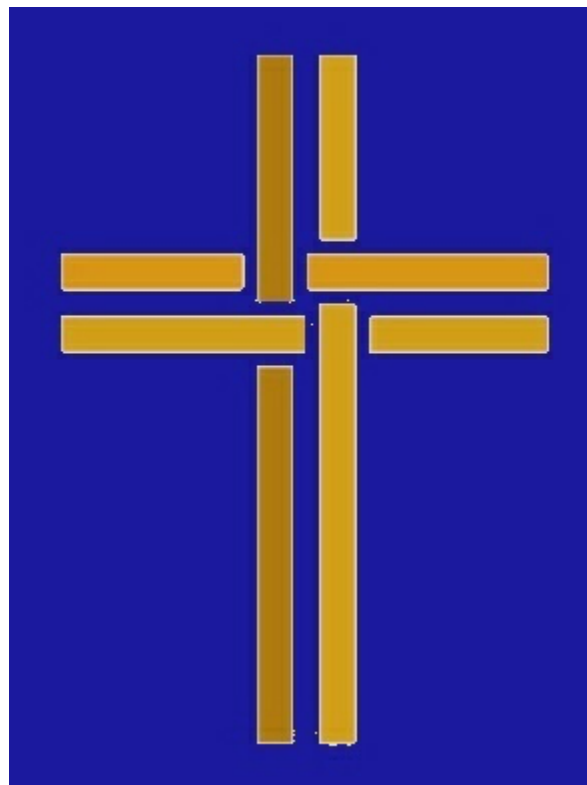




# Annual Report 2023-2024 as of 6/2/24



**Christ Church**  
+ SUMMIT +

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

None of us could have predicted that the consequences of the Covid pandemic would have been as dramatic as they have been. We didn't go back to the forms of community we had before. Our technology started bringing clothing, then food, to us with impressive efficiency, and it cultivated a self-referential disposition that has only grown.

We emerged from isolation, but we were permanently changed. How we were changed has not yet been analyzed, so we are looking at a group of symptoms that cannot be properly diagnosed. I spent the year on Zoom calls with pastors all across our country (and Canada) who reported the same symptoms with the same confusion about what it means.

I'm sure if I could access a wider perspective, I would be able to see a dramatic transformation of church culture happening around me. The institutional form of church that I inherited right out of college still had a functioning Sunday School for kids of all ages and a committee structure that mirrored the schools, the Y, and other Civic organizations like the Rotary Club.

I told Bev York (Bev is 92) that I'm pronouncing that era officially over. But what is emerging to take its place is less clear institutionally. So, we have a stubborn deficit of \$100k that needs to be addressed, and we all know that it won't be addressed by simply repeating what was successful for us in the past. We are in the midst of a more profound shift than tinkering around the edges.

The good news is that we have more new names on our list of people who attend than I can remember. And people connect with us online from farther away than ever, so the diaspora of Christ Church folks around the country remains connected longer.

Right now, we are evolving our website, the front door to the church that most of our visitors enter before they set foot on the property. Our marketing team, led by Khurram Malik, Ed Walter, Deb Trisler, John Houston, and Annie Salario, is developing our brand.

Our tech guys, led by Andrew Sfiris, captured wonderful footage on Sunday of Julian Wamble, Justin Gonzalez, and our kids singing wonderful pieces. We are planning to release the footage online and start creating meme trends by having our members repost it on their social media feeds.

Dave Graepel and Deanna Smeltz have been renegotiating our lease agreement with Cornerstone Nursery School to ease our debt burden. Lou Blanco has been reviewing all of our property expenditures with helpful effect.

I speak for the church's leadership when I say that I'm tired of being the best-kept secret in Union County. It is time for us to bust out. So, this summer, I will be in the office a lot more than usual, coordinating the groups that will develop our outreach. We will be

invested in creating worship services that are in sync with what is happening in the world around us all summer long.

Particularly in July, I'll be reading through the gospel of Luke, leading us in reflections on Jesus' teaching rather than the teaching about Jesus that we grew up with. We are shaping piety for our age.

I ask that you pray for your church that we will be inspired to imagine the institutional implications of that piety and figure out how to engage each other as 'contributors' to our community. This is the biggest challenge I've faced as a clergyman in my adult life. Sometimes, it hurts my head trying to imagine something genuinely novel. But I feel like we are on the cusp of a breakthrough. Pray that we transcend the present impasse.

The Rev.

## Associate Minister's Report – Rev Julie Yarborough

Dear Friends,

As we come to the end of the 2023-2024 school year and look back to all that we accomplished as a faith community, I'd like to share some of my highlights.

Serving as staff mentor for our ministry intern from Drew Theological School, Madison Tatum, was a pleasure. During her 8 months with us, Madison engaged in many different aspects of ministry. She led small groups, assisted with youth ministry, attended the Summit Interfaith Council meetings, assisted in worship and preached a sermon that ended in a standing ovation. She clearly has the gifts and skills to serve as a pastor and our congregation is grateful to play a part in that process. This year, with Madison's leadership, the Love and Faith Alliance (LAFA) group was formed as a support group for members and friends of Christ Church who identify as LGBTQ+. It's still going strong under the leadership of John Tkcasz and Greg Huff.

On June 9, 2024, Christ Church will host a table at the North Jersey PRIDE Event in Maplewood. We've been hosting a table at this event since at least 2015, and for a number of years, we were one of the only faith communities there. It's a fun, family-friendly event and we always meet a number of folks who are looking for a church home and are surprised to discover that they are welcome at Christ Church, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In September 2023, Christ Church celebrated Homecoming and encouraged people to bring friends to join us. There was a full weekend of activities, starting with a reception and concert on Friday night. We had planned for a street fair on Saturday and invited our neighbors in the surrounding community to join us, by going door-to-door with postcard fliers. Unfortunately, heavy rain had us cancel those plans, but it didn't dampen our spirits. That evening, Justin Gonzalez and friends entertained us with a brilliant show of comedy, magic and music. Unfortunately, the rain continued to fall that week and our intergenerational all-church retreat the following weekend had to be canceled at the last minute due to flooding in Ocean Grove. The dates for our upcoming All-Church retreat are September 28-30, 2024. Please save the date and plan to join us for this fun and engaging retreat for all ages!

The organization *Sacred Reckonings* held a virtual workshop to talk about churches and reparations in November. Mary Dickey, John Houston, Bola Lawrence, Donovan Sherman, Janet Quartarone and I all attended. We learned that the work of reparations for white supremacy and our country's history of enslavement is not solely about financial recompense, but encompasses spiritual practice, relationship, political solidarity, truth-telling and wealth return. Along with the Race Equity Task Force at Christ Church, we will be offering opportunities for our congregation to learn more and to delve into this important work of repairing past injustices.

The Progressive Dinner was held in January, with a wildly successful turn-out, thanks to the hard work of Penny Vigilante and Claire Rupkey. We thank Lauren and Michael Garvey for hosting the cocktail party and all the dinner hosts for opening their homes and offering the gift of hospitality!

At the end of January, I led a Civil Rights Pilgrimage for a group of 26 people from Christ Church and the Union Congregational Church in Montclair to Birmingham, Selma, Montgomery and Atlanta. We had the chance to visit historic locations and hear from people who participated in the Civil Rights Movement as children and teenagers. I will be leading another pilgrimage to the same locations from October 22-27, 2024, so please let me know if you'd like to come!

Our women's retreat was held March 2-3 at the St. Marguerite's Retreat House, Mendham, NJ. The topic was *Making a Way in the Wilderness: Finding your Way in Times of Transition*. We walked the labyrinth, participated in discussions and prayer stations, created art and worshiped together. Each year the retreat offers opportunities to relax, spend time in community with other women and explore spiritual themes.

Last summer, I started working in earnest to start a non-profit organization to develop affordable housing in Union, Essex and Morris Counties with the approval of the Executive Board and the help of Sara MacDonald, Bola Lawrence and a few other folks. I'm thrilled to announce that ESHIN Affordable Housing Corporation is now a reality! We are currently filing paperwork to become a 501(c)3 and looking for our first project.

After 28 years of serving as your Associate Pastor, I can't imagine being on staff in any other church. I am immensely grateful to be able to work with such a talented and congenial staff - Chuck, Mark, Brenda, Ashley, Ali, and Matt. What a blessing it is to worship, laugh and cry, sing and pray, work for justice and welcome others alongside all of you.

Grace and Peace,  
Rev. Julie Yarborough

## Director of Children and Youth Ministries Report

It's hard to believe that we have been serving in ministry together for five years. I was reminded this fall, in a time of personal and professional transition, how truly fortunate I am to be part of a supportive team of colleagues.

Christ Church is a special community, and we have many ongoing activities for the children and youth at CC, from birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I invite you to read about these ministries and reach out to me if you have any questions or you would like to become involved. New ideas, lessons, teachers, and volunteers are always welcome!

**Sunday School-** Our Sunday School ministry is always evolving and this past spring we noticed that we have enough middle school youth to bring back that class a few times a month. We continue to offer preschool/kindergarten classes for our littlest disciples, and our elementary class is usually bursting with inquisitive minds. Our workshops were able to include baking activities, which the kids all loved, in addition to our stories, art projects, and games. Our lessons this past year included the miracles of Jesus, Paul's journey, and the legend of St. Patrick as he taught the trinity.

It is with sincerest gratitude that I thank Kate Speer for her 15+ years and Bev York for her 60+ years of service to this ministry. Their dedication to the Sunday School program at Christ Church truly would not be what it is without these two amazing women. In addition, Julia Speer has been assisting teaching our Church Mice choir with Ms. Ali for several years and this past year did a beautiful job instructing our preschool/Kinder class. Please join me in wishing all the best to Kate, Julia, and their family as they move to Ocean Grove later this month, and Julia as she begins college this fall. They will all be dearly missed but we hope they return to Christ Church often.

Finally, a special thank you to Rob, Maura, Christina and Andrew, Ali, and our dedicated teachers who make our Sunday school program a success. Sunday school will continue to be offered throughout the summer. Our theme is Caring for God's creation, as we plan a native plant garden which we hope to plant this fall. Thank you to Dean Neilson for providing resources and helping us with this project- we look forward to it.

**Nursery Care-** This year, our nursery received a much-needed remodel. New floors and an area rug were installed over the winter, making the space easier to clean. Thank you to Paul Delaney for his oversight on this project. We also installed a TV in the nursery so families can watch the service while their little ones play. In April, we made the hard decision to transition away from paying weekly nursery staff as we currently do not have any little ones who stay in the nursery without a caregiver. The children celebrated Kimberly Mayorga, and Carol Torres for their many years of service to Christ Church with a little party, cards, and gifts. Our little ones are always welcome to join us in service, but please feel free to visit our nursery if your little one needs a safe place to play.

**Youth Group-** Summer 2023 was full of adventure as six adults and 18 youth from Christ Church traveled to Fairbanks, Alaska. This wonderful team spent five days in service as we constructed a handicap ramp at a disaster relief warehouse, and sheetrocked three cabins at a Christian camp for at risk teens. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to Doug and Krist Witkowski, John Nanavati, Derik Bracke, and Toiya Facey for ensuring that our team was safe, well cared for, and able to pick up a few new skills along the way.

Later this month, this team will be partnering with Central Presbyterian Church, as 27 youth/adults from CC, and 12 youth/adults from CPC travel to Farmington, Maine. Our team of nearly 40 participants will be providing much needed home repairs for low-income families. Thank you for your prayers and financial support of this dedicated team! Special thanks to Jennifer Neilson for sharing a few delicious recipes to enjoy during our soup fundraiser in February.

Youth group continued to meet twice a month, and our youth enjoyed time together ice skating, eating ice cream followed by gaga, or attending holiday parties. In April, Milla Trigos shared a special gift with

our youth as we all learned how to make Ukranian Eggs. This activity required a lot of patience and focus but was enjoyed by all. Thank you, Milla, for bringing this tradition to Christ Church.

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. That same weekend, we have several other teams cooking meals for Summit Warm Heart and helping a fellow church member with their home.

In January, also took a team of three adults and nine youth to Yardley, PA for a weekend where we are organizing a diaper bank in Trenton and a clothing panty in Warminster, PA. Special thanks to Madison Tatum and Natalie Fidlow for chaperoning this team.

Madison was a vital part of our youth ministry this past year. She shared many gifts with our church family but was a special blessing to our youth on Sunday evenings. Her welcoming presence and inciteful commentary will be missed.

**Confirmation Class-** We now run on a bi-annual schedule for confirmation class, with anyone entering 7th grade or older invited to join us this fall. If you are interested in registering, please email me at your earliest convenience so that I can include you on our mailing list.

As I reflect on my past five years, I am so grateful for each and every one of you for the continuous support of our Children and Youth Ministries. It is a sign of vitality and health within a church community when *all* members of a church, not just those with children in programming, prioritize and uplift children, youth and family programs. Thank you for all the love you pour into our children and youth daily.

Blessings,

Ashley Kile  
Director of Children and Youth Ministries

## Report of the Minister of Music

*So, do something that will not compute.  
Love the Lord. Love the world.  
Love someone who does not deserve it.*

*Be like the fox, who makes tracks  
Sometimes in the wrong direction.  
Practice resurrection*

- Excerptps From *Manifesto: Mad Farmer's Liberation Front*, by Wendell Berry

I am happy to report the state of Christ Church's music and worship program is strong! Please see Annie Salorio's wonderful report on the Music & Fine Arts Committee to read up on all the past year's events.

Thanks to a committed core of active choir members and frequent guests, music and worship continue to animate the beating heart of this thriving community. A heart full of gratitude to these special musical souls who come weekly to rehearse and share their gifts with the congregation:

Leslie Adler, Rosie Gaeta, Hedy Tukey, Penny Vigilante, Liz Markay, Jill Bernstein, Brinna Kolitz Annie Salorio, Laura Willet, Justin Gonzalez, Ken Grispin, Dean Nielsen, Jeremy Nielse, Madison Tatum, Deb Trisler, Paul Tukey, Frank Bolden, Tim Dalton, John Houston, Matthew Markay, Jan Ettienne Jusino Medina, Griffin Shoemaker, Julian Wamble, and Jillian Tundidor.

This year we were blessed to see Austin Organ Company install beautiful new facades for the pipe organ in the chancel. Although the pipes in this casework do not speak, the casework that should be delivered by summer's end for the gallery organ *will* have speaking pipes. We look forward to hosting a number of celebrations when the organ is Finally completed in the coming season!

An annual note of shout-outs to my fantastically talented and committed colleagues, Ali Caravano, Children's Choir Director and Matthew Chi Lee, assistant conductor and musician!

Our dear friend and musician extraordinaire Daniel Rufolo has moved to Los Angeles with his wife Ellie (congratulations!) to pursue a career in composing. We are proud of you Dan and wish you continued joy & success!

On a personal note, I am deeply thankful that the congregation and my ministry colleagues support my ministry as a composer of congregational songs and choir music. It is both gratifying and humbling to know that the music I compose helps offer spiritual formation to the rising generation of our church and faith communities everywhere.

Faithfully Submitted,



Mark Miller  
Minister of Music

## The Executive Board

“No matter who you are and where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

Christ Church is a community of faith, where persons of different hues, ages, sexual orientations, beliefs, cultures etc. are woven into an extraordinary tapestry.

At our last Executive Board meeting I shared my Christ Church moment-the exact time I knew that I wanted to be a part of this congregation. I shared this experience in hopes that it would remind them of the importance of Christ Church in their lives and that it would bolster their conviction to maintain our beloved church so that future generations may also experience it.

I know I was preaching to the choir; however, one of the duties of the Chair is to serve as a cheerleader and nudge the team from time to time to achieve our goals.

We had a great year:

- the Stewardship campaign started earlier and resulted in a record amount being pledged.
- the institution of a quarterly financial report that is disseminated to members to promote financial transparency.
- six new families were added to the church roster.
- the Love and Faith Alliance (LAFa) organization was formed, giving additional voice to our LGBTQIA members.
- Rev. Julie led a Civil Rights pilgrimage to Georgia and Alabama that included visits to the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama and the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

Christ Church is a great place to be. We experience thoughtful and inspiring sermons weekly by our senior pastor, Chuck. Our music ministry, under the leadership of Mark Miller is phenomenal and second to none. Our special events are extraordinary. However, not enough people know about the Christ Church experience. Consequently, we have solicited the help of Khurram Malik, one of our new members, to assist us with our marketing plan. Also, we are updating our website to add features that will allow more people to amend its content.

I would like to thank all of the Executive Board members for their efforts this past year. To ensure that we maintain our momentum, most of the members have decided to remain for an additional term.

If you would like to share your expertise, consider becoming a member.

Sincerely,

John Houston  
Chair  
Chair, Executive Committee

## Church Clerk's Report

### **Christ Church Congregational Meetings 2023-2024**

The Church Clerk recorded the following minutes of congregational meetings:

#### **Christ Church 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting**

Held in-person and live-streamed on June 4, 2023, immediately following the church service at 10:50am and via zoom on June 7, 2023, at 7pm.

Toiya Facey, Chair of the Executive Board called the meeting to order and explained that this was an informational session. Voting for Officers would take place on-line via a link which would be emailed to the congregation on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Toiya turned the meeting over to Rev. Chuck Rush who thanked the Chairs of Church committees for their outstanding work this past year including Paul Judicke of Deacons, Frederick Taylor Kincaid of Property Managers, Anne Salorio of Music and Fine Arts, Monique Taylor Kincaid and Donovan Sherman of the Racial Equity Task Force, John Ross and Christina Froelich of Faith Formation, Mary Dickey of Board of World Fellowship and Bola Lawrence as The Cornerstone School liaison. Rev. Chuck went on to thank Toiya Facey for her can-do spirit and extraordinary leadership as Chair of the Executive Board, during a challenging year of transition for the church, post COVID. She continued the visioning process which began before COVID, launched the long-range strategic planning committee, and led us in the matching challenge campaign. Chuck presented Toiya with a small token of thanks on behalf of the entire congregation.

Toiya thanked Chuck for his words and extended her thanks to all of the volunteers of the Church. She asked them to stand for a round of applause. She then encouraged everyone to take time to read the Annual Report as it was filled with information from each of the committees and their activities of the past year. We still need committee chairs for Property Managers, RETF, Communications and the Cornerstone Liaison. Please see Toiya if interested. This year represented a "new normal" for the church post- COVID. We were able to bring back many traditional events like the Progressive Dinner as well as add some new ones like Homecoming Weekend. Other issues of note from of the year include: Executive Board meeting minutes will now be posted on the Church bulletin board; we have established a long-range planning committee to ensure that we continue to grow our church community; and we implemented the matching gift challenge to raise funds for short term financial stability. Toiya closed her remarks by stating that she was very optimistic about the future of the church and asked all members to be sure to vote online for the election of officers for 2023-24.

John Houston, current Vice Chair, and incoming Chair thanked Toiya for her leadership and stated that he would continue Toiya's goals and focus on growing the church.

Julie closed with a prayer.

#### **Christ Church Congregational Meeting- 2024 Budget Presentation and Review-March 24 & April 2,2024**

Two informational meetings were held to review the proposed 2024 operational budget for Christ Church and provide an opportunity for questions. The first meeting was held in-person, immediately following the church service on Sunday March 24th at 11:25am. The second meeting was held via zoom on Tuesday April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00pm.

At both meetings, John Huston, the Executive Board Chair called the meeting to order and explained that voting for the budget would take place 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 valuable assistance with the church financial operations. Steve then reviewed the proposed budget which was distributed to the congregation via email and also distributed in church at the 3/24 meeting. The proposed budget included \$970,000 in revenue and \$ 998,000 in expenses, representing a deficit of

\$28,000. On the income side, the positive news is the successful pledge campaign this year as well as a large estate gift we recently received. As a result of this gift, our operating reserve now stands at \$500,000. However, our expenses still exceed our revenue, with 90% of our expenses related to compensation and building costs. The matching challenge grant which accounted for \$114,000 in revenue in 2023 and 2024, will not be available next year, and Steve noted it was critically important for the Executive Board to develop a plan to make up this revenue going forward. Steve then answered any questions from members about the budget. As per the Church By-laws, the congregation will vote to approve the budget after the review sessions.

The survey for the vote will be emailed to the congregation April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The congregation was reminded that as per our by-laws, the budget must be approved by 75 of our members.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jayne Graepel, Clerk

## **New Members**

### **October 29, 2023**

Lance Castillo & Andrew Miller

### **November 12, 2023**

Alison & Chris Vicari

### **March 17, 2024**

Erica & Khurram Malik, Pat Harris & Al Pastino, Kristen & Tony Forman

### **June 23, 2023**

Natalie Fidlow

## **Confirmation Class – None for 2024**

## **Deaths**

Patricia "Pat" Kettenring – November 8, 2023

Sara "Sally" McCobb Weggeland – November 11, 2023

## **Baptisms**

Winn Zohrab-Michael MacMillan – September 24, 2023

Ethan Parker Lemond – October 1, 2023

Emilia Sophia Tarnow - November 12, 2023

Tessa Roberti Thrasher – May 12, 2024

Sadie Claire Cummins – June 2, 2024

Louise Parks Carbone – June 2, 2024

## Slate of nominees

### A. EXECUTIVE BOARD

<i>Chair</i>	John Houston
<i>Vice Chair</i>	Deana Smeltz
<i>Cornerstone Liason</i>	OPEN
<i>Clerk</i>	Jayne Graepel
<i>Treasurer</i>	Steve Jones

#### Members-at-Large

<i>Communications</i>	Ben Bowen Amy Knight
<i>Planning</i>	Toiya Facey
<i>Staff Relations</i>	OPEN

#### Chairs of Boards

<i>Board of Membership</i>	Laura Engelhardt
<i>Board of Deacons</i>	Paul Judicke
<i>Board of World Fellowship</i>	Anne Kennison
<i>Board of Property Mgrs</i>	Lou Blanco
<i>Board of Music &amp; Fine Arts</i>	Annie Salorio
<i>Board of Resources</i>	Mary Dickey

### B. BOARDS OF THE CHURCH

#### 1. DEACONS

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

#### 2. FINANCE


**3. MEMBERSHIP**

Laura Engelhardt, chair Lynn Richardson	Ginny Jordan Maura Aimette	Jeff Andrienas
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**4. PROPERTY MANAGERS**

Louis Blanco Stewart Trisler Chuck Gelber	Chuck Mixon Frederick Taylor-Kincaid	
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**5. RESOURCES**

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**6. RETF**

Chair Open Margaret Haughey Don Richards B. Von Klemperer	Kirk Johnson Ed Walter Dave Graepel Frank Bolden	Donovan Sherman Bola Lawrence Janet Quatarone
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**7. WORLD FELLOWSHIP**

Anne Kennison, chair Cynthia Mathis Rob Morse Carolyn Dorflinger	Mila Trigos Dave Bunting  Roz Kendellen Patty O'Neill	Yesenia Reichart Bill LaCurtis Bruna Lopes Dean Nielsen
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**8. FAITH FORMATION**

Christina Froehlich John Ross, co chairs	Krista Witkowski Kate Speer	Bev York Lynn Richardson Lisa Cardinal
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**9. MUSIC & ARTS**

Anne Salorio, chair Manish Ambre Brina Kolitz Ed Walter	Kim Reynolds Patty O'Neill Felipe Lopes Lizanne Ceconi	Cary Hardy Nancy Mion Rosemarie Gelber Rick Morey
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**C. CHARTERED COMMITTEES**

**1. AUDIT**


**2. COMMUNICATIONS**

Chair Open Ben Bowen Amy Knight		

**4. PERSONNEL**


**5. CHURCH LIFE**

Penny Vigilante Claire Rupkey		

**6. ASSISTANT TREASURERS**

Karen Harrison Hedy Tukey		

**D. OTHER COMMITTEES**

**MEMORIAL GARDEN**

Julia O'Brien  
Chad O'Brien

**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**

Kate Speer  
Bev York

**FINANCIAL SECRETARIES**

Brian Angle  
Tom Cummins  
John Ahlbeck

**ASSISTANT FINANCIAL  
SECRETARIES**

Lizanne Ceconi  
Joe Salsberry  
Maurice Devroye  
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 2023-2024

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Number of Pledges	140	137
Total Amount Pledged	\$605,905	\$639,071
Total Received on Those Pledges	\$599,002	
Number of Pledges Met	103	
Number of Pledges Exceeded	17	
Number of Unfulfilled Pledges	20	
General Contributions	\$100,092	
Donations to SOS	\$17,054	\$14,657 (to date)

The pledge drive for 2024 resulted in an increase of 5%.

Automatic recurring online donations are used by 49 donors, with another 10 donors sending recurring checks directly from their bank accounts.

Statements were sent via email in February of 2024 to all donors that contributed \$250 or more in 2023, and included amounts paid as pledges, general contributions, and SOS contributions. During 2023, 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 2023-2024**

Please refer to the page showing Christ Church's financial performance in 2023 and approved budget for 2024. **On a bright note, the church received a bequest of approximately \$300,000 from a former parishioner in 2023.**

**The church's financial performance resulted in a deficit in 2023 and our budget for 2024 shows a deficit. We need to increase our income to more closely match our expenses and find ways to reduce expenses.** Please see a brief description of the 2023 results and 2024 budget below:

### **2023 Performance**

The church lost approximately \$42,000 in 2023 after posting a deficit of \$90,000 in 2022. Our revenue materialized largely as planned in 2023 although Pledges fell short by \$7,000 and Contributions were ahead of plan by \$15,000.

**The successful Matching Challenge Campaign in early 2023 raised \$228,000, half of which we included as revenue in 2023 and half will be included in 2024.**

Compensation & Benefits exceeded plan by \$20,000 due to a bonus to employees in lieu of salary increases. Property Managers expense exceeded budget by \$60,000 due to increased Utilities expense and Repairs & Maintenance.

### **2024 Approved Budget**

Our 2024 budget results in a \$28,000 deficit.

Pledges for 2024 are up materially versus 2023 but we have budgeted Contributions lower, assuming some former Contributors have converted to Pledgers. **The \$114,000 of revenue from the Matching Challenge campaign will not appear in 2025 and will need to be replaced.**

Compensation & Benefits and Property Managers represent approximately 90% of our total budgeted expenses of \$998,000. We budgeted a 3% increase in staff compensation in 2024. We have budgeted 2024 Property Manager expenses slightly higher than 2023 but 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, 2023**

Income	<u>2023 Actual</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Pledges	583,200.00	635,000.00	51,800.00
Contributions	95,500.00	70,000.00	-25,500.00
Matching Challenge	114,000.00	114,000.00	0.00
Cash in Plate	16,900.00	15,000.00	-1,900.00
Building Use	136,600.00	136,000.00	-600.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>946,200.00</u>	<u>970,000.00</u>	<u>23,800.00</u>
Expense			
Compensation & Benefits	584,300.00	595,000.00	10,700.00
Property Managers	280,600.00	285,000.00	4,400.00
Music & Fine Arts	23,400.00	24,000.00	600.00
Debt Service	0.00	0.00	0.00
Board of World Fellowship	11,800.00	10,000.00	-1,800.00
Denomination Payments	9,500.00	9,500.00	0.00
Christian Education	13,100.00	12,000.00	-1,100.00
Office Expenses	22,000.00	20,000.00	-2,000.00
Information Technology	15,700.00	15,000.00	-700.00
Video Production	17,700.00	18,000.00	300.00
Deacons	7,200.00	2,000.00	-5,200.00
Church Life	1,600.00	3,000.00	1,400.00
Race Equity Taskforce	0.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Other Expenses	900.00	2,000.00	1,100.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>987,800.00</u>	<u>998,000.00</u>	<u>10,200.00</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><u>-41,600.00</u></u>	<u><u>-28,000.00</u></u>	<u><u>13,600.00</u></u>

## **Board of Deacons 2023-2024**

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

Dolly Blanco  
Robin French  
Ginny Jordan  
Trudy Noonan  
Laura O'Rourke  
Barry Pilgrim  
Hedy Tukey  
Susie Wall  
Krista Witkowski

Paul Judicke will retire as a Deacon and new Deacons are TBD.

#### **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.

In June 2024, the Reverends, and the Chair (TBD) will finalize the formation of the remainder of the 2024-2025 Deacon roster.

New and existing Deacon training will commence in late summer/early fall after the 2024-2025 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, Kate, Julia and Bev provided 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 by Ashley, including a trip to Alaska. The faith formation committee added new activities this year including a gathering to play games after worship and multiple service days. We continued traditions like the advent festival and Halloween trunk or treat event for youth. Several adult education events took place this year, many under the leadership of Julie and intern Madison. The Women's Retreat was well attended, as were several after church discussion groups offerings on zoom for connection and learning included a second group on loss that was rooted in Anderson Cooper's podcast. 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,  
John Ross and Christina Froehlich, co-chairs

## **Board of Property Managers 2023-2024**

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. As such, they 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.

For the past several years these responsibilities were shouldered by two very dedicated parishioners, Frederic Kinkaid and Chuck Mixon. Several months ago the team was expanded with the addition of Lou Blanco and Stewart Trisler.

The most recent achievements of the property managers have been the replacement of defective sidewalks on New England Avenue and the switching of the church's electric to a significantly lower cost provider.

The Cornerstone roof is still experiencing a leak in one area. A contractor has been selected to make, what is hopefully, the final repair and work should begin as soon as some paperwork requirements have been met.

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

## Stewardship Committee

This is the report of the Stewardship Committee for 2023-24

### PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

Our annual pledge campaign netted the highest number of commitments ever. Please see attached summary for details.

### ENHANCED REPORTING

The committee has introduced quarterly expense statements to be circulated among the congregation. The purpose is to update our "stakeholders" re the church's expenses on a continuing basis--rather than just saving this message for the pledge campaign. It is also our hope that when needs are expressed, pledges will be honored and additional cash may come in. As a result of thr Q! report, a contribution of \$20k was offered to support our roof repairs.

### PLANNED GIVING

We have begun an exploration of a planned giving (aka legacy giving) program which we hope to implement in Q4.

### ALTERNATIVE GIVING MODES

Collaborated on the introduction of a handheld credit card reader to offer attendees an alternative to the traditional collection plate.

## Board of World Fellowship 2023-2024

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 continued the tradition begun in 2020 of celebrating 3Kings Day each January with a gift to a charity selected by the Congregation. Three organizations, all with long ties to Christ Church, were nominated this past January: Family Promise of Union County, which works to help families find housing; Inhijambia, which reaches out to street children in Managua, Nicaragua; and GlassRoots in Newark, which helps youth and young adults learn glassblowing, to understand its creative and economic power.

This year, nearly 70 votes were cast, and we divided the \$6,000 proportionally, reflecting the votes: \$2,240 to Family Promise of Union County; \$2,200 to Inhijambia; and \$1,400 to GlassRoots,

SOS Fund. This spring, we again invited the congregation to support the Seasons of Sharing (SOS) campaign, during Lent and Easter, although SOS contributions are welcome year-round. SOS is the largest source of outreach funds for Christ Church, and the Board of World Fellowship administers SOS, distributing funds to organizations that address emerging and urgent crises worldwide. To date this year, members and friends of Christ Church have contributed over \$14,000 to SOS.

Since June 2023, World Fellowship has used SOS funds for a variety of organizations, to address acute needs:

International: Direct Relief (in the wake of the Nova Kakhovka Dam disaster); International Medical Corps (flooding in Libya and earthquake in Morocco) and to UNICEF (to help the children affected by the flooding in Libya); Women for Afghan Women (helping Afghan immigrants in NYC); The Parents Circle (response to the war between Hamas and Israel); One Acre Fund (help for subsistence family farmers in Africa); World Central Kitchen (the crisis in Gaza);

Local and US: UCC Disaster Ministries (in the wake of wildfires in Hawaii); Our House, (a local organization helping disabled adults); Stay Tough, Fight HARD (helping families meet the needs of ALS patients); and Grace Kitchen (helping address problems of food security in our area).

The Margaret Baker Fund. Margaret Baker was a longtime 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 monetary gift for three years in a row; typically the gift goes to help with a specific educational project.. In 2024, World Fellowship began the process to identify the organization that will be the next recipient of this gift.

Volunteer Efforts. The Church's strategic plan calls for a deeper commitment to volunteerism and we responded with a revival of our annual Inter-generational Volunteer Day at the Community Food Bank's warehouse in NJ. A crew of 13, joined in a morning of packing boxes for distribution to New Jerseyans in need. An inter-generational team joined together to prepare winter hygiene kits for the clients of Bridges and Summit Warm Hearts. And we have just completed a Diaper Drive to benefit mothers and infants in our area.

Current members of World Fellowship are: Dave Bunting, Carolyn Dorflinger, Roz Kendellen, Bill LaCurtis, Cynthia Mathis, Rob Morse, Dean Nielsen, Patty O'Neill, Jessie Reichart, Joe Salsberry and

Milla Trigos. Special thanks to those who have served on World Fellowship for many years and are now leaving the Board: Carolyn, Cynthia, Joe, and Milla.

Thanks also to Rev. Rush who meets with us each month. We appreciate the insights and wisdom he shares with us.

If you'd like to be part of World Fellowship and help Christ Church continue its long tradition of reaching out to those in need, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Anne Kennison

Chair, Board of World Fellowship

## **Membership Board**

The Membership Committee has helped welcome six new families to Christ Church this year during four New Member Sundays.

New Christ Church Households:

Fall: Lance Castillo & Andrew Miller, Alison & Chris Vicari

Winter: Erica & Khurram Malik, Pat Harris & Al Pastino, Kristen & Tony Forman

Summer: Natalie Fidlow

We revamped the traditional floral corsages given to new members to include a ribbon and UCC pin, and revised the welcome letter. During the year, we also held three small gatherings for new and prospective members. Finally, we grew the membership of our Membership Committee, adding two new members in May. The current Committee consists of: Jeff Andrienas, Carol Angle, Laura Engelhardt, Laura O'Rourke, Lynn Richardson, and Susan Salsberry. Next year, we plan to explore "Bring a Friend" initiatives and website/social media member spotlights.

Laura Engelhardt, Chair

## Board of Music & Arts 2023-2024

### **Committee members for 2023-24**

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

In the summer of 2023, the Committee said a thankful farewell to Rick Morey, who moved in order to be closer to family. And after many years of service and leadership, MFA's former fearless leader Nancy Mion has recently decided to step down from the Committee due to her new home's distance from Christ Church and other family commitments. While we are sad to see both of these remarkable people go, we are sincerely thankful for the warmth, creativity, leadership, and enthusiasm they brought to the table. Best of luck on their next adventures!

### **Musical Programs**

**Saturday, September 23 - "Homecoming Music & Comedy Show"** - To ring in a new church year and encourage congregational excitement for the Fall, we (in partnership with church leadership) introduced a special new show. Professional tenor and longtime friend of Christ Church Justin Gonzalez partnered with comedian Mark Riccadonna and magician Denny Corby to bring the community a variety show of music, magic, and comedy! An audience of all ages gathered in Barnwell Hall to enjoy food, company, and unique (and very funny) contributions from all three performers. Both attendees and performers reported enjoying the event. We're eager to revisit the idea of a capstone performance as a part of "Welcome Back" weekends in future years! Tickets to this event were priced at \$40.00 per person.

**Sunday, December 17, 2024 - "A Holiday Cabaret"** - In what is quickly becoming a beloved Christmastime tradition, the community gathered in Lyle Hall in the afternoon for an in-person gathering with food and music to get us into the holiday spirit! Our talented community members sang festive selections, and the community appreciated time together in a relaxed, intimate, and friendly setting. Suggested donations of \$20.00 were collected to help cover costs of food and drink.

**Sunday, June 16, 2024 - "Juneteenth Gospel Brunch"** - After last year's inaugural show was a smash hit (thanks to the hard work and leadership of the Race Equity Task Force), the Music and Fine Arts Committee is determined to bring the event back and make it an annual tradition. In a couple of weeks, the community will share a spectacular and moving celebration. Music will be performed by special guests, and a catered brunch will be made available. There is a suggested donation of \$25.00 to help cover food costs.

### **Visual Arts**

**The Meaning of Home** - This special display, currently hanging in Barnwell Hall, asked the congregation to depict their understanding of the word "home". We kept the project open-ended, meaning that people could describe their physical home, or the broader concept. Congregants of all ages participated, using a variety of materials to cover their canvases.

*In the coming year, we would be eager to welcome new members to this committee to expand our capacity and offer you even more arts programming. We would be especially eager to welcome any visual artists to the group.*

*We look forward to continuing to bring a vibrant arts and music culture to our 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.

Julia O'Brien and Chad O'Brien, Co-Chairs

## **Race Equity Task Force 2023-2024**

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 Remembrance**

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*

Pat Kettenring – November 8, 2023  
Sara "Sally" McCobb Weggeland – November 11, 2023