



Fairlington United Methodist Church

Leadership Team 2024 Fall Report



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Your FUMC Leadership Team: *Front L to R: Mark Elder (lay Leader), Andrew Hunter (Team Chair), Holly Sapp (Treasurer), Connie Cartledge (secretary), Elizabeth Mitchell (FUW in faith).*

Back L to R; Pastor Dr. Janine Howard, Nana Amoateng (Lay member to annual conf), Dr Louise Wilson (Dir of Music), Lana Hurdle (Trustees Chair), Ken Chadwick (Staff Parish Relations Chair), Stephen Ng (Finance Committee Chair). Missing: Christian White , Eric Lundquist, Jackie Weavill.

By Andrew Hunter, Chair, Leadership Team

Leadership is first a matter of the heart. For these past three years it has been such a privilege to be part of this team. I have learned to appreciate so much more about Fairlington and the love and devotion of its members that keep this community vibrant, loving and welcoming. We are a place of familiarity AND exploration in the way of living good lives - making Jesus smile.

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.” (Matthew 20:28) As a leader I am inspired by Jesus’ example of Leader as Servant. We live in a world of complexity and rapid change, and together with life’s uncertainty and ambiguity living in our world can be an exhausting and overwhelming experience. Most leaders still reflect a model that I believe is sorely ineffective—attempting to micromanage others. The temptation to lead as Chess master, controlling each move exactly, must give way to a more “gardening” type of approach—enabling rather than directing. A good gardener/leader nurtures through building trust and providing reasonable structure, as well as nourishing individuals and celebrating new growth. The effective leader also pays attention to circumstances, adapting to change while remaining optimistic regarding future outcomes. This

leader acts as a “eyes on, hands-off” active enabler who creates and sustains an environment in which the organization grows.

This past two years we have focused on addressing the physical needs of our church and our four mission areas. We have sought to discern how our campus could better serve the community—first regarding the alternate use of our upper parking lot and now with our new kitchen. For now the parking lot development will remain dormant as we rent portions of it to other organizations to pay for our infrastructure needs and monthly loan payment.

In mid-September the leadership team met for it’s annual planning session to determine priorities for our four strategic focus areas for 2025:

1. Creating a 21st century infrastructure that strengthens our ministry and mission
2. Building a more effective community
3. Empowering our mission priorities of housing, food security, immigration and refugee support, and creation care.
4. Strengthening our financial systems/processes

To be accountable to ourselves and the congregation our team needs to have shared commitments. This can happen best in an environment of honest communication fostered by trust. Here are some highlights of the shared intentions of our engaged team of leaders for the upcoming year:

Pastor

- Priorities include increasing fellowship, community, outreach, and mission
- More fellowship opportunities such as a new orientation for visitors and a variety show or comedy night to attract new visitors and enhance casual conversation with them.
- Engage in community and outreach projects such as the Northern Virginia District’s *Do No Harm* initiative and English as a Second Language
- Reinvigorate missions beyond our geographic zone to include disaster response and mission involvement in another country
- Offer United Methodist Volunteer Mission training next year, targeting 3 or 4 people from the congregation
- Possibly offer a class on Saving Grace that teaches Wesleyan financial practices

Trustees

- A new roof for the sanctuary, sidewalk repair, completed conversion of lights to LED, remodeling the ladies room by the kitchen, a new door security system, LED lighting for the upper parking lot, a new stage curtain, and radon mitigation for the Parsonage
- Explore hiring a building manager to manage building operations and rentals of kitchen and parking lot

Staff Parish Relations Committee

- Evaluate staffing to support FUMC mission and review job descriptions of pastor and staff to make sure they are accurate
- Utilize an output communication strategy to foster better communication; possibly find someone in congregation who might be good at this
- Finish the current overhaul of the church website. The new system will have capability to communicate the same message by voice mail, text, or email

Finance Committee

- Biggest expenditure in 2025 will be the new roof
- Focus on second mile giving and budget for emergency infrastructure costs. We currently have a good operational budget, but if the congregation wants to do more we must do that by encouraging second mile giving
- Develop a simplified budget that is more easily communicated to the congregation

Lay Leader

- Use the opportunity after COVID and General Conference to rebrand the UMC to bring people back to church; use our FUMC reconciling identity to attract neighbors and younger people
- Connect people's gifts with service opportunities and small groups within the church
- Promote a focus on improved communication and stronger fellowship and connections with each other

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourself. DO what it says.” (James 1:22) So many possibilities! How are you opening yourself up to opportunity? We invite your ideas and your energy. Let us go forth with humility and curiosity to make new discoveries, while taking care of our tireless beating heart.



Our beating Heart is strong at work in our Mission Areas.

Mission area: Food security

Starting in January the ALIVE! Food pop up in the parking lot will be moving indoors!

With the help of Jennifer Ayers, Marguerite Broadwell and the Trustees, we have a path forward that will 1) meet a community need, 2) help ALIVE! feed more people at a reduced cost from our current Saturday pop up model, and 3) enable us to distribute food with barely an impact on our building's use or storage space, 4) show respect to the community we serve by giving them food choices, and 5) require reasonable, achievable volunteer commitment. Our plan is to begin communicating the new food distribution info in October with a January 2025 start date.



Mission area: Housing

From January through September 2024, Fairlington's RSDAP Fund has provided grants to 48 households for a total expenditure of \$16,845.38. The pace of referrals from the community in this post-Covid environment has slowed somewhat, which has allowed us to be more liberal by offering grants above the previous \$300 cap. Most security deposits required (even for subsidized rentals) are market rate one or two-month rent amounts (\$1,000-2,000).

Our community partners are grateful that FUMC's dedicated security deposit assistance fund is now able to be more flexible in helping families access affordable housing while they focus their emergency services funding and efforts on eviction prevention, past rent due, utilities, food, and other life essentials. Our fund balance remains solid, and we are able to offer more grants of \$400 to \$500 and to join some collaborative efforts to forestall eviction and eliminate the need for a move.

Rent Security Deposit Assistance Giving Club: This month we have sent reminders to 33 members who have committed to twice-yearly giving. These commitments help sustain a strong and consistent funding base. We encourage church members to consider signing on through the FUMC website, or by forms located on the Connect Boards in the Narthex.

Volunteers are needed to provide backup support in the program coordinator's absence. This involves flexible availability to respond by email and phone to requests for grant assistance from the community. Questions? Contact Carolyn DeVilbiss at carolyn.devilbiss@icloud.com.

Mission Area: Immigration and Refugee support

FUMC is collaborating with Just Neighbors to assist the Ortega family in obtaining 5-year work documents (they are eligible because they have already filed applications for asylum). Just Neighbors will also work with them to renew their Temporary Protected Status (TPS) documents in early spring. Both adults continue to look for sustainable employment, and both children are thriving in school. Show your appreciation for all of the support Just Neighbors provides to a broad array of immigrants by donating to the October 20 Just Neighbors' Lady Liberty Birthday Party event. Fairlington is a key sponsor of this event. See the church bulletin for details.

The Ortega family crossed the border June 22, 2023! I hope that all of FUMC feels proud of the support that has—and continues to—help this family thrive. As they do so they are very committed to lifting up others as well. We are so glad to be a part of their unfolding journey.



Wendy Ortega graduated at the top of her culinary class, had perfect attendance, and is seen by her professors and mentors as having tremendous potential for both her technical and leadership skills.



Anne Wilson and Doug Brown accepting Fairlington's 2024 Faith Community Sustainability Champions Award. Anne gave a speech about the benefits of natural spaces in the urban environment for creation, community, and human connectedness.

Mission Area: Creation Care

The energy efficient FUMC kitchen is now fully operational. We are also already seeing reductions in energy costs from the chiller installation and expect to see the same with our new kitchen. LED lights have been installed throughout Fellowship Hall and in the Education wing hallways. A predominant 2025 theme for Creation Care activities will be reducing waste—especially kitchen waste. You will note that FUMC has switched from small plastic bottles in the Narthex to “boxed” water. We will be advocating that all groups reduce and eliminate plastic in all forms and ensure that event planning includes “leaving no waste behind” as a major emphasis. Watch for tips on how to reduce and eliminate waste.

Your Trustees are busy!

The following is a list of many of the projects the Trustees have completed in 2024, as well as possible projects for the remainder of the year and recommended projects for 2025. It is an amazing amount of work!

List of Trustee Priority Projects Completed in 2024

1. Adjustments to the communion table
2. Painting, new art work and carpet for the Family Room
3. Installation of a safe, and a proper attic staircase for access to the steeple area
4. Painting and the addition of new lighting and mirror in the Narthex
5. Completion of the glass Narthex door and refurbishment of the transom
6. Mapping and repair of the education wing sewer system connections
7. Painting and wall restoration of Fellowship Hall
8. Renovation of the Youth Kitchen on the 3rd floor (thanks to Andrew Spain!)
9. Modification of the lighting in Fellowship Hall (in concert with Dominion Energy)
10. Restoration and repair of brickwork on the King Street porch, the steps to the Boyer Garden area, and the steps leading down to the inside landing
11. Replacement of the parsonage roof
12. Renovation of our church kitchen (finally!)
13. Repair and painting of the back staircase
14. Painting and waterproofing of the chiller room by the kitchen
15. Re-screening of 79 windows throughout the church
16. Conversion of 65 of the cloud lights throughout the building from fluorescent lighting to LED
17. Replacement of lights in the church office with new LED fixtures
18. Many follow-up issues with the new chiller

Many of these accomplishments have been possible with the assistance of Denyi Ortega and the continuing efforts of Lana Hurdle (Trustees Chair) and Mark Griffin.

Upcoming/Ongoing Trustee Priority Projects for the Remainder of 2024

1. Security improvements for the upper parking lot: Our upper parking lot is a great resource for our church, not only providing extra parking on Sundays, but also significant rental income.
2. Lighting and sound Improvements for the Sanctuary: Work is underway to address sound issues reported by several members of the congregation. Anna Bethel has identified a sound specialist who suggested improvements and will provide recommendations.
3. Install a wooden door on the closet just outside of the Chapel
4. Heating and cooling unit replacements in the parlor



Enjoying the Fellowship Hall and kitchen again – the Joypalooza!

Trustee Priority Projects in 2025

1. New roof for the Sanctuary. This project requires research and will be a major priority.
2. Sidewalk repair along King Street.
3. Completion of the cloud lights conversion to LED. This will include all of those not yet done throughout the building, most of which are on the 3rd floor.
4. Remodeling the ladies room beside the kitchen.
5. New door security system—our current security system is outdated and unreliable.
6. LED lighting for the upper parking lot—Dominion Energy’s rebate is available until December 2025.
7. New stage curtain
8. Radon mitigation for the parsonage



In June the United Methodist Men sponsored our annual interfaith dinner with the Beth El Hebrew Congregation.

Ted says: “Eat chicken”

Thanks to Ted West (pictured) and Fred Geisler we had another successful Chicken BBQ the Saturday after Labor Day.

