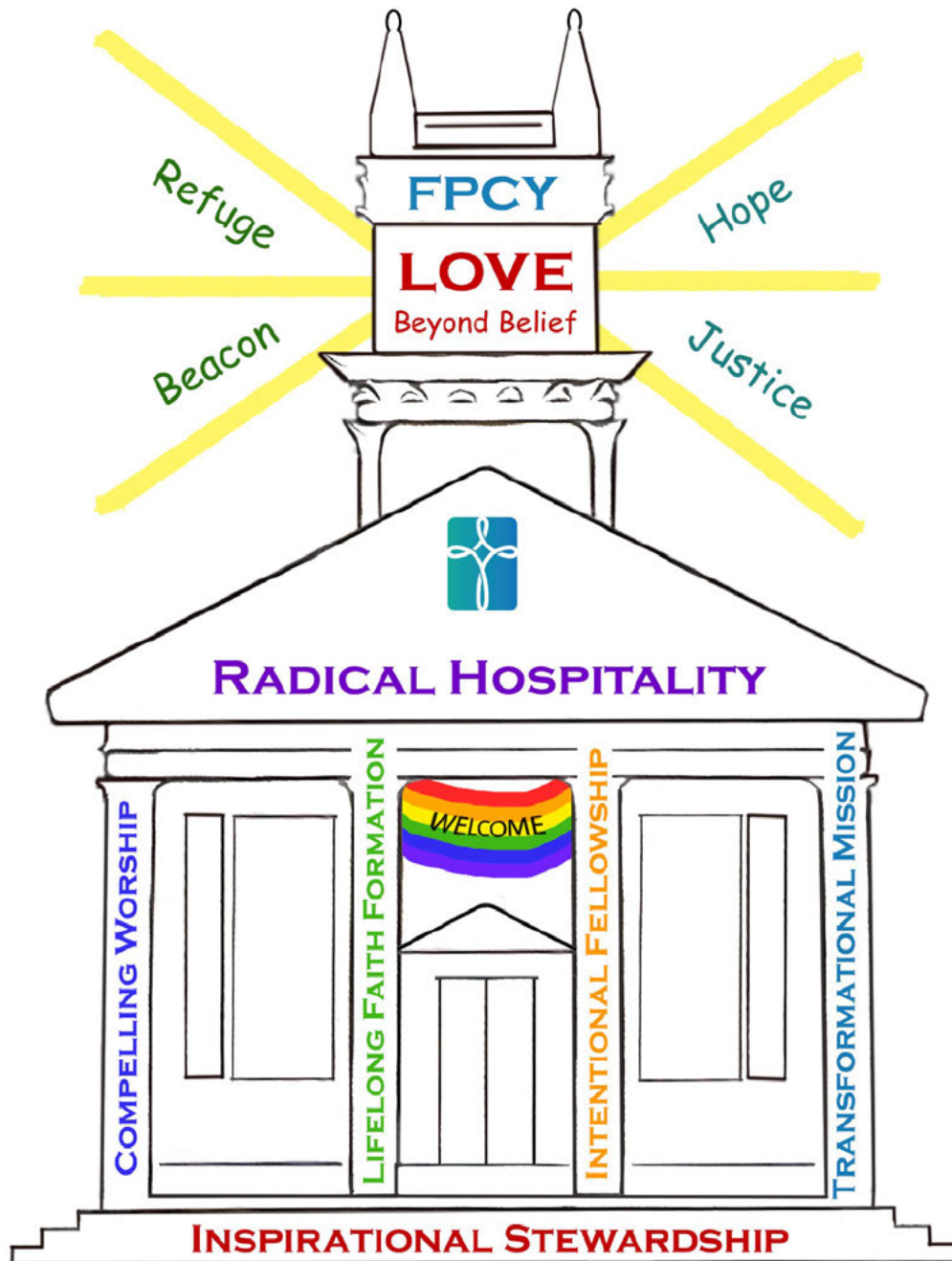




# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF YORKTOWN



2024 ANNUAL REPORT  
February 23, 2025

# LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

2024

## 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 up to six Elders is elected each year, serving for three years in a rotating membership arrangement. In addition, two Youth Elders may be elected each year for one-year terms.

### Class of 2024

Alice Chin (Personnel)  
Katharine Frase (Operations)  
Elaine Heyde  
(Congregational Connection)  
Connie Knapp (Mission, Nominating)  
Jennifer Rowe-Behun  
(Communications)  
Jack Shaughnessy (Budget, Finance,  
& Stewardship)  
Marisa Swift (Mission)

### Class of 2025

Jane Amato (Congregational  
Connection)  
Andy Cross (Faith Formation)  
Margaret Harrison  
(Congregational Connection)  
Bill Herman (Worship & Music)  
Jean Post-Winget (Faith Formation)  
Vinny Wallace (Operations)

Youth Elder: Kithara Buccarelli (January 2024—August 2025)

### Class of 2026

Sheri Gausepohl (Worship & Music)  
Beth Gruber  
(Budget, Finance, & Stewardship)  
Jeff Kephart (Mission)  
Dana Mordue  
(Communications, Personnel)

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## Board of Deacons

Co-Moderators: Allen Arnwine, John Winget

Secretary: Nancy Paskin

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 may be elected each year for one-year terms.

### Class of 2024

Judy Chessa  
Sue Nelson  
John Winget  
Mary Vezzuto

### Class of 2025

Tim Chin  
Nancy Paskin  
Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado  
Ann Timmons

### Class of 2026

Allen Arnwine  
Debra Farrell  
Diane Yarris

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# REPORT OF THE CO-PASTORS

*Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.*

*Esther 4:14*

We always read the annual report of our church through the lens of gratitude first, and this year is no different. We begin with gratitude.

This report reflects the commitment of so many to dream, build, sustain, lead, serve, give, pray, sing, and love the ministry and community we share together. It also contains the results of much discernment, discussion, disagreement, practice, evaluation, and clarification that often does not or rarely gets reported. Our annual Giving Covenant asks us all to “Pray, Engage, and Give” to the ministry of our church, and so many of you have done just that. The result of so much time and effort is the community we are and the impact we are having on the lives of people in our church and well beyond it. For all the ways, you the reader join us in this ministry, thank you.

Our reason for being a church is connecting with God, one another and the world in the present and the future with the gift of ministry that has been passed on to us from many before us. How we continue to build those connections and embody the good news of Jesus Christ is our work to do together. We will not be perfect at it, but we can strive to be faithful with all of the gifts God has equipped us to use for healing and wholeness, community and belonging, refuge and justice, love and grace. We are so very grateful to serve with you as we move forward into 2025.

At the 2025 Leadership Retreat, we focused on the verse at the top of this page from the Old Testament book of Esther. Previous to this verse, we learn that the Jewish people, Esther’s people, are being targeted with violence and threatened with extinction. Somehow, through a strange twist of fate and the whims of power, this young Jewish girl has risen to the position of queen over the Persian empire. Although she feels completely unqualified, Esther finds herself in a position that gives her access to power and opportunity to save her people. However, if she uses her position and opportunity to influence the king, it could cost her her life. Esther must decide how she will respond. She could turn a blind eye to her people’s plight. She could admit that her people were in danger, but let things play out and see what happens. She could risk her life and approach the king for help. The key in all of this is that Esther must decide what she will do. She must make a decision and live with it.

That’s why the first word of the verse, “perhaps,” is so important. We don’t always know what the right path will be. But, “perhaps”, as her Uncle Mordecai begins his thought, everything has led to this moment so that you can respond and help your people. After a time of communal prayer and discernment, Esther goes on to devise a plan to save her people. She sees her circumstances as being in the right place at the right time to do for her people what no one else is able to do.

Like Esther, we can’t always know everything ahead of time. Like Esther, we too have a choice about how we can engage in the issues of our community and world in various ways. Will we turn a blind eye to the needs and suffering of the world around us? Will we focus on being spiritual, separating our faith from life, and letting the chips fall where they may? Or will we listen deeply to God’s call to deliver his people from bondage to the whims of power and privilege? Will we enter into people’s experience and wonder what the gospel means for the real issues people face each day, discerning how we will use the fullness of our life together to share hope and healing for people and all creation? Like Esther, the choice is also ours.

During our capital campaign (2019-2022), the question that guided our planning and improvements became clear. How do we prepare ourselves for ministry for the next 10 years? Not how do we prepare for ministry in 10 years? How do we prepare ourselves for ministry for the next 10 years? Esther and Mordecai are inviting us to answer that that same question:

- not with perfection but with faithfulness,
- not with one final way of doing church but with ever-evolving answers that connect with God, one another,

*(Continued on page 5)*



and the world,

- not with “of course we should be on the corner of 132 and 202” but with how can our unique location be a gift to our community in new and next ways,
- not with how we will keep people happy but how we will advocate for the left out and left behind of this country and world,
- not with technical solutions that impose our answers on the needs of others but with adaptive solutions that invite us to grow and change as we engage the world and participate in God’s mission of wholeness and life abundant.

We must decide as Esther did, “How we will be a church for one another and the world God loves in this time and this place, for just such a time as this?” Our belief is that this report includes a multitude of ways we have sought to do that. For all the ways, we pray, engage, and give, we again say, Thank you!

As you read this Annual Report, we hope you will also notice how our pastoral work among you is evolving as well. In January 2025, Tami started her Doctor of Ministry program in Leadership for Wonder: Re-Enchanting the Christian Life at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Texas. She hopes the church will support her time and effort with prayers, finances, and partnership as she does work that is intended to be both academic and

(Continued on page 6)

### FPC Yorktown Co-Pastor Responsibilities 2025

Responsibilites		Chip	Tami	Both
Book of Order Pastoral Relationships	Preach, Administer Sacraments (Baptism, Lord's Supper) + Weddings, Funerals			X
	Presbytery and Service to the Larger Church			X
	Extend Pastoral Care for acute crisis when needed			X
	Advocate and model power of prayer			X
	Moderate Session Meetings to ensure the work and deep dive discussions are in alignment with the strategic goals, as well as promoting cross-commission collaboration			X
	Identify New Initiatives			X
	Administrative Innovation / Process Improvements			X
	Coach Session and/or Other Leadership to Advance Strategic Mindset	X		
	Commissions			
	Co-Pastors -- Advisory / Consultative / Contributor (not needing to attend meetings regularly)			
	Operations	X		
	Congregational Connection		X	
	Mission	X		
	Communications	X		
	Deacons			X
	Co-Pastors -- Engagement (more regular involvement/leadership necessary)			
	Faith Formation		X	
	Support / Nurture Men's Fellowship/Service Opportunities	X		
	Support Faith4Life Team in Offering Adult Faith Formation Opportunities; esp. with Women			X
	Support leadership of children and youth programming for Faith Formation		X	
Lead Faith4Life Studies, scripture-based explorations of faith in action			X	
Budget, Finance & Stewardship	X			
Worship & Music			X	
Personnel			X	
Nominating			X	

practical and to enrich our ministry together. To afford her the necessary time and space for this, our commission work and responsibilities are shifting, as you can see in the attached chart. Chip continues to serve the larger Presbyterian church in a variety of ways as a licensed, professional coach, and he is grateful for the encouragement to do so, as well as the opportunity to bring back learnings and support for FPCY. We are also grateful for the opportunities we have had to share experiences from Chip’s sabbatical with FPCY, first by leading a trip to walk the Camino Frances in August 2024 and next to explore Celtic Christianity in Scotland and spend a week on the Isle of Iona in April 2025.

FPC Yorktown is special to us because of its commitment to grow and learn and adapt and change. The landscape of church ministry continues to change in our community, country, and world. We cannot stop growing and learning and changing, if we want to continue the ministry God has given us to do together. We hope that you will hear Mordecai’s word, “Perhaps” as your invitation to reflect and pray, grow and change and invest in the ministry and mission of FPCY. We hope that you will celebrate with us all of the good in our life and ministry together. We hope you will help us struggle and discern our way forward as well, so that faith and faithfulness are real gifts for us and all we serve together. Thank you in advance for how you will help us be the church God invites us to be for one another and the world God loves in ever-evolving, new and next ways.

Chip and Tami

Chip Tami



REPORT OF THE SESSION

2024 Statistics

MEETINGS:

11 Regular Session Meetings, 2 Special Session Meetings, 1 Elder & Deacon Leadership Retreat,  
2 Meetings of the Congregation, 2 Electronic Advisements

Active Members as of December 31, 2023: 343

<u>Gains (7)</u>		<u>Losses (34)</u>	
Profession of Faith	0	Deaths	3
Reaffirmation of Faith	4	Transfer	3
Letter of Transfer	3	Roll Removal	28

Active Members as of December 31, 2023: 316

NEW MEMBERS

<u>Profession of Faith</u>	<u>Reaffirmation of Faith</u>	<u>Letter of Transfer</u>
	Gilberto Colon, Jr. (2940)	Carol Cornish (2618)
	Stacy Gelhaus (2941)	Roselyn Kendrick-Jones (2938)
	Eileen Migueles (2943)	Michael Kocz (2942)
	Jeanette Payton (2939)	

BAPTISMS

3/17/2024	Penelope Frances Lewis	7/28/2024	Jacob John Maraia
4/28/2024	Julianne Patti Vuoso	10/13/2024	Harper Jean Graham Hannel
7/21/2024	Keyon Bo Chessa Sheen	10/20/2024	Ruth Sally Weaver

## DEATHS (\*Active Members)

2/3/2024	Rita Koelsch*	2663	5/4/2024	Arulasanam Perinbasekar*	2171
3/16/2024	Florence Malcolmson		9/14/2024	Carl Anderson*	2356

## REMOVAL FROM ROLLS (\*=Transferred Out):

Mavis Agbenorku (2829)	Frank Fontana* (2883)	Jade Pagel (2755)
Caroline Awuor (2715)	Jocelyn Fontana* (2657)	Jill Pagliettini (2623)
Robert Baddeley (2710)	Christina Gardineer (2747)	Kevin Rishel (2775)
Judith Baddeley (2711)	Nicole Gardineer (2751)	Craig Scatola (2783)
Karen Cameron (2325)	Sarah MacDonald (2772)	Kristen Scatola (2784)
Joann Campoli (2805)	Gregory Mack (2754)	Matthew Sheridan (2814)
Kathleen Carroza (2745)	Kianna Mack (2774)	Jacqueline Sheridan (2815)
Susanne Caruso (2721)	Ellen Miles* (2578)	Anthony Tomicich (2737)
Allison Child (2819)	Amanda Monk (2730)	Heidi Wynne (2466)
Alessandra Cirillo (2873)	Kyle Monk (2672)	
Sara Delaney (2821)	Ingrid O'Sullivan (2679)	

Respectfully submitted,  
*Christie Herman, Clerk of Session*

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## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

**Members at Large:** *Jean Post-Winget & Vinny Wallace, co-chairs; Judy Chessa (Deacon Rep.), Bill Winsted, Debbie Hager, Linda Swift, Jennifer Burns, Debbie Bernardini, Kithara Buccarelli, Chip Low, Tami Seidel*

### ***Officers of the Corporation:***

President: Jane Amato  
Vice-President: Jeff Kephart  
Treasurer: Beth Gruber  
Secretary: Christie Herman

### **Counters:**

Donna Gresh  
Debbie Hager  
Randy Pratt  
Linda Swift  
Bill Winsted

### **Youth Ruling Elders**

Griffin Brown ( Jan 2025-Aug 2025)  
Anna Hagen (Sept 2025-Aug 2026)

### **Staff of the Session of FPCY**

Clerk of Session:  
Christie Herman

Treasurers: Beth Gruber  
Frank Hodgkinson  
Gregg Nelson

Financial Secretary:  
Lisa Flanagan

Auditors/Reviewers:  
Megan Whalen  
Linda Swift  
Emily Monk

### **Food Pantry Co-Leadership**

Debbie Bernardini  
Katharine Frase

### **Ruling Elders—Class of 2026**

Ian Spence

### **Ruling Elders—Class of 2027**

Nathan Perry  
Karen Gerth  
Lynn Edling  
Linda Swift

### **Deacons – Class of 2026**

John Winget

### **Deacons – Class of 2027**

Sonia Braham  
Matt Hager  
Lynda Spring  
Nance Thompson

### **Youth Deacons**

Kacey Chin (Sept 2025-Aug 2026)

Many thanks to all of the hard working members of the Nominating Committee as well as to the people who have stepped up to serve and to lead. We are grateful!

Respectfully submitted, *Jean Post-Winget and Vinny Wallace, co-chairs*

## CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION COMMISSION

*The newest FPCY commission, Congregational Connection Commission (CCC), has been organized this year by elders: Jane Amato, Kithara Buccarelli, Margaret Harrison, Christie Herman, Connie Knapp and co-pastor Chip Low. Nancy Paskin was CCC recorder of minutes. Gloria Coccodrilli and Pam Darreffe contributed to the many working committees. CCC is made up of many committees: some were previously assigned to Stewardship and Congregational Life commissions, and some relatively newly formed small groups. The new CCC organization includes Membership, Sustaining Relationships, Small Group, Whole Church & Special Events, as detailed below. Our mission is intentional fellowship as it relates to inviting and sustaining connections within our congregation and beyond.*

### Membership:

*First Visit Forward submitted by Christie Herman*

Initiated in September 2023, the First Visit Forward ministry builds intentional relationships with new visitors (guests) to our church, and provides long-term support and care for new members. Eight rotating teams of two members work together as “Buddies” to welcome guests each week in worship, and let them know they are welcomed, remembered and connected with us. Members of the New Member Class are given “Shepherds” who get to know them in greater depth providing assistance in integrating them into the life of the church. Shepherds introduce new members to the resources, events, activities, and small groups of the church, and provide long term-support and care. Members of the church form a “Board of Guardian Angels” who provide oversight and support for the program.

*New Member Class submitted by Jane Amato*

The new member team consists of **Pam Darreffe, Gloria Coccodrilli, Nancy Paskin** and **Jane Amato**. There are typically two new member classes a year, one in the fall and again in the spring which are hosted by the co-pastors. This year there were seven new members received and welcomed to grow in faith together with us. Potential new members and interested members of the congregation are invited to attend these classes which are usually held over four or five Sundays during the time between the two church services. There is engaging introductory conversation and review of the historical relevance of our church; a perfect time to reflect on our individual faith journeys and initiate new friendships within our growing church family.



*Annual Membership Review submitted by Christie Herman*

The Membership Review Committee of the CCC this year included **Connie Knapp, Christie Herman** and **Jane Amato**. The Review Committee meets yearly to review the membership rolls. In conjunction with the co-pastors, the subcommittee develops a list of members who are actively participating in the life of the church. Those who have been inactive are contacted by phone and letters in order to consider their wishes. The Session votes on membership removals. Letters are sent to those who are being removed assuring them that they may re-activate membership.

### Sustaining Relationships

*Gratitude/Recognition submitted by Jane Amato*

The Congregational Connection Gratitude Note Writers include **Nancy Paskin, Gloria Coccodrilli, and Jane Amato**. Special thanks to all the CCC members who have assisted in writing notes. Gratitude notes are written to thank people within the congregation (and community) for such things as: shared musical talents, special coffee hours /kitchen volunteers, organizers for special events, banners, liturgists, service of elders and deacons, outside landscaping donations, etc. We try to acknowledge the many who help support our mission with their time, energy and resources. A record is kept of the recipients, and suggestions are discussed at the CCC monthly meetings. There were over one hundred fifty gratitude notes of appreciation sent by the CCC this year. Thank you notes for completed pledges (previously under the “old” model of the Stewardship Commission) are also sent following the annual campaign.



*College Outreach submitted by Pam Darreff*

**Pam Darreff** coordinates this project along with **Gloria Coccodrilli** and **Jane Amato** who assist with gathering addresses, special text messages on Valentine's Day, Easter, Christmas, birthday, etc. Throughout the academic year, we traditionally have recognized our college students with special mailings that include gift cards, care packages and well wishes during exams. We welcome the congregation to join us in our endeavors by assisting us in donating goodies, packing the goodies, and assisting with monetary contributions to defer the increasing mailing costs. We also encourage those to join us who are interested in sending special communications of personal well wishes throughout the year. This outreach keeps a caring connection with our young adults.

*Veterans Recognition: submitted by Connie Knapp*

With the help of **Lisa Flanagan**, we continued to honor our veterans by collecting names to list in our Sunday bulletins closest to Memorial Day (deceased veterans) and Veterans' Day (living veterans). Please note that this is not a celebration of war, but instead, a recognition of those who put themselves at risk for their country.

## Fellowship

### *Small Groups:*

*Women's Birthday Breakfast Club submitted by Debbie Hager*

The creators and contacts for this group are **Christie Herman, Barbara Sterbenz, Margaret Harrison, Alice Chin, and Debbie Hager**. The women of FPCY gather once a month in fellowship hall to celebrate togetherness, grow friendships, share breakfast, and celebrate birthdays. Each month we recognize those celebrating birthdays in that month by donning them with a tiara and singing Happy Birthday. They are also front and center for our group photo, taken before we part ways until the following month. We set the tables with tablecloths, centerpieces, silverware, plates, etc. It is potluck, so our food tables are abundantly full every time! There is also an abundance of storytelling, laughter, and joy. We look forward to its continued success!



*Men's Breakfast submitted by Vinny Wallace*

Men's breakfast meets one Saturday a month (usually the third Saturday to work around food pantry). Many men of FPCY have been to breakfast but our core group consists of **Chip Low, Matt Hager, Bill Winstead, Bill Treacy, Ian Spence, Damian Heyde, Fred Mintzer, Chuck Radke, Dick Mills, Allen Arnwine, and Tim Chin**. We are loosely organized around the idea of fellowship (with a little organized discussion - as needed). We organize as needed, cook together, pray together and clean up together. Please join us for pancakes next time.

*Women at the Well submitted by Abby Cross*

Women at the Well is a FPCY group that recognizes the challenge many face today in finding time for self-care and restoration in a supportive environment of their peers, especially in the midst of the busy lives they and their families lead. The organizing team, **Alice Chin, Dawna Dennis, Elaine Heyde, and Abby Cross** have invited participants to set aside time to build community in conversation and fellowship, to laugh together, and to lean on one another in all the joys and tribulations of our lives. Women at the Well had two big events: a wonton workshop for Lunar New Year, led by Alice Chin -- and an Easter floral arrangement workshop with a local floral artist. Both were well-received and well-attended (15-20 participants). Going forward, we look to find a balance in our offerings between social activities/workshops, and "down-time" gatherings that give participants a chance to talk about issues they need help with (or just want to be listened to). Our target is four events in 2025.



### *Whole Church Events:*

*Coffee Hour submitted by Connie Knapp*

Session began asking each Commission to host coffee hour during 2024. This was expected to be a temporary approach to hosting coffee hour, as we changed our organizational structure, and the activities of the Congregational Life Commission was absorbed into the Congregational Connections Commission. We are grateful to the Women's Birthday Breakfast Club, the Men's Breakfast, and the Pantry team who have been setting up the coffee pots for

the Sunday services. Commissions have been rotating hosting and cleaning up. It has been difficult to consistently provide coffee and snacks for many reasons. Some Commissions are too small to host, some commissions have members who are busy during the coffee hour (Faith Formation, for example), and some smaller Commissions have found it difficult to coordinate working with another commission. We are currently rethinking how we handle coffee hour.

#### *Lunch Bunch submitted by Connie Knapp*

Congregational Connection has been organizing the monthly Lunch Bunch gatherings. **Bill Winsted** coordinated from January to June, and **Connie Knapp** coordinated from September through December. CCC is currently looking for a “point person” coordinator. Speakers have included: Maria Correa, an elder-care lawyer, discussing asset protection; Connie Knapp, showing slides from her trip to the Galapagos; a presentation on safety and mobility at home; Chuck Radke and Amy Swan, the assistant curator at the Yorktown Museum, on the history of the New York State memorial in front of our church. We celebrated St. Patrick’s Day and Thanksgiving with catered lunches and sang Christmas carols in December, led by Garrett Artman.

#### *Special Events submitted by Connie Knapp*

Congregational Connection organized three Special Events this year: the Annual Meeting potluck lunch in March; the Easter Breakfast after the sunrise service on March 31, organized by **Cheryl** and **Alyssa Bauer**; and the Annual Church Picnic on September 8. This year we returned to the traditional picnic format, with hot dogs and hamburgers supplemented by potluck sides and desserts. We are grateful to everyone who attended and supported these events.



#### *Special Thanks*

Thank You to all who helped to organize, or participated in any of the many CCC activities. A special thank you to **Lisa Flanagan, John Harrigan, Beth Gruber, Chip and Tami.**

#### *Looking forward*

We welcome anyone interested in joining our commission. Our goal continues to be welcoming and fostering intentional fellowship, inviting a sustaining connection within our congregation and community, and sharing a life filled with Christ’s grace, faith and love.

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

**Members:** *Jennifer Rowe Behun (co-chair), Bryan Ekelund, Donna Gresh, JoAnne Marsh, Dana Mordue (co-chair) 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 events. 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.

### Our Year in Review

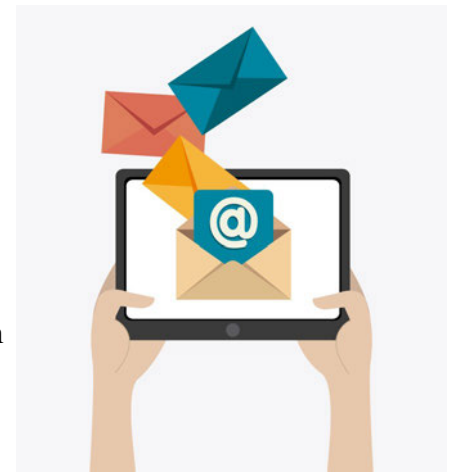
#### **Website**

Our website is likely the number one place that new people head 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](http://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 2024, we posted 270 articles on our news feed, each of which was also distributed to our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown](http://www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown)). Each of our posts is illustrated with colorful graphics created by our dedicated artists **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](http://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.

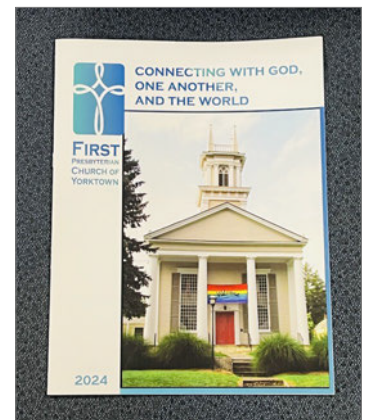


2) Alternatively, for current activities, scroll down past the video of our church activities and there are moving sliding graphics that display current events. You can click on a graphic and it will take you to the details of that event. You can learn about upcoming special worship services, social 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, as well as managing the Gathering Space monitor! Send an email at least a month in advance if possible to [news@fpcyorktown.org](mailto:news@fpcyorktown.org) (*the email goes to both Donna Gresh and Lisa*) with any upcoming event information and details to be included in the bulletin, disciple, social media, as well as graphic requests.

### A 2024 Church Directory!

In 2024 we finalized the design for the new 2024 church directory and distributed it to the congregation. Many thanks to **Linda Swift** for being the point person on this including delivery of the church directory to people, and to **Lisa Flanagan** for her efforts in getting the roster up to date. Thank you as well to all of the individuals who participated by getting their pictures taken for the directory and updating addresses and phone numbers as necessary. Everyone who had their picture taken received a new church directory; it was also available to all who asked although a donation was requested toward the expense if people were able to donate.



### Information about each Commission and the Deacons

We help promote and obtain information about each Commission and the Deacons. You can find this information on the website under “I’m New->Meet Our People” and then finding the link to “Commissions.” This “people” 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 and worship and special services are shared on [facebook.com/fpcyorktown/live\\_videos](https://facebook.com/fpcyorktown/live_videos), as well as on our YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/@FPCYorktown/streams](https://www.youtube.com/@FPCYorktown/streams). The audio of the sermon is also recorded and available on the FPCY website. 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 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.”



A big thanks to the Tech Team for running the livestream each Sunday morning. The Tech Team consists of **Andy Cross, James 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.



**FPCY is on social media** – Our blog posts get automatically posted to Facebook, X, and now Bluesky (<https://bsky.app/profile/fpcyorktown.bsky.social>). We encourage people to follow us on their social media of choice - please follow, like and share.

- Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/fpcyorktown/>
- X - @fpcyorktown
- Website: [www.fpcyorktown.org](http://www.fpcyorktown.org)
- BlueSky: <https://bsky.app/profile/fpcyorktown.bsky.social>
- Facebook: Our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown](http://www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown) shares our blog posts, as well as “candid” photos of events and activities. If you 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.
- Facebook FPCY Friends Group: Thanks to **Bryan Ekelund** for creating and managing a new 'Friends of FPCY' Facebook group. Please consider joining the group — we are trying to get more people to join as it will encourage greater social interaction, and the more the merrier.



### **New Street Corner Banners**

A number of visitors and new members have remarked that their first introduction to FPCY were the FPCY banners that we display at the corner of Routes 202 and 132. We have completed an inventory of our current banners and designed a few new ones that will enable us to ensure that we have not only banners displayed for special events but banners that can be displayed on a near continuous basis in between special events. Special thanks to **Barbara Santagata** who spearheaded design of new banners and **Natalie Swift** for stepping in to create a wonderful new banner “Hope Not Fear; Love Not Hate” including many rounds of revisions until we felt that we had it “just right”.

### **With Gratitude**

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to our Commission members, members of Session, and all of those individuals who make sure the Commission is made aware of events in a timely fashion so they can be publicized. All that has been accomplished this year would not have been possible without their dedication, commitment, and support. Many thanks to **JoAnne Marsh** and **Barbara Santagata**, for designing and creating so many amazing graphics! These graphics are used on our website, the gathering space monitor, on social media, on banners, and in the events we publish in digital newspapers. Special thanks to **Donna Gresh** who works with Lisa as the point person for communications and also keeps track of all of the different upcoming graphics that are needed. Additional thanks go to Donna Gresh and Barbara Santagata and **Dana Mordue** for managing our Facebook and Instagram pages; to Bryan Ekelund, Donna Gresh, Linda Swift and Dana Mordue 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. Special thanks to Tim Chin who does an excellent job taking photographs of FPCY people and events that he contributes to the Communications Commission to use in blogs and postings.

### **For the Future**

The primary mission of the Communications Commission is to enhance communications within our congregation, to potential visitors and our immediate community as well as our online extended community. In the future year we will continue to explore new avenues and improvements to further build our communications with each group of stakeholders in order to enhance relationships and service to one another and our extended community.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Dana Mordue and Jennifer Rowe-Behun*



## 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, rather than do the ministries on our own. To that end, we have enlisted congregation members for several of our ministries: Loaves and Fishes, the Prayer Team, the Mental Health team and the Visitation team. We welcome the participation of members of our congregation and encourage each member to experience the joy of caring for one of our own, as well as the joy of working with some truly caring people. Deacons continue with the traditional ministries listed below as well as some new ministries either in the works or actively meeting, such as Elder Care Issues Planning.

**BEREAVEMENT:** Deacons help with receptions after a funeral or memorial service. They work with the family by setting out any food that the family provides from a caterer, make coffee and tea and serve food and drinks when needed. There were 2 memorial services this year. As part of the Bereavement Ministry, Deacons sent out 6 sets of books to grieving families at crucial times during the first year after a loss. It is our hope that they provide comfort and peace to the families during a difficult time. This year 8 families have received these books. This team is headed by **Judy Chessa** and **Sue Nelson**.



*FPCY Bereavement Support*

*Bereavement Support Group:* This year we are very pleased to announce that our Bereavement support group is over one year old and continuing to offer a service to those in our Congregation who have suffered a loss. **Judy Chessa** continues to lead the group every 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. We wish to heartily thank Judy for continuing to run this group and we also thank **Dolores Vidal-Roy** for her past involvement as a co-Leader.

**CARDS:** This year 402 cards were sent by the Card Ministry. Categories included Birthday, Anniversary, Get Well, Sympathy, Baptism, Confirmation, Wedding, New Baby, Thinking of You, Congratulations, Graduation and Holiday cards. Cards for the most part are donated by members of the congregation, though a few special cards are also purchased each year, as are the stamps. Cards are sent out to members who are 80 years and older approximately every two months. Members under 80 are sent birthday and anniversary cards every five years and other types of cards as appropriate, e.g., get well, graduation. This ministry thrives because of the dedication of **Nancy Paskin**.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** The Deacons relay information to the congregation through write ups for the Disciple and the bulletin, as well as with the Communications Commission for web site info and other items that need publicity. **Judy Chessa** has performed this function for us this year.

### **ELDER CARE ISSUES PLANNING:**

The Deacons are sponsoring informational talks about planning for later stages of life. Elder Care Lawyer Maria Correa from Keane & Beane Law firm in White Plains, spoke to us regarding estate and asset management. Her presentation on Sunday, January 28 during Coffee Hour gave a short overview presentation and provided pamphlets and time to consult with her. A light lunch was served. We also welcomed Glen Shapiro representing 101 Mobility. Glen presented helpful information regarding home safety and accessibility. This presentation took place during the Lunch Bunch gathering on November 20, 2024.



### **KNITTING MINISTRIES:**

⇒ In 2024, the Knit Togethers gave 88 hand-made items to several local groups. These included Birthright in Peekskill (baby blankets, hats), The Pantry Plus at FPCY (hats, scarves), and Paramount Care in Somers (lap blankets). We had eight members:

*(Continued on page 14)*

**Teri Froehlich, Gail Frost, Diane Hawlk, Priscilla Lucas, Sue Nelson, Regina P., Janet,** two at home knitters, and **Noreen Radke, Chair.**

⇒ **Prayer Shawl**—This group gives out many handmade items to several groups in our church as well as friends of church members. Shawls are also given to those in our congregation who are ill or going through a rough time. Baptism blankets are presented to a child when they are baptized. Every year new communicants receive a red scarf when they become new members. Support is also given to Project Linus with many blankets (36 in December) which are picked up and distributed by their representative, MaryLou Santoro, several times a year. At the December Food Pantry, hats, scarfs and gloves were distributed to all our clients which included a large donation from Hedwig, a 94 year old women from our community. Our knitters are: **Marianna Sherman (Leader), Cheryl Bauer, Gail Frost, Terri Froehlich, Joyce Hotai, Sue Nelson, and Regina Poltrack.** Our offsite contributors are: **Aloha Hicks and Odette Matthews.**



**LOAVES & FISHES:** Meals are delivered by a volunteer to a family who has a need either because of a new baby, illness, death or hospitalization of a family member. Four Deacons shared the responsibility of this ministry on a quarterly basis in 2024. When needed, notification comes from the Pastors or the office. The assigned Deacon contacts the volunteers and coordinates deliveries through Realm. This year 20 meals were delivered. Our four Deacon Coordinators were: **Judy Chessa, Sue Nelson, Mary Vezzuto and Diane Yarris.**



**MENTAL HEALTH:** 2024 was a year of transition for the Mental Health & Wellness Ministry, beginning with a transition of leadership. In February, **Eric Kreuter**, who has been helping to lead this ministry since its conception – first with **Sue Caruso** and then with me (**Tamsin Levine**), stepped down in order to focus on other ministry and work opportunities. We are indebted to Eric for his years of service in this ministry, and grateful for his continued involvement as a volunteer. With careful and prayerful consideration, I have since stepped in to the role of primary leader; an endeavor that would never have been possible without the support of Pastors Tami and Chip, and our dedicated MH volunteers.

Another major transition for our team in 2024 was, more broadly, greater integration with the other ministries of FPCY. We hosted Coffee Hour on three occasions (in February, April, and December), allowing parishioners to speak to our volunteers in a relaxed environment about whatever concerns they were struggling with. It also allowed us to feature our book display that coverages a wide range of both mental health challenges and mental wellness ideas.



In response to a recent report linking depression with loneliness, our Mental Health Sunday Service on April 28th focused on the topic of loneliness in its various forms, and the benefit of both connection with others and the Holy Spirit that connects us all to God. My portion of the sermon examined how Jesus experienced loneliness and the ways He renewed His spirit, while Sue Caruso gave a powerful testimony on how the church had been a comfort during the isolation she felt after losing her son unexpectedly. And, in an ode to CrossGen's previous event, **Heidi Haring** read a children's story about the invisible string of God's love.

In an effort to reach out to the youth of our church and community, we hosted a lecture and Q&A with Dara Caputo on recognizing the symptoms of anxiety and depression in youth and adolescents.

In September the Mental Health Ministry teamed up with **Abby Cross** for a centering prayer evening focused on experiencing different forms of freedom. It was the highest turnout we have had so far for one of our “experiential” evenings, including three people who’d never come to a MH event, and one participant not even a member of our church.

In November we hosted a “Meet the Author” event to allow me to share more about the book I have written and published called *To Rise from Rubble*, dealing with my own journey through depression and suicidal ideation. The event not only allowed me to share my testimony, but to facilitate a broader conversation on how we address these issues in our community, and why individuals struggling often don’t share.

Finally, in December members of our team played a role in the liturgy and prayer ministry of the Longest Night service, where we come yearly to find hope and comfort in the midst of darkness.

At year’s end our active members were as follows: **Tamsin Levine** (leader), **Marilyn Alvarado**, **Jen Burns**, **Heidi Haring**, **Eric Kreuter**, **Chip Low**, **Tami Seidel**, **Dana Tracey**, and **John Winget**

**PRAYER MINISTRY:** We continue to get many requests from the church prayer request e-mail, through the pastors, through our various groups and sometimes from non-members, who are thankful that we have prayer support available. It is a privilege to watch this ministry continue to be well-used. A prayer ribbon is hung for each request. Ribbons are left in the breeze behind the church until the requests are “gone” with the wind, etc. This past year 130+ ribbons were hung. At this point, prayer is done individually by each team member. We have a team of 20 members: I will only ask them to stand to be thanked rather than list them all here. *Submitted by Mary Vezzuto and Co-leader Heidi Haring.*



**TRANSPORTATION:** The Deacons provide transportation to those needing rides to medical appointments and to and from Church to attend worship. We have provided approximately 10 rides for medical appointments during 2024. An added blessing is that often rides are arranged without the need for Deacon intervention. In addition, we have set up a sign-up genius for transporting one of our members to and from church. This was initiated late in 2023 and involves the participation of 5 of our members. This tool will continue on an as-needed basis into 2025.



**VISITATION TEAM:** The Visitation Team, which consists of several Deacons, members at large, and our pastors, continued its ministry by maintaining contact with those who are not able to attend worship regularly (if at all) for reasons of illness, mobility, recovery from surgery, residence in a health care facility, etc. Our 16+ team members have made at least 110 home visits, 49 telephone calls, and 27 contacts by email, text, or other correspondence, for a total of over 171 contacts in 2024. Some home visits included bringing Communion to members. The visits also provide us insight into possible needs for meals, transportation, prayers, cards, and mental health support which we then communicate to the other ministry teams as needed. All of these acts of “intentional fellowship” are at the core of who we are as a church. 20 individuals/couples were supported through the efforts of the team during the course of 2024.

**THANKS:** We 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 2024. Yet vital ministries kept going and new ones were initiated! Thanks to all! I also want to say a special thank you and farewell to our outgoing class of 2024. We needed your hearts and hands. We welcome our new Deacons for the class of 2027: **Sonia Braham**, **Matt Hager**, **Lynda Spring** and **Nance Thompson**.

Respectfully submitted, *John Winget, Co—Moderator*

*(Continued on page 16)*



## MISSION COMMISSION

**Members:** Jeff Kephart and Marisa Swift, co-chairs; Debbie Bernardini, Dawna Dennis, Katharine Frase, Heidi Haring, Kaycee Perry, Nance Thompson.

### Activities for 2024



#### Pantry

The client volume at the Pantry in 2024, while prone to oscillations from one week to the next, remained very high. The increase may be attributable to several factors: ongoing high prices of groceries and other household expenses, changes to social support programs, and (perhaps) the positive view of our pantry held by our clients. On the third point, a very high percentage of our new clients are related to, or friends of, existing clients; we also saw the return of former clients we'd not seen in several years.

We have seen an increase in the number of elderly clients, disabled clients and clients in need of diabetic-appropriate foods. We deliver bagged groceries to the Beaver Ridge senior facility in Yorktown and have a customized drive-up experience for clients with mobility issues. In rare instances we will deliver to a client's home. We have continued to operate in a "choice" model which allows clients to select foods their family likes or needs. The choice model also makes the distribution of specialty items (including gluten free, dairy-free and unusual foods) more straightforward, which enables us to better use the donations we receive.

In addition to our monthly distribution of diapers and eldercare supplies, we continued our annual distribution of school supplies and hand-knit items (supported by the Knit Together and donations from the community).

We are thrilled with the expanded team of volunteers who have come on Fridays for preparation and on Saturdays for distribution. The on-line signup method has allowed us to do better planning and to ensure that we are both well-staffed and can make good use of volunteer time.

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 most bulk foods free of charge throughout the year, including fresh produce. In June, a collaboration between Feeding Westchester and Telemundo at a local Stop and Shop produced 1,290 pounds of donations for us; we are so grateful to our volunteers to have been able to staff that effort.

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, Stewart's Farm, the Garden of Hope, Hilltop Hanover Farm, the Country House, the Yorktown Federation of Teachers, monthly food drives of the Knights of Columbus at St Patrick's, the Elks Club, the Lions 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, 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 purchasing diapers all 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 have non-church members who spearhead the eldercare initiative, for which we are grateful.

The annual totals for 2024 were 19,000 individuals from 2,900 families and over 140,000 pounds of food, including 12,000 pounds from donations. Thanks to the generosity of the community and congregation, as well as the support of Feeding Westchester, we continued to operate very efficiently (about 8 cents per pound for the year despite the overall increases in food prices) and are in good financial standing for 2025. We look forward to further collaboration with FPCY's Hunger Action Congregation effort.

*(Continued on page 17)*

2025 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.

*Debbie Bernardini and Katharine Frase, FPCY Pantry Co-Leaders*

## Hunger Action

The Hunger Action team oversees the Jan Peek House and Noontime Meal programs and provides opportunities for Food Justice advocacy.

On the fourth Sunday of each month, 3 or more families (or an organization like the FPCY Youth Group or a local karate class) work together to prepare dinner for 35-40 clients at Jan Peek House. Some families choose to use the church kitchen, which can be a fun way to socialize. Some families drop the food off at Jan Peek House, while others choose to serve dinners to the residents there.

On the second Wednesday of each month, we provide lunch to dozens of clients at the Salvation Army in Peekskill via the Noontime Meal program. Prior to the pandemic, the number of Noontime Meal clients was roughly 30, and we were able to make the lunches ourselves. Since that time, the number of clients has increased at a very alarming rate, to about 70 in early 2024 and then to 120 by the end of 2024. Since we can't possibly make lunches on this scale, we buy the food at a local ShopRite and deliver it to the Salvation Army the day before the lunch so that they can make it in their kitchen.

We are seeking volunteers for 2025. Noontime Meal just takes an hour door to door, so if you are free in the morning or early afternoon on Tuesdays this could be a good fit for you. If you are interested in Jan Peek or Noontime Meal, and want to learn more, please contact Jeff Kephart ([jeffkephart@gmail.com](mailto:jeffkephart@gmail.com)) or sign up on [signup genius](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E45AEA62FA1FB6-janpeek1#/):

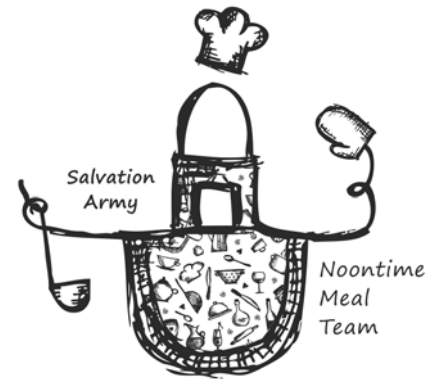
Jan Peek: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E45AEA62FA1FB6-janpeek1#/>

Noontime Meal: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E45AEA62FA1FB6-46970556-noontime#/>

We are grateful to the many Jan Peek House and Noontime Meal volunteers who helped us in 2024 with these important missions, which help us understand and serve our neighbors.

### Jan Peek House

- January 26: Kaycee Perry (coordinator) and the FPCY youth group
- February 24: Christine Lazarus (coordinator) with Sheri and Mark Gausepohl and Bill and Dana Treacy
- March 23: Barb Wanamaker (coordinator) with the Chin, Treacy and Vlad families
- April 27: Nance Thompson (coordinator), Danise Talbot, Nicole Decintio and friend Koreen
- May 25: Abby Cross (coordinator) and Ms. Lorna's karate class (including Jamie and Claire)
- June 22: Liza Placido (coordinator) and her co-worker Mercedes Eagleson along with her two children Gisele and Leo
- July 27: Jen & Patrick Burns (coordinators) with Emily Monk and Rick Vesperman
- August 24: Christine Lazarus (coordinator) with Lynn Edling and Heidi Haring
- September 28: The Coccodrilli family (Gloria, Bud, Amy and Beth)
- October 26: Debbie Bernardi (coordinator) with her sister Leslie Deich, her sister-in-law Denise Adorante, Judy Vigar, and Kathryn Lacombe of second chance food.
- November 23: Judy Chessa (coordinator) with Monica Duffy, Christine Lazarus, and Ruth Barton
- December 28: Emily Monk, Courtney and Megan Donnelly, and Lynda Spring.



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## Noontime Meal

January and March: Sheri and Mark Gausepohl

February, April, May, July and August: Ruud Haring

June: David Cruikshank

September: Jeff Kephart

October, November and December: Ruth and Charles Barton

## Food Justice Advocacy

We had a very successful Offering of Letters on May 5th between services and after the 10:45 service. 175 letters were signed and addressed to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and to Representative Lawler in support of the Farm Bill. Since some people took extra copies of letters home with them for friends and family to sign, we believe that at least 10-15 additional letters were sent. We are especially grateful to Vinny Wallace for printing up all the letters, and to Nance Thompson for her presence of mind in photocopying an emergency batch of letters when we started to run short.

Initially, we had a problem with delivery of the letters to Senator Gillibrand's office, as the PO Box posted on their website was temporarily not receiving letters. We collected about 1/3 of the letters that were returned to our congregation and resent them with a cover letter recapping our experience and emphasizing how important food justice and the Farm Bill are to our congregation. Eventually, we were contacted by a regional representative for Senator Gillibrand, who apologized for the mix-up and set up a call in October with Jeff Kephart and Katharine Frase to explore potential avenues for food justice advocacy in our area.

*Jeff Kephart, Hunger Action chair*

## Garden of Hope

This year's theme was The Invasion of the Animals. We relocated 1 racoon, 1 groundhog, 2 skunks and 4 rabbits. The animal invasion had two causes. First, there were holes in the fence due to the lower edge not having been reinforced properly. Second, town workers who installed a new water line for the tree nursery (good news) left the large gate open for days several times (bad news). We addressed this by double-fencing the former FPCY section inside the garden (we no longer distinguish different sections). Later, the entire garden section was fenced from the tree nursery section. The outer fence was reinforced, and the inner fence was completed. We hope this will prove sufficient to keep the animals out next season and beyond.



The harvests were modest again this year due to the late start (caused in large part by the animal problems) and a rainy early summer. Nonetheless, we were able to provide the FPCY Pantry with several lovely donations of green beans, tomatoes, kale and chard, peppers and squash. One week, we packed and distributed 75 bags of green beans. On the weeks that the FPCY pantry was not running, or if no one was available to help deliver it to FPCY, the harvest was donated to the food pantry at St. Mary's in Mohegan Lake.

We are considering recruiting some new sources for seedling starts in the spring. We may supply seeds and ask volunteers to grow the starts at home, so that we can have more successful varieties of plants.

Janet Morra continues to coordinate all GOH activity, including volunteers and volunteer training. Paul Silverman continues to work with the city to secure, maintain and upkeep the area and supplies. A special thank you to our FPCY volunteers in 2024, who included Pam Darreff, Jeff Kephart, Nance and Carl Thompson, Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado and Ari, Barbara Wolff, and the Edelmänn family. (We apologize if we missed anyone who happened to volunteer on days when we weren't there!)

*Submitted by Dawna Dennis and Heidi K. Haring, GoH co-coordinators*

*(Continued on page 19)*

## Green Team

The Green Team met in September to determine the direction the team will take over the next few years. For the last few years our activities have all been at the Presbytery level, where Connie is a member of HRP Green, a partnership of congregations working on environmental initiatives.

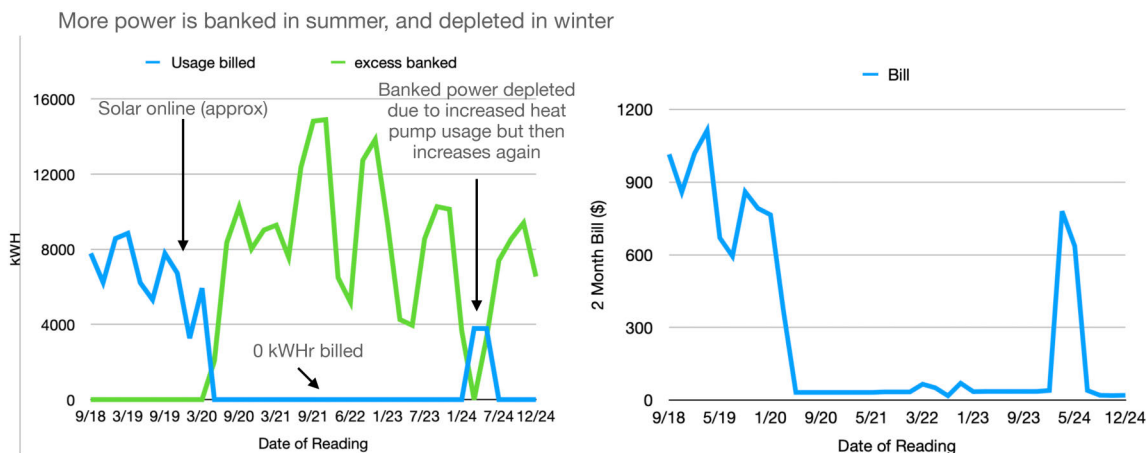
- We continue to maintain our *Earth Care Congregation* status, something we have held for the past decade. We expect to be recertified when we apply again in February.
- Some of us participated in *The Battle of Yorktown*, a town-sponsored cleanup of Route 202.
- This summer a group, led by Tami, read Robin Wall Kimmerer's book *Braiding Sweetgrass*. We were inspired by that book to look at ways we can protect our environment.



The Green team needs new leadership, as the original team leaders have either moved away or become involved in other aspects of church leadership. Are you interested in helping to shape the future of the Green team? If so, please contact [Connie@fpcyorktown.org](mailto:Connie@fpcyorktown.org) or [Tami@fpcyorktown.org](mailto:Tami@fpcyorktown.org).

Report on Solar Energy Production: Excess electric energy production above our needs is “banked” by NYSEG. In 2023 we made the decision to have our heat pumps be the primary heat source in those rooms that had them, and to have our oil burners be secondary in those rooms and primary in the rest of the building(s). We have banked solar credits in most months, using them to offset our overall electric energy usage. Only in the late winter, when sunlight is scarce, are our solar credits completely depleted and we have net (billed) electricity consumption. The graph (below) shows the impact of our solar panels for our main electricity circuit (the CE building). We are grateful for the continued downward trend in total expenditures for fuel oil from 2022 – 2024. Oil prices and heating degree days vary from year to year (sometimes greatly). We have spent many hours monitoring our oil usage, fully using the capability of our wi-fi enabled thermostats to enable a conservative heating plan, paying attention to closing room doors so that heat is not gushing out into empty hallways and, lastly, having all of our energy devices maintained professionally. These collective efforts resulted in fuel oil expenditures going from \$26,345 in 2022, \$19,943 in 2023 and \$17,585 in 2024. We believe we have the right heating, cooling & maintenance strategies in place and we can see the benefits in these year-to-year comparisons. ~Donna Gresh, Katharine Frase, and Dick Seymour

### Solar Panel Effect on Electricity Usage Sept 2018 through Dec 2024 (Solar went online in late 2019)



Respectfully submitted,  
Connie Knapp, Green Team chair



## WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMISSION

### Members in 2024:

*Jane Amato, Debbie Amorese, Garrett Artman (Director of Music Ministry), Judy Chessa, Sheri Gausepohl (Co-chair), Karen Gerth, Bill Herman (Co-chair), Christie Herman, Rev. Chip Low (Co-pastor), Sara Mann, Barbara Santagata, Rev. Tami Seidel (Co-pastor), Ann Timmons.*

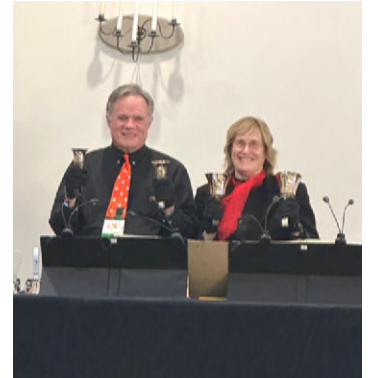
### About the Commission:

The Worship and Music 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 and Music Commission oversees the musical life of our congregation, including service music, the **Adult Choir**, the **Adult** and **Youth Bell Choirs**, Special Choirs (**Him Singers**, **Treble Choir**, etc.) **Drum Circle**, **The Bullroarers**, **The FPCY Orchestra** and the **Concert Series**. And anything else the creative and brilliant mind of **Garrett Artman** might conceive.

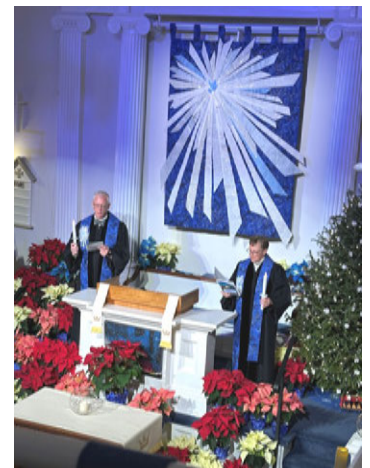
The **Tech Team** also falls under the purview of Worship and Music and provides for both live-streaming of services as well as the audio-visual aids to in-person worship (such as microphones, lighting, projections, etc.). The Tech team provides live streaming for all Sunday worship and most special services, enabling our members and guests to remain connected to the church regardless of our ability to gather face-to-face.

This past year's overarching strategic thinking has been how to bring Intentional Fellowship to Worship and Music. A key component has been the institution and roll out of the Community Music Initiative and a deliberate plan to expand lay-leadership and congregational involvement in Worship.



### 2024 highlights:

- ♫ We have returned to all pre-pandemic practices in worship except for intinction in a communal cup which we are deliberately not returning to as the coming forward to receive the elements allows for the intentional fellowship mentioned previously. It is good to get to “see” everyone worshipping together.
- ♫ Nearly every service was live-streamed both on Facebook and YouTube, (including some clever work to avoid copyrighted material that would have shut down the service if streamed). Streaming is now an option for memorial services and funerals.
- ♫ The hunt continues for interested prospective tech team members. I’m talking to you.
- ♫ We continue to “flex our lay leadership muscles” on a regular basis, even when the pastors are both present. **Ann Timmons** continues as our Lay Liturgist Coordinator/Wrangler. We also enjoyed preaching from **Connie Knapp**, **Katharine Frase**, **Lynn Edling**, **Angela Maddalone**, **Casey Carbone**, **Bryan Mesler**, **Susan DeGeorge**, the **Mental Health Team**, the **Montreat Youth Squad**, **Abby Cross**, and **Garrett Artman**.
- ♫ Garrett ran a series of intergenerational events and music programs for youth – no experience required!



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- ♪ The Christmas pageant featured the **10 Commanders plus one, minus two** performing and leading the Congregation in a spirited re-telling of *The Greatest Story ever Told...Part one*. Great appreciation to all including those who had to withdraw.
- ♪ A final highlight of the year was the Advent candle-lighting by new members and their families — thanks to **Jane Amato** for putting that together.



### Worship themes:

- ⇒ **Lent:** Perfect Love Casts out Fear
- ⇒ **Stewardship:** You are Invited...
- ⇒ **Advent:** Room at the Inn? Lessons in Divine Hospitality

### Special Services:

- Ash Wednesday (2/14)
- Holy Week (03/24-03/31)
- Earth Day Worship (04/21)
- Mental Health (04/28)
- Gifts of Women (05/12)
- Graduate Recognition Sunday (06/02)
- Faith Formation Sunday (06/09)
- Gifts of Men (06/16)
- Pride Sunday (06/23)
- Mid-Year Stewardship Celebration (07/14)
- Church Picnic Sunday (09/08)
- Blessing of the Backpacks (09/15)
- Blessing of the Animals (10/06)
- Peace and Justice Sunday (11/17)
- Longest Night Service (12/21)
- Christmas Eve Services (12/24)
- Commissionings, Ordinations, Baptisms

### In Gratitude:

- ♪ **Karen Gerth** continues to be a steadfast leader and contributor to all aspects of our work, organizing communion, wrangling banners, and serving on the tech team. Particular appreciation for her years as the usher team coordinator, a role she is passing to **Judy Chessa**. Karen is always 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 guests 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 **Wilkins/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 2024, and to **Ann Timmons** for serving as our lay liturgist coordinator.
- ♪ 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 **Angione's**, **Cross's**, **Perry's**, **Reide's**, **Tantillo's** and **Weaver's**. **Bill Herman**, **Abby Cross**, and **Garrett Artman** always pour an abundance of their talents and energy into the pageant—thank you so much. **James Cross** stepped in at the last minute so the “Show could go on.” “Thanks” is not enough.

Special thanks as always to **Lisa Flanagan** for her administrative support, and to **John Harrigan** for his work to keep the Sanctuary in order! Oh, and **Chip** and **Tami**. They know what they did.

Respectfully submitted, *Bill Herman and Sheri Gausepohl (Co-chairs)*

(Continued on page 22)

# MUSIC MINISTRIES

## Building a Strong Foundation: Crafting Our Music Ministry

As a carpenter carefully crafts a chair or table, ensuring each leg is sturdy and balanced, we too are in the beginning stages of building a music program that will stand the test of time. The process requires patience, precision, and vision.

In 2024, we have laid the groundwork for a vibrant and enduring ministry by focusing on four foundational pillars: education, concert outreach, invitation, and stability.

### The First Leg: Education

Education is the first essential leg of our music program. This year, we have launched a private lessons initiative, an effort that benefits not only the individual learners but also the broader church community. By offering private music lessons within our church, we create an opportunity for members to both give and receive the gift of music. A portion of the lesson income is allocated to fund our concert series, provide scholarships, and invite more musical groups to utilize our space. This approach ensures that the gift of education uplifts the individual and sustains our collective efforts.

### The Second Leg: Concert Series - "Concerts on the Corner"

In 2024, we celebrated a wonderful season of "Concerts on the Corner." This series has not only brought joy to our congregation and community but has also deepened our connection with other ministries. We have welcomed many performances in our space hearing the wonderful music of piano, oboe, flute, cello, and voices. We even planned a free "recovery concert" in partnership with the Mental Health Initiative team featuring John Dillon, a Certified Addiction Recovery Coach, that took place on January 26th, 2025. This collaboration highlighted the healing power of music and underscored our commitment to addressing pressing societal needs through artistic expression.



Looking ahead to 2025, we hope to expand our concert offerings by working more closely with other ministries. Just as a musician practices daily to refine their craft, we must view our space as an instrument to be used, practiced, and perfected. By inviting others to listen, share in the word of God, and participate in performances, we continue to create a dynamic and inclusive musical environment.

### The Third Leg: Invitation

The third leg, invitation, requires us to think creatively and act intentionally. In today's fast-paced world, a random "pop-in" is no longer sufficient. We must actively go out and invite people to be part of our ministry and services. This includes offering our space for events like open mic nights or allowing more groups like **Westchester Children's Chorus** and **Taghkanic Chorale** to rehearse and teach within our facilities. By doing so, we create opportunities to connect with individuals who may not yet attend our worship services but who find value and welcome within our walls. This spirit of openness and hospitality aligns with our mission to share God's love in innovative ways.



### The Fourth Leg: Stability and Gratitude

The final leg is Stability and Gratitude — the balance that ensures our chair or table can stand securely. Stability is achieved through connection, as each of the other three legs must work together harmoniously. Education, concerts, and invitations must interweave to create a sustainable, thriving program. Fostering relationships within the congregation and extending our reach into the community builds a foundation that will support our ministry for years to come.



(Continued on page 23)

With the stability comes gratitude, not only from our community, but from us welcoming each other.

- ♪ I am grateful for those I work with. For **Chip, Tami, Lisa, and John**. Together, as staff of the church, we are called to let the word of God flow through us harmoniously.
- ♪ For the musical groups we offer, allowing us to experience fellowship through music. For **Christie Virtue-Herman, Ann Timmons, Erik and Carol Jensen**, without these people the flagship ensembles of choir and bell choir would not thrive as healthily as they do.
- ♪ For our seedling Music Ministry team, with careful watering and sunlight, this group will flourish into a blossom of God's love.
- ♪ Lastly, for the supportive congregation and the Worship and Music Commission, allowing my creative hijinks with new ensembles, improvisations, and reharmonizations (both at and away from the organ) with open arms.

### Setting the table

In 2024, we have taken the first steps toward building something meaningful and enduring. As we continue this work in 2025, let us remain committed to our vision, striving to balance each leg of our music ministry with care and intention. Together, we are not only building a chair or table but a legacy that will stand as a testament to God's love, creativity, and carpentry! Thank you to everyone who has supported our music ministry. Your prayers, time, and resources have been invaluable. Let us move forward with faith and excitement for all that is to come.

Peace, Love, and Harmony, *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 adult, our mission is to guide us all on our spiritual journeys and to have fun in the process! The following sub-committees fall under this commission: Sunday School, Faith4Life (adult education), Youth Ministry, Confirmation, Church Library, CrossGen (Intergenerational Ministry), Centering Prayer, and the Christmas Pageant (in concert with the Worship and Music Commission).

**2024 Commission Members:** *Jean Post-Winget and Connie Knapp, co-chairs; Andrew Cross, Nance Thompson, Suzy Rishel, Miranda McGill, Pam Angione, Kaycee Perry, Carol Jensen, Lynn Edling.*

### Sunday School and Confirmation:

Classes are available for children and youth from preschool through the 12th grade! We were so delighted this past September to be able to expand our classes to finally add our preschool, "Sparkle" Class!! Our classes meet Sundays during the school year from 9:15 to 10:15. We have 33 children and youth registered for Sunday School.

It is exciting to have our Director of Music Ministries **Garrett Artman** continuing to offer a time for musical fun each week to the children in our two youngest classes, Sparkle (pre-K & K) and Shine (1st – 4th grade). Sparkle and Shine have used the Shine curriculum and are now exploring some other curriculum options. Our 5th and 6th graders use the "Connect" curriculum, alternating each year between Old and New Testament stories. Our 7th and 8th graders (Faith X) use the "Echo the Story" curriculum which studies the Bible from Creation to Revelations as well as learning about the history of the church. Ever since the 2022-2023 school year, we have adopted a new model for the process of Confirmation. Our youth no longer go directly into a full year Confirmation



(Continued on page 24)



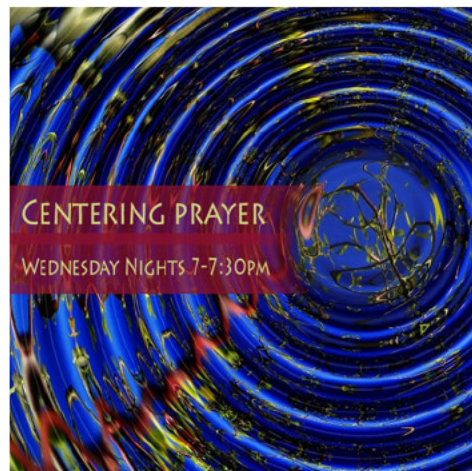
Class after finishing 8th grade. After much discussion and discernment, it was determined that we needed to give our young members the opportunity to demonstrate and to discern readiness and a personal desire to take the step to Confirmation as well as deciding for themselves if they would like to continue on with the High School “Fathom” Class. All are welcome in Fathom regardless of a choice to be confirmed. We are delighted to continue to report strong attendance and registration of high school youth in our Fathom Class! Our series of Confirmation Classes take place in the late winter to early spring.

We have a very strong and enthusiastic Sunday School faculty which now includes the following: **Kaycee Perry, Ryan Haver, Sara Weaver** (Fathom Class); **Susy Rishel, Jenn Burns, Kithara Buccarelli** (Faith X Class); **Bill Herman, Megan Whelan, Miranda McGill** (Connect Class); **Joanna Marcos, Diane Yarris, Dawna Dennis** (Shine Class); **Jean Post-Winget, Pam Angione, Liza Placido** (Sparkle Class).

We continue to be so very grateful to all of the teachers for their love and commitment to our children and youth as together they share relationships with one another as they share in this life long process of faith formation.



**Centering Prayer:** In concert with the Worship Team, there is a weekly offering of silent prayer focusing on breath and its power to connect us to the Divine. This occurs on Wednesday nights at 7:00 and is led by **Abby Cross**. This has been a steady group for several years now. It is a complement to the Deacon’s focus on prayer for our congregation and offers us alternative ways to pray together. Many thanks to Abby for her leadership!! Our backyard Labyrinth also provides us with yet another prayer alternative as we can practice walking prayer.



**Church Library:** We can enhance our spiritual journey through reading! Our church library has continued to be maintained by **Carol Jensen**. If you missed a Bible or a book study, you will find the resource in our library ready to be signed out! Come and check it out. Many thanks to Carol for her faithful attention to keeping our library in order and up to date!

**Christmas Pageant:** Our annual Christmas Pageant, which takes place during our Family Worship Service on Christmas Eve, truly represents collaboration at its best as a joint effort between Worship and Music and Faith Formation. We owe this success to its masterful and dedicated creative writer, director, casting executive, technology expert and general clerk of the works, **Bill Herman!!!** Aided by **Abby Cross** and **Garrett Artman**, this year’s pageant involved an impressive cast of players, all young and enthusiastic members of our Sunday School classes!

*(Continued on page 25)*

## Faith4Life:

We offered many learning opportunities through our programming in 2024.



Studies this year have included:

- ⇒ *The Gospel of Mark: A Beginner's Guide to the Good News* by Amy-Jill Levine, on Thursday and Sunday mornings, and Wednesday evenings, from January through April
- ⇒ *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr, on Sunday evenings in January and February, led by Chip and Tami.
- ⇒ “The Good News of Faith and Politics” on Tuesday and Thursday mornings in September and Sunday evenings from October through the end of the year. The Sunday evening group was led by Chip and Tami, and the Tuesday and Thursday groups by Connie and Tami.
- ⇒ *Context* by Josh Scott, on Sunday mornings in September and October
- ⇒ *Baptizing America* by Brian Kaylor and Beau Underwood, a study of Christian Nationalism, in May
- ⇒ *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, led by Tami on several days over the summer
- ⇒ Two *Disciple* groups are currently meeting for 90 minutes once a week: Wednesday at 2 PM and Wednesday at 7 PM. Connie, Lynn, and Tami are rotating leadership of these two groups.

John Bentley hosted a talk on “*Misinformation, Disinformation, Fake News—how to sort it all out?*” on October 13 after the later service.

Classes were led by **Connie Knapp**, **Chip Low** and **Tami Seidel**.

The *Women's Circle* met the first Wednesday of every month except July and August. This group, led by Tami, follows the Horizon curriculum published by Presbyterian Women. The 2023-2024 curriculum was *Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts*, which we read from January to June of 2024. Starting in September, we began the 2024-2025 curriculum, *Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Our Neighbor and All Creation*.

Abby Cross led us in Centering Prayer every Wednesday evening for the entire year, for which we are grateful.

The Men's Breakfast met every month throughout the year.

We are grateful for those who participate as well as those who lead, with extra special gratitude to our inspired and inspiring F4L leader, **Connie Knapp**!

## CrossGen/Intergenerational Ministry:

Team Members: *Abby Cross, Debbie Hager, Connie Knapp, Tami Seidel and Nance Thompson*

In 2024, the CrossGen team held 3 Wednesday events each with a great turnout. CrossGen is an intergenerational program designed to help old, young, and middle age people talk together, eat together, play games together, and sing songs of praise and worship. Our March theme was *Love, God, Neighbor and Enemy*. In July, we ate outside on the picnic tables and explored our theme, *Honor the Sabbath*. November's theme was *Welcome All: The Big Table* and we ended the evening with a unique celebration of the Eucharist. *Submitted by Nance Thompson*



CrossGen Wednesday

Respectfully submitted, *Jean Post-Winget and Connie Knapp, Co-Chairs*



## YOUTH MINISTRIES

2024 was an exciting year for the youth! We spent the early months of the year raising money for our big summer trip to Montreat. The youth oversaw our Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner this year, which ended up happening late because of the one snowstorm we had last year to happen on that day. This worked in our favor since the turnout was huge when we ended up having our pancake meal right after both services on a Sunday about a month later. Our other fundraising events were a bake sale where the youth baked goods Saturday night and then sold them to the congregation on Sunday, as well as kicking off our Montreat Tree where people could donate money to put a leaf of that value on our tree poster board. We have already begun our fundraising campaign for the trips slated for this summer (2025), starting with our Christmas wrapping fundraiser. Keep an eye out for the many other fundraisers we are sure to have between now and the summer.

This Summer 11 youth and 4 adults traveled down to Montreat in North Carolina to join hundreds of other Presbyterian youth from around the country for the Montreat Youth Conference. We spent a week meeting new people, engaging in fellowship, fun activities and learning about how we can plant peace every day in our lives. We were able to come home and share these gifts that we learned with the congregation on Peace and Justice Sunday in November. This trip definitely energized the youth and everyone is looking forward to Triennium this summer for the High School youth and Massanetta Springs Conference for middle school youth. Both are happening this year in July and we can't wait to share that experience with the congregation when we get back.

**Youth Group** this year has had some fun as well. We were finally able to do a youth overnight lock-in. We had a night filled with conversation, food, games, and a late night (early morning) movie for those still awake. Thank You to the adults who took shifts to make this event happen. We are definitely hoping to do this again. The Lock-in was also the night before we had the pancake supper so they were running on very little sleep and serving all those pancakes. What an amazing job they did!

Other than the Lock-in the youth has done some hiking, cooking, bingo, campfires, as well as participating in the Yorktown Pride Walk and Festival. Every Youth Group we try to share a meal together and discuss a current events topic, whether it be Earth Day, MLK, Pride, or national elections. Usually we end our time with a game or two (usually a game of sardines which is seemly their favorite!).

All in all 2024 was an amazing year and it seems like we are starting to get back into a great pattern that we lost since the pandemic started. We are hoping to keep that momentum going for 2025 and beyond.

Respectfully submitted, *Kaycee Perry, Interim Youth Ministry Support and Tami*



Kaycee Perry





## OPERATIONS COMMISSION

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

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

### 2024 Highlights:

- ◇ Thanks to the excellent detailed work by **Dick Seymour** and **Bud Coccodrilli** in preparing our 2024 budget, we were able to complete the year very close to budget, despite increases in several line items, particularly propane and electrical usage. The strategy put in place in 2023 to rely first on the heat pump units for heating helped us save substantially on fuel oil in 2024.
- ◇ The appearance of the graveyard, the East Yard graveyard, and the area near the labyrinth were all upgraded in 2024. Continued work in our gardens and with tree maintenance contributed to an overall improvement in the appearance of our grounds. The new drainage systems installed last year along the east sidewalk work well. Inside the buildings, we continue to work to understand the plumbing, heating, and electrical systems that have evolved over the many years.
- ◇ We had fun and productive Spring and Fall Workdays and we are so grateful for everyone who came to help us on those days as well as for small jobs throughout the year. While the list of these small jobs is too long for this report, it is important to document that in every category (heating, cooling, electrical, plumbing, flooring, grounds maintenance, etc.) there are issues to be solved continually throughout the year.

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. We welcome new members to the Commission – we have a good time!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Vinny Wallace and Katharine Frase, Co-Chairs*





## 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 2024:** Alice Chin (Co-chair), Katharine Frase, Beth Gruber, Rev. Chip Low (Co-pastor), Fred Mintzer, Dana Mordue (Co-chair), Nathan Perry, Jean Post-Winget, Rev. Tami Seidel (Co-pastor), Nance Thompson

### About the Commission:

The Personnel Commission can be thought of as the church’s Human Resources department. As such, our duty is to oversee—and care for—the extraordinary staff who serve with us in our mission before God. This requires a balance of wisdom and empathy, to guide 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.

The work of our Commission is largely collaborative. We work closely with the Budget, Finance, & Stewardship Commission to oversee staffing expenditures; 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.

### Our Year in Review:

Our year began, as it always does, by evaluating the annual **cost-of-living adjustment** (COLA) for pastors and staff. For 2024, we recommended an increase of 3.2% which was the recommendation from the Presbytery. The recommended increase was approved by the Session (for staff) and by the Congregation (for the co-pastors). Other start-of-year tasks included year-end evaluations of staff members for 2024, and the review of employment agreements.

In February, FPCY ended its employment relationship with **Facilities Caretaker** Kevin Barnes after eight months of service. A team of members from both the Personnel and Operations Commissions was convened to assess the best path forward in filling this vacancy. John Harrigan, Operations and other volunteers stepped up to ensure critical areas were covered in the interim. The team recommended that the position not be refilled at the level of a full time Facilities Caretaker and that current needs are covered by a small increase in hours by John Harrigan and members of Operations and other volunteers. From this process, an opportunity arose for discernment of our staffing needs, both for the Caretaker position and at the overall church level. A task force was charged to assess staff needs for FPCY to report to the Personnel Commission and Session with their evaluation. We continued to exercise a more direct role in the oversight of our **Childcare Providers**, another position that we examined as part of our staff assessment process. Reflecting the importance of this service to the growth of our faith community, we are pleased to report that in 2025 we will add a third provider to complete the roster to ensure adequate coverage. No additional changes were proposed to any additional FPCY staffing for 2024.

A FPCY Employee Handbook and Personnel Operations Manual were written and subsequently approved by the Personnel Commission and Session as part of the FPCY completion of its Organization Manual that is required by the Presbytery. Sexual Harassment Prevention and Sexual Misconduct Policies were updated and approved by the Personnel Commission and Session. Job descriptions were also codified for all FPCY staff and volunteer positions as required. A Child Safety Policy was also written and approved.

As always, we continued to handle various administrative tasks, such as setting the staff **vacation calendar**, conducting **periodic staff check-ins** and **annual reviews**, and the yearly certification of NYS **Sexual Harassment Prevention Training**. A particular focus this year was a major restructuring at the Presbytery level of **health benefits packages** for pastors, which required significant revision of the Terms of Call for our Co-pastors, Chip and Tami.

### 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, Finance & Stewardship Commission. All that has been accomplished this year would not have been possible without their dedication, commitment, and support. Special thanks to **Alice Chin, Beth**



**Gruber, Dana Mordue, Katharine Frase and Christie Herman** who spent a great deal of time and effort completing new policies and revisions of current policies that were needed to update the Employee Reference Handbook and Personnel Operations Manual. We also want to thank **Jean Post-Winget** and **Rev. Tami Seidel** for leading efforts to update job descriptions for our Child Care Staff, draft a new policy for Child Safety and for their overall efforts to ensure that FPCY has adequate child care for our worship services and other special events. Special thanks also to **Katharine Frase, Fred Mintzer** and **Nance Thompson** for their work as a task force to ensure coverage of management of FPCY facilities after the loss of **Kevin Barnes** and their work to evaluate coverage and make recommendations for 2024 and 2025. Thank you also to **John Harrigan** who increased his hours to ensure sufficient coverage and other volunteers who stepped in to assist. We also thank **Alice Chin, Katharine Frase** and **Beth Gruber** for their leadership and work on a task force to examine FPCY staffing needs both currently and in the immediate future and to subsequently present their recommendations to the Personnel Commission and Session. Their work generated productive and thoughtful conversations about the mission and goals of FPCY and the staff models that might best help us achieve our mission going forward. We also want to express our gratitude to **Garrett Artman**, Director of Music Ministry, who met with the Personnel Commission to share his vision for expanding our view of the potential components of music ministry at FPCY.

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**, who 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—the true human resources of FPCY. We are blessed by the presence of each person on this list and the support they provide to our Church and its Congregation.

FPCY Staff of 2024

Director of Music Ministry:  
Facilities Caretaker:  
Childcare Providers:  
Office Manager:  
Custodian:  
Interim Youth Ministry Support:  
Co-pastors:

**Garrett Artman**  
**Kevin Barnes** (through February 2024)  
**Marissa DiSisto** and **Kaitlyn Kretzschmar**  
**Lisa Flanagan**  
**John Harrigan**  
**Kaycee Perry**  
**Chip Low** and **Tami Seidel**



Chip                      Tami                      Garrett                      Lisa                      John                      Kaycee

**For the Future:**  
The primary responsibility of the Personnel Commission is to care for those who work for us, so that they may bring to bear their treasured talents through the work of the Church of Jesus Christ. 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 staff as they devote their gifts and energies to the work of our church.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Alice Chin and Dana Mordue, Co-Chairs*

## Proposed Co-Pastors Terms of Call 2025

### ANNUAL REVIEW OF MANSE PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024

As specified in the Manse Purchase Agreement between Charles Low (the Pastor) and the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown (FPCY): *"The **Manse Purchase Spreadsheet** shall be reviewed jointly by The Pastor and a member of FPCY's Finance Committee (now designated the Budget, Finance and Stewardship Commission of the Session) each year, both shall document their approval of all amounts recorded from the previous review as well as the current equity levels, and the completion of the review shall be documented in the Annual Report to the Congregation."*

The required annual review of the Manse Purchase Agreement, and Amendment I, Amendment IIa, and Amendment III thereto, along with the incorporated Amendment III Manse Purchase Spreadsheet, was completed on January 29, 2025. Equity ownership percentages of the Manse as of December 31, 2024 are: Church's Equity Share of 66.565 %, and Low's Equity Share of 33.435%. Low's Monthly Payments to the Church for Manse Purchase remain unchanged at [REDACTED] for the year 2024. Approval of all amounts recorded from the previous review as well as the current equity shares were agreed to by Charles Low and Beth Gruber, Treasurer of the FPCY Corporation, and witnessed by Christie Herman, Clerk of Session.

Charles Low  
Charles Low (Jan 29, 2025 11:28 EST)  
Charles Low  
Pastor

Beth Gruber  
Beth Gruber (Jan 29, 2025 11:44 EST)  
Beth Gruber  
Treasurer, First Presbyterian  
Church of Yorktown Corp.

Christie Herman  
Christie Herman (Jan 29, 2025 12:28 EST)  
Christie Herman  
FPCY Clerk of Session

## BUDGET, FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

**Members:** In 2024, the member of the Budget Finance and Stewardship Commission (BFS) included *Fred Mintzer (Chair)*, *Beth Gruber (member of Session)*, *Connie Knapp (member of Session)*, *Jack Shaughnessy (member of Session)*, *Frank Hodgkinson (Treasurer)*, *Gregg Nelson (BFS Secretary and Treasurer)*, *Charles Barton*, *Jessica Mayes*, and *Co-pastor Chip Low*. BFS is blessed by, and thankful for, their willingness to serve and their generous contributions of time and expertise.

### **BFS was born from a merger in 2024**

BFS was born in 2024 from a merger of the Budget and Finance Commission and the Stewardship Commission. It is responsible for recommending a stewardship program, financial policies, goals, and budgets to the Session that support the mission, values, and strategic goals of the Church – and for implementing that stewardship campaign and those financial policies. At the beginning of the year, the Stewardship Team’s members Connie Knapp and Charles Barton joined Budget, Finance and Stewardship. Jessica Mayes and Nancy Paskin were also part of the Stewardship Team and we are engaging with others to assist with our 2025 stewardship campaign.

### **FPCY Stewardship moves onward**

In 2024, we worked with our colleagues in BFS and Lisa to develop a more comprehensive monthly report on our yearly stewardship to date.

This year’s annual campaign was inspired by Chip, who suggested that we present the impact of our giving graphically. We are gratified by the congregation’s strong response.



We are grateful for the generosity of our congregation, and we look forward to expanding our Stewardship Team to support our church. Stewardship plans include recognition of legacy and endowment gifts as well as articles in the Disciple.

**Legacy Giving:** The church welcomes gifts under wills and trusts, as well as contributions of cash or stock to the endowment fund, which provides a perpetual source of income for our ministries and mission. The Legacy Giving Team, consisting of **Charles Barton**, **Bud Coccodrilli**, **Connie Knapp**, and **Ann Timmons**, has information on how members may consider a legacy gift, or please visit the Planned/Legacy Giving page on the website at <https://fpcyorktown.org/giving/planned-estate-giving/>.

### **Special Offerings:**

**One Great Hour of Sharing:**  
100% PCUSA

**Easter Offering:**  
100% FPCY – NoonTime Meal

**Pentecost:**  
60% to Presbytery + 40% FPCY – Youth Montreat Trip

**Peace & Global Witness:**  
75% PC(USA) + 25% FPCY - Seeds for Peace

**Thanksgiving Offering:**  
100% FPCY – Christmas Extras for Pantry Clients

**Christmas Joy Offering:**  
100% PCUSA

**Other Benevolence This Year:**  
PDA (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) - North Carolina Flooding Relief

(Continued on page 32)



## **BFS responsibilities**

BFS reviews the Church's stewardship and financial performance against its goals and manages the Church's investments, with monthly reporting to the Session. As BFS was formed only this year, it is "on a journey" to truly fulfill those goals. To document its new suite of responsibilities, BFS created a **Budget, Finance, and Stewardship Charter** for a new Commission, which was approved by the Session. BFS also created an **FPCY Investment Policy**, an **FPCY Endowment Policy**, and a description of the **Financial Duties of [FPCY] Treasurers** – all of which were added to the Church's Manual of Operations (MOO).

## **The FPCY Treasurers, Financial Secretary, and annual financial review**

While Budget and Finance recommends financial policies, goals and budgets, the work of implementing those policies largely falls to our Treasurers and our Financial Secretary. We thank **Beth Gruber, Gregg Nelson** and **Frank Hodgkinson** for executing Treasurer duties. We thank **Lisa Flanagan**, for her steadfast dedication as our Financial Secretary. Budget and Finance assists our Treasurers in organizing our annual financial review - which is analogous to, but less rigorous than, an audit. Budget and Finance is very grateful to **Emily Monk, Linda Swift**, and **Megan Whalen** for their service as "auditors" of our 2024 financials.

## **The 2024 Budget & Reports**

2024 was a challenging year for us financially as we had budgeted an [REDACTED] deficit and the economy was still experiencing elevated inflation. Fortunately, giving continued at a high level. **Pledges and Offerings** surpassed budget – thanks to the generosity of our members. We are especially grateful to those whose giving exceeded their pledges. Other income items were also favorable to budget – and **Total income** surpassed budget by [REDACTED]. **Total Expenses** were [REDACTED] favorable to budget – as we left unfilled planned paid positions for **Caretaker** and **Director of Youth Ministries** - and otherwise diligently managed our expenses. We owe many thanks to the FPCY volunteers that kept those activities moving - in spite of the lack of paid leadership. Despite a budgeted deficit of [REDACTED], our actual deficit was only [REDACTED].

Budget, Finance, and Stewardship continued its diligent management of the Church's investments – which focuses on long term gains through investment in equities and fixed income securities. In 2024, our investments gained a robust 16.06% - which was enough to offset our 2024 operating deficit. While we should celebrate the robustness of our 2024 investment gains, we must acknowledge that **we cannot count on them in future years.**

## **The 2025 Budget**

As we prepared our 2025 budget,

- We budgeted Pledges and Offerings at the 2024 level, but anticipated an increase of other receipts of [REDACTED].
- We budgeted no funds for the **Caretaker** position and only [REDACTED] for the **Youth** position.
- We held salary increases to 2.5%, which is the Presbytery recommendation, and
- We challenged Commissions to hold budgeted spending to 2024 levels as much as possible.
- However, we recognized that some budget expenses needed to be increased due to inflation.

With these constraints, the 2025 budget recommended by Budget, Finance, and Stewardship - and adopted by the Session - is **very much a challenge budget** – as it projects a deficit of [REDACTED].

## **In summary**

We are truly blessed to have been given the privilege of inspiring members' stewardship and managing the Church's resources to best support its mission. We are eternally grateful for the congregation's faithful generosity. Nonetheless, it will take even greater generosity in giving, strict spending oversight, and God's blessing, to produce a positive financial outcome in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

*Fred Mintzer, Beth Gruber, Jack Shaughnessy, and Connie Knapp*

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## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

### Financial Reports

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#### **REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The annual review of the financial records of the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown for the year ended December 31, 2024 was conducted on February 7 and 13, 2025.

The focus of the review was on Payables, Receipts, Investments, and Payroll.

A review is substantially less in scope than an audit, the objective of which is the expression of an opinion regarding the financial statements as a whole. Accordingly, the Financial Review Committee does not express such an opinion.

Based on our review, we are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements.

Respectfully submitted,

The Financial Review Committee  
Emily Monk, Linda Swift, and Megan Whalen

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.

# THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF YORKTOWN

2880 Crompond Road  
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598  
Phone: 914-245-2186  
Worship Service: Sundays at 8:00am and 10:30am  
Sunday School and Adult Education: Sundays beginning at 9:15am  
Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm

**[www.FPCYorktown.org](http://www.FPCYorktown.org)**

Chip Low and Tami Seidel, Co-Pastors  
Garrett Artman, Director of Music Ministry  
Connie Knapp, CRE for Educational Ministries  
Lisa Flanagan, Office Manager  
John Harrigan, Custodian  
Kaycee Perry, Interim Youth Ministry Support  
Beth Gruber, Frank Hodgkinson, and Gregg Nelson, Treasurers

## THE SESSION

### **Class of 2025**

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

### **Class of 2026**

Sheri Gausepohl  
Beth Gruber  
Jeff Kephart  
Dana Mordue  
Ian Spence

### **Class of 2027**

Lynn Edling  
Karen Gerth  
Nathan Perry  
Linda Swift

Youth Elder: Griffin Brown (January 2025—August 2025)  
Anna Hagen (September 2025—August 2026)

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

## THE BOARD OF DEACONS

### **Class of 2025**

Tim Chin  
Nancy Paskin  
Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado  
Ann Timmons

### **Class of 2026**

Allen Arnwine  
Debra Farrell  
Diane Yarris  
John Winget

### **Class of 2027**

Sonia Braham  
Matt Hager  
Lynda Spring  
Nance Thompson

Youth Deacon: Kacey Chin (September 2025—August 2026)

Moderators: Allen Arnwine, John Winget  
Secretary: Nancy Paskin