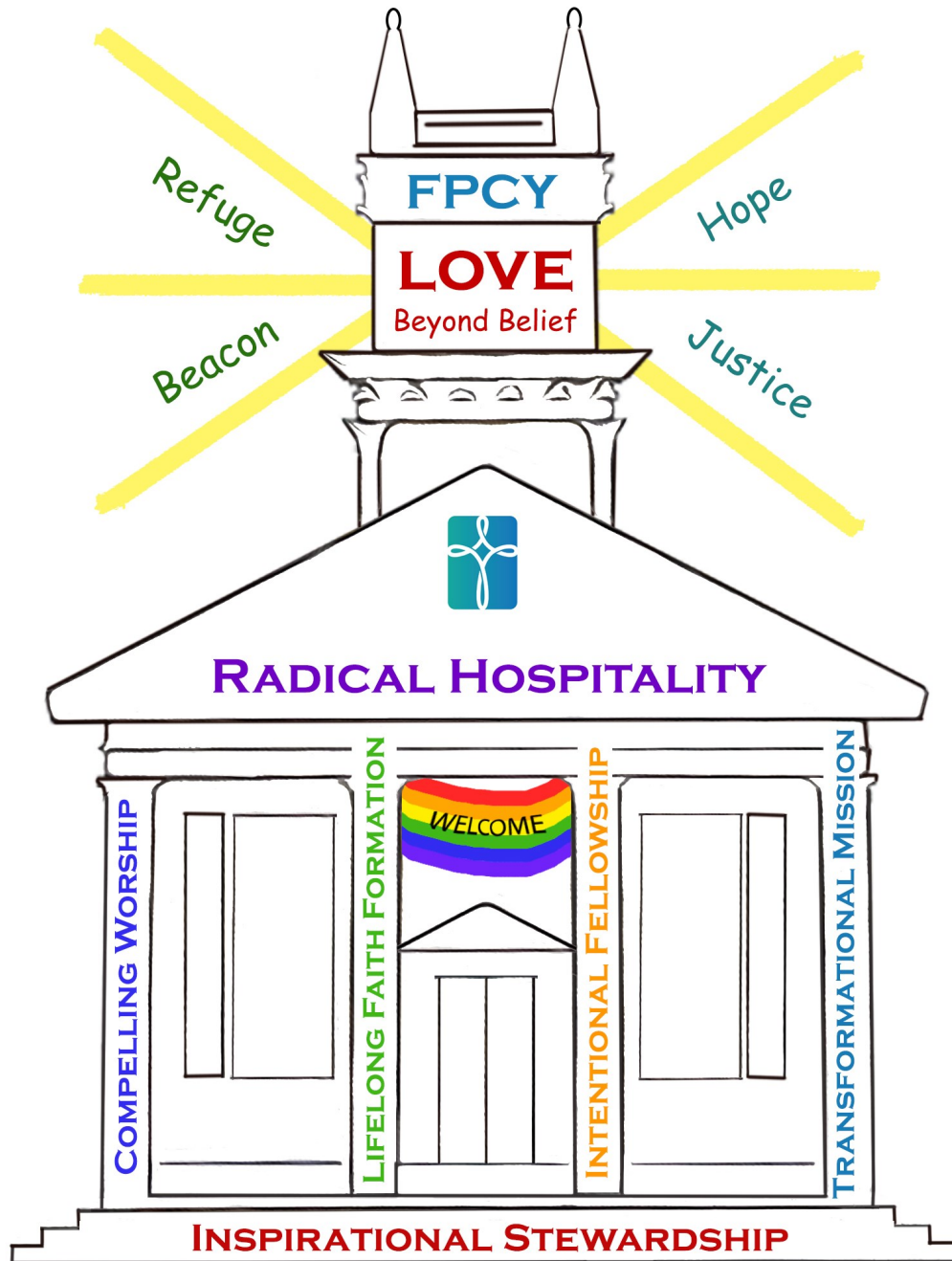




FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF YORKTOWN



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

March 5, 2023

LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

2022

Session of Ruling Elders

Clerk of Session: Christie Herman Moderators: Reverend Chip Low, Reverend Tami Seidel

The Session is the governing body of our Church. It consists of “ruling elders” elected by the members of the Church. One class of about six members is elected each year, serving for three years in a rotating membership arrangement. In addition, two Youth Elders are elected each year for one year terms.

Class of 2022

Abby Cross (Worship)
Nicole DeCintio (Faith Formation)
Lynn Edling (Faith Formation)
Eric Kreuter (Mission)
Ian Spence (Operations)
Bill Winsted (Congregational Life)
Benjamin Low, Youth Elder
Spencer Brown, Youth Elder

Class of 2023

Alice Chin (Nominating, Personnel)
Bryan Ekelund (Communications)
Donna Gresh (Communications)
Jessica Mayes (Stewardship)
Fred Mintzer
(Budget & Finance, Personnel)
Nathan Perry (Worship & Personnel)

Class of 2024

Katharine Frase (Operations)
Elaine Heyde (Congregational Life)
Connie Knapp (Stewardship)
Jennifer Rowe-Behun
(Congregational Life)
Jack Shaughnessy (Budget & Finance)
Marisa Swift (Mission)

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Heidi Haring and Dana Mordue Secretary: Christine Lazarus

In the Book of Order:

“The Office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ. It is the duty of deacons, first of all, to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith.”

The primary work of the Deacons involves responding to the needs of our congregation.

Deacons also serve 3 year terms.

In addition, two Youth Deacons are elected each year for one year terms.

Class of 2022

Diane Hawlk
Dana Mordue
Christine Lazarus
Nancy Paskin

Class of 2023

Jennifer Burns
Heidi Haring

Class of 2024

Judy Chessa
Terri Froehlich
Sue Nelson
John Winget

Marina Wheeler, Youth Deacon
Emma Placido, Youth Deacon

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REPORT OF THE CO-PASTORS

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm,
to give you a future with hope.*

Jeremiah 29:11

You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.

Matthew 5:13-14

*For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function,
so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.*

Romans 12:4-5

Looking back over 2022, we are struck by the similarities to where we were at this time last year. We all thought we would be further along coming out of the pandemic and getting back to “normal,” only to face continued challenges. For example, 2022 began with yet another Covid surge that required us to return to online worship and programming for a time. (Thank goodness for our investment in technology that allowed us to pivot and continue to include so many in regular worship, and thanks to our Tech Team!)

Now at the beginning of 2023, we are realizing yet again how much longer it is taking for not only our church, but the whole world to emerge from the pandemic and its many disruptions into the new reality of where we are now. In so many ways, we are just beginning to understand and come to terms with the multiple losses and trends the pandemic either created or accelerated in our current context. And along the way, things have continued to change and demand our creative adaptation and ongoing dedication to being the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown.

Grounded in Gratitude

We want to begin by expressing our profound gratitude to the staff, members, and friends of FPCY who have done so much to keep us open, flexible, and moving forward in these uncertain times. Here are some highlights from 2022:

- **First In-Person Easter Sunday Worship Services** since the pandemic and for Garrett, our Director of Music Ministries who began working with FPCY in August 2019.
- We welcomed our new **Facilities Caretaker Kevin Barnes** who brings his enthusiasm and diligence to work every day and can often be found touching up the paint and waxing floors.
- We continued **Faith Formation** for all ages and started the **CrossGen** gatherings for intergenerational fellowship and nurture.
- We restarted fellowship opportunities like **Lunch Bunch** and **Men’s Breakfast**.
- We transformed our pledge cards into **Giving Covenants** that invite us into the commitment of ministry together by Praying, Engaging, and Giving.
- Our **Food Justice** ministry continued to expand to meet the growing numbers and needs of the people in our community through the herculean efforts of our Food Pantry team, Breakfast Runs, and food deliveries to JanPeek and Noontime Meal.

(Continued on page 5)

- Thanks to a dedicated team of planners and workers, the gardens around the church were reimagined to reduce maintenance and beautify our exterior, culminating in the refurbished **Agape Garden** at the center of our facility, which is now an inviting space for reflection, conversation, and small group meetings.

We cannot begin to name here everything else we accomplished this year (please read the rest of the report!), but for all these and the countless ways so many of you have shared the love of God through word and deed, we want to say, “THANK YOU!” We are so very grateful for this amazing community of pilgrims and disciples with whom to journey through this exciting and challenging time as a church!

Forward in Faith

The primary questions that emerged for our leadership in 2022 have been, “*Who are we now?*” and “*How can we be faithful to God’s call to be church together with the people and resources we have now?*”

In response to the emerging impact of the pandemic, and in addition to much prayer and discernment, the Session launched the Reach Out & Reconnect (FPCY R&R) campaign in the fall to find some answers to these questions. With over 30 callers making over 260 contacts (by phone, email, and text), we were able to connect again with many people we had not seen in quite some time and to hear how they are doing. We also collected some valuable information in response to the following questions: How have you survived the pandemic? How are you connecting with our church and what obstacles have you encountered? How can we better communicate with and engage people in our life and ministry? The data was not the primary purpose of the calls nor was the same data gathered in a consistent way. The primary purpose was CONNECTION. Still, we were able to see some patterns in the data that can aid us in understanding who we are now, the resources we have, and the ministry that is emerging for us. The Session, Deacons, and various commissions will continue to reflect on this data as we discern our way forward.

There is no doubt that the pandemic has had an effect on us, just like it has with churches all around the country, and FPCY is facing some challenges. Some people are not returning. Significant organizers of ministry have moved away or died. Our donor base has lost some big givers. It seems harder to find volunteers to do just about everything from usher, sing in the choir, teach Sunday School, clean up our property, or help with mission activities like the Pantry. This corresponds with larger societal trends of declining church attendance and involvement, as well as a drop in volunteerism in many organizations. Throughout 2022, church consultants cautioned that churches should expect 20-30% of their membership not to return after the pandemic. There are many reasons for this, but the two primary issues facing our church today concern our *Identity* and *Capacity*.

Along with the Session, we are invited to enter a time of discernment about how we move forward into the future together, in light of who we are now and the resources we have for ministry. Before the pandemic, we made some plans and invested in visionary ministries which may need to be re-evaluated in our post-pandemic reality. In order to be faithful stewards of the blessings we have now (in terms of people and resources), how can we “right-size” our ministry and mission in such a way that it is fruitful and sustainable?

Reading this pastoral letter may raise our anxiety; it is easy to become paralyzed by fear and doubt. However, if we look to the scripture lessons at the beginning of this reflection, we are reminded of our core identity as beloved children of God, called to be salt and light and to work together in one body, each doing our part to be faithful even when the way forward is not as clear as we’d like it to be. Just as God has done throughout the ages, God is inviting us to enter into the unknown of the current situation and listen deeply for God speaking in the midst of it all. *God is faithful*, and we believe that God will lead us to embody God’s purposes in new and next ways, sharing the love of Christ and knowing the presence of God’s Spirit in our lives, our life together, and in this world God loves.

(Continued on page 6)

On a final note, it seems appropriate that Chip’s sabbatical continues this year for its third and final section of what was supposed to be a one-year, four-month time away. Just like our lives and ministry, his plans for rest and renewal were disrupted by the pandemic. Like the journey of the church, Chip’s sabbatical has had to adapt, not only to new plans and ways of resting, but also to the changing landscape of faith and ministry. To that end, in September Chip will be walking the West Highland Way in Scotland and spending a week on the Island of Iona. We are grateful to you for your commitment to his sabbatical. The time away has opened up new connections to the significance of the Incarnation and what it means to live life authentically.

In closing, we celebrate everything that 2022 was, both the joys and the challenges, and we remember that ministry is not a destination so much as it is a journey together seeking to be faithful to God’s call on our lives and for our church. We are excited to keep traveling with you all into 2023 and the future that God has in store for us – a future filled with hope!



Chip

Tami

FPC Yorktown Co-Pastor Responsibilities 2023

Commission/Task	Chip	Tami	Both
Budget & Finance	X		
Communications	X		
Congregational Life	X		
Deacons			X
Faith Formation		X	
Mission	X		
Nominating			X
Operations		X	
Personnel			X
Session			X
Stewardship			X
Worship			X
Presbytery			X
Public Ministries - 50/50			X
Worship Leadership			X
Preaching			X
Weddings & Funerals			X
Pastoral Care			X

REPORT OF THE SESSION

2022 Statistics

MEETINGS:

Session: 11 Regular, 4 Special, 1 Session/Deacons Combined (retreat), 2 E-mail Advisory
Congregational: 1 Annual, 1 Special

Active Members as of December 31, 2021: 418

Gains (27)

Profession of Faith	13
Reaffirmation of Faith	5
Letter of Transfer	9

Losses (114)

Deaths	5
Transfer	1
Roll Removal	108

Active Members as of December 31, 2022: 331

NEW MEMBERS

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Jenny Yoo-Swan
Emma Kathryn Behun*
Griffin Brown*
Kithara Ann Buccarelli*
Kylie Compoli*
Payton Donnelly*
Bryn Adeline Dennis Edelmann*
Jason Gardineer*
Samuel Low*
Joshua Placido*
Julia Micaela Placido*
Hailey Jordyn Romano*
Lily Wallace*

REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Paul B. Cantales
Barbara Ann (Gurrieri) Sterbenz
Richard Sterbenz
Elmer John Weaver
Sara Marie (Tantillo) Weaver

LETTER OF TRANSFER

Allen Arnwine
Amy Baisley
Sonia (Beckford) Braham
Sheri Lyn (Connor) Gausepohl
Mark Gausepohl
Michael Hagen
Margaret Louise Harrison
Megan (Swiderski) Whalen
Diane Yarris

**Confirmand*

BAPTISMS

02/27/2022	Owen Randel Branciforte
03/27/2022	Kyuri Aariah JJ Sheen
05/15/2022	Kithara Ann Buccarelli
06/12/2022	Alexander Wales Ekelund

DEATHS (*= active members)

01/09/2022	Lois Ostling	
01/18/2022	Jim Gerth*	2358
01/23/2022	Bill Whetsel*	2741
02/07/2022	Fred Koelsch*	2662
02/09/2022	Eddie Caruso	
04/27/2022	John Watkins*	2816
09/25/2022	Ken Sherman*	1095
11/14/2022	Marsha Henderson*	2560

REMOVAL FROM ROLLS

Sarah Anderson
Kim Angliss-Gage
Arthur Bahr
Debra Bahr
Kai Bernardini
Gabrielle Beyer
Carolyn Blaney
Adam Blaney
Michael Blaney
Jalen Buckhout
Josie Buckhout
Sarah Capichioni
Emma Capichioni
Todd Child
Rita Child
Veronica Clough
Richard Cordone
Alison Cordone
Alex Corpolongo
Justin Corpolongo
Sally Corpolongo
Jennifer Costello
Carol Cornish *
Mary Cowman
Michael Cruikshank
Megan Cruikshank
Blair Cullen
Sarah Cullen
Ann DeFeo
Mike Delano
Chelsea Delano
Chris Desiderio
Diane DeVaul
Jen Dixon
Bill Dixon
Laura Drysdale
Taylor Drysdale
Sammi Drysdale
Gary Eliasson

Lisa Eliasson
Lucas Eliasson
Mallory Eliasson
Laura Farrell
Noelle Fontaine-Legros
Douglas Freal
Kim Friscia
Amanda Friscia
Keith Froehlich
Brielle Furci
JJ Giglio
Austin Giglio
Allan Gilbert
Liz Gilbert
Larry Hetz
Denise Hetz
Larry Hetz
Kristin Hodgkinson
Carter Humphrey
Nick Jarosz
Kirk Larsen
Sharon Larsen
Dominique Legros
Marcel Legros
Catherine Leonard
Kevin Lodewick
Cheryl Lodewick
Eugene McGrath
Emily McGrath
Brian Monk
Ryan Mulcahy
Alison O'Connell
Kristin O'Connell
Sarah O'Hare
Ryan O'Hare
Tarah Oubina
Matthew Oubina
Maryann Oudheusden
Bill Pagel

Bevin Pagel
John Perrone
Denise Pinatello
Jason Pinatello
John Rainieri
Kathy Rainieri
Jackie Rainieri
Johnny Rainieri
Tim Rishel
Janna Ryan
Ben Santagata
Karla Santagata
Adam Santagata
Ryan Shores
Jessica Shulman
Jenna Shulman
Mike Stewart
Jim Switzer
Patricia Switzer
Michael Switzer
Megan Switzer
Lisa Tieche
Max Tieche
Rob Tomeny
Lisa Tomeny
Russ Uszak
Kathy Uszak
Natasha Uszak
Ruby Uszak
Jack Wanamaker
Kelly Weinmeister
Nancy Wulkan

* = *Transfer*

Respectfully submitted,
Christie Herman, Clerk of Session

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Members at Large: *Connie Knapp and Bryan Ekelund, co-chairs; Sue Caruso, Tim Chin, Debbie Hager, Bill Herman and Nance Thompson*

Officers of the Corporation:

President: Alice Chin
Vice-President: Jack Shaughnessy
Treasurer: Beth Gruber
Secretary: Christie Herman

Staff of the Session of FPCY

Clerk of Session: Christie Herman
Treasurers: Gordon Braudaway
Beth Gruber
Frank Hodgkinson
Financial Secretary: Lisa Flanagan
Auditors/Reviewers: Vinny Wallace (2023)
Megan Whelan (2024)
Kathy Winsted (2025)

Counters: Pam Darreff
Debbie Hager
Donna Gresh
Kathy Hodgkinson
Nancy Paskin
Linda Swift

Ruling Elders—Class of 2025

Jane Amato
Andy Cross
Margaret Harrison*
Bill Herman
Jean Post-Winget
Vinny Wallace

Youth Ruling Elders

TBD

Deacons – Class of 2023

Allen Arnwine*
Lynda Spring

Deacons – Class of 2024

Mary Vezzuto*

Deacons – Class of 2025

Tim Chin*
Nancy Paskin
Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado
Ann Timmons

Youth Deacons

TBD

**pending election*

Thank you to all the hardworking members of the Nominating Committee and to the people who stepped up to serve. We are very grateful for so many positive responses.

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Knapp and Bryan Ekelund, *co-chairs*

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

2018 - 2021 Capital Campaign -- Grounded in Gratitude Forward in Faith



The Capital Campaign Project Management Team (CPMT):
Katharine Frase, Chair; Donna Gresh, Matt Hager, Chip Low, Kevin McAuliffe, Randy Pratt, Tami Seidel, Vinny Wallace.

Our Capital Campaign's goals of enabling us to improve our efficiency, upgrade our facilities, design & implement new space options, and to enrich our capabilities to worship, serve, and grow in faith continued to be realized in 2022. The CPMT continues to oversee and coordinate projects associated with the Capital Campaign but that are directed by the appropriate commissions. We are grateful for the past service of Ellen Miles, and particularly Jim Gerth, whose insights and humor we miss every day.

It is amazing to reflect on how much has been accomplished through your generosity, sacrifice and faith.

Financial Data has been removed for the web-copy of the annual report.
Church Members can obtain a full printed copy of the Annual Report upon request.

Much of the indoor work has been done by our Caretaker, Kevin Barnes, as well as a stalwart team of volunteers (including Dick Seymour, Jerry Amato, Bud Coccodrilli, Vinny Wallace, and Matt Hager). We are so grateful for their talents and devotion!

Three years ago, we embarked on the "Grounded in Gratitude, Forward in Faith" journey to prepare our facilities and capabilities for the future. We established six ministry priorities for this work (Compelling Worship, Intentional Fellowship, Transformational Mission, Lifelong Faith Formation, Inspirational Stewardship under the theme of **Radical Hospitality**). While the financial portion of the Campaign technically ended in 2021, work continues to complete the full suite of intended projects. There are so many reasons to celebrate; we have done more than we originally planned thanks to the faith-filled generosity of the congregation. We were able to start work immediately thanks to First Fruits giving and have incurred no substantial debt thus far.

Radical Hospitality/Inspirational Stewardship: the foundation for all we do. Original goals: repaint the sanctuary exterior, replace the roof to enable solar panel installation, repave and light the parking lots, increase our energy efficiency for heating and cooling, and increase our accessibility in the sanctuary, the office and our entrances. Create a welcome center in the Gathering Space and increase the welcoming feel of the office. Most of these tasks were completed in 2019 – 2021.

New in 2022:

- Improved accessibility to the office and pastors' office
- Removed metal doors from hallways to improve sense of openness and welcome



Office Improvements

Compelling Worship:

Original goals: improve the technology (light, sound, cameras, projection) in the Sanctuary to improve the in-person experience (and once 2020 hit, to enhance our streaming services as well). Consolidate worship storage from many corners of the building into an area closer to the sanctuary, and create a clean, secure banner closet. Most work completed in 2021. New in 2022:

- Created a new banner closet and worship storage area from the coat closet
- Obtained new projector and screen

Lifelong Faith Formation:

Original goals: create a consistent Church School area on the west corridor, create a larger flexible meeting/education room, and enhance the space available for the Youth Groups. Most work completed in 2020-2021. New in 2022:

- Completed the renovation of Room 2 from pantry storage to an education space.



New Banner Closet

Intentional Fellowship / Transformational Mission:

Original goals: renovate the kitchen to improve food safety, accessibility, and capability to serve meals to the external community. Consolidate pantry storage and distribution into the former pre-school area, to enable other rooms to be used differently and to improve efficiency. Create a larger, consistent and convenient meeting space for community groups. Most work completed 2019-2021. New in 2022:

- Re-imagined, re-designed and initiated the renovation of the kitchen. Many thanks to the Commissions for thoughtful discernment on our requirements. The new kitchen will feel homey and comfortable while offering better accessibility for both children and wheelchair users. It will also provide commercial-level sanitation (*see nearly complete photos below*).

We still have exciting projects in front of us, primarily the completion of the kitchen and the renovation of the west hallway plumbing. We are so grateful for your prayers, suggestions and feedback, and faithful giving to support us. If you have not completed your pledge, or if this work has touched your heart, we do still need a bit of fundraising to see us through the rest of the work. With God's guidance and your dedication and support, we look forward to completing the journey, and living into the new capabilities before us. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Frase



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMISSION

Co-Chairs: Elaine Heyde, Jennifer Rowe-Behun, Bill Winsted **Members:** Alyssa Bauer, Debbie Bernardini, Chip Low, Sue and Fred Mintzer, Emily Monk, Nancy Paskin, Nathan Perry, Amy Wallace.

PURPOSE: We extend hospitality to our church members and visitors. We plan, participate in and help organize events and activities for our church families to socialize and meet new people.

2022 ONGOING MINISTRY AND HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS

Sunday Coffee Hour – following Sunday worship services, we shared fellowship time with the congregation and visitors. Coffee, tea, and refreshments were provided by commission volunteers, who setup and cleanup. We continued to meet also for coffee hour via zoom each Sunday after the live streamed church service. We saw an increased interest and participation in in-person events toward late Summer and Fall of 2022.

We are grateful to everyone who supported our commission by hosting coffee hours and participating in events. We had nicely attended lunch bunches with various themes: St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Potlucks, and a successful BBQ themed Annual Church Picnic. We also celebrated New Members and Confirmation Sunday with cake and refreshments.

Amy Wallace and Nathan Perry organized a wonderful list for the Pilgrim Walks during 2022. We went to the Peekskill River Front, Harriman State Park, Walkway over the Hudson, Cold Spring, Hyde Park, Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, and Mianus River Gorge Preservation.

KITCHEN RENOVATION

We continued working with the Capital Project Management Team to research and design a new and efficient kitchen, which will enable FPCY to broaden our hospitality to the church community. We are excited to see the completion of this beautiful space.

SPECIAL THANKS

We wish to give Bill Winsted a huge thanks for his involvement in all the events over the years handled by Congregational Life. His time as an elder on Session has come to completion, but we are grateful for his continued participation as a commission member.

We also give thanks for Pat and John Prauda and for their faithful stewardship of our kitchen and organization of so many Congregational Life activities, such as Lunch Bunch and the Annual Picnic. We miss them dearly and wish them well in their new home in Indiana!

Thanks to our entire congregation for your support of these events! We look forward to 2023 and all the wonderful activities and fellowship opportunities we are planning. Please consider joining the commission!

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Heyde and Jennifer Rowe-Behun



Pat & John Prauda Farewell



Lisa, Steph & Sue—St. Patrick's Lunch Bunch

COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Members: *Bryan Ekelund (co-chair), Donna Gresh (co-chair), John Bentley, Kithara Buccarelli, JoAnne Marsh, Barbara Santagata, Linda Swift, and Rev. Chip Low*

Purpose: The Communications Commission manages the internal and external communications of our church. This includes the website, Facebook, Instagram, digital newspapers, banners at the corner of Routes 202 and 132, online event calendars, press releases, advertising, brochures, the TV monitor in the Gathering Space, and community fairs. We tell the story of the church's activities -- from both in-person and online worship, to Sunday School, to mission projects, to the annual Stewardship Campaign, to congregational get-togethers, and to many other church events and church mission work.

Highlights of 2022 include:

Website

Our website is likely the number one place that new people go to in order to find out information about FPCY. We strive to make information easy to find both for visitors and the current congregation.

In addition to the weekly church bulletin, and the Disciple newsletter, one of the best ways to stay up to date on what is happening in our church is to visit our website www.fpcyorktown.org.

There are two ways on our website that Congregation members and the surrounding community can learn about what's going on in our church:

- 1) At the top of the website home page, under the "News & Events" heading, click "Latest News." Any events, announcements, worship services, etc., will be listed here, newest to oldest. In 2022, we posted 270 articles on our news feed, each of which is also distributed to our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown). Each of our posts is illustrated with colorful graphics created by our dedicated artists Kithara Buccarelli, JoAnne Marsh, and Barbara Santagata. ***If you want to receive events and announcements as they are posted (about 5 per week) directly in your email***, go to our website (FPCYorktown.org), under "News & Events", click on "What's New", then click on any entry. To the right of that entry, there is a message that says "Subscribe to FPCY Connections Email"; simply enter your email.
- 2) For current activities, scroll down past the video of our church activities and there is a moving sliding graphic that displays the most current events. You can click on a graphic and it will take you to the details of that event. You can learn about upcoming special worship services, social events, the food pantry item of the month, and other relevant information.

Thanks to Donna Gresh, who keeps our website up-to-date with all the current events, blogs, and graphics!

Commission Cards

We collected information about each Commission, as well as the Deacons, so that we could create cards describing our work to offer to visitors in the Welcome Center. Joanne Marsh designed the cards, and they are now available in the Gathering Space. You can also find this information on the website under "I'm New->Meet Our Staff" and then finding the link to "Commissions." ***This "staff" page is also where you can find links to Session members, Deacons, and Commission chairs.***

Facebook and YouTube Worship Services

Internet streaming continues to be an invaluable tool, as our late (or summer) service, as well as our special services, are shared on [facebook.com/fpcyorktown/live_videos](https://www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown/live_videos), as well as on our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/@FPCYorktown/streams. With the addition of a new camera system, we show video from different angles within the Sanctuary allowing us to show the bell choir, the organ, the choir, and the piano, which enhances the online

(Continued on page 14)

worship service even more. Each week we have between 15 and 25 “screens” watching us live, with an unknown number viewing the services at later times. Each week's entire worship service is available soon thereafter on our website under the menu “I’m New->Worship Services.”

Many continued thanks go to our “virtual greeters” who make sure comments left on each Sunday’s livestream are met with a welcome, hello, or thumbs up.

A big thanks to the Tech Team for running the livestream each Sunday morning. The Tech Team consists of John Bentley, Andy Cross, Bryan Ekelund, Karen Gerth, Bill Herman, Nathan Perry, and Linda Swift. And a special thanks to Karen Gerth, who has been organizing the Tech Team and being our cheerleader on Sunday mornings.

Each Sunday, three people are needed to livestream the worship service. The Tech Team needs more members, so if you are interested, please contact someone from the Communications Commission or Worship.

Social Media

Another way we relay our church’s story, events, and activities is with Facebook and Instagram.

Our Facebook page www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown shares our blog posts, as well as “candid” photos of events and activities.

If you regularly use Facebook, please "Like" our Facebook page, and then, under "Follow Settings" (...), choose to "Follow" the page to have our activities appear regularly in your Facebook feed.

Final Thanks

Many thanks to JoAnne Marsh and Barbara Santagata, and new member Kithara Buccarelli for designing and creating so many amazing graphics! These graphics are used on our website, on social media, on banners, and in the events we publish in the digital newspapers.

Additional thanks go to Donna Gresh and Barbara Santagata for managing our Facebook and Instagram pages; to John Bentley, Bryan Ekelund, Donna Gresh, and Linda Swift for posting the services to our website each week; and to Linda and Donna for promoting church events in community outlets. We would also like to thank Chip Low for keeping us informed about upcoming events; Lisa Flanagan for designing the Disciple and Bulletin with great artistic creativity; Tim Chin for documenting so many church activities with his photos; and Walter Oudheusden for making and putting up banners and signs.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Ekelund and Donna Gresh

REPORT OF THE DEACONS

The Deacons are charged with developing and overseeing ministries which care for our congregation. Our goal is to lead the congregation to be involved in caring for one another. To that end, we have enlisted congregation members for several of our ministries: Loaves and Fishes, the Prayer Team, the Mental Health & Wellness Team and the Visitation Team. We welcome all congregational participation and encourage each member to experience the joy of caring for one another, as well as the joy of working with some truly caring people.

In 2022, the Deacons continued with the traditional ministries listed below, as well as some new ministries either in the works or actively meeting, such as the *Bereavement Support Group.

BEREAVEMENT: Deacons help with receptions after a funeral or memorial service. We work with the family by setting out any food and cold drinks that they provide from a caterer, make coffee and tea, and serve food and drinks when needed. There were 4 this year. This team is headed by Judy Chessa and Sue Nelson.

⇒ *Bereavement Support Group*: This year we are very pleased to be able to expand our services to those in our Congregation who have suffered a loss. Last year was a time when a number of prominent losses came to our attention and our support was sorely needed. Outside therapy for bereavement can be hard to find or is not nearby. Judy Chessa, who has led counseling groups for White Plains Hospital for a number of years, expressed interest in leading. After initial research and consultation with professionals who have set up church-based, non-therapy groups, we got the go-ahead to start once Judy retired. She and Dolores Vidal-Roy, a social worker, have led a Bereavement Support group on Monday mornings each week since late October. It was so well received that the group shifted to weekly meetings instead of every other week as initially announced. We wish to heartily thank Judy for offering to run this group and we also thank Dolores for her involvement as a co-Leader. We have had requests for an evening group as well, so we are looking into the feasibility of offering a second group.

CARDS: Nancy Paskin has built up this ministry to encourage more of those who are homebound or afraid to venture out due to COVID. For all of 2022, 395 cards were sent to the congregation for various occasions including: get well, welcome, thank you, etc. Number by the month: Jan: 18, Feb: 55, Mar: 16, Apr: 46, May: 33, Jun: 18, Jul: 41, Aug: 22, Sep: 29, Oct: 19, Nov: 46, Dec: 52. This is an effort that is much appreciated by recipients. Thank you Nancy for all the love and work you pour into this ministry. Also this year, guidelines were written and submitted by Nancy for how the Card Ministry works.

COMMUNICATIONS: This largely involved communication from Deacons to the congregation through write ups for the Disciple and the bulletin, as well as with the Communication Commission for web site info and other items that need publicity. Judy Chessa has performed this function for us this year.

ELDER CARE: The Deacons are also working on a nascent Elder Care ministry to aid those in the congregation who are trying to find resources for themselves or a family member who may require additional support as they age. As of now the focus is on providing a local resource guide for our Pastors and members to use in case a need arises. We also have a few books in the library for general information about how to organize support and about other services, such as Elder Care law, etc. Jean Post Winget and Nance Thompson helped Heidi Haring to get a good start on the resource guide.

KNITTING MINISTRIES:

- ⇒ The *Knit Togethers* gave 53 hand-made items to several local groups. These included Birthright in Peekskill (baby blankets and hats), the Youth Group at FPCY for the Breakfast Midnight Run to NYC (scarves), and Paramount Somers (lap blankets). The team includes Nancy Betz, Terri Froelich, Gail Frost, Diane Hawk, Priscilla Lucas, Sue Nelson, Nancy Paskin, Regina Poltrak, Pat Prauda, Maxine Travis and Noreen Radke, Chair. Two members moved in April, so currently we have 9 members.
- ⇒ The *Prayer Shawl Ministry*, led by Marianna Sherman, has recently continued their prayer shawl knitting. There was a hiatus while Marianna was busy caring for Ken. Prayer Shawls are given to new babies, new Deacons and Elders and to those who are sick, etc. They are a great comfort and a gift of love! A few were given out this year. We will continue to meet, knit, pray and see where the new year takes us. Listed below are our knitters: Marianna Sherman, Terri Froelich, Sue Nelson, and Gail Frost are our onsite knitters. Aloha Hicks and Odette Watthews are our offsite contributors.

LOAVES & FISHES: Homemade meals are delivered by a volunteer to a family who has a need either because of a new baby, illness, death in the family or hospitalization of a spouse or a family member. We divide the year into quarters and a different Deacon coordinates for 3 months which involves notifying volunteers and coordinating the delivery of meals. Notifications of a need usually come to us by a Pastor or through the office. This year there were at least 3 requests for meals. Our 4 Deacon coordinators were: Christine Lazarus, Sue Nelson, Judy Chessa and Terri Froelich. A special thanks to Christine Lazarus who also stepped in when other Deacons were unable to make calls, etc.

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We invite congregation members to volunteer to be on our call list. This is a ministry that can be done once or several times a year by a volunteer, depending on one's time. It is also possible to volunteer to make only an entree or to deliver, instead of making a full meal, if one's time is limited. It is a very satisfying act of caring and helps build relationships.

PRAYER MINISTRY: We continue to get many requests via the church prayer team e-mail address (prayer@fpcyorktown.org), through the pastors and through our various groups. Sometimes we even get requests from non-members who are thankful that we have prayer support available. It has been a privilege to witness a growing comfort with prayer and a recognition of the need for prayer for each other. A prayer ribbon is hung for each request, and ribbons are left in the breeze behind the church until the requests are "gone" with the wind, etc. This past year 80+ ribbons were hung. At this point, prayer is done individually by each team member. We have a growing team of 18 members.

CENTERING PRAYER: Through the Worship Team, there is also a weekly offering of silent prayer: focusing on breath and it's power to connect us to our God. This occurs each Wednesday night at 7:00 led by Abby Cross. This has been a steady group for at least a year now. It complements the Deacons' focus on prayer for our congregation and offers alternative ways to pray together. Thanks to Abby! PS: There is also a Labyrinth in the back of our church for walking prayer.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS MINISTRY was initiated in 2020 as a joint initiative by the Mission Commission and Deacons to explore the mental health needs of the church and to develop approaches to strengthen the mental health outreach, first to our church, and later to neighboring communities.

Mainly we have worked on reducing the stigma of mental health issues through education, some training, books and pamphlets, prayers for mental health and some topics that are addressed in worship services. This year Mental Health Sunday focused on the epidemic of suicide and how many are affected in each church, many more than you would think. One goal is to make it easier for people to talk about mental health issues, and to encourage reaching out rather than isolation--a known suicide preventer. To this end, Chip encouraged the congregation to create a list of 3 trusted friends/church contacts who agree to be supports if one is ever feeling depressed or despair. It is easier to reach out when suffering, if contacts are in place. This needs to be reiterated often so it becomes a congregation-wide habit, since we all deal with sadness and even despair at times.

We hosted several workshops, some open to other churches: Soul Shop workshop, in April, and ASSIST, suicide prevention training in September; for creating safe environments for people struggling with mental health issues. Our Mental Health & Wellness Team members also received Companionship Training in June, through the grant from the Presbytery to work with Pathways to Promise. We have been working on the feasibility of implementing a Companionship Ministry with trained members in the coming year. The crux of the training is compassion, listening, inclusion and encouragement for anyone who is struggling with mental health issues, or for a family member. The goal is for church to be a safe welcoming place for all, and especially for those who may be on the fringes or feeling isolated because of mental health problems or even life hardships. **WE DON'T DO THERAPY** and all personal connections are in a public space (ie. church, a park).



Another aspect of Mental Health Ministry is to encourage good mental health care for ourselves and each other. As part of our emphasis on mental wellness, we also offered a night of Prayer, Sharing and Mental Wellness in October. It was a beautiful evening of practicing seeking God through quiet sitting and focus on breath and it's calming capacity. We also sat in candle light and lit a new candle with each request shared. No response, we just sat with the person in silent prayer and in compassion. The feedback was that it was much appreciated and needed. In the end we witnessed a miracle: the atmosphere changed from profound sadness and suffering to laughter and

even some joy; relief was given and burdens eased by sharing. We also worked together to create a poem, and there is always a nice bonding that happens in creative projects. We hope to offer more of these wellness and sharing events in the future.

I have seen more prayer requests for those suffering from mental health issues, so I hope this indicates more comfort with sharing and reaching out for support—which would indicate some success of our efforts. This is a major aspect of our Mental Health ministry and for any caring ministry; encouraging safe spaces for sharing, support/inclusion and prayer.

TRANSPORTATION: occasional rides to church or to Doctor or other appointments are provided by calling John Winget, 914 329-9978. He also has an extensive list of ride services to help those who cannot easily get into a car or need wheelchairs. He has given 5 rides this year.

VISITATION: The Visitation Team continues to be a vital ministry of the Deacons. We have had many phone contacts during the past few years of Covid, especially checking in with those who live alone or who are in facilities. There have been more in-person visits this past year, as Covid restrictions ease in most places. The overall number of calls and visits: over 80.

THANK YOU, FAREWELL AND WELCOME

I want to extend a most enthusiastic word of thanks to all of the members of the Board of Deacons for your flexibility, compassion and faithful service in the face of what has been a challenging 2022 with frequent Covid, other hardships and a reduced pool of volunteers. Yet vital ministries kept going and a new one was started! Thanks to all!

I also want to say a special thank you and farewell to our outgoing class of 2023. We want to heartily thank Christine Lazarus who did an excellent job as our Secretary, Diane Hawlk for her support and liaison to the knitting groups and for her help with the prayer ministry, when needed. We wish to thank Terri Froelich for her work while she was Deacon. And last but not least, I wish to thank my Co-Moderator Dana for being a great co-worker and support. I wish you all a nice rest and heartfelt thanks for all your contributions.

We are thrilled to welcome a number of new Deacons who will help finish off some un-filled terms and some who are coming on for a 3 year term. Please welcome Allen Arnwine, Tim Chin, Nancy Paskin, Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado, Linda Spring, Ann Timmons, and Mary Vezzuto. We pray that you are inspired, energized and blest as you help to lead our congregation in service for one another.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi K. Haring and Dana Mordue; Co—Moderators

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MISSION COMMISSION

Members: *Eric Kreuter and Marisa Swift, co-chairs; Debbie Bernardini, Dawna Dennis, Katharine Frase, Donna Gresh, Steph Hare, Heidi Haring, Jeff Kephart, Chip Low, Liam McAuliffe, Kaycee Perry, Tami Seidel, Lynda Spring, Nance Thompson.*

Focus for 2022

We used four guiding questions to focus our work on the Mission Commission in 2022:

- ⇒ What activities can we continue to do well?
- ⇒ Should we take on new projects?
- ⇒ What aren't we doing well?
- ⇒ How is God speaking to each of us in connection to our work on Mission?

This year we focused on the projects we are passionate about related to food insecurity and opened up some new projects like the Mission Trip.

Activities for 2022

One Pantry 2022

We continued to operate in a pre-packed, masked, socially distanced, drive-by distribution model for 2022, as the challenges of managing high client volume, uncertain supply chains and public health concerns continued. We hope to return to indoor full-choice operations sometime in 2023. Our clients appreciate our personal touches: choice of unusual items at the front desk; stocks of specialty items for those needing vegan or gluten-free, etc, choices; birthday greetings; and our wearing of nametags so that they can call us by name. It has been heartwarming to have gestures of friendship and support from our clients (including assistance with school supplies, sharing personal stories, and even bringing us goodies from time to time). We are immensely grateful for the core team of volunteers who have packed bags on Fridays, and particularly those who have stood outside in all sorts of weather for the pantry throughout 2022 (and in many cases since 2020!). We have resumed welcoming new volunteers and are grateful for the enthusiastic response from our congregation.

Feeding Westchester continues to be our lifeline for food supply, augmented by shopping at Acme, BJ's and Restaurant Depot for missing items. Feeding Westchester has continued to make the majority of bulk foods free of charge throughout the year, including the off-week free pallet of fresh produce. We continue to have unbelievable support from the congregation, the community at large, and local businesses, houses of worship, schools and civic groups in terms of both financial and food drive contributions. A partial list includes Wilkens' Farm, Meadows Farm, the Garden of Hope, the Yorktown Federation of Teachers, the monthly food drives of the Knights of Columbus at St Patrick's, Yorktown for Justice, Uncle Guiseppa's, the Elks Club, local politicians, many school and sporting groups, and local families who created their own food drives or charity sales initiatives on our behalf. The ongoing support of our "Item of the Month" has enabled us to offer canned fruit, canned protein, pasta, cake mix and breakfast cereal to our clients (not to mention Turkeys!) when our other sources ran dry. We are also grateful to Sue Nelson for taking on the diaper purchasing this year, and to the Fang family (Louise, Marina and Janice) and the Bentley family for making the deliveries to our elderly neighbors at Beaver Ridge.

We had expected 2022 to show a gradual decline in need, as we had seen in 2021. However, the uptick in inflation has had the reverse effect. Across all the segments of our client base, we have seen an increase in need throughout the year; by December our client volume was comparable to the height of the pandemic in the summer of 2020. For the full year, we served 18,485 individuals from 4,589 families with 145,000 pounds of food; for comparison, the 2021 volume was 16,000 individual, 3,900 families and 125,000 pounds of food.

Thanks to all the generosity and Feeding Westchester's support, we continued to operate very efficiently, and are in good financial standing for 2023. We also distributed nearly 1000 bundles of diapers, eldercare supplies for nearly 1200 people and 250 school supplies. We continue to co-lead the Yorktown Food Security Task Force sponsored by the Town Board of Yorktown and look forward to contributing to FPCY's Hunger Action Congregation effort. 2023 will bring its own challenges, and we will continue to rely on the congregation's support in prayer, financial support, food donations, and volunteer efforts. We are so very grateful to be able to help our hungry neighbors with your support. Thank you all.

Liam McAuliffe and Debbie Bernardini, FPCY Pantry Co-Leaders

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Garden of Hope

This was a gratifying year to work in the garden, in terms of amount of produce raised. An average harvest produced close to 300 lbs of food. The general quality was superb (a judge from the Yorktown Grange Fair saw some of our produce and said it was very high quality. Take a look at Mission Bulletin Board to get an idea of how beautiful some of the veggies were). Our pantry clients commented about how they appreciated the great produce and the variety. Both our Pantry leadership and St Mary's commented often on the quantity and quality of this year's donations.



We had a small crew from our church last spring to help us get the garden up as well as winterizing it at season end - appreciation to Jeff Kephart, Steph Hare and Miranda McGill. Over the summer we had regular help from Alan Arnwine, Pam Darreff, Oliver and Kacee Perry and Nance Thompson. Other garden volunteers have also helped us, just as we have helped them—a nice community collaboration. Dawna Dennis, our coordinator, oversaw the bulk of the actual soil amendments and planting this year, as well as a huge part of the packaging of veggies for our clients. Heidi Haring also co- coordinated with Thursdays' harvest help, deliveries and Pantry packaging help with Dawna.

Submitted by Dawna Dennis and Heidi K. Haring

Hunger Action Congregation, Sub-committee – Chair – Jeff Kephart

The Hunger Action Congregation team is responsible for overseeing the Jan Peek House and Noontime Meal programs and identifying opportunities for Food Justice advocacy. On the fourth Saturday of each month, 3 families work together to prepare dinner for approximately 40 clients at Jan Peek House. On the second Wednesday of each month, we provide lunch to as many as 60 clients at the Salvation Army headquarters in Peekskill via the Noontime Meal program. We are grateful to the many Jan Peek House and Noontime Meal volunteers who helped us in 2022 with these important missions that help us understand and serve our neighbors.

Jan Peek House

January: Donna Gresh, Christine Lazarus and Wendy & Peter Eagleton & family

February: Barbara Wanamaker and Judy Vlad & family

March: Jennifer Rowe-Behun, Amy and Vinny Wallace, and Deborah Szanto-Phillips

April: Nance Thompson, Pam Darreff and Judy Chessa

May: Diane Hawlk, Courtney Donnelly and Kaycee Perry

June: Gloria Coccodrilli, Beth Coccodrilli & family, and Jennifer Rowe-Behun

July: Liza Placido and Liana & Guy Grieco

August: Barbara Wanamaker and Judy Vlad & family

September: Nance Thompson, Sue Caruso, Carolyn Braverman

October: Donna Gresh, Robin Corpolongo and Elaine Heyde

November: Abby Cross (with her son's Taekwondo class)

December: Nance Thompson (coordinating catering by Cole's Market) and about a dozen families who baked Christmas cookies.



Noontime Meal

March: Donna Gresh

April: Donna Gresh

May: Pam Darreff

June: Diane Hawlk

July: Heidi Haring

August: Heidi Haring

September: Pam Darreff

October: Sheri Gausepohl

November: Charles and Ruth Barton

December: Charles and Ruth Barton



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In 2023, we intend to use our new kitchen to prepare Jan Peek dinners and Noontime Meal lunches. Let's socialize for social good! We really need Jan Peek and Noontime Meal volunteers for 2023. If you're interested, please contact Jeff Kephart at jeffkephart@gmail.com or (for Jan Peek) use the signup at <https://tinyurl.com/FPCY-janpeek>.

Midnight Run/Breakfast Run

2022 marked the post-pandemic return of FPCY to participating with the Midnight Run organization, an outreach ministry providing food, clothing, toiletries, and human connection to people experiencing street homelessness in New York City. Our congregation conducted two Breakfast Runs, one with our Confirmation Class on April 2 during which we served approximately 75 clients, and an intergenerational Run on November 12 during which we served approximately 45 clients. Along with our own volunteers from FPCY, we were grateful to be able to share the experience in November with volunteers from our larger community, including a staff member from Fox Lane High School. Students from Fox Lane supported the Run by collecting socks and providing donuts and muffins as a part of our breakfast offerings. Many, many thanks to all who played a role in the Breakfast Runs, whether in donations of funding, supplies, food, or in time.



Submitted by Stephanie L. Hare

Breakfast Run

Mental Health Initiative

Team Members: *Sue Caruso – Co-Chair, Eric Kreuter – Co-Chair, Jen Burns, Michelle Forlano, Sandy Fryrear, Heidi Haring, Jeff Kephart, Tamsin Levine, Dana Mordue, Cecilia Ortiz, Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado, Tami Seidel, Marina Wheeler.*

We have eight trained Wellness Companions. New badges have been ordered. Planning for regular communication through Disciple, Church bulletin, and website. Considering additional training on mental health. Eric is two-thirds through new Christian Coaching certification program offered by the American Association for Christian Counseling. Two evenings of Healing and Sharing took place, more planned for 2023. Eric presented collaborative poem at the Longest Night Worship Service. Planning for 2023 topical seminars: Addiction, Anxiety, Depression, Loneliness, and Relaxation/meditation. See page 15 for more information about our Mental Health Initiative.

Former Manse

Eric met Rabbi Heber of the Chabbad and formed a collegial relationship. The property is in litigation due to actions taken by the owners. Rabbi Heber agreed to keep Eric informed; they have no current plans for the use of the house should they receive title.

St. Christopher's Inn

Eric continued in the capacity of chemical dependency counselor and facilitator of creative writing. Population of clients is increasing. Work is intense, but very spiritual and purposeful. The community is mindful of our church, its prayers, and its support

Mission Trip

We are excited for the return of a mission trip in 2023 after a break during the pandemic! We will be going on an intergenerational domestic mission trip to New Bern, North Carolina to work with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance on houses affected by Hurricane Florence.

Respectfully submitted,
Marisa Swift, Co-Chair

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WORSHIP DESIGN COMMISSION

Members in 2022:

Jane Amato, Debbie Amorese, Garrett Artman (Director of Music Ministry), Abby Cross (Co-chair), Karen Gerth, Bill Herman, Christie Herman, Rev. Chip Low (Co-pastor), Sara Mann, Nathan Perry (Co-chair), Barbara Santagata, Rev. Tami Seidel (Co-pastor), Ann Timmons.

About the Commission:

The Worship Design Commission oversees the needs of our faith community as it gathers for worship in the Sanctuary, at home, or even out of doors. The Commission serves as a resource and support to the pastors in developing themes for worship and to design and implement meaningful, thoughtful and experiential worship. This includes, but is not limited to: reviewing the content and structure of worship, planning and implementing worship themes, designing special services, overseeing the Usher Ministry and lay leaders, making arrangements for the serving of the Lord's Supper, and planning for appropriate decoration of the Sanctuary (such as banners, candles, flowers, themed décor, and greens). Additionally, the Worship Design Commission oversees the musical life of our congregation, including service music, the Adult Choir, the Adult and Youth Bell Choirs, and the Concert Series. The Tech Team also falls under the purview of Worship Design and provides for both live-streaming of services as well as the audio-visual aids to in-person worship (such as microphones, lighting, projections, etc.). The Tech team provides live streaming for all Sunday worship and most special services, enabling our members and guests to remain connected to the church regardless of our ability to gather face-to-face.

2022 highlights:

In a post-pandemic-minded world, the phrase “new normal” was often on our lips in 2022 as we considered the ways in which we worship together: what to reclaim (from “before”), what to redefine, and what to accept as-is?

- We returned to serving non-prepackaged communion (juice offered in Dixie cups rather than intinction).
- Singing out of the hymnals, rather than printing every hymn in the bulletin, was re-introduced.
- Nearly every service was live-streamed both on Facebook and Youtube, and memorial services/funerals have a streaming option now as well. The tech team offered a training session for interested prospective team members.
- Building lay leadership is one of FPCY's four strategic focuses. We strengthened our lay leadership by offering a lay liturgist training session, to prepare for lay liturgist opportunities during Chip's Sabbatical Part Two, plus the pastors' summer travel. We intend to continue to “flex our lay leadership muscles” on a regular basis, even when the pastors are both present. Ann Timmons has graciously agreed to be our Lay Liturgist Coordinator. We also enjoyed lay preaching from Connie Knapp, Katharine Frase, Liam McAuliffe, and Abby Cross.
- A great joy this year was the return of the Concert Series in March, when the Gettysburg College Choir gave a fantastic and energetic performance to a packed sanctuary.
- Garrett ran a series of intergenerational drum circles in the late spring – no experience required!
- The Christmas pageant once again featured the children performing their own pre-recorded dialogue, since this creative Covid-era solution from Bill Herman taught us that we could hear the children much better this way! Another highlight from the pageant was the impressive Youth Orchestra that performed during the prelude, featuring an array of young instrumentalists under the baton of Garrett Artman.
- A final highlight of the year was the Advent candle-lighting by new members and their families (new as of the last few years).

Four Strategic Focuses from the CAT Scan:

1. Strategic investment in the next generation of the church
2. Building lay leadership capacity
3. Strengthening relational infrastructure
4. Investment in spiritual formation & mental health ministry

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Worship themes:

- ⇒ **Lent:** Walking with Jesus (as friend, as teacher, as savior, as Lord, as way, as presence)
- ⇒ **Stewardship:** the pulse of generosity (community, sacrifice, abundance, life!)
- ⇒ **Advent:** Now in flesh appearing

Special Services:

- Epiphany: Individualized “Star Words” to focus on through the year
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday
- Earth Day Worship
- Celebrate the Gifts of Women
- Mental Health Awareness (Ascension Sunday)
- Pentecost and Music Ministry Sunday/recognize the graduates
- Children’s Sunday
- Celebrate the Gifts of Men
- Pride Sunday
- Stewardship Celebration
- Blessing of the Backpacks
- World Communion Sunday
- Blessing of the Animals
- Mental Health Sunday
- Peace and Justice Sunday
- Longest Night Service on the Winter Solstice
- Christmas Eve Services (Children's Service, Lessons & Carols)

In Gratitude: We remember **Marsha Henderson**, who was a faithful member of the Worship Design commission for many years, and we will miss her supportive presence.

Karen Gerth continues to be a steadfast leader and contributor to all aspects of our work, in particular the usher team coordination, organizing communion, wrangling banners, and serving on the tech team. She is also a joy to work with!

Speaking of the **Tech Team**, we are grateful for the whole crew and their tireless commitment to working out the seemingly never-ending unexpected curveballs the technology throws our way!

Much, much gratitude goes to the **Usher Team** for being the first smiling faces our attendees see upon arrival, and managing the offering and sanctuary tidy-up after the services, among other often invisible tasks!

We also very much appreciate those who helped at the annual Sanctuary Greening, and a huge thanks to **Matt Hager** for coordinating the greening, as well as to the **Wilkens/Pratt** families for their generous gifts of trees, wreaths, garlands, and other sanctuary decor.

Thank you so much to our **lay liturgists** and **lay preachers** for truly stepping up in 2022, and to **Ann Timmons** for serving as our lay liturgist coordinator. Thanks also goes to **Jane Amato** who coordinated the Advent candle-lighting.

To all who contribute musically to our church life: we are so grateful for you and the time you give in rehearsal and service. **Garrett Artman’s** creativity, spirit, and wisdom seem to know no bounds. A well-deserved shout-out goes to **Erik and Carol Jensen** for their tremendous help with the handbell rehearsals – and to our choir music librarian, **Christie Herman**, for her tireless work behind the scenes.

Huge thanks to the parents who supported the Christmas Pageant by bringing their children to rehearsals during an especially busy December season, and by bringing snacks, helping with costumes, and striking the set after rehearsals and the service. Pageant families this year were the **Bentleys, Heydes, Angiones, Edelmans, Crosses, Reides, McGill-Dials, and Whalens**. **Bill Herman** and **Garrett Artman** always pour an abundance of their talents and energy into the pageant—thank you so much.

Special thanks as always goes to **Lisa Flanagan** for her administrative support, and to **John Harrigan** and **Kevin Barnes**, for all their work to keep the Sanctuary in order!

Respectfully submitted,
Nathan Perry and Abby Cross (Co-chairs)

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MUSIC MINISTRIES

With 2022 drifting further behind us and 2023 sliding in quickly, I wanted to take this moment and share with you my thoughts and prayers for the Music Ministry here at our church. As you read this report, I hope my gratitude, hope, and investment here is apparent. My years here have been some of the most powerful years of my life and I hope to continue to inspire those that are unsure to dare greatly. To cast shame aside and sing a new song of love, justice, and kindness. For what does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.

Before I begin, I would like to thank our co-pastors, who have shown me love, trust, and compassion in doing what I love to do and sharing it with all of you. To the staff here – Lisa for keeping me on track and in line, Steph for sharing our passion of youth ministries, John and Kevin for always making me laugh and sharing unexpected wisdom, and to the memory of Jim Gerth; there's not a corner in this building that doesn't remind me of him and the story of how he fixed it. To our choir leaders, Ann Timmons and Debbie Amorese, who (by the grace of God) can translate my directions in a rehearsal and type them up for the choir to reference. To our librarian, Christie-Virtue Herman, keeping not only the choir member binders up to date, but organize the flow of music from our lips to God's ears. To our spirituality coach, Abby Cross, for helping us find mindfulness and connection with each other and ourselves. To our go-to pianist, Cheryl Burns, for being so helpful and playing on the Sundays I can't be there. Lastly, to the man/myth/legend himself – Erik Jensen. Without Erik, the bell choir program here at the church suffers. He is the personification of consistency, reliability, and communication and I am extremely grateful for his presence here in this ministry and my life.

Our instruments are in decent shape for the foreseeable future. The Organ was repaired in 2020-2021, and there have been many piano repairs this past year. While I do not know the exact history of our Steinway, I can see that it has undergone an extensive rebuild at some point in the past decade or two, and with this most recent repair and a fresh tuning, it will be one of the finest instruments in Westchester County. Thanks to our technicians Jeff Waldo and Stanton Daugherty.

FPCY's ensembles have had another successful season, turning out some incredible music under biblically difficult circumstances. One of which to note is our youth orchestra, having a total of two rehearsals, beautifully played Christmas carols during this year's pageant. I am consistently amazed at the musicians in this church (despite them constantly trying to tell me they are not musicians). These groups are the backbone of our music ministry, and it wouldn't be an annual report without me reminding you that you are worthy, and you are wanted in these ensembles. Looking ahead at the health of our membership in these ensembles, I would like to identify and the two biggest obstacles in our way of true musical innovation.



FPCY Youth Orchestra

♫ **Disengagement.** Disengagement is a protective response. It occurs when the fear of pain overrides the desire to connect. You can only experience so much shame before you need to disengage. Disengagement corrodes our willingness to show up and connect meaningfully. There's musical scar tissue here, folks. I work and live in it every day. The only way to counteract disengagement is with a strong reengagement. Do projects in your house get finished with you saying, "that's too bad, it didn't used to be like that"? No, they get fixed when you take the time to identify, grab a wrench, and learn some plumbing.

♫ **Risk Avoidance.** Creativity, learning, and FAITH are, by nature, unpredictable and uncertain experiences. They can only occur as a result of taking risks and being vulnerable. You need to be able to experience failure to learn and grow.

“When the people we love or with whom we have a deep connection stop caring, stop paying attention, stop investing, and stop fighting for the relationship, trust begins to slip away and hurt starts seeping in. Disengagement triggers shame and our greatest fear of being abandoned, unworthy, and unloved. What can make this covert betrayal

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so much more dangerous than something like lying or fighting is that there is nowhere to point for the source of our pain. There is no event, no obvious evidence of brokenness.” Dr. Brené Brown (paraphrased)

I refuse to disengage or stop taking risks. Whether it is handing you a boomwhacker, dragging drums out in fellowship hall, making the choir go and sit with you while they sing Sunday’s anthem, or writing my muses in the Disciple article, I will be there for you, and I hope that you do not disengage with us about what the music ministry here means to you. It is so easy to show up and listen to music, but to be the music is so much more, and the rewards to the church and us are tenfold. I am one person. A note on a page. But together we are a symphony capable of truly meaningful experiences.

Looking ahead, a few areas I want to dive deeper into in 2023 are stronger investments in the musical education of this church with regular sessions on the principles of music literacy, history, and awareness. If there are topics that interest you such as: “What is the Messiah by Handel, anyway? Or “Why do I only see pipe organs in church?” Please let me know. Second, I would like to engage the youth of this church to stretch their creative and musical muscles with more opportunities to perform, share their thoughts, and live in the light of their musical gifts. Lastly, to use our space for more than Sunday Worship. This past year we were able to put together a “Return to Music” concert with the Gettysburg Choir and their chamber group, Camerata. This year we are kicking our season off with an exchange concert on Friday, April 21, 2023 featuring the Old Saybrook High School Chamber Singers, The Bangor Area Youth Choir, and our own FPCY Choir. The goal of this concert, and our ministry - is to encourage people, young and old, that music is a lifelong investment in ourselves and our community.



Gettysburg Choir Concert

Respectfully Submitted,
Garrett Artman, Director of Music Ministry

FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION

Overview:

The Faith Formation Commission is responsible for the development and implementation of educational programs that address the needs and interests of our entire church family. From the youngest child to the oldest senior, our mission is to guide all on their spiritual journey and have some fun in the process! The following sub-committees fall under this commission: Sunday School, Faith4Life (adult education), Youth, Confirmation, Church Library, CrossGen/Intergenerational Ministry, Childcare, Christmas Pageant, and Vacation Bible School

Sunday School:

Children and youth from pre-school through 12th grade are welcome! Our classes meet Sundays at 9:15am for an hour during the regular school year. In the 2021-2022 school year, our classes were hybrid which gave families the opportunity to join online if they chose to do so. During the summer of 2022, as we planned for the Fall, it was decided that all classes would return to in-person, as the online students were not experiencing the same level of interaction and education as those sitting in the classrooms together. It has been wonderful returning back to "normal" and connecting in a meaningful way again, in person, with our youth. We have 43 students registered for Sunday School, from pre-K through 12th grade this school year.



(Continued on page 25)

The "Shine" curriculum is used for our preschoolers through 4th graders, who also enjoy music time in their class with our Music Director, Garrett Artman, and Abby Cross. Our 5th and 6th graders use the "Connect" curriculum and our 7th and 8th graders (FaithX) are currently using the "Echo The Story" curriculum, which is a study of the Bible from Creation to Revelation. A major change that was implemented for the 2022-2023 school year is that our youth no longer go straight into Confirmation class after 8th grade. It was decided in the Summer of 2022, that after 8th grade, we would give our young members the opportunity to discern for themselves if they would like to continue on in the High School class. All our High School students are welcome to join the new High School Class, named Fathom by its students (see Youth Ministries, page 27 for more information), irrespective of whether or not they choose to be, or have been, confirmed.

We would like to thank all the teachers for their help in keeping our classes running smoothly, and especially our Superintendents, Miranda McGill and Wanda Diaz for their dedication to the students and teachers. A thank you to Garrett and Abby for their musical time with the youngest children during class, and our Co-pastor, Tami Seidel for her guidance and help as we make decisions. Most of all, thank you to our youth who are inquisitive and insightful, and keep us laughing and learning along with them!



Faith4Life:

In the past year, the Faith4Life group has been blessed to meet again in person for many of our study groups. We have included the option of participating through Zoom for those who are unable to attend in person. We were able to offer groups on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and Wednesday evenings, as well as Sunday mornings before church and Sunday evenings. Participation has been good, with lively and interesting discussions.

On Wednesday evenings we began to offer a time for Centering Prayer which has been led by Abby Cross. Abby guides us through these one-half-hour sessions to help us put aside the distractions of our lives, sit quietly together and realize God's presence among us.

One of our main themes this year has been incarnation. We have had lively discussions studying *The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For, and Believe* by Richard Rohr. This was led by Tami and Chip on Sunday evenings.

On Sunday mornings, Connie guided us through different aspects of how we know Jesus by studying Diana Butler Bass' book *Freeing Jesus: Remembering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence*. The Women's Circle looked at the women in Mathew's genealogy of Jesus by studying *What My Grandmothers Taught Me* led by Tami.

The Thursday morning group viewed and discussed a video series *The God Who Knows Your Name* by May Lucado. The series explores Jesus' humanity and divinity. The Tuesday morning group focused on *Faith After Doubt* by Brian McLaren. The Men's Breakfast group continued to meet for fellowship on the third Saturday of each month.

In the Fall, the Sunday morning group studied a video series called *Here and Now Matters: Moral Action in the Real World* by the Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann. Through this, we saw how the Gospel can be real for us in our present-day lives and actions.

To continue our self-examination of the Church's role in history and society, the Tuesday morning group studied *White Too Long* to see how Christianity has been used to justify racism in America. On the lighter side, the Women's Circle enjoyed the Presbyterian Women/Horizons bible study, *Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight*.

(Continued on page 26)

The Wednesday evening Disciple group has begun a new 32-week study, *Under the Tree of Life*. The group will be reading and discussing the Old Testament Writings (Psalms and wisdom literature), the Gospel of John and Revelation. Tami and Chip will both lead.

In celebration of Advent this year, Connie led the Sunday morning and Thursday morning groups in discussions to see if the Christmas stories in the Gospels are really what we have always thought them to be. The Sunday evening group read *Sacred Earth Sacred Soul* by John Philip Newell to discover the spiritual connection between ourselves and the earth and the means for healing both.

We are very grateful to Tami, Chip, and Connie for their leadership and insights. We also want to thank our occasional leader, Nance Thompson and all those who participate in our studies. It has been wonderful learning with you! – *Lynn Edling*

Church Library:

Enhance your spiritual journey through reading! The church library has continued to be maintained by Carol Jensen. If you missed a Bible study or a Faith4Life class, stop by to sign out a copy of the book used during the sessions. Many thanks to Carol for keeping our library up-to-date and answering questions as needed!

CrossGen/Intergenerational Ministry:

Debbie Hager, Stephanie Hare, Marissa Swift, Nance Thompson and the Holy Spirit planned 4 different Cross Gen programs in 2022. Cross Gen Wednesday is an evening program of fellowship, music, games, scripture and dinner for all ages. This past year we have had attendees from 6 months old to 92 years young come together to make new friends and share in a meal. Stay tuned for future events starting on March 8th of 2023. – *Nance Thompson*



CrossGen Wednesday

Childcare:

Our church offers dependable childcare during Sunday morning services and special events. Available to infants through kindergarten, parents can rest assured that their children are in good hands while they attend service. We typically employ 3 people for coverage (background checks conducted on all) however, we currently have 2 and are seeking a 3rd person. Many thanks to Michele Mosca, our Child Care Coordinator, for her continuous work in this area as well as the childcare workers!

Christmas Pageant:

The birth of Christ was brought to life by the Children and Youth of FPCY! Along with our young people, our talented Pageant Planning and Tech Team were instrumental in this successful event on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. The pageant included Prelude Music performed by James Cross, Clara Cross, Julia Whalen and the FPCY Youth Orchestra. The cast members were Caroline and Julia Angione, Grace Bentley, Clara and James Cross, Ansley and Paige Edelmans, Alex, Brianna and Meagan Heyde, Sasha McGill-Dial, Addison Reide and Ben Whalen. We thank them all for volunteering and doing an awesome job! Special thanks to our planners and tech team: Tami Seidel, Bill Herman, Abby Cross, and Garrett Artman (Music Director). Additional thanks to all of the helpers, parents and grandparents as well as the Pratt family for their gift of live greens that decorated our sanctuary.

Vacation Bible School:

VBS has been on hold since 2020. This program brings together the children and youth of our church, The United Methodist Church, and St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. Our commission is in discussion about planning for 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole DeCintio

(Continued on page 27)

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth Group

2022 was a year of building back and re-grouping for our youth group activities after being interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Our Middle and High School youth enjoyed meals together, played together, and served together, traditionally on the 2nd and 4th Sunday evenings of the month. In the midst of adjusting to virus variants, especially through the first half of the year, we still managed to have fun while celebrating the earth at our Earth Day movie night; loving our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness with the preparations for and the execution of a successful Breakfast Run to New York City; and to make a very joyful noise when we finally got to bring Christmas Carols once again to our senior neighbors after a multi-year hiatus.

High School Sunday School – Fathom

As mentioned above in the Sunday School report, in fall of 2022 we initiated our new High School Sunday School class which meets on Sunday mornings during the education hour along side our classes for younger students and our adult Faith4Life class. The class is open to any and all 9th -12th graders and has been well attended since its inception. The class is facilitated by Steph Hare, Jessica Mayes, and Kaycee Perry.



The students adopted the name Fathom for the class, a word which means to understand a difficult topic after much thought, or a unit of measure for a deep body of water such as an ocean. It is an appropriate name for this class which takes on discussions of deep and difficult questions. So far this year we have wrestled with questions such as: how do we reconcile our knowledge of science and our faith, how did the Bible come to be, how do we understand the Incarnation of God in Jesus, what does Salvation mean, and what is the Holy Spirit?

Confirmation

In May of 2022, twelve students completed confirmation preparation and were received into membership at FPCY. The class was a combined group of 9th and 10th graders that was held after having taken a year off from holding a confirmation class due to the pandemic. Our class was led by our Gordon Braudaway, Pam Darreff, and Steph Hare, along with help from Co-Pastors Tami and Chip. We again followed the curriculum from the PC(USA) called *Big God Big Questions* which is built around studying the four questions that are asked during both our services of youth confirmation and in our reception of new adult members into the Church.



2022 Confirmation Class

In preparing for the 2022-23 program year, Tami, Chip, and Steph spent a significant amount of time reviewing our confirmation traditions at FPCY in light of scholarly research into the faith development of youth. As a result, we have made some modifications to the confirmation process for the current year that we will report on in the near future that we believe will serve the faith journeys of our young people well.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie L. Hare, Director of Youth and Intergenerational Ministries

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Members: Jane Amato, Gloria Coccodrilli, Pam Darreff, Connie Knapp, Rev. Chip Low, Jessica Mayes, Nancy Paskin, Rev. Tami Seidel, Lynda Spring.

Stewardship Campaign:

Financial Data has been removed for the web-copy of the annual report. Church Members can obtain a full printed copy of the Annual Report upon request.

Special Offerings:

One Great Hour of Sharing:

100% PCUSA

Easter Offering:

100% FPCY – CHHOP & Garden of Hope

Pentecost:

60% to Presbytery + 40% FPCY – Youth Mental Health Ministry

Peace & Global Witness:

75% PC(USA) + 25% FPCY - The Gun Violence Prevention Program

Thanksgiving Offering:

100% FPCY – Christmas Extras for Pantry Clients

Christmas Joy Offering:

100% PCUSA

Gratitude Practice: One important way that the Stewardship Commission expresses our gratitude is by writing thank-you notes to contributors who have participated in our ministry and mission together. This year, we sent 130 notes! Even with all those notes, we recognize that we have not been able to recognize everyone's contributions, for which we are very thankful!

Membership and New Members: In 2022, we resumed hybrid New Members classes in the spring and fall, and welcomed 27 new members to the congregation! Jane Amato led coordination of these classes with the co-pastors. One new practice that has worked well is inviting the new member prospects to attend a Faith4Life class as part of the New Members process. After a pandemic pause, the Stewardship Commission also resumed one of our annual duties, reviewing the membership rolls of FPCY. After doing so, we recommended to the Session (which approved) removing 108 members from our rolls due to moving away or joining new churches. 5 of our members passed away in 2022. We also welcomed 27 new members (including the Confirmation Class) in 2022. As of December 31, 2022, FPCY has 331 members.

Outreach: College students and active military personnel receive care packages during the year. Pam Darreff coordinates this project, working hard to update accurate addresses and timely mailings. This outreach keeps the connection with our young adults and service members who are away from home.

Green Faith/Earth Care: Connie Knapp reports the Green Team's activities to Stewardship, and is actively involved in the Presbytery's partnership, HRP Green. During this past year, the Green Team has been in a state of transition following Nancy Caswell's move. The team has worked to ensure that our Green Faith and Earth Care certifications will remain in place. Next steps require discernment as to what the team's priorities should be going forward. New members and ideas are welcome!

(Continued on page 29)

Earth Care Application Renewal - Review of 2022 - First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown

Accomplishments

During this third year of the COVID pandemic, we continued with as many outside activities as possible. This included:

- * An outdoor Earth Day service
- * Continued participation in The Garden of Hope, an interfaith partnership growing food for neighborhood food pantries, including our own
- * A series of hikes, coordinated by our church and posted on Facebook as *Pilgrims of the Hudson Valley*
 - * We began the walks in May 2021
 - * We hosted a walk once a month from January 2022 until November 2022

We are part of a Presbytery Partnership, HRP Green, that focuses on earth care and environmental justice. A member of our team sits on the planning group.

- * HRP Green received a grant to develop a program of anti-racism education focusing on environmental justice.
- * We worked with HRP Green to produce a video, Gardens of the Hudson Valley Presbytery https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t04g5iqdJU0&ab_channel=JeffreyGeary

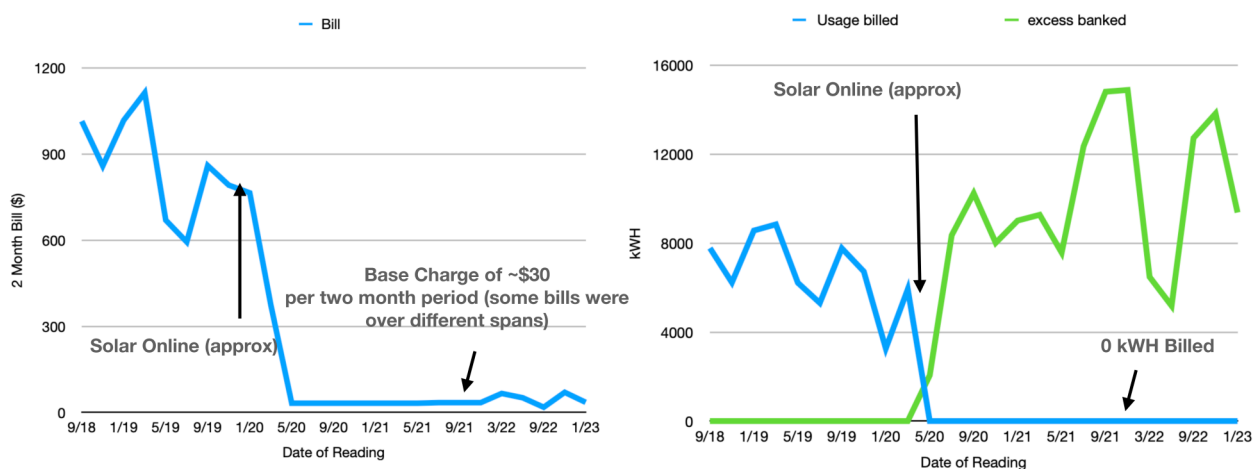
Future Plans

We are looking for ways to revitalize our team as the pandemic winds down. Plans for 2023 include:

- * Becoming involved in the Wild Church movement
- * Continuing the Pilgrims of the Hudson Valley hiking series
- * Hosting an Earth Day Service in our outdoor worship space
- * Continuing our participation in the Garden of Hope

Report on Solar Energy Production: Beginning in 2020 we started “banking” the excess electricity that we generate. As of January 2023 this year, we had excess (banked) generation of about 10,000 kWh. The sanctuary circuit shows small amounts of net electricity usage, so the savings for the sanctuary circuit aren’t as great. In the coming months the Operations team intends to increase use of our heat pumps, and decrease use of oil furnaces as recommended by our heating consultants. Electricity use should increase and oil use should decrease. Our banked credits will be applied to our increased electricity usage. The graph below shows the impact of our solar panels for our main electricity circuit (the CE building).
~Donna Gresh and Dick Seymour

**Solar Panel Performance Through Early January 2023
(Solar went Online late 2019)**



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Planned Giving: In 2013, the Session approved the establishment of an endowment fund for FPCY to support planned giving. The Stewardship Commission has information on how members may consider long-term giving, or please visit the Planned Giving page on the website at <https://fpcyorktown.org/giving/planned-estate-giving/>.

Veterans Recognition: Another area historically led by the Stewardship Commission is Veterans' recognition, which also has been in transition as we have looked for someone to carry on the work that Tim Lupfer so ably handled for many years. This year, the Stewardship Commission prepared Disciple articles to emphasize the importance of Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

It has been a year of reconnection and renewal, and as ever, the Stewardship Commission is amazed by the generosity of this congregation! Thanks to all for your gifts and prayers in 2022.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Knapp, Jessica Mayes, Co-Chairs

OPERATIONS COMMISSION

***Members:** Tami Seidel, Dick Seymour, Bud Coccodrilli, Vinny Wallace, Deanna Collins, Walter Oudhuesden, Judy Chessa, Matt Hager. Co-chairs: Ian Spence and Katharine Frase*

Purpose: The Operations Commission is responsible for maintaining and improving our premises and by doing so to support FPCY's ministries.

2022 Highlights:

2022 was a challenge financially for Operations, as many of our contracted services increased in price as inflation hit our suppliers. The dramatic increase in the cost of oil forced some projects to be deferred in order to try to maintain our overall budget goals.

Under the leadership of Dick Seymour and Bud Coccodrilli, Operations updated the church Operational Manual, created a list of Periodic Tasks to assist both the church staff and the commission to keep track of the indoor and outdoor tasks to be completed each week, month, quarter and year. Creating the Periodic Task List also assisted in the articulation of job responsibilities for the new Facilities Caretaker position.

Under the leadership of Dick Seymour, Operations signed equipment maintenance contracts to ensure that the sump pumps, modernized boilers and cooling equipment installed in 2021 will be kept in optimal operating condition.

Several projects connected with temperature management were completed this year. Carey and Walsh spent substantial time fine tuning our new boilers and installing programmable thermostats to help us better control temperature and oil usage. Dick and Jerry installed louvered doors on the office closets to provide better circulation to the new networking equipment. Dick and Jerry have refurbished many of the wall mounted heaters around the building and are engaged in an effort to balance the heating load across the Sunday school rooms. We continue to explore methods to get better financial advantage from our excess solar energy credits.

Operations supported the Campaign Project Management Team by engaging Jim's Paving to create the new "landing pad" for deliveries at the exterior door of Room 5.

Dick and Jerry built and fitted out the new and expanded Banner Closet between the Crib Room and the old cloak room, which has been converted to Worship Storage.

A new water meter was required by the town and installed.

The main hallway ramp was repaired by Dick and Jerry in combination with Absolute Flooring.

It was a delight to be able to hold real Spring and Fall Work Days again after a two year hiatus, and we are grateful for everyone who turned out to help us on those days, as well as those who help us with small tasks all year long.

One of the largest projects for the year was the refurbishment of the gardens around the church, particularly the re-imagining of the Agape Garden in the courtyard. Many thanks to Judy Chessa, Karen Gerth, Connie Knapp, Katharine Frase, Jerry Amato, Bud Coccodrilli, the Gardeners of Eden, and particularly Dick Seymour for bringing these visions to life.

Finally, it has become clear that we need to have a more comprehensive strategy for maintaining our graveyards, including filling low spots, attending to broken tombstones, and updating our record keeping systems. Dick and Jerry have begun the first of these tasks with help from Mike Androsko's team. A word of appreciation to Androsko's, who not only do our mowing and other maintenance tasks on the exterior of the property, but have donated many hours and equipment in support of FPCY, and to Mike Androsko in particular for his donation of a tree in honor of Jim Gerth.

We are also grateful for the work of Sav-a-Tree in maintaining our trees to be both healthy and safe.

As is clear from these highlights, we are so very grateful for the dedication of our Commission members, particularly Dick Seymour and Bud Coccodrilli, and a special thank you to Jerry Amato, who while not a member of the commission has been dedicated and essential to so many of the projects this year. Many thanks also to Ian Spence for his leadership of this Commission for the past 3 years.

Respectfully submitted,
Ian Spence and Katharine Frase, Co-Chairs



Office Hallway ramp Repair



The Agape Garden

PERSONNEL COMMISSION

“We call people to varied forms of service and covenant to support them so they may devote their best gifts and energies to the work of God’s kingdom.”

—“A Theology of Benefits”, from *Living by the Gospel* by
The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Nov. 2022

Members in 2022: *Alice Chin (Co-chair), Beth Gruber, Rev. Chip Low (Co-pastor), Fred Mintzer, Nathan Perry (Co-chair), Jean Post-Winget, Rev. Tami Seidel (Co-pastor), Nance Thompson*

About the Commission:

Our Church is many things to many people, and for the extraordinary staff who serve with us in our mission before God, it is first and foremost a workplace. The primary responsibility of the Personnel Commission is to care for those who work for us—those with whom we trade treasure for talents—so that they may bring to bear those treasured talents through the work of the Church of Jesus Christ.

We undertake this duty through a discernment process that balances wisdom and empathy, guiding us toward prudent recommendations and compassionate actions that support the needs of our staff, the wholeness of our Congregation, and the requirements of law that govern us as a place of employment. If we are the Human Resources department of FPCY, then our mission is twofold: resourcefulness, and humanity.

Depending on the nature of our work, we seek counsel from or collaborate with both internal and external sources. We work closely with the Budget and Finance Commission to oversee staffing expenditures and to determine the annual Cost of Living Adjustment; we follow guidance from the Presbytery on matters of policy, training resources, etc.; and we communicate with other Commissions of the church whose work is supported by the staff members under our care. As we are called by God and commissioned by the Church to fulfill this purpose, we will continue to exercise due diligence in support of our church staff as they devote their gifts and energies to the work of our church.

Our Year in Review:

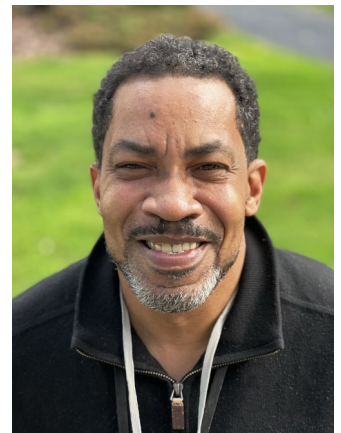
The people are at the heart of any Church, and our year began by filling a hole in our heart. On January 18th we received news of the passing of **our beloved Caretaker, Jim Gerth**. While taking a moment to celebrate his life and commemorate his work for our Church, we then set about the task of seeking to fill the void left on our staff (if not the one in our hearts). A committee was set up to review and revise the job description, and to recruit and interview candidates for the position. In May, the Personnel Commission selected **Kevin Barnes** for the role of **Facilities Caretaker**, and on approval of Session, we welcomed Kevin to our staff on June 21st.

We began the year with other vacancies as well. With **Streaming Media Manager Ben Low** having concluded his tenure at the end of the prior year, we spent the early months of 2022 in a period of discernment: we considered the scope and duties of the position, how to attract qualified and interested candidates, and ultimately, whether some human resources have a value that transcends that of a single job description. We therefore refocused our efforts away from retaining this paid staff position. To this date, a team of lay leaders from within the church carries on the work of reaching our online Congregation, always striving to meet the high standard set for us by **Ben Low**.

Throughout the year, we also considered ongoing vacancies in the roles of **Childcare Provider** and **Bookkeeper**. We continued to balance our ability to absorb some of this work through our lay leadership with the need to retain and recruit paid staff where necessary.



Jim Gerth



Kevin Barnes

In addition to filling vacancies, our Commission continued its work drafting and revising policies and procedures to be compiled into an **Employee Reference Handbook** for our staff. A team composed of Beth Gruber, Fred Mintzer and Nance Thompson reviewed and updated our **Sexual Misconduct Policy**, and the Commission explored resources for the annual **Sexual Harassment Prevention Training** required by New York State. Other topics we addressed were **COVID protocols** (including the NYS HERO Act and our mandatory vaccination policy), annual revisions to **employment agreements**, quarterly **staff check-ins** and **annual evaluations**.

Of particular importance was an extensive assessment and reconstitution of the available **health benefits packages** we offer to our employees, as well as staff holidays and other kinds of **paid time off** (vacation, sick leave, personal days, etc.). Our work on this topic stemmed from our analysis of the employment agreements for Facilities Caretaker and Director of Youth & Intergenerational Ministries, as well as our consideration of how these benefits might guide our choices in the annual COLA review process.

With Gratitude:

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to our Commission members, members of Session, and our close partners on the Budget and Finance Commission. All that has been accomplished this year would not have been possible without their dedication, commitment, and support.

In particular, we would like to give thanks to the Caretaker Exploratory/Search Committee—from Personnel, **Fred Mintzer** and **Nance Thompson**; from Operations, **Bud Coccodrilli** and **Katharine Frase**. We are grateful to **Jean Post-Winget** for her tireless, compassionate efforts in developing the role of the Director of Youth & Intergenerational Ministries. And we are endlessly indebted to FPCY Treasurer **Beth Gruber** who provides figures, analysis and invaluable insight into the many factors that affect our staff expenditures; and to our Office Manager **Lisa Flanagan** for the innumerable ways her administrative support provides for the smooth operation of our Church and the well-being of its staff.

We cannot express in mere words our appreciation for our Co-pastors, **Tami Seidel** and **Chip Low**. Besides their involvement in all the issues mentioned above (and more), they also serve in the role of Head of Staff, overseeing the daily operations of the Church and its employees, conducting staff meetings, resolving workplace issues, and generally offering more guidance, compassion, wisdom and knowledge than one would expect possible in a single person—or even two.

Finally, we give gracious thanks for the very reason for our Commission’s existence, our paid staff. We are blessed by the presence of each person on this list and the support they provide to our Church and its Congregation. They are the true human resources of FPCY, and they are to be treasured.

FPCY Staff of 2022

Director of Music Ministry:

Facilities Caretaker:

Childcare Providers:

Office Manager:

Director of Youth & Intergenerational Ministries:

Custodian:

Co-pastors:

Caretaker:

Garrett Artman

Kevin Barnes

Marissa DiSisto and **Kaitlyn Kretzschmar**

Lisa Flanagan

Stephanie Hare

John Harrigan

Chip Low and **Tami Seidel**

Jim Gerth, *in loving memory*

For the Future:

The most monumental and abiding concern for our Commission, as for any employer, is the rising cost of living and—as a direct result—the rising cost of labor. At the same time, our Congregation has made choices over the years that affect the scope of our mission, and in some cases the role of paid staff in supporting that work. The staff expenditures of FPCY at any given time may reflect the wishes and decisions of a Congregation going back as many as five years or more. With respect to this, it is impossible to overstate the unforeseen effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on how our Church runs on a daily basis and how our various missions are affected.

This theme was at the forefront of our minds during the latter part of 2022. In June, the Personnel Commission presented a special report to Session on the mounting importance of this topic, and a special Session Retreat was held in July for further discernment.

The same subject arose again when it came time to consider the Cost of Living Adjustment for 2023, after an increase by the Social Security Administration of 8.7% for its own COLA, a rate unprecedented since the Carter administration. We began the year 2022 with a COLA increase of 3.4% for all pastors and staff (except Childcare Providers), or 2% below the SSA rate for that year, and we closed it out by recommending a COLA increase of only 4% as the most financially prudent option.

We are a vibrant, generous Congregation, and our Church is blessed with many gifts. We can offset the income gap for our employees with relatively generous benefits for paid time off, and we have extended additional choices for electable health benefits. However, the Personnel Commission would be remiss in our duty of humane resourcefulness not to report on the growing disparity between the cost of living for the people of our church, and the costs we expend to fulfill our goals and our mission, even as the latter continues to rise. At the same time, our theology dictates not that we impoverish ourselves, but neither that we hoard our resources rather than employing them to work for us. So, we invite this Congregation to consider that, while the Session can provide leadership and guidance through the work of Personnel and its other Commissions, it is the duty and the power solely of the Congregation to decide how to grow, spend and manage its treasure, and on the range and depths of the human talents it hopes to receive in trade, as it sets to carry out the work of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Chin and Nathan Perry, Co-Chairs

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