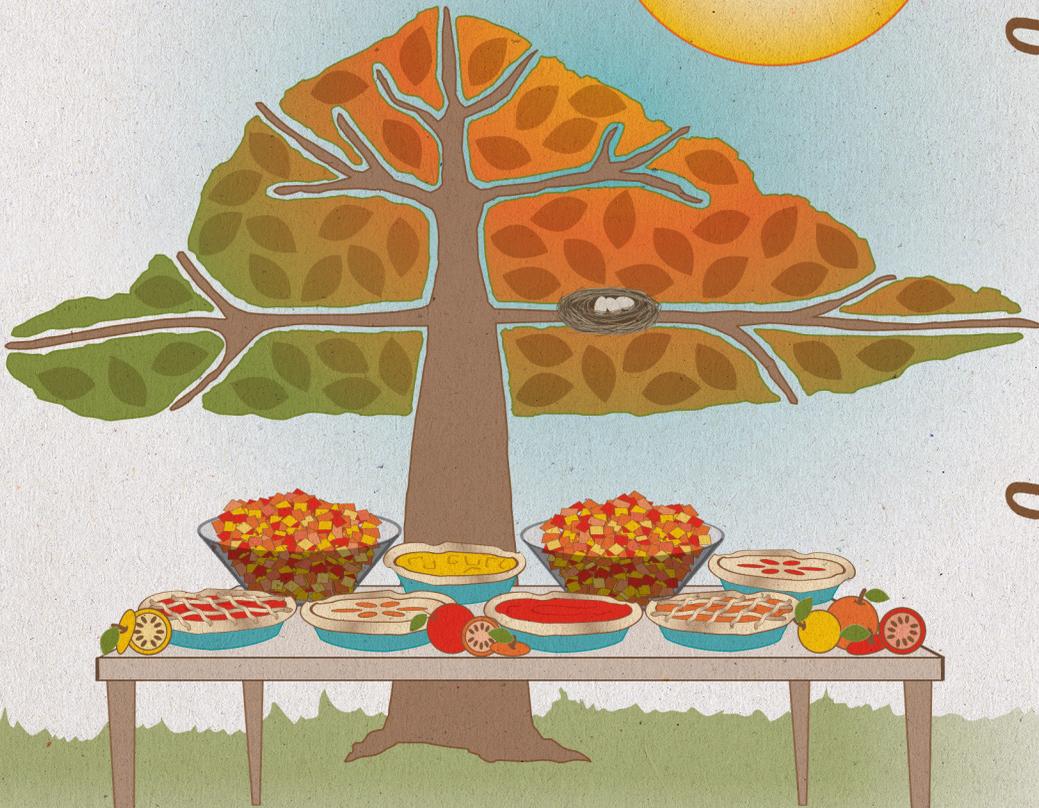


a feast of

The **2022** Annual Stewardship
Campaign and **Year Three** of the
Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign

HOPE

for the future



Community UCC

We're worth our words



Welcoming Progressive Community

Vibrant Messengers of Hope



Many of us have spent an unusual amount of time thinking about and looking to the future recently. We worry about what the world will look like in a future of climate extremes. We worry about what our country will look like in a future of political extremes. And we worry, of course, about how we and those we love will weather yet another wave of Covid-19 cases. It feels sometimes as if the future is leaking hope, and we are powerless to plug the holes.

What a remarkable choice, then, to adopt the theme “A Feast of Hope for the Future” for our 2021 Stewardship Campaign. To write of hope flies in the face of so much that we have been feeling over the past nineteen months. Isn’t it downright delusional to imagine a feast of hope? We would argue that the answer is “no,” especially where CUCC is concerned. We are a church deeply rooted in hope. We are a church that cultivates hope in worship and in the community. We are a church guided by radical hospitality and radical generosity to set feasts of hope, especially when hope seems so fleeting.

And what is remarkable about our feasts of hope, is how they are prepared, not by one grand benefactor, not in one big annual event, but by many, many hands working daily. We can see the feast of hope being prepared and served every Monday by our Jubilee Café volunteers. We can see it too on the faces and in the eyes of our children and the community members who bring the Gospel alive for them through our Children’s and Family Ministry. We can hear the feast of hope in the voices of our choir and our soloists, and in the artistry of our Music Director and instrumentalists. The feast of hope is brought to life when a call for volunteers goes out — to help maintain the church grounds, to help mark birthdays, to bring comfort to those who are ill or suffering, to plan for a future of live-streaming. All of our hands prepare the feast almost every day. Even with the world challenging us on so many fronts, we have continued in this hope-filled, hope-giving work.



This is the time of year when we as a community need to think about the financial conditions that allow the work of CUCC — the feast of hope — to be realized day in and day out. It’s the time of year to do what we can do, to pledge what we can pledge, to make CUCC as financially strong as possible. In addition to the operational expenses, with which we are familiar, there are also particular challenges this year that require us to think and plan differently. As you are aware, we no longer have the rental income that was a significant part of our budget. We are also working to maintain and to expand the live-streaming ministry that we built in response to the pandemic, to make worshipping online as experientially rich and meaningful as it can be. We are facing these challenges because we have been and will be true to our values of inclusion, respect, and love for all, and because we are committed to sharing these values beyond the walls of our beloved church building.

Your pledges this year will help us to set a feast of hope for the future. And though we don’t know exactly what the future will bring, we know that it will be new, that it will have challenges, and that we will enter it, as we always have, with hope in our hearts, and with Jesus of Nazareth as our guide.

Warm wishes,

Larry and Jon, Stewardship Co-Chairs





I've invested many years in children's ministry, and I am raising two children, now teenagers, of my own. Because of this, I am acutely aware of the weight of the messages they receive, particularly from the church. Children don't choose their spiritual homes, their parents and caregivers do. A few years ago, my husband and I realized that we were in a church home that didn't share the inclusive values that we wanted to impart to our children.

In CUCC, we found a place that is wholeheartedly welcoming to all. And while my teens are still figuring out their spiritual paths, I know that they see the example that we set by being a part of this congregation. Each week, when Leah begins the service, I'm reminded of why we chose to be here, and why we continue to invest our time and resources here: "Who are we? We are young and old and middle-aged. Gay and straight and in between. We are single and partnered. Happy and sad, confused and inspired. We are street smart and college educated. Some of us can't pay our bills and others of us have more than enough to share. Who are we? We are God's people. We are the Body of Christ. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here and we really mean it."

As a parent, and as Children's Ministry leader, I am striving to make sure that message comes through loud and clear to the kids of CUCC.

— Julie McClure

When I came to the University of Illinois for grad school, I was in a strange place. Through childhood and adolescence, I was brought up in a church that made quite the fuss over my Tourette's Syndrome. There were always questions of what I or my parents had done to deserve my disability — and even talk of possession. This was compounded by a condemnation of my brother for his crime of being autistic. So when I went away to undergrad, I threw away the church too. For four years, I was faithless. And maybe you think that's no big deal, that everyone has their moments of doubt. But being in a world without God devastated me. Since childhood, I desperately wanted to feel God and to feel Love.

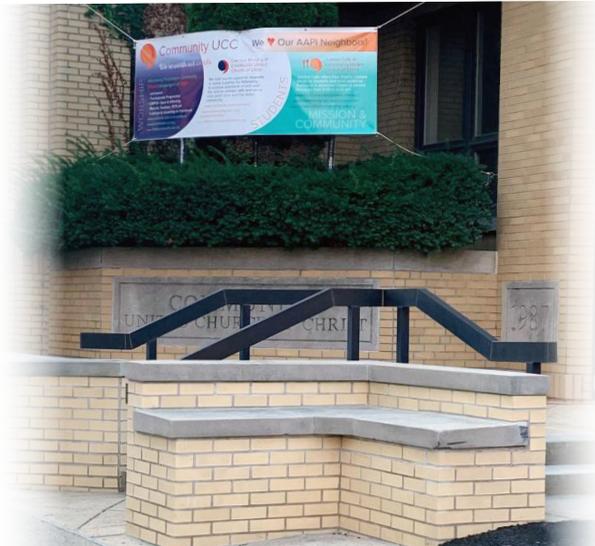
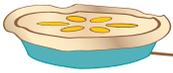
Fast forward to Taste of Champaign 2016, where I stopped at the CUCC booth and met Leah. The way she acted and made me feel welcome — that felt like the Love I was looking for. I attended church at CUCC the next Sunday, where I was warmly welcomed. I joined Campus Ministry and Pub Theology, which have both uniquely changed the way I view myself, faith, and the world. Someone in the church once lovingly told me they celebrated my Tourette's because they saw it as my body's unique dance to the universe and to God. I know that may sound like a strange comment, but it is the lens I still view my Tourette's through today.

Five years and one pandemic later, I still regularly attend CUCC from Zoom. CUCC made it possible for me to truly find God and also to find a community that Loves me. I don't know why I stopped at the CUCC booth in 2016, but I am sure glad I did.

Thank you, CUCC, for sharing a placesetting for me at the Feast of Hope.

— Kristin Johnson Pitlik





On Quad Day, while enjoying her hot dog, a University senior commented how much she loves walking by our church. So often, the Christians she knows reject the inclusive values reflected in our flags. Throughout these difficult years, our flags, and the fact that there are faithful Christians who share her values, have buoyed her. The Congregationalists who felt called to be in relationship with the University knew that the students who sat in the pews would be impacted by their decision to move onto campus, but no Congregationalist a hundred years ago would have predicted that their move from downtown to campus would profoundly impact students who never set foot inside the building. The little yellow church on the corner of 6th and Daniel stands as a symbol of witness to God's greater justice, mercy, and radical welcome. Our building stands as a feast of hope for the future.

Last month, I sat on one of the newly rehabbed benches surrounding CUCC's 6th Street entrance with a Jubilee Café guest. I listened to this guest, a community member who lives close to the bone, talk through some big problems. Our conversation uplifted them, and they offered me a fist bump to celebrate! When I rose to return to my post distributing dinner, the 1987 cornerstone on the addition caught my eye. The concrete benches that create walkways, ramps, and stairs leading up to the 6th Street entrance were installed 34 years ago and were repaired recently as part of our current Capital Campaign and improvements. To be honest, these benches are rarely used. That is, they were rarely used until the pandemic hit. Now, guests sit and fill out their menus there. They sit and eat. They stand under heat lamps in the winter and talk. Campus Ministry students gather around them and form bonds that will last a lifetime. No CUCCer in the late 1980s would have predicted that the porch they planned as part of that generation's Capital Campaign would become the community hub of Jubilee Café. Likewise, no one would have predicted that the lobby would become a make-shift food pantry. The benches in the lobby have been used more now in the last 17 months





than ever before! And what does it say about our church that when you walk into the building you are greeted, not with a pretty lobby, but a food pantry that sends hundreds of pounds of prepared, fresh, and shelf-stable food out the door every week? It says everything. No CUCCer in the late 2000s would have predicted that the commercial grade kitchen they installed would become the heart of Jubilee Café. Nor could they predict how important that weekly connection would be for community folks and students alike, particularly international students, in the middle of a global pandemic. The improvements made by past generations have provided a literal feast of hope for the future.

As we regathered in the sanctuary this August and I looked out over the congregation, both those in the sanctuary and those on the video screen from across town, across the country, and across the globe, I paused and gave thanks to God that our forebearers built such a sanctuary. It is wide open, with long pews — there's plenty of space to spread out and plenty of air to circulate in from the parlor and up through the wide-open space between our heads and ceiling that soars above. We are able to gather and, with the implementation of multiple mitigations, do so as safely as possible. No Congregationalist, way back when, would have predicted how important that space would be in light of an airborne pandemic... or, maybe they would, considering the decision to build the church on campus was made amid the flu pandemic of the last century. Again, the investment of our forebearers has become, for us, a feast of hope.

I believe that there is providence before there is need. If we are paying attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit, and trust its leading, we have the privilege of participating in that providence. We get to be the people who make a future with hope not just possible in a subsistence sort of way, but in a way that is abundant — a feast! Time and time again, when faced with challenge after challenge, and calling upon calling, our forebearers made the hope upon which we feast possible through their generosity and sustained commitment. As we enter the third and final year of our Capital Campaign, and look at an annual budget defined by new challenges, I am confident, Community UCC, that God is calling us into a future full of hope and promise, not just for the folks who look to CUCC in need. I trust that the Spirit is at work, calling us to meet our present challenges and calling us into a future with hope. When you and I answer the call to give, we get to participate in the work of providence. We get to be the people who never imagined a need would arise, but were there to meet it all the same. It is our generation's turn to complete the investment we have envisioned, not just for ourselves, but for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued financial commitment to the ministry of Community United Church of Christ and the Capital Campaign. May these financial gifts be, for one another, a feast of hope.

Blessings,

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser, *Pastor*



Pastor Leah celebrates the new CUCC parking lot.





Dear Community,

We are each blessed to be part of an engaged and supportive faith community, people who are about each other and the broader world. We are a campus church, repeatedly affirming our collective desire to be a beacon of hope in this place. We are a “doing” church with branches that reach beyond our walls. We are an open and affirming church, formally committed to this covenant for more than a quarter of a century. We are deeply rooted in community — in this community — and we have collectively engaged in the work of planting, cultivating, and harvesting a feast of hope for the future.

As a community we set ambitious goals for our 2019 Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign and came together to nourish our deep roots and to plant new seeds. Over the past two years we have begun to see the fruits of our plantings — all while weathering a pandemic. The projects cultivated by your contributions have included an overhaul of the elevator, new plaster and paint in the sanctuary, and major roof repairs, including full replacement of some sections. In late summer 2021, the parking lot was resurfaced! Technology upgrades in the sanctuary have begun and will continue and updates to the flooring, paint and furnishings in the parlor are on the horizon. Bit by bit our plans for our building are coming to fruition.



Much of this renovation work has happened as we worshiped online. The work of the church, too, has continued to plant seeds and germinate hope. Whether through the outreach of Jubilee Café, the creativity of staff and volunteers in finding ways to maintain connection and offer radical hospitality, or your support of Campus Ministry and its students, you are a community that cultivates not just hope for, but the reality of, a better future.

Those of you who have been able to return to in person worship have begun to realize the fruits of our labors — a newly brightened sanctuary, a smooth parking lot surface, a building that is watertight. Initial investments in technology are making it possible for others of us to continue to participate in worship from home.

But the seeds we have planted over the years of this campaign will flourish well beyond these immediate harvests. The investments that we have made to better root ourselves in this place will bear fruit for generations to come, as we continue to shine the light of progressive Christianity, work for social justice, offer radical hospitality that is open and affirming, serve as a home away from home for students, feed hungry bellies and voracious minds, and offer belonging and connection across lines of difference. These gifts will continue to flower and will germinate seeds that will scatter far from this place. What we have planted and nurtured now, here, in this place, makes that hopeful future possible.

I continue to be grateful to all of you for your faithful participation in the life of our church and for your generous contributions to this Capital Campaign. Your commitment to this campaign has made all these projects possible. If your circumstances have changed and you need to decrease or increase your pledge, please contact our Financial Secretary, David Wilcox, at financial-secretary@community-ucc.org. You can also update your pledge, or add a new pledge if you didn't make a pledge during the first two years of the campaign, on our website.

Thank you for your financial gifts to the campaign and for all the other gifts and talents that each of you brings to our community.

Peace,

Jen Robbennolt, *Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign Team Leader*

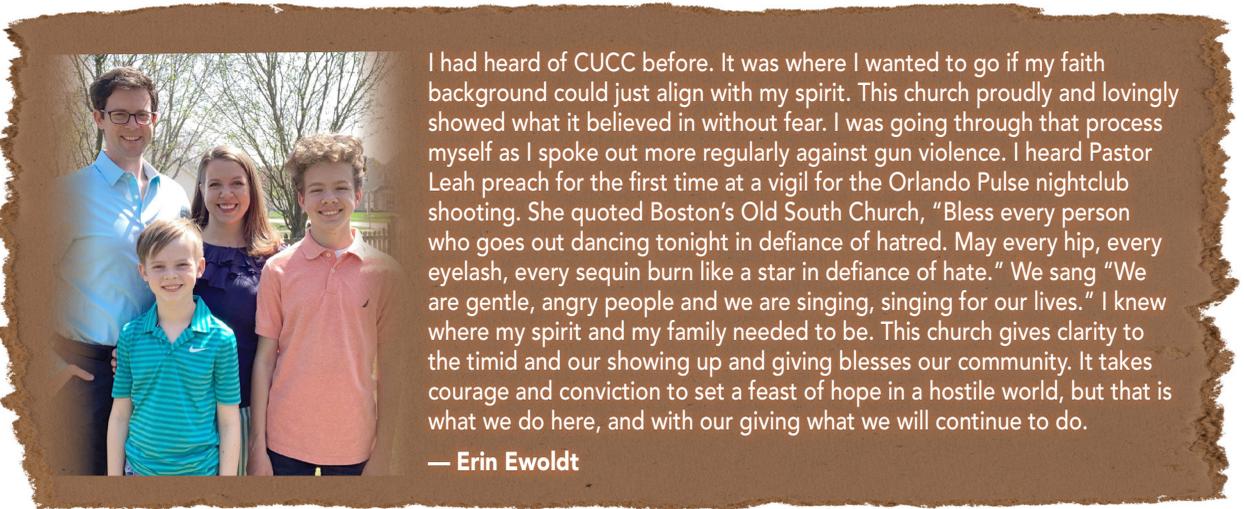




Ten years ago, I joined CUCC and knew I was in the right place. This church actually was doing and continues to do the work that God asks us to do.

One memory stands out for me in terms of giving. We had a mission weekend right here in Champaign. This led me to seeing our neighbors and neighborhoods with a new perspective and how we could make a difference. Helping with Jubilee Café has also given me a sense of purpose in giving. What we do as a church in feeding those in need is an outward sign of our values. As well, we are a welcoming church to those who may never have felt comfortable in a church. As Leah says, we provide various entry points that allow anyone and everyone to come. This is also true in our giving. All we ask is that you listen to what God guides you to do.

— Douglas Irwin



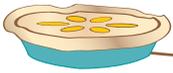
I had heard of CUCC before. It was where I wanted to go if my faith background could just align with my spirit. This church proudly and lovingly showed what it believed in without fear. I was going through that process myself as I spoke out more regularly against gun violence. I heard Pastor Leah preach for the first time at a vigil for the Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting. She quoted Boston's Old South Church, "Bless every person who goes out dancing tonight in defiance of hatred. May every hip, every eyelash, every sequin burn like a star in defiance of hate." We sang "We are gentle, angry people and we are singing, singing for our lives." I knew where my spirit and my family needed to be. This church gives clarity to the timid and our showing up and giving blesses our community. It takes courage and conviction to set a feast of hope in a hostile world, but that is what we do here, and with our giving what we will continue to do.

— Erin Ewoldt

I am a 'Zoom' worshiper at CUCC. A gift of Covid times! A few years ago, while helping my daughter, Brin Schuler, during the early days of her recovery from a major medical episode, I was introduced to Community United Church of Christ through the 'Meal Train' — busy people taking time out of their busy lives to bring nourishment and words of encouragement to a family in need. These seemingly simple actions made an indelible mark on my heart. As I came to know CUCCers better and met more members of the community, I witnessed the depth of belief among the members and observed how these beliefs are put into action. The inclusive approach and the view of world is heartfelt and real. Since coming to worship regularly, I have been inspired to be more present and aware of the needs of others and avail myself of the opportunities to help as they present themselves. I feel blessed to be able to help contribute to sustaining these works.

— Maureen Schuler





On the first Monday of October, Jubilee Café turns 4! Over the course of the previous 52 weeks, Jubilee Café has served 4078 meals, averaging 78 guests per week. Since March 2020, when Public Health issued restrictions on how many people could gather safely, we adapted quickly from in person, sit-down meals, to carry-out meals PLUS groceries.

Over the past 12 months, instead of being greeted in the fellowship hall, seated, and served in order to eat off of real dishes, our guests line up (6 feet apart) or drive up. Campus Minister Rev. Nate Brantingham is typically stationed outside handing printed menus and donuts, courtesy of Ye Olde Donuts, to guests and waiting on drive-up guests. Pastor Leah is inside the entry way, at the far end of a six-foot table. She receives menus from walk-up guests. Volunteers who are working distribution, typically, University students, wait inside our 6th Street lobby which has been transformed into a pantry. During the current growing season, we've also set-up our market stand full of fresh produce, graciously donated by Sola Gratia Farm. The volunteers fill and bag orders. Another volunteer, usually Ilsa, assists with drink orders and distributing meals in the entry way. Distribution of the meals itself is only

a sliver of the work it takes to make Jubilee Café happen — meals are planned, groceries are acquired, food is prepped, cooked, and boxed. Dishes still have to be done!

We saw the need in our community increase with the arrival of Covid.

- **Pre-covid, we served an average of 60 meals per week.**
- **Post-covid, that average jumped to 78 meals per week.**

However, due to the measures we put into place so that we could follow safe physical distancing, we saw our volunteer numbers decrease.

- **Pre-covid, Jubilee Café was made possible by an average of 32 volunteers per week.**
- **Post-covid, Jubilee Café has been made possible by an average of only 10 volunteers per week.**

That's a 21.67% increase in output, not including the groceries that we distribute, with a 68.75% decrease in volunteers.





Donations from Jubilee Café friends, CUCC members, and our community partners, including:

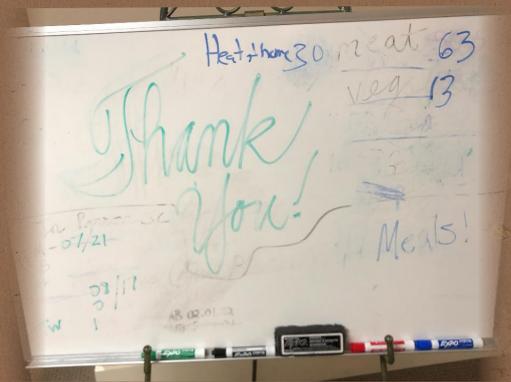
- **Eastern Illinois Foodbank**
- **Far East Grocery**
- **Jubilee Farms**
- **Sola Gratia Farm**
- **Ye Olde Donut Shop**

continue to help us feed our regular guests, as well as DREAM House students and staff during their summer 2021 program. The continued success of Jubilee Café is due to YOU, CUCC! Jubilee Café is a ministry of our church — it exists within the infrastructure of our congregation. Your regular giving, and your gifts to the Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign, are the bedrock that make Jubilee Café possible.

Thank you for your generosity towards Community UCC, which makes this ministry possible!

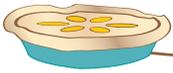


If you came to Jubilee Café pre-covid, you might remember a white, dry erase board on an easel that has that week's menu written across it. In those days everyone who volunteered got a job or two to do, but as we transitioned to out-the-door meals and the number of volunteers was reduced, we all took on new jobs. Our welcoming whiteboard took on new jobs, too. Along the top and down the right side we keep a tally of how many meals are sent upstairs, which, along with the menus handed out at the door, helps us keep track of how many people we serve each week. A few months after the change some of us began to speculate when we would return to inside table service and those guesses are written on the lower left portion of the board. Many of the dates have come and gone, including my guess of Easter 2021, but we keep them there as a reminder that even as those dates pass, we persevere. And the middle of the board has "Thank You!" scrawled across it, because although it is in the basement and none of our guests see it, it is a reminder that everyone is still welcome, as Jubilee continues our mission of feeding whoever comes to the door.



— **Ann Hart** (volunteering at Jubilee Café in the photo above)





Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign Construction Updates Since October of 2020

Though most of us were not able to spend much time in the church building during 2021, there was a lot of activity that took place related to the capital campaign construction!

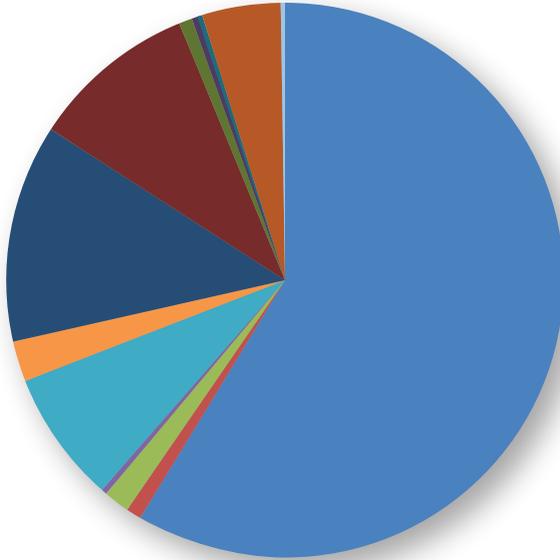
- All our roofing work was wrapped up in 2021, including: new roofs over the parlor, choir area, and southwest storage area; repairs and upgrades to the tile roof; and repairs to the roof over the offices.
- The walls and ceiling in the sanctuary were repaired and the entire space was repainted. We introduced some new blue hues in the choir loft and back wall which look fantastic!
- The area just inside the Daniel entrance (where the choir prays before worship on Sunday mornings during normal times) was repaired and repainted a lovely shade of yellow.
- The “original entryway” (between the sanctuary and the parlor) was repaired and repainted using the same shade of yellow.
- The southwest worship storage area had plaster repairs and new paint.
- Since we needed to move all of the pews for the painters they were repaired and, in most cases, repositioned once the painting was complete.
- The parking lot was completely overhauled. Trouble spots were milled down, new asphalt was applied and rolled, new striping was put down throughout, and new signage was added. Many of the old, crumbling parking blocks were eliminated. Our two disabled parking spots were reconfigured and are now ADA compliant.
- After being put on hold for most of the year, due to the new building across the street, our tuck pointing continues with work on the east (Sixth Street) side of the building.
- Still to come once the tuck pointing is complete on the east side, we'll be turning our attention to the parlor enhancements. We'll have significant repair work done to the walls, new paint, new furnishings, and new floor covering.





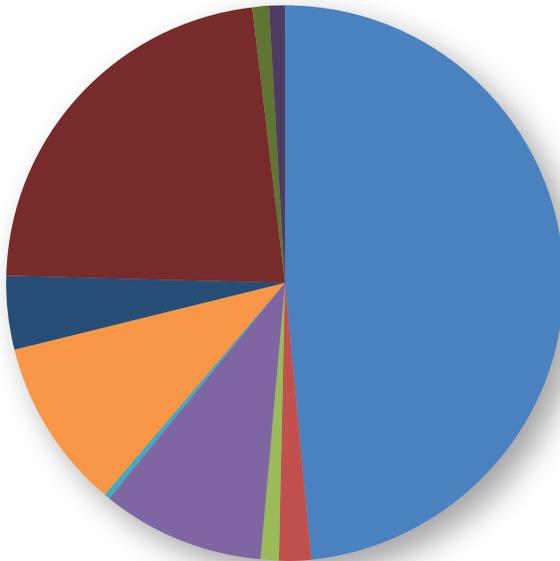
Nearly two-thirds of CUCC's income comes from pledges and donations from members and friends. In normal years we get additional income from renting our space to other groups, but since the building was closed for the first part of 2021, that amount has been reduced.

2021 CUCC INCOME BUDGET*



- Pledges & Identified Giving – 58%
- Open Plate – 1%
- Investment Income General Fund – 2%
- Investment Income Endowment Fund – 0%
- Rent - Covenant Fellowship Church** – 8%
- Rent - UCC Campus Ministry – 2%
- Rent - 510 E. Daniel St. Property – 13%
- Parking Income – 10%
- Fundraising – 1%
- Other Income – 0%
- In-Kind Contributions – 0%
- Sabbatical Reserve Transfer – 5%
- Jubilee Café Transfers – 0%

2021 CUCC EXPENSE BUDGET*

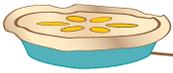


- Personnel Expenses – 48%
- Non-personnel Expenses – 2%
- Miscellaneous CLB Expenses – 1%
- Mission – 10%
- Identity – 0%
- Worship – 10%
- Children and Family Ministry – 4%
- Facilities Management – 23%
- Financial Resources Management – 1%
- Community Building – 1%

* Read the legend information clockwise within the pie charts.

** We received 34% of the budgeted \$25,305 rent from CFC in 2021. This income source will be absent from our 2022 budget.





The spiritual practice of stewardship starts with prayerful consideration of what part of your household income you plan to give to support the mission and ministry of CUCC. By setting aside and giving back these “feasts of fruits” from what God gives us, we realize God’s abundance more fully.

Please use the chart below in determining your pledge to the Annual Stewardship Campaign or a new pledge to the Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign. What percentage of your household income are you currently giving to the Annual Stewardship Campaign? Discern prayerfully how you might give more. Normally we’d suggest an increase of 1% or more of your household budget, but in this uncertain year, we know that will not be possible for some. We also know that for others, more will be possible. Together, as a Community, God blesses and multiplies our giving. Thank you to everyone who gives! Thanks to you who tithe (10%) for being foundational and sustaining members of our Community.

2022 GIVING SUGGESTIONS

INCOME		TITHE 10%		5%		2022 SUGGESTED INCREASE 1%	
Yearly Income	Weekly Income	Yrly Pledge	Wkly Pledge	Yrly Pledge	Wkly Pledge	Yrly Pledge	Wkly Pledge
10,000	192	1,000	19	500	10	100	2
20,000	385	2,000	38	1,000	19	200	4
30,000	577	3,000	58	1,500	29	300	6
40,000	769	4,000	77	2,000	38	400	8
50,000	962	5,000	96	2,500	48	500	10
60,000	1,154	6,000	115	3,000	58	600	12
70,000	1,346	7,000	135	3,500	67	700	13
80,000	1,538	8,000	154	4,000	77	800	15
90,000	1,731	9,000	173	4,500	87	900	17
100,000	1,923	10,000	192	5,000	96	1,000	19
150,000	2,885	15,000	288	7,500	144	1,500	29
200,000	3,846	20,000	385	10,000	192	2,000	38

*This table is for you to use when calculating your pledge and donations.
A more detailed table with more percentage options is available elsewhere in your packet.*

You can make your pledge and donations on the website community-ucc.org by clicking **PLEDGE** and **DONATE** at the top of the homepage.

Or mail your pledge card and donations to:
Community United Church of Christ
Attn. Financial Secretary
805 S. 6th St., Champaign, IL 61820

