

# Foundation Grants Report



May 2011

## *Musical "The Secret Garden"*



For many years, our congregation has been effectively engaged in a variety of ministries related to helping our neighbors care for their basic needs. Outreach Ministries are central to our congregation's identity and mission.

In addition to that outreach focus, our long-standing commitment to offering high quality music ministries has made us a "magnet" for many who appreciate Fine Arts. Throughout the 2011 Lenten season, several ministry initiatives were offered combining best

practices of our Outreach Ministries with best practices of our Fine Arts Ministries. The Foundation helped make this pilot program possible by providing a grant supporting:

- Copies of the book, *The Secret Garden* distributed to families who are guests of our Food Pantry and Sunday school families (study and discussion guides are included).
- Tickets for performances of the musical, "The Secret Garden" distributed to several families who are guests of our Food Pantry and families engaged in other community assistance programs.
- Tickets for the Meal for Hope distributed to several Food Pantry families and individuals.
- Produce from farmers participating in the Meal for Hope Farmers' Market shared with Food Pantry guests.
- A temporary art gallery in the Chapel titled "Garden Conversations: A Photographic Essay".
- Packets of seeds (for growing herbs) distributed to all guests who visit our building during Lent.

The vision for this Fine Arts Outreach ministry initiative is grand and yet to be fully determined, but we trust that there is much to be learned during the pilot projects of the 2011 Lenten season. And we trust that everything we learn will help our congregation move more fully into our commitment to extend radical hospitality.

## *Funds for Leadership Events*



The Foundation provided funds for two very exciting leadership events. For the first, a lay leader and the senior pastor from Glen Mar United Methodist Church in Maryland spent a weekend with First Church leaders, sharing their experience of transformation into a church where every member is in ministry. They helped us to see more clearly how we could move forward toward realizing our vision of partnership in ministry. We enjoyed a Saturday workshop, which was

well attended, followed by a Sunday morning class for those who could not attend on Saturday. The lessons learned from Glen Mar are continuing to inform our strategic planning efforts.

A Foundation grant allowed us to host Rev. Dan Dick at another Saturday leadership event. Rev. Dick taught us to recognize our individual spiritual gifts and to appreciate what our collective giftedness as a community of faith can mean. We hope to employ some of the tools and techniques he provided in an ongoing program to help us identify and understand our giftedness.

- *Kate Vanderheiden*, Chair, Church Council

## *Lenten Labyrinth Retreat*



The Foundation provided a grant to help fund a Lenten Labyrinth Retreat. We offered a morning session which included 19 participants and an afternoon session which included 15 participants. The retreat, led by Rev. Lynn Scott of Sabbath Way Ministries, focused on spiritual growth and the personal journey of faith, but

also offered many ideas in regard to future ministries related to our labyrinth. Though the labyrinth is an ancient tool of prayer and meditation, it is new to our church building as part of our rebuilding project and is new to many of our members. Feedback, whether from those experiencing individual walks or group walks, often acknowledges the experience as a significant milestone on their faith journey. The grant from the Foundation made it possible for us to offer the introductory retreat and to begin to develop our labyrinth ministries. We are grateful for the Foundation's investment in this ministry opportunity.

- *Mary Bean and Rev. Tina Lang*,  
Labyrinth Ministry Team

## *International Habitat for Humanity*



The Foundation provided a grant which became seed money as part of First Church's first international Habitat For Humanity mission trip in 2009. A group from First Church went to El Salvador for a week and a half and participated in a blitz build – helping build 18 houses which were completely constructed in three weeks for families who previously lived in sub-standard housing. For some of the team members, it was a first exposure to life in the third world. Reading about conditions in poor countries has a very different impact from personally experiencing it. As Christians we know it is important to feed the hungry and house the homeless and care for the poor, because God calls us to be compassionate people. But actually putting your own sweat and sore muscles into the project side by side with people you don't personally know (and may not really even be able to communicate with) brings a whole new reality to one's faith and perspective. We see how profoundly blessed we are, just through the fact that we happened to be born in the USA, and thus have many automatic opportunities that very few people in much of the rest of the world enjoy. Through the Foundation's support, this ministry was undertaken in 2007. Since then, a group from First Church returned to El Salvador in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. We have developed a connection and caring for hurting people in El Salvador that was just abstract and hypothetical before we picked up trowels and shovels personally. Each person who has been "blessed to be a blessing" has had personal experiences that have meaningfully shaped our faith, and touched our hearts and souls. We have been changed. The families who now own and occupy the solid, sturdy homes we helped build will never forget us, nor will we forget them. We have been able to share our experiences with the rest of the Church, and the ripple effects continue to touch us and the people who prayed for us and who supported us in this mission program. We appreciate the Foundation's financial support which was instrumental in getting this program launched, and now it stands, on its own, as a mission project we and First Church have become committed to continue.

*- Marjorie Matthews,*  
Habitat For Humanity Mission Team-El Salvador

**2010-2011 Update:** The International Ministry Team's 2010 focus was "Building Communities". In April 2010, eight First Church members joined nine Orchard Ridge UCC members to build homes in El Salvador with Habitat for Humanity. In June 2010, another mission team went to Cuba as part of a VIM project, building houses for a Methodist Seminary in Havana. First Church participated in the "Strengthening Getesami Project" in western El Salvador in April 2011. Our role in this holistic community development project focused on micro-entrepreneurship and housing solutions.

## *The Bishop Ralph Alton & Marion Alton Scholarship*

The Alton Scholarship program originated with a discussion in a hospital room. Van Van Dyke of our congregation was sitting with Bishop Ralph Alton in the Bishop's room at Meriter Hospital shortly before Ralph passed away in 1994. Ralph had been Bishop of the Wisconsin and Indiana United Methodist Conferences. When he retired in the early 1980s, he and his wife, Marion, moved back to Wisconsin and made First Church their church home. Ralph was a very active "Bishop in Residence" at First Church until his death. As Van later recalled the hospital conversation, he asked Bishop Alton: "How do you want to be remembered? Perhaps a stained glass window?" Van said Bishop Alton scoffed at the idea. Then Van suggested a scholarship program for youth. Van said Ralph lit up at the idea and quickly added, "Yes, but be sure they earn it!"

That was some 17 years ago. Since then, with Van and Nancy Van Dyke's leadership, the family and friends of Bishop Ralph Alton and Marion Alton have established – and generously contributed to – the Alton Scholarship Program. Beginning in 1995 Alton Scholarships have been awarded annually to graduating high school seniors who are church members and who have been active in the church's youth program. Bishop Alton strongly believed in the value of participation in the church youth program as important to starting a lifetime of Christian service. He said the youth program is where the youth learn to be Christians. They care for each other, they study and learn together, they work together, and they pray together. In addition, Alton Scholarships have also been awarded to First Church members who are studying for the ordained ministry. The Alton Scholarship program provides both financial support and a symbolic recognition that the church continues to care about the recipients. Since 1995, we have awarded some 100 scholarships worth \$92,200. After a recent major gift from the estate of Marion Murphy, the endowment base of the program now stands at more than \$400,000. The funds in the endowment base are invested and administered by the church's Foundation and the program is overseen by a board of church members. This wonderful program has proven to be a key part of our church's youth ministry. And it all began in a hospital room.

*- Alton VanDyke Scholarship Committee*

## *Minister's Fund Helps*

Did you know?! First United Methodist Church Foundation offers opportunities for individuals to align their values and philanthropy with action through the church's multiple ministries. A lovely illustration follows. A young couple (that wishes to remain anonymous) joined First United Methodist Church over five decades ago. Their active involvement within the church spanned many areas over the years. However, this husband and wife were especially impressed with the enormous contributions of the church's food pantry and holiday meals. Through participation in these efforts, this couple became more acutely aware of fellow community members' needs. They pondered how to help the church respond to the personal circumstances and unplanned crises of individuals who often felt they had nowhere else to turn. Why not give a gift (or what actually turned out to become several substantial gifts over time) to establish an endowed fund at First United Methodist Church to address these concerns and to help persons less fortunate than ourselves?

The current Minister's Fund was created with special thanks to this couple. Since 1998, it has supplied over \$180,000 in emergency and crisis support to people in need who arrive at the church's door humbly seeking help. The Minister's Fund at First United Methodist Church makes a difference. Those who contribute to the fund make a difference. And the two individuals who took the initiative to establish the fund truly have made a difference. The joy derived from making a difference is multifold. Through the Minister's Fund, we share small blessings with fellow community members every day throughout the year. We have seized an opportunity and taken action. Many feel blessed.

*- Outreach Ministries Program Council*

## *170-Year Downtown History*



The FUMC Foundation grant enabled the Building Committee to authorize the design, construction, and installation of a creative, artistic display highlighting our 170 years of downtown Madison history. This historical wall, a handsome addition to our building, witnesses our past as well as challenges our future. Members and visitors alike benefit from its educational and inspirational value. Sunday school

classes use the wall to reference and illustrate our church's impact in Madison. Without the FUMC Foundation grant, this display would not be in place as a constant reminder of our being "Downtown for Good."

*- Barb Clapp, Building Committee*

## *Supporting Youth Missions*



I have had the privilege of being a Youth Leader on Appalachian Service Project (ASP) mission trips for the past nine summers. The various Youth Funds in the Foundation have provided financial assistance for these trips for many more years than I have been attending. But I can certainly say that,

from my personal experience, these dollars have gone beyond mere “assistance.” They have helped to transform hearts and to change lives. These trips involve so much more than simply construction repair work. That is certainly a big part of what happens. Homes in poverty-stricken areas of southern Appalachia are indeed made warmer, safer and drier. All of that is good. But far more than that happens on these trips. Cultural horizons are broadened for youth and adults alike; stereotypes about what it means to live in poverty are smashed. And hearts are softened. We always end our experiences with an evening worship experience on our way home. These worship times often last as long as three hours. To be a witness to the tender opening of hearts and to the shedding of tears as young people and adults share how they have experienced God during the course of a week is an experience of grace like none other. In this way, you could look at the support provided by the Foundation (and by all of the members of our congregation) as a sacrament of sorts: an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The “return” on that investment is incalculable.

- *Kathie Nichols*, ASP Youth Leader

## *Music at First Church*



The Foundation has been an invaluable asset to me as director of music.

As one time only, special events and extraordinarily large events come into focus, it is often the FUMC Foundation that steps up to the plate and provides the needed funds to allow the music to be a part of these events. The foundation provided the money needed to commission music for David Lyons retirement celebration. The foundation

provided money for the first summer music camps for young people. They helped open this new building, they brought Old Befana here for the first time and more. I look forward to being able to call on the foundation in the future when new and exciting opportunities present themselves and we are all able to celebrate because our Foundation was there for us.

- *Scott Foss*, First Church Music Ministry

## *Generous Gift to First Church*



Gentle. Kind. Quiet. Always pleasant. A very private person. Very kind hearted. A true physician. These are some of the adjectives used to describe Dr. Marion Murphy, who died on October 12, 2009. She was 86 years old and had been a member of First Church since 1973. Marion's husband, Quillian, was also a physician in the UW Medical School. He died in 1976. Marion served at UW Student Health Service from 1951 to 1996. She was a loyal attendee at the eight o'clock Sunday service. At her death, Marion left \$378,000 to the First United Methodist Church Foundation, to be divided between the Alton Scholarship fund, the Foundation's unrestricted fund, and a new Foundation building fund. We are deeply grateful for this gift and the ministries it will make possible.

## *Celebrating Their Many Contributions to First Church*



A devoted couple and loyal members of First Church, Winston and Neva Brembeck both died during 2009: Winston in March, Neva in December. During their 57 years of membership at FUMC, they contributed in a variety of ways. Winny, as his friends knew him, was passionate about good preaching. As a prominent leader of the field of persuasive speech in the Department of Communication Arts at UW-Madison, Winston loved great preachers and outstanding sermons. Throughout his life, he was a friendly critic of preachers at FUMC from Ellsworth Kalas to Keith Schroerlucke. He helped Lee Moorehead form and run the highly respected preaching school in which many First Church members participated as observers/critics. He also helped found the Forward Club, a men's club for several years at FUMC.

Together, Winston and Neva helped develop neighborhood groups of First Church members. These were very important fellowship/learning groups for several years. The friendships formed in these groups 30 to 40 years ago still endure. Neva was an accomplished pianist and organist who loved "good music." She was an active member of Elizabeth Circle for many years. The Brembecks were a gracious couple who loved to have people in their home.

Winston and Neva had no children and greatly appreciated the friendship of First Church members, especially in their later years. They left an unrestricted bequest to FUMC Foundation that is likely to total more than \$90,000 since the estate has settled. Earnings from the Foundation's unrestricted funds are used to fund grants for innovative and new efforts or enhancements to existing church programs. We are deeply grateful for their many contributions to FUMC over nearly 60 years and to their generous gift which will sustain ministries in the future.

## *Other Projects Supported by FUMC Foundation Grants*

**Communications Audit & Website with Social Media:** The FUMC Foundation provided a grant supporting a professional marketing and communications audit, and a grant to support new innovations with First Church's website. Some of the audit recommendations already have been implemented with more to be completed in 2011. Coming soon are a new name and look to our weekly eNews, more electronic communications efforts, and a more consistent look to all printed materials.

**Embracing Diversity:** The Embracing Diversity team received a grant for a coordinated series of events in 2009 designed to engage the congregation in conversations about the relationship of the church with the LGBT community. The project included several visits by Rev. Amy De-Long, including the multi-week book study, "Holy Conversations: Talking about Homosexuality" and follow-up conversations facilitated by Rev. DeLong. The group also hosted an LGBT film festival as part of the project. One outcome of the project was the congregational affirmation at the 2009 Charge Conference to become a Reconciling Congregation.

**Landscape Concept Plan:** The Landscape Committee of the Trustees received a grant to engage landscape architect Dick Fayram to develop a conceptual plan for our property's landscaping. Now that the dust has settled from our building project, the Trustees have identified the church grounds as an area of focus, where thoughtful choices will improve the 'open and inviting' character of our property. This group will use the conceptual plan to guide future landscaping decisions and investments.

**Hand in Hand:** The Youth Missions program received a grant to bring in actress and director Leslye Orr for the play "Hand in Hand," which celebrates the possibilities of disabilities. Youth and adult participants experienced a heightened awareness of their senses while learning about the remarkable life and work of Helen Keller, and her teacher Anne Sullivan. The project helped youth and adults connect to the Appalachian Service Project theme, "We walk by faith, not by sight," and to provide the group with a new way to learn about diversity and radical hospitality.

**New Consecration Sunday:** Stewardship Committee received a grant to adopt the New Consecration Sunday approach for the fall 2009 stewardship campaign. The committee worked with Rev. Dan Dick in planning the campaign, and the grant enabled us to bring Rev. Dick to First Church to preach on Consecration Sunday, and host a leadership dinner one week before. The grant also supported celebratory meals for the congregation on Consecration Sunday.

**Shelby Database Training:** Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) received a grant to offer new training on the church's Shelby Database to the staff. This training will help staff members work more effectively in the church's membership database. Prior to submitting the grant request, SPRC had recently completed a series of interviews with church staff and laypersons to create a Staffing Report; the database training was one of the committee's key recommendations.