prayer meeting—from their own homes.

Again, I am reminded how God has provided us with an outstanding staff team here at First Free! JoAnn Burns, Sarah Olson and Dan Fergus keep things together and moving in the office. Pastor Jay, Pastor Paul, Pastor Jason, Carrie Boyum, Stacey Urbanz, Jeanine Bruen, Allison Danielson and Scott Beckett are each gifted and wonderful people to work with. Finally, I want to say "Thank You" to Jeff Olson, who is the Chairman of the Council. Jeff has given many hours of leadership to our church body. His wisdom and heart and friendship are invaluable.

My prayer as First Free moves ahead, is that we might be as faithful to God as He is to us.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Sutton
Senior Pastor

ASSOCIATE PASTOR ANNUAL REPORT 2023

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1.3-6, NIV

If you ever sit down and read through the book of Philippians all at once, I can almost guarantee that two things will stand out. First, you will be surprised at how little time it takes. Few books of the Bible would take more than an hour, and Philippians is well toward the shorter end of the spectrum. Second, I am confident that you would be struck by its warmth. We do not have all of the letters Paul sent to his various churches, but many of those we have exist because Paul needed to address some pressing issues in church life. Some of those letters betray some frustration and genuine grief over decisions churches have made, and all of them reveal Paul's sincere love and concern. But Philippians in particular gives off the deep impression of genuine delight in their gospel partnership. These new and young Christians have become Paul's treasured coworkers in Jesus—and you can sense it when you read the letter.

As I look back over the past year of ministry here at First Free, I can relate. Like all the rest, this year has flown by. But as much as any other year I can remember, I am finishing this spring feeling energized, glad and joyful. Part of the reason we decided to transition to our new Sunday schedule was to prioritize being together: worshiping together, learning and growing together, and serving together. This decision had many practical benefits, but it has had—certainly for me—a tremendous spiritual benefit. There is something especially moving about having everyone together for worship; it is a reminder every week not just of God's redeeming reach, but of his continued work. But I have also found it powerfully energizing to look out each week and see all of these fellow laborers in the gospel. I look around and I think as I imagine Paul did in Philippians: with such a church, God could do some amazing things. In my report this year, I want to highlight just a few.

Community Groups

One of the additional unforeseen benefits of switching our Sunday schedule has been a boost in Community Group participation. I am particularly happy to report this as I spent some time worrying that we might see the opposite. I want particularly to highlight the hard work and faithfulness of our Community Group leaders who do such a great job of both facilitating community and teaching. I am also grateful to our classes for being flexible and patient as we moved them around and worked to make some new and additional rooms available for use. Community Groups continue to be a great next step for those looking to get to know people more deeply.

MOPS & WNBS

This past year has been a great year for MOPS, one that has seen growth and new energy after the disruption of COVID. MOPS has been one of our most significant outreach efforts, and continues to draw in moms and kids from around the community and to introduce them to Jesus and our church. To stick with my theme, I want to recognize and publicly thank all of those who have served in MOPS leadership over the past few years. They have had to be flexible and creative in ways they never could have anticipated, and have worked to provide a meaningful and significant place to connect for many. This past year, their work has been rewarded as participation has again increased, bringing a new energy along with some new people. Please thank those leaders who will be stepping down after this year, and pray that God would provide new leaders for the next few years.

Women's Neighborhood Bible Study (WNBS), like MOPS, continues to draw in women from our community and to connect them with our congregation. Like the MOPS leadership, the WNBS leaders have had to be both flexible and creative in their ministry over the past few years. Certainly God had the right people in the right positions for those years. WNBS not only survived, it expanded its reach through Zoom and other technologies, connecting and ministering to women who otherwise would not be able to be a part of the ministry. May God continue to use all of those groups and technologies to do his work!

Those are just a few highlights, there could easily be more: Men United, Soul Share, Men's Night Out, Small Groups, etc. All of them testify in their own way to the present work of God in our midst, and all of them remind me of the joy of the partnership that we all here share in the kingdom work of Jesus. I hope you will pray with me for the year ahead as we look forward with expectation toward what God has in store for First Free.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay Pound
Associate Pastor

CREEKSIDE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT 2023



We started out the 2022 school year with a new mission statement for Creekside. Our mission is to help kids KNOW God, GROW in God, and SHOW God's love to others. We want all of our kids at First Free to KNOW a saving and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We desire that all of our kids GROW in their faith in Jesus Christ by learning from the Bible, praying, and growing a Christian community with intentional leaders. We want our kids to SHOW God's love to all of those around them by serving, praying for, and telling others about the love God has for them. All areas of what we do in Creekside point to one of these three areas of the mission.

Creekside Nursery & Preschool

These groups meet during both Community Hour and Worship Hour on Sunday mornings and learn stories from the Bible. They also learn that they are loved by God, that church is a safe place, and that their leaders care for them. Stacey Urbanz has done a great job overseeing the nursery. The Nursery Coordinators keep things running smoothly while welcoming children to church and into the nursery and preschool classes.

Creekside on Sundays

Bible Time happens during the Community Hour and kids spend time with their leaders learning from the Bible. During the Worship Hour, elementary kids remain with their families in the worship service and are dismissed to Children's Church prior to the sermon. This allows kids to have family worship time with the congregation. The second part of the service is spent in two elementary groups learning the morning's lesson. All children birth-fifth grade learn the same lessons on Sunday mornings through The Gospel Project curriculum. This year we have been learning from the second half of the Old Testament. It has been fun to learn exciting Bible stories and to discover how the Bible is one big book—all pointing to the Gospel story. On Sundays, we have had 103 kids participate in classes. We have a group of 50 adults who are leaders on Sundays and 27 youth who volunteer with kids on a regular basis. Praise God for His faithful servants who have hearts for children!

Creekside Clubs

We have had a great year of Clubs this year. We had 69 kids involved in Clubs and 22 leaders. We have many dedicated leaders who are committed to having relationships with the kids, investing in them, and pointing them to Jesus. There have been many fun activities including hikes to Minnehaha Creek, winter sledding, wacky hair night, a Seder dinner, and pumpkin rolls. All of our Club groups helped with service projects this year including making sandwiches for The Sandwich Project, tying baby blankets for New Life's First Care centers, and making cards for First Free seniors. Our groups learned from the Bible about the 10 Commandments, Thankfulness, The Great Commission, Joseph, the Miracles of Jesus, Truth, Worship, Identity, and Discipleship. Clubs are for kids in grades 1-5 and wrap up at the end of April.

Creekside Special Events

Many families participated in Creekside special events this year. We had two family hikes, boys Fall camping at Camp Nathanael, the first annual Advent Festival, winter family sledding, Retreat46 at Camp Shamineau for 4-5 graders, and an end of the year Creekside Family Party. Vacation Bible Camp was our summer special event and it was a great week! The theme was *Monumental: Celebrating God's Greatness*. Kids learned just how awesome God is!

Camp Shamineau

Last summer 46 kids and youth from First Free spent time as campers at Camp Shamineau. First Free was generous to give each of these campers a \$100 scholarship toward their week at camp. We had many adults and kids attend camp during the year for Father-Son weekend, Mother-Son weekend, Mother-Daughter weekend, Women's Retreat, Men's Retreat, Fall Fling (youth), and Retreat46 (4-5 graders). We pray that kids' lives are changed and transformed because of their time away from home spent at Camp Shamineau.

Creekside Leaders

We would not be a ministry without the dedication and creativity of the Creekside Leaders. We have an incredible group of adults and youth who serve faithfully in the Nursery, Preschool, Bible Time, Children's Church, Clubs, at check-in, as substitute leaders, as greeters, and security. There is a great 'behind the scenes' group of people who support Creekside in areas of mailings, brainstorming, graphic design, photography, curriculum prep, organizing supplies, decorating, and cleaning. Hats off to all who are called and are willing to serve the kids in our church body.

It's been extremely moving to have a number of our Creekside kids baptized this year. I praise God for the commitments some of these young kids have made to have Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. It's so cool that they're ready to be obedient in the waters of baptism, boldly proclaiming their faith. Our kids have the potential to make a huge impact in our community and in this world for Christ.

I am proud to work with the Creekside leaders and Church leadership who have the vision of empowering our kids to know God and helping them grow in their living relationships with Jesus Christ. I love working with our First Free kids and I am blessed to see them grow in their faith; to KNOW God, GROW in God, and to SHOW God's love to those around them.

I look forward to another year of ministry in Creekside at First Free.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie Boyum
Children's Ministry Director

VELOCITY STUDENT MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT 2023

One of the biggest highlights of the year was being able to collaborate with Doug Nelson as he flourishes in his role as our Middle School Director. Our Wednesday program is the focus of our Student Ministries. On the high school end, we've been looking at what the Bible says about mental health and focusing on how Jesus prayed. This year we did three prayer nights, something I first started back in 2020. In the middle school, Doug has been focusing on the difficult questions in faith.

This year in the Sunday Community Group, we finished the Gospel Foundations 10,000 ft overview of the Bible, getting through both the Old and New Testament. In January 2023, we transitioned to having separate middle school and high school community groups. It has been a pleasure to work with Doug and help him get the middle school class off the ground. With the high school we looked at how to study the Bible and are ending the year talking about how to lead as a disciple of Jesus.

Thanks to the generous support of our Church family, we raised over \$20,000 and served almost 200 people at Terrace on Chicago! It was fantastic to see our team back to putting on this historically significant fundraising event. It was fun to see so many of you enjoying the time with friends and family at the event. It was also encouraging to see so many new people helping out with this all-hands-on-deck event. This fundraiser will help students be able to attend these faith-formational and gospel advancing trips this coming year!

This year our Student Ministry Team looked at tools that help students as disciple-makers for Jesus. We looked at how to pray like Jesus using the Lord's Prayer as a guide, we have talked in depth about how to structure and present your testimony, we've talked about how to share your faith with others and we've talked about how the fruit of our lives might uncover incorrect beliefs and how we need to build up logically from the roots to see what fruits should be in our lives. My prayer is that this will equip them to be disciples of Jesus. My hope is that these discipleship habits will overflow into the lives of their friends and family.

In conclusion, in the Scripture we see Jesus looking upon the crowds. In fact we read, *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."* (Matthew 9:36-38) Would you please pray for Doug and me? Pray that this local mission field would be front and center in the minds of our Velocity Ministries leadership. Would you please pray for our students in Velocity Student Ministries? Pray that they will see their friends, have compassion on them and desire to ask God to send out harvesters. Might they be ready to be the answer to that very prayer. Might we all be ready.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Pensa
Student Pastor

WORSHIP ARTS MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT 2023

In Worship Arts, this past ministry year truly felt like it was the first time since Lent of 2020, when the pandemic first disrupted our rhythms of community worship, that we were able to move past a sense of constantly responding to uncertain conditions and into taking significant steps towards growth and the future of what God wants to do in our church.

A major focus in our ministry has been the development of a leadership pipeline and a movement toward team leadership on the platform. Emma Delisi moved from the role of Worship Intern to Worship Associate. Emma has done a fantastic job of leading our music teams, as well as connecting with up-and-coming leaders in Velocity Student Ministries. The expansion of leadership opportunities has also meant that Ellie Nordell has been leading worship more frequently. Ellie has done an amazing job bringing her own unique gifts and thoughtful care for our community into the way she leads in song. Lucy Kobielush has been leading more songs on Sunday morning and spearheading efforts to have student-led worship gatherings in Velocity.

One of the biggest shifts in the life of worship this past year has been the move to one big community gathering for worship at 10:30 a.m. I'm sure many of you have felt a renewed sense of energy and vitality in being all together. One of my favorite moments in our service each week is our greeting time in the middle of our worship. After years of dealing with social distancing, working from home, and a pervading sense of isolation, to see our community embrace each other, share a warm smile, or take a moment to hear someone else's prayer needs face-to-face fills me with joy each Sunday. It's a simple interaction but it is something I will never take for granted again.

One of the positive side effects of this Sunday morning schedule change has been the increased participation in our 9:00 a.m. Community Hour. I believe many of our community groups have experienced increased attendance as a result of the new format. Personally, I've enjoyed the opportunities I've had to come downstairs and connect with groups or teach a class now that we have this new schedule and a growing pool of capable leaders in our worship ministry.

We've also had some great participation in our seasonal art galleries, with contributors from all ages sharing their gifts with our community as another valuable expression of worship. Gayle Gilman and Marlene Maloney helped lead an art group giving classes and working on collaborative projects together. We hope to continue to add more opportunities for our community to worship through visual arts in this next year.

Finally, I want to express thanks to some of the most important "hidden" members of our ministry team—those serving in our vital tech roles. They produce audio, images, lyrics, and adjust lights for a room full of worshippers, as well as broadcast our service live on YouTube each week which requires an entirely different set of operations. Our broadcasted worship services continue to reach an additional 150 people on average. I'm so thankful for the vital work each member of our tech team performs under the leadership of Dan Fergus to serve our community well every single week.

I feel a sense of positive momentum as we head into our next ministry year. I look forward to what God wants to do in this ministry in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Anleitner
Worship Pastor

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Faith Community Nurses (FCNs) Jeanine Bruen and Maureen Juarez (staff members) along with Dee Huanca (volunteer) work together to serve the congregation. Maureen stepped down in October and Allison Danielson started working on staff in the FCN ministry in November.

Four individuals took the Visitation Class this fall. Eighteen attended the visitation team brunch in April. Some of these 18 were seasoned visitors, others were new and wanting to learn more. As we build our visitation program after COVID restrictions, we visit and phone those homebound and hospitalized. We also had the privilege of coming alongside those who were not homebound, assisting them with various issues of concern.

Jeanine continues in the role of Faith Builder for MOPS/MOMSnext and will teach a CPR class in May. The Wellness Advisory Team of the FCNs met three times to provide support and advice to the FCNs. Doug Erickson, Dee Huanca, John Lande, Gail Marchand, Maureen Juarez, Phyllis Nordin, Cindy Larson, and Darla Melander are team members.

Additional Areas of Ministry which were overseen or carried out by the FCN's included the following:

- Gifts for new babies and high school graduates
- Health Care Directives educational support available for those working on Advanced Directives
- Expressions Support Group for those with chronic illness, returned to twice a month meetings starting January 2023 (facilitated by Gayle Gillman and Dee Huanca)
- Distribution of prayer shawls made by volunteers
- A greeting card ministry facilitated by First Free kids
- Sympathy cards to those who lost loved ones
- Participation in Wednesday Night Prayer group
- Staffing the First Aid Station for VBC
- Coordination of meals and transportation as needed
- Led and participated in Women's Neighborhood Bible Study
- Members of the Caring Commission
- Flu Clinic immunized 25 people (organized by Cindy Larson)
- Addressed safety issues of the church
- Organizing a visitation luncheon for 20 participants, including current visitors and those interested in visitation

The following people went to be with Jesus since our last report: Glenn Ahlgren, Carolyn Berg, Lois Chapman, Violet Clinton, Felix Juarez, Janet Shellman, and Vernetta Wessman.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanine Bruen and Allison Danielson
Faith Community Nurses

CARING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2023

It has been a privilege to lead the Caring Commission for the last two years, and to serve alongside my fellow Caring Commission members.

This year, the Caring Commission consisted of the following members; Kim Foss, Apryl Hultstrand, Caleb Ogren, Jeanine Bruen, Allie Danielson, John Symington and myself. Together we work to offer care and support to the congregation of First Free.

The Benevolent Fund, which is supplied solely by donations directed to the Benevolent account, continues to be our primary area of service and responsibility. Through your generous giving, we were able to distribute over \$15,000 in supplies and support this year. Our support is directed at those within our congregation and to those with First Free connections.

In November, the Caring Commission coordinated the annual CES Food and Hygiene Drive. We collected 89 bags and donated 1,121 pounds of products. This was an increase from the 2021 Food Drive.

The Faith Community Nurses, Jeanine Bruen and Allie Danielson, continue to be an integral part of our team by identifying individuals who may benefit from Caring Commission support. It has been an honor to distribute the funds that you have generously donated over the last year. May we continue to bring glory and praise to God through our giving.

Respectfully submitted,

Eve McClun
Caring Commission Chair

OUTREACH COMMISSION 2023

Our Fall Outreach Weekend took place on October 15 and 16, 2022. On Saturday morning, we were blessed to hear about the short-term mission trips that took place in 2021 from individuals within our church. Lenka Bragg and her two daughters, Adela and Petra shared about their trip to Czech Republic and serving at the English Camp alongside Josh Krato. Casey Foss and Kimber Carter shared about the high school trip to Lead the Cause. Doug Nelson shared about the middle school mission trip to Duluth, MN. On Sunday morning, Katie Dudgeon shared during both Sunday school hours about her trip to Ukraine. A week later, Rick Mackey preached about the calling of a missionary and how to pray for missionaries.

Our Winter Outreach Sunday took place on February 26, 2023. On Sunday morning, all Sunday school classes listened to Terre Webster share about the ministry of Damascus Way. During the Sunday service, the sermon was preached by Carl Nelson of Transform MN.

The Outreach Commission has been able to contribute to several initiatives supporting our missionaries and other needs. The commission felt moved to send money to the EFCA Turkey Earthquake response fund. Additionally, the commission has increased our contributions to the EFCA Fair Share and the North Central District. Special donations were sent to two ReachGlobal missionaries, Josh Krato (Czech Republic) and Denny Debruyne (Germany). To answer a need expressed by John Gerhardt, we were able to send an additional donation to support the work of Urban Impact in New Orleans.

This past year we saw many changes as missionaries retire or move onto the next chapter God has in store for them. Timothy and Carolyn Dahlin have retired from ReachGlobal. Beth Thompson also retired at the end of February 2023 from ReachGlobal. Katie Dudgeon transitioned from ReachGlobal Europe to a new role as the Director of Strategic Development for EFCA West. Anastasia Gerhardt decided to resign from her position and is optimistic for what God has in store for her next.

The Outreach Commission looks forward to the many mission trips that will be happening this upcoming summer. Lenka, Adela, and Petra Bragg will return this summer to the Czech Republic along with Christina Boyum and Lucille Carter. Elizabeth Gray will be going to Austria to work at an English Camp with ReachGlobal. Lauren Koch will be traveling to Tanzania with Teen Missions. Please take time to pray for these trips as our congregation is being Christ-sent beyond our borders.

Thank you to those who took the time to pray for our missionaries as well as those who have volunteered their time to make the Outreach events run smoothly.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryant Dittmer
Outreach Commission Chair

FINANCE & PROPERTY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Serving on Facilities and Property is a humbling experience. In talking with others on the board, at times we've talked about, who are we to be in charge of the building, the three houses across the street, leasing, etc. Besides knowing that God is in control, so we don't have to worry about it, I'd like to thank John Symington and Scott Beckett for being willing to help and offer their input, attending meetings, etc.

This year we did not have as many big projects around the church building as in the past. The three houses across the street have occupied more of our attention. We were informed the houses were going to lose their tax exempt status from the city earlier in the year. The church worked with the city, explaining how the houses were used and the support the tenants received from the church. The city eventually agreed we would have the exempt status for another year. There are guidelines for us to continue to receive a tax exempt status with the city. We worked, and continue to work on having set procedures for the tenants. The procedures would help us maintain the tax exempt status, but also give a more defined role of the houses and how they fit into our mission as a church.

The houses needed multiple repairs this year including new appliances, plumbing work, masonry work, painting and electrical work. There are many repairs and upgrades needed at these homes, they are showing their age. The northernmost home needs discussion on whether we fix it or tear down, once the tenants move out, it's in rough shape. God's love providing housing to the families living there will impact generations. The homes seem like a burden at times, we need to remember the impact they are having on families.

Heather's has been a good neighbor to us, however, there is more wear and tear on our parking lot from the restaurant traffic. We are looking at amending the lease for 2023 to address the amount we receive from them so that we don't bear the cost of parking lot maintenance due to their traffic. We have a good relationship with Heather's; it's been a pleasure having them as a neighbor and tenant.

The main church building has had minimal projects this year. We did sign for a new rooftop air conditioning unit for the nursery. There were two left in the country due to supply chain issues. Pete Lehner was able to secure one of them for us through his persistence with the vendor. A steam pipe is leaking in the back parking lot which caused the cold water supply to the nursery to run hot. The pipe is getting looked at this spring (2023). We will have an understanding of the scope of what needs to be repaired after getting looked at by a professional. Another project this year was to order two very large dumpsters. A team of people were able to fill both dumpsters with junk accumulated throughout the years in back closets, garage, as well as the attic.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Kobielush
Finance & Property Board Chair

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

For those of you who know Pastor Joel, you know that he uses the phrase “God sightings” from time to time. Looking back at the past year, while I have seen specific incidents of God working in our finances, the knowledge that He has been with us throughout the year is my “God sighting” report. Being new to this role and given all the changes at the start, sometimes I wondered how this important church function would work. I am grateful that God provides not only for our financial needs but also provides grace, abilities and others in the body to accomplish His tasks.

Income

On a year-to-date basis, giving is **above** our seasonally adjusted budgeted amount. Based on historical averages, we estimated giving to be at \$847,335 as of March 31st, 2023. Actual giving (excluding housing rental income) at March close was \$862,192 or **\$14,857** more than budget. Giving has been trending upward since January, with all months January to March exceeding our monthly budget targets. The first six months of giving was tracking below monthly budget but the gap was made up in a generous March. Praise the Lord for his provision and the faithful giving of our congregation.

Balance sheet

The balance sheet remains healthy and we are grateful to have reserves for ministry funding and to address any challenges that come our way. As of March 31, 2023 our cash and liquid assets stand at \$561,300, which includes \$272,000 of operating reserves. We continue to carry **NO** debt.

Achievements

We are in a better place currently compared to the start of the year. Back in July we were still getting our heads around the changes to our new accounting approach, roles, reports and procedures. A thanks to our staff and commission leaders for their patience and understanding during this time. I am looking forward to the next fiscal year, working with the new financial team, and leveraging our financial effort to support our missions and callings at First Free.

I ask for your prayers as we close out the year and begin a new fiscal year soon:

- Continued financial health for our church and those who attend First Free
- To be Christ-sent and led by His calling, that our resources are blessed in our efforts
- Unity as a congregation as we go forward

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Burns
Treasurer

FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
PROPOSED BUDGET 2023-2024
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024
as of May 1, 2023

First Evangelical Free Church
Proposed Budget: FY-2023-2024
Fiscal Year July 2023 - June 2024

	2022-2023 Budget	2023-2024 Proposed Budget*	Dollar Change	Percentage Change
Income				
General	927,385	973,506	46,121	5.0%
Commissions	-	82,210	82,210	
Property	27,900	27,900	-	0.0%
Mission/Outreach	173,050	170,550	(2,500)	-1.4%
	1,128,335	1,254,166	125,831	11.2%
Expenses				
Personnel & Admin	692,632	724,271	31,639	4.6%
Commissions	95,475	187,644	92,169	96.5%
Property	167,178	171,702	4,524	2.7%
Outreach Commission	173,050	170,550	(2,500)	-1.4%
	1,128,335	1,254,166	125,831	11.2%

* Fiscal year 2023-24 FEFC proposed budget approved by FEFC council on April 23, 2023.