First Presbyterian Church

Annual Report

2024-2025



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Preface

This annual report offers a snapshot of our life together here at First Presbyterian Church, Durham (FPC) from June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025. Within these pages you will find highlights of our shared ministry and a summary of the work carried out by our committees and leadership.

This marks the twenty-fourth year that an annual report has been prepared for our congregation, continuing a long-standing practice established by the Session to preserve a faithful record of where we have been and how God has been at work among us.

Our clergy and officers hope you will take a few moments to read through this report and find it both informative and encouraging. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions, trusting that together we can continue to shape a report that reflects our congregational life with clarity, care, and gratitude.

The Staff

(June 1, 2024 - May 31, 2025)

Pastor/Head of Staff:	Mindy Douglas
Associate Pastor:	Esther Hethcox
Associate Pastor for Youth and Their families:	John Weicher
Parish Associate:	Susan Dunlap
Director of Children's Ministry:	Lenore Champion
Minister of Music:	Kathryn Parkins
Church Administrator:	Shakira Bethea
	Valerie McMillian (retired Dec. 2024)
Business Administrator:	Tom Bloom
Administrative Assistant:	Sybil King
Church Sexton:	Vernon Cooper
Sunday Sexton:	Omar Guess, Sr.

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Reports from Ministers



Mindy Douglas | *Pastor, Head of Staff*

Dear Friends,

As I look back on the past twelve months, I give thanks for the health and vitality of this community. First Presbyterian Church started in the hearts and minds of a faithful few over one hundred and fifty-five years ago. These people envisioned a church in the heart of a community called Durham which at the time was only two years old and would be considered a village today. Durham grew and FPC grew with it, as God led faithful families, elders, deacons, and church leaders to continue to bring the good news of the grace and peace of Christ. So many years later, that is what we continue to do – seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we follow Jesus in the midst of this city, bringing light in the darkness, hope where there is despair, and justice and equity for all people. Here we find our own faith nurtured and nourished as we worship, learn, serve, and build a community of love and trust together. We are blessed to be part of a special place – not perfect, always learning and growing, but seeking in whatever way we can to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives and in the world.

For this annual report, I want to update you on who we are as a congregation.

We are a congregation of over 575 members and friends, active in worship, faith formation, service, and fellowship.

As you read through this annual report that documents the life of the church from July 2024-June 2025, you will see the wide variety of activities in which our active, vibrant community participates.

In order to support the mission and ministry of the church, FPC employs five full-time paid staff members and four part-time paid staff members:

Our five **full-time staff** include three pastors, our church musician, and our sexton:

Vernon Cooper is our sexton. His responsibilities include cleaning, maintenance, and repairs for the physical plant, among other things. His work is mainly Monday-Friday, though he sometimes supports weekend events.

Esther Hethcox, who was installed as our "designated" associate pastor in 2023, following the requirements of the presbytery, was

ordained to the position of Associate Pastor in April 2025. Her call includes pastoral care, work with the deacons, young adult ministry, and occasional preaching.

Kathy Parkins, our Minister of Music, works full-time and continues to provide incredible, powerfully moving music from the organ, the piano, with the choir, and through guest musicians. Kathy plans to retire in June 2026.

John Weicher, our Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families, works with youth and their families, as his job title states, but also manages our social media and oversees the adult education program. He has been here since 2018 and took a three-month sabbatical in 2025.

I, **Mindy Dougla**s, have been here since May 2016 as the Pastor/Head of Staff and could not be more delighted to be doing ministry with you here in the heart of Durham.

Our **part-time staf**f include:

Shakira Bethea – our church administrator, stepped in after Valerie McMillian retired. She produces Sunday, memorial, and mid-week bulletins, the bi-monthly newsletter, and other email communications. She handles all tasks and requests from the staff. She is also the primary contact for members and people in the community.

Tom Bloom – our business administrator, manages the financial side of the church as well as supervises Vernon and oversees the physical plant. Tom plans to retire in the summer of 2026.

Lenore Champion – our director of children's ministries, works with all our children's faith formation programs, trains teachers, and sends out a weekly newsletter to families with young children. She works approximately 12 hours each week.

Susan Dunlap – our volunteer parish associate, Susan works with Esther and Mindy on pastoral care and care teams. She also staffed the fellowship committee this year. Her time and attention to the life of this church is generous and immeasurable!

Sybil King – our administrative assistant, assists Shakira and Tom in office work, including database management, mailings, membership, communication, and receipts. Sybil plans to retire in June 2026.

Shakira, Tom, and Sybil all currently work 30 hours.

Knowing that we would be in a season of retirements (four people over two years), I appointed a **Retirements Committee** in the spring of 2024 to plan for these transitions. This committee has been hard at work as Valerie McMillian retired at the end of 2024 and as Tom, Sybil, and Kathy all plan to retire in June 2026.

Now, on to the **Building renovation and expansion.** Through our 2022 Capital Campaign we have raised (through your pledges and a $600,000 bequest) over $3 million. This was exactly what we hoped to raise to do the proposed renovation and expansion. Unfortunately, as we shared with you in a detailed brochure in spring of 2023, around the same time the capital campaign began, construction expenses began to rise significantly and before we knew it, we could no longer afford to build the plan designed for us. In 2024, under the leadership of Paul Baldasare, we applied for grants that supported church capital projects (most do not). We also talked to potential donors outside of our membership. Recognizing the challenges before us, the Session held a Saturday retreat in the fall of 2024. On that day, Tyler Momsen-Hudson, chair of the Building Committee, Paul Baldasare and I carefully reviewed with the Session the proposed renovation and expansion plan (and how we got to that plan from our 2019 long-range plan), the revised cost of the plan due to inflation, and the overall financial picture – in other words, exactly

what it would take to move forward with this project.

The results were clear. We need an additional $2 million to proceed with the current plan. In addition, we would still need to borrow $1 million to be paid off at a later date. After discussion, the Session decided we needed to modify the plan and share another option with the congregation. At their next stated meeting, the Session voted to explore renovation options that would keep the current footprint of the church. This means that the fellowship hall, kitchen, volunteer and Walk-in Ministry offices, bathrooms, gathering spaces, and memorial garden would not be expanded, but would be renovated.

In addition to this, the Session approved a Building Assessment. This is designed to give us a 15-year picture of what repairs, replacements, and maintenance work is required, and when required projects should happen. This information will also help us consider how to move forward.

Most of you have already contributed to the 2022 Capital Campaign. We cannot thank you enough for your generosity and vision. Funds already contributed have been invested on the recommendation of our Finance and Investment Committee and are earning interest until we need those funds. The church is stewarding your gifts well. We will move forward in a way that is faithful to the intention of your gifts and will make decisions that will not burden our annual budget in the future.

The Finance and Investment, Property, and Building Committees, in addition to the Session, have been working and praying hard to discern the way to proceed as a congregation that is informed by our calling to God and this community, honors the original intentions of the capital campaign, and stays within the budgetary constraints we have. You are critical partners in this work, too, as your faithful generosity is what will sustain our future direction and pave the way for generations of people to worship, learn, grow, and serve from this place in the heart of the city of Durham.

Finally, I want to celebrate the many ways we are being the church:

- Through your **warm welcome and inclusion** of all who enter these doors for worship, meetings, classes, assistance, or concerts. This is truly a space for all God's people and I hope we will continue to find more expansive ways the church can welcome and include all. We rejoice in the many new members who joined last year and have already joined this year. We are growing in faith and love together. Personally experiencing your energy, vitality, and vision, especially in the midst of so many challenges in our nation and world right now is a beautiful witness to God's love made manifest.

You are also being the church

- Through the **stewardship** of your gifts – your financial contributions support the mission and ministry of this congregation as we seek to follow Christ. You share your gifts of time and talent as you teach our children, youth, and adults, and as you serve as a deacon or an elder or on a committee that helps us do the work we are called to do.

- Through our **work for justice** in the community – as we prepare food at Emanuel Food pantry or Urban Ministries, as we tutor at Iglesia Emanuel or ESL or adult literacy, as we build Habitat Houses and go on mission trips, as we serve on non-profit boards. As we make connections across denominational and interfaith lines so that we might support one another and join our hearts and minds for the work of including all in the work of peace and love. As we work for more opportunities for housing, education, and healthcare for all people.

- We are also being the church through our **care for one another** – as we take meals, write cards, make calls, knit blankets, sew quilts, donate clothes, share books, give rides, and on and on. We are Christ to one another.
- Finally, we are being the church in our **worship and faith formation**. We come together each week to study in small groups and classes and then we gather to worship God through prayer, songs, scripture, confession, affirmation, and music. In doing this, we remember who we are and whose we are. We remember that we do not walk alone. We are surrounded by God's love and by a great cloud of witnesses, on earth and in heaven. It is a blessed gift to be in community with one another – to laugh and cry together, to make mistakes and forgive one another, to learn and grow, to question and affirm. This is what it means to be the Body of Christ.

Friends, we are a church made up of people who long to know and follow Christ in our life and work. We search for meaning in our relationships. We know the power of love to change the world, and we want to be a part of bearing the light of Christ's love to the world.

I am endlessly grateful for you and all the ways you model discipleship through your lives. I pray God will continue to guide us in our work together in the days, weeks, months, and years to come.

With deep gratitude for your faith and love,

Mindy



Esther Hethcox | *Associate Pastor*

Greetings, saints of FPC!

It is with a joyful and grateful heart that I reflect on a year of discipleship and love in this incredible community of faith. I invite you to read my reflections below, knowing that it is difficult to fully speak of all the components of my role. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out!

The Somethings

The Somethings are the 20-30 something year olds of FPC. Hence, the Somethings!

When I began in 2022, the Somethings were a group of less than eight young adults scattered throughout the community, and in the two years we have seen a 1000% increase in the life of this community, boasting around 50 members of our group. There are many reasons for this:

- They have seen evidence of your value and trust in young adults. You called the youngest person yet to the role of Associate Pastor, the first openly queer person to be ordained as a Minister and only the second "first call" to be ordained here.
- You have shown you trust our discipleship and leadership! This is not only because of my representation on staff, but because of your discerning trust in the Holy Spirit. These young adults serve as elders, deacons, board members, committee leaders, and worship leaders. You have trusted their voices in the decisions of this community, and trusted that God has brought their experience and wisdom to shape and form this family of faith.



- A mentor asked me how I was "getting" this group to grow. My response is this: we have to give them something the world can't. They can have potlucks with friends; they can pray alone; they can volunteer on their own. But they can't have those things within one solitary friend group. Within the

Somethings, they have fellowship, spirituality, and the invitation to justice work—all wrapped into one. Spirituality and fellowship feed us and empower us to go forth to carry the yoke of justice. They feast on something different in this community, and that difference is drawing them in by large numbers.
- Most importantly, God is present in their kindness and humility, joy and energy, love and faith, hope and excitement. Thanks be to God for showing up in this group of folks.
- Make sure to follow us @thefpcsomethings Instagram account! This is an intentional space where we seek to show the vibrancy of this community. I am grateful that multiple Somethings have joined FPC because they stumbled across our social media presence.

The Diaconate

I continue to be grateful for the discipleship of our incredible deacons. With extra energy and time, I am grateful that with the Nominating Committee of FPC, I was able to fill all vacant spots of the Diaconate and receive a full class of deacons in June 2025. This is amazing news for the committees of the diaconate, who will be well supported as they step forward to complete their ministries.

Please see the individual reports later in this document for the following committees, submitted by their chairs/co-chairs:

- Welcome & Belonging, Wil James and Mary Ashley Rose
- Pastoral Care, Brianna Bennett and Andy Henry
- Fellowship, Ashley Swavely

Pastoral Care

This is a difficult report on—how do I sum up the honor of holding the stories of so many in my love and prayers? It is a gift to love and care for you, and I am grateful for the ways I carry this out in weekly parish visits, monthly meals with fellowship groups, hospital and hospice visits, funerals and baptisms. Pastoral care also takes form in the following:

There are a few fellowship groups I attend regularly: Men of Faith (As Dennis Buckley called me, their "ornery man!"), First Friends and Daytimer's.

I also offered premarital counseling to three young couples (who have since joined the church!).

Social Justice

Among my work in the world, I participate in the following social justice ministries. I am sure I have forgotten some, but these are built into my routine:

- **Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations, Networks)**
    - I attend monthly clergy caucus, city council meetings and gatherings (not metro council).
- **DCIA (Durham Congregations In Action)**
    - I attend monthly meetings, de-escalation meetings and other events.
- **Multifaith relations**
    - I continue my work with Judea Reform, Beth El Synagogue, Makom Synagogue as well as relations with the Bahai Community and Muslim community (at Duke).
- **Protests**
    - I attend protests for various social justice causes: against ICE having a presence in our community, growing fascism in our country, queer rights and support for trans youth. You'll always see me there wearing my collar!

Presbytery Involvement

I grateful to contribute to the greater life of the church in the following ministries:

- In January 2025, I began my 3-year term serving on **New Hope's Commission on Preparation of Ministry (CPM)**, which serves to equip and empower those seeking ordination in the PCUSA.
    - In this time I have been assigned a "sheep" to "shepherd," a young, queer man who feels called to be a balm to the spiritual hurt that exists within the story of our people. Praise be to God!
    - I am so grateful to represent FPC in this space, and to be a hand in the formation of God's kingdom to come.
- I organized, programmed and led **New Hope Presbytery's Annual Clergy Retreat** through Union Seminary in October of 2024. This was a time of reflection, study and connection for the participants. I am grateful to contribute to the community of clergy in NHP.
- NHP is blessed to be showered by the ministry of many young clergy. In the effort to support one another, I have been working on creating a community in the form of a council to launch the **Young Clergy Initiative**. I have joined with Rev. Alex Fischer, solo pastor of Hillsborough Presbyterian Church, to organize and lead this ministry.

Continued Education

In 2024-2025, I completed a program to become a **certified spiritual director** through the Charlotte Spirituality Center. With other clergy of different denominations, I spent an intentional two hours a week for a year reading, studying, writing and practicing spiritual direction. My hope was for this program to shape and form my pastoral ministry. I have seen the fruits of this labor in my pastoral visits, my worship leadership and my pastoring of the Somethings (specifically their prayer services). I am grateful for the ways this program shaped and formed my pastor's heart. This program was paid for by the Catawba Flourishing Clergy Grant.

In May 2025, I attended the **Board of Pension's CREDO Conference**, for newly ordained PCUSA ministers. This was an incredible week, which empowered me to step forward feeling supported, seen and valued by my denomination. I continue to meet monthly with my assigned small group from this conference, and talk weekly with individuals I formed close relationships with. I am excited to return next year in May 2026!

Thank you for being a congregation which encourages the continued education and spiritual formation of its pastors. I am grateful!

As I finish this report of a full year of ministry, I am especially giving thanks for that honor of being called to be your permanent associate pastor. We traveled an interesting two and a half years of Presbyterian polity and process, and I am grateful for never having a reason to doubt your sincerity and faithfulness. Thank you, thank you, thank you for the gift to continue to love and serve you.

One of my favorite moments from the installation service was looking out to see so many folks I have grown so close to in my time at FPC. That is a major perk of the strange path we took with my role—it gave me the opportunity to have an installation service with a congregation I already knew and loved well. I am grateful for your trust in my ministry and discipleship, and look forward to many, many years together.

Love,

Esther



John Weicher | *Associate Pastor for Youth & Their Families*

The great gift of this year was my sabbatical. While FPC allows for one after five years, I waited until this, my seventh year, so that it could align with the sabbatical of my wife, the Rev. Laurie Taylor Weicher. It was a great blessing to leave worship on Easter and be away from this loving community until July 1 (and then a little bit later in the summer to get to 12 weeks total).

Highlights included…

- Two weeks in Scotland and England, walking along the Scottish coast and then being in London.
- Two weeks of adult conferences at Montreat – Discovering Renewal and Arts, Recreation & Worship.
- A week of vacation in Montreat with my family.
- And seven weeks at home in which I focused on my physical health, joining Burn Boot Camp and working on losing weight and changing my body. During this time, I was also able to read over a dozen books and simply to rest and lay low.

I am deeply thankful to Bridge Youth Ministers Heidi Biermann and Mimi Dunn who took over my youth ministry role during my time away. It was a great blessing to leave this thriving group in such capable and well-known hands.

We are growing as a youth ministry, both in the depth of what we do and in the numbers of folks who participate. In a way, one can tell the story of this ministry by means of the high school seniors who graduated this spring.

- Thilo Fullenkamp was the only 6th grader when I first came to FPC. He has been involved in the life of the church in many ways, from Christian education committee member to worship livestream volunteer to deacon. He represents so many of our youth who have grown up at FPC and don't remember not being here.
- Ruby Gentithes joined us just before the pandemic, at the end of 7th grade. She has grown into a fabulous and faithful leader, with almost too many positions to name, from elder to three-year Youth Ministry Committee chair to three-year Massanetta Advocate. One of my highlights in professional ministry was performing her baptism in her backyard in the summer of 2020, when all worship was Zoom-led. She represents our persistence through the COVID times and our growth out of it.
- Sam Brown joined us just two years ago, during his junior year. He jumped right in

as a regular in youth group and summer trips and provided such important leadership for us week in and week out. He represents how we have continued to thrive and deepen our ministry.

All three of them were Youth Sunday preachers, each giving an authentic and faithful sermon. I will miss each of them dearly as they head on to new adventures in college and beyond.

Here are some of the highlights of my year, both youth ministry and otherwise…

- Our theme for the year in youth group was Chosen Family, using the story of the infant Moses, his family and Pharoah's daughter in Exodus. We explored themes of belonging, connection, and unlikely leaders. Retreats included Keep Awake (HS Massanetta), Asheville Youth Mission (HS), the Beach Sabbath Retreat (MS & HS), and CROSS Missions (MS, w/Trinity Avenue Pres., rescheduled because of the hurricane).
- Yet again, Youth Sunday was entirely selected, written, musically played, illustrated, ushered and led by our youth. They selected Matthew 22:34-40 and Joshua 1:1-9 as our passages. All told, 29 youth participated in the preparation and/or in-person leadership. This continues to be our single-biggest ministry with youth of the year.
- We had more youth participate in summer trips than ever before – 27 different youth filling up 36 trip spots. Montreat, CROSS and Massanetta saw marked increases. This is especially good news, because these are always the highlights of the year, for the length and depth of the experience.
- Elder Katharine Whitmore took over chairing the Christian Education Committee, and led us as we continue to expand and develop our ministry with children. Highlights included the Christmas Pageant, the fall kick off (God's Wonderful World) and planting and tending a garden in summer faith formation.
- Our McPherson Lecturers – Bobby Williamson and Amy Robertson – were a particular thrill for me, as I regularly listen to their podcast, in which these Christian and Jewish (respectively) Biblical scholars discuss texts. A particular highlight was each of them preaching a sermon and Amy's cantoring of a Psalm in worship. As always, the McPherson Committee, led by Lea Bingham, did a stellar job.
- Faith & Community covered a wide variety of topics, from Palestine to Disability Justice to Walk-In Ministry. FPC University, in which church members discuss the intersection of their profession and their faith, continues to be popular and poignant. I am deeply thankful for the ministry of Brent Curtis & Kathy Krahenbuhl in coordinating this class with me. This summer, our book series was on How We Learn to Be Brave by Marian Budde.

Chosen Family,

John



Kathy Parkins | *Director of Music Ministry*

“Glorious the song when God’s the theme.”

– Christopher Smart

This past year has been a time of steady growth and renewed activity in the music ministry at First Presbyterian Church. The program has supported our traditional worship services, welcomed the wider community into our space through concerts, and continued to build participation across age groups. Our focus has been on strengthening the foundations of the program while also creating new opportunities for engagement and outreach.

Children’s Choir

After a long interruption due to the pandemic, the children's choir has been reestablished. We’ve focused on rebuilding it from the ground up, offering a consistent musical presence after Sunday services and integrating some liturgical education as well as learning songs. I intend to continue this choir beginning in September after our summer break.

Concerts and Community Events

Our sanctuary was used throughout the year to host a wide variety of musical events. Two concerts were especially well attended:

- The **Meyer Music Endowment Jazz Concert** was free and open to the public and filled the sanctuary. Shana Tucker was the featured artist along with her band.
- A benefit concert by **SONAM (Singers of New and Ancient Music)** raised $4,500 for the Iglesia Food Pantry. About half of those attending had never been to a SONAM concert before.

These events helped bring new people into the church building and provided meaningful support to the broader community.

In addition, we hosted the Duke Chorale Retreat and Concert, some chamber choirs from the Choral Society of Durham, the Vocal Arts Ensemble, Vox Vivorum (a group comprised of lower voices), and the Women’s Voices Choir (a group comprised of upper voices).

Choir Leadership and Participation

Several members of the choir with conducting experience were invited to contribute their skills. This has helped build leadership within the ensemble and shared the work in a collaborative way. Regular choir participation remained steady throughout the year, with good attendance and

commitment from members. We mourn the loss of my right hand, Kate Busa, who died suddenly on the morning of August 3. A choir soloist, she spent many hours in the choir music library, entering and cataloging music, filing music, and making sure all of the folders were up to date and ready for use on each rehearsal day. Her quick humor and pragmatic approach are irreplaceable. We also appreciate the gifts of Gordon Campbell who helps with accompaniments from time to time on the organ and piano as well as serving as rehearsal pianist.

Organ Maintenance

Working with the Property Committee, we oversaw the **re-leathering of the Austin organ wind chest**. Our curator, Lewis Moore spearheaded this project, much needed after wind leaks began appearing over the past year. The leather had lasted sixty years. While the organ has been regularly maintained, this deeper repair addressed issues that had developed over time and helped stabilize the instrument.

Music Library

In June and July, we reorganized and cataloged music to the church's **choir library**. First Presbyterian has an extensive library which includes resources for the chancel choir, children's choir, bell choir, vocal soloists, and instrumentalists. The goal was to make the collection easier to navigate and better reflect the variety of music we use throughout the year.

This has been a productive year for the music ministry, with progress made in rebuilding, organizing, and reaching out. Thank you to everyone who supported the program—including choir members, clergy, staff, volunteers, donors, and the Property Committee.

–***Kathy Parkins***, Minister of Music



Reports from The Session

Clerk of Session

Active Elders

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Art Baker Ruby Gentithes Debbie Hamlin-Aggrey Keith Merritt Mary Ellis Merritt Lanny Pratt Laurie Ray Dawn Shelton	Jon Abels Jennie Alwood Amy Dillon Gordon Campbell Conrad Carter Alice Raney Katharine Whitmore	Al Arrowood Michael Bacon Kathy Conner Mimi Dunn Laura Hanson Jordan Jones Mary-Jo Keenan Josh Walters

Session Moderators:

Pastor Mindy Douglas, Associate Pastor John Weicher, Associate Pastor Esther Hethcox

Clerk of Session: Jane Wettach

The Session called three congregational meetings during this period, as follows:

- November 17, 2024, at which the congregation approved members of the Nominating Committee;
- March 9, 2025, at which the congregation received a report of the Nominating Committee and elected a slate of officers; received the Senior Pastor's State of the Church Report; received a report from the Stewardship Chair; received a report about the church budget; and approved new terms of call for Pastor Mindy Douglas and Associate Pastor John Weicher;
- March 16, 2025, at which the congregation received a report of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee recommending that Rev. Esther Hethcox be called as Associate Pastor, and approved such recommendation.

The Session held ten stated meetings during this period, at which it received reports from committee chairs, voted on motions brought from committees, and heard reports from teams within the congregation and other organizations. The work of the committees are reported elsewhere in this Annual Report. Other actions of the Session include:

- Approving the transition from calling a Designated Associate Pastor to calling a Permanent Installed Associate Pastor;
- Recommended Griffin Momsen-Hudson as a participant in the Young Adult Volunteer program;
- Approved a fund to be known as the Carlisle Harvard fund, to support the Walk-in Ministry;
- Approved Cris Rivera as an Inquirer, an initial step toward pursuing the credential

to become a Minister of Word and Sacrament;
- Heard ongoing reports regarding the planning for and fundraising for renovations to the church building and requested that an alternative plan be developed that would not exceed the current church footprint;
- Engaged in general oversight of the work of the church under the leadership of Pastor Mindy Douglas and Associate Pastors John Weicher and Esther Hethcox.

The Session held six called meetings as needed throughout the year, primarily for

the business of examining and approving new members.

The Session held one retreat, on October 5, 2024 to hear reports from the Building Committee and the Capital Campaign Committee regarding the planned renovations of the facilities, and discussed the implications of those reports.

The 2024 Annual Statistical Report, included with this report and submitted to the

Presbyterian Church USA in early 2025, reflected 578 active members, effective

December 31, 2024. Special effort was made to accurately report the age, race, and

gender breakdown of church members in general and those participating in the

Christian education programs.

On September 23, 2024, the Board of Trustees met to elect officers for the 2024-2025

year. The officers are:

- President- Lanny Pratt
- Vice President- Alice Raney
- Secretary- Jane Wettach
- Treasurer- Torrell Armstrong

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Wettach, Clerk of Session

Board of Trustees

Officers elected to the Board of Trustees 2024-2025

President: Lanny Pratt

Vice President: Alice Raney

Secretary: Jane Wettach

Treasurer: Torrell Armstrong

The remaining members of the Board of Trustees are as follows:

Art Baker
Ruby Gentithes
Debbie Hamlin-Aggrey
Keith Merritt
Mary Ellis Merritt
Laurie Ray
Dawn Shelton
Jon Abels
Jennie Alwood
Gordon Campbell
Conrad Carter
Amy Dillon
Katharine Whitmore
Al Arrowood
Michael Bacon
Kathy Conner
Mimi Dunn
Laura Hanson
Jordan Jones
Mary-Jo Keenan
Josh Walters

Christian Education Committee

The CE Committee works throughout the year to organize the Faith Formation classes and to organize and host various events. We stand in awe of Youth Pastor John Weicher and his accomplishments with the middle and high schoolers. His reports each month are testimony to his incredible work with these youth – in the church and away on trips. Similarly, we are fortunate to have Lenore Champion's creativity and commitment as the Director of the Children's Ministry. Her presence every Sunday creates a warm and protective space for our youngest church family members. The Christian Education Committee meets via Zoom on the second Monday of the month.

Elders: Katharine Whitmore (chair), Amy Dillon, Mimi Dunn

Members: Kim Abels, Stephen Berry, Brent Curtis, Kathy Krahenbuhl, Amy Sanchez, Beth Stringfield

Staff: Lenore Champion, Director of Children's Ministry and John Weicher, Associate Pastor for Youth and their Families

Faith Formation Classes

Adult Faith Formation Coordinators

- Faith & Community – Brent Curtis, Kathy Krahenbuhl & John Weicher
- Journeys – Paul Baldasare, Andy Henry & Eric Weibe
- Lectionary – David Smith
- Meaning in the Middle – Mary Berry & Emily Diy.

Children's & Youth Faith Formation Teachers

- 2s-4s: Rosemarie Baker, Mary Berry, Stephen Berry, Elizabeth Jones & Kristin Meade
- 5s-2nd: Lea Bingham, Michael Bacon, Amy Sanchez & Katharine Whitmore
- 3rd-5th: Kim Abels, Amanda Atkin, Kathy Colville), Celia Dickerson & Carolyn Merritt
- Middle School: Ellie Dilworth, Annie Gentithes, Almira Mbah & Bob Pleasants
- High School: Heidi Biermann, Roxana Keesler, Cris Rivera & John Weicher

Childcare is available for infants through preschool during the Faith Formation hour, and for infants through five year olds during worship, and is staffed by babysitters hired by Lenore.

Each spring we recruit teachers for the coming year for each of the child and youth classes. Our intention is to have four teachers for each class so that on a given Sunday there is one teacher and one assistant, and the commitment is thereby two Sundays a month.

The **Faith and Community Class** is coordinated by John. The class leaders are often from outside of the congregation but also come from within FPC.

- This past year, Faith and Community topics included:
- Peacemaking, Israel, and Gaza
- FPC University – the intersection of faith and profession
- Homelessness in Durham
- Durham CAN
- Iona Christian Community
- FPC's Walk-in Ministry
- McPherson Lecturer - annual
- The Pauli Murray Center
- Duke Univ Ctr for Sexual and Gender Diversity
- Beyond the Offering Plate, led by Stewardship
- Jerry Postema The Rule of Law
- Desmond and Mpho Tutu The Book of Forgiving
- Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians

- How we Learn to be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and in Faith

CE Events

Generally, three or four CE members tackle a specific event, and the rest of the committee will help as needed. Our annual events include:

- Faith Formation Kickoff
- Trunk or Treat
- Advent Festival/Alternative Giving
- Christmas Pageant
- MLK Service Day
- Palm Sunday crafts and hot cross buns
- Easter Egg hunt

New this year: four Sundays of intergenerational conversation: "Toast and Talk", "Donuts and Discussions", etc. Each child or youth class is paired with an adult class for 20 minutes of snacks and conversation at the end of the Faith Formation hour. Considered a great success, these Sundays will again take place in the 2025/26 year.

Adult Volunteers in Youth Ministry

- Youth Advisors – Brent Curtis, Mimi Dunn, Kati Ruark, Parker Stiles & John Weicher
- Appalachia Service Project high school mission trip – Dan Huff, Tyler Momsen-Hudson & Beth Stringfield
- CROSS Missions middle school mission trip –Ellie Dilworth and John Weicher
- Massanetta Middle School Conference – Almira Mbah and John Weicher
- Montreat Youth Conference – Lexy Rile and John Weicher

Youth Leadership & Engagement

- Elders – Mary Ellis Merritt & Ruby Gentithes.
- Deacons – Izzy Allison-Pleasants, Thilo Fullenkamp & Evelyn Walters.
- Youth Ministry Committee
  - Chair – Ruby Gentithes
  - Scribe – Gretchen Sims
  - Youth – Noah Dillon, Kirbey Blackwood, Colin Bethune & Sibu Admay
  - Adults – Amy Cummings, Bob Pleasants & John Weicher
- Artists in Residence – Izzy Allison-Pleasants, Nora Allison-Pleasants, Mason Armstrong, Isa Cummings & Ellie Everett.
- Massanetta advocates – Ruby Gentithes (lead), Mary Ellis Merritt & Izzy Allison-Pleasants.
- Worship Leaders – Thilo Fullenkamp (Tech) & Evelyn Walters (Crucifer).
- And we continue to have youth who acolyte, sing, or play an instrument in worship.

Christian Education Committee

- Chairs – Katharine Whitmore (elder)
- Members – Kim Abels, Stephen Berry, Brent Curtis, Amy Dillon (elder), Mimi Dunn (elder), Kathy Krahenbuhl, Amy Sanchez & Beth Stringfield
- Staff – Lenore Champion & John Weicher

McPherson Lectureship

- McPherson Lecturer – Robert Williamson & Amy Cooper Robertson
- Committee – Lea Bingham (chair), Mary Berry, Steve Rimmer, Heidi Biermann, David Sappenfield, David Smith, Nora Tubbs Tisdale, Hendrika Vande Kemp, John Weicher & Lyn Williams

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Somerville Whitmore, chair

Youth Ministry Committee

The committee met on the first Monday of each month, totaling 6 meetings in-person and 1 on Zoom from August to April, and will continue until a final celebratory June event. The Youth Ministry Committee continued to serve a variety of functions this year, including structuring events, planning fundraising activities, and, as always, engaging in thoughtful discussions about our impact and addressing the needs and wants of the youth ministry program.

Current members include:
Gretchen Sims, 12th (co-chair), Isa Cummings, 12th (co-chair)
Noah Dillon, 11th (scribe); Kirbey Blackwood, 10th; Colin Bethune, 9th; Sibu Admay, 8th; Henry Kelley, 7th; Bob Pleasants, teacher & parent; Amy Cummings, parent; John Weicher, youth minister & parent

Accomplishments of the Committee:

- Selecting the theme for Youth Group, based on Luke 5:17-26
- Re-doing parts of the Youth Room (Inc. many photos from trips and other fun things!)
- Picked our HS faith formation book, Everything Good About God Is True, by Bruce Reyes-Chow
- Helped structure the Confirmation class to make it more comfortable for youth
- Figuring out how to reach the audience for summer trips and retreats
- Planning Youth Group activities, esp. Skills from Elders
- Souper Bowl of Caring
- Creating the theme of “Mental Health” for the beach retreat and engaging in conversation about what we want it to look like.
- Discussing what we like/don’t value as much in youth advisors to determine who we want to have as new advisors next year, as Brent and Parker are leaving.
- Advent and Lenten devotionals
- Planning activities or rising 6th graders
- Discussing HS Faith Formation and how it will change next year (Inc. meeting once a month at Yonder and having more engaging activities)
- Picking out new HS Faith Formation teachers
- Picking out our 2026 Youth Group swag, which is a t-shirt
- Researching places we can volunteer in the summer as part of a Senior Project to do more things focused on outreach in the Durham community.

Goals of the Committee for the Upcoming Year

The primary goal of the Youth Ministry Committee for the upcoming year is to continue its successes in all the spheres of the Youth Group it has previously, including:

- The function of YMC at PC! This includes all of the regularly scheduled Sunday evening youth groups, faith formation, retreats throughout the year, summer trips, the stock sale, and devotionals.
- The committee hopes to continue promoting consistent engagement from its members. The Youth Ministry Committee will continue to be in-person as much as possible, as it has proved to be the most productive way of meeting over the past 2 years.
- YMC also hopes to continuously adjust and discuss the needs and wants of the Youth Ministry and any changes we may want to implement.

The Current State of the Committee

Rotating off the Youth Ministry Committee this year will be Gretchen Sims (graduated senior) and Isa Cummings (graduated senior), who were both chairs this past year. Noah Dillion (Rising senior), Kirbey Blackwood (rising 11th), and Henry Kelley (rising 8th) will most likely remain.

Colin Bethune (Rising 10th) and Sibu Admay (Rising 9th) may leave the committee once their Confirmation has been completed and other spiritual gifts realized. By extension, Amy Cummings (Parent) and Bob Pleasants (Parent) may also rotate off.

Right now, nothing is truly confirmed about who will be rotating on and off, except for Gretchen and Isa. Otherwise, everyone else will be confirmed in the next few months.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Sims, 12th (co-chair)



Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is made up of seven members. Two are elected from the active elders; they are Conrad Carter, Chair, and Mary-Jo Keenan, vice-chair. One member is elected from the active deacons; the year the deacon serving is Julio Manceras. The other four are elected by the congregation as "At-large" members. They are elected at our annual congregational meeting. The At-large members elected to the nominating committee by the congregation for 2024-2025 are: Tom Bacon, Bert Clere, Shirley Frederick, and Jancy Johnstone.

The nominations of the Committee were presented at the March 9, 2025 congregational meeting.

The meeting of the congregation was called to order by Pastor Mindy Douglas following worship. A quorum of the congregation was present.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Mary-Jo Keenan introduced the slate of officers nominated by the Nominating Committee.

For the role of Elder, 3-year terms:

Emily Dennis
Kathy Colville
Lanny Pratt
Laurie Ray
Lea Bingham
Richard Anderson
Jane Williams

A motion was made and seconded that the nominations for Elder be closed. Such motion

was unanimously approved by the congregation. Following, the vote was called on the recommended nominees; the vote approving the nominees for Elder was unanimous.

For the role of Deacon, 3-year terms:

Brianna Bennett
Caroline Means
Carolyn Ragans
George Danser
Jo Ann Moore
Sara Radtke
Wil James

A motion was made and seconded that the nominations for Deacon, 3-year terms, be closed. Such motion was unanimously approved by the congregation. Following, the vote was called on the recommended nominees; the vote approving the nominees for Deacon, 3-year terms, was unanimous.

For the role of Deacon, 1-year terms:

Sarah Wright
Lexy Rile

A motion was made and seconded that the nominations for Deacon, 1-year terms, be closed. Such motion was unanimously approved by the congregation. Following, the vote was called on the recommended nominees; the vote approving the nominees for Deacon, 1-year terms, was unanimous.

Personnel Committee

Committee Members:

Debbie Hamlin-Aggrey (Chair)

Laura Hanson (Chair-Elect)

Adrienne Allison, Jennie Alwood, Luke Everett, Laurie Ray and Rev. Mindy Douglas as Head of Staff.

This was a busy and eventful year for the Personnel Committee (PC), beginning with Pastor Mindy Douglas taking her well-earned three-month sabbatical. The break in duties provided her with time for rest, research, reflection, reconnection, and renewal.

In the months preceding her leave, Mindy kept the Personnel Committee informed of her planned activities for the sabbatical as well as the scheduled coverage for her duties while away. During the sabbatical, the church staff stepped up and made sure things ran smoothly. The Personnel Committee greatly appreciated everyone's efforts in making the sabbatical successful for both Mindy and FPC!

The Personnel Committee worked closely with the **Retirement Transition Working Group** (RTWG) to prepare for the December 2024 retirement of long-time Parish Administrator, Valerie McMillian. Among the Elders, Deacons and other members of the working group the Personnel Committee was well represented by former PC member, David Sappenfield and current PC Member/Elder Laurie Ray. At several points in the process PC chair Debbie Hamlin-Aggrey and Pastor Mindy were also invited to attend the meetings and provide input.

The RTWG & PC's efforts produced:

- A reimagining of the Administrative Support Team structure and organizational chart
- A draft job description
- Recruiting and interviewing candidates
- An approved job offer and benefits package for the final candidate
- Negotiated terms of employment and start date for the new Church Administrator, Shakira Bethea

Another major focus of the PC was working on moving from a **Designated Associate Pastor to an Associate Pastor.** Esther Hethcox had been serving a two-year term as a designated associate pastor, but the term was scheduled to end in the winter of 2024-25. Following the guidance provided by the Presbytery and the Commission on Ministry, an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee was formed. Adrienne Allison was the PC's representative on the committee. They developed a Ministry Discernment Profile and they worked with the PC by:

- Updating the Associate Pastor job Description
- Negotiating the Associate Pastor's terms of employment including the salary and benefits package
- Supporting Esther when she appeared before the Exams and Transfers committee with Adrienne Allison attending the meeting
- Participating in the Congregational meeting in March 2025 to affirm the call to Esther

The Personnel Committee also worked on several other initiatives during the year including:

- Granting all staff an annual Christmas bonus.
- Providing all FPC staff, except, Mindy a cost-of-living increase. Mindy requested an additional week of vacation leave in lieu of the COLA which was approved during a congregational meeting in March of 2025.
- Sending all staff cards for their birthdays.

Goals for the 2025-2026 year will include supporting the process of recruiting new employees to replace those who will be retiring, making 2026 Personnel Budget recommendations, and updating the Annual Performance Review process for the Head of Staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Hamlin-Aggrey, Former Personnel Committee Chair



Property Committee

Elders and areas of responsibility

- Dawn (Carsey) Shelton - committee chair
- Lanny Pratt - highly involved in assessing problems, vetting solutions, & monitoring repair work, liaising with vendors
- Conrad Carter - main oversight for Day School needs, investigates solutions for complex problems (ex: antique lamp posts)
- Jordan Jones - Facilities Condition Assessment interface

Committee members - wise, unflappable, and persevering

- Barbara Buckley - Landscaping and Grounds lead and mastermind
- Celia Dickerson
- Tyler Momsen-Hudson
- Jim Rogers
- Chuck Wilson

These are the large-scale items that were addressed over the past year.

Exterior

- Lots of really busy yard workdays
- Tree work / esp perimeter of playground
- Removed invasive species
- Main St. lamp posts fixed
- Front porch issues - camera investigation
- Chasing some sanctuary roof and church house roof issues
- Investigating a service for landscaping needs
- Investigating solar panels - phase 2
- Roof drain clog

Technology

- New phone system
- Paxton door software updated
- New thermostats (remote monitoring/adjustments via app)
- New Fire Alarm Control Panel (FACP)

Church apartment refresh for new tenant

- Paint
- Carpet
- Some ceiling lighting replaced
- Switched to electric oven
- Bathtub pipes were replaced

Sanctuary

- Plaster and painting / sanctuary and stairwell to sanctuary
- Sanctuary lighting - unreliable
- Organ bellows need to be re-leathered
- Improving locks at front / Main St. sanctuary door

Water intrusion

- After hurricanes (vestibule, laundry room, 2nd floor hallway of CE building)

HVAC

- Capped off wasted / conditioned air in lumber room
- Boilers and HVAC - a variety of service calls
- Replaced leaking radiator valves in sanctuary basement

Planning for the future

- Divided the load of leading the committee into a more sustainable (easier to recruit!) model
- Facilities Condition Assessment - we hired a skilled consultant to provide us a comprehensive evaluation of our physical plant, allowing us to identify short, medium, and long term needs and to guide us in budgeting for them

We are blessed with an observant sexton, Vernon Cooper, and our Building Administrator, Tom Bloom, who is constantly dealing with our physical plant and putting his vast institutional memory to work in our favor.

The committee and the church are grateful for the many hours of service (often on their knees) by Barbara Buckley and several dedicated volunteers. They pull weeds season after season, plant seasonal flowers, and keep things looking tidy.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Shelton



Service and Mission Committee

Committee Members:

Tom Bacon & Mary-Jo Keenan, co-chairs

The Committee resumed holding all meetings in person. In February, following Gordon Campbell's departure for Italy new co-chairs were elected. Our most generously supported organizations continue to be Presbyterian denominational commitments, First Presbyterian Day School, Iglesia Emanuel and Walk-In Ministry.

First Presbyterian Day School

Church support for the Day School continues to be substantial, and is contingent on the Day School meeting three major goals: maintaining its 5-star quality rating, having approximately 50% of those served be children of color, and approximately 50% of children be from low-income families. The Day School has struggled in recent years to meet the goals of serving low income and minority kids. As a result, a reduction of $2,000 of support for the Day School was made in the budget for 2025. In addition, representatives from CE, S&M, Finance & Property, plus clergy, met in June to discuss & clarify whether our partnership with and support for the Day School aligns with the Church's mission and values including community, diversity, inclusivity, and social justice. It was a productive meeting which helped us identify our values and goals regarding FPDS; not just the support for good child care but also that FPDS values their staff and pays them a living wage. We affirmed we want to continue to address the critical need for high quality child care in the community by supporting the Day School. We will meet this summer with Day School representatives to develop a covenant, i.e. a mutual understanding of what is expected from them and the church. Amy Dillon joined the Service & Mission Committee and will also serve on the Day School board.

Iglesia Emanuel

There continues to be a strong presence of FPC volunteers serving both the **Food Pantry** and the **Learning Center**. The number of families provided weekly with groceries from the Food Pantry rose from about 600 to 700-750. They are now looking for an Executive Director in addition to Joy Newburn, part-time Operations Director, who was hired in October 2024. Margaret & Miguel Rubiera continue in their roles as co-executive directors. An Advisory Committee was formed to oversee the Learning Center. The Christmas Offering of $3130 was given to the IE Learning Center.

The Federal Government acted to shut down funding to non-profits specifically those helping immigrants and refugees. The committee added a $2000 commitment to CWS to support refugees. Due to an increase in ICE raids nationwide, the staff of Iglesia Presbiteriana Emanuel requested support to help undocumented immigrants, some of whom are members of their church. Anxiety keeps some families away from the Food Pantry leading to an increase of grocery deliveries.



Walk-In Ministry

The monthly budget is spent in the first 1-3 work days each month ; New major sources of donations: 1) Carlisle Harvard Fund which was approved by the session this spring, all donations to the fund will go to the Walk-In Ministry. 2) Westminster Presbyterian Church donated $15,000 from their Easter Offering which doubled the WIM budget for this year.

Racial Equity Task Force

FPC has been chosen to be part of DurhamCare's **Journey to Thriving** program along with five other congregations, 3 of which are African American. The program will begin this fall. RETF committed 20 FPC participants for a Durham Pilgrimage of Pain and Hope in the fall. FPC will co-sponsor a Durham Human Rights Commission event in September.

PC(USA) World Mission

During the past year PC USA instituted a 50% reduction of Presbyterian mission co-workers due to financial challenges facing the national denomination. The Peacemaking Program and Office in DC was also closed. The two couples we identify as honorees of our funding are in the process of leaving their positions as part of these reductions. PC(USA) mission co-workers in Nicaragua preached & joined the Faith & Community Class in July 2024; a PC(USA) International Peacemaker from Costa Rica preached in September and also presented at Faith & Community.

Urban Ministries of Durham

Jancy Johnstone took over the volunteer coordination duties at UMD when Jen McGonnigle stepped down. There has been an 11% increase in people eating meals at the shelter. The rising cost of food basics, decreases in fundraising and a loss in Federal Grants led to staff layoffs and budget cuts at UMD.

Budget

Our authorized operating budget was the same as in 2024 and there was an increase in the funds generated by the Human Needs Endowment. With funds from these two sources the committee decided to make the following changes to the budget: 1) in response to Federal grant cuts, provide CWS Durham with $2,000 to support refugees already in place in Durham needing assistance with food, rent, job placement and other services; 2) in response to Hurricane Helene, provide funding for the two Presbyterian conference centers used by FPC youth and adults, including $500 for Montreat, and $414 for Massanetta Springs. 3) increase Walk-In funding by $2000, and 4) reduce Day School funding by $2,000. In Fall 2024 we also provided $1000 of emergency funding to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for relief work relating to Hurricane Helene.

2025-2026 Goals

1. Continue to build our partnership with the Day School
2. Update the Outreach section of the FPC website.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Bacon and ***Mary-Jo Keenan***

Budget 2025

Organization	Source of Funds	2024	2025	Budget + Human Needs
Day School*	Operating Budget	$54,600	$51,223	$62,000
Presbytery/Synod/GA	Operating Budget	$20,000	$20,000	
FPC Walk-In Ministry	Operating Budget	$15,000	$20,000	
Iglesia Emanuel*	Operating Budget	$12,915	$9,915	$22,556
Durham CAN	Operating Budget	$3,000	$3,000	
Housing for New Hope	Operating Budget	$7,000	$7,000	
Habitat for Humanity	Operating Budget	$1,000	$1,000	
Families Moving Forward	Operating Budget	$3,500	$3,500	
Step-Up Ministry	Operating Budget	$3,000	$3,000	
Durham Congregations in Action	Operating Budget	$2,000	$2,000	
Senior PharmAssist	Operating Budget	$1,000	$1,000	
Meals on Wheels	Operating Budget	$1,000	$1,000	
NAACP	Operating Budget	$500	$500	
Threshold (Mental Illness)	Operating Budget	$2,000	$2,000	
Duke Campus Ministry	Operating Budget	$5,000	$5,000	
NCCU Campus Ministry	Operating Budget	$5,000	$5,000	
Theological Education (seminaries)	Operating Budget	$1,000	$1,000	
Missionary Support	Operating Budget	$4,000	$4,000	
New Initiatives	Operating Budget	$1,000	$2,377	
Durham Literacy Center	Operating Budget	$2,000	$2,000	
Racial Equity Task Force	Operating Budget	$2,000	$2,000	
RCND---Reentry Program	Operating Budget	$2,000	$2,000	
Mission Partnership (PCUSA)	Operating Budget	$3,000	$3,000	
Urban Ministries of Durham	Operating Budget	$5,000	$5,000	
NC Council of Churches	Operating Budget	$900	$900	
	Total Allocated	$157,415	$157,415	

Table 1: Service & Mission Operating Budget

Organization	Source of Funds	2024	2025
Day School*	Human Needs Endowment	$9,400	$10,777
Iglesia Emanuel*	Human Needs Endowment	$9,641	$12,641
El Futuro	Human Needs Endowment	$2,000	$2,000
Walk in Ministry	Human Needs Endowment	$3,000	$0
Iglesia Emanuel Food Pantry	Human Needs Endowment	$3,000	$3,000
Iglesia Emanuel Learning Center	Human Needs Endowment	$1,000	$1,000
CWS Durham (Church World Services)	Human Needs Endowment		$2,000
Montreat Retreat Center	Human Needs Endowment		$500
Massanetta Springs Conference Center	Human Needs Endowment		$414
	Total Allocated	$28,041	$32,332
* Funding from Human Needs & Operating Budget			

Table 2: Service & Mission Human Needs Endowment

Stewardship Committee

"They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not whither. In all they do, they prosper."

Psalm 1:3

The stewardship committee includes Jon Abels (Chair), Josh Walters, Sharon Hirsch, Leslie Curtis, Tony Brown, Celia Dickerson, George Bernhardt, Pat Dillon (webmaster), and Jennie Alwood (brochure), with staff assistance from Mindy Douglas, Tom Bloom, Valerie McMillian, and Sybil King. Creation Care Subcommittee included Cris Rivera (Chair) and numerous members. Legacy Society Subcommittee included: Caroline Rouke, Sandy Roberts, and Jon Abels.

The 2025 stewardship pledge campaign began on October 20 with a kickoff reception following the Sunday service where stewardship packets were distributed to members before enjoying a light lunch and hearing a short message from Mindy Douglas and Jon Abels (Chair). The theme of the campaign was *Rooted in Faith*, *Growing in Service*, *Living in Love* which draws inspiration from the scripture in Psalms.

Over a four-week period, church members shared their thoughts about the ministry and services of FPC in a Minute for Stewardship each Sunday, in a weekly newsletter, videos, and reflections from families printed in our colorful brochure. The goal of the campaign was to meet a "needs budget" request of $1.2M for 2025. We asked people to increase their pledge by 3.5-5%, which was significantly lower than the 10.5% and 11.5% increase we requested in 2024 and 2023, respectively.

The pledge campaign was extremely successful in that it engaged more members, generated enthusiasm, met our goals, and received 197 pledges from individuals and families. Given that 96% of FPC annual revenue comes from pledged giving, increasing the amount and number of pledge donations continues to be critical to supporting the ministry and services that the congregation and the community expect and rely on from the church.

There were two additions this year that were successful to the campaign. The first was the kickoff event that was renamed the Stewardship Festival. It included family-friendly food and activities that children and adults could do (e.g. bagging rice and beans, and posting notes of gratitude). The second was the printing of 300 postcards with the image of the campaign cover on the front. We preprinted address labels of all the church members and purchased stamps. At the Festival and over the next four weeks, we invited members to write a brief note to another member of the congregation. At least 270 postcards were mailed. We heard from many that they appreciated writing and receiving these postcards.

Caroline Rouke agreed to chair the Legacy Society in May with the assistance of Sandy Roberts and Jon Abels. Their annual luncheon, usually held earlier in the year, was scheduled for September 2025. The goal was to return afterwards to a luncheon in spring each year.

Respectfully submitted ,

Jon Abels, Chair

Worship and the Arts Committee

Committee Members:
Alice Raney, Chair, Michael Bacon, Co-Chair

Peter Fish, Jean Wilson, David Smith, Kathy Parkins, Esther Hethcox, Mary Ann Compton, Julie Whiddon, Floalice Reaves, Ann Huff, Matthew Eggleston.

The main responsibilities of the committee include:

1. Flower Ministry

Fresh flower arrangements are provided for worship every Sunday. The arrangements are usually donated by members of the congregation in memory of a loved one, in honor of a special occasion or just to add to the beauty of the Sanctuary.

The committee is also in charge of the Tyren Fund which allows money to be used for flowers if there is an occasional open Sunday.

The fee charged by Ninth Street Florist has increased from $85.00 per week to $140.00. This is a significant increase and the committee is reviewing other options.

2. Weekly Worship Preparation

Members make sure that the Sanctuary is prepared for Worship services. This includes the paraments, candles, chalice and paten on the communion table and water in the pitcher beside the baptismal font. We also ensure that a member of the church youth group is available and provides the services of the Crucifer.

3. Communion Preparation

Communion is served on the first Sunday of every month, during the annual Christmas Eve Service, on Easter and additional dates as requested. All dates are approved by the Session. Several members volunteer to prepare the bread and juice for each service. The prep team cuts the bread in the Sacristy as it is a gluten free environment. The team prepares for Communion before the serve and also cleans up and returns the chalices and patens to their respective cabinets in the Sacristy. If the cloth is used on the table, it along with the protective plastic covering is returned to the cabinet in the Chapel.

The Worship and Arts Committee meets on the second Monday of every month throughout the year at 7:00 pm either by Zoom or in person at the church, with one exception there is no meeting in July.

4. Home Communion Preparation

During the regular Communion preparation, we also prepare small glass containers of bread and juice for the volunteers (minister or elder and a lay person) to take to several members of the congregation who are unable to attend church.

5. Communion Server Assignments

All currently serving Elders (Classes of 2025, 2026 and 2027) are given assigned dates to serve communion through-out the year. Volunteers are requested to serve Communion on Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday and Easter. If a substitute is needed, Elders may switch assigned dates or may ask other members of the congregation to serve in their place. may also serve in the place.

6. Annual Traditions

Advent and Christmas. The Advent Wreath and the beautiful red Poinsettias, a long standing gift to the church from Arthur and Mary Clark and their family enhance the beauty of the sanctuary. The Candle Lighting Service is held at 5:00 pm on Christmas Eve.

Lent /Easter. The palms, Lenten Banner and Easter Lilies are an important part of the church celebration. Church members make donations towards the purchase of the lilies in memory or in honor of loved ones or friends.

ARTS FESTIVAL. June 8-15, 2025, Watts Hill Hall. The many artistic talents of members of our church were discovered, gathered and placed on exhibit in Watts-Hill Hall during the week of June 8th through the 15th. The festival included knitted items by the Prayer Shawl Group, crochet/cross stitch, quilts, pottery, fused glass, poetry, iris folding, paintings that included oil, acrylic and watercolors. Photos of our beautiful stained-glass Sanctuary and birds from around the world. Medieval buttons, jewelry art and several different sizes of tables. Several members of our Youth Group exhibited watercolor and oil paintings. We also displayed many of their hand-drawn church bulletin covers.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Raney









Reports from the Diaconate

Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Rachel Bethune Andy Henry Kathryn Murchison Lexy Rile Mary Ashley Rose Eric Wiebe Sarah Wright	Izzy Allison-Pleasants Matthew Eggleston Kerry Holbrook Ann Huff David Lorimer Julio Manceras Bill Wigger	Brianna Bennett Caroline Means Carolyn Ragans George Danser Jo Ann Moore Sara Radtke Wil James

Welcome and Belonging Committee

The main focus for the committee has been to complete a bulk mailer. Lexy created the postcards, including the art and the layout. The plan is to mail to several downtown areas. We are currently working on the best option for bulk mailing.

We purchased FPC tumblers, mainly to include in Welcome bags for new members. The Welcome bags have been updated with new materials.

Most recently, there has been discussion on helping with updating the website. Future plans include sprucing up the Narthex, updating the table at the parking lot entrance, designing and purchasing welcome banners to use in the entrances, and possibly updating the sidewalk sign and using it in front of the church on Sundays. We now have around 18 regular ushers and 4 substitutes. With the new Deacons joining, we are actively recruiting more

Wil James and Bill Wigger will continue to train and schedule ushers. Lexy Rile is the new Chair of the Welcome and Belonging Committee. There have been several new members welcomed in the last year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wil James

Pastoral Care Committee

The Pastoral Care committee's work focuses on communicating with and visiting church members who are sick, mourning, in convalescent homes, or homebound for any number of reasons. There have been many meal trains over the year for those recovering from illnesses and surgery, as well as those who have lost a loved one. Weekly, the flowers that have been donated by members in honor, or memory of someone at church, are then delivered to those who are on the joys & concerns list or identified as needing a visit with flowers. Approximately 141 bouquets have been delivered in the past year by deacons or other church members who volunteer. If you have wanted to sign up but are not sure what to do to deliver flowers, here are instructions:

1. After worship take flowers to kitchen by sink at window. Use the door by the piano and take the side hall to avoid the crowd if you'd like.
2. Prepare 3 or more vases by filling with water. Vases are below the sink and in the cabinet.
3. Trim flowers as needed and place flowers in vases. The drawer with trimmers is on the right in a small drawer under the sink. Using 3 and 5-of-a-kind of flowers, as the base of

your bouquet will help you build a lovely arrangement. To build the armature, you can use some of the fern like greenery in the back of the bouquet. You can usually make 3-4 bouquets. If you have extra you can place a vase in the volunteer office or leave for a pastor to deliver. Let the pastor know if you've left extra for them to take.

4. Tie a tag to each vase. The tags and ribbon are in the plastic bucket to the right of the sink.
5. Look at the care and concerns list in bulletin and make note on the clipboard of who you are taking the flowers to. List your name as the deliverer. Ask the pastor for suggestions. If a person is taking home communion they might also help you deliver a bouquet.
6. It is nice to give a bouquet to the family who donated the flowers if they'd like one. You can also ask the flower donor if they have someone they would like you to take the flowers to. See the bulletin and ask them if you are able. Sometimes they aren't here or they leave quickly and this isn't possible. No worries.
7. If you happen to visit someone who is a regular flower recipient, ask if they have vases, you can bring back to church for them.
8. You can drop flowers at the desk at care communities, or call first if you are planning to visit.

The deacons send the Stephens Ministries grieving series to those in the congregation who have suffered the loss of a loved one. The four-booklet series is sent at different periods over the first year after the death and helps people deal with the grieving process. First Presbyterian Church sent booklets to about fifteen over the last year.

The Pastoral Care committee also coordinates Meal Trains for those who've recently had surgery, a baby, or otherwise are in need of some provided meals. We organized 6 meal trains this past year and contributed to a number of trains organized by other church members. In addition, we dedicated one Diaconate meeting to prepping and cooking a vegetarian and non-vegetarian white chili, which created 8 freezer meals for church pastors to take to parishioners.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brianna Bennett

Eric Wiebe

Fellowship Committee

The Fellowship Committee of FPC – Durham assists in planning congregational gatherings and celebrations. From June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025, the Fellowship Committee has engaged in the following:

1. Ash Wednesday congregational meal following evening service
    - Potluck soup dinner in the fellowship hall
2. Spring Fling
    - Quarterly full congregational gathering at a local park with games, pot luck meal, and intergenerational fellowship
3. Easter Brunch
    - Coffee and juice with pastries, fruit, and light breakfast snacks prior to the Easter service
4. Summer Sizzle
    - Quarterly full congregational gathering at the Momsen-Hudson home with games, pot luck meal, and intergenerational fellowship.
5. Awesome Autumn
    - Quarterly full congregational gathering at FPC with games, pot luck meal, and intergenerational fellowship
6. Stewardship meal
    - Fellowship committee provided set up and clean up volunteers for luncheon following worship for the Stewardship luncheon
7. Christmas Potluck
    - Annual congregational wide potluck and carol sing-o-long following the children's Christmas Pageant
8. Hot cocoa with the Durham Christmas Parade
    - Prepared and served hot cocoa on the front steps of FPC for spectators of the parade
9. Retirement parties/ordination celebrations /sabbatical sendoffs
    - Throughout the year, fellowship committee plans events to celebrate notable events for the clergy, staff, and members





Presbyterian Women

Officers for 2024-2025:

Circle Chair: **Linn Lopez**

Circle Treasurer: **Shirley Frederick**

Card Ministry: **Bet Lawson**

Presbyterian Women is an organization within First Presbyterian Church, New Hope Presbytery, Synod of the Mid Atlantic, and General Assembly Council. We contribute to the life and mission of the congregation, the community, and the world mission of the First Presbyterian Church, using our talents, skills, knowledge, and monetary gifts to spread the love of Jesus Christ to those we can, help build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthen the Presbyterian Church (USA), and witnesses to the promises of God's kingdom.

The Circle meets on the first Monday of the month (unless rescheduled for holidays) at the church. It is a source of fellowship and support for members, especially as we study together from the Horizon Bible Study curriculum. Our study leader is ***Susan Dunlap***. Our meetings usually start with a brief business report and then the Bible study. Our average attendance is 15. This year we included an extra meeting for a picnic as a totally social event.



We normally collect two offerings: Least Coin for causes selected by The International Committee for the Fellowship of Least Coin, to support programs that work for justice, peace and reconciliation throughout the world. The Blessing Box is used for individual Circle projects such as gifts for shut-ins, Share the Warmth, Church World Service for blankets, or special requests.

In addition, members pledge to the local Presbyterian Women's budget. We made donations to the Children's Hope Alliance, Meals on Wheels, Families Moving Forward, Durham Urban Ministries.. At each monthly Circle meeting, 15-20 cards are brought by ***Bet Lawson***, outreach chairperson, for members to sign. The cards are then mailed out or delivered by Circle members to shut-ins.

We thank those who lead and support Presbyterian Women. Your devotion and faithfulness keep us strong. Women of all ages are invited to join us as we continue to serve Jesus Christ, and we pray for God's guidance in meeting the needs of our church, community, and the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Linn Lopez, Moderator

Finance Committee

Committee Members:

Al Arrowood, Chair, Tom Keller, Keith Merritt, Fred Moore, Doug Butler, George Bernhardt, Wendy McCorkle, Karen Romines, Torrell Armstrong

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

- Oversee the financial accounts of the church.
- With the Investment Subcommittee oversees and directs the investment of all monies.
- Assist the Session with planning, monitoring and allocating the church budget.
- Develop the preliminary "needs budget" (for the Stewardship Campaign) and the final budget (to be approved by the Session) with the assistance of the ad hoc budget committee.
- Report to the Session monthly on the financial condition of the church.
- Ensure that an annual independent review or audit be conducted of the church's financial statements and report result to the Session.
- Work in conjunction with the Stewardship Committee during the Stewardship campaign.

Meetings

The Finance and Investment Committee has stated meetings eleven times a year, no meetings in December. The committee may have called meetings at other times as needed. Each month the Business Administrator reviews the prior months Financial Statements.

forwarded to the Session for final approval. The final budget will be presented to the

At our July 2024 meeting Sandy Newell (from Bernard Robinson and Company) presented our Audit Report for the year ended 12/31/2023. Everything was in order and there was no management letter. We discussed different church software options and the difficulty of finding qualified church business managers. Sandy said she did not see any reason for churches to functionally classify their expenses – she does not do it for any of her church clients.

At our August 2024 meeting we had our annual Budget preparation kickoff for our 2025 budget.

At our September meeting we had a Capital Campaign update. Our original forecast for the Capital Campaign showed a projected cost of about $3,000,000. The significant cost increases experienced during the pandemic resulted in an estimated cost of about $6,000,000. Paul Baldasare discussed options to try to meet the $3,000,000 shortfall.

At our October meeting the committee approved allowing the Investment Subcommittee to research investment options to improve the earnings of the Capital Campaign funds.

At our January meeting we discussed the new occupant of the church apartment and approved setting up a separate bank account for the required $100 saving account deposit. The use of a separate bank account was approved and sent to the Session for final approval.

At the February meeting the committee approved the final 2025 budget. The budget was congregation at the church's annual meeting in March.

At the May meeting Jordan Jones (Elder and member of the Property Committee) discussed the Facility Condition Assessment Report prepared by the Foundational Facility Management Consulting dated 4/30/2025. Jordan discussed the date sources used to determine findings included in the report and cost estimates that are needed to implement the items identified.

Financial performance for the period January 2024 – June 2025

For the 12 months ending 12/31/2024:

Total operating revenues for the period were $1,255,689 or 2.63% over budget.

Total operating expenses for the period were $1,236,890 or 1.34% under budget.

For the 6 months ending 6/30/2025:

Total operating revenues for the period were $641,098 or 4.33% over budget.

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Total operating expenses for the period were $613082 or 5.21% under budget.

Budget – 2025

The budget process began in August 2024. Tom Bloom, our Business Administrator, prepared budget packages for the Chairs of each FPC committee. The committee chairs collaborated with Tom to prepare a needs budget for 2025. The needs budget must be completed by September for the Stewardship Committee to begin the Stewardship Campaign.

The budget is adjusted as needed as pledges come into the Stewardship Committee. The budget is then finalized by the Finance and Investment Committee and submitted to the Session for final approval. The final step in the budget process is to present it to the congregation at the church's annual meeting. The budget is approved by the Session and then presented to the congregation for information and questions

The 2025 budget

DESCRIPTION	2024 ACTUAL	2025 BUDGET	DIFFERENCE
OPERATING REVENUES			
CONTRIBUTIONS	1,167,601	1,163,886	(3,715)
INTEREST INCOME	30,484	15,889	(14,595)
SPECIAL OFFERINGS	18,956	0	(18,956)
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	37,148	49,210	12,062
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME	1,254,189	1,228,985	(25,204)
OPERATING EXPENSES			
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE	2,935	3,950	1,015
SESSION	6,435	7,719	1,284
PROPERTY COMMITTEE, PLANT	169,337	162,331	(7,006)
PROPERTY COMMITTEE, OFFICE	79,285	82,103	2,818
FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE	676	3,489	2,813
WORSHIP & ARTS COMMITTEE	9,538	7,650	(1,888)
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE	20,924	20,920	(4)
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE	918	3,541	2,623
SPECIAL OFFERINGS	18,956	0	(18,956)
SERVICE & MISSION COMMITTEE	156,364	157,415	1,061
PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE	967	918	(49)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	1,239,890	1,225,98	(12,561)
NET TOTAL	14,299	0	(12,644)

Investment Sub-Committee

Committee Members:

Celia Dickerson, chair, *Sam Miglarese*, *Torrell Armstrong*, *Doug Butler*, *Fred Moore*, *Al Arrowwood*

January 2025, Fred Moore withdrew from the committee. Al Arrowwood, as chair of the Finance Committee, joined. This committee is seeking new members.

This committee has oversight of the investment account for First Presbyterian Church held at Bank of America since Feb. 9, 2017. The account for investment monies is valued at $5,505,000 as of June 30, 2025. In this year, this committee also gave direction on the placement of $1,500,000 of Capital Campaign monies.

The portfolio, invested broadly across equities and fixed income products, performed in a stable pattern in a "headline" market. Since inception dated April 1, 2017, the portfolio has yielded an annualized growth of 7.01%, net of fees. We are pleased with our investment return based on our specified program. BoA representatives have been responsible and responsive.

These significant events occurred in the last year.

- Upon recommendation to the Finance Committee, a new Certification Regarding Beneficial Owner with Bank of America was signed with Torrell Armstrong, church treasurer, as signatory.
- Distribution* from the endowment portfolio, calculated at 4.70% of the value of the portfolio, at the third quarter end (Aug 31, 2024) totaled $182,894.
- $1,500,000 cash from the Capital Campaign was invested separately from the portfolio.
- January 10, 2024 $1,500,000 in money market at 4%
- November 13, 2024 $1,000,000 divided among 3 and 6 month CDs yielding ~4.3%. $500,000 remains in the money market at 4%.

Protocol for meetings:

Upon the conclusion of the meeting with BoA, the committee adjourns to meet without the investment manager. The committee reconvenes via zoom to discuss the bank report and FPC needs at the time. The committee makes recommendations as needed.

*Each September, following the third quarter close, the FPC Investment committee calculates the withdrawal amount from this account to spend in the coming budget year (2024). According to the church's Investment Policy Statement, the choice is

- 5% or
- a rolling average of the most recent 3-year returns, whichever is lower

Statistical Report to Presbytery of New Hope

2024 Church Statistical Report

Church	**First**	**PIN**	**21311**
Presbytery	**New Hope**		
Address	**305 E Main St, Durham, NC 27701**		
Phone	**919-682-5511**	**Fax**	**919-682-0493**
Email	**office@firstpres-durham.org**		
Web Site	**www.firstpres-durham.org**		

Membership			
Prior Active Members	**546**	Adjusted membership	**546**
Gains		**Losses**	
Certificate	**16**	Certificate	**1**
Youth Professions	**5**	Deaths	**5**
Professions & Reaffirmations	**17**	Deleted for any Other Reason	
Total Gains	**38**	**Total Losses**	**6**
Total Ending Active Members	**578**		
Baptisms		Average Weekly Worship Attendance	**231**
Presented by Others	**2**	Friends of the Congregation	**30**
At Confirmation	**2**	Ruling Elders on Session	**22**
All Other	**1**	Do you have Deacons?	**Yes**
Age Distribution of Active Members		**People with Disabilities**	
17 & Under	**82**	Hearing impairment	**1**
18 - 25	**58**	Sight impairment	**2**
26 - 40	**84**	Mobility impairment	**8**
41 - 55	**80**	Other impairment	**5**
56 - 70	**124**		
Over 70	**150**	**Gender Distribution**	
Total Age Distribution	**578**	Women	**339**
		Men	**237**
		Non-Binary	**2**
Youth in Congregation			
Age 4 and under	**13**	Middle School (6th – 8th grade)	**20**
Elementary School (K-5th grade)	**30**	High School (9th – 12th grade)	**19**
		Total Youth	**82**
Racial Ethnic			
Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian	**10**	Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous	**1**
Black/African American/African	**52**	White	**505**
Middle Eastern/North African	**1**	Multiracial	**2**
Hispanic/Latino-a	**7**		
		Total Racial Ethnic	**578**
Budgeted Income	**1,356,753**		
Budgeted Expense	**1,382,230**		
Receipts			
Regular Contributions	**1,205,742**	Bequests	**8,807**
Capital Building Fund	**523,786**	Other Income	**21,000**
Investment Income	**185,139**	Subsidy or Aid	**0**
Expenditures			
Local Program	**1,239,890**	Investment Expenditures	**26,708**
Local Mission	**196,389**	Per Capita Apprt	**5,863**
Capital Expenditures	**262,317**	Other Mission	**7,000**

2024 Worship Attendance Monthly Averages

Month	Weeks this month with in-person attendance	2024 Monthly Average
January	4	197
February	4	209
March	5	236
April	4	186
May	4	188
June	5	180
July	4	160
August	4	188
September	5	198
October	4	199
November	4	222
December	5	216
Monthly Average		**198**

Live streaming of worship began March 15, 2020.

Attendance numbers include online views of worship at 11:00a.m

Outside Organizations using Church Buildings & Grounds

June 1, 2024– May 31, 2025

1. 1986 Project Advisory Group
2. AA Support Group
3. Al-Anon Support Group
4. Coalition for Affordable Housing and Transit
5. CROP Walk
6. Durham Bullhorns (rehearsal)
7. Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations and Neighborhoods)
8. Durham City/County Government Employees (MLK Celebration)
9. Durham Habitat for Humanity Contractor parking
10. Durham Public School Foundation
11. First Presbyterian Day School (Board, Committees, Training, Fall festival, graduation)
12. Foundation Fighting Blindness
13. Mallarmé/HIP rehearsals/concert
14. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Service (Unity Rally)
15. Ministry Collaborative Gathering
16. NC Council of Churches
17. Overeaters Anonymous Search Committee Interviews
18. Ordination Exam
19. Red Cross Drive
20. St. Philips Episcopal Church (parking for events)
21. Singers of New and Ancient Music (SONAM) concert
22. Solidarity Beyond Walls
23. Triangle Avenue Presbyterian Church (parking)
24. Vox Virorum (auditions, rehearsals, and concert)
25. Vocalist Rehearsal and Recording
26. Weddings (non-members)
27. Women's Voices Chorus (rehearsals and concert)
28. World Overcome Church (photoshoot)
29. Yiddish Concert Rehearsals



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