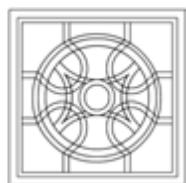


# THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHESTNUT HILL



## Annual Report 2020



## *Letter from the Moderator*

Dear Members and Friends of PCCH,

“You didn’t sign up for this!” That comment has been made to me countless times over the past months by many of you. My standard reply is that “none of us signed up for this!”

On March 10, your Session met and began discussing some minor adaptations to our worship service (no passing of the peace, for example) in case this still largely unknown virus became more serious. On March 12, we were still debating whether to have church or not. On March 13, we cancelled worship for March 15, thinking this would be a few weeks, at the most. I remember shedding a tear that day – worship is what we do and cancelling it seemed inconceivable.

And yet so much of the following months seemed inconceivable. Masks, flattening the curve, ventilators, positivity rates. None of these things were in our vocabulary. Now they are. Nearly 500,000 dead with so many other tragic trajectories.

Like all of you, like our society, PCCH sought to respond and adapt. We essentially closed down the building to onsite gatherings. We turned the Reception Room into a staging area for food donations and Widener Hall became the site for numerous blood drives.

After navigating a learning curve, we have offered worship continually online, and, in my humble opinion, in an engaging and compelling way. Thanks to Brian Russo for his technological acumen; to Austin Crenshaw Shelley for creative children’s opportunities; to Ken Lovett and Dan Spratlan and our musicians for sharing their gifts in creative ways. Thanks to Leslie Lefer, Evelyn Carpenter and Esther Cole for keeping things moving smoothly and keeping us connected.

The Center on the Hill adapted well with a robust online program offering. Thanks to Mariangela Saave-

dra! The PCCH Preschool responded admirably keeping young people safe and engaged. Thanks to Carla DiOrio and her fantastic team! A government loan (that will become a grant) gave us some budgetary breathing space.

I will continue to say that there are no silver linings in this pandemic time. And yet we are called to be good stewards of the time God gives us. We have learned some things, and it will be important to apply those learnings as we move into the future (I will not use the word “normal.”).

- Online worship can work – you continue to tell me how much you appreciate our worship offering.
- Zoom is not perfect, but has some positive qualities – we will continue to do some of our classes and meetings via Zoom as we move into the future, for convenience and flexibility.
- Social Witness matters – you continually share your time, financial resources and food with our neighbors in need.
- Connecting matters – we miss being together – a lot! We miss our sanctuary, to be sure, and so many other chances to connect face-to-face.

In the midst of the global pandemic, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis. His death, along with the deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others, prompted us to magnify our racial justice/anti-racism efforts, and that important work continues to develop.

You have clicked, logged on, written checks, made calls and sent emails – the things that a church during COVID does – all the while navigating the coronavirus in your own lives. For some that meant increased isolation and loneliness. For some that meant work furloughs. For some that meant school-at-home and work-at-home. For all of us, it meant adapting to new things, like masks and social distancing.

As I write this, the vaccine is getting into more and more arms. Your Return to Church Team (many thanks to them: Rebecca Bernstein, Laura Brobyn, Lisa Guy-



er, Jane Kaufman, Kristin Lawton, Dan Pretz, Taylor Slaughter) is working to determine when is the right time, seeking to balance the factors of inclusivity and community health. We hope it will be soon, and very soon.

In the meantime, thank you for your support, spiritual, physical and financial. Thanks to a fantastic staff team for keeping things going in this most unprecedented time.

Stay in touch. Let us know if you have prayer concerns.

Wear your mask. Keep the faith.

Faithfully,

*John Wilkinson*

## *Associate Pastor Messages*



In no particular order here are some things that I miss: sitting at the sushi bar with my wife; coffee dates at The Night Kitchen; lunch at the retirement communities; mission trips with the youth; dinner parties with friends; Sunday worship in

our sanctuary; attending live performances in person (Radiohead, of course); handshaking strangers after a surprising conversation in a random place; drinking with Austin after a long day at Presbytery; poking fun at Esther in her office; Theology on Tap at Campbell's Place; not worrying about the physical proximity and distance therein when Seth mucks about with his friends in the sandbox or on the play equipment.

And here are some things that I am thankful to have enjoyed the privilege of: steady and safe employment; a friendly neighborhood; an almost excruciating abundance of TIME and opportunity to play with my amazing son and watch him grow; more family dinners at home; more family time in general; reconnecting with lost faces and friends over the miracle of Zoom technology; an ever increasing desire to reclaim my down time AWAY from the screen resulting in more books read, board games played, piano covers butchered, and photos taken.

And finally here are some things I am hopeful for and looking ahead to: a vaccine for all; a more equitable and friendly society; a just minimum wage and health care system; a less frantic and divided political arena; singing hymns again; Texas Hold'Em events whenever Jim Spause is available; hugging without fretting.

We have all lost so much. But some considerably more than others. Think of them. Act for them. And don't neglect them when things return to "normal" (whatever that will be). Don't forget what we have learned. What I hope we have all learned. Perhaps, if nothing else, to appreciate the things and the people we had too long forgotten to appreciate.

Stay safe. Find happiness where you can. And keep hopeful for what lies ahead.

May God bless you all,

*Brian D. Russo,*  
*Associate Pastor for Youth and Senior Adults*

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When I was in seminary, our professors taught us the first rule of pastoral care for those who are grieving:



acknowledge the grief in the room. This is the first rule and not the second because it is impossible to hear the promise of resurrection without first being heard when we weep for those we have loved and lost to death. Perhaps this is why Jesus listened to Martha and Mary's grief and wept for Lazarus before raising

him from the dead. A colleague who lost both of her parents in a car accident just over two months ago recently said, "Grief is love with no place to go."

I think it's both appropriate and necessary to count what we have collectively and individually lost this past year. Over 500,000 Americans have died from COVID-19, and we've lost even more to other causes (physical, mental, and emotional) that were left untreated due to the pandemic. In an attempt to stave off more death, we are forced to grieve in ways that are more isolated than ideal.

Beyond the sting of these deaths lies the amalgamation of additional losses; lost health, lost jobs, lost abil-



ity to move about with freedom and ease, lost social interaction, lost gathering for worship, lost singing in public spaces, lost hugs, lost handshakes, lost equilibrium.

No doubt you have your own list and can name it well by now. Here's mine: I grieve not being able to see children racing to the chancel steps in the sanctuary or to hear them begging to be the one to collect the church school offering. I grieve the loss of coffee hour conversations and Bible study discussions around foldable tables. I grieve the loss of being able to comfort a widow with a hug when we commit her beloved husband's ashes to the earth. I grieve the loss of deep conversations with our youth when Brian leads them through tough topics or hilarious conversations with our children when they imagine the world of the Bible. I grieve the loss of office chatter and joking with colleagues. I grieve the loss of a full choir's full-throated chanting of psalms from the gallery. I grieve trips to the zoo or playground with my children. I grieve church picnics and dinner church and a week of vacation Bible school with kids running all over the building and front lawn.

Don't get me wrong; I believe there is hope of resurrection. I can see glimpses of it in your creativity and flexibility during this time. I love the way that our Reception Room has transformed from pristine parlor to messy, useful distribution center for everything from Christmas Eve costumes to lunches for Face to Face to warm clothing for Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry to masks for West Kensington Ministry to worship bags for children. The room has become a hub for all things social witness and Christian formation, and it occurs to me the room's new uses are probably a little closer to the Reign of God than keeping an empty space tidy.

Pride isn't exactly a Calvinist virtue, so I will say instead that I'm well pleased with the ways we have pivoted as a congregation. I'm sure our response to this pandemic has not been perfect. Nobody's has. But I believe we have been faithful servants who are offering our lives to God in the midst of crushing circum-

stances. We have continued to worship God week in and week out. Our musicians, pastors, staff, preschool, and session have adapted and learned and, in many cases, made tough decisions to care for and to protect our people and our community.

My colleague and friend was correct in saying that "Grief is love with no place to go." But I think it's also true that as we work through our grief as a church, we are finding new places for love to go, new ways to love our neighbors as ourselves, a new hope for resurrection.

Blessings and Peace,

***Austin Crenshaw Shelley,***  
***Associate Pastor for Christian Education***

## ***SESSION UPDATE***

### **The Session**

#### **Class of 2021**

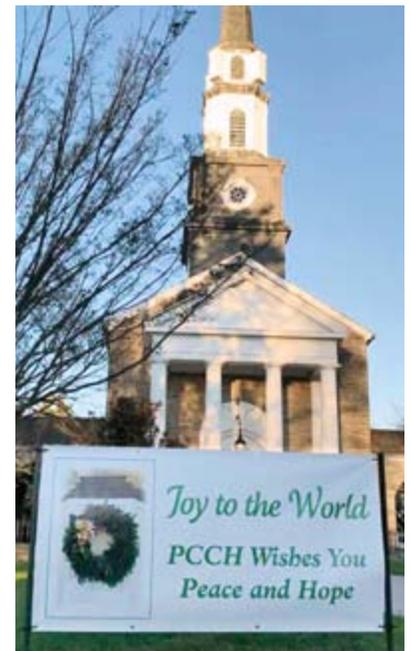
Stephen Bishop  
Laura Brobyn  
Katherine Connelly  
Lisa Guyer  
James Lutz  
Daniel Pretz  
Kevin Raphael  
Beth Nell Vaccaro  
James Walker

#### **Class of 2022**

Martha Agate  
Ryan Cavanaugh  
Matthew Eastman  
Ryan Mann  
Melissa Montgomery  
Jeffrey Podraza  
Alison Rudolf  
Taylor Slaughter

#### **Class of 2023**

Rebecca Bernstein  
Lisa Burns  
Gregory Dickinson  
Robert Fles  
Katherine Magid  
Christen Webber  
Kevin Welsh





### PCCH NEW CHURCH MEMBERS

Savannah Abernethy	Luke Jones
Beatrix Amsterdam	Helen Lutz
Nancy Archer	Abigail Nye
Charlotte Baughman	Anna Pendse
David Bertrand	Anna Quirus
Joyce Bertrand	Kate Quirus
Emily Goodwin	Grace Rebeck
Lydia Hessel-Robinson	Micah Shelley
Maximillian Huertgen	Brady Welsh

### PCCH MEMBER DEATHS

William Bux	John Hausner
Emma M. L. Conti	Marcia Jones
Joan Costello	Vera Turner
Steven Foldes	Harry White
Jane Greenawalt	Constance Xanthopoulos
Thomas Haight	

### PCCH BAPTISMS

Carson Aitken

## Highlights

#### January

- ❖ Approved the 2020 operating budget.
- ❖ Session approved a motion to receive a gift of \$100,000 from the Sheble estate into the endowment, dedicating 50% for operations and 50% to the newly created Jarvis Fund for Mission.

#### February

- ❖ At the annual meeting on February 9, 2020, the congregation voted to elect both the Elder and

Deacon candidate slates, for installation in April 2020, as well as the terms of call for the three ordained and installed pastors, and voted to receive the 2020 operating budget.

- ❖ Session approved a motion to create a Technology task force dedicated to reviewing the tools the church uses for communication and operations.

#### March

- ❖ Session began early COVID-19 response discussions
- ❖ PCCH began virtual worship

#### April

- ❖ Session established a COVID-19 team to manage response measures and return to church plans
- ❖ All committees and staff adjusted operating rhythms and plans to account for pandemic response
- ❖ Applied for a Payroll Protection Program loan to allow us to continue to pay staff

#### May

- ❖ Session evaluated and welcomed into membership 15 members of the Confirmation Class
- ❖ New elders and deacons were virtually examined and approved for ordination and installation

#### June

- ❖ Session heard plans from the Preschool committee regarding reopening school according to state and CDC guidelines

#### September

- ❖ The Return to Church team presented a plan to allow for outdoor fellowship and worship under the tent, as well as recommendations for the fall and Advent seasons
- ❖ 2020-2021 committees were presented for review, including a proposal to include more at-large church members

#### October

- ❖ Kicked off 2020 Stewardship campaign, "Walking in Faith"
- ❖ Preschool received a CARES Act grant for \$48,000 intended to cover personnel costs

#### November

- ❖ No major updates

#### December

- ❖ Discussed and approved the 2021 personnel budget.

*Katie Connelly, Clerk of Session*

## *Deacons and Senior Adult Ministry*

### **Class of 2021**

Diane Cornely  
Allison DeCaro  
Beverly Heimbach  
Lyn Huertgen  
Linda Lipscomb  
Douglas Olson  
Dominick Rebeck  
Amy Violante



### **Class of 2023**

Rebecca DePasquale  
Sara Eastman  
Debby Evans  
Courtney Franklin  
Trish Franklin  
Jane Kaufman  
Kristin Lawton  
Edna Russo  
Beth Vaccaro

### **Class of 2022**

Alison Abernethy  
Karen Asper  
Emily Barth-Werner  
Beth DeSoo  
Jesse DeSoo  
Cynthia Hillsley  
Barbara Olson  
Linda Pettengill  
Deborah Robinson

The Deacons went through a restructuring of sorts last year. Rather than nominating from within ourselves individual persons to handle rather large tasks by themselves (birthday card mailings; newborn meal deliveries; etc.), we divided into teams serving on a rotating schedule.

Not only did this re-energize us as a collective unit, but it also propelled a wider participation in leadership activities while allowing for a more effective approach to pastoral ministry at large. Of course, COVID



has disrupted many of the things we would have normally been doing (visiting with folks in their homes, calling on them in the hospitals, hand-delivering poinsettias at Christmas, offering our Deacons Brunch in January), and so we are all so terribly missing seeing and conversing with our members before and after worship on Sundays.

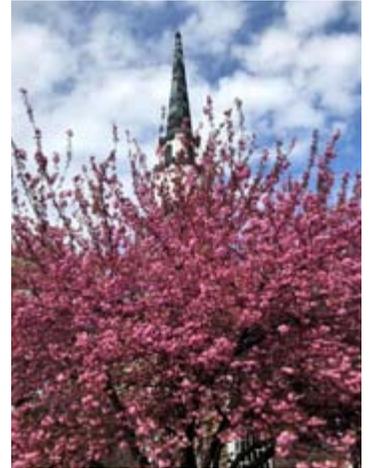
With the rest of soci-

ety, we await and long for a global vaccine. However, with brighter news already upon us – that many of our retirement communities have begun to schedule dates for their first jabs – we are hopeful that when warmer weather arrives so too will we at your doorsteps! And, if all goes exceedingly well on that front, we will

look to organize a day-trip to The Grounds for Sculpture in April or May. Tentative plans are already in the works, so be on the lookout for more information in the coming months!

If you are ever in need of assistance, prayer, or even just a friendly phone call, please let Brian Russo or Evelyn Carpenter know.

*Brian Russo, Associate Pastor*



## *Adult Education*

The purpose of the Adult Education Committee is to provide resources that foster spiritual growth in our congregation. Traditionally, much of the programming from our committee takes the form of Second Hour discussions scheduled to follow the worship service. 2020 began with a Second Hour discussion of sermons from Martin Luther King Jr. as part of our ongoing efforts to respond faithfully to ongoing racial inequity and strife. We then moved to a series in which our staff discussed many aspects of our church traditions including the order of worship, the nature and history of preaching, prayer, children in worship, and the sacraments. We also rolled out a new resource for the congregation in the form of a weekly devotional, “On Faith,” that allows members of our community to reflect on faith in their everyday lives.

The coronavirus pandemic forced a temporary pause in our programming, but by late spring we had moved our offerings online via Zoom. John Wilkinson began by leading a remote series that explored the theological resources of our tradition by discussing the most recent additions to our Book of Confessions from the Confession of 1967 to the Confession of Belhar. In the fall, we resumed our remote Second Hour offerings in concert with the Social Witness Committee, which



brought in speakers from six of our mission partners. We learned about the incredible work of our partners to help the most vulnerable in the city, how the landscape of need has changed due to the pandemic, and what we can do as a church and as individuals to help. Also in the fall, we put together offer-

ings under the big tent before evening prayer services. In one, Beth Shalom Hessel led a discussion regarding how to cast aside mythologies that have often masked injustice throughout our nation's past so we may more faithfully address our history and move forward. Additionally, John Wilkinson led us in a timely discussion of why voting matters to Presbyterians. Our remote Second Hour offerings in 2020 concluded with more discussions about worship and a two-part series about the history, theology, and music of Advent, led by John and our Associate Director of Music Ken Lovett.

***Greg Dickinson (chair), Alison Rudolf, Sarah Halverson, Edie Russo, Donald Todd, John Wilkinson (staff)***

## ***Children's Education***

### **The Before Times:**

We kicked off 2020 much like any other year with children gathering for children's sermons, church school, and Joyful Noise rehearsals in our sanctuary, chapel, and church school wing. Our nursery caregivers, church school teachers, church school shepherds, and musicians were instrumental to these offerings. Many thanks to the following staff members and volunteers who continue to pray for our children and to fulfill the baptismal promises we make to nurture them in faith: Debbie Lambeth, Icilda James, Julie Snyder, Ken Lovett, Amy Raphael, Greg Dickinson, Micah Shelley, Christen Webber, Lydia Hessel-Robinson, Sharyn Walker, Deborah Robinson, Barb Olson, Jillian Quirus, Kimberly Nye, Emilyanne Shelley, Austin Shelley, Lindsey Pennington, Brad Pennington, Nicole Huertgen, Jennifer Miller, Alison Rudolf, Amanda Raphael,

Jesse DeSoo, Beth Lutz, Helen Lutz, Dom Rebeck, Virginia Rebeck, Anna Rebeck, Grace Rebeck, Jack Violante, Brenda Phillips, Emily Camp-Landis, Claire Camp-Landis, Sarah Wright, Linnea Johnson, Isaac Hessel Robinson, Jeanette Quirus, Anna Quirus, Kate Quirus, Steve Bishop, Max Huertgen, Miller Huertgen, Lyn Huertgen, Sara Eastman, Matt Eastman, Gabe Eastman, Greg Hocking, Clara Hocking, Alison Abernethy, Savannah Abernethy, Lisa Burns, Lexi Clement, Rebecca DePasquale, Kevin Welsh, Brady Welsh, Becky Welsh, Brian Russo, and Beth Hessel.

### **Church School During the Coronavirus Pandemic:**

We then turned to church school at home, first by sending lessons home by email, followed by weekly Zoom meetings with PCCH kids. We then transitioned to offering church school lessons and Joyful Noise via video lessons on our PCCH Church School Vimeo site. PCCH has provided a year's worth of worship-at-home materials to families with children, including getting a quality children's Bible, *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth Caldwell and Carol Wehrheim, into every child's hands. Other worship bag materials have included worship cloths in the colors of the liturgical seasons to "set the table" for worship, wooden prayer blocks for families to use at meal times or bed times, candles for ordinary time and Advent, coloring sheets, seasonal devotionals, percussion instruments, and more. Check out our archived church school lessons and follow us at <https://vimeo.com/509377039> for access to new videos as they post. As we move forward into 2021, we're shifting our approach once more to synchronous Joyful Noise rehearsals on Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m. Our church school videos on Vimeo now include yoga practice led by Amy Raphael. These segments allow us to move our bodies in order to help the Bible stories "stick" in the minds and hearts of our kids!





Meanwhile, our children have continued to be generous with their time, resources, and money. They have chosen to help support West Kensington Ministry, which offers a variety of services to neighbors in the West Kensington area of Philadelphia, and to Woman Cradle of Abundance, which helps to provide school fees, clothing, school supplies, and living wages for women and girls in Congo. Children and families have also filled reverse Advent boxes with shelf stable food and supplies for Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry, led our first ever Children's Sunday worship service, become pen pals with many of PCCH's senior members, and helped several adults spearheaded by Bill Toffey to grow and harvest vegetables and flowers in the raised bed gardens on PCCH's front lawn.

### Reimagined Special Events

This year has offered us many opportunities to reimagine PCCH traditions. We held a weeklong Vacation Bible School over Zoom. PCCH kids, PCCH grandkids, and children all over the map were able to participate in our exploration of the parable of the Good Samaritan through our close reading of the book, *Who is my Neighbor?* by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso.

Our annual Christmas pageant also made its way online! Paste the following link into your browser <https://vimeo.com/494289513> to see and hear the story told in a new way by adorable sheep, a sweet Holy Family, regal magi, frightening King Herod, energetic angels, awe-struck shepherds, and eloquent narrators!

Our annual Breakfast with Santa morphed into a socially-distanced drive through event complete with hot chocolate bags lovingly constructed by the Lutz family, a North Pole mailbox for children's letters to Santa, and outdoor photos by PCCH's own huge spruce Christmas tree with Saint Nicholas himself.

Finally, we continue to offer pastoral care and referrals to professional counselors to families and children in this time of increased stress. If you feel that you or your kids are struggling, you are not alone. Please contact your pastors for help navigating a way forward!

*Ryan Mann, Lisa White, Greg Dickinson, Brenda Phillips, Michelle Shachtman, Rebecca De Pasquale, Kate Houston, Samantha Aitken, Austin Shelley (staff)*

## Church Life

The COVID pandemic has made it challenging for the Church Life Committee to focus on its regular mission – membership recruitment and visitor welcome is necessarily at a standstill, but we do our best to encourage participation and engagement in what has become a largely virtual society, while we await with care and caution the time when we can be together again!

In the interim, we have been helping other groups to promote events, and have looked for opportunities to gather people and create connection in a safe way. During the fall, we coordinated two very successful Breakfast Clubs Under the Big Tent and look forward to starting these up in the spring! We initiated socially-distanced caroling at Christmas, and gathered folks around the fire pits after the Las Posadas walk in Chestnut Hill in December. We are planning some outdoor events this winter and spring to encourage safe interactions. We look forward to the day when we can be back at theatre, baseball games, Derby parties, and other fun activities in person!

We thank everyone who helps to create and maintain a welcoming environment at PCCH, and we encourage your thoughts and comments relative to activities and



programs of interest to you and your family, so as to encourage relationships within our PCCH church family.

***Jeff Podraza (chair), Dan Pretz, Edie Russo, Liz Podraza, Mark Bernstein, Rebecca Bernstein, Ryan Mann, Steve Bishop, John Wilkinson (staff)***



## ***Theology on Tap***

Since 2009 our numbers at Theology on Tap have grown from 4 to 15 on average. We once had a high of 26, which admittedly, was too much of a good thing. We used to meet once a month from September through May in the Upper Room at Campbell's Place on Germantown Avenue, but since March 2020 when the pandemic shuttered most of our normal operations, we have been meeting on ZOOM. There we have remained up unto this day (minus one such occasion outside in the PCCH Tent), discussing and debating as if it were the good old days. If you would like to engage in conversations about: War and Religion; The Modern Christian Family; Bio-Medical Ethics; etc. then carve out the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30p.m. and ask Brian to email you an invitation and a link!

***Brian Russo***

## ***Music and Arts***

The Music & Arts Committee has been meeting regularly via Zoom during the past year, which has been a welcome opportunity for committee members to stay connected. During the late summer and fall of 2020, PCCH hosted a series of three virtual galleries featuring selected works from some of the talented artists within our congregation. Two of these virtual collections are still available to view under the Music & Arts tab on the

PCCH website. We look forward to presenting an additional virtual gallery this spring, and we give thanks to Rebecca Thornburgh and Leslie Lefer for their enthusiastic curatorial efforts.

The fourth annual exhibition of Souls Shot portraits was on view in Widener Hall from November 2020 through January 2021. PCCH is proud to support the Souls Shot Portrait Project, with the mission of raising awareness and memorializing lives tragically cut short by the plague of gun violence. Portraits and video from the exhibition can be viewed online by clicking the Souls Shot Art Exhibition link under the Music & Arts tab on the PCCH website. We encourage everyone to view this painfully beautiful and moving exhibit.

The Music & Arts Committee is currently working on two performing arts offerings for spring: a virtual play reading and a virtual talent show. Keep your eye on the bulletin for announcements about those and other arts offerings.

***Matt Ward (chair), Mark Bernstein, Julie Snyder, Mark Conti, Joan Demme, Laura Madeleine, Frank Slaughter, Taylor Slaughter, Harry Spaeth, Margaret Spencer, Rebecca Thornburgh, Beth Vaccaro, Ken Lovett, Austin Shelley, Dan Spratlan (staff)***

The music program is one of the many facets of our church life that had to do a hard pivot away from our usual in-person activities. In the beginning of the pandemic, we had soloists record themselves at home, and relied on pre-recorded services or concerts to supply the music for our digitally produced worship services. As the year progressed and we were able to meet in the Sanctuary while masked and distanced, we began recording weekly with a rotating octet of Gallery Choir members. While we can't wait to have the full choir back, this arrangement allows us to provide nearly all the music each week that we did pre-COVID.





In November, PCCH lead a consortium of singers from six neighboring Presbyterian churches in a series of three virtual choir Christmas hymns. Members of all six choirs recorded a video of themselves singing to an accompaniment, and a producer worked to combine all of the recordings into one cohesive ensemble.

These videos were used by each church for their respective online worship services and are still available to view on our website. Since March, the Cantatas and Chamber Music series has produced a dozen concerts featuring edited content from past performances, newly recorded material from our homes, and live streamed recitals from our Sanctuary as a way to connect with you at home. Most of our videos are up on our newly founded YouTube page <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC24kk0w1A3VaQdn8TN-s5sQ>, and continue to offer some entertainment and comfort as we progress into 2021.

### ***Dan Spratlan, Director of Music***

Much of our PCCH musical life in 2020 involved sharing the experience of worship and music through recordings, while members were unable to worship in person. We transitioned from recording hymns on my home piano to utilizing the instruments at the church, especially the organ. Although the sound of the organ is much better when recorded from the middle of the church, I made several recordings in the gallery in an attempt to show the workings of the organ console – which most worshippers rarely have occasion to see. Members of our Youth Choir made a recording which was included in the May 3 Youth Sunday service video. (Thanks to Youth Choir parents for assisting with this project.) On Sunday afternoons during the fall months, in-person evening prayer services were held in the big tent. Gratitude to our soloists for leading the music for these services, as well as choir volunteer Margaret Spencer, who joined me every week to offer hand bell accompaniments.

### ***Ken Lovett, Organist/Associate Director of Music***

Joyful Noise started the year strong by singing in worship in February and sitting together as a group to participate in the service. Our pandemic activities included a weekly 15-minute video in conjunction with our Christian Education video. In these videos, I worked to expose the children to technical concepts such as standing with confidence, breathing deeply, opening the mouth, and using head voice and chest voice; in addition, with the aid of my children, we explored singing in rounds, in harmony, and with instrumental accompaniment on the piano and violin. Our repertoire included seasonally-appropriate songs as well as Christian-themed “camp” songs. We look forward to moving to a more traditional rehearsal format in 2021.

### ***Julie Snyder, Director, Joyful Noise***

## ***Flower Guild***

The mission of the Flower Guild is to bring the beauty of God’s world into our worship space. Like many other church activities, our work was curtailed when indoor worship ceased in March. In recent months, however, we have used silk flowers artfully arranged by Diane Cornely to brighten the sanctuary for Sunday services online.

We thank our Guild members who provided lovely live arrangements in the early months of 2020 prior to the arrival of the pandemic. We also thank our members



and friends who donated to the Flower Fund in memory of loved ones during those early months.

Special thanks go to Ken Lovett for his support during this pandemic period. The Guild looks forward to the time when we can worship together in person again and are particularly looking forward to getting back to work with our beautiful array of live flowers.

*Guild Members are:*

Mari Bernhagen	Barbara Olson
Jill Bown	Linda Pettengill
Katie Connelly	Liz Podraza
Sandy Connelly	Alison Rudolf
Joan Demme	Sue Shuchat
Debby Evans	Barbara Spause
Barbara Frazier	Barrett Stewart
Linnea Johnson	Mary Ann VanBlarcom
Jane Kaufman	Susan White
Ken Lovett	Suzan Willcox

*Grace Stewart and Diane Cornely*

## ***Personnel Committee***

The Personnel Committee is charged with overseeing our diverse staff and working with the Pastor on all matters relating to human resources. This typically includes position descriptions, compensation matters and benefits for the staff. In 2020, the committee began the work of systematic reviews as well as a review of position descriptions.

The committee is grateful for the staff and its outstanding work in adapting to the coronavirus pandemic. We will look for continued ways to support these talented people.

Our first task in 2021 will be identifying a new Church Administrator to succeed Esther Cole. We are thankful for Esther's faithful contribution to our mission and ministry.

***Kevin Welsh (chair), Kate Magid, Kevin Raphael, Christin Webber, John Wilkinson (staff)***

## ***Social Witness***

2020 presented our world, our community, our church and our committee with challenges that we could not have imagined. However, in 2020 our congregation continued to bear witness to God's love through



mission work to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, witness lives lost to gun violence, bring joy to children in poverty, welcome refugees, provide a safe harbor for victims of domestic violence, educate children, free the innocent, and so much more.

Due to the pandemic, we provided many of our partners dealing with homelessness and food insecurity on the front lines with our annual giving in April, rather than wait until the end of the year. This allowed Broad Street Ministry, West Kensington Ministry, Whosoever Gospel Ministries, Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network, Our Brother's Place, Achievability, Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry, and Face to Face to have much needed funds to address the increased needs of their communities.

Despite the changes in how we worked with our partners, we continued to be able to provide donations to many of our partners via several food and supply drives throughout the year. Highlights included 60 backpacks filled with school supplies for PIHN, school supplies for Community Partnership School, coats and gloves for West Kensington Ministry, masks for many of our partners, toiletries and personal products for Face to Face and PIHN, Christmas gifts for 40 children for Achievability (with some help from our neighbor Chestnut Hill Hospital!), and food for Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry, Face to Face, PIHN, and West Kensington Ministry. We changed our monthly interaction with Face to Face to provide "to go" lunches to the clients as meals are no longer served over the weekends.

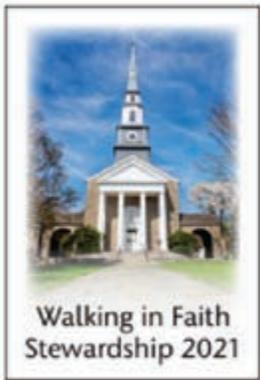
While in-person activities were limited, we joined with members of our larger community to host a vigil for peace and racial justice following the death of George Floyd, joined many local congregations for A Walk With the Holy Family in the Spirit of Los Posadas to raise awareness of homelessness and to raise money

for PIHN, and joined our brothers and sisters at West Kensington Ministry to help distribute food, masks, coats, gloves and blankets.

Finally, we were able to continue to financially support many of our other partners, including Heeding God's Call, Dawn's Place, Centurion Ministries, Freedom School, Habitat for Humanity, Anti-Violence Partnership and Souls Shot. Also, we were thrilled to be able to distribute the tithe from the Capital Campaign to Whosever Gospel Ministries, West Kensington Ministry, and Souls Shot, to assist them in continuing their amazing work.

*Melissa Montgomery (chair), Laura Brobyn, Susan Brunell, Emily Camp-Landis, Bob Fles, Jeff Podraza, Liz Podraza, Alison Rudolf, Beth Vacarro, Margaret Spencer, Suzan Wilcox, John Wilkinson (staff)*

## Stewardship



How do you conduct a stewardship campaign during a global pandemic? That was the question presented to the Stewardship Committee in the fall of 2020. The answer was simple—tell the story of the church and invite people to support it.

The means of delivery was different. We presented several smaller mailings over the fall to share information. We also welcomed many members of the church who shared their reflections during worship. They were terrific.

On Stewardship Sunday, November 22, we welcomed people for “drive-through” pledging. Pledgers were welcomed with cookies and a wonderful stewardship mask made lovingly by the fabulous Trish Franklin.

Pledging is the heartbeat of our financial life, and the Stewardship Committee is grateful for the support of so many. Thank you. If you have yet to pledge for 2021, do it, whether as a renewal or for the first time.

Our stewardship theme, “Walking in Faith,” reminded us that whether we are able to gather together in person or not, that God walks with us, giving us the gift of faith in all times.

Thank you, again, for your support.

*Mark Bernstein, Matt Eastman, Courtney Franklin, Trish Franklin, Jim Lutz, Laurie Menyo, John Wilkinson (staff)*

## Youth Groups

As much as COVID has disrupted our normal life, in some shade of the truth, it has yet to derail our youth group. Sure, the variety of our activities has been greatly reduced and we have been unable to exchange hugs and handshakes, not to mention cheese curls and pizza slices. But warm or cold we have continued to meet, safely outside at our church parking lot and less frequently on Zoom (from which most of them deserve a much needed break). We have done fire pit nights, gift exchanges, and devotionals; we have hiked throughout the Wissahickon, partnered with Habitat for Humanity on a “rake-a-thon” project, and helped lead collections at our annual Souper Bowl of Caring donation event. And for a while there we were even doing mini podcasts (well, Zoomcasts) under the moniker “The Good Millennial.”

The pandemic would have been a perfect excuse for our numbers to go down, and our enthusiasm for each other's company and the Church to diminish... but that has not been the case. This group of young people are simply amazing. They have endured so much. They have had to deal with almost crippling levels of uncertainty and loss. And yet, persevered they have and hopeful we are.

Please continue to support them in all the ways you do. They both need it and deserve it.

## Confirmation Class

Last year's Confirmation Class had near 20 students. In addition to our own youth, we had three students join us from a fellow congregation in our Presbytery (East Falls Presbyterian Church), and their minister Kari Olson joined Brian in helping to lead lectures. Unlike previous iterations, this class met for a full academic year as opposed to a half-cycle. And unlike previous classes,





this one had to culminate their journey not on our cancel steps and with a grand celebration to follow, but over Zoom with the session and a virtual recognition on Vimeo. None of us could have expected to finish that way, and it was certainly a bit deflating for everyone involved (especially as the year together had proved so special and substantive). However, that did not stop them from authoring some of the finest faith statements yet, not to mention some of the longest (one was over 14 pages!). It was and is a shame that we were ultimately unable to celebrate their achievement in person, but I hope that whenever we are back in the sanctuary together, we will be able to give them a much-belated and well-deserved standing applause.

*Kelly Baughman, Ryan Cavanaugh, Katie Connelly, Beth Lutz, Dom Rebeck, Jeannette Quirus, Kevin Welsh, and Brian Russo (staff)*

## ***Center on the Hill***

The Center on the Hill, the place for active adults at PCCH, spent its 10th year by continuing its mission to provide a wide variety of programs, events, activities, and resources that enrich the lives of seniors in Chestnut Hill and surrounding areas. January and February of 2020 found us attracting record numbers of participants in our planned activities. Our screening of the film “Harriet” in February attracted over 150 people and we had to move it upstairs to Widener Hall to accommodate those arriving to watch. Yoga and Art Classes were at maximum capacity, and the registrations for our other activities were ever growing. Then in March of 2020 when we closed our doors due to the pandemic, like so many of us, I was faced with a tremendous challenge. How to find new ways to still stay connected and offer things while we were closed to protect our

health and safety. I was quick to find ways to offer fitness videos, watch and learn presentations, lectures, virtual luncheons, interactive games, art lessons, community resources and more, online completely FREE for anyone to access.

Many of our instructors volunteered their time to teach and record classes, workshops, and presentations that were then posted online. We created a Center on the Hill YouTube channel, and I created new web pages that could be updated daily with new content. Presently our YouTube Channel has over 195 videos, that have been produced since March, with over 10,000 total views. All of these efforts helped keep our community engaged and active while safely staying at home. We have so many creative people helping us in these new ways, allowing us to still be a part of our neighbors’ daily lives.

In September of 2020 we were able to transition to offering more structured ongoing classes online like Yoga, Tai Chi, Watercolor and Collage Art, for minimal participation fees, as well as continuing to offer new daily content shared online on our Programs page for free.



Some examples of various online programming offered in 2020 were:

- Tai Chi
- Golden Yoga
- Health and wellness lectures on topics like:
  - Staying Active at Home
  - The Healthy Brain
  - Wellness for Everyday Living
  - Telemedicine
  - Safety in Your Home
- Zumba Gold in a chair
- Collage Art
- Watercolor Painting
- Virtual Community Luncheons
- Diabetes and Nutrition Class

- Learning to Look at Art Presentations
- Managing Your Grief over the Holidays
- Medicare Counseling
- Qigong
- Chair Pilates
- Interactive Trivia Games
- Healthy Cooking Demonstrations
- Well Spouse support and Alzheimer's support groups

In October 2020 we took a day trip (wearing masks and remaining outside, socially distanced) to the historic Laurel Hill Cemetery where we had a private tour with Tom Keels, a local author, historian and tour guide. It was a lovely outing, with perfect weather, and included individual brown bag lunches so that those attending could spread out and enjoy the grounds after the tour was over.

Also in October I launched our 2020 Fundraising Appeal. In a time when our doors were closed and the economy was struggling due to the pandemic, I did not know what to expect from my efforts. I appealed to our community to help me continue to be able to offer programming at little or no cost to our participants in an effort to keep people active, engaged and safe during the uncertain year ahead. They responded with an outpouring of support. 133 donors gave \$7500.00 in total, which was beyond my expectations in the uncertain climate we found ourselves in this year. I am very grateful for the support we received, and look forward to using the funds raised to continue modifying programming in ways to reach even more people in the year ahead.

As I celebrate my second anniversary as Director of The Center on the Hill, I look back at this last year, and am thankful for all the people who have taken the time to tell me how appreciative they are of all I am able to do for them. Even if it is just a quick phone call or email to say hello, they don't hesitate to let me know how glad they are that the Center is still here, and present in their lives. The goal for my first year as Director in 2019 was to get to know the people I was serving at the Center on the Hill, and attract new people by offering as much diverse programming as I could think of. My goal for 2020 was to maintain those relationships and then find ways to keep people active while staying safe at home. It has been a year of unprecedented challenges in so many ways, but it has also been so rewarding to be able to stay connected, and continue to cultivate these important relationships with people in our community. I look forward to the year ahead, as I continue to plan for growth and further enrichment of our programming in 2021.

*Mariangela Saavedra, Director*

## *Speaker Series on the Hill*

The Speaker Series is a monthly event (September-June) 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 nearly forty years. Subjects presented by our speakers over these years have included the arts, science, athletics and current events. This year began as we hosted speakers who drew record attendance numbers such as local historian Thomas Keels, and PCCH's Pastor John Wilkinson.

In March when the pandemic began we transitioned the series to an online only event presentation. For the months of April – June speakers were filmed presenting on topics such as The Emergence of Gene Therapy in Modern Medicine, Archeology at Jefferson's Monticello, and Encore Careers. In September we began hosting these speakers live online through Zoom so you could watch in real time and speak to the presenters, or watch the recorded version later on. Speakers presented on topics like the Economic Outlook, 21st Century Music and Philadelphia's Golden Age of Retail. Those participating in the series this year included church members, and residents of Germantown, Mt. Airy, Chestnut Hill, and communities both near and far, who could now attend online each month.

*Mariangela Saavedra, Coordinator*





## ***PCCH Preschool: State of the School***

This has been a strangely challenging and uniquely beautiful time to be a part of PCCH Preschool. We were elated to reopen our doors in September at approximately half capacity so that we might remain more safely socially distanced, masked, and safe from COVID-19. We were uncertain as to how we might encourage such young toddlers to keep their masks on, to refrain from touching each other during collaborative play, and how we might summon the restraint to avoid hugging them or picking them up. We spent many months preparing for these challenges as well as the physical demands of constant cleaning and other CDC regulations so that we might safely reopen. I am delighted to report that PCCH Preschool remains safely open and that we are the only part of PCCH church on campus daily.

I don't think it is an overstatement to share that having interaction with the students and with each other, while not without unique protocols and considerations, has served as a beacon of light and hope in a very difficult time in the world. It has offered us a pocket of normalcy in our lives during such a surreal time and, most importantly, offers our students the dynamic curriculum and building blocks for academic and acúcielo



learning which our students have enjoyed for nearly 70 years. We are so grateful to be together! Ordinarily a 14 person faculty, we've managed to safely run the school with six or seven faculty plus a director. To say that we have each taken on extra initiatives and worn multiple hats would be a gross understatement, but we are happy and grateful for the opportunity to do so. We have also created our own COVID-19 task force which has navigated many highly nuanced cases, circumstances and considerations, ultimately remaining open as a healthy oasis for our children and families. Of the success thus far, we are quite proud.

As always, we are a community of lifelong learners who embrace progress, creativity, innovation, and who strive to better reflect our global citizenry. As such, our curricular program includes project-based learning and an interdisciplinary Spanish program. We also have a unique curricular focus called Famous Folks, wherein the school emphasizes heroes of color, remarkable women, and social justice up standards throughout history. We will continue our innovative curriculum throughout the summer months, offering at least nine weeks of summer camp here on campus for children ages 2 to 5. Please see our website [www.pcchpreschool.org](http://www.pcchpreschool.org) for more information.

***Carla DiOrio, Director***

## ***Administrator's Report***

In last year's report I had written "PCCH is always bustling in December with the Flower guild and Felix erecting Christmas trees, wreaths and generally sprucing up the building." Well – how everything can change in a year. December was quiet at PCCH! With it came a peace that I hadn't experienced in the clamor of all the concerts and events of the past Christmases. Felix put up one tree up in front of the new glass doors in the sanctuary narthex and when the wooden doors were flung open on Christmas Eve all of us who had gathered on the front lawn enjoyed the lights of the tree and the sanctuary beyond. Our gathering outside on the lawn for that service was wonderful and helped to remind me that the church is the people and not the structure.

While it's true (that the church is the people), our buildings still needed care and upkeep this year and Felix and our weekend crew of cleaners continued to provide that. An inspector from our insurance company stopped by this month and went through the building and commented that it was the most cared for church



and grounds he'd ever seen!

Sadly, the building wasn't utilized as it usually is and all of the groups that have used it in the past have been staying safe, but away. The building has been largely empty and quiet, with choirs and concerts silenced and dance groups, Scouts and other social groups

temporarily disbanded. Some of these groups have been in touch this month now that inoculations of the vaccine have begun and hope emerges that these groups may be meeting again sometime in the future.

The few of us staff that were in the building throughout the lockdowns continued to enjoy the grounds, often having a sandwich on the bench out front or in the Memorial Garden. The beautiful urns continued to look beautiful throughout the year thanks to the Flower Guild and gorgeous flowering trees out front continued to share their glory with those who passed by. And the sunsets remained constant in their beauty as well, giving all of us hope that this pandemic will soon be behind us.

In April I will retire and hand the care of this beautiful building over to someone else's capable hands and in the months to come PCCH will again be buzzing with the activity it has missed this past year. I will miss those I've worked with and come to love. PCCH (the people, not the structure) will always have a special place in my heart!

*Esther Cole, Church Administrator*

## ***Finance and Treasurer's Report***

The Finance Committee and the Treasurer are responsible at PCCH for overseeing the Operating Budget, the Senior Adult Ministry Budget, the Capital Campaign cash flow, financial oversight of the Preschool, and the various restricted funds that help the Church in its mission. Once the budget is established for the year, the Finance Committee meets monthly to review our progress, and on an as-needed basis with a representative from Main Line Accounting, our third-party accountants. Cash flow management for the church is also reviewed and monitored to coordinate with the

Investment Committee to time the draws from the endowment that need to take place. The Finance Committee's monthly review and any recommendations are then reported to Session regularly.

A summary of 2020 financial results as well as the Session-approved budget for 2021 are included below for review and comparison. We clearly could not have anticipated or budgeted for what curveballs 2020 would throw our way, but we managed to navigate our way through it all financially quite well. While the pandemic impacts did have some adverse impacts to our building rental incomes and likely contributed to some shortfalls to our pledge receipts, these headwinds were offset by lighter expenses and the benefit of a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan. This PPP loan enabled us to maintain payrolls at both the Church and the Preschool, and we have met the requirements for loan forgiveness, a process currently underway.

As always, unfilled pledges from 2020 or any prior year are always welcomed in subsequent years. Thank you one and all for your continued dedication to the financial stewardship of the Church.

***Steve Bishop, Finance Committee Chair and Christen Webber, Treasurer  
Finance Committee Harry Spaeth, Jim Lutz, Graeme Frazier, John Wilkinson (staff)***

## ***Investment Committee***

The Investment Committee continued to faithfully oversee the Endowment Funds of our church. Our committee is responsible for investments that are managed by Merrill Lynch and PNC.

The 2020 Endowment Funds provided income of \$119,401 to support the operating budget and \$107,606 to support the Senior Adult Ministry of the church. This past year was a challenging year due to COVID and the Investment Committee made sure that the funds were available throughout the year to support the budget.

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.

***John Lawton (chair), Steve Bishop, Harry Spaeth, Mark Nottingham, Matt Abernethy, Brian DiDonato, John Wilkinson (staff)***

# *Keeping the Faith*

KEEPING  
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## *Capital Campaign Update: As of December 31, 2020*

Capital Campaign Goal including Tithe:	\$ 665,500
Total Amount Pledged:	\$ 629,520
Pledge Receipts to Date:	\$ 613,899
Gifts Received to Date:	\$ 9,162
Total Sources of Funds:	\$ 623,061
Cash on Hand:	\$ 23,427
Percentage of Pledges Received to Date:	98%
Amount of Pledges that have Not Been Received:	\$ 15,620
Total Campaign Tithe Amount for Mission YTD:	\$ 47,105

### Projects Completed in 2017-2018:

- ❖ Campaign Advertising, Printing and Administrative Expenses
- ❖ Removal of Old Boiler
- ❖ Removal of Oil Tank
- ❖ Steeple Roof Repair
- ❖ Acquisition of “Carrie” Steinway Piano
- ❖ Repair of the Front Walkway
- ❖ New PCCH Signage

### Projects Completed in 2018-2019:

- ❖ Widener Restroom Addition
- ❖ Kitchen Renovation
- ❖ Rear Entrance Update/Renovation
- ❖ Capital Campaign Tithe

### Projects Completed in 2020:

- ❖ New Glass Sanctuary Entryway Doors

### Projects to be included on any New Capital Campaign:

- ❖ Replace Windows for Strouse Classrooms with Energy Efficient Windows
- ❖ Replace Backstage Windows

# Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill

## Session Approved 2021 Budget and 2020 Recap

	2021 Budget	2020 Actual	2020 Budget
<b>Revenue</b>			
Congregational Response	\$702,779	\$641,543	\$746,400
Building Use and Other Revenue	\$102,200	\$54,168	\$142,200
	<u>\$804,979</u>	<u>\$695,711</u>	<u>\$888,600</u>
Draws Against Endowment Income:			
Designated Draws	\$66,942	\$56,956	\$65,081
Other Draws	\$59,670	\$63,965	\$54,320
Total Endowment Draws	<u>\$126,612</u>	<u>\$120,922</u>	<u>\$119,401</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b><u>\$931,591</u></b>	<b><u>\$816,633</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,008,001</u></b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Ordained Ministers	\$270,248	\$256,291	\$265,287
Lay Personnel Salaries & Benefits	\$247,755	\$247,575	\$242,267
Other Personnel	\$63,977	\$49,623	\$63,977
Personnel Total	<u>\$581,980</u>	<u>\$553,489</u>	<u>\$571,531</u>
Music and the Arts	\$20,700	\$7,646	\$20,700
Church Life	\$21,200	\$7,349	\$25,000
Christian Education	\$20,541	\$15,249	\$20,250
Administration	\$104,000	\$91,896	\$109,000
Buildings and Grounds	\$154,500	\$153,394	\$169,500
Mission	\$82,020	\$71,348	\$92,020
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>984,941</u></b>	<b><u>900,370</u></b>	<b><u>1,008,001</u></b>
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	<b>(\$53,350)</b>	<b>(\$83,738)</b>	\$0
<b>Footnote on budget shortfall coverage:</b>			
PPP Wave 1 (\$137,088 less \$83,738 to 2020)	\$53,350	\$83,738	
<b>Sr. Adult Ministry</b>			
Carry over previous year	\$21,865	\$30,016	\$30,016
Gifts/Grants	\$5,000	\$6,061	\$5,000
Other Income	\$13,000	\$7,054	\$13,000
Draw from SAM endowment	\$111,074	\$107,606	\$107,606
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b><u>\$150,939</u></b>	<b><u>\$150,737</u></b>	<b><u>\$155,622</u></b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Personnel	\$98,998	\$95,593	\$95,592
Operating Expenses	\$15,000	\$13,279	\$15,000
Contribution to Church Overhead	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>\$133,998</u></b>	<b><u>\$128,872</u></b>	<b><u>\$130,592</u></b>
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	<u>\$16,942</u>	<u>\$21,865</u>	<u>\$25,030</u>

***On the cover...***

*Left side:*

Austin Crenshaw Shelley, Associate Pastor; Brian Russo, Associate Pastor (and Fulton); Felix Delgado, Sexton; Carla DiOrio, Preschool Director; Esther Cole, Church Administrator; Leslie Lefer, Communications Coordinator

*Right side:*

John Wilkinson, Pastor; Daniel Spratlan, Director of Music; Evelyn Carpenter, Administrative Assistant; Mariangela Saavedra, Director, Center on the Hill; Ken Lovett, Organist/Associate Director of Music

