



# Annual Report

## 2024-2025

as of 6/13/25



**Christ Church**  
+ SUMMIT +

561 Springfield Avenue, Summit, NJ 07901  
Telephone: 908-273-5549 Fax: (call)

[www.ChristChurchSummit.org](http://www.ChristChurchSummit.org)  
[staff@ChristChurchSummit.org](mailto:staff@ChristChurchSummit.org)



## Senior Minister's Report – Rev. Chuck Rush

It was a consequential year that should be filed under “Prayer answered”. After 12 years of start, stall, stop and restart, we finally finished our organ. New pipes in the front and the back of the sanctuary. For a moment, we have one of the finest organs in all the country. And it is paid for.

We had a couple of notable achievements this year that are full of promise. In the fall, I met with Ashley Kile to explore her vision of developing more mission and service trips that are inner-generational. In January, a big group of college students went to Ashville, North Carolina to clean up after the hurricane. Many thanks to my sister-in-law, Anne Bullard, who donated living space at her camp to make it possible.

Ashley also planned a mission trip to Namibia in June/July that will have 26 people serving in an orphanage in Swakopmund. Children, teens, college students, adults and retirees will work together and tour the safari landscape at Etosha National Park.

And we have a retreat planned for Rome in January 2026 that will feature Mark Miller playing organ concerts at the churches, as well as touring opportunities.

If we had one group to recognize for outstanding improvement, it would have to be deacons. This year, John Houston outdid himself and created masterful flower arrangements almost every week of the year. The Deacons distributed those beautiful creations to more people that we pray for during ‘joys and concerns’ than I can ever remember. It promoted community and a sense of support in a year that was socially tumultuous.

Next year, we celebrate 150 years as a congregation, so we have started planning some fun events to mark that milestone. And the Eboard voted to start a “Capital Campaign” that will increase our endowment to where it should be to achieve financial stability. Likewise, we’ve started a “Legacy Society” for bequests to the congregation so we can continue for another 150 years.

Our Music and Fine Arts committee expanded their vision this year, inviting two art displays in Barnwell Hall, featuring the work of Kathy Havens and Neela Pushjabi. Hopefully, we will continue this into the future.

In December, we celebrated the 30 years that I’ve been at the church with all twelve of my grandchildren present. It was a blessing to realize that I’ve raised two generations at Christ Church. On a personal note, we broke ground on a house that we plan to retire to in Hardwick, New Jersey. 2 years of environmental studies with 65 pages of documentation. But this time next year, we should have somewhere to move to in the future.

And this June, we can pronounce the “Juneteenth Gospel Brunch” a sustaining worship experience at Christ Church after three years running. The food is wonderful, and the music has all the magic we expect from Mark Miller and our choir.

We said farewell to Maurice Underhill in May, as he needs to attend to family issues and cannot serve as our sexton. And we expanded the work of Andrew Sfiris, who is our tech guy live streaming worship every week, so that he can do much of the set-up Maurice used to do.

Our seminary intern, Madison Tatum, graduated from Drew Theological School and will be moving soon. We continue to support her as she explores her vocation with a divinity degree.

Our world has been more chaotic than usual with the re-election of Donald Trump. Normally, I don’t mention things like national politics in a Minister’s report, but the division and aggression in our country has not been normal this year. For the historian reading this report

fifty years in the future, it was a time of real elevated stress and disharmony. That has affected what we do in worship and how we support our community.

What it has meant for the staff is an increased need for prayer and vision in a less predictable world and a bigger challenge to create harmony in a world driven by social media echo chambers.

The Rev.

## Associate Minister's Report – Rev Julie Yarborough

Here are some highlights from the 2024-2025 school year:

Last fall, we held our all-church retreat at Ocean Grove from September 27-29 around the theme, "Practicing the Presence of God." 15 participants of all ages spent time in the beautiful location that Ocean Grove has to offer and enjoyed spending time getting to know one another and deepening our spiritual lives. Our first all-church retreat was held in 2013 and through the years, our numbers have declined. Unfortunately, it is no longer cost effective to go away for an entire weekend with such a small group. This fall, we're going to try something new: instead of a weekend-long retreat, we will go to the Family Fun Day at Camp Johnsonburg, a Presbyterian camp about an hour away. Save the afternoon of Sunday, October 5th for this fun, intergenerational event!

During the first week of January, Ashley Kile, Rob Lubin, Andrew Sfiris, Madison Tatum and I took a group of college students to Western NC to provide assistance and offer relief to those who were impacted by Hurricane Helene. We worked in several social service agencies to sort clothes, clean and organize, and cook and serve meals. We worked beside and ate with local folks who told us stories about the grief, sorrow and trauma they experienced in the aftermath of such a huge storm that led to so much devastation. We were honored to serve alongside the people we met and to bear witness to their stories.

In mid-February, I attended a UCC clergy retreat in Maryland, where the guest speaker was Mary Luti, a retired professor from Andover Newton Theological Seminary. The theme was understanding communion as a form of resistance, based on Mary's book, [Do This: Communion for Just and Courageous Living](#). It was an impressive event that inspired me to offer a Lenten series on Communion on Wednesday evenings for the 6 weeks leading up to Easter.

At the end of February, 22 women attended the annual women's retreat, which was held at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in the Berkshires this year. We participated in the Rest and Renewal weekend and gathered together to process our experiences in a room set aside for that purpose. Everyone raved about the experience and we hope to go back with a bigger crowd at some point, opening it up to all adults who wish to participate.

Last year I reported that I started a non-profit called ESHIN (Equitable Solutions for Housing in New Jersey) to develop affordable housing in Essex, Union and Morris Counties. I'm pleased to announce that we have been in discussions with the Borough of Chatham to develop four units of affordable housing. The plans have been presented to the public and the planning board will vote on them on June 18. The Town Council will then vote on June 23. If all goes well, we hope to begin construction sometime this fall! Christ Church member, Bola Lawrence serves on the Board of ESHIN and other church members have been involved to various degrees. If you'd like to be involved in our efforts, please let me know.

On a personal note, I spent some time this year going back and forth to Nashville, TN, as my mom's health declined - first moving her into assisted living, then heading back to Nashville after she died at the end of March, to help my sister clean out her room. Her memorial service will be held on June 20, and we will make another trip down to Tennessee for the celebration of her life, which will be held at Glendale Baptist Church, the church in which I was nurtured, baptized, ordained and married. I want to thank you all for saying prayers, offering hugs, sending cards and flowers and surrounding me with love during these difficult months. The grief is real, but through it all, I have felt your love and support. For that, I am very grateful.

Rev. Julie Yarborough  
Associate Pastor

## Director of Children and Youth Ministries Report

This past year has been one of growth and change. As I move into my seventh year of ministry at Christ Church, I am excited to announce some shifts in our Children and Youth Ministry. In just a few days, a team from Christ Church is heading to Namibia for our first intergenerational service trip. Early this year, we had service teams in Brevard, NC and Yardley, PA, and at the end July we have a team returning to Farmington, Maine.

In addition, we are so fortunate to have a growing group of young adults (18-30 y/o) who have stayed connected to Christ Church, and serve as dedicated Sunday school teachers, youth ministry volunteers, and members of our service teams. As their world expands through education, work, and travel, we are truly blessed when they come home and offer their gifts to our community.

Below is a small window into the Children and Youth (and Young Adult) Ministries at Christ Church.

### Sunday School-

Sunday School is running at pre-pandemic levels with an average of 15 children attending classes each week. Their lessons this year covered Ruth and Naomi, a Lenten Journey with Jesus, the biblical significance of "40", parables of Jesus, and so much more. This summer, our theme is "Love Your Neighbor" and children will be learning ways to love their neighbors close by and around the world.

It is with the sincerest gratitude that I thank Kate Speer for her dedication to the children at Christ Church. She and her family moved to Ocean Grove last June, and while she is no longer able to join us each Sunday, her years of work in this ministry is still felt weekly. We are also so grateful that Bev York for her continued service in our Sunday School program. I am also pleased to announce that Stina Nanaviti has joined our Sunday School team and is assisting with lesson planning and teaching, in addition to redecorating our youth room. I invite you all to introduce yourself to Stina and welcome her to CC.

Finally, a special thank you to Rob, Maura, Christina, Andrew, Ali, Lisa, Lauren, Julia, Jennifer, Naima, Guiliana, Tia and all our dedicated teachers/shepherds who make our Sunday school program a success.

### Service Projects-

**Youth Service Trip to Maine:** Summer 2024 holds a special place in my heart as I lead a team to Farmington, Maine and we partnered with Mission at the Eastward (MATE). M.A.T.E. is the first mission trip I participated in, so it was a joy and an honor to return years later. Our team of 40 youth and adults served the community through home repairs and completed projects on six homes. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to Doug and Krist Witkowski, John and Stina Nanavati, and Derik Bracke for ensuring that our team was safe, well cared for, and able to pick up a few new skills along the way. This year, rural Maine received news that many non-profit organizations would not be able to support families in need, as federal grants were cut. With a record number of applications for much needed home repairs, staff at MATE has been working for months to assess homes and fill the gap. At the end of July, we will return to two of those six home and continue the work we started last summer. In addition, we will connect with two additional families in a trailer neighborhood and work to stabilize/weatherproof their homes. We look forward to developing deeper relationships within this community and our partners at MATE.

***If you would like to support this ministry partnership, please consider joining our team or sending a donation to Christ Church with "Maine Service Trip" in the memo line.***

**College Aged Service Trip to Asheville, NC:** In January, Pastor Julie and I lead a team of young adults to Asheville, NC for a long weekend of service to an area recently devastated by Hurricane Helene. Our team of 16 youth/adults were hosted by Anne, Kate Rush's sister, at her camp. We partnered with World Central Kitchen and Blunt Pretzel, Sharing House, Bread of Life and Haven Family Home, as we prepared and served meals, organized clothing for families, and deep cleaned a family shelter. It was an opportunity for our team to reconnect with old friends, make new friends, and provide hope and support to this loving and resilient community.

Thank you to Anne for providing our accommodations, and to Rob Lubin, Andrew Sfiris, and Madison Tatum for supporting our growing Young Adult ministry.

**Youth Winter Service Weekend in PA:** We returned this winter to Yardley, PA with a team of seven youth and four adults to serve in the Trenton/Philadelphia area. Our teams served at food, clothing, and diaper banks. Their hours of organizing, sorting, cleaning, and counting items helps to ensure families have access to basic needs. This work can be tedious, but the impact is truly lifechanging for so many. In the evening, we enjoyed games and worship with our friends from Yardley United Methodist Church. Thank you to Matt Karpa, Natalie Fidlow, and Julia Speer for chaperoning and encouraging our youth as they play and learn.

**Intergenerational Service Trip to Namibia:** Next week, a team of 24 children, youth, and adults from Christ Church will be traveling to Namibia. We are scheduled to serve in an orphanage, preschool, and participate in village ministry. Thank you to all who have supported our team! I'm sure we will return with many stories to share.

### **Youth Group-**

Youth group continues to meet twice a month during the school year, and our youth enjoyed time together as they participated in scavenger hunts, ate ice cream, played gaga, or attended holiday parties. In addition, our youth enjoyed a ski trip this winter at Shawnee Mountain. Thank you to Jessie Reichart for hosting us at her home in the Poconos, in addition to John Nanaviti and Krista Witkowski for chaperoning, and keeping everyone safe on and off the slopes.

While enjoying fellowship with one another is a focus in youth group, we also look for opportunities to serve in the community. In November, we partnered with Highland Park Reformed Church and built dresses for i-Rise, an organization that settles minor refugees in apartments throughout NJ. In addition, Dean Nelson joined us this fall to teach the importance of native gardens and invited our youth to help plant the garden by the nursery school. Stop by and enjoy this new, beautiful garden- thanks Dean!

### **Confirmation Class-**

This year we had two youth attend our confirmation class and shared in this rite of passage. Caprice Dorflinger and Ian Ross are our newest members of Christ Church- welcome! Thank you to John and Penny Vigilante for serving as wonderful mentors and teaching our youth about the history of Christ Church and Bridges, while providing heartfelt guidance and support. I'd also like to recognize John and Greg who joined our confirmation classes as a way to learn more about Christ Church. We all grew from your insight and words of wisdom.

In closing, I am so grateful for each and every one of you for the continuous support of our Children and Youth Ministries. As we grow and expand to incorporate more opportunities for children, youth, and young adults, and those with a heart to volunteer in our community and around the world, I am reminded that it truly takes a village of dedicated believers to make this ministry possible. Each of you have contributed to this work by offering your time, gifts, donations, and prayers- thank you! I look forward to seeing what this next year brings our way.

Blessings,

Ashley Kile  
Director of Children and Youth Ministries

## Report of the Minister of Music

*We cry God, save us from the troubles of the world  
Can we be the change we long to see?  
We pray Lord, your kingdom come to us upon the earth  
Can we be the change we long to see?*

*We are the love we long to see  
Your love shines through us and that's all we need  
Help us to trust and to believe  
We are the love, we are the love we long to see!*

- Excerpt From my new octavo, "The Love We Long to See"

The music program of Christ Church continues in 2024-2025 in its strong tradition of life-giving sustaining ministry to the congregation and beyond. Thank you to Music and Fine Arts chair, Annie Salorio, who writes about many of the past year's events in her concise and cogent report. I will add that the final installations for pipework, digital stops (Walker) and casework was completed by December and we are very pleased with the outcome from Austin organs!!

I give thanks continually for the heart of our weekly worship and music program, the chancel choir! It is they who come every Wednesday night from 7:30-9:00 p.m. to rehearse and fellowship. Their joyful commitment helps to lift the souls of the congregation Sunday by Sunday. They are: Leslie Adler, Rosie Gaeta, Hedy Tukey, Penny Vigilante, Mia Grizutti, Liz Markay, Jill Bernstein, Brinna Kolitz, Dennis Uhlig, Salia Paul Kamara, Nancy Mion, Erin Mooney, Annie Salorio, Laura Willet, Justin Gonzalez, Ken Grispin, Dean Nielsen, Jeremy Nielsen, CJ Fassl, Deb Trisler, Paul Tukey, Frank Bolden, Tim Dalton, John Houston, Matthew Markay, Julian Wamble, and Jillian Tundidor.

Christ Church is blessed to have Ali Caravano as our Children's Choir Director. She leads our Church Mice and Genesis Choir with energy and encouragement, with her own children, Kira and Leo leading the way! It is an honor to work with Matthew Chi Lee, who conducts the Chancel Choir, accompanies, and leads music for rehearsal and worship when I am away. I couldn't ask for someone more gifted (and humble..with a great sense of humor!) to work with!

This past March the three of us attended the American Choral Director's Association National Conference in Dallas (sponsored by our other music jobs), and I am proud to know we have some of the most highly regarded and skilled musicians in the country at our church!

On a personal note I was humbled last month to receive the Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis for my work in sacred music. I wouldn't be able to compose the congregational and choir music and share it with the larger world if it wasn't for the support of the congregation at Christ Church. To God be the glory.

Faithfully Submitted,



Mark Miller  
Minister of Music

## The Executive Board

### Christ Church Executive Board Chair Reflections

I came to Christ Church about eight years ago, drawn by my deep love for sacred choral and organ music. This month, I conclude my second year as Chair of the Christ Church Executive Board. It has been my honor to serve a church that welcomes people from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, united by a simple and powerful goal: to try to be a better person.

### Major Accomplishments

During my tenure, I am proud to highlight several significant accomplishments that reflect our church's growth, inclusivity, and evolving mission:

- **Strengthening Board Leadership:**

We established a more goal-oriented and adaptable board structure, responsive to the changing needs of today's church community.

- **Record-Breaking Stewardship:**

Under the dedicated leadership of Mary Dickey, Stewardship Committee Chair, we achieved the highest fundraising totals in the church's history over the past two years.

- **Growing Our Congregation:**

Thanks to the efforts of Laura Englehardt, Membership Chair, and the support of Pastor Julie, we have welcomed over **15** families in the past two years.

- **New Committees for a Changing Church:**

- **Green Team:** Focused on beautifying our church grounds and addressing environmental concerns, including climate change.

- **Love and Faith Alliance (LAFa):** Created to foster dialogue and support for our LGBTQ members and their families.

- **Blacks @ Christ Church (B@CC):** Formed in the wake of the last presidential election to offer a safe and supportive space for members of color to share experiences and discuss issues important to them.

- **Heritage Committee:** Established to encourage legacy giving, enabling members to support Christ Church through their estate plans, regardless of contribution size.

- **150th Anniversary Committee:** Initiated to plan a series of events celebrating Christ Church's remarkable 150-year history.

### Closing Thoughts

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this role. It has been a privilege to witness firsthand how our church continues to grow in compassion, inclusivity, and purpose. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for this extraordinary community.

Respectfully submitted,

John Houston  
Executive Board Chair

## **Church Clerk's Report**

### **Christ Church Congregational Meetings 2024-2025**

The Church Clerk recorded the following minutes of congregational meetings:

#### **Christ Church 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting**

Held in-person on June 2, 2024, during the church service at 10:20am

John Huston, Chairperson of the Executive Board, announced that instead of holding a formal annual meeting, a digital copy of the 2023 Annual Report along with the slate of officers for 2024-2025 will be emailed to the congregation. Voting for the officers will take place online. John then called each of the members of the Executive Board up to the front of the church to receive a gift of thanks for their service. At the end of the service, Reverend Julie gave a closing prayer in which she remembered Christ Church members who passed away this year including Pat Kettenring and Sally Weggeland.

Addendum:

The 2024 Slate of Nominees was emailed to the congregation on July 13, 2024, with a link to vote online. The slate was approved unanimously, with 102 votes, which represents a quorum.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jayne Graepel, Clerk

#### **Christ Church Congregational Meeting – 2025 Budget Presentation and Review- Feb 8, 2025**

An informational meeting was held to review the proposed 2025 operational budget for Christ Church and provide an opportunity for questions from the congregation. The meeting was held in-person, immediately following the church service on Sunday February 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:25AM. Chuck began by explaining that today's meeting would provide a review of the budget, and that voting would be held online via survey. He then turned the meeting over to Steve Jones, the Treasurer.

Steve thanked Karen Harrison, Hedy Tukey, and Debra Trisler for their invaluable assistance with the church financial operations. Steve then reviewed the proposed operational budget for 2025, which was distributed to the congregation via email and also handed out during the meeting.

Steve's review included a summary of 2024 performance : Christ Church roughly broke even over the combined 2023-2024 period because of the Matching Challenge Campaign, which raised \$228,000 in 2023. We have exhausted those funds, and although we have made progress in addressing our deficit, we will need to find additional sources of revenue or cut expenses in 2025 and thereafter to remain financially viable. We had a surplus of approximately \$70,000 in 2024 after posting a loss of \$42,000 in 2023. Our revenue materially exceeded budget because of a record level of Pledging (\$667,000) and because Contributions exceeded budget by \$25,000. Our expenses in 2024 were lower than the budget and 2023. Compensation expense was comparable to 2023 and lower than budgeted. Property Managers expenses were \$8,000 lower than 2023 and \$12,000 lower than budget. Miscellaneous expense items, which constitute a smaller portion of total expenses, were also lower than 2023 and budget.

As to the 2025 proposed budget, Steve explained: Our 2025 preliminary budget results in a \$52,000 deficit. A very successful Pledge campaign resulted in a record \$656,000 of Pledges, and an anticipated renegotiation of our lease with Cornerstone School will provide approximately \$35,000 of additional revenue, but the loss of \$114,000 from the Matching Challenge campaign, recognized in 2024, leaves a large hole. Compensation & Benefits and Property Managers represent approximately 90% of our total budgeted expenses of \$995,000. We have budgeted a slight increase in Compensation for 2025. We have budgeted 2025 Property Manager expenses roughly flat with 2024. The Property Managers have succeeded in controlling expenses, but our physical plant is aging and subject to unanticipated expenses. Fortunately, our \$500,000+ reserve will cover the anticipated deficit.

However, going forward, we will need to explore ways to increase revenue, primarily through increased pledging from the congregation in a more targeted stewardship campaign.

Steve then answered questions from members regarding the budget. He turned the meeting over to John Houston, Executive Board Chair, who thanked members of the Board for their hard work this past year, in particular, Lou Blanco who chairs the Property Managers, and Deanna Smeltz and Dave Graepel for their work in re-negotiating the lease with Cornerstone School. John noted that the board will undergo a re-organization this year, in order to meet the changing needs of the congregation.

As per the Church by-laws, the congregation will vote to approve the proposed budget. A survey for the vote was emailed to the congregation on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

Addendum- the 2025 budget was approved by a quorum of members

Respectfully submitted,

Jayne Graepel, Clerk

## **New Members**

### **June 23, 2024**

Bill And Marie LaCurtis

Natalie Fidlow

### **September 15, 2024 (Adult Baptism)**

Lindsay Rosoff

Kristen Perry

### **November 3, 2024**

Madison Tatum

Robin Demillio

Christine Ciano

### **February 2, 2025**

Abiola Fasehun

Ashley Campisano-Cohen

Caroline Love

### **February 9, 2025**

Libby Marotta

Peter Richardson

### **Confirmation Class – May 18, 2025**

Caprice Cayenne Dorflinger

Ian Porter Ross

## **Deaths**

Rev. Robert M. Cassels – August 21, 2024

Lura Hallet Smith - September 23, 2024

June Talbot – December 15, 2024

Jon Lerner – April 26, 2025

Ann Soper – April 27, 2025

## **Baptisms**

Emmaline Formosa – June 9, 2024

Lindsay Rosoff – September 15, 2024

Kristen Perry - September 15, 2024

Montgomery Cole Ford – December 15, 2024

Jabari Kabir Keith Rogers – April 6, 2025

Eliza Mary Cummins – May 11, 2025

## Slate of nominees

### A. EXECUTIVE BOARD

<i>Chair</i>	Deanna Smeltz
<i>Vice Chair</i>	Robin French
<i>Cornerstone Liason</i>	TBD
<i>Clerk</i>	Jayne Graepel
<i>Treasurer</i>	Steve Jones

#### Members-at-Large

<i>Communications</i>	OPEN
<i>Planning</i>	OPEN
<i>Staff Relations</i>	OPEN

#### Chairs of Boards

<i>Board of Membership</i>	Laura Ann
<i>Board of Deacons</i>	TBD
	Eboard Representative
<i>Board of World Fellowship</i>	Anne Kennison
<i>Board of Property Mgrs</i>	Lou Blanco
<i>Borad of Music &amp; Fine Arts</i>	Annie Salorio
<i>Board of Resources</i>	Mary Dickey

### B. BOARDS OF THE CHURCH

#### 1. DEACONS

Robin French	Trudy Noonan	Barry Pilgrim
Krista Witkowski	Dolly Blanco	Pam Morse
Hedy Tukey	Laura O'Rourke	Andrew Froehlich
Tony Forman	Suzie Wall	Paul Judicke

#### 2. FINANCE


**3. MEMBERSHIP**

Laura Ann, chair Lynn Richardson Laura O'Rourke	Ginny Jordan Sue Salsberry Carol Angle	Jeff Andrienas Chuck Gelber Andrew Miller
---	--	---

**4. PROPERTY MANAGERS**

Louis Blanco Stewart Trisler Chuck Gelber	Chuck Mixon Frederick Taylor-Kincaid Peter Richardson	Al Pastino
---	---	------------

**5. RESOURCES**

Mary Dickey Debra Trisler (design)		
---------------------------------------	--	--

**6. RETF**

Chair OPEN Don Richards B. Von Klemperer	Ed Walter Dave Graepel Frank Bolden	Donovan Sherman Janet Quatarone Bola Lawrence
--	---	---

**7. WORLD FELLOWSHIP**

Anne Kennison, chair Rob Morse Patty O'Neill	Mila Trigos Dave Bunting Roz Kendellen	Yesenia Reichart Bill LaCurtis Dean Nielsen
--	--	---

**8. FAITH FORMATION**

Christina Froehlich John Ross, co chairs Caroline Love Lauren Van Orden	Krista Witkowski Kate Speer Christine Ciano Mark DeMillio	Bev York Lynn Richardson Lisa Cardinal
--	--	--

**9. MUSIC & ARTS**

Anne Salorio, chair Manish Ambre Brina Kolitz Ed Walter	Kim Reynolds Patty O'Neill Lizanne Ceconi	Cary Hardy Nancy Mion Rosemarie Gelber
--	---	--

**C. CHARTERED COMMITTEES**

**1. AUDIT**


**2. COMMUNICATIONS**

TBD		



**4. PERSONNEL**

TBD		

**5. CHURCH LIFE**

Penny Vigilante Claire Rupkey		

**6. ASSISTANT TREASURERS**

Karen Harrison Hedy Tukey		

**D. OTHER COMMITTEES**

**MEMORIAL GARDEN**

John Houston

**GREENFAITH COMMITTEE**

**Jennifer Nielsen**  
Jill Berstein  
Nancy Davies

**USHERS**

Terry Baker  
Rosemary Gelber  
Chuckl Gelber  
Lou & Dolly Blanco  
Kate Blanco  
Annabelle O'Brien  
Lynn Richardson  
Chuck Mixon  
Daryl & Rob Lubin  
Rosoff Family  
Noonan Family  
Hayes Family  
Guida Family

**SUNDAY SCHOOL  
PLANNING**

Stina Nanavati

**FINANCIAL SECRETARIES**

Brian Angle  
Tom Cummins  
John Ahlbeck

**ASSISTANT FINANCIAL  
SECRETARIES**

Lizanne Ceconi  
Heather Landsittel

**PAYROLL**

Debra Trisler

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

John Houston  
(Need Volunteers)

**LONG TERM PLANNING**

**Terry Baker**  
Ryan Mathias  
Deanna Smeltz  
M. Taylor-Kincaid  
Toiya Facey

## Financial Secretary/Board of Resources 2024-2025

### Financial Secretaries Report

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Number of Pledges	137	128
Total Amount Pledged	\$639,071	\$656,435
Total Received on Those Pledges	\$658,473	
Number of Pledges Met	98	
Number of Pledges Exceeded	14	
Number of Uncompleted Pledges	25	
General Contributions (non-pledgers)	\$97,238	
Donations to SOS	\$16,096	\$14,615 (to date)

The pledge drive for 2025 resulted in an increase of 3%, despite 9 fewer donors.

Automatic recurring online donations are used by 43 donors, with another 10 donors sending recurring checks directly from their bank accounts.

Statements were sent via email in February of 2025 to all donors that contributed \$250 or more in 2024, and included amounts paid as pledges, general contributions, and SOS contributions. During 2024, emails were sent mid-year and again before year-end to all pledgers showing all payments received. Giving statements are available at any time on-line, via a secure, password-protected account.

Brian Angle, Tom Cummins and John Ahlbeck

## **Treasurer's Report for the Year 2024-2025**

Please refer to the page showing Christ Church's financial performance in 2024 and approved budget for 2025.

**The church ran a very successful Matching Challenge Campaign in early 2023 and raised \$228,000, of which we included as revenue half in 2023 and half in 2024. As a result, we lost \$42,000 in 2023 but ran a surplus of \$70,000 in 2024. Because those funds are exhausted, we have budgeted a \$50,000 loss for 2025 and must again address our financial viability.**

Please see a brief description of the 2024 results and 2025 budget below:

### **2024 Performance**

The church had income of approximately \$70,000 in 2024 after posting a deficit of \$42,000 in 2023. Pledges received exceeded plan in 2024 by \$32,000 and Contributions were ahead of plan by \$34,000. Compensation & Benefits were \$12,000 less than plan. Property Managers expense was less than budget by \$12,000 due to a variety of factors. Other expenses were in line with plan.

### **2025 Approved Budget**

Our 2025 budget results in a \$52,000 deficit. Pledges for 2025 are down \$12,000 versus what we received in 2024. We have budgeted Contributions roughly flat with 2024 Contributions. We have budgeted an increase in rent from the Cornerstone School of approximately \$40,000. That increase has not been agreed as of this report. If it does not materialize, our budgeted deficit will be significantly larger. Compensation & Benefits and Property Managers represent approximately 90% of our total budgeted expenses of \$996,000. We budgeted a 3% increase in staff compensation for 2025. We have budgeted 2025 Property Manager expenses roughly flat with 2024, but we have limited visibility on what we will need to spend.

**The Executive Board is addressing the church's financial position as our present course will be difficult to sustain.**

**Christ Church Summit**  
**Income & Expense - Budget vs. Actual**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2024**

Income	<u>2024 Actual</u>	<u>2025 Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Pledges	667,500.00	656,000.00	-11,500.00
Contributions	104,100.00	100,000.00	-4,100.00
Matching Challenge	114,300.00	0.00	-114,300.00
Cash in Plate	16,200.00	15,000.00	-1,200.00
Building Use	135,900.00	172,000.00	36,100.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>1,038,000.00</u>	<u>943,000.00</u>	<u>-95,000.00</u>
Expense			
Compensation & Benefits	582,800.00	602,000.00	19,200.00
Property Managers	272,800.00	275,000.00	2,200.00
Music & Fine Arts	24,000.00	24,000.00	0.00
Board of World Fellowship	8,000.00	8,000.00	0.00
Denomination Payments	9,500.00	9,500.00	0.00
Christian Education	7,800.00	10,000.00	2,200.00
Office Expenses	18,900.00	20,000.00	1,100.00
Information Technology	16,600.00	17,000.00	400.00
Video Production	17,300.00	18,000.00	700.00
Deacons	6,400.00	7,000.00	600.00
Church Life	2,300.00	3,000.00	700.00
Race Equity Taskforce	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Other Expenses	1,300.00	1,000.00	-300.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>967,700.00</u>	<u>995,500.00</u>	<u>27,800.00</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><b>70,300.00</b></u>	<u><b>-52,500.00</b></u>	<u><b>-122,800.00</b></u>

## **Board of Deacons 2024-2025**

### **Deacons Committee**

***Submitted by Robin French & Paul Judicke - May 29, 2025***

### **Committee members for 2025-26**

Dolly Blanco  
Tony Forman  
Robin French  
Andrew Froehlich  
Paul Judicke  
Trudy Noonan  
Laura O'Rourke  
Barry Pilgrim  
Hedy Tukey  
Krista Witkowski

### **Committee Activities**

Deacons supply, prepare and administer the Eucharist and deliver Easter lilies, Christmas poinsettias and altar flowers to parishioners; support members of our church family; and change the paraments according to the church calendar.

The Deacon group has distributed over 160 flower bouquets to parishioners, visitors, guest speakers, and performers, sharing Christ Church's support for those in recovery or grief and celebrating achievements.

In June 2025, the Reverends and the Chair (TBD) will finalize the 2025-2026 Deacon roster.

New and existing Deacon training will commence in late summer/early fall after the 2025-2026 Deacon roster has been finalized.

## **Board of Faith Formation**

The faith formation committee had a successful year of leading faith-based events for all ages outside of worship. Ashley worked with various volunteers to provide a weekly children's Christian education program for prek- grade 5 that was well attended. Ashley led both the middle school and high school youth groups. Multiple service trips were arranged for the youth group and young adults by Ashley, including a trip to Maine, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. The faith formation committee added a few new activities this year including a Valentine Card making event for the seniors of Summit. We continued traditions like the Advent festival and Halloween party for youth. Several adult education events took place this year, many under the leadership of Julie. The Women's Retreat was well attended, as were a number of after church discussion groups. We hope to continue to build on our successes this year in the fall and would love to add new members to our group with new ideas for programming.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Christina Froehlich and John Ross, co-chairs

## **Board of Property Managers 2024-2025**

The Christ Church property managers are responsible for the maintenance, repair and operations of the sanctuary, Cornerstone School and the parsonage, including buildings as well as grounds. Property Managers oversee the services of numerous outside contractors who provide the many services required by the Church such as sanitation, grounds maintenance, cleaning, inspections, elevator service, electrical, plumbing, etc.

The property managers also oversee and approve the rental of the church's facilities to outside organizations.

The active members of the property management team include Lou Blanco, Fredrick Kincaid and Chuck Mixon.

### **Major completed projects is year include:**

- Extensive work to seal the stone parapets above the Cornerstone school, which was completed last summer and has, so far, been effective in preventing leaks.
- Resetting the pavers outside of the entrance to the Cornerstone School.
- Replacing the windows in the offices used by the Student Partner Alliance.

### **Pending projects, with fairly high priority include:**

- Replacing the heating system for Lyle Hall.
- Replacing the kitchen grease trap.
- Repairing the stucco on the Barnwell Hall building.
- Repairing roof leaks in the vicinity of the music room.
- Misc. masonry repairs.

Maintaining the church's facilities is a monumental and often expensive task. The aim of the property managers is to prioritize our many needs, select reliable, qualified vendors and maintain our facilities in pristine condition while staying within budget.

It is an honor to be entrusted with this responsibility and a pleasure working with our team members. Also, I would be remiss if I didn't credit Brenda Dodds for her day-to-day involvement with the many people who use our facilities and the many vendors that provide us with services.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Louis Blanco

## Finance Committee

This is the report of the Finance Committee for 2024-25

Our principal focus of 2024 was the annual Stewardship Campaign. We set a goal that matched our projected operating budget for 2025: \$775,000.

See below:

- There were 128 pledges, 9 less than last year, for a total of \$656,435. This is the highest pledge total ever! But the lowest number of pledges.
- The increased total was due to increases in pledge amounts from over a third of existing members.
- The number of pledging families has shown a persistent decline since 2021.
- Most of the dropouts were in the lower ranges, while there were several stepups in the higher levels. 49 families increased their pledge.
- Overall, total pledge dollars were up 3%, and the average pledge increased 10% to \$5,128.
- 84% of last year's pledgers made a pledge for 2025. We lost 22 pledgers, and gained 13.
- New and returning pledges totalled \$40,701. Lost pledges totalled \$65,265.
- The number of brand new pledgers was 8. Their average pledge was \$3,138.

In addition to the Stewardship Campaign, we began development of a planned giving campaign: The Legacy Society, which will focus on bequests. This program will be announced in September and guided by Cary Hardy.

We are also in the process of exploring a Capital Campaign to focus on establishing an endowment for the church.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Dickey  
Chair

## Board of World Fellowship 2024-2025

The Board of World Fellowship is the outreach arm of Christ Church, charged with the oversight of funds that benefit from the generosity of our congregation. All donations are made to charities to advance their missions, as well as the mission of Christ Church.

**3Kings Gift** World Fellowship uses its allotment from the church's annual budget to make gifts to three different charities. World Fellowship has been allotted \$8,000 from the church's budget and decided to award the 3Kings Gifts to three organizations that had been suggested by church members in the past. This year, too, World Fellowship decided to forego having the congregation vote but to award each organization an equal amount, \$2,500. The three recipients are: *The Other Fellow First Foundation* (Summit) which helps local individuals and families in need in our area; the *York Street Project* (Jersey City), which works with homeless women and families in Jersey City; and *All Hands and Hearts* (Mattapoisett, MA), which recruits volunteers to rebuild communities around the world devastated by disasters like hurricanes.

**Margaret Baker Fund** Margaret Baker was a long-time member of the church and a teacher who left a generous bequest to Christ Church. The Margaret Baker Fund is used to give a local organization a grant for three years in a row; typically the gift goes to support a specific educational project.

Early in 2024 we began the process to find a new recipient. Roz Kendellen led the effort and ultimately presented five applicants to World Fellowship. After interviewing each organization, in December we chose *Keys2Success*, which "brings quality music education to students starting in Pre-K in the most underserved areas of Newark." *Keys2Success* received its first gift of \$4,000, at the worship service on January 19, 2025.

Because we were impressed by the other applicants, we voted to give each organization a one-time gift from SOS funds: Pillar Care Continuum (East Hanover); Our House Foundation (New Providence); EPIC Inclusive Communities (Bergen County); and Sage Eldercare (Summit).

**SOS – Seasons of Sharing** World Fellowship administers the church's SOS fund, which was established over 80 years ago, and is currently the largest source of outreach funding at Christ Church. Each year during Lent, the congregation is asked to support SOS. In spring 2025, members gave over \$14,000 to SOS, and we know additional funds will come in during the year. World Fellowship also uses unspent SOS funds from prior years.

SOS funds are used locally and internationally, to help non-profits that respond to acute situations (like hurricanes and wildfires) and to those dealing with ongoing problems (like climate change and food scarcity).

Between May 1, 2024, and April 30, 2025, World Fellowship made sixteen SOS grants, ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000, to fourteen organizations: **International:** Action Against Hunger, for general support; Foreign Aid Bridge, to help support projects abandoned by the US government earlier this year; SHOFCO (Shining Hope for Communities) for Kenyan flood relief; Water for South Sudan; World Central Kitchen for Gaza relief. **Natural Disasters:** UCC Global Hope, two gifts – one in the wake of Hurricane Helene, and the other after the wildfires in Los Angeles; World Central Kitchen after the wildfires in Los Angeles. **New York/New Jersey:** Covenant House to help youth at risk; EPIC

Inclusive Communities; ESHIN (Equitable Solutions for Housing in New Jersey); Our House Foundation; Pillar Care Continuum; Sage Eldercare; StayTough;Fight Hard; and Summit Interfaith Council Anti-Racism Committee.

**Volunteer Opportunities** World Fellowship was not able to organize a volunteer effort this past year.

**Members:** The members of the Board of World Fellowship for 2024-25 were: Dave Bunting, Roz Kendellen, Anne Kennison, Bill LaCurtis, Dean Nielsen, Patty O'Neill and Jessie Reichart. World Fellowship is looking for new members to help Christ Church continue to help those in need.

Submitted by

Anne Kennison, Chair

## Membership Board

The Membership Committee organized two types of events this year: New Member Sundays and Small Gatherings. During New Member Sundays, the Congregation welcomes new members into the church. This year, we had nine people/households join Christ Church. Small Gatherings are held off-site with a limited guest list to enable new joiners, as well as prospective members, to meet existing members in a casual and relaxed social setting. We held four small gatherings this year. We are thinking of introducing casual get togethers at the Office as an additional way to encourage socialization, but open it to all Christ Church members.

Our goals for next year are to work on modifying the church website, hold four New Member Sundays, three Small Gatherings, to continue our revisions of the new member packets, and to provide education to the congregation regarding inviting friends and acquaintances to church.

New Christ Church Households:

Summer: Natalie Fidlow

Fall: Ciano Family, DeMilio Family, Tatum Family

Winter: Abby Fasehun, Ashely Campisano-Cohen, Caroline Love, Marotta family

Spring: Pete Richardson



Finally, we are growing the membership of our Membership Committee, and will add three new members to start next year (Chuck Gelber, Erica Malik, and Andrew Miller). The current Committee consists of: Jeff Andrienas, Carol Angle, Laura Engelhardt, Laura O'Rourke, Lynn Richardson, and Susan Salsberry.

Sincerely,

Laura Anne, Chair

## **Board of Music & Arts 2024-2025**

### **Committee members for 2024-25**

Mark Miller, Minister of Music  
Anne Salorio, Chair  
Lizanne Ceconi  
Rosemarie Gelber  
Cary Hardy  
Ed Walter

### **Musical Programs**

Sunday, June 16, 2024 – *Juneteenth Gospel Brunch* – Music and Fine Arts once again collaborated with the Race Equity Task Force to put together a special Sunday worship service featuring a catered brunch and joyful gospel music from Christ Church members and friends. We hope this is a Christ Church tradition that will endure, especially in these turbulent times. It is an event that offers beauty, fellowship, and celebration. A suggested donation of \$25.00 was collected to help cover the costs of food and promotion.

This event will be back for its third year on Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup>! This year, we are offering the suggested donation in advance through the church website - \$35.00 for adults, \$10.00 for kids 12 and under. At the door, the suggested donation will be \$40.00 for adults, \$15.00 for children under 12. We are also working with a different caterer, while also utilizing the cooking talents of some neighbors and community members.

Sunday, December 15, 2024 – *Organ Dedication* - After many years of anticipation, we were finally able to offer a full recital for our newly refurbished pipe organ! Featuring Mark Miller and William Rehwinkel, with special guest artists Silky Carter and Julian Wamble, the evening was a beautiful way to honor the major donors who made this project possible. Free will donations were accepted at the door, and the event was followed by a reception with drinks and light refreshments.

Sunday, December 22, 2024 – *Annual Holiday Cabaret* – Performers new and old performed a range of festive classics at this highlight event of the winter calendar. Guests participated in sing-along songs in between performers, enjoyed a range of snacks and drinks, and embraced a relaxed community atmosphere before the holiday rush. Suggested donations of \$20.00 were collected to help cover costs of food and drink.

Sunday, February 23, 2025 – *Let Justice Roll* – Our beloved Black History Month concert returned to Christ Church this year! Featuring the Christ Church Chancel Choir and invited singers and instrumentalists, this show's message and music were enthusiastically received by audience members. A suggested donation of \$30.00 adults and \$15.00 for children 12 and under was collected at the door.

### **Visual Arts**

May and June 2025 – “Kathy Havens Solo Art Show” - Longtime member and local artist Kathy Havens has an ongoing art show at the church, with paintings displayed in Barnwell Hall. Featuring many landscape and still life paintings, the art is a beautiful and welcome addition to the space. The show was launched on May 18<sup>th</sup>, with coffee hour in Barwell to encourage the congregation to view the artwork. Kathy was also available to answer any questions.

## **Upcoming Events**

September 5, 2025 – *Bobby Jo Valentine Concert* - Singer-songwriter Bobby Jo Valentine reached out to Christ Church a few months ago to propose a concert. Drawn to our community because of its open and affirming declaration and commitment to inclusivity, he is excited to meet us and potentially bring a new audience into our space. We are considering folding this concert into the church's annual "Welcome Back" activities. More details TBD.

October 2025 – *Neela Pushparaj Solo Art Show* - Another friend of the church community has expressed interest in a Fall art show. More details TBD.

And more to come....

*Thank you for the incredible opportunity to share the arts with the church community!*

## **Memorial Garden**

We still hope to see the plaques containing nameplates removed from the exterior walls of the atrium and returned to the Memorial Garden area at the top of the stairs, where they were housed for decades before Barnwell Hall construction required their removal. Funds have not been available.

The Memorial Garden continues to be a place for quiet meditation, reflection and prayer, and provides a final resting place for former members and friends of Christ Church. It is supported by donations and fees: \$750 per member and \$1500 per non-member, which includes an inscribed bronze nameplate. Spaces can be reserved by sending a letter of intention, with payment, to the Christ Church Administrator, Brenda Dodds.

John Houston, Chair

## **Race Equity Task Force 2024-2025**

No report submitted

## **Shawl Ministry**

The shawl ministry is a virtual group at Christ Church. We do not have meetings. We are a group of women who knit or crochet shawls at our leisure to be donated to members of Christ Church or to other people in need of comfort. They are given to Rev Julie Yarborough to give to the people who need them. She knows the needs of the congregation.

We are listed with the national group Prayer Shawl Ministry. <http://www.shawlministry.com/>  
We could use more members. We have the directions for the basic shawl or they can be obtained from the Prayer Shawl website. We also have yarn that has been donated that people can use.

Cathy Doremus and Trudy Noonan  
Shawl Ministry

## **In Rememberance**

Together we remember the vital contributions of those members of Christ Church who died this past year.

*Requiem aeternam donei, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis. Requiescant in pace. Amen*

Rev. Robert M. Cassels – August 21, 2024

Lura Hallet Smith - September 23, 2024

June Talbot – December 15, 2024

Jon Lerner – April 26, 2025

Ann Soper – April 27, 2025