

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

PASTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Baron Mullis

When the life of a congregation is going well, it is easy to make the pages of an annual report into a valedictory. And this year, as every year, I would posit that our correct posture to reflecting on our life together is one of gratitude to God for how God has led and sustained us this year, as every year.

As every year, I am grateful to those whom God has called to lead here: Both those who do so in ordained service, our elders, deacons, and ministers, and also those who lead, not from the standpoint of an installed office, but from the standpoint of simply doing what needs to be done.

For those whose installed service concludes this year, we owe a debt of gratitude: Deacons Anne Futterer, Michael Smith, João Magalhães, Chase Stewart, and Bill Swoope, and Elders Reggie Amoa, Carol Cook, Susy Christensen, Allan Schimmel, and Shellie Unger. Please express your gratitude to these members who undertook special service to the church.

And, as every year, we are grateful to the church staff who work so tirelessly for our good. We are served by a devoted staff who love this congregation. Please express your gratitude to the staff for the countless ways they serve us.

Perhaps most importantly, we are grateful for those whose songs along with us continue on another shore and in greater light, our members whose passing into the more immediate presence of Jesus Christ are noted in our Clerk's report.

Gratitude is so key to an outlook on our life together that is focused on the work of Jesus Christ. And with our gratitude rightly noted, let me offer this observation: 2023 also marked a turning of the page in the life of First Church. Our future will look different from our past because of significant staff changes this year. We began 2023 with a search for the person God was preparing to serve as an associate pastor here at First Church, and the Rev. Laura Colee joined us in July, focusing on Children's Ministry, T&Ts, Membership and Evangelism, and general pastoral duties. We are also very grateful for the presence of Asante Carter as our sexton. Likewise, after years of devoted service nurturing our music program, we bid Godspeed to Andrew Senn as he left us to accept a wonderful opportunity. We were enormously blessed to be joined in an interim capacity by Donald Nally, Paul Fleckenstein, and Ken Lovett as we embark on the search for our new organist/choirmaster. And while Jerry Foote's service as our minister of congregational care didn't conclude until the very beginning of 2024, her retirement also means transition in how we care for our congregation. Ideally, when staff transitions occur, they open the way for fresh ways of seeing our ministry, and engaging our congregation and world. So, I write this report from a vantage point of great

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**Annual Meeting of the Congregation
February 11, 2024**

1. **Call** The Reverend Dr. Baron Mullis
2. **Constituting Prayer**
3. **Appointment of Clerk/Establishment of Quorum** Susy Christensen, Clerk of Session
4. **Notification of Distribution of Annual Report**
(Copies available upon request)
5. **Q&A on Financial Reports** Phil McMunigal & Craig Boddorff
Treasurer's Report 2023, electronically distributed 2/8/24
2024 Budget Highlights, electronically distributed 2/8/24
Endowment Report, electronically distributed 2/8/24
6. **Report of the 2023 Officer Nominating Committee** Carolyn Crego, Chair
Nominees for the Class of 2027 (unless otherwise indicated):

<i>Elders:</i> Carolyn Bavington Cynthia Decrucq Rebecca Horowitz Karen Marston Rebecca Melley Jordana Woodford	<i>Deacons:</i> Sydney Cardy Linda Deis Gui Siqueira De Carvalho (2025) SommerAnn McCullough Anita McLarin Eric Ojerholm (2025) Max Stainton (2025) Katie Wu
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7. **Election of At-Large Members of the 2024 Nominating Committee**

<i>At-large Members:</i>	SommerAnn McCullough Lester Morris Emily Roan Stella Tsai
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8. **Changes to the Pastor's Terms of Call** Fraz Thomas
9. **Adjourn with Closing Prayer** Dr. Mullis

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excitement about the future that God is preparing for us. It is my privilege to be your pastor, and I am full of hope for what this next season of ministry will hold.

Finally, let me conclude with my perennial admonition: As you read these pages, please think of them not so much as a reflection on where we have been, but instead, read them with an eye for where God is calling you to be part of our common life in the year to come.

THE SESSION

Susy Christensen, Clerk

You will see from the Session Committee reports that follow, much work has been done during the past year.

The Policy Review Task Force (Susy Christensen, Rebecca Melley, Jon Rogers, Elaine Rothbauer and Allan Schimmel) wrapped up their work so that there is a set of up-to-date policies for our church.

In June, the Session examined and approved for ordination and installation the new classes of elders and deacons and elected the corporate officers of the church: Carolyn Crego, President; Craig Boddorff, Treasurer; and Susy Christensen, Secretary.

We welcomed 19 new members in 2023: Chase Stewart, Brian Chu, Frances Tate, SommerAnn McCullough, Eric Ojerholm, Lynn Utter, Katie Wu, Ibikari Legg-Jack, Marley Legg-Jack, Heather van Stolk, Brooks Barber, Richard Davies (who was a reinstated member), Joyce Brill, Sydney Cardy, Alan Southergill, Christine Southergill, Ashley Brunk, Alicia McDonald and Gerry Rice. It is remarkable in a time when many churches are experiencing declines, that we would have so many new members, many of whom are already actively serving on boards and committees.

We celebrated 6 infant baptisms and one adult baptism. But with joys can also come sadness and we said goodbye to several of our members as they joined the church triumphant: David W. Marston Sr., Marcellus (Marc) Lloyd, Eve-Ann Wilson and John Winkler.

It is worth noting that our congregation statistics (which are required to be reported to the Presbytery and GA) shows that we continue to have an even balance of younger adults and older adults. This balance allows for wisdom and sustainability for which we are abundantly blessed.

THE BOARD OF DEACONS

Gary Christensen, Moderator

2023 started with the deacons being ably led by Jean Witmer and Natalie Amoa as co-moderators. In May, Natalie rolled off the board (and became an elder). Later in the year, with deep appreciation for her service but also sadness, that we learned that Jean Witmer would be moving to California to be closer to family. We would like to acknowledge all that Jean contributed to First Church over many years of service and wish her well.

When the class of 2026 was installed, Gary Christensen was elected as co-moderator. Following Jean Witmer's departure and in consultation with the clergy, the board reverted to its historic structure of having a moderator and a vice-moderator. With an eye to the church's future, a major reason for the change was a desire to develop newer members and grow them into leadership roles in the church. This structure provides a less-demanding means for development into leadership roles in the church and a lower workload commitment than that perceived of a co-moderator. The board

(see Deacons on page 4)

unanimously adopted this recommendation and proceeded to elect Gary Christensen as moderator and Elaine Hanby as vice-moderator.

A focus for the deacons has been the building of camaraderie and teamwork. The board achieves more when working as a supportive team, as opposed to being a board of individuals. While this is frequently seen by the congregation when many deacons who have not signed up, help out with ushering and fellowship duties, it also occurs in many ways not seen by the congregation. One notable example this year was the sending out of hand written and addressed Christmas cards to the congregation, organized by Elaine Hanby. The cards featured artwork by Deacon João Magalhães, which was featured in an article in the December Messenger. The hand writing and addressing took place when most of the deacons (and an elder) gathered after church in November, finishing what originally appeared to be a daunting task, in less than two hours. Helping and supporting each other, and the congregation, are central to the deacons' spirit.

The deacons continue to experiment with meeting formats that fit our post-COVID needs. While Zoom meetings were convenient, in-person meetings were missed. The deacons have begun trialing a hybrid approach, alternating Zoom and in-person meetings monthly. Consensus was that in-person meetings would occur after church on the first Sundays of in-person months, while the Zoom meetings would occur on the first Thursday of virtual months.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Carol Cook & Allan Schimmel, Co-chairs

The year began with "Practicing Unity When Things Fall Apart," a two-part series featuring church history in light of FPC's 150th Anniversary of the dedication of the church. The Rev. Ken Ross spoke on "Things Fall Apart" and Dr. Mullis spoke on "Belonging in an Age of Disintegration." Topics included the division in the First Church that created the Second church in 1743; the deeper division that resulted in the First and Second churches organizing as two separate denominations in 1837, and the spiritual resources for reunion that might be called on as we confront a secular America that seems resigned to alienation. The classes were held after worship on January 29 (seventeen attending) and February 6 (nineteen attending).

A five-part book club featuring *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC* by the Rev. Frederick Buechner comprised the Lenten series. The club featured discussions of sections of the book led by Baron Mullis, Barbara Chaapel, and Ken Ross. Topics such as faith and doubt and the real meaning of common theological terms such as agnosticism, love, and sin were explored. The sessions were held in the MacColl Room after worship from February 26 to March 25 for in-person and online attendees. The number of participants varied from nine to fifteen.

The committee sponsored two programs recognizing Earth Day (Saturday, April 22). Doug O'Malley, FPC member and head of Environment New Jersey, led a program on climate action after the worship service on April 23. Participants in last year's *Saving Us* book club provided updates on their climate action plans. The church's energy savings initiatives, developed under the leadership of Karl Miller, were described. Nineteen attended. The second program was Earth Walk 2023, on May 6 at the Morris Arboretum. Jeannie Boehner provided insights on the natural environment during the walk. Six people attended.

(Adult CE, continued from page 4)

Two Advent series were held. In the three-week Advent Bible Study, the Rev. Laura Colee and Dr. Baron Mullis explored Advent texts with online participants. Held from 12:15-12:45 on Wednesdays on November 29, December 6, and December 13, the scheduling was designed to help fit Advent reflection into a busy holiday schedule. Attendees numbered between nine and twelve. In the Advent Program on Dreams, the Rev. Susan Teegen led in-person attendees in a four-part program exploring dream interpretation in the context of a spiritual practice. The classes were held before worship in the Whitefield Room on November 26, December 3, 10, and 17. This series was fully subscribed at ten participants.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Natalie Amoa & Crystal Reeck, Co-chairs

The past year was marked by many different forms of growth for our children’s Christian education efforts. Most notably, we welcomed the Rev. Laura Colee as our Associate Pastor, and she has led a number of important initiatives involving the church’s children and parenting families. With more families returning to in-person worship, we also expanded our in-person activities, including restarting regular Sunday school. We highlight a few activities below.

This year, the Celebration Service included a Mardi Gras celebration, complete with beads, king cake, and an enthusiastic rendition of “When the Saints Go Marching In.” We also distributed the fish banks for the children to participate in One Great Hour of Sharing.

During Easter, we hosted a great crowd of children in the Celebration Service, with children of multiple ages participating in an Easter scavenger hunt. Thank you for everyone’s patience as the children roamed the halls of the church following the clues to find their prizes.

We also hosted our first Kids Night at FPCP this winter. Children came to the church in the evening for fun activities, pizza, and a holiday movie. Parents and caregivers weren’t allowed to attend and seemed to enjoy some time to themselves while the children were at church.

Our children also participated in several important events during the Advent season. They sent hand-decorated cards to some of our members, particularly those who are homebound or unable to attend services. They helped decorate our Christmas tree at FPCP. And they decorated dozens of cookies for people staying at Winter Shelter to brighten their holiday season.

None of our activities would be possible without the help of our wonderful congregation. It would be impossible to name everyone who contributes to our Children’s Christian Education in this short space, as there are so many ways to help us. Some, like, João Magalhães, baked cookies for the children to decorate at Christmas. Others, like the Marston/Buzan family, ordered and wrapped dozens of Christmas books for the children.

This coming year, we have more exciting ideas for programming, but we need your help to make it possible! If you are interested in volunteering with us, please reach out to laura.colee@fpcphila.org.

Our focus in 2023 has been on sustainability, building care, and technology.

► **Sustainability:**

Over five years ago, Session mandated that we purchase electricity from renewable sources. Building on this, FPC joined Philadelphia's "District 2030" Energy Savings Program with a goal to reduce energy use by 50% by 2030. First Presbyterian Church was featured as the first house of worship to join this program in Philadelphia. FPC then hosted an event in April, sponsored by the Philadelphia Energy Authority, "Why Now is the Time for Nonprofits and Houses of Worship to Go Solar." This event brought together several Center City religious and non-profit organizations to showcase renewable energy and encourage more sustainable efforts.

With energy prices surging, our electricity vendor was predicting a 71% rate increase at the end of our contract in October 2023. The committee worked hard to evaluate alternate vendors and contracted for a fixed electrical supply with a new vendor (AEP Energy) that will supply 100% renewable energy at less than a 10% increase in cost – with the rate fixed for four years.

Our church is finding better ways to use less energy. For 2023, electricity use was 25% lower than in 2019 (pre-pandemic usage rates), resulting in a savings of about \$1,800 at the current supply rate. Regarding natural gas, the committee, studying the experiences of other churches with pipe organs, instituted programming lower unoccupied temperatures in the sanctuary, which has improved natural gas specific consumption (CCF/HDD) by about 13% versus 2022-2023, and we expect will reduce annual natural gas costs by ~ \$1,200. We received \$1,660 in energy efficiency rebates for different projects from PGW.

► **Building Care:**

In early March, we had the unfortunate event of a pipe bursting within the basement ceiling. The pipe, electrical equipment, ceiling, and surrounding walls have been fixed/replaced. Our insurance policy covered all repairs and replacements except the burst pipe, as the pipe failure was due to age. The committee then engaged a plumbing contractor to conduct a walkthrough to review all exposed piping in the building and repair any pipes as needed.

Masonry and roof repairs have been scheduled for Baron's office to begin as soon as temperatures are consistently warm enough in the spring.

Throughout the year, church members have approached the committee regarding the narthex sliding wood doors being difficult to open, close, and secure. We have approached multiple contractors and specialists to see what repairs and work is possible. After a long search a contractor has been engaged and will begin repair work in February.

We are working with Atkin Olshin & Schade (AOS) Architects to prepare for Term 2 of the Facilities Condition and Assessment Maintenance Program (FCAMP). Begun in 2018, the FCAMP is a comprehensive, proactive approach to maintaining our church facilities over the next decade by ensuring that we update our building and equipment on a timely basis. The corresponding facility detail spreadsheet, with input from the architect, engineers and other consultants, provides us with a basis to determine our annual capital spending budget. By planning ahead we are able to budget large projects and make sure we are good stewards of our building.

(Facilities, continued from page 6)

Finally, Jeannie Boehner has accomplished the daunting task of updating our building use policy. This helps ensure that we continue to open our doors to others in a responsible manner.

► **Technology:**

The church began using the Realm software package in fall 2022 for church management functions like membership and giving. In January of 2023 we completed our software transition by moving all church financial functions to Realm Accounting. The fact that hardly anyone noticed testifies to the hard work and dedication of the church's Realm Software Team and Finance Office in making this a smooth transition! As a result, our entire church community now can administer their own personal information and giving, track (and sign up for) church events, and view a church directory (with appropriate access controls) using their own browser or the smartphone app, Realm Connect.

The committee selected a new vendor for the church's main copier/printer to replace the older copier when its lease expired in December 2023. The new copier brand, Kyocera, was selected by the committee for its proven sustainability, and the new vendor, Saxon Office Technology, offered a competitive lease and copy rate, so it was not too costly to pursue our sustainability goals.

There was also much IT work done behind the scenes by our IT guru Jen Gay, including new, upgraded computers for most of the church staff to replace aging equipment, an upgraded WiFi network, standardized software for all staff computers, and many hours of ongoing infrastructure "clean up" to keep our system of shared files and email running smoothly.

With grateful thanks to the Facilities Committee: Jeannie Boehner, Heather Coyne, Carolyn Crego (co-chair), Jen Gay, Mac McLarin (co-chair), Karl Miller, and Sue Riemann (staff support).

MEMBERSHIP & EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

Shellie Unger & Larry Slagle, Co-chairs

The Membership & Evangelism Committee (M&E) exists to welcome visitors and newer attendees and encourage and integrate them into the life of the church. One of the goals of this ministry is to facilitate the membership process to add new members to the First Presbyterian family. Though the last four years have presented unusual circumstances, the First Presbyterian family continues to care and support one another, and grow.

2023 continued to be a year of adjusting to post pandemic life. The committee continued to provide oversight for fellowship/affinity groups:

- Of note, we welcomed Reverend Laura Colee, Associate Pastor. Laura capably took full responsibility for the faithful execution of consistent program offerings for our **Twenties and Thirties group (T&Ts)**.
- The **Women of Wit & Wisdom** were gathered in May for an interesting overview and photo presentation of Diane and Jon Rogers's trip to Australia and New Zealand, in September for a "welcome back" lunch, and in November for coffee/conversation with Laura Colee.
- The **fpcQ** group hosted a brunch in September and an awesome Christmas party in December.
- The **Band of Boomers** organized the Philadelphia Rail Park Walking tour in September and its popular Christmas Party in December.

(see M&E on page 8)

Due to the efforts of Baron Mullis and Laura Colee, First Church continues to welcome new members. Session accepted 19 new members in 2023.

Looking into 2024 with great anticipation, we are grateful for the sustaining grace and love of our fellowship. We approach the new year with a renewed commitment to creatively nurture our visitors and new members and to provide opportunities for deeper engagement and welcome into the First Church family. We have planned our “We’re So Glad You’re Here” reception at the home of William Swoope on February 20, 2024.

Members of the M&E Committee are Diane Rogers, Gui Carvalho, Kayla Krystek, Suellen Smith, Richard Unger, and William Swoope, and the committee is fortunate to have the Rev. Laura Colee as our staff liaison.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Jordana Woodford & Ina Mexhitaj, Co-chairs

In 2023, the Mission Committee highlighted our mission partners in different ways throughout the year. We invited past, present, and potential mission partners to engage with our congregation by presenting their work in a Minute for Mission during our celebration and traditional services. For example, a representative from Covenant Network spoke to the congregation about the importance of building a network of churches that welcome and affirm LGBTQIA+ people, help churches find LGBTQIA+ pastors and cultivate a new generation of leaders who can expand these efforts. Additionally, we set up a digital “Missions Fair” on the church website that allowed congregation members to watch short videos showcasing our mission partners and their contributions to the community.

We added new mission partners, such as Health Ministries, William Way Center, and Episcopal Community Services (ECS). Health Ministries is run through the Christ Lutheran Church in Harrisburg and provides medical, dental, and mental health support for individuals living in the Allison Hill community. The William Way Center supports the LGBTQ+ community in the city through advocacy, arts and culture, empowerment and community support, such as the LGBT Elder Initiative, the Trans Resource Center, and the LGBTQ+ archives. ECS is a community resource center supporting individuals and families living in West Philadelphia through an open pantry and rapid rehousing program.

We continue to share volunteering opportunities and events to support our mission partners. With the unwavering support of the congregation, the Mission Committee continued its tradition of the Advent and Lenten Drive supporting organizations such as Philly House, Maternity Care Coalition, and St. Barnabas Community Resource Center. In addition, we supported through donations and volunteering the Annual Girls’ Leadership Camp Sojourner Truth Walk, Health Ministries by helping cover the costly repair of their medical clinic after an emergency plumbing accident, MANNA with their Pie-in-the-Sky Fundraiser, and Zia by providing space and volunteer opportunities to assemble meal kits for Philadelphia families experiencing food insecurity.

For the second year in a row in the spring, we hosted and sponsored lunch and dinner for fifty-five students from the Howard University Alternative Spring Break program. Under the Youth Empowerment, Health and Wellness initiative, students traveled from Washington, DC and participated in community service projects to support public schools and after-school programs in

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Philadelphia. During their visit, students and the site coordinator attended the traditional worship service and spent fellowship hour with members of the congregation. We will be welcoming them to First Church in March for a third year.

The Missions Committee continued the yearly tradition of reviewing nineteen applications for students from the Community College of Philadelphia applying for the 2023-2024 scholarship funded by First Presbyterian Church and awarded scholarships to three students. In the fall, we went through our grant application review and will be supporting twenty-one mission partners.

As a committee, we sought out to connect with present and potential partners to learn more ways that the church can support them. We joined the University of Pennsylvania Christian Association Dinner with Twenties & Thirties group. The Missions Committee partnered with the Twenties & Thirties group to coordinate our annual Giving Tree donation drive for the families of the Valley Youth House's Achieving Independence Center. This long-standing tradition at First Church was a success with many gifts bought through the generosity of the congregation. Representatives from the American Red Cross presented their ongoing projects with the committee and the congregation and shared volunteering opportunities about how our congregation could get involved. At the end of the year, FPCP opened its doors to Child Houses, an organization that protects and advocates for children's rights in Syria, which hosted a well-attended information session that focused on how the church and local community could support their efforts. As further support, the Mission Committee unanimously approved to send a contribution to Child Houses on behalf of the church.

In 2024, the Missions Committee will be collaborating closely and strategically with other committees and by working closely with our mission partners, we will be brainstorming ideas on ways the church can play a more active role in our community and deliver on those goals. A major goal for 2024 will be for the Mission Committee to organize an in-person Missions Fair. We are grateful that the church has provided continued support to represent First Presbyterian Church and our missions and are hopeful that through these intentional efforts 2024 will be an even more exceptional year for First Presbyterian Church congregation to support our community.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Brian Chu & Fraz Thomas, Co-chairs

2023 has proven to be a busy and substantive year for personnel matters at First Church, starting with the implementation and successful conclusion of our nationwide search for a full-time associate pastor, selecting the Rev. Laura Colee to join the pastoral team at FPCP. The decision, approved unanimously by Session, was facilitated by months of focused planning and organization by the search committee members, Becky Yep (chair), Jennifer Boyd, Elaine Hanby, Rebecca Melley, and Larry Slagle. Since the fall, Rev. Colee has stepped into her roles as assisting minister and coordinator for congregational life brilliantly, and her ministry has already borne out the promise of her candidacy, engaging with the Membership and Evangelism committee as new member coordinator and spearheading fellowship for the Twenties & Thirties Group. We look forward to how her tenure at First Church will continue to bless and enrich the life of our congregation.

► **Music Director Search**

With Andrew Senn's departure in September, after 17 years serving as FPCP's organist and music director, a new search committee was created to organize a nationwide search for his successor. The

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(*Personnel*, continued from page 9)

five-member team, overseen by Chair Delores Brisbon, includes the Rev. Cindy Jarvis, Philip Amoa, and choir members Brian Chu and Fran Kraemer, with Dr. Mullis participating *de facto*. This committee is overseen by and reports directly to the Personnel Committee, which finalized a revised job description in November to make the position full-time, a significant change necessary to cull the best talent to lead the choir and continue the historic legacy of the music program at First Church. Session approved the revised job description in December, and the job opening was posted on the church website and in the employment databases of the American Guild of Organists and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, among other outlets.

Delores and the Search Committee began their process by gathering feedback from the choir and congregation in separate listening sessions during the fall, while conducting a salary survey to reflect changes in the climate and expectations of music liturgy and ministry since Andrew was hired.

The music director search continues on apace, with committee members meeting weekly since January 15, 2024 to review applicant submissions. In addition, the committee's evaluative team has been expanded to include church elders Cynthia Decrucq (former chair of the Personnel Committee) and Rebecca Melley, who is serving as the search's HR point person and coordinator of applications and candidate correspondence. The committee intends to close the window for application submissions on March 15, 2024, after which they will narrow down the applicant pool to invite finalist candidates to come to Philadelphia to audition in person with the choir at First Church. Following thereupon, after consideration of both the choir's and the congregation's feedback, the search committee will report to Personnel with their recommendations.

► **Interim Music Staff**

First Church has been especially blessed to have garnered the services of several excellent regional musicians to step in during this period of transition for our music program. Donald Nally, the founder and conductor of Philly's Grammy-winning choral ensemble, *The Crossing*, agreed to direct the choir through the Christmas season, in collaboration with a team of exceptionally experienced church organists - Paul Fleckenstein, Steven Tharp, and Ken Lovett. Maestro Nally's intensive work with First Church's professional choir and coordination of the music liturgy with Baron during this pivotal season of the liturgical calendar has been revelatory, drawing from his wealth of discernment and passion for liturgical music, as well as his breadth of association with contemporary composers. Donald was persuaded to continue leading the choir into the new year, through Holy Week and Easter. We are grateful for his dedication to maintaining the musical standards of FPCP amid his busy schedule of teaching, performing, and recording. Paul Fleckenstein has also graciously agreed to continue as interim organist until Easter.

► **New Staff Hires**

In other staffing news, Chase Stewart, who facilitated the Deacons and the church as interim part-time sexton, had to step down from this role as a result of the exigencies of his cross-country work. After a thorough revision of the sexton job description, with considerable input from Evelyn Schwartz, Jeannie Boehner, and Bill Swoope, the church hired Asante Carter as our new sexton. Asante has been a welcome presence at First Church, fulfilling his duties of keeping the church in order and prepared for weekly services with efficiency and grace. Sharese Smallings has been hired as an additional nursery caregiver, with Carrie Pease continuing to provide her excellent care in this capacity each

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(Personnel, continued from page 10)

week. Sue Riemann continues to serve as supervisor to the sexton, while Rev. Laura Colee has taken over supervision of nursery staff. Additionally, Crystal Reeck has graciously stepped in to assist Laura Colee with the reinstatement and leadership of the church's Sunday School program, of vital importance to the church's Christian educational mission.

I would like to tender my gratitude to my fellow committee colleagues - Cynthia Decrucq, Rebecca Melley, Stella Tsai, and co-chair Fraz Thomas - for their insightful assistance and dedicated collaboration, addressing the numerous personnel concerns the church has encountered during the past year.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Dave Huting & Carolyn Bavington, Co-chairs

During 2023 the Risk Management Committee completed the compilation of First Church's financial statements for the years 2021 and 2022. The compilation was performed by the accounting firm of Kreischer Miller. We also performed an audit of our processes and procedures for operations as outlined by the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

Our insurance policies have continued to be sponsored by the Presbytery of Philadelphia and issued by Church Mutual Insurance, and our workers' compensation policy with AmTrust.

Karl Miller was integral (super helpful and supportive) in handing off his responsibilities for the compilation and audit to the new Co-Chairs. Stephen Krystek and Elaine Rothbauer have continued to provide needed expertise.

STEWARDSHIP & BUDGET

Reggie Amoa & Phil McMunigal, Co-Chairs

During 2023, Phil McMunigal assumed the role of Co-Chair of the Stewardship & Budget committee (S&B Committee), as Fraz Thomas took on another role on the Personnel Committee. We're excited to have Phil, who comes with years of experience, not only as a former member of the S&B Committee but with knowledge of the investment management industry.

As Co-Chairs, Reggie and Phil lead efforts to organize and advance the mission of the S&B Committee with ardent support from the committee's members. At its core, the S&B Committee seeks to ensure that First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia (FPCP) has the ability to provide adequate funding for its mission and programs for years to come.

The activities of the S&B Committee this year continued to involve integrating our budget and reporting process in Realm's Accounting Platform and thinking about more beneficial ways to provide transparent information to our Session and the Congregation at large. We are still excited by the features this platform provides and are pleased with our switch to the "one-fund" accounting that consolidates the activities of the church's three funds, namely the Operating, Endowment, and Capital budget. For planning purposes and discussions with Session, we still present results and budgets for the three funds for presentational purposes only. We continue to receive feedback from our committee members and church members on ways to improve transparency, which is always appreciated.

If there was a theme to summarize our meetings this year, it would be gratitude. We continue to be blessed by results of our annual giving and investment income, which are still represent a steadfast source of our church's financial resources. That said, we are most grateful for a bequest of over \$2

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million from the estate of John Paul Decker, a deceased member of FPCP. Per our church policies, the bequest is placed in the unrestricted endowment unless otherwise directed by Session.

As will be noted in the Treasurer's report, while the bequest represents a sizable increase in our endowment, we cannot ignore the impressive increase in our annual giving numbers, which registered an increase of almost 35 percent from 2022, and we continue to believe, based on the current FY2024 budget, that our collective commitments to First Presbyterian will only grow stronger.

With inflation moderating, the S&B Committee will continue to work with various committee heads to prudently manage expenses and mitigate discretionary spending whenever possible. Major operating expense categories continue to be our seen from our building expenses (i.e. utilities and other church maintenance), worship, congregational needs, and clergy which also includes expenses for our music director and other music program related expenses.

The S&B Committee, in concert with the Endowment Committee, remain committed to the analyzing the annual draw and installing appropriate guard rails to give the Session sufficient information to approve annual budgets. Our investment manager, Mercer (formerly Vanguard), provides additional professional guidance and feedback to help us make informed decisions with respect to our projections of the potential growth of the endowment over its perpetual investment horizon. Our return expectations for 2024 remain conservatively modest. However, with our endowment at over \$11 million, we are aware that there is nothing modest about our position and remain thankful for your charitable gifts and for the bequests that continue to ensure FPCP can carry out its mission and maintain its physical home for many years to come.

The Facilities Condition and Assessment Maintenance Program (FCAMP) design and project plan lays the foundation and outlook for maintaining (program is only maintenance, no upgrades) the church's building through and potentially beyond 2030. The study was commissioned in 2017 by the Joint Capital Planning & Building Management Committee with a twenty-year plan expected to address building improvements over three terms.

Scope includes masonry and roofing repairs and replacement, restoration and replacement of window frames and window sashes, replacing mechanical systems for heating and cooling. With this much to plan for, the Facilities Committee continues to partner closely with the S&B Committee to not only keep us informed of the priorities but also spending that stems from unforeseen emergencies. As highlighted in the 2024 budget presentation, we expect to see some of these projects take shape and increase our capital spending over the next couple of years.

In conclusion, I would like to extend sincere appreciation to all our members for their commitments of time and talents to the S&B Committee – Phil McMunigal (Co-Chair, Annual Giving), Fraz Thomas (former member, Co-Chair Personnel Committee), Heidi Artigue, Craig Boddorff (Treasurer), Gary Christensen, Dave Huting (Endowment Committee Chair), Mac McLarin (Facilities Co-Chair), Patti Sassoli (Director of Annual Giving), and Dr. Baron Mullis (ex-officio).

We welcome new members all the time. If the mission of this committee is something that interests you, please contact one of the co-chairs.

WORSHIP COMMITTEEEvelyn Schwartz and Frances Tate, Co-chairs

The year 2023 was a year of celebrations and transitions at First Church. We welcomed the Reverend Laura Colee as our associate pastor, we celebrated the 325th anniversary of our congregation, our choir sang in England and Scotland and we bid a fond farewell to our music director, Andrew Senn.

We had six baptisms and Dr. Mullis officiated at four nonmember weddings and three member weddings. Communion was served every Sunday at the Celebration! service and nine times at the Traditional service. Our family-oriented Celebration! service continues to grow under the leadership of Dr. Mullis and Rev. Colee with the help of the Marston, Buzan, Melley and Reeck families. Calli and Evan Graver provide the music for the service every week. If you have not attended this service, I encourage you to do so. It is an uplifting experience. Our 11 a.m. traditional service continues to guide us spiritually through the Word and the music. We have continued live streaming our traditional service every week thanks to the hard work of Patti Sassoli.

First Church is fortunate to have such talented musicians in our choir. Each week they share with us their gifts of music. In August the choir led a successful musical tour of the United Kingdom. They provided music for weekday Evensong at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Sunday morning worship service at the Glasgow Cathedral and a concert at Saint Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh. After Andrew Senn's departure members of the choir were quick to step up and keep our music program up to the standards we have come to expect. Dr. Mullis was able to contract Donald Nally as an interim choir director. In addition, we have three talented organists, Paul Fleckenstein, as interim organist, with Ken Lovett and Stephen Tharp who are available on a rotating basis.

In November we had a special service commemorating the 325th anniversary of our congregation followed by a champagne reception in Old Buttonwood Hall.

On December 3 we had Advent Lessons and Carols, and on Christmas Eve we had the Traditional nine Lessons and Carols. Donald Nally led the choir in a more a cappella based, contemplative service which was a wonderful challenge for our choristers.

Members of the worship committee are Barbara Chaapel, Dave Huting, Anita McLarin, Dr. Baron Mullis, Owen Robbins, Evelyn Schwartz (co-chair), William Swoope, Frances Tate (co-chair) and Stella Tsai.

Operating Budget Summary

2022 & 2023 Operating Budget Results and 2024 Operating Budget							
INCOME - Totals	2022			2023			2024
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget
General Giving	\$ 489,015	\$ 495,260	101%	\$ 523,500	\$ 664,151	127%	\$ 606,500
Designated Offering	\$ 5,450	\$ 3,963	73%	\$ 4,200	\$ 5,220	124%	\$ 4,200
Investment Income	\$ 432,668	\$ 448,409	104%	\$ 437,210	\$ 457,954	105%	\$ 459,209
Other	\$ 6,746	\$ 16,787	249%	\$ 4,246	\$ 21,974	518%	\$ 2,100
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 933,879	\$ 964,419	103%	\$ 969,156	\$1,149,299	119%	\$1,072,009
EXPENSES - Totals	2022			2023			2024
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget
Clergy & Staff	\$ 289,659	\$ 270,221	93%	\$ 308,718	\$ 270,629	88%	\$ 340,571
Financial Services	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	80%	\$ 5,800	\$ 8,301	143%	\$ 6,000
Worship & The Arts	\$ 162,323	\$ 148,324	91%	\$ 172,101	\$ 162,538	94%	\$ 192,109
Congregational Needs	\$ 31,200	\$ 19,364	62%	\$ 30,710	\$ 48,339	157%	\$ 56,011
Christian Education	\$ 15,324	\$ 8,040	52%	\$ 15,000	\$ 6,612	44%	\$ 7,500
Office	\$ 109,803	\$ 101,057	92%	\$ 110,035	\$ 115,808	105%	\$ 119,116
Building	\$ 256,947	\$ 228,806	89%	\$ 254,020	\$ 212,290	84%	\$ 250,450
Mission & Benevolence	\$ 97,450	\$ 94,763	97%	\$ 98,700	\$ 98,297	100%	\$ 97,200
Miscellaneous	\$ 4,646	\$ 12,101	260%	\$ 4,750	\$ 13,398	282%	\$ 15,500
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 972,352	\$ 886,676	91%	\$ 999,834	\$ 936,212	94%	\$1,084,457
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ (38,473)	\$ 77,743	-202%	\$ (30,678)	\$ 213,087	-695%	\$ (12,448)

Endowment Budget Summary

2023 Endowment Budget Results and 2024 Endowment Budget				
INFLOWS	2023			2024
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget
Bequests & Memorial Gifts	\$ -	\$ 2,335,634		\$535,000
Interest - Money Markets	\$ 700	\$ 4,432	633%	\$ 4,500
Investment Gain	\$ 167,815	\$2,552,307	1521%	\$ 333,240
TOTAL INFLOWS	\$ 168,515	\$ 4,892,373	2,903%	\$ 872,740
OUTFLOWS	2023			2024
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget
Operational Support	\$ 327,510	\$ 327,510	100%	\$ 347,363
Capital Support	\$ 220,800	\$ 36,788	17%	\$ 465,052
PILP Principal	\$126,567	\$127,513		\$ 131,308
Advisor Fees	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	100%	\$ 30,000
Investment Loss	\$ -	\$1,186,931		\$ -
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	\$ 704,877	\$ 1,708,742	242%	\$ 973,723
TOTAL NET ENDOWMENT INFLOW	\$ (536,362)	\$ 3,183,631	-594%	\$ (100,983)

Capital Budget Summary

2023 Capital Budget Results and 2024 Capital Budget			
INFLOWS	2023		2024
	Budget	Actual	Budget
Donations from Congregation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Support from the Endowment	\$ 220,800	\$ 36,788	\$ 465,052
PILP Principal Support	\$126,567	\$127,513	\$ 131,308
Bequests	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Interest received from PILP Investment	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,125	\$ 3,200
TOTAL INFLOWS	\$ 350,367	\$ 167,426	\$ 599,560
OUTFLOWS	2023		2024
	Budget	Actual	Budget
Masonry Repair	\$ -	\$ -	
Roofing Repair	\$30,000	\$ -	
Capital - Miscellaneous	\$ -	\$ -	
Door Replacement - 21 st Street	\$ -	\$ -	
Water Infiltration Remedy Buttonwood Hall	\$ -	\$ -	
Security Cameras	\$ -	\$ -	
MacColl Room AudioVisual Upgrades	\$ -	\$ -	
Narthex Entrance Door Repair	\$16,500	\$ -	
Basement Window Door Restore - Fees	\$ -	\$ -	
Sanctuary Ventilation Study Fees	\$5,000	\$ -	
Pastor's Office Roof and Masonry - Fees	\$12,000	\$13,430	
Pastor's Office Roof and Masonry - Construction	\$135,000	\$ -	\$ 150,000
Old Buttonwood Attic Insulation	\$11,500	\$10,739	
Old Buttonwood Window Treatments	\$800	\$ -	
Building Commemoration Committee*	\$10,000	\$10,544	
FCAMP Term 2 Scope			\$ 205,000
Façade Inspection			\$ 10,000
Urgent Repairs (Façade)			\$ 25,000
Carpet Replacement			\$ 60,000
OBH Livestreaming			\$ 5,052
21st Street Doors			\$ 5,000
Hot Water Heater - Kitchen			\$ 5,000
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	\$ 220,800	\$ 34,713	\$ 465,052
TOTAL NET CAPITAL	\$ 129,567	\$ 132,713	\$ 134,508

*Commemoration Committee actual expenditure of \$12,619 was offset by \$2,075 revenue from offering of books and art.

Summary of Activity in Designated Funds

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 924
Special Programs	\$ (54)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 870

HATFIELD CIRCUS FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$41,342
Investment Loss Share	\$ 7,355
ending balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 48,697

CLERGY HOUSING FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 506,184
Investment Gain Share	\$ 90,048
Ministers Housing Allowance	\$ (24,000)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 572,232

COLUMBARIUM FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ (14,610)
Niche Payments	\$ 3,500
Engraving	\$ (123)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ (11,233)

CONCERTS@FIRST FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 13,656
Choir Tour Residual Transfer	\$ 4,630
Choir Tour Support	\$ (450)
Concert Publicity	\$ (950)
Performer Payments	\$ (8,463)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 8,423

McCORMICK ORGAN FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 168,017
Investment Gain Share	\$ 29,889
Organ electronics replacement	\$ (36,055)
Instrument Maintenance	\$ (7,283)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 154,568

MUSIC RESERVE	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 1,025
Designated Gifts	\$ 750
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 1,775

McCURDY MEMORIAL FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 2,596
Dividends Presbyterian Foundation	\$ 2,764
Special Musical Performance	\$ (3,279)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 2,081

SCHNEIDER SPEAKERS FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 8,745
Speaker Support	\$ (230)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 8,515

MINISTER'S DISCRETIONARY FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 292
Disbursements	\$ (201)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 91

DESIGNATED OPERATIONAL USE FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 6,820
interfund transfer	\$ (20)
Camp Sojourner Support	\$ (300)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 6,500

DESIGNATED CAPITAL USE FUND	
Beginning Balance as of 1/1/23	\$ 3,662
Designated Gifts	\$ 236
OBH Livestream Hardware	\$ (950)
Ending Balance as of 12/31/23	\$ 2,948

Select Balance Sheet Items as of December 31, 2023

Endowment Value	\$ 11,877,670
Endowment Encumbered Funds	\$ 795,467
Loans from PILP	\$ 2,005,646
PILP Investment	\$ 417,246