



# ANNUAL REPORT

■ 2024



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHESTNUT HILL



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# from the SENIOR MINISTER

## Saints of PCCH—

It is a joy to be among you as your Senior Minister and Head of Staff. As my family and I continue to settle into our new lives in Philadelphia, many thanks are in order: to the Pastor Nominating Committee for their faithfulness in discernment as we walked together in the second half of 2024; to the transition team for planning a wonderful series of get-to-know-you events and making sure I had everything I needed when I arrived; to our capable and creative PCCH staff for helping orient me to the mission and ministries of our vibrant congregation; and to all of you for a warm welcome!



I was with you for only one-twelfth of 2024, but the month of December was a joyful one, as we explored the meaning of Advent hope and celebrated the coming of our Savior with two beautiful Christmas Eve services. With tearful gratitude, we recognized the conclusion of Russell Sullivan's ministry as our Parish Associate. And we enjoyed much fellowship through festive music and a variety of holiday celebrations.

What follows in PCCH's annual report is a snapshot of the many ways our congregation lived out our call to be an inclusive community of faith in 2024, written in the words of the people who make that ministry possible: our staff members and committee chairs, speaking on behalf of our elders, deacons, committee members, and volunteers. As Presbyterians, we believe that human beings best discern God's will and do God's work when we do it

together, each of us sharing our God-given gifts and listening together for God's voice. I invite you to consider what skills and abilities God has given you and how you might use them for the good of our community, whether that is serving as a committee member, Sunday School teacher, choir member, volunteer with one of our mission partners, or in some other imaginative way. Your participation enriches our common life.

As we move through 2025, God is leading us into a future full of both possibilities and challenges. We hope to call a new Associate Pastor before the end of the year. Our building turned 75 in March and is busier than ever. Offering our space as a resource for our neighbors has become an integral part of our congregation's mission, but with high use and age come a variety of ongoing and emergent maintenance challenges. Stewardship has rebounded since pandemic times, but we need to continue growing our giving to support our thriving programs. And the collective challenges faced by our nation and our world call us to find new ways to live into our call as a Matthew 25 Congregation, serving our neighbors and building more just systems and structures.

With joy in the many ways God's Spirit is at work in our midst, we give thanks for all that we accomplished in 2024 and look forward to finding new avenues of faithfulness in 2025.

with hope,

*Ellen Williams Hensle*

The Reverend Ellen Williams Hensle  
Senior Minister and Head of Staff

# SESSION/DEACONS

## ELDERS *Class of 2025*

J. Matthew Eastman  
B. Graeme Frazier 1st term  
Ryan Mann 2nd term  
William H. Murphy IV 1st term  
Michelle Shachtman 2nd term  
Taylor Slaughter 2nd term  
Harry M. Spaeth 1st term

## ELDERS *Class of 2026*

Rebecca DePasquale 1st term  
Gregory Dickinson 2nd term  
Elizabeth Podraza 1st term  
William Storm 1st term  
Clarke Woodruff 1st term

## ELDERS *Class of 2027*

Jill Bown 2nd term  
Jack Evans 2nd term  
Jeannette Quirus 1st term  
Dom Rebeck 1st term  
James Spause 2nd term  
Margaret R. Spencer 2nd term

## DEACONS *Class of 2025*

Emily Barth 2nd term  
Mark Bernstein 1st term  
Catherine Brzozowski 1st term  
Beth DeSoo 2nd term  
Becky Frazier 1st term  
Emily McCahery 1st term  
Barbara Olson 2nd term  
Linda Pettengill 2nd term  
Sarah Wright 1st term

## DEACONS *Class of 2026*

Nicolette Cobbold 1st term  
Debby Evans 2nd term  
Ann Goslin 1st term  
Kristin Lawton 2nd term  
Thanice Petrak 1st term  
Rachelle Pretz 1st term  
Amy Raphael 2nd term

## DEACONS *Class of 2027*

Stephen Bishop 1st term  
Sharyn Walker 1st term  
Kelly Baughman 2nd term  
Jane McGill 2nd term

## BAPTISMS

Dean Alan Hudson  
Brooke Lillian Olson  
George Graeme Connelly

## DEATHS

Alice T. Parry  
Anne Pringle  
Stanley W. Elwell  
Elizabeth I. Simes  
Mary B. Monteith  
James P. Violante







# DEACONS

**I**n 2024 the Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill Deacons strengthened outreach activities to support our ministry with compassion, witness, and service. The Deacons gathered monthly to discuss how to address the care needs of congregants. We used four areas identified the previous year to focus our efforts: Communication, Life Transition, Prayer, and Connections.

**Communications:** Facilitate communications between the Board of Deacons and the congregation; raise awareness of the ministry of the deacons; and devise strategies to elicit requests from the membership for care.

**Life Transition:** Proactively mark events that occur in the lives of our members including birth and baptism, illness, death and bereavement, graduation and young adult recognition, and reaching out to our college students.

**Prayer:** Lead the prayer group and encourage member participation to pray over prayer requests, church needs, the community, the country, or whatever the Holy Spirit leads them to pray.

**Connections:** Provide a point of connection, nurture, or specific assistance. Examples may include:

- 1) incorporating new members into the life of the church;
- 2) transportation to appointments;
- 3) meals for families or persons who are experiencing difficulties; and
- 4) visits as needed to people, especially those at home.

The Deacons will continue to work diligently to serve the needs of church members and to support the overall mission of PCCH.

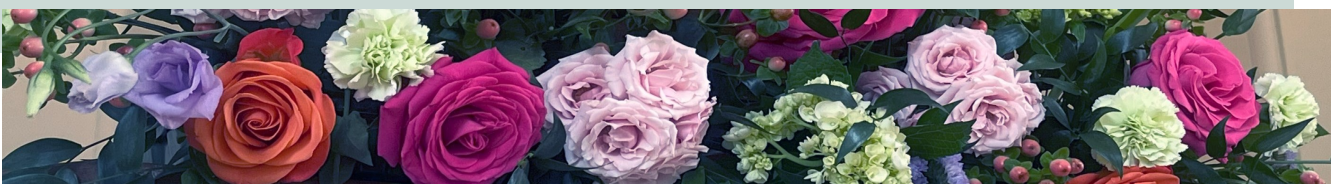
*Emily McCaheny*

Moderator of the Board of Deacons



## *Some of this year's* DEACONS ACTIVITIES

- created a pew card for care requests
- began serving communion to members at home
- welcomed Ellen Williams Hensle with a "dinner with the deacons"
- sent birthday cards to members age 80+ and sympathy cards to members who lost loved ones
- served a Fellowship Brunch to 100+ attendees in February
- organized an Ice Cream Social in place of coffee hour in July
- recognized baptisms with chancel rose and gift
- delivered flowers to senior members at Christmas and Easter
- continued online prayer group
- greeted worshipers at the back door each Sunday
- prepared and delivered meals to members in need
- visited homebound and hospitalized members
- provided transportation support
- provided other services at the request of members



# CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

We are excited to report that our Children's and Family Ministry has grown to include several new families during the past year while continuing to engage families who have attended PCCH for many years. Our children are fine examples for us of how to be welcoming to the stranger as they strive to live as Jesus taught in the church community. We are all enriched by the contributions of our newest participants and pray that our program continues to grow over the next year.

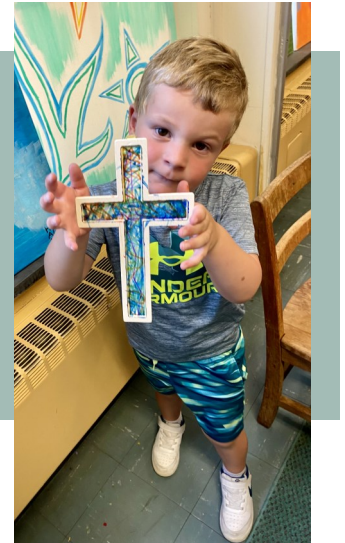
Our programming continues to strive for:

- all children knowing that they are uniquely loved and valued by God
- active, joyful engagement in our Sunday School and other programming among all of PCCH's children
- a large pool of adult volunteers to serve as teachers and shepherds who are, in turn, blessed by their ministry to the children
- cohesive programming among the liturgical season, worship service themes, children's messages, children's music, and Sunday School
- accessibility of the worship service to children and families through materials in Praise Packs and child involvement as liturgists and choral singers

In 2024, we continued to hold two Sunday School classes each week during the school year: *Godly Play* (age three-grade two) and *Christian Studies* (grades three-five). Our Godly Play curriculum uses materials that engage all senses to teach the core stories of the Christian faith. When children move into our Christian Studies class, they are given a Deep Blue Children's Study Bible (Common English translation) and continue to deepen their knowledge of Christianity while also studying Bible literacy. Our Godly Play class size continued to expand this year. As a result, we will move our first and second graders into their own class, called *Growing in God's Love*, in the fall of 2025.

For summer Sunday School, our classes combined in our air-conditioned chapel to study three of Paul's letters in a fun, cruise-themed curriculum. We also held a one-week Bible School in August called *Camp*

*Firelight*, where sixteen children from PCCH and elsewhere in our community learned more about trusting Jesus through contemporary songs, skits, stories, yoga, games, and crafts. It was a joy-filled week for both the children and our volunteers.



Beyond their experiences in Sunday School, our children participate in an Easter Egg Hunt, perform a special act in Melody & Comedy, and make their own Advent Wreaths in December. They are an integral part of the Christmas Eve Pageant as well.

Our children seem to love coming to church and Sunday School. It is a blessing to see their budding faith in God, their commitment to living as Jesus taught, growth in their knowledge of Christianity, and the friendships they have formed with one another and their teachers. We have already had a fun and blessing-filled beginning to 2025, and we look forward to what the year holds in our Children's Ministry.

*Julie Snyder*

Director of Children's and Family Ministry

**Children's Ministry Committee:** Michelle Shachtman, chair, Rebecca DePasquale, Greg Dickinson, Diana Rodgers, Buddy Storm





# YOUTH MINISTRY



## Youth Group

Our PCCH youth have had an amazing and busy year! In summer of 2025, a group of high school and college youth traveled to Bozeman, Montana for a mission project. The group of teens, along with Ryan Mann and Kate Magid, lived and worked at Rockhaven Camp and Retreat Center, a Presbyterian camp located along the beautiful Gallatin River. By day, the group diligently worked on service projects around the camp, including rehabbing a rock-climbing wall that will benefit children who come to camp. The evenings included lively discussions, hikes and outdoor activities (like zip-lining!) and evening devotionals around a crackling fire. The group traveled to Yellowstone Park at the end of the week where we marveled at God's incredible creation.

This summer, the youth will participate in an "in-house" mission trip where we will perform service projects for the benefit of our city while staying overnight at PCCH.

## Middle School Sunday School Program

Several Sundays each month, middle school youth head to the youth room for Sunday school. The youth have been using the *Follow Me* curriculum where we have focused on caring for God's creation, sharing communion, and how we can be disciples of Jesus' word. Through studying scripture, art, play and lively discussion, the middle school youth are considering how the Lord is working in their lives and how they may be called to serve in their schools, community and our church.

Youth have also spent time getting to know one another, tackling difficult life questions, and having some fun! In December, the Youth ran a festive, church-wide cookie exchange. Most recently, the youth hosted a fantastic spaghetti dinner where they cooked for and served over one hundred church members.

Throughout the year, youth in both middle and high school have met regularly for both service and fellowship. On the first Sunday of each month, the youth participate in Service Sundays and engage in volunteer work after worship. Service Sundays have involved serving lunch to vulnerable members of the community, cleaning up trash and debris along roadways with the Friends of the Wissahickon, and preparing meals in our own PCCH kitchen for food-insecure residents in the city.

*Kate McGill Magid*

Director of Youth Ministry



# MUSIC & ARTS

Our PCCH community was again a beacon for music and the arts in 2024. The Gallery Choir has continued to grow, now thirty-three singers! The choir rehearsed weekly for Sunday morning worship and a handful of special services and concerts throughout the year.

In March we presented our Festival of Music & Arts concert featuring Mason Bates' *Mass Transmission*, a work for choir, organ, and electronic sound. The work tells a story of a Dutch mother speaking over the first long-distance radio transmissions to her adolescent daughter who was thousands of kilometers away in Java. The sanctuary was filled with electronic whoops and waves, lush organ sonorities, and the sounds of Gamelan ensembles and jungle animals. The concert was complemented by an art project for our youth, led by Julie Snyder and Rebecca Thornburgh. Children were encouraged to create a piece that reflects the ways in which they stay connected to loved ones who are far away; an exhibition of their finished works was displayed in Widener Hall.

Our Cantatas and Chamber Music series presented several concerts in both the chapel and sanctuary. The spring featured a concert by Variant 6, a Good Friday performance of Bach's *Cantata 12* with our soloists and instrumental consort, and Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzes* featuring our soloists along with pianist Mark Livshits. Philadelphia Orchestra Concertmaster David Kim returned to the sanctuary in September for a second extremely well-attended recital with our own Jeff DeVault, David's accompanist.

We held our annual Melody & Comedy performance with a silent auction in April, presented by the Music & Arts Committee, and it was another hit! It is always a wonderful opportunity to see the amazing hidden (and obvious!) talents of our staff, congregation, and community. Thanks to your generous bidding and wonderful donations to the auction, we have continued to raise significant funds for the Music and Arts programs!



The Music & Arts Committee hosted the Souls Shot Portrait Project weekend in November with a Friday night opening reception for SSPP's eighth annual Philadelphia exhibition, followed by a performance of Maurice Duruflé's timeless *Requiem* by the Gallery Choir during Sunday morning worship.

Our acoustically brilliant sanctuary was the site of several performances by Piffaro, Tempesta di Mare, Commonwealth Youthchoirs, Philomusica Chorale, and the now four-time Grammy-winning choir The Crossing.

*Daniel Spratlan.* DMA  
Director

**Music & Arts Committee:** Taylor Slaughter & Rebecca Thornburgh, co-chairs, Marie Bender, Mark Bernstein, Mark Conti, Joan Demme, Kelley Garner-DiCesare, Sharon Rising, Frank Slaughter, Hap Spaeth, Jim Spause, Margaret R. Spencer, Beth Vaccaro, Matthew Ward, Clarke Woodruff; Jeff DeVault, Julie Snyder, Dan Spratlan, staff



# CHILDREN & YOUTH MUSIC

Our Children's and Youth Music Ministries continued to flourish in 2024. Joyful Noise, our children's choir, met weekly after worship for rehearsals and sang in worship each month during the school year. Joyful Noise continues to sing and process during the opening hymn on the Sundays they sing in worship. In rehearsals, the children continue to work on vocal technique, ensemble singing, sacred song repertoire in a variety of styles, understanding the connection between our song texts and the scriptures, and learning the musical components of our worship service. This school year, the children have used a song to learn the Books of the New Testament.

Our Youth Choir consists of twelve singers spanning grades six to twelve. The group sang several times in worship on its own and with Joyful Noise this calendar year, including leading the musical parts of the Youth Sunday worship service.

Several of the members of the Youth Choir have contributed musically to the worship service through instrumental preludes, and one member has also joined the Gallery Choir. Engaging the youth more actively in the musical life of the church is a continued goal of the music staff.

Joyful Noise and Youth Choir also performed a song from *Jesus Christ Superstar* in our Melody & Comedy fundraiser in April. Both Joyful Noise and Youth Choir were an integral part of our Christmas Eve pageant service. The combined group of over thirty-five singers led two of the hymns and sang an offertory anthem.

*Julie Snyder, DMA*  
Director



## CHURCH LIFE

The Church Life Committee's first event of 2024 was a Quizzo night attended by over thirty folks. Nearly all attendees were daunted by the Bible round, but all of us learned something from it! The committee continued to support other all-church social events such as Poker Nights and Melody & Comedy. In late

August a group of twenty went to see a Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs game. This has become an annual event that is always popular. With fewer sign ups than we'd hoped, we took a pause on November's Game Night, but look for it to return next year. We helped to host new member information sessions along with the pastor and two Session members. It is important to integrate the new members into PCCH life by inviting them to come to social events that the committee plans and supports. Members of the committee served on the Transition Committee that was formed to plan events around Ellen's arrival. We found generous hosts who opened their homes to Meet & Greet events to help Ellen meet members and vice

versa. In response to congregational requests, we have chosen magnetic name tags that will be made for members. Look for this roll-out in early 2025.

**Church Life Committee:** Elizabeth Podraza, chair, Mark Bernstein, Rebecca Bernstein, Kelley Garner-DiCesare, Ryan Mann, Bill Murphy, Jeff Podraza, Jim Spause, Margaret Spencer, Tennyson Tippy



# FLOWER GUILD

The Flower Guild and its seventeen members bring the beauty of God's world into our sanctuary.

We are especially grateful to those members and friends who donate to the Flower Fund at Christmas and Easter, and those who remember loved ones during the year by gifting to the Flower Fund.

Sunday flowers are arranged by teams of two, while special events and holidays involve all Guild members. After the Sunday service, arrangers create small vases of flowers for Deacons to take to those who remain at home because of health considerations.

The large arrangements are rearranged into smaller containers and placed in spots around church.

The Guild also provides centerpieces for receptions, events and celebrations in Widener Hall. Occasionally, arrangements are done for weddings and funerals.



Guild Members Diane Cornely and Debby Evans take charge of planting seasonal flowers in the driveway urns, at the front door and at the Center on the Hill entrance.

Guild members are involved with PCCH's children's program, including teaching a session at Vacation Bible School on flower arranging.

We are always excited to welcome new members to Flower Guild. No prior experience is necessary. Existing members act as mentors. If you would like to learn more, please contact Grace Stewart (glstewart1@verizon.net) or Diane Cornely (dcornely7@gmail.com) You can come to one of our arranging hours and see how it's done.

We thank our diligent and talented team of Flower Guild members for their many years of service.

*Diane Cornely & Grace Stewart*

co-chairs

## *Guild Members*

Jill Bown	Jane Kaufman
Cathy Brzozowski	Barbara Olson
Katie Connelly	Linda Pettengill
Sandy Connelly	Elizabeth Podraza
Diane Cornely	Sue Shuchat
Debby Evans	Grace Stewart
Barbara Frazier	Barrett Stewart
Linnea Johnson	Suzan Willcox

# HOSPITALITY

Hospitality has had lots to celebrate this year! We prepared events to celebrate Russell Sullivan's ministry with us, and the start of Ellen Williams Hensle's ministry! Many hands prepared coffee, lemonade, and tea, while plating cookies and baked goods for Coffee Hour when we were without a sexton. That help was greatly appreciated! With Asante as our Sexton, we have returned to the roles of clean-up and linen launderers, with additional set up and preparation on High Coffee Sundays.

Please consider joining this committee to provide occasional help to make our post-worship receptions special. Thanks to all of our members!

**Hospitality committee:** Emily McCahery and Sandy Connelly, co-chairs, Martha Agate, Barbara Frazier, Kelley Garner-DiCesare, Ann Goslin, Bev Heimbach, Kristen Lawton, Diana Markowitz, Laurie Menyo, Tennyson Tippy





# pcch PRESCHOOL

The PCCH PreSchool is thriving! This year, there are eighty-one children enrolled in eight classes. Enrollment for 2025-2026 is strong, and I hope to match this year's numbers. We continue to see new enrollment trends each year and strive to adjust to meet the needs of families in a changing workforce landscape while maintaining the core tenets of our program.

Our PreSchool's approach to learning is play-based. In addition to our focus on social-emotional learning, our teachers utilize multiple curriculums to prepare the children for kindergarten. Specifically, we use Foundations, Singapore Math, Rockalingua, and Handwriting Without Tears.

We supplement our curriculum with experiential learning opportunities. So far this year, we've had visits from Mad Science, Wolf Performing Arts Center, Quiver Farms, the Philadelphia Fire and Police Departments, Opera Box, and Briar Bush Nature Center.

Members of the Friends of PCCH, our parent committee, continue to be wonderful stewards for the school. They organize bake sales, a wreath sale, an art auction, and several informal gatherings throughout the year for PreSchool families. The funds raised support experiential learning opportunities and scholarships. The FoPCCH also organizes monthly faculty appreciation events with delicious snacks for the faculty. We are very fortunate to have such engaged families.

We currently have fourteen teachers on staff. Our assistant director Willa Douglas also teaches music, Spanish, and soccer. Amy Raphael is our yoga teacher. Our talented faculty continues to be the secret to our success.

I am extremely grateful that Ellen Williams Hensle is our new Senior Minister and Head of Staff. It has been wonderful having her support, both as the Head of Staff and as a PreSchool parent. I am also grateful for the support and guidance I receive from Jill Bown and the PreSchool committee. Knowing that they are available as resources is very reassuring. Rachel, Mary, Felix, Asante, and Joan assist us in countless ways each week. I'm honored to work with the PCCH staff and to be a part of this community.

*Megan Cullen*

Director

**PreSchool Committee:** Jill Bown, chair, Lisa Guyer, Kristin Lawton, Beth Vaccaro, Becky Welsh



# CENTER ON THE HILL

The Center on the Hill, the place for active adults at PCCH, spent its fourteenth year offering a variety of programs, events, activities that enhanced and enriched the lives of the seniors in Chestnut Hill and our surrounding communities. We continue to maintain an online presence for those still wanting to do things from home, but saw a substantial increase in people attending in person activities. We also remain committed to posting fitness videos, watch and learn presentations, interactive games, art lessons, community resources and more, online completely free for anyone to access through our website.

Some of our programs that saw growth in the numbers of attendees throughout the year were: Community Luncheons, Tai Chi, Golden Yoga, Qigong, health and wellness lectures, Android classes, art classes, Bingo games, computer classes, game groups (Bridge, Mah Jongg,

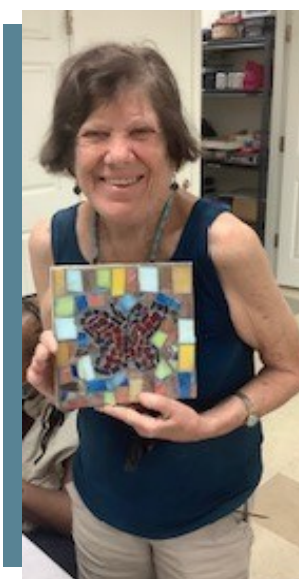
Rummikub, table games), grief counseling, well-spouse support, and Alzheimer's support groups. We also took day trips to the American Treasure Tour Museum and Linvilla Orchards this year. We continued our Center on the Hill Lunch & Theater Meet Ups, where we enjoyed good company and good food at Toska and El Poquito before matinee performances of *Father Comes Home From the War* at Quintessence Theater in Mt. Airy, and *The Thanksgiving Play* at the Stagecrafters Theater in Chestnut Hill.

Grant money, received from the Covenant Fund of the Presbytery in August of 2023, continued to support us through 2024 by helping many older adults from our neighboring communities to be able to participate in some of our paid programs that they would not otherwise have been able to afford. Thanks to this generous grant, a total of 293 people were able to participate in activities that we offered at a reduced cost in 2024. Our annual appeal in November attracted over \$8,000 in donations from individual supporters, bringing our 2024 individual donation total to just under \$9,500.

I have been the Director of the Center on the Hill for the past six wonderful years and I continue to enjoy serving this community very much. I am grateful for the church staff who supports the Center, as well as all our instructors, partners and volunteers who make our excellent programs and events possible each year. The Center on the Hill continues to grow and connect with more people each season, and I look forward to more vibrant and busy seasons for us in the future.

*Mariangela Saavedra*

Director, the Center on the Hill







# FORUM ON THE HILL

The Forum on the Hill is a monthly event (September-May) presented in collaboration with The Center on the Hill which appeals to our neighbors and the members of PCCH as well. It is a part of the Church's outreach efforts and is a means to offer relevant and thought provoking information presented by speakers who are knowledgeable and accomplished in their particular fields. PCCH's history of inviting guest speakers goes back forty years.

The 2024 Forums included:

- Brett Mandel speaking about his book *Philadelphia, Corrupt And Consenting*
- Rebecca Yamin who discussed *Archeology and Digging in the City Of Brotherly Love*
- Amy Cohen who led a lively conversation about *Black History in the Philadelphia Landscape*
- Famed sports commentator Angelo Cataldi who joined us to talk about his storied and lengthy career
- Barbara Vernick who traveled up from Virginia to talk about her effort to correct incorrect history, and bring home from France where she is buried Eliza Monroe Hay, daughter of President James Monroe



The Forum strives to have speakers who engage our attendees in conversations and shared dialog about their topics. It continues to be recorded and streamed online after the event takes place for people who cannot attend in person; presentations are viewed anywhere from twenty-eight to forty times in the first couple of days after being posted on our website.

*Mariangela Saavedra*

Coordinator

# SOCIAL WITNESS/MATTHEW 25

In 2024 our congregation joyfully embraced a full return to in-person volunteer opportunities, renewing our commitment to bearing witness to God's love through compassionate mission work. This past year, we responded to a wide range of needs—feeding the hungry, sheltering the unhoused, grieving lives lost to gun violence, uplifting children living in poverty, welcoming refugees, supporting survivors of domestic violence, championing education, advocating for justice, and much more.

Our sustained efforts to combat food insecurity continued with regular food collections for Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry. We deepened our partnership with Face to Face by providing "to-go" lunches, gathering to prepare meals, and serving onsite.

Over the summer, we donated more than sixty backpacks filled with school supplies to students at Edmonds Elementary School. In collaboration with Bryn Mawr Presbyterian and Our Mother of Consolation, we also helped support an Afghani

Community Fridge, assemble toiletry kits, and tend the church garden. We also reached out into the wider community, serving meals at Face to Face and completing home repairs alongside our mission partner, Urban Resources Development Corporation (URDC).



During the Christmas season, in partnership with the PreSchool and Church School, we collected gifts for sixty children through ACHIEVEability.

Financial support continued for our numerous partners, including West Kensington Ministries, Dawn's Place, Northwest Victim Services, Whosoever Gospel Mission, ACHIEVEability, Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry, Face to Face, URDC, and Souls Shot Portrait Project.



family, including providing assistance with rent. Our relationship with West Kensington Ministry continued, marked by various programs, including our sponsorship and participation in their annual golf outing.

The Social Witness Committee's *Weekends of Service* remained vibrant, hosting three events in January, May, and October. These weekends brought congregants together in Widener Hall, the kitchen, and on the church lawn to prepare meals for Face to Face, make casseroles for the Germantown

**Social Witness Committee:** Beth Vaccaro, chair, Rebecca Bernstein, Laura Brobyn, Kelly Garner-DiCesare, Ann Goslin, Emily McCahery, Melissa Montgomery, Bill Murphy, Elizabeth Podraza, Jeff Podraza, Margaret Spencer, Julianne Watson, Suzan Willcox; Craig Barnes, Russell Sullivan, Ellen Williams Hensle, staff



# STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for overseeing the congregation's annual giving, culminating with the receiving of pledges on Stewardship Sunday, the week before Thanksgiving.



2024 continued to be a dynamic fundraising environment for our congregation, driven by fundamental shifts in the way people choose to engage with the church and worship. Against this tide of societal change, we enjoy the blessing of renewed stability in our leadership and the prospect of an exciting future with our new Senior Minister, which we hope will be the catalyst for our spiritual growth. Our theme, "Come, for everything is ready," is a reflection of this, and our invitation for the congregation to give their whole selves to the ministry of PCCH.

With gratitude, our Stewardship campaign for the 2025 fiscal year raised \$571,000 in pledges as of this report, generated from a total of 116 pledging households. This represents an increase over the total amount pledged the previous year, continuing a positive trend upward from a low point in 2022. Since that low point, the total pledge amount has grown at an average of around 3% per year, which keeps us in line with inflation but additional growth will be necessary to achieve the mission and ministry we aspire to. Gratefully, our congregation continues to grow, and six new pledges contributed to that total, helping to offset other generational pledge losses. A steady influx of new members is critical not just to the vitality of our congregational community but also to our ability to maintain financial stability. We do still however have a concerning deficit in the quantity of pledging households relative to last year, which continues a recent downward trend of fewer households giving more. Five years ago we had 152 pledging households, and while we make some gains, we struggle each year to attain a healthy quantity of pledging households that is proportionate to the size of our congregation.

Each year, approximately 60% of our annual income comes from pledges, and as partners of the Finance Committee the success of our annual pledges received is the largest determinant of what our congregation can aspire to in our annual budgeting process. While the Session was able to reach a balanced budget for 2025 based on the 2024 Stewardship campaign, the Stewardship Committee will be continuing efforts throughout the course of the upcoming year to engage the congregation for more meaningful giving to the church.

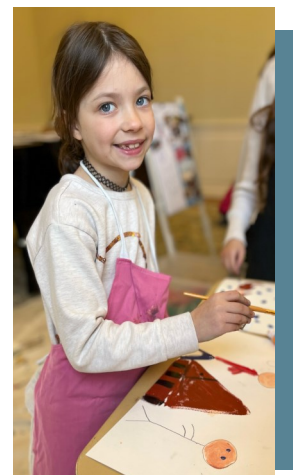


Lastly, make-up pledges received at or after the end of 2024 allowed us to close out budgetary gaps, reminding us of the importance of holding true to pledge commitments, even if done so at the last hour.

We offer our sincere appreciation to all those who made a payment at the end of the year to close out any pledging gap.

As always, we extend our thanks to Rebecca Thornburgh, who brings life to our campaign through her design of the logo and all the printed stewardship material.

Thank you to all who pledge—your support makes our ministry possible, especially in this most important threshold year for our church.



**Stewardship Committee:** Matt Eastman, chair, Mark Bernstein, Jim Lutz, Laurie Menyo, Taylor Slaughter; Ellen Williams Hensle, staff



# PERSONNEL

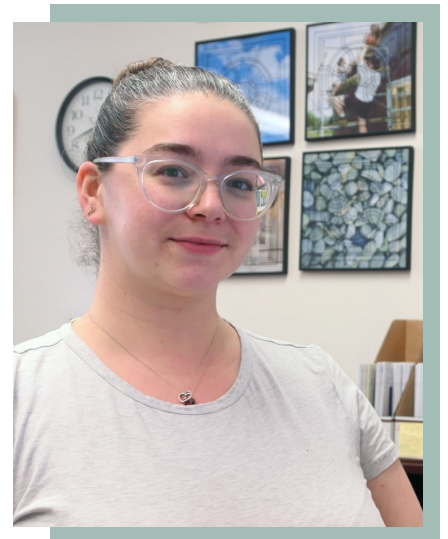
It has been another year of dedicated service for the PCCH staff and for the Personnel Committee. The committee's role is to support our wonderful staff and to work with the Pastor on all matters relating to human resources. The Committee is grateful to the team for its dedication to the church and congregation, particularly during this year of renewal.

In May, the Reverend Dr. Craig Barnes left PCCH after serving for a year as our Interim Pastor. We are thankful to him for his leadership and stewardship during our transitional period. Fortunately, the Reverend Dr. Russell C. Sullivan, Jr. agreed to stay on as Transition Pastor until December.

The Pastor Nominating Committee was hard at work and the committee and the congregation was thrilled when the Reverend Ellen Williams Hensle was called to be our full-time permanent Senior Minister and Head of Staff. Previously, Ellen was the Associate Pastor for Youth and Discipleship at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas. She has strong ties to our region as she is originally from Camp Hill, Pennsylvania; and attended both the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton Theological Seminary. Her first day coincided with the first day of Advent on December 1st.

The church said goodbye to Evelyn Carpenter in October, who was the administrative assistant for PCCH for eighteen years. Communications Coordinator Leslie Lefer also left PCCH in November. We then welcomed Mary Frommer in the newly named position of Office and Media Coordinator. Mary, who came to us most recently from the Quintessence Theatre, is a lifelong resident of northwest Philadelphia—she was born next door at Chestnut Hill Hospital and attended our PreSchool in the early 1990's. Finally, at end of the year the church hired Asante Carter as an additional Sexton to help with evenings and weekends.

The personnel committee spent a considerable amount of time over the past year in preparing a draft employee handbook. A separate expense policy was finalized and rolled out to all PCCH staff in January. And two other separate policies were drafted, including guidelines for records retention and electronic communications. The policies that are separate from the forthcoming employee handbook also apply to church members serving on committees; we expect Session approval later this spring.



*Welcome, Mary!*

**Personnel Committee:** Kevin Welsh (outgoing chair), Jeannette Quirus (incoming chair), Rebecca Bernstein, Jill Bown, Elizabeth Podraza, Christen Webber, and our newest member David Thornburgh



# PROPERTY

Our Church property remains a well-built and sturdy home for our place of worship in the sanctuary, the PCCH PreSchool, and the Center on the Hill, and provides an excellent community facility hub for many groups. However, the years since our first worship in 1950 have contributed to wear and tear that must be addressed to maintain our property in excellent condition.

The Property Committee has general charge of the administration and upkeep of the grounds and building, under the direction of the Church Administrator and with the oversight of the Session. The Property Committee meets monthly with the Church Administrator during the program year and as needed during the summer months. The committee chair provides a monthly report of activities to the Session.

The committee has established a master list of over two dozen repairs and projects that includes maintenance related items as well as capital project improvements. An effort is made to prioritize the execution of these tasks based on the assessed urgency by the Church Administrator and the committee to complete each one in a timely manner with an eye towards available funding from the annual budget. The status of active repairs and project status is reported to the Session monthly.

Major tasks completed in 2024/2025 included the renovation of the Memorial Garden (which was made possible in part as a result of a generous monetary gift from a church congregant), upgrading of the IT infrastructure to assure a more reliable network to support church operations, and Widener Hall HVAC replacement in conjunction with repairs to the heating boilers. Other high priority projects (e.g. installation of a new roof on Widener Hall) will be considered as funding becomes available.

Deferred projects include PreSchool/Strouse HVAC and sanctuary improvements, as well as cosmetic improvements throughout the property. It continues to be difficult to fund the growing list of maintenance tasks and projects based on amounts allocated from the annual budget. Accordingly, a future campaign to raise funds is being considered.

**Property Committee:** Jack Evans, chair, Will Agate, Matt Eastman, Graeme Frazier, Bill Murphy; Rachel Cline, Church Administrator, staff





# FINANCE & TREASURER

The Finance Committee and the Treasurer work together to facilitate the adoption of the annual operating budget for PCCH. The operating budget is the financial roadmap for the church as we journey through the calendar year. Once the budget is set early in the year, the Finance Committee meets monthly to review our progress. Also discussed at these meetings are the finances relating to the restricted funds, e.g., Senior Adult Ministry, building maintenance, and the PreSchool. Cash flow management for the church is also reviewed and monitored to coordinate with the Investment Committee any draws that need to take place.

The findings and recommendations of the Finance Committee are conveyed to Session at their monthly meetings for review and/or action when needed. You will see a financial summary updated regularly in the church bulletin throughout the year.

We are blessed to have our endowment invested for today and for the future of PCCH. In 2024, an extraordinary draw was required to deal with the unbudgeted capital expenses to replace the HVAC and repair the boilers. (so, fortunately, the endowment had a good year).

It is important to remember that most of the Operating Fund—and therefore the success of our budget throughout the year—depends on the response of our congregation and the annual pledges PCCH receives.

In 2024, we again had a difficult year with pledge receipts as our search for a new Pastor continued. Upon news in the fall that our new Pastor would arrive at the beginning of Advent, enthusiasm returned and pledge receipts rebounded. Thank you to all who have kept up with your pledges! We ended the year with a \$32,844 deficit.

For 2025, we have shown progress in the number of stated pledges, so please remember to keep those up to date. Thank you, one and all, for your dedication to stewardship for the church.

If you have any questions, please contact any member of our team.

**Finance Committee:** Steve Bishop, Graeme Frazier, Jim Lutz, Christen Martin, Harry Spaeth, Clarke Woodruff



# INVESTMENT

The Investment Committee continued to faithfully oversee the Endowment Funds of our church. Our committee is responsible for having fiduciary responsibility for the investments that are managed by Merrill Lynch and PNC. Mark Nottingham serves as the Investment Advisor and serves on the committee as a non-voting member and Reverend Ellen Hensle has joined the committee in 2025.

The 2024 Endowment Funds provided funds of \$153,145 to support the operating budget and \$118,118 to support the Senior Adult ministry of the church. The Endowment also supported unbudgeted draws in 2024 of \$72,661 to repair the HVAC system and boiler.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about the Investment Committee, please contact John Lawton at 215.527.5775. We meet four times a year on the fourth Monday after Quarter End to discuss performance and set strategic direction.

**Investment Committee:** John Lawton, chair, Matt Abernethy, Stephen Bishop, Harry Spaeth, Richard Stewart



# 2025 BUDGET & 2024 RECAP

	2025 BUDGET	2024 ACTUAL	2024 BUDGET
<b>Revenue</b>			
Congregational response	\$ 685,000	\$ 619,767	\$ 693,000
Building Use and Other Revenue	\$ 183,993	\$ 187,845	\$ 158,000
Revenue Total	\$ 868,993	\$ 807,612	\$ 851,000
Draws Against Endowment Income:			
Designated Draws	\$ 80,722	\$ 82,228	\$ 82,282
Other Draws	\$ 73,586	\$ 143,579	\$ 71,791
Total Endowment Draws	\$ 154,308	\$ 225,807	\$ 154,073
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,023,301</b>	<b>\$ 1,033,419</b>	<b>\$ 1,005,073</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Ordained Ministers	\$ 172,714	\$ 137,453	\$ 184,475
Lay Personnel Salaries & Benefits	\$ 382,543	\$ 362,167	\$ 358,594
Other Personnel	\$ 64,000	\$ 82,185	\$ 60,500
Personnel Total	\$ 619,257	\$ 581,805	\$ 603,569
Music and the Arts	\$ 26,300	\$ 26,934	\$ 20,300
Church Life	\$ 13,200	\$ 17,581	\$ 19,464
Christian Education	\$ 14,000	\$ 7,680	\$ 13,300
Worship	\$ 4,850	\$ 4,127	\$ 4,000
Administration	\$ 118,489	\$ 107,399	\$ 106,140
Building and Grounds	\$ 181,200	\$ 251,438	\$ 169,000
Mission	\$ 46,005	\$ 69,300	\$ 69,300
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,023,301</b>	<b>\$ 1,066,264</b>	<b>\$ 1,005,073</b>
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$ -	\$ (32,845)	\$ -
<b>Senior Adult Ministry</b>			
Carry over previous year	\$ 13,997	\$ 34,904	\$ 34,904
Gifts/Grants	\$ 50,000	\$ 57,374	\$ 25,000
Draw from SAM endowment	\$ 113,173	\$ 118,118	\$ 118,118
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 177,170</b>	<b>\$ 210,396</b>	<b>\$ 178,022</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Personnel	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000
Operating Expenses	\$ 20,000	\$ 51,399	\$ 20,000
Contribution to Church Overhead	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 165,000</b>	<b>\$ 196,399</b>	<b>\$ 165,000</b>
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$ 12,170	\$ 13,997	\$ 13,022



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