

# **Annual Report to the Congregation**

*First Presbyterian Church—Newark  
Annual Congregational Meeting  
February 5, 2023*



*A nurturing community in Jesus Christ reflecting God's love for the world  
as we Worship, Grow, and Serve*

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## Foreword

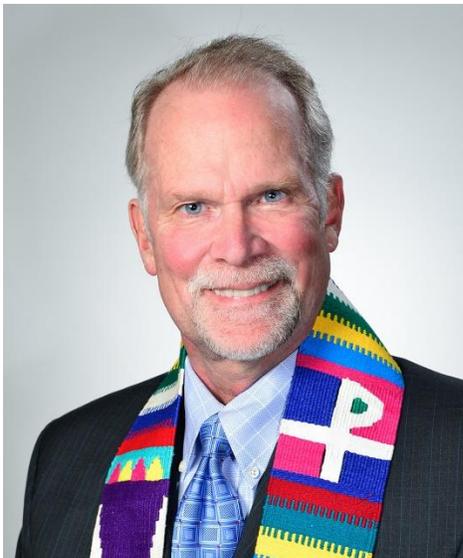
In this congregational report, our committees and leaders provide summaries of church accomplishments during 2022. These summaries are great testaments to the dedication of our members who, in voice and deed, further the work of our church and its mission. I believe you will agree with me that the accomplishments are most impressive.

The summaries also relate the issues encountered this past year. The renovation of the sanctuary and the move by the recovery community to Memorial Hall east are two major accomplishments, but there are many more. You can read about many of them in the pages that follow.

Once again, this congregation has shown resilience, perseverance, and faith to move ahead in the challenges that we have faced. I believe you will find inspiration and encouragement that our church's work goes on and we are given great opportunities to serve the Lord.

In Christ,

Pastor Eric



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# Pastor's Report

Rev. Eric Markman

Dear Members and Friends,

Many exciting and essential goals were completed in 2022 at First Presbyterian Church, Newark (FPC-N). Through faith, dedication, a strong willingness to serve and a deep sense of hope, First Pres. has again moved forward in bringing the love of our Lord Jesus Christ into our community.

Years were spent planning for the renovation of the sanctuary. Plans were drawn up, financing put in place, contractors hired, and large crew of church volunteers began the hard work of bringing a new, more versatile, and better electronically equipped sanctuary into being. Today the congregation has a space that is more beautiful, brighter, with better acoustics, and space for all the musical talent with which this church is blessed. The choir gained dedicated seating front and center. With the renovation also came a better and more adaptable platform for all the community concerts and events which the church supports.

The Worship Committee, chaired by Carol Olson, has been hard at work creating faithful, powerful, joyful, and meaningful worship services. In the spring, an organist was recruited to work with our musical groups, but due to internal issues, he was unable to stay with us. The Worship Committee then directly faced the issue that had caused friction within the congregation: contemporary versus traditional worship styles.

Covid forced the church to move from two to one worship services. Previously, most of the music had been offered by either the Praise Band or the Choir separately. A questionnaire was sent to the whole congregation and the response was that 88% of the congregation enjoyed a combined worship service, blending elements from both traditional and contemporary formats. Worship music now is provided by the combined "Music Team" with both groups working together to offer up weekly anthems to our Lord, as well as lead the hymns. Add to that our incredible Bell Choir, led by Steve Breffitt, and the Sunday musical offerings are remarkable!

The committee, with the help of the Human Resources committee, hired our wonderful new Interim Choir Director, Leia Gibson, who brings amazing talent and energy to this position. A search is underway for a new Organist/Choir Director. Attendance has continued to climb as the year progressed and 11 new members joined the church. These new members have shared that the musical offerings were part of what attracted them to the church. I thank the Worship Committee, and all who offer their musical gifts on Sunday mornings, including the audiovisual team who work behind the scenes to make the words and music sound their best in the sanctuary and through our livestream.

Sunday School was restarted under the leadership of Greg Hills and Darlene Newsom when we entered the fall season. It is not uncommon now to have up to five young people up front for

our “Children’s Message”, as they teach us about faith, excitement, and hope. The young people then make their way downstairs for Sunday School lessons. Though this may seem like a small start, “a thousand-mile journey starts with the first step.” We also have five students in our Confirmation Class that meets largely by Zoom each Sunday.

While Sanctuary renovations were taking place, the congregation worshiped in Memorial Hall West. This was the perfect opportunity to address two of the interim period tasks: Discovering a New Identity and Coming to Terms with History. The Vital Congregations Committee, chaired by Pat Nelson, took these tasks head on. The first task was done using the Vital Congregations program. The congregation met on a regular basis in small groups in Memorial Hall working through the “7 Marks of a Vital Congregation” curriculum throughout the summer. A summary of these discussions was sent to congregation members last year and is included in this Annual Report. I thank the committee for their hard work. For the second task, the session asked Rev. Dr. Len Hedges-Goettl to meet with members of the congregation to discuss past events of the church, both joyful and painful. The Presbytery of New Castle helped cover the cost of this study and a very insightful report was shared with all members of First Pres.

Building on input from the Vital Congregations discussions, the sessions with Pastor Len, and work done on church leadership structure by the session, trustees, and deacons, the Mission Review Committee was formed, chaired by Jim Pierson-Perry. The committee finished their comprehensive report which was endorsed by the session and sent to the Committee on Ministry and Congregations of the Presbytery for final approval. This report was a necessary step along the path of calling a new pastor. The Nominating Committee has begun efforts to identify members for a Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC). The PNC will use the Mission Study report with other information to formally open the new pastor search. While this is underway, we look to continue the process of creating a stronger congregation. In the new year we will learn how to identify and understand each member’s spiritual gifts, then combine knowledge of these gifts with input from the Vital Congregation discussions and Pastor Len’s report, to cast a vision for our church—the path on which Christ calls us.

It was determined in 2021 that the Westminster House building was in bad condition. During the winter of 2022, power to the building was lost in an ice storm. With the loss of power, the already problematic sprinkler system froze and failed. Due to that loss, an order from the Fire Marshal, and the fact that many other systems in the building had come to the end of their expected operational lives, planning was begun to move the recovery community meetings to Memorial Hall. This move began in late 2022. We are working to create a new liaison group with church members and the recovery groups, now meeting in Memorial Hall, that will bring this important mission back to being a vital part of this congregation’s ministry

In addition to many other mission projects, over this last year the church has sponsored refugees from Afghanistan. A group of eight First Presbyterian members formed a Circle of Care, affiliated with Jewish Family Services (JFS), to assist a group of Afghan refugees who worked for the US government and were at risk of death if they remained in Kabul. The refugees included three married men, who had to leave their wives and children in Afghanistan,

and one family which includes 4 children from 5 to 17. Our group helped with many needs, including grocery shopping, driving instruction, school registration, and even preparation for kindergarten. These efforts were recognized when JFS was invited to receive the Wallenberg Award from Muhlenberg College in honor of their work with Afghan Refugees. Our FPC Circle of Care was honored especially. The Circle of Care is now meeting with some Ukrainian refugees and we welcome anyone who would like to join us in this work.

As 2022 ended, so too ended our time with our long-term Office Administrator par excellence, Cindy Rogers. Cindy notified us that she would be leaving at the end of the year to begin a career in the private sector. The HR committee, myself, and Cindy worked together to find a way forward; first by defining a new position, and then helping existing groups and committees take back responsibilities that had moved into the church office during Covid. A job description was written and has been posted in many places. I also thank everyone who has helped in the office and encourage anyone who is interested to sign up to help.

First Presbyterian is a strong church with committed, caring, and capable members. There will always be challenges, and as time moves forward there will continue to be need for changes. This last year saw much change and, in the midst of it all, the congregation showed the energy, intelligence, imagination, and love needed to move forward to a new day!

In Christ's Love,  
Pastor Eric

# Session

## *Clerk's Report*

### **Nancy Lewis (Clerk of Session)**

Again, this has been a difficult year for the Church because of the challenges we have faced during the Corona Virus pandemic.

The Sanctuary reopened this Fall. The improved acoustics and improved worship and choir facilities have enhanced our services. We continue to be diligent in safeguarding worship. All participants are encouraged to wear masks while in the service.

Our Session has fully supported the move to providing virtual access to services, via YouTube, and has been holding virtual Session meetings via Zoom throughout the year. This use of technology enables us to include those members who are leery of returning to the buildings.

Interim Pastor Eric Markman has brought us new ways to look at our church and spearheaded a hard look at Westminster House. After several failed attempts to rent Westminster House to the Jewish Family Services (JFS) to use as a counseling center, we determined to find a potential buyer or a long-term renter. Our commitment to the Recovery Community, however, remains strong. We moved their meetings to Memorial Hall this month. We have had many meetings with them to make sure their needs are met.

We held several discussion sessions based on the Vital Congregations program, provided from Presbytery, to help us determine our path forward. We were very pleased to see a large attendance at these small group exercises. A report from Vital Congregations will be part of this Annual Report. We also welcomed Pastor Len Hedges-Goettl to work with us to understand some of our past history which has led to current problems. Many people also participated in these small group sessions and reported that they were helped by the process.

In partnership with JFS, a group from our church formed a Circle of Care around a family and 3 single men from Afghanistan. This group is made up of Melanie Bock, Greg Hills, Shirley Hills, Faithe Koser, Nancy Lewis, Annette Mehan, Ron Mehan, and Carolyn Morton. Our group has done things as varied as teaching cultural awareness skills, tutoring in math, teaching banking skills, assisted with driving tests, driving kids to soccer classes, registering kids with Christina Public Schools, serving as school liaison for those kids, preparing a child for Kindergarten, and counselling on how to get jobs, and cars. Other members of the Circle of Care group provided transportation and gathered donations for the families.

One of our families relocated to California in December, but still calls on us for help navigating American education and soccer registration. That family sent us a nice picture of them in California. The three single men are waiting for their wives and children to be relocated to Newark in the coming year. We are currently working with JFS to meet some Ukrainian

refugees who are now in Newark. It has been a very rewarding experience, and more people are invited to join our Circle of Care.

This has been a challenging year for our church, as we lost our Director of Music and our administrative assistant. We are trying to fill both of those posts. In the midst of all these challenges, your Session is thoughtfully following our promise to faithfully watch over the members of the congregation and provide for their worship, nurture, and service as well as reaching out to help our community.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

## ***CHURCH OFFICERS***

**Session**      **Clerk of Session** Nancy Lewis

**Class of 2023:** Greg Hills, Mimi Lovelace, Don Tancredi

**Class of 2024:** Melody Bock, Pat Nelson, Bob Wunder

**Class of 2025:** Joe Kowalski, Nancy Lewis, Mark Sisk

**Deacons**      **Moderator:** Jane Moore  
**Vice Moderator:** Norma Salomon

**Class of 2023:** Angela Abankwa-Opoku, Nancy Boulden, Anne Lewis, Norma Salomon

**Class of 2024:** Rosemarie Beron, Jane Moore, Pat Steele, Nancy Stevens

**Class of 2025:** Judy Agnello, Stephanie Birdsall, Jan Huckleberry, Bob Wenner

**Trustees**      **President:** Ron Olson

**Class of 2023:** John Bock, Francis Kwansa, Ken Lewis, Ron Olson, Jynx Stevenson

**Class of 2024:** Jim Annett, Joe Challburg, Jerry Holt, Kern Piser

**Class of 2025:** Bill Lewis

## ***ECCLESIASTICAL EVENTS - 2022***

### **BAPTISMS**

Katelyn Ann McCabe  
Kensington Palmer Hitchens

### **IN MEMORIAM OF OUR MEMBERS**

Dorothy Gronka  
Sue Chantler  
Victor Klemas  
Patty Haid  
Esther Reutter

### **NEW MEMBERS FOR 2022**

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#### **Transfer of Certificate**

Mimi Lovelace  
Fred and Louise Dawson  
Elizabeth and Peter Ross  
Carole Hermes  
Lauren Annett  
Julia and Stanley Blair

#### **Reaffirmation or Profession of Faith**

Myles Thompson  
David Angel  
Clinton and Flora Nanji  
Nathan Nanji  
Ida Nanji  
Anna Ngwe Nji  
Barbara Russell  
Kaitlin Douglas

## ***MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS***

**Active Members as of December 31, 2021: 256**

#### **Members Gained during 2022**

Profession/Reaffirmation of Faith	9
Certificate of Transfer	9
All Other Gains	0

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<b>Total Gains</b>	<b>18</b>
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#### **Member Losses in 2022**

Certificate of Transfer	33
Death	5
To Heritage / Inactive Roll	0
All Other Losses	0

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<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>38</b>
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**Total Active Members as of December 31, 2022: 236**

**Average Worship Attendance for 2022: 84**

(2021 Average Attendance not available due to Covid)

## *Vital Congregations Steering Team*

### **Pat Nelson (Chair)**

Thank you congregation for your thoughtful and energetic participation in the Vital Conversations this spring and summer. Here are some of the key themes and “big ideas” we learned:

- FPC-N has strengths in each of the 7 marks, especially in *Caring Relationships*—where we feel God’s presence in worship, fellowship, and in loving, caring, supporting, and helping one another. We are thankful for excellent facilities and the very good people watching over our assets.
- Challenges—We’re concerned about who will be members/volunteers in the future. We’re unclear about how to meet the needs and interests of those we’re not currently reaching. We avoid tackling big issues and areas of conflict. We want to learn healthy ways of communicating and integrating diverse views into our decision-making.
- Growth opportunities—We look forward to re-energizing small groups, fellowship, and shared interest opportunities across age groups, where we can get to know each other and those in our community. We want to explore non-traditional worship gatherings—possibly including fellowship, a meal, worship, and/or Bible study—which might attract those in their 20’s and 30’s+.
- The Afghan Refugee Integration Support Effort has been a shining example of relationship-based outreach, where we not only donate resources, but also help by going with the Afghan families to parent-teacher conferences, soccer games, and grocery shopping—helping them bridge the transition to a new culture. We have worked collaboratively with other organizations to have a strong, positive impact on these individuals and our community.

Dr. Len Goettl-Hedges led small healing and reconciliation group sessions in October and November, helping us examine areas where FPC-N is currently getting “off track,” as well as providing recommendations for dealing with disagreements and other dysfunctional patterns in the future.

## ***Mission Review Team***

### **Jim Pierson-Perry (Chair)**

A team was commissioned by Session in August 2022 to write an updated Mission Study report as a necessary step along the path of identifying a new called pastor. The team members were: Matt Bowen, Lois Huggins, Jim Pierson-Perry, Kern Piser, Ann Roybal, and Pam Wunder. Consultants to the team were Pastor Eric and John Balaguer, representing our Presbytery.

Using a variety of reference documents—including older Mission Study reports, local religious and demographic surveys from our Presbytery, and historical notes—the team assembled the framework of the report. More recent inputs came from summaries of the Vital Congregations discussions, a congregational survey on desired leadership skills for the new pastor, and the summary from Pastor Len’s discussions with congregation members.

The report was completed in early December, then approved by Session and our Presbytery. The upcoming Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) will use this report as the basis to launch a nationwide search in early 2023 to identify new pastor candidates.

# Belonging Ministry

## *Board of Deacons*

**Jane Moore (Moderator)**

The Board of Deacons works together to serve the members of our congregation. Deacons also interact with other groups in our church. Hence, we have liaisons to Session, Human Resource Committee, Church Bylaws Committee, Westminster Committee, and a representative on Nominating Committee. A Deacon also serves as a liturgist one Sunday a month. We support our sister church in Dinanga by prayer. We recently provided financial support to Friendship House to help a homeless woman have housing. We also staffed the First Presbyterian Church table at Newark Community Day on Sept. 18.

Pastor Eric Markman continued to lead us in training using [The Presbyterian Deacon: An Essential Guide](#) at our meetings. We have continued to meet on Zoom to accommodate those who find it hard to drive at night and to avoid the noise issues encountered at hybrid meetings.

We have been able to resume visits to members in rehab facilities and in their homes, and have been able to serve Home Communion and deliver flowers. Nancy Stevens took over the responsibility of the flower donation sign-up sheets in addition to the delivery schedule, and each Deacon participates in selecting the recipients of the flower deliveries. At Easter, we delivered shut-in bags containing candy or bunnies and at Christmas we delivered little trees handmade by Rosemarie Beron and stuffed animals to our members who are homebound or are in nursing homes. Bereavement, Thinking of You, Get Well, and Sympathy cards were sent to members to mark significant occasions.

Fellowship is a special gift that the Deacons share with our congregation. This year we were able to host the annual Strawberry Picnic on June 12. Due to rain, the picnic was held in Memorial Hall which proved convenient for servers and guests. We participated in serving Punch on the Lawn during the summer. We were unable to schedule the Harvest Festival due to date conflicts and travel commitments of many of our members. We did, however, host the reception following the Church Reopening Celebration on Oct 16. Jan Huckleberry made nametags for all church attendees so that we can more easily greet one another.

Memorial Receptions were organized by the Board of Deacons. Numerous receptions took place in Memorial Hall, the largest of which were in honor of Esther Reutter and Pat Steele's daughter, Susan. Anne Lewis organized the events and the Deacons provided cookies and helped serve and clean up.

The Board of Deacons is a caring ministry which tries to reach out to the entire congregation. We continue to do so by each Deacon taking a portion of the names of congregation members and calling them on a regular basis. We share their prayer requests with the Pastor, special concerns with the rest of the Deacons, and changes in information with Cindy Rogers.

Nancy Boulden took the lead in organizing the call structure and also in arranging for rides for our members needing to go to doctor appointments and medical treatments. She assigned each Deacon shut-ins to visit. She also took charge on behalf of the Deacons in leading the prayer group on Wednesday mornings. Nancy and Reverend Beth Thomas led the Life Support Group which met weekly in person and by Zoom. Together, they led a Blue Christmas Service in December for those suffering loss of loved ones. All of these activities served to broaden the outreach of the Deacons to our congregation.

Members: Angela Abankwa-Opoku, Judy Agnello, Rosemarie Beron, Stephanie Birdsall, Nancy Boulden, Jan Huckleberry, Anne Lewis, Jane Moore, Norma Salomon, Pat Steele, Nancy Stevens, and Bob Wenner.

### ***Presbyterian Women***

#### **Carol Olson and Pam Wunder (Co-Moderators)**

Presbyterian Women (PW) is open to all Christian women (FPCN members and non-members). Our 63 active sisters are divided into 5 Circles (small groups) which meet throughout the day on the third Tuesday of each month. Each monthly meeting consists of Bible study, fellowship and support of one another as well as the general association activities. This year we are using the PW Horizons study, "What My Grandmothers Taught Me" as our Bible study. We stay connected with 14 special sisters who are no longer able to participate. We have reached out to about 35 younger women within FPCN who are not in PW with letters of short meditations and prayers. We provide greeters for Sunday worship services and aid to church functions.

Our June general association meeting was our first large in person event in MHW since Covid. In addition to the 62 present in MHW, 20 devices were logged into the live-stream of our program "Make a Joyful Noise unto the Lord" with music provided by the Sweet Adelines. We ended the evening with our general meeting featuring the recognition of the '21-'22 officers, the election and installation of officers for '22-'23 and new Circles were posted.

Our October evening program brought the return of a potluck dinner followed by speaker, Vlad Cerbov, from Jewish Family Services. He described the local Afghan refugee resettlement activities. It was a well-attended evening of good food, learning and fellowship.

Once again our Fall Fair, our major fundraiser, was held in MHW with each Circle organizing a category of items for sale. In cooperation with the Trustees, a Man's Cave selling tools and outdoor items was added. We also added a basket raffle and artists from the Newark Senior Center displayed their pieces. We were grateful for all the help before, during and after the sale. Monies raised were given to support the activities of Hope Dining Room, Newark Area Welfare, Newark Empowerment Center and the Presbytery Guatemala Chick Project. Unsold items were donated to the Newark Senior Center and Goodwill.

The response to our ongoing and single event collections demonstrate the generosity of PW members and our congregation. Boxes of school supplies were collected for Albert Jones Elementary School, knitters lovingly knit caps and prayer shawls, thinking of you cards were sent to local nursing care centers, bags of can tabs were given to Ronald McDonald House and stamps were sent to the Stamp Alliance for Bible lesson translation. In partnership with our local community, our Little Food Pantry remained stocked under the premise of “Take what you need; Give what you can.” We also support the Presbytery PW Thank Offering, Birthday Offering and Least Coin Offering as well as Meals on Wheels.

Our Christmas program, “What Sweeter Music” created by Joanne R. Hench and Rev. Beth Thomas, was an inspirational evening of music, poems and meditations. What a beautiful way to begin Advent and remind us of the meaning of the season! Hot cider, cookies and fellowship followed. The support of our free-will offerings for Shoes that Fit and our Afghan families was absolutely amazing!



# Coordinating Ministry

## *Human Resource Committee (HR)*

### **Jerry Holt (Chair)**

The Human Resources Committee (HR) recognizes the continuing efforts and thoughtful initiatives of our entire staff in 2022: Interim Pastor Eric Markman, Acting Handbell Director Steve Breffitt, Praise Team Music Leader Larry Benson, and Office Manager Cindy Rogers, as well as the Praise Team musicians, the Nursery Workers, and all volunteers as the church completes another year.

We continue to thank Steve Breffitt for returning as Acting Director of our Carillon Ringers. Steve continues to serve as an unpaid volunteer. The Ringers regularly have an active role in the music of FPC-N and add significantly to our worship experience.

In March 2022, Rodney Cleveland joined us as Choir Director, Organist, and Handbell Director. Unfortunately, he resigned after less than three months. Worship and HR Committees have developed a vision for worship music, based on a congregational survey of music style preferences that revealed a strong support for blended styles. Session approved a Organist-Choir Director job description at its December meeting. The search began this January.

Office Manager Cindy Rogers resigned at the end of the year to pursue a new direction. Over her six-year tenure, her position acquired more duties from other congregational entities and centralized other work in response to the Covid pandemic. With Session's approval and support, HR has restructured office work back to the level of staffing when Cindy was hired. The search for a half-time Office Administrator has begun.

Annually, HR makes budget recommendations to the Finance Committee and the Session, and works with the Finance Committee to complete the Session-approved Human Resources Budget for the year.

This year, HR continued our work to assure job descriptions address current congregational needs. On a continuing basis, the Committee works to resolve personnel issues and concerns within the church in a timely, effective manner. We welcome your feedback, comments, suggestions, and concerns regarding staff personnel.

In alphabetical order, the present committee members are Jim Annett (at large), Evelyn Hayes (on leave), Jerry Holt (representing Trustees), Nancy Lewis (representing Session), and Jane Moore (representing Deacons). Interim Pastor Eric is also a member. More volunteers will be very welcome.

## ***Church Officer Nominating Committee (CONC)***

### **Bob Wunder (Chair)**

The Church Officer Nominating Committee (CONC) found two Session members and one Deacon to fill vacated offices in 2022. Three offices of Trustees were deliberately left vacant while the church considers combining Trustees and Session into a Unicameral body.

The CONC is preparing to look for members to make up the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) as soon as formal approval is given by Presbytery. Later in the spring, the CONC will begin searching for new officers. Anyone interested in serving on the PNC or as an officer should contact a member of the CONC (Bob Wunder, Francis Kwansa, Angela Abankwa-Opoku, Jackie Evers, Ann Roybal, Shirley Hills, and Lorraine Conner).

## ***Stewardship***

### **Mimi Lovelace (Chair)**

Last summer a small group met with Ellie Johns-Kelley to discuss stewardship and narrative budgets. Since the Finance Team spends hours going over all aspects of church finances it is no surprise that no one was interested in more committee meetings. However, everyone was willing to share needed information.

So, without one committee meeting, Pastor Eric and Jim Newsom had ideas about how to identify the ministries of this church, Harvey Connor contributed data on membership, Bob Black and Jim Newsom contributed income and expense information via easily understood pie charts, and Mimi Lovelace gathered the information, added narrative, and handed it over to Cindy Rogers. Cindy added pictures and formatted the information into a pamphlet.

In addition, Jim Annett, Doris Brewer, Lorraine Connor, Dave Lovelace, and Pat Steele spoke eloquently on the importance of FPC-N to themselves and to the community.

The good people of FPC-N unselfishly contribute what they can, and they do it so very well. Thanks and praise to our awesome God!

## *Strengthening FPC/UD/Newark Community Linkages Team*

**Pat Nelson, Francis Kwansa, Evelyn Hayes, Ann Roybal**

We participate in The Newark Partnership and Interfaith Dialogues, which provide forums for identifying and collaboratively addressing community needs.

- Affordable housing shortages were highlighted in this year’s annual Interfaith Thanksgiving service (which included FPC-N’s excellent choir!).
- FPC-N members participated in the Interfaith Christmas Eve service, which provided worship services, dinner, overnight shelter, and breakfast for those who are alone and without housing. The opportunities are abundant. Francis Kwansa, Ann Roybal, Evelyn Hayes, and Pat Nelson want you to know that more FPC-N members are extremely welcome and needed!! To join us, email [ptnelson@udel.edu](mailto:ptnelson@udel.edu)

We continue to explore potential community linkages that will contribute to the “growth opportunities” cited on our path to the 7 Marks of Vital Congregations.

- Explore meaningful multi-generational volunteer activities beyond our church campus
- Commit our time and effort to understanding issues and learning how to have the greatest enduring positive impact on the needs of those who are marginalized in our community.
- Explore programs and formats—possibly including fellowship and a meal— that will be more attractive to those we are not currently reaching.
- Energize small groups and shared-interest opportunities across age groups—where we can get to know each other better, as well as develop relationships with those in the Newark community.
- Refresh and enhance our skills in listening and discussing difficult issues with each other. Consider collaborating with other churches, Stephen Ministers, and UD.

## *Finance*

**Bob Black (Treasurer), Jim Newsom (Assistant Treasurer)**

The Finance Committee advises Session and Ministries on all financial matters of the Church. The Committee meets each month and reviews the Church's finances and operations including:

- Income and expenses
- Financial statements
- Assets and liabilities comparisons
- Asset reconciliations
- Treasurer's reports
- Investments

The Committee also has responsibility for development and monitoring of the Church's annual budget. Additionally, it evaluates project proposals from other committees for impact on the budget and recommends funding sources from our assets to Session.

Overall, the financial condition of the Church is very sound. Our assets were impacted by the decline in the financial markets and some spending to support our programs and campus renovations. Our portfolio declined 18.45% from a record high level at the end of 2021.

It was a challenging year, as we added a new person to lead our music program in March. In order to meet that increased financial need or expense, we increased our overall budget \$3,000 by moving some reserve funding to our income. The resultant operating budget is shown on page 22. That did not increase the budgeted general income needed from our membership, known as Venture In Faith (VIF). Year 2022 ended slightly short of meeting our VIF goal by 3.3% (\$11,385), that goal being roughly the same as Year 2021.

Fortunately, other income items came in above budget, such as from the recovering community who used our Westminster House facility for their programs. They nearly doubled their budgeted income, donating about \$10,900 over budget. Overall, income was only about 3.9% below budget (\$17,111). Note that none of our reserves were used in this year's spending for budget items. Due to the underspending discussed below, we finished 2022 with a positive net income of \$38,624, that increased our overall reserves or equity by the same amount.

The table below shows the six ministries which form the expense portion of our annual budget.

	Jan - Dec 22	Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget	Underbudget Spending	
<b>Expense</b>					
COORDINATING MINISTRY	234,580	277,143	84.6%	42,563	15.4%
SUPPORTING MINISTRY (Trustees)	126,386	133,044	95.0%	6,658	5.0%
LEARNING MINISTRY	1,496	6,120	24.5%	4,624	75.5%
WORSHIPING MINISTRY	6,880	8,800	78.2%	1,920	21.8%
BELONGING MINISTRY (Deacons)	289	900	32.1%	611	67.9%
WITNESSING MINISTRY	29,634	28,993	102.2%	-641	-2.2%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<u>399,265</u>	<u>455,000</u>	<u>87.8%</u>	<u>55,735</u>	<u>12.2%</u>

The largest percentage savings was in our Learning Ministry as those programs have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Monetarily, the Coordinating Ministry is our largest ministry. Within Coordinating, HR is both our largest cost element and area of savings for 2022, largely as the Choir Director/Organist position was only filled for 3.5 months. Other position-related underspending led to an overall underspending of \$42,563. Witnessing was the only ministry to over spend (2.2%), mostly for Newark Community Day and Sanctuary closing/reopening activities. Combined spending across all operating ministries was \$55,735 under budget.

Perhaps the greatest fiscal concern during any year is whether VIF income, which has lagged in previous years, would meet our expense budget needs. VIF usually accounts for about 75% of our total income but this is decreasing as more investment monies are supporting the budget. Early in 2022 we predicted VIF to lag at a level that caused concern. Fortunately, contribution projections improved later in the year. We ended with a net positive income of \$38,624.

The 2022 operating budget called for using \$20,382 of reserves. Per actual 2022 history, none of that was used; however, \$64,000 of reserves went to fund the Campus Renovation Project. This reduced our 2022 end of year reserves to \$65,294 (shown in the Balance Sheet on page 21). A portion (21.3%) of these reserves is budgeted for use in 2023 to balance 2023 expenses.

The preliminary annualized 2023 budget (see page 22) totals \$482,000, reflecting an expense budget increase of \$82,785 (20.7%) over 2022 actual expenses. This includes funding as an in/out expense for the Campus Renovation Project loan. Funding for this loan (\$13,787) is from reserves built-up on the balance sheet in 2022 for the anticipated loan start. The loan is still in a Pre-Loan state as the project is not complete, pending finish of parking lot improvements. As such, we only owe the interest on the money (\$219,000) received to date. The estimated total income budget is higher by \$44,111 (10.1%); depending in part on balancing expenses by usage of \$13,938 in equity/reserves.

Compared to 2022 actual expenses, the 2023 preliminary budget provides an increase of \$60,867 for HR needs (52.7% of the total church budget). This reflects that the Choir Director-Organist position was only partially filled in 2022. The 2023 budget supports the HR committee plans to fill this position. The 2023 budget also includes some staff pay increases (reflective of a nation-wide COLA increase) and some continued part-time positions, as recommended by HR.

A critical part of sustaining our budget is to continue supporting our mission activities, both in our local community and abroad. This includes our long tradition of supporting the recovering community meetings that will be located in Memorial Hall-East for 2023.

The Finance Committee remains concerned that VIF income will not keep pace with operating expenses in the future. Balancing expenses and income have been a long-standing principle of our Church. Although our assets are considerable, some of these assets are restricted by donors to be used for special purposes and cannot be fully used to support the operating budget. This creates a situation of having to use our reserves (equity) and a portion of unrestricted assets to balance budgets. In the annualized 2023 budget, about 16.4% of our income comes from those

reserves and unrestricted assets. These same sources provided about 12.8% of 2022's actual income as no equity was used. One can see (page 21) that income is still predominately controlled by our VIF giving goal of \$333,000, that is budgeted to be \$1,185 (0.36%) more than 2022's actual VIF amount. Compared to 2021 the VIF giving fell in 2022 by \$9,150 or 2.7%.

This level of VIF uncertainty is the financial reality that FPC-N operates within and is part of the reason not to expend most of our equity in any future budget year. Therefore, members are encouraged, if possible, to increase their level of VIF giving so that we can minimize the use of reserves (equity) and any excessive drawdown of unrestricted invested assets. This is essential, as we appear to be on continuing downward trend in membership.

The Finance Committee continues to successfully work with the Legacy Gift and Investment Committee (LG&I), a committee of Session. Dave Berkebile, the chair of LG&I, is a member of the Finance Committee, ensuring that we receive first-hand on the LG&I activities related to legacy giving, investing, and utilization of the Church's invested assets.

Lastly, we report on our indebtedness. We only had one active loan prior to starting the 2022 Campus Renovation Project. That loan is from 2017 for the new Sanctuary HVAC System. The anticipated pay-off date remains mid-2032 with a cost of \$13,800/year, funded inside the Trustee operating budget.

The full active loan for the CPR project will start in 2023 once the project is complete, with a total yearly expense of \$17,910 for 20 years (until 2043). This active loan is planned to be funded in 2024 and subsequent years with in/out monies from the same investment funds that were used to retire the previous 2014 Memorial Hall roof loan. In descending usage order these funds are: Physical Properties (29%), General Investment (28%), Future Development (18%), Jones/Smith (15%) and FPC Church (10%). The full active CPR loan (\$269,000 starting principal) is at a nominal rate of 3%, much lower than the earnings expected from our investments. We currently have and expect to maintain assets that are nominally 5 times the total indebtedness of our church. This means, if it makes fiscal sense, we can easily retire these loans in the future.

The Finance Committee extends its appreciation to the Congregation for continuing to faithfully support our Church. We also thank Ron Olson for faithfully organizing the weekly counters and to the rest of the counting team: Steve Breffitt, Harvey Conner, Steve Hardwick, Joe Huggins, Francis Kwansa, Mimi Lovelace, Clinton Nanji, Kern Piser, Matt Reyne, Don Tancredi, Kathy Tancredi, and Kevin Thomson. And lastly a HUGE thank you to Harvey Conner for his dedicated work as the Financial Secretary of our church.

If you would like more financial detail and information, please contact, please contact Bob Black at [treasurer@firstpresnewark.org](mailto:treasurer@firstpresnewark.org).

Finance Committee members: Bob Black, Jim Annett, Dave Berkebile, Harvey Conner, Joe Huggins, Jim Newsom, and Don Tancredi  
Ad Hoc member: Ron Olson—Trustee President, Session Representative: Mimi Lovelace



# First Presbyterian Church—Newark Session Budget Comparisons

INCOME	2022	2023		Comments (Items Changed more than \$1,000)
	Actual	Annual Budget	Increase (Decrease) from 2022	
VIF				
Checks-Incl. PayPal Net	321,869	323,000	1,131	
Cash	9,945	10,000	55	
<b>Total VIF</b>	<b>331,815</b>	<b>333,000</b>	<b>1,185</b>	Increase = 0.36% - Small Challenge
Agency Contributions				
Recovery Groups (WH to Mem. Hall-E in 2023)	20,149	6,220	(13,929)	<b>Decrease = 69.1%</b>
Other Agencies (Sanctuary & Mem. Hall)	2,524	1,750	(774)	
<b>Total Agency Contributions</b>	<b>22,673</b>	<b>7,970</b>	<b>(14,703)</b>	<b>Decrease = 64.9% - Relocation of recovery groups</b> <b>21.3% of Yearend 22' Equity</b>
Equity from Prior Years	0	13,938	13,938	
Interest	132	120	(12)	
Credit Card Rewards	1,190	1,700	510	
Designated Endowed Income	4,252	3,950	(302)	
Investment Funds Earnings				
Restricted ("Beds" Landscaping)	900	1,115	215	
Restricted ("Newark" Mission)	3,623	4,507	884	
Unrestricted Fund Earnings (First used in 2019)	55,885	65,144	9,259	Increase = 16.6% - Higher balances & <b>No monies for 2023' loan</b>
Balance Sheet Reserves Loan Payment <b>[2023 Only]</b>	0	13,787	13,787	Increase = 100% - "New" In/Out item related to <b>2023' loan</b>
Eastman Fund (LG&I Est'd. Usage Limit)	250	604	354	
Major Maintenance Fund <b>[2023 Only]</b>	0	10,232	10,232	Increase = 100% - "New" item in lieu of <b>2023' loan</b> payment
Ministry Fund (LG&I Est'd. Usage Limit)	2,750	5,543	2,793	Increase = 101% - 50% of 22' allocation was used in 2021
Special Gift	11,119	11,000	(119)	
Miscellaneous Income (Recovery & Other)	3,300	9,390	6,090	Increase = 185% - <b>four</b> balance sheet funds involved in <b>2023'</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>437,889</b>	<b>482,000</b>	<b>44,111</b>	Total Increase = 10.1% ( <b>2.9% Campus Loan 2023'</b> )
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease) from 2022</b>	<b>Comments (Changed more than \$1,000)</b>
COORDINATING MINISTRY				
Stewardship	652	1,000	348	
Session & Child Safety Administration	16,877	21,047	4,170	Both Ministry Fund & Eastman Funds - Increased Earnings
Finance / Office	24,124	25,080	956	
Human Resources (Personnel)	192,927	253,794	60,867	See HR report Page 15
<b>Total Coordinating</b>	<b>234,580</b>	<b>300,921</b>	<b>66,341</b>	Increase = 28.3%
BELONGING MINISTRY (Deacons)				
Bereavement & Subscriptions	289	500	211	
Emergency Fund & Fellowship	0	200	200	
Stephen Ministry - General Operational	0	0	0	
<b>Total Belonging</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>411</b>	Increase =142%
LEARNING MINISTRY				
Adult Learning	346	1,500	1,154	Increase =334% Increased Program
Children's Education	874	1,700	826	
Library	75	250	175	
Nursery	53	600	547	
Vacation Bible School	0	0	0	
Youth Council	148	200	52	
<b>Total Learning</b>	<b>1,496</b>	<b>4,250</b>	<b>2,754</b>	Increase =184% Increased Programs
SUPPORTING MINISTRY (Trustees)				
Sanctuary & Memorial Hall	102,021	120,432	18,411	Increase = 18.0% - <b>2023' Pre-Loan Expense</b> & Groups Move & ....
Westminster House (WH)	24,365	14,920	(9,445)	<b>Decrease = 38.8% - Recovery Groups Moving</b>
<b>Total Trustees</b>	<b>126,386</b>	<b>135,352</b>	<b>8,966</b>	Increase = 7.1% ( <b>10.9% Campus Loan 2023'</b> )
WITNESSING MINISTRY				
Church Growth	2,584	3,300	716	
Mission & Outreach	27,051	27,977	926	
<b>Total Witnessing</b>	<b>29,634</b>	<b>31,277</b>	<b>1,643</b>	Increase =5.5% - Local Mission Fund Increased Earnings
WORSHIPING MINISTRY				
Special Services	167	350	183	
Worship	4,552	5,250	698	
Worship - General	2,161	3,900	1,739	Increase =80.4% - Underspent ~54% in 2022
<b>Total Worshiping</b>	<b>6,880</b>	<b>9,500</b>	<b>2,620</b>	Increase = 38.1%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>399,265</b>	<b>482,000</b>	<b>82,735</b>	Total Increase = 20.7% ( <b>2.9% Campus Loan 2023'</b> )
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$38,624</b>	<b>-</b>		2023 Budget "Balanced" - Income = Expenses

## *Memorials and Bequests*

### **Bob Black (Chair)**

The Memorials & Bequests Committee remains un-chaired. The work of the committee still continued, however, with the support of Cindy Rogers (Office Manager), Bob Black (Treasurer), and Harvey Conner (Financial Secretary).

Cindy acknowledged each memorial contribution to the giver and to a relative of the deceased. The Treasurer maintains individual memorial records as well as oversees and recommends expenditures in accordance with Memorials & Bequest general guidelines. The Financial Secretary assures that transactions are recorded in the overall giving database. Jointly, they worked together to follow the essentials and church policy.

A chairperson of the Committee is desired to relieve workload on the now reduced office staff. You could easily do it!

In 2022 only two sub-accounts were involved in Memorials expenses.

- One expended the full \$600 assets of the Thordis Searl “Garden Stone” subaccount for completion of her stone, which can be seen in the bed outside the left front door of Memorial Hall. The remainder of the account was added to the Searl Landscaping fund, which for many years has partially supported the maintenance of all landscaping beds.
- The second was the Pat Sankus “Adult Education subaccount, which fully expended its assets of \$100. This was used to pay for about half of the new Christian Education copier to be used by all Christian Education groups.

With these two expenditures, no monies remain in Memorials with a restricted designation.

The four persons for which memorial funds were received in 2022 are: Barbara Banks, Sanford Blair, Suzanne (Sue) Chantler, and Esther Reutter.

Those memorial accounts which added monies (\$1,975) during 2022 having no designated purpose as stated above will be transferred to the undesignated general holding account in early 2023. When added to the earlier year’s accumulated monies, the undesignated general holding account total is \$8,791 (see balance sheet Page 21).

Currently, there are no Bequests below the limit (\$10,000) that is considered under the purview of the Memorials and Bequests Committee. For several years now, any bequests over \$10,000 have been the responsibility of the Legacy Gifts & Investments Committee.

Please contact Bob Black if you have any questions or wish to have further information.

## *Legacy Gifts and Investments*

### **Dave Berkebile (Chair)**

#### Summary Report for Legacy Gifts & Investment Funds

Value at the start of 2022:	\$2,502,642.15
Value at the end of 2022:	\$1,974,607.99

During 2022 the value of Legacy Gifts Funds declined by over \$526,034. This was in line with the general stock market decline in value. The S&P 500 decline in 2022 was the worst since 2008 and the seventh worse in history. Our funds declined less than the market in general, because we held a significant part in cash instruments. During the year, Session also voted to spend more of the funds than had been recommended by the LG&I Committee.

The status of the funds on December 31, 2022 was as follows:

#### Funds managed by FPC-N

Jones/Smith Fund	\$771,183.26
General Investment Fund	\$549,413.48
Koffenberger Ministry Fund	\$118,498.91
Gliwa Physical Property Fund	\$113,093.17
Searl Local Missions Fund	\$97,292.72
Koffenberger Permanent Endowment	\$84,732.97
Gliwa Future Development Fund	\$69,745.21
FP Church Fund	\$51,437.94
Searl Landscaping Fund	\$24,106.31
Eastman Fund	\$12,660.45

#### Funds Managed by Presbyterian Foundation

Koffenberger Outreach Endowment	\$82,443.57
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At the end of the 1st quarter 2022, the LG&I Committee recommended, and Session approved, requesting the Presbyterian Foundation to transfer management of the money in the Koffenberger Permanent Endowment Fund to FPC-N. Once this transfer of management was completed, we requested that these funds be held as cash to avoid the downward movement of market values anticipated for the rest of 2022. These funds are being invested as Koffenberger Permanent Fund in New Covenant Funds in 2023.

The LG&I Committee recommended the use of \$91,337.14 in the budget for 2023 from the Legacy Gifts Funds we control. A significant contribution to FPC-N missions and most of the funds for retirement of our major project loans comes from these Legacy Gift Funds.

Legacy Gifts & Investment Committee members are Mark Sisk, Marianne Piser, Francis Kwanza, Sandy Boyce, and David Berkebile.

# Learning Ministry

## *Adult Christian Education*

### **Melody Bock (Chair)**

Overall, attendance at Adult Education classes was down from last year, but we are hopeful that 2023 will see increased attendance. Some of the reduction in 2022 might be from the return to in-person meetings after COVID and the shift from church services being held in Memorial Hall back to the Sanctuary. Some people were nervous about meeting in person and had difficulty with the technology in hybrid meetings, and some people didn't find the time (immediately after service) and location convenient. Overall, attendance averaged approximately 12 people in class.

There were a variety of classes offered during the year, beginning with a study of Ruth using a book authored by David Roseberry, an Anglican priest. For Lent, the class studied "Drawn to the Cross", based on the devotional book and bookmarks provided to the church members and expanded for class. After Easter, a book by Adam Hamilton, "The Lord's Prayer", was studied. For several weeks the class discussed the weekly "Wired Word" provided by Jim McNeely, until taking a summer break. In the early Fall, Vital Congregation meetings were still going on, which took the place of Adult Ed classes. After Vital Congregation meetings finished, the class spent several weeks discussing the sermon and scriptures used in the liturgy, until Advent. Then an online Advent study on Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace was done, bringing us to the year's end.

## *Children's Education*

### **Greg Hills and Darlene Newsom (Co-Chairs)**

Sunday School for Kindergarten through Grade 5 reopened in mid-September 2021. Safety precautions have remained in place with air purifiers in the rooms and the rooms being sanitized every week. The wearing of masks is optional. In addition, all teachers and assistants have shown proof of COVID vaccinations. They have passed a background check, and have agreed to the church's Child & Youth Safety Policy. There is one classroom with one teacher and one assistant each Sunday.

A trained employee is in the nursery each Sunday, along with an adult church member. The nurse has their own curriculum and abides by all safety rules.

Students come to the 10 am service with their parents. They participate in the service until Pastor Eric invites them up front for the Youth Message. Afterwards, they leave with their teacher for the Sunday school classroom. Parents pick up their children in the lower sanctuary after the service.

We continue to use the PC(USA) curriculum, Growth in Grace and Gratitude. This curriculum encourages children to think about how the Bible applies to their lives. Along with the curriculum, each teacher has augmented their lessons with You Tube videos and their own activities and projects.

The Children's Learning Committee is comprised of the teachers, assistants, and an additional church member.

- The teachers are: Darlene Newsom, Mimi Lovelace and Greg Hills
- The assistants are: Ann Ferreira, Ann Roybal, Pam Wunder, Peggy Hester, Jackie Evers
- Rosemarie Beron helps the committee with planning and preparation.
- In the nursery is Julles Stevenson, our trained employee, and Janet Huckelberry is our church member volunteer

We do need more volunteers in the nursery, along with teachers and assistants in the classroom.

### ***Boy Scout Program***

#### **Matt Reyne (Chartered Organization Representative)**

The Boy Scout Program of First Presbyterian Church returned to a more "normal" state of operation in 2022. Troop 56 continued to have weekly Troop meetings and monthly Adult Committee meetings via Zoom during the first half of the year. In the Fall, all meetings resumed inside in Memorial Hall. The Scouts participated in a number of outdoor service projects during the Summer months and even went to Summer Camp while observing all applicable Covid-19 safety protocols.

Cub Pack 56 also resumed activities again in the Fall, with monthly Den and Pack meetings in Memorial Hall and the usual participation in the church's grounds clean-up in the Fall.

The Boy Scout Program at FPC-N successfully completed its 78<sup>th</sup> year of providing traditional and relevant learning experiences for young girls and boys in our local community. FPC-N has re-chartered Cub Pack 56 and Troop 56 for the year 2023, and looks forward to a full year of program activities.

# Supporting Ministry

## *Board of Trustees*

### **Ron Olson (President)**

The trustees faced a challenging year in 2022 and had to make some difficult decisions.

We thank Don Tancredi for continuing to volunteer as the Facilities Manager. I thank Don for planning and contracting the Family Bathroom project that was added to Memorial Hall.

In 2022 we had a major setback with the Westminster mission. In February, an accidental loss of electricity to both Westminster and Memorial Hall brought about the activation of the Fire System in Westminster. This was a catastrophic accident in that it caused the unrepairable loss of the Fire System, for which the insurance payout was minimal. This led us to a decision to move the Recovering Community to Memorial Hall starting in 2023.

It must be noted that a long stained glass window in the front of the church was damaged. This was reported to the police and Insurance. The insurance payout was great enough to cover the cost of replacement and a contract with Willet Hauser (the original installers) was signed. We look forward to completing the replacement in 2023.

Damage to the front of the church emphasized the need for more security. In that area, the trustees have added new security cameras to the Narthex and to the front of church overseeing the steps and the parking lot. We also added new cameras to lower Sanctuary hallways and outside the doors to view the parking lot.

It also was a privilege for me to assist the Renovation Committee in the upgrade of the Sanctuary. This communal effort has already proven to be a great asset to the church and to the community at large.

I also thank all the people involved in both the Spring and Fall cleaning. Thanks to all who were there and a special thanks to the scouts and other young people, their leaders, and parents that helped to make those events so successful.

# Witnessing Ministry

## *Mission & Outreach*

**Bob Black, Jim Annett, Sarah Huckleberry, Ted Koser, and Mimi Lovelace**

The Mission and Outreach Committee is an umbrella group for the mission work done by many people at First Presbyterian Church. A primary function of the committee is to distribute funds designated for mission through the Venture in Faith budget for local mission and the Congo, as well as several special funds. The committee also distributes earnings received from a number of permanent endowments dedicated to the mission work of the church.

Through contributions made by church members, Mission and Outreach was able to provide financial support to Newark Empowerment Center, Habitat for Humanity, Meeting Ground, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and Newark Area Welfare. We held three special offerings, One Great Hour of Sharing at Easter, the Peace and Global Witness offering in October, and the Christmas Joy offering. The Peace offering was collected on World Communion Sunday.

- Mission & Outreach sponsored the Alternative Gift Market again this year. The congregation's support was wonderful, with donations totaling \$1,451. The organizations thank you!
- Internationally, we supported the school of the Dinanga Church, our sister church, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Please see the separate write up of that ministry.
- We continued to support our mission co-workers: Bob and Kristi Rice in South Sudan and Doug Dicks in Israel-Palestine.
- Our church remains involved in Code Purple but we did not host again this year due to COVID. Many of the area homeless are instead being housed in a local hotel.

We are very thankful for the many members who generously support the mission work of our church. Many members of church give generously of their time and money to the following organizations, Hope Dining Room, Meeting Ground, Newark Area Welfare, and Newark Empowerment Center. The members of our church continue to support those in the most need as seen by the kindness of their donations to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Please remember if you want a full fiscal break-down of our church's Mission and Outreach to any organization supported in 2021 you may contact Bob Black - Treasurer

## ***Hope Dining Room***

### **Willee Short (Chair)**

The year has been a very trying one for the Hope Dining Room ministry. The number of guests who attended our meals on the second Monday of each month ranged from a low of 13 to a high of 27. We continually have a full load of volunteers so, as you can see, our service is unique and we have plenty of time to talk to our guests.

We spent \$1139.33 on food this year (\$94.94 per month) and had donations of \$520. Our contributions were low because we still had money left from the previous year and asked for no new funding. With the price of food so high, we have tried to be very careful with money.

We wrapped hats, knit by Rosemarie Beron (thank you, Rosemarie!), and socks left from last year as Christmas gifts which were gratefully appreciated by our guests.

Our menu stays the same, with our Presbyterian pasta (ziti with meat) being a big favorite. We serve a vegetable, salad, roll and butter, dessert and a piece of fruit with the pasta in order to keep a well-balanced meal.

Many thanks to our gracious and smiling group of volunteers: Stephanie Birdsall, Greg Hill, Kathleen Jolly, Jane McAlpine, Janet Myers, Vickie and Jim Pierson-Perry, Willee and Paul Short, and Pat Steele.

## ***Helping Hands***

### **Sheila Anderson, Steve Hartwick, and Jynx Stevenson**

Helping Hand is a small, informal committee that collects groceries for Newark Area Welfare, Kingswood Methodist Food Closet and Meeting Ground's Wayfarer House. Newark Area Welfare and Kingswood Methodist Food Closet provide food for families in our community experiencing food insecurity. Wayfarer's House is a shelter for women and children, located in Elkton, MD.

In 2022 we had 7 collections. The congregation donated approximately 117 bags of groceries and approximately \$1700 in cash and check donations. Cash donations are typically used to purchase perishable items such as eggs and milk. Your donations are greatly appreciated by both the agencies that distribute them, and the families that receive them. Your donations go directly to people in need in our community.

We plan 8 collections in 2023. We appreciate the continued support of the congregation.

We are especially indebted to Cindy Rodgers for helping us with items in the bulletin and the Communicator. We also appreciate the support of Harvey Connor and Bob Black, with keeping track of cash and check donations for us.

## *Dinanga Parish—Our Sister Church*

### **Jim Annett (FPC-N Contact) and Pastor Lazare Tshibuabua (Dinanga Church)**

As desired, we have the honor to share with you an annual report on the activities carried out in 2023. It is presented in the following three essential points.

#### **1. Support from General Funds Received**

a. General support funds in April:	\$1,100
b. Funds received in September:	\$2,500
c. <u>December general support:</u>	<u>\$1,300</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$4,900</b>

#### **Expenditures**

Student support for exams:	\$650
Windows support:	\$400
Food crisis intervention:	\$1000
School supplies for students:	\$400
Bible purchase:	\$150
Plastic chairs purchase:	\$650
Support for teachers:	\$1050
Refreshment of the Temple (paint and lime):	\$150
Special supplement on the Pastor's Salary:	\$300
Communications and transportation:	\$150

#### **2. Building:**

a. Funds receivable:	\$60,000 (thru bank to bank)
b. Bank fees and VAT:	\$696
c. <u>Supplement received in September:</u>	<u>\$2,500( thru Western Union)</u>
Total of funds received:	\$61,804

#### **Narrative Report**

The funds were used for the construction of the new building, the equipments, and computer equipment according to the estimate, despite certain realities of the prices on the market and other factors. The building will be officially used starting this January. We experienced a delay for three reasons:

- The first contractor did not meet the agreed deadline and his way of working was not convincing. We had took the option of terminating the contract with him while other important works remained.
- The electrician did not come in time to complete the electrical installation stage.
- We took the time to observe the insecurity that reigned over the town of Kananga. We had a little reserve before installing the computer equipment and furniture.

### **3 Dinanga Church Activities of 2022 and Objectives for 2023**

#### **a. Dinanga Church and School Activities**

- No Sunday is without worship.
- 14 babies were baptized
- 11 catechumens baptized and received as effective members of the Church
- Rehabilitation of the interior of the Temple
- Equip the Church with plastic chairs to replace wooden benches
- 4 training seminars organized for the capacity building of young people, women, leaders of the Church of Dinanga according to their categories in the fields of Evangelization, liturgy, development, doctrine of the Church, mission to the poor.
- The 35 primary school finalists had all passed the national test at the end of primary studies. This year the number of primary school students has significantly decreased to less than 250 compared to previous years. Many children went to official schools where education is free under current Congolese law.
- In secondary school there is an increase in students more than in previous years for two reasons: the total success of finalist students in STATE exams and the construction of the new computer building. Number of students: 273.

#### **b. The Objectives of 2023**

- Offer at least one Tshiluba Bible to a member of the Dinanga parish, i.e. to 100 who can read and write.
- Encourage and sensitize members to civil and religious marriage.
- Organize the worship of thanksgiving for newlyweds over 10 years, bless the marriages of some of them and give certificates and diplomas of fidelity to others.
- Multiply seminars for evangelization and the fight against violence against women and children.
- Start the construction of the office of the Church.
- Constitute a pressure group with the people of our environment to lobby the Congolese government in relation to the erosions that threaten our neighborhood, the Church of Dinanga and other infrastructures of public interest.
- Secure the school by placing a metal barrier and reinforcing the fence wall.
- Equip the cutting and sewing room in the new building with sewing machines, overcasting machine, embroidery, chain stitch and button press.

Many thanks for your appreciation.

Pastor Lazare Tshibuabua

# Worshiping Ministry

## *Worship*

### **Carol Olson (Chair)**

The current members of the Worship Committee are: Judy Agnello, Jim Annett, Larry Benson, Steve Breffitt, Interim Pastor Eric Markman, Carolyn Morton, Carol Olson (Chair), Jim Pierson-Perry, and Norma Salomon.

This year has presented the Worship Committee some challenges with the sanctuary renovation, moving worship to Memorial Hall and the sudden resignation of our Director of Music which caused some instability in the music program for a period of time. The Worship Committee has worked diligently to keep worship running smoothly.

### **Looking Back at 2022**

- March 1<sup>st</sup> Rodney Cleveland began as Director of Music
- March 6<sup>th</sup> Communion by intinction reinstated
- May 1<sup>st</sup> Began clearing the sanctuary for the start of the renovations
- May 8<sup>th</sup> Worship begins in Memorial Hall until the sanctuary reopened
- June 12<sup>th</sup> Rodney Cleveland's last Sunday. Resigned due to personal matters and internal issues that impacted his availability for this position
- June Myles Thompson accompanies the choir for hymns and anthems
- September 25<sup>th</sup> Soft opening of the sanctuary with Tim Evers on the organ
- October 16<sup>th</sup> Grand Opening of the sanctuary
- October 16<sup>th</sup> Reintroduce Passing of the Peace during the Worship Service
- Since the sanctuary opened, we have had an organist on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month
- Early October Leia Gibson, a UD music major, began directing the choir. They sing an anthem every Sunday

Since the reopening of the sanctuary, attendance has increased and we continue to live stream the service every Sunday.

Thank you to all those who usher, greet and serve communion willingly when asked. You are a vital part of the worship service.

## *Carillon Ringers*

### **Steve Breffitt (Director)**

The Carillon Ringers played through the Spring of 2022 under the direction of Steve Breffitt, with the final 2 months under new Director, Rodney Cleveland. Unfortunately, when we lost Rodney, we lost bells for several months. During that “time off”, one ringer moved to Iowa and some made other commitments. In the fall, Steve agreed to resume directing rehearsals and the Ringers played for worship twice during the final months of 2022. The nucleus of the group is intact, we added some ringers, and are looking for more. Many thanks to the ringers for your dedication and enthusiasm. If you are interested in becoming a ringer, please contact Steve Breffitt ([sbreffitt@aol.com](mailto:sbreffitt@aol.com)., 302-588-4506). 2023 rehearsals will begin soon!

## *Chancel Choir*

### **Leia Gibson (Interim Choir Director)**

Leia Gibson joined as Interim Choir Director of worship in late September. The choir and praise band continue to combine contemporary and traditional music during worship with strong collaborative effort. Praise music leader Larry Benson and Leia work together to program music for both groups and prepare the music in rehearsals on Sunday mornings before worship begins. Myles Thompson graciously accompanies the praise band and choir anthems on the piano and in rehearsals. The sound system and AV Team has worked diligently and improved audio quality during livestream services. The music ministry has welcomed many organ players and guest musicians including Chuck Cole, Sue Fuhrmann, Jane Van Valkenburg, Carl Van Valkenburg, and Andrea Agnello. The choir is expanding with many new and returning members. We are always seeking additional musicians to join the team and share their talents.

## *Praise Band*

### **Larry Benson (Praise Band Leader)**

What a year!

Worship services continued uninterrupted, despite moving from the main sanctuary to Memorial Hall and back. Our dedicated crew maintained professional audio and visual performances even with new Covid virus attacks. When many were out due to sickness or vacation, the “Baker Quartet” stepped in and did a great job. We may need to revisit that.

The collaboration between Praise Band and Choir is going well, especially with Leia’s arrival. She is doing a great job, has an excellent voice, and is always open to suggestions. Unlike other Presbyterian YouTube services, our music program features a genuine and unique blend of contemporary and traditional music. It is not a performance, spotlighting any one individual, but a united effort with the sole purpose of glorifying God. Reviewing previous services, I

believe that the Music Team continues to improve each week. It is my privilege to lead a group of reliable, dedicated musicians and singers willing to give of their time and talents each week. My personal thanks to all of you!

Our drummer position remains elusive and apparently impossible to fill. Anyone with drumming experience in our congregation is welcome to audition if they are interested. The same goes for anyone with expertise on other instruments. I am always looking for people who want to use their talents in ministry. Please contact me through the church office or after services.

## ***Audiovisual (AV) Team***

### **Jim Pierson-Perry (Chair)**

With the move of worship services to Memorial Hall and back, as well as the numerous changes to the AV system in the renovated Sanctuary, the AV team had its hands full in 2022! Operating out of our newly built control room in the back of the Sanctuary (thank you Dave Evers!!), our team of volunteers works to ensure the best audio quality within the Sanctuary as well as both audio and video for our livestream and recorded videos.

Our volunteers arrive every Sunday before service to set up the equipment, reset audio input levels (affected by which groups are performing and what instruments will be used), decide which video angles to use for each part of the service, and prep the livestream. During the service they oversee sound from up to 25 different audio sources and video from 3 cameras. New updates this year were installation of induction loops to support those with T-coil hearing aids and an upgrade to Pastor Eric's headset mic. We have grown a lot from our early days with a single hand-held videocam and pickup mic—to literally a small TV production setup.

In addition to Sunday services, the AV team also assists with special events such as funeral services, weddings, and presentations such as the recent PW Christmas event. Having the ability to provide a quality livestream lets us broadcast those events out to family and friends who otherwise might not be able to attend, as well as provide lasting video recordings.

We recently welcomed several new volunteers to the team: Clinton and Nathan Nanji and Beth Marshall. Clinton has been handling audio in the Sanctuary for several weeks now, while Nathan and Beth are learning the video side. They are blessings to us. We are always looking for new volunteers, so if you have any interest—come on back to the sound booth and let's talk!

Your AV Team Members are: "Mighty" Matt Bowen, Dave Evers, Ted Koser, Beth Marshall, Clinton Nanji, Nathan Nanji, Jim Pierson-Perry, and Jeff Rogers (emeritus).

# **Staff, Worship and Administrative Team**

## ***Interim Pastor***

**Rev. Eric Markman**

ericmarkman@firstpresnewark.org

## ***Worship Team***

**Larry Benson, Praise Team Music Leader**

larrybenson@firstpresnewark.org

**Steve Breffitt, Handbell Director**

stevebreffitt@firstpersnewark.org

**Leia Gibson, Interim Choir Director**

## ***Administration Team***

**Bob Black, Treasurer**

blackre2@firstpresnewark.org

**Nancy Lewis, Clerk of Session**

**Jane Moore, Moderator Board of Deacons**

**Ron Olson, President, Board of Trustees**

**Carol Olson, Pam Wunder, Co-Moderators, Presbyterian Women**

pw@firstpresnewark.org

## ***Nursery Staff***

Julles Stevenson

## ***Mission Co-Workers***

South Sudan: Bob and Kristi Rice

Israel & Palestine: Doug Dicks

## ***Sister Congregation***

Dinanga Presbyterian Church, Democratic Republic of Congo