

**CHRIST
CHURCH**
FOX CHAPEL

2023 **ANNUAL** REPORT

As presented on January 21, 2024


Our 2023 Teaching

**1ST CORINTHIANS:
BUILDING UP THE BODY**




January 14-May 28

JUDGES



Correcting Your
Spiritual Vision

June 10-September 3

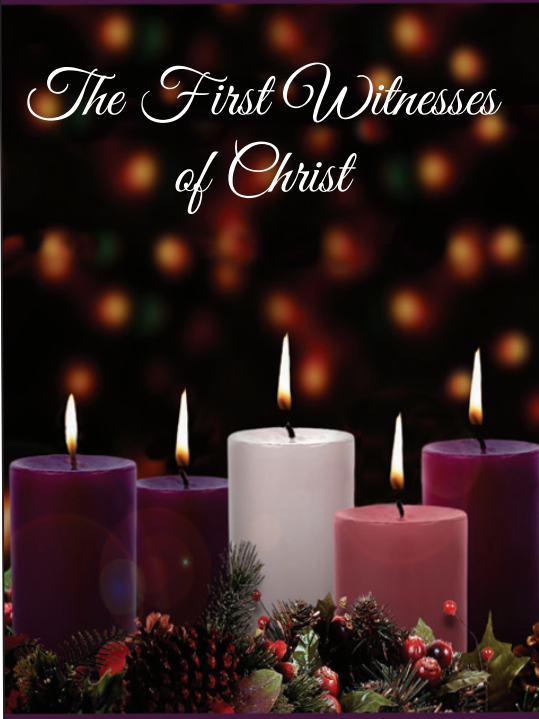


REVELATION
THINGS ARE NOT AS THEY SEEM ...

September 9-November 26

Advent & Christmas 2023

*The First Witnesses
of Christ*



December 2-December 31

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Christ Church Fox Chapel

Annual Meeting of the Congregation held January 29, 2023 in the Parish Hall

Welcome and Introductions

Rev. Alex Shuttleworth (Chair) called the meeting to order at 9:55 am. Tiffany Gray was introduced as the Judge of Elections and Anne Malone as Secretary.

Alex gave a brief devotional on I Corinthians 3:10 emphasizing that in order to build something solid, we build on the foundation of Christ.

Minutes

Upon a motion made by Bill Gordon and seconded by Nicole Shirk, the minutes of the Annual Meeting held in January 2022 were approved.

Matters for Decision

Election of New Vestry Members

The Nominating Committee voted to recommend Jane Flaherty, Alyssa Campbell, and Richard Cagley to serve on the Vestry. The congregation voted to conduct the voting by a show of hands rather than written ballots. A motion was made by Marion Ahlers, seconded by Amy Beresik to elect Jane Flaherty to a second term. The motion was approved. A motion was made by David Lowe, seconded by Kevin Klaum, to elect Richard Cagley to the Vestry. The motion was approved. A motion was made by Kris Kann, seconded by Caleb Campbell, to elect Alyssa Campbell to the Vestry. The motion was approved.

Alex expressed sincere thanks to Becky Lowe for her leadership on the Vestry during her two terms.

Matters for Information

Finance/Treasurer's Report – Joe Nawrocki

Treasurer Joe Nawrocki reported 2022 was in many ways a year of sustained growth for our church. With expenses in line with budget, we saw increases in membership, attendance and giving. As a result, we finished the year with a surplus. Capital reserves and restricted assets were used for property improvements without an impact to the operational budget.

Our church's daily operation is funded almost solely by our members. Pledged amounts are helpful to the Vestry for planning purposes because they historically and predictively come in around 95+ percent of target. Actual pledged giving in 2022 was \$495,500 vs. a budget of \$515,000. Donations are defined as monies above one's pledged amount or traceable giving that is not a pledged amount. Donations for 2022 were \$221,200 vs. a budget of \$98,700. As such, our 2023 budget is weighted significantly around pledges.

Combing some categories, and using rounded figures for the sake of simplicity; Joe summarized the 2022 and 2023 Budgets as follows:

INCOME	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Budget
Planned giving	\$515,000	\$495,500	\$532,800
Donation, plate & other	\$98,700	\$221,200	\$199,500
Legacy & memorial	\$1,700	\$34,400	\$1,700
Cell tower & rental	\$51,300	\$50,500	\$51,300
Investment income	\$38,800	\$38,000	\$31,900
Other	\$1,800	\$3,000	\$1,800
PPP "loan" or PRF	\$37,000	\$37,000	\$0

With regard to expenses, the church continued to operate slightly below budget throughout the year. Bridget, Niki and Alex consistently look for ways to trim costs, renegotiate contracts for office expenses like our commercial copy machine, trash pickup, natural gas, etc. As a result, the church's expenses for 2022 were \$736,000 vs. a budget of \$741,000, resulting in a net surplus of \$144,000.

EXPENSES	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Budget
Pastoral expense	\$260,000	\$247,800	\$274,000
Music, Office & Education	\$178,000	\$180,100	\$191,400
Buildings & Grounds	\$165,500	\$168,000	\$174,000
Inside Parish Events	\$41,700	\$39,400	\$42,700
Outside Parish Costs & Tax	\$96,600	100,500	\$131,000
Total	\$741,400*	\$736,000*	\$813,100

* Rounded from actual total, not from rounded figures above.

Although our investments outperformed the market marginally, 2022 was still a bad year. Total assets decreased by \$204,000; approximately 25% of that resulted from market losses, and the remainder being planned spending from restricted reserves as detailed in the report on page 29.

Our 2023 budget is \$813,000 compared to a budget of \$736,000. The net increase is based solely on inflation and is not due to any new operational spending. That said, 2023 pledges are up slightly over last year to accommodate the new budget. In the Vestry's opinion, although there may be minor savings to be found, the 2023 budget is what it costs to run a church our size in this location.

Overall, the finances at Christ Church indicate we are functioning as a healthy church. Budget, expenses, and assets are watched carefully and excess resources are put back into the facility and deferred maintenance. Building improvements in 2022 include:

- Chimney repair
- Tree removal in the courtyard
- Gutters and downspouts
- Fence along the driveway
- New trash area
- Accessibility and safety improvements in the bathroom and to the sidewalks
- Installation of security cameras
- New stove and fire suppressant hood in the kitchen
- New sanctuary hearing aid system
- Better lighting in the Parlor
- Generator for power outages at the Rectory
- Replacement of two furnaces that heat the Sanctuary

In the upcoming year, blacktop replacement on the road and parking lots, and sidewalks and drainage improvements are expected. Shady Side Academy is expected to cover 75% of the cost. Christ Church has set aside funds from the 2022 budget surplus for this project.

We give thanks to God for the church's financial health at this time. Further details of the Treasurer's report can be found in the 2023 Annual Report.

Membership and Attendance – Ben Hughes

Ben gave a summary report on membership and attendance. Overall membership fell off during the pandemic but has been up in 2021 and 2022. Members are getting plugged in on Service Teams and small groups. The launch of three home groups has gone well and is enabling members to connect on a deeper level. Other areas where members are connecting are in the Men's and Women's Groups, MOPS/Moms in Prayer, the Adult Forum, and on the Service Teams. Additional participants in any of these groups or ministry areas are more than welcome!

Building Development – Alex Shuttleworth

Alex presented the congregation with artist renderings of possible renovations to the Sanctuary, Chancel, and the Parish Hall. Issues in the Chancel and Sanctuary include:

- An inaccessible communion rail
- Cluttered Chancel
- Need for paint and insulation
- Need for new windows
- Light and Sound
- Re-grading the Balcony and addressing safety issues.

The artist renderings portray possible solutions to these issues to make a more flexible and accessible space.

Issues that would be addressed in the Parish Hall include

- New flooring and ceiling
- Upgraded lighting
- Removal of the stage and remodel of the backstage area to create space for children's ministry
- New HVAC for improved heating and cooling

A non-aggressive capital campaign will be launched in the Spring with multiple options presented for methods of giving and a more accurate projection of the amount we will need. There will be no external consultants involved. Members will receive a custom Yeti mug or cup as a thanks for their contributions. The number of improvements made will depend on the amount we are able to raise. If we do not raise enough to cover the scope of the project, we will address those that are most important and come back to other projects later. If we raise more than what we need, we will pray and discuss how to use the surplus.

The following questions were raised after Alex's presentation:

1. ***Would renovation of the sacristy be included?***
Yes, along with renovation of storage space in the area where the organ pipes are.
2. ***What about the organ?***
The organ is currently in terrible shape and would be replaced with an electronic organ that would not need the same level of maintenance. The pipes would not be necessary. The visible pipes in the sanctuary would be retained but the pipes behind the screens would be removed.
3. ***Would the Sanctuary renovation be first?***
It really depends on the amount that is raised.
4. ***What about old money from when the church was part of The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh?***
The EDoP would want us to use funds so we would spend down those funds.
5. ***Will we still have a balcony?***
Yes, but it will be safer.

6. *Will the sanctuary renovation increase our capacity?*

Not really, but we are OK on space for now.

7. *Will there be future meetings about this?*

Yes, prior to the Spring launch of the campaign.

8. *Would utilizing a short term loan be possible?*

Yes, if it is needed and the congregation agreed upon it.

Other Business

There were no other issues or questions raised from the floor.

The meeting was closed in prayer at 11:16 am and the congregation present prepared to worship following the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Malone
Secretary

Submitted to the Congregation on January 21, 2024.

RECTOR'S REPORT

In 2021, we renewed our baptismal vows and agreed to (re)commit, connect, and contribute to life together. 2022 was all about finding ways to make it happen.



Alex & Kat at Alex's Naturalization Ceremony on December 28

Our Teaching in 2023

I am pleased with seriousness of our biblical study in 2023. We spent quite some time in two long and challenging books to prepare us for something even harder after that. But the story of 2023, I think, has a lot to do with a church really maturing in its faith.

We started with a long and careful study of one of my favorite books of the Bible. In *1st Corinthians: Building the Body*, we looked at how we're all called to grow in love together. The only exception (to the careful study bit, not the growing in love bit) was, perhaps, on Easter Day, in **a tale of two blenders** where we tried to illustrate the pitfalls of Gnosticism and other Corinthian heresies to some 8 year-olds by blending and then drinking a McDonald's Happy Meal. For those who missed it, there is still a pretty nasty stain on the chancel steps as a permanent memorial to the equal pitfalls of addressing a subject like that in an all-age sermon.

The point, though, was simple: unless we receive the saving grace of Jesus, and live out of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we will quickly fall into one of two equally destructive errors: legalism (trying to perfect ourselves with holy works); or license (giving up and doing whatever we like, regardless of the consequences).

1st Corinthians is an excellent book for the wider church right now. Just like us, the Corinthians were wrestling with all the same hostility, confusion, and cultural issues that our contemporary world is going through. It was also an excellent book for our church in 2023 in particular, because in building a clear theology of eternity, it prepared us for some much more elaborate thinking on that subject later in the year.

Over the Summer, in *Judges: Correcting Our Spiritual Vision*, we looked at the oft-repeated cycle of drift, sin, repentance, and restoration that characterized life in the Promised Land. We also saw how sometimes God allows suffering to protect us from becoming too settled in a world that is fading away, and that He makes an even greater, ultimate promise, to lead us into an everlasting Promised Land one day.

Judges is an excellent book to learn how to read the prophetic and apocalyptic genres of scripture properly. We learned how often history repeats itself and how one single prophecy can be fulfilled in multiple different ways over time. We also learned how scripture uses certain symbols, images, types, and themes, almost like the musical score of a movie, to show us how parts of the big story all fit together.

Both of these extended teachings were deliberate. The plain speaking of 1st Corinthians on what happens to those who die in Christ and the complex images of Judges depicting how it all fits together, formed a useful background for our Fall study on Revelation.

Revelation is a book that people tend to avoid, but in *Revelation: Things Are Not As They Seem*, with a few simple tools, we've seen how its elaborate images often depict quite foundational, even basic, Christian truths.

The hope of Revelation is that God in His sovereign grace has already achieved everything that we need for salvation through the atoning blood of Christ on the cross and His exchange of places with us, taking on our sin and imputing upon us, his seal of righteousness. The many thrones, crowns, victory palms and pure robes worn by the people of the Lamb, were won for them and given to them by Jesus. This gives us hope for today, no matter what pressure we might be under, and it gives us hope for eternity, as a glimpse of that future reality is revealed.

About 15 years ago, the Archbishop launched a biblical literacy task force because he was alarmed at how little our congregations knew their scripture. Some of the original members were in our church and I think they would have been delighted with you in 2023.

Renovations & Repairs

Turning to more physical things, in 2023, we undertook the job of replacing the entire road and all the sidewalks around the church. With several big storms, it took longer than was planned but it created an excellent racetrack for anyone living nearby with a go kart, it gave Mr. and Mrs. Fire's music students the opportunity to ride some farming equipment up and down the hill, and it gave us all the chance to live out a small version of what we were preaching at the time (in Judges, we saw that disruption often leads to new life).



I loved worshipping off site for a few weeks, especially in the building down by the river in Aspinwall. Now that it's all done, I've also enjoyed seeing how much more easily people can access our building now that the steps have gone by the coatroom and how much better the traffic is when it's busy.

A campus like this can be difficult to maintain, but it's starting to look really great and if we are to bless the people of Fox Chapel (which is our primary mission field) having something safe, welcoming, and easy to navigate is a major theological statement.



Last year, we also launched our building campaign. The aim of the project is to complete the last two areas of disrepair and poor function (the Sanctuary and the Parish Hall). Both have problems with water damage, old electrics, poor sound, light, insulation, and decor.

The campaign was deliberately low-key: we simply stated the need, especially around accessibility, safety, and function and handed over the vision to you. I'm pleased to say that we have already raised enough in pledges to complete at least one of the rooms. We'll not be able to start until the funds have been received (2025 at the earliest)—but we're still on track to meet the challenge that the church set itself in 2014, which was to fix the abundant decrepitude of everything in under 20 years.

Vision for 2024

I've been struck this year by just how many photographs we have of people eating, praying, and studying together. Like the early church, as our church continues to commit, connect, and contribute, it's becoming clear that there's a hunger to spend even more time together.



We've had several different women's ministries for quite some time, and now that we have an established Men's Ministry, we'd like to add a men's overnight retreat. Our home groups are thriving and we need to add another. Now that the pandemic is well behind us, we'll be running a bible study at the rectory again for newer members. Some of our members are planning a mission trip to Sierra Leone with Edunations, and as you'll see from our mission and service page in this report, there's so much going on with our existing mission partners as well as some new opportunities in Tanzania and through the youth group.



As for the regular Sunday stuff (which is still an important part of church life) in 2024, we'll continue to teach some deeper biblical principles from books we often overlook. Our study of Hebrews will prepare us for a great study in Advent 2024 on "Christ before Christmas" and how Jesus fulfills every major theme of the Old Testament. We even hope to publish our first book to go with that series.

Personal Note

On a personal level, it's been another great year living here. In the Summer, my mother-in-law moved to Pittsburgh and I love having our family so close by. Then in December I interviewed for my US citizenship and became a United States Citizen. So it really feels like home now. People often asked me what it felt like to be a Brit. living in the US, especially around July 4th. Frankly, I suspect this year will feel very good. Like the early colonists, I've escaped some increasingly stifling laws around religious liberty in my native country and I'm glad to be free to proclaim the full gospel in my new home. In America we read a lot of negative things about ourselves, but I'm proud to have become one of you and honored to have been welcomed so kindly.



*Rev. Alex & Kat with their children,
Hannah & Ben*

As for my family, one of the things I'm most pleased about, as a parent, is our youth ministry. The program and the team are excellent and I love the way they involve the parents. Several times last year, Kat and I got to attend the group and see the level of friendship and support our children have. All the research shows that growing teenagers in the faith requires the entire family and church family to be as integrated as possible and to teach vulnerably on the hardest subjects. You can read much more about that on the youth ministry pages, but I'm writing here simply as a very grateful Dad.

Yours in Christ,
Rev'd. Alex

BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

Last year we shared a vision to repair and renovate the Sanctuary and the Parish Hall. Both have poor décor, rotting windows, water damage, outdated electrics, and problems with the lighting, heating, and sound. In addition to replacing broken items, we want to use this opportunity to improve the functionality and accessibility of both spaces. In the Sanctuary this means creating a level floor and in the Hall, creating a dedicated Children’s Ministry space behind the current stage.

Our campaign was deliberately brief and low-key because we wanted to avoid making the building our main focus and we wanted people to give willingly, without feeling compelled. We always knew this would yield a lower number, but we also felt it would have a better impact on the character of our church to do things a little differently here.

At today’s prices, and without contingency, the sanctuary will cost \$650,000, and the hall \$435,000. So far, we have pledges for \$525,000, which is more than enough to complete the Hall, or perhaps just enough to complete the Sanctuary if we change a few ideas. We will receive 45% in year one, 35% in year two, and 20% in year three. Hence, an earliest possible start date of 2025.

In the Fall, we polled those who gave to see what their preference might be. People were fairly evenly divided between the two rooms, with the majority happy either way. We’ll keep updating people as we go, but the good news is that we will have at least one beautiful, usable, space.



CCFC PODCAST: CELEBRATING 35,000 DOWNLOADS!

In 2020, we started a podcast as a substitute for the Adult Forum and we kept it on as an experiment. The podcast is a very different format to most ways that pastors tend to communicate. We were trained to preach in large rooms and to teach in small groups and always to make sure we had a clear message. But we’ve discovered something fascinating about the idea of an unscripted form of interactive teaching, where we get to form our ideas out loud, and even discover things for ourselves right there on mic. Sometimes we’ve even felt that we’ve expressed a thought more clearly this way than we have in our sermons.



In another podcast (almost as popular as ours) Joe Rogan suggests that in a world where everything is scripted and curated and polished, there is something more engaging about a real conversation. His guest added that humans were made for dialogical thinking and that’s what the podcast allows us to do.

More specifically, what we’re trying to model is bible study: how to use commentaries as you go; that it’s OK to be uncertain about things; and how to allow others to help you work things out without fear of getting it wrong as well as how to avoid lecturing others when you think you know the answer.

It’s also become a great way to interview people like Steven Manyama about his experiences of coming to faith in Tanzania and as we say, if you have a testimony of something God has been doing in your life, we’d love to have you join us too.



“Thanks for stopping by. But mostly stay classy”.

OUR VESTRY



Front row: Anne Malone, Catherine Parham, Alyssa Campbell. Matt Beresik, Richard Cagley
Back row: Zack Gray, Joe Nawrocki, Jane Flaherty

2021-2024 Term

Matt Beresik
Junior Warden
Joe Nawrocki
Catherine Parham
Senior Warden

2022-2025 Term

Zachary Gray
Treasurer
Anne Malone

2023-2026 Term

Richard Cagley
Alyssa Campbell
Jane Flaherty

VESTRY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Members of the 2024 Nominating Committee, Jim Edwards, Kevin Klaum, Anne Malone, and Joe Nawrocki, Chair, met on January 7, 2024.

We unanimously voted to nominate Matt Beresik & Catherine Parham to stand for a second term, serving from 2024-2027. No other nominees were presented either before or during the meeting.

Respectfully,
Joe Nawrocki

REPORTS FROM THE WARDENS

I again feel honored and privileged to have served both as Warden and vestry member.

2023 Vestry discussions revolved around five main themes:

1. The Building Campaign was launched; the vestry wanted to avoid a process of aggressive pitches, thermometer updates, etc. The money raised so far will not cover everything we envisioned. A survey of donors showed a roughly 50/50 split between redoing the sanctuary or the Hall. Discussions continue!
2. The relationship with Shady Side Academy included lengthy negotiations about how they could increase classroom space. In a nutshell, the result is the trailers in the parking lot rather than the school taking over the Meeting House or adding to their building. The school was also actively involved in the decisions made about the paving & sidewalk project.
3. The paving & sidewalk project was completed over the summer. It provided several improvements, including added parking spaces and easier access to the front of the building. It also took a little longer than expected, requiring adjustments and changes on all our parts. One development that I really liked was the off-campus services in Aspinwall; I apparently wasn't the only one, as I heard the phrase, "We should do this more often" more than once.
4. We heard that mission was on the minds of people this year, so presentations by possible partners and discussion about them have started and will continue in the next months.
5. Finally, we continued to be intentional about keeping Christ in Christ Church Fox Chapel. We spend more time praying for His presence and guidance both during our meetings and on a prayer walk, as well as for each other.

Please pray for us as we continue to ask for God's wisdom and seek to do the best for you and His kingdom.

I am grateful to Matt for his support as we try to support Alex and the team.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Parham



Catherine Parham,
Senior Warden



Matt Beresik
Junior Warden

I'd like to again express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve our church family alongside such wonderful people. I look forward to standing for another term on the Vestry. Welcome to our newest members and attendees. Thank you to Alex and Ben for their wisdom and leadership; to Kat and Alex for their years of dedication and service to CCFC; and a special cheers to Alex on becoming a Yank! Welcome to the winning team, my friend.

Thanks to all of our CCFC family who prayerfully pledged to give toward our future renovations. We look forward to continued growth and activity in our home groups, service teams, and various ministries. To all our gents, in whatever life stage you may be—cowboy, warrior, king, or sage—I want to challenge you dig into the blessed opportunities God has created for you, to strengthen, support and sharpen one another in community. The new year is a perfect time to plug in with our Men's Group. It is my prayer for us to come together, step up, and invest in our relationships at home and at church. I encourage us all to engage more deeply and meaningfully in our connections with one another. Please uphold in prayer all of our church leaders, ministers, operations staff, vestry members, and their families in 2024.

In Christ,
Matt Beresik

REPORT FROM THE ASSISTANT MINISTER



The Rev. Ben Hughes

So far as I can see, our church community experienced a year of stable, incremental growth in 2023. I saw a lot of small changes in our culture that I believe will bear fruit in the long run. The bestselling author and habit guru James Clear writes that “all big things come from small beginnings.”¹ I believe that he’s right, but Jesus said it better:

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree (Mt. 13:31, ESV).

As I look back on 2023, I see a lot of mustard seeds in the ground, and even a few sprouts starting to break through the soil.

Growing Deeper

First, I have noticed that our congregation has deepened. Our home groups have met regularly for a year and a half now, and it shows on Sunday mornings. Attendance is slightly up from last year, but more significantly, it has become steadier throughout the year. The old view that church is a winter sport has all but vanished. We are becoming a church where people come to worship every week—rain or shine—and they stick around to connect and cultivate real relationships. I have seen members praying for one another, confessing sin, contributing to one another’s financial needs, and looking after one another in myriad other ways.

I have also noticed a change in our congregation’s engagement with the Word of God. This year we preached through 1 Corinthians, Judges, and Revelation—three of the most complex and controversial books in Scripture—and everyone dug right in. When Alex and I preach we now hear pages rustling as people scan the Scriptures and follow along. We see High School students taking notes. I believe we are growing to be a church that is hungry for Gospel-centered expositional preaching.

Christ Church is in a sweet season, but I don’t want to give the impression that everything has been easy and comfortable. Far from it. 2023 was a year of suffering and loss for many among us, but I am encouraged to see how other members of the Body of Christ have wept with those who weep. The gospel tells us that this world is not the way it is supposed to be, that Christ is restoring all things, and that we have only to be patient and trust Him to hold us in hard times. Christ calls us deeper into the reality of His suffering so that we can share in the joy of His resurrection. I’m grateful to be a part of a community that is walking this difficult, but blessed road.

My Evolving Role

On another note, Alex and I looked back at my job description recently and were surprised to see just how much my role at Christ Church has changed. I started here a little more than four years ago as a (very) part time youth pastor, and since then my focus has expanded to include the whole congregation. I divide my time between preaching and teaching, leading our Youth Ministry (CCYM), Men’s Ministry, overseeing Home Groups and Children’s Ministry, and congregation-wide pastoral care.

Over the summer I began to encounter what I jokingly call “the Hermione Granger problem.” Hermione is a stridently zealous student in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter books who chronically over-schedules her life. At one point she employs a magic clock so that she can sit in two different classes at the same time. I have often wished for such a device, but God in his mercy has repeatedly denied my request.

¹ James Clear, *Atomic Habits*

I continue to be ambitious for God's kingdom, but I am learning that my limitations are a gift. Walking in the way of Jesus means learning to be fully human and fully present before God in the moment that He has given to us. When we frantically overwork or over-schedule, we rob God of glory and court burnout. As I read more about the state of the Church in America, I am convinced that this issue is endemic.

This year, however, I stumbled across a piece of Biblical wisdom that has helped me. In Luke 10 Jesus sends 72 of his disciples out to perform the work of ministry, and he tells them to go in pairs. Even Paul, who many think of as the lone wolf apostle, co-wrote most of his letters with partners. In Romans 12, he encourages us to think of ourselves not as soloists, but as interdependent members of a body.

In 2023 I sought to implement this Biblical vision in every area of my ministry. Instead of planning our Youth Ministry schedule by myself and micromanaging every event, I formed the CCYM Advisory Team. I meet with a small group of leaders monthly to pray, plan, and implement the program. I formed a leadership team to collaborate in similar fashion around Men's Ministry. The net effect of this has not been a decrease in my workload per se, but it has focused my ministry and made it a lot more fun. Special thanks to the dedicated leaders who have stepped in to partner with me in this work.

As with many things in my life and ministry, my newfound emphasis on collaboration is a riff that I learned from Alex. I know that he learned it from somebody else. Ultimately we all learn it from Jesus. But still, I want to acknowledge my sources. I have had a lot of fun this year collaborating with Alex and the rest of the staff team. Our conversations around the office flow between serious theological ideas, sins we have been repenting of lately, and jokes about toilets. Anyone who has listened to our podcast (the fastest growing conservative evangelical charismatic ANGLICAN podcast in the entire Fox Chapel Area) knows what I'm talking about. It has been a blessing to work in an environment where people are valued, honesty is encouraged, and grace is practiced.



*Ben & Jenna with their children,
Samuel, Asa & Junia*

Our Growing Family

Perhaps the most significant shift for me was the birth of my daughter, Junia, in February of last year. Sometime in the early Spring she learned how to make a wry, mischievous smile with her eyes that makes her look (to me at least) like Grogu (Baby Yoda) from "The Mandalorian." I am in love. My oldest son Sam started kindergarten, learned to ride a bicycle, and went hunting with me for the first-time last year. Asa, age two, has eavesdropped on his brother's school lessons and is now learning to read. All three of them fill me with wonder.

My wife, Jenna, serves in many ways as the glue that holds this all together. She prays for me when I preach, encourages me when I'm down, and works tirelessly to raise both our children and our CCYM students in the nurture and admonition of the LORD. I'm grateful for her love, friendship, and partnership.

Thank you all for loving and supporting the ministry of Christ Church in 2023. I look forward to seeing what God has for us in the year to come.

Love in Christ,
Rev'd Ben

MINISTRIES & MISSION



Josh, Tami & Grace

2023 Attendance

Overall: 701

Weekly Average: 13

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

2023 has been a wonderful year of growth and challenging students on who the person of Jesus is and who they are in Jesus. We walked through many different books, such as the book of Titus, Romans, and different Psalms. We also started a journey through the whole bible. We are doing a handful of lessons from each book and looking at where all of God's promises point to Jesus and His work to save us from our sins. One of the best things is seeing all the ways that everyone failed at serving God and following his commands, except for Jesus.

It is a continued blessing having both Tami and Grace on this team. Tami has such a heart for music worship and giving the children coloring pages that fit with the scripture they are going over. Grace serves these children in a wonderful and loving manor. She can connect with them in different ways and manors than Tami and I can.



Thank you and God bless,
Josh Gerdes, Tami Fire & Grace Lowe
Children's Ministry Staff



Missions Committee

Christ calls us to serve the poor, hungry, homeless, and imprisoned with our time and money. In addition to all the time that our members spent working with our mission partners, it was also a privilege to help fund the following organizations in 2023:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Church Army (Uncommon Grounds Café) | Trinity School for Ministry |
| Kairos Prison Ministry | Urban Impact Foundation |
| Shepherd's Heart | |

Partners Overseas

Our primary focus is our own city, but our hope has always been to expand our ministry into the wider world. This year, in addition to our regular giving, we gave away the first \$5,000 from our building campaign to enable a church overseas to complete their own building.

We were delighted in November to welcome Pastor Steven Manyama from Family Worship Center in Birmingham AL. Steven is ordained in the Anglican church and grew up on Ukara Island in Tanzania where Jesse Egeler's family have served as missionaries. On the podcast and in the adult forum Steven shared some amazing testimonies of his own conversion as well as stories of how rapidly the church is growing where he grew up. Many of us were especially moved by his photograph of a thriving church with no roof or seats, but thanks to you, we were able to give enough to complete that building for them using the first \$5,000 raised for our own building development.

Sonya Schnurpel from Family Worship Center writes "... you are making a dream come true for the people of Tanzania, Africa through our Lord Jesus Christ. What a blessing you



are to the Family Worship Center Ministry to help us reach the people of Tanzania”. As you can see from these images, that roof has now been completed.

We also heard from Adam Bright about he and Nicole’s work in Sierra Leone through Eduinations, a charity that specializes in teacher training and education. We were pleased to see people signing up to learn more and our dream would be one day to make a church mission trip overseas with several of our members together.



Changes to the Committee

In ye olde days we had quite a large missions committee with many partners each receiving quite small sums. In recent years we’ve been increasing the size of the budget, and reducing the size of the team and the number of partners, focusing especially on those with whom we can have a dynamic relationship (Kairos and Urban Impact are clearly two especially great examples).

The Bishop has been encouraging us to become even more agile in every aspect of church administration, and after reviewing our church bylaws (which require the majority of any sub-committee to be comprised of active vestry members) it’s become obvious this work should simply be done by the Vestry themselves, with members of the Vestry taking a more active role in visiting all of our major partners. As those meetings are formally documented, we’re hoping that everyone will be able to see more easily how mission is becoming an increasing priority for us as a church.

This year Sally Greulich ended her latest three-year term on the Committee and I’d like to thank her for all of her work over the years, as well as the rest of the team in previous years who lobbied well for an increased budget and have longed for the day when mission would become more of a focus for us as a church.

The Ultimate Vision

Although we have increased our budget every year for the last ten years, the vestry and many on our committee have all expressed the desire, one day, to give away significantly more: up to 10% of our operating budget. To achieve that, we’d at least have to double our missions budget, but that is our long-term vision.

Rev’d Alex
Committee Chair

Kairos Prison Ministry

After four years of restrictions on the Kairos program in Western PA, initially associated with the COVID Pandemic, Kairos Prison Ministry returned to a new norm. Five Weekend Retreats were held in 2023, two each in SCI-Greene and SCI-Fayette, men’s prisons, and one in SCI-Cambridge Springs, a women’s prison. In addition, follow-up programs in all five of the prisons have restarted, providing encouragement and reinforcement of the Weekend message.



The mission of Kairos Prison Ministry is to share the transforming love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ to impact the hearts and lives of those who are incarcerated. Congregants who volunteered on Kairos teams in 2023 were Jim Edwards, Catherine Parham, Stu and Gail Simpson and Susan Tusick. Several others supported the program by attending a closing service. In the spring our parishioners cooked a meal for the volunteers, and more than 40 hours were covered in prayer by our congregants for the participants on each Weekend. Our Sunday School students participated also with joyful colored drawings. We are so grateful for the support our church family!

Stu Simpson
Ministry Leader



2023 Camp Stats

Students: 161

Meals Served: 7,440

Baptisms: 13

Overall Youth's Served by UIF Programs: 2,282

Urban Impact: Summer Camp Program

This year's program included 2 weeks of training for interns and 7 weeks of Camp with students. This year Camp was held at Allegheny Center Alliance Church (ACAC). Returning to ACAC was a blessing. Being back in the center of the North Side put us within walking distance of various places that we were unable to take students to the past few years. Because of this, we were able to take each class to the pool twice a week, as well as take students to the Children's Museum, a Pirates game, and other local places on the flats of the North Side. Each morning was filled with math, literacy, and Bible classes. This summer, over 83% of students maintained or improved their skills in math and 90% of students maintained or improved in reading fluency. Spiritually, 16 students made a first-time commitment to Christ and 10 made re-commitments to Christ!



Thank you so much to everyone who prayed for the program, donated resources, provided a meal, or served as a volunteer. It's because of you that this program can happen.

Josh Gerdes
Urban Missionary



Music Ministry

How much do you think Jesus is worth? Our worship will never rise higher than our vision and value of Jesus. If we truly see Him as our Lord, and Savior, and King, both Lover and God—then nothing is too good for Him. He will get all we have.

Simon Ponsonby

I have been reading and thinking lately about God's worthiness. Worship is giving something or someone worth or value. Worship is about giving to God. It's about blessing Him. When we worship and praise, however, we are blessed also. When we worship and praise, God comes. He heals. He restores. He speaks. He transforms. As Simon Ponsonby would say, "What a thing!"

I am thankful that we are a singing congregation. More and more, we are changing! We are becoming more like Him and less like us. Thanks be to God! We sing with more and more joy and energy. I believe that is the result an ever-growing understanding of our blessings in Christ Jesus, who He is and what He has done. God has been so good to each of us and to CCFC!



Robert Fire

I would like to thank everyone who has participated in the Choir Sundays throughout the year. I would like to thank Diane Yorkshire for leading singing when Kirsten was on maternity leave. Many thanks to Amy Beresik and Nicole Bright for joyfully stepping in to play on the weeks that the Fire Family was away. Thank you to Matt Beresik for playing the trumpet. Those are fun weeks for me! Matt serves humbly but plays with great skill. He's an excellent musician. I would like to thank Chuck Gerdes who, while only recently coming to CCFC, has already stepped in to serve in a big way by



playing bass with me at 9:00 and 11:00 am on more weeks than not. It's a huge commitment of time and sharing of his talent and I'm personally thrilled to be playing with him again after 10 years apart! Thank you to Kirsten for another year of beautiful singing, gentle leadership, and joyful showing up! She is a blessing to me and to the entire congregation.

My prayer as we look to the year ahead is for more of Him in all that we do and more giving to Him of all that we have.

Pastoral Care Ministry

Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you are also in the body. *Hebrews 13: 1-3*

It is a privilege and a joy to serve as Pastoral Care Minister at Christ Church, and I continue to work with a deep sense of gratitude to Alex and the Vestry for giving me the opportunity to officially represent our congregation in an expanded part-time role. I give thanks to God, who equips me for this work daily. I ended my 20-year career in elementary music education in June, and Robert and I "stepped out in faith," as my childhood pastor would have said, trusting that God would help to supply our financial needs by providing private music students. He has done so abundantly, and I am so grateful for His mighty Providence that has caused my music studio to flourish. It is a dream come true to devote my working hours to Children's Ministry, Pastoral Care Ministry, and music education.

Over the past months, I have visited current and former members of our congregation who live at VA hospitals and at residential care centers in Verona, Oakmont, and Cabot. I have also visited parishioners in their homes. During our visits, we read the Bible, sing, talk, and pray together. We also share in ministering to each other simply by being together. This time spent together is a quiet but powerful reminder that God is present with us; that we don't need to always be doing, doing, doing; that there is holy silence and space to simply be His beloved. On a recent visit, the resident whom I was visiting wanted to watch TV quietly but wanted me to sit with her as we did so. Sometimes serving God means laughing with someone over the antics of a Golden Girls rerun!

Our visits may be informal or may include prayer services from our Book of Common Prayer. On several occasions, I have prayed and sung with those who are dying, and it is a solemn, grace-filled privilege to be present with those who will soon see Jesus face to face. What a delight it has been to have Kevin Klaum and Tony Sandrick partnering with me in ministry to our United States veterans.

I have gotten to know all the residents and caregivers in a particular neighborhood at Longwood Care Center, and singing and talking with these dear people every Monday morning is the BEST way to start the week! Please know that I do not "sentimentalize" ministry to those in need. I do recognize the power, grace, and love of God that is shared when we simply show up.

In addition to making visits and phone calls, I send many cards and letters to members of our congregation, and these notes often include colorful Scripture pages that the youngsters in Children's Ministry have created. We share these encouraging, Scriptural messages from our Children's Ministry with those in prison, as well. We thank Gail and Stu Simpson for the opportunity to extend Pastoral Care to those in Kairos Ministry and to involve the



Tami Fire
Pastoral Care Minister

children in living out Hebrews 13:3. I attended my first Kairos Weekend Sunday night celebration service and look forward to doing so again.

I have also had the privilege of praying and planning with Corrie Passavant, Becky Lowe, and Catherine Parham as we seek God's will and direction in structuring a time of interceding, post-service prayer on Sunday mornings. A highlight of the year for me was leading the musical portion of the Christmas caroling get-together at the high-rise apartment building in Blawnox with Gail Simpson, Mary Reina, Catherine Parham, and many of the building residents.

Several members and I have met throughout the year on Thursdays for the service of Morning Prayer. I fondly remember our outdoor prayer times at the park when our church road was under construction. As we declare the truth of Scripture aloud and pray together, we are built up and knitted together as the body of Christ and prepared and equipped in the Spirit to serve God.

I encourage anyone who wishes to join in Morning Prayer to come to the Meeting House on Thursdays at 7:00 a.m. Likewise, anyone who would like to be visited or knows someone who would like to be visited is heartily encouraged to contact me.

Looking ahead, I would love to facilitate deeper relationships among our congregants and our CCFC mission partners, especially Shepherd's Heart and Urban Impact. I have begun meeting with an Anglican priest who is also a registered nurse, and I hope to learn more from her about ways I can serve our congregation holistically. My seminary studies continue as I progress on the path of diaconal ordination discernment. Thank you so much to every person who is praying me through these days that are full of work and joy!

Many thanks also for your prayers for our family. I love being a minister at CCFC, but my favorite earthly titles are "Robert's wife" and "Mark's and Tim's mother." (I expect my favorite title of all will be the one spoken of in Revelation 2:17. Come, Lord Jesus!) I love you, church. May God bless all yinz richly with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus! (Ephesians 1:3!)



Youth Ministry

Not long ago I came across some Youth Group photos from this time last year. I was surprised to see just how much our students have changed. I know that I said something like this in last year's report, but it happened again. I was unprepared for how fast our students are growing up. By my sense, they made a developmental leap in 2023, and our ministry has grown with them.

The CCYM Revolution

We implemented a structural change that I like to call "The CCYM Revolution." It started when I took three weeks of leave in February following the birth of my daughter Junia. I was worried about how our volunteers would carry on, but in my absence they stepped up to the challenge, and the ministry thrived. Lesson learned.

Throughout the year I made a conscious effort to empower other leaders and invite them to share in the planning and execution of CCYM programming. I have found that team leadership takes a little more work and intentionality than flying solo, but it is much more fruitful and fun.

Mission & Discipleship

CCYM's first ever mission trip marked another significant cultural shift. In mid-July we packed eight teenage boys and two adult leaders into a van (no small feat), and headed to Charleston, WV to spend the week serving with an organization called Youth Works. We spent our working hours watching kids at a local Boys & Girls Club. The trip was a wake-up call for all of us. Our students saw – some for the first time – what life is like outside the Fox Chapel bubble. We had a lot of conversations about systemic poverty, the mercy of God, and the call to serve. The experience marked our ministry in a lasting way.

Following this formative experience, we started a new initiative for High School upperclassmen called the “Mere Discipleship Cohort.” A cohort is not a class or program, but a group. It is a band of acquaintances who work toward a common goal, and in the process become brothers. Mike Starz, my co-leader in this effort, describes it this way:

Over an academic year, the Mere Discipleship Cohort helps deepen and strengthen the bonds between our upper class high school students to the Lord, each other and The Church as they approach adulthood. The five teens and two leaders are asking ‘big questions’ via readings, videos, reflections and discussions. The group has bonded over meals in a variety of settings, conducted a weekend retreat and visited two other churches for the launch of a new ministry and a performance of Handel’s Messiah. The teens now sit together during services and set an example for the younger students of CCYM.

The cohort model has formed our middle school ministry as well. For more than four years now we have held a Sunday morning Bible study that we affectionately call SWAG (Saved With Amazing Grace). This fall I asked Jenna to take the reins of the program and focus on welcoming the church’s big group of soon-to-be middle-schoolers. In her usual creative fashion, she had them expositing the gospels while decorating notebooks with sparkly markers, and turning in sermon notes in exchange for donut parties.

How We Teach

The mission of CCYM remains the same: to make and equip disciples by proclaiming the gospel (see Mt. 28:19-20). We have found over the years that teenagers respond better to interactive forms of learning than they do to lectures and sermons, and we have adapted our teaching style to engage the heart, soul, mind, and strength of our students.

We usually teach using a Socratic method where interruptions, rabbit trails, clarifying questions, and other contributions are welcomed. Although this can sometimes feel chaotic, it helps students engage Biblical truth on a deep level. This year we also used theater, visual art, music, scavenger hunts, and games to help students experience the Scriptures in new ways. Our hope is that by the time they graduate our students will not only know but love the Biblical Gospel.

Our team spends a lot of time praying, talking, and wondering about what we should teach next. Jenna and I have a running conversation about what we need to study, and how we might go about communicating it.





Last winter we taught through the Ten Commandments. We noted that God’s law is like a mirror that points out our need for a Savior, it’s like a fence that protects us from one another, and it’s like a flashlight that illuminates the way of righteousness. We took great pains to make clear to our students that although God’s Law is good, we need more than good instruction; we need a Savior.



Over the summer we worked our way through the first half of Mark’s gospel. Most scholars think that Mark was the earliest of the four gospel accounts, and it certainly gives a unique perspective on the cross-centered focus of Jesus’ ministry. Having just finished a series on the Law, we emphasized how the Gospel is different. Gospel means “good news;” it is announcement of what God has done for us in Jesus, not a set of instructions or religious advice.

Starting in the fall semester we followed along with the rest of the congregation by studying Revelation. Our burden was to show how John uses wild imagery and layers of symbolism to express Gospel truth in fresh and lasting ways. Revelation, we learned, is really about Jesus.

This spring and summer we will be working through a series putting all these concepts together. We want to help students understand the Gospel, live by the Gospel, and proclaim the Gospel to others. We have noticed over the years that many Christians (including pastors) lack a basic comprehension of what the Biblical Gospel is and what it means for them. We want to equip students to know how to express the gospel in various contexts, from a sentence, to an elevator pitch, and even an in-depth conversation.



CCYM has a lot of momentum as we round into the coming year. God has blessed this ministry, and we hope to steward it well in 2024. We are excited to see how He moves this year in the lives of our young people.

Special Thanks to Caleb Campbell, Catherine Parham, Mike Starz, Jenna Hughes, Lou Antosz, Thomas Clement, and Lam Gray for their tireless efforts to point students to Jesus.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Ben Hughes
Youth Minister

Jenna Hughes
Asst. Youth Minister

Lam Gray
Youth Ministry Assistant



SMALL GROUPS & STUDIES

Adult Forum

As you might have seen from the image on the front cover of our giving brochure, the Adult Forum is a popular meeting that Ben and I really enjoy.



We usually use the time to dig more deeply into the scriptures of the day, but, for me the highlights were our special extra meetings in 2023. In one we explored the four major academic views of the end of the world. The place was packed which goes to show how hungry our congregation is for sound doctrine and theological study.



Another highlight was hearing from Pastor Steven about his work in Tanzania and the time when he expelled a demon and then cooked and ate the demon's rooster (you can also find that story on our special interview Podcast from November).



In 2024, we look forward to more time together and to running another special class on the Book of Common Prayer.



Rev'd Alex

Blawnox Senior Bible Study

This has been a year of ups and downs!

Some of the factors contributing to the down times were our occasional absences, interpersonal conflicts among the group members, poor health in a faithful member who feels unable to leave his apartment, changes to the building made by management and finally the closing of the community room where we meet while major renovations are made. The group attendance had been spotty and we wondered whether the project had just run its course.

After discussion with Alex and prayers for wisdom, we had lunch! Gail Simpson hosted a lunch, inviting the group to come, meet together socially and have an honest discussion about how they wanted to proceed. The upshot was that they wanted to continue, they wanted to study Revelation and some offered to host the meetings in their apartments. That is where things stand today.

We held a carol singing afternoon in the building's lobby and some of us walked the halls. This drew other tenants to join the gathering and perhaps be encouraged to join the group; one of the showed enough interest that he has offered to host a session.

Thank you to Mary Reina for her enthusiasm and great ideas; her knowledge about the building, as the daughter of a resident, is helpful. Thank you also to Tami Fire for providing music for carols and her infectious and cheerful presence.

I am, always, very grateful to my fellow leader, Gail Simpson, for her faith and companionship in this endeavor. Thank you also to Alex and Ben for their unwavering support.

Catherine Parham
Ministry Leader



Home Groups

A year and a half ago we launched what we then called “an experiment in home fellowship.” Given the busyness, tribalism, and fear pervading the wider culture, we weren’t entirely sure how it would go. Three groups started meeting monthly to share a meal, study the Scriptures, and pray for one another. We wanted to establish groups that are approachable, inter-generational, and Gospel centered.

A year and a half later, this lay-led initiative has transformed the culture of our church. All three groups are thriving and settling into a rhythm of life together. Many people have voiced demand for more groups, and we hope to start at least one more in 2024. I can’t help remarking that this is a good problem to have.

Over the summer we gathered home group leaders to debrief, share ideas, and talk about vision for their groups. As we ate and talked, I noticed that the groups are quite different from one another in culture and approach. This is a good thing. Home Group communities need to be able to adapt and contextualize to best serve their own unique strengths and challenges. The initiative has been successful, in part, because we haven’t micro-managed it.

Special thanks to the Campbells, Shirks, and Starzs for leading, and to all who have helped to make home fellowship a reality in our church. If you are not yet in a Home Group, I encourage you to join one. Just go to our app or website and sign up!



Rev. Ben



Men’s Ministry

Our monthly men’s Bible study is now in its third year, and it’s going strong. Men of all ages gather to open the Scriptures, speak honestly about their lives, and pray for one another. The formula is simple but Biblical. This is an “open door” kind of group. We take pains to ensure that any and all men are welcome.

This year we have been working our way through Paul’s letter to the Romans. The study has sparked reflection about the nature of sin, whether human beings are basically good, and why our attempts at self-improvement are often self-defeating. We have a thoughtful group of men, and I have enjoyed walking with them through some technical Scriptures and heavy concepts.

The most significant change in Men’s ministry this year has been the formation of the Men’s Leadership Team. I asked Jim Edwards, Kevin Klaum, and Matt Beresik to share with me in the leadership and planning of all things Men’s Ministry at Christ Church. We have been thinking, praying, and planning various service opportunities, a weekly Bible study initiative, and even a Men’s overnight in 2024.

Rev. Ben

Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS)

Fox Chapel MOPS (Mother's of Preschoolers) meets bi-weekly on Wednesdays in the Parish Hall from 9:30-11:30 am. We are a small group with upwards of 30 women including five mentor moms. This past year we launched a prayer group and Bible study that meets on the intervening Wednesday mornings, also from 9:30-11:30 am. Childcare is provided for both groups.

Our theme this year is "Say Yes!" based on 2 Corinthians 1:20.

"As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been yes and no. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you ... was not yes and no, but in Him, it is always yes. For all the promises of God find there yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory."

So far this fall, we have explored topics of community, friendship and vulnerability, caring for ourselves, encouragement, and mothering from our worth. Sample topics for this spring are attitudes about money and good parenting. We are also planning a session that will be a panel of our mentor moms sharing on their collective wisdom. All gatherings are full of laughter sprinkled with a few tears as we share and encourage one another.

MOPS, recently renamed MOMCO, is an international ministry to moms headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO. We are Jesus followers, Kingdom enthusiasts, and sisterhood cultivators. If any of what has been shared appeals to you, please reach out to us on Facebook. As always, we are grateful to Christ Church for providing us with a home.



MOPS

Women's Group

Tuesday Women's Group 2023 was a fabulous adventure. We read books, drank boatloads of coffee (with lots of naughty & lush creamer) and talked about nearly every subject matter one can imagine.

The women on Tuesday mornings are fun, funny, wise, godly, open, caring, servant-hearted and committed. The books we read together serve us as more of a vehicle to open up discussion. This year we read: A historical fiction book about the plagues of Exodus, a great book on how to forgive by the late Tim Keller, an more intellectually rigorous book called 'Confronting Christianity', and, more recently, a very insightful and convicting book called 'The Freedom on Self Forgetfulness', also by Tim Keller. Through these book discussions we all continue to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

One of my favorite things about this group is how well we argue ;). Sometime all of us like the book. Sometimes only some of us do. Often we have lively debate about the various topics within these books.

The Parlor on Tuesdays is an open, safe, and warm environment to have civil discourse regarding those parts of faith (and life) that require some careful thought, discussion, "wrestling, and valued feedback. Still, no matter how far ranging we are with our opinions and stances...the Tuesday women love, respect, continue to pray for, and serve one another tirelessly. And we laugh...a lot. It's a rare gift to be surrounded by such stellar women and I am eternally grateful to be part of the refining and fun work that our God is doing here on Tuesday mornings.

Kat Shuttleworth
Women's Group Leader



Kat Shuttleworth





The Service Team

We have about 100 people signed up to join one of the five ministries below. Some serving just a few times a year when they're able, and others serving every month, even in multiple different ways.

I really enjoyed our Service Team lunch this year, seeing all of the teams in one place was very encouraging.

I'd like to thank you all, but especially our team leaders: Matt Beresik (AV); Jim Edwards (readers); Jane Flaherty (servers); Bill Gordon & Joe Nawrocki (greeters); and Desa Voelker (coffee), for overseeing things.



AV Ministry

We amplify the sound in the sanctuary, broadcast, record, and provide assistance to those with hearing loss, and even sometimes use sound monitors for our musicians. This year we made several important changes to simplify the way it all works quite considerably. We have an excellent team and Matt writes:

Thanks to all who have worked on this team over the past year. If you have not yet considered the opportunity to sit behind the sound desk during weekend service, we strongly encourage you to give it a try! The system was recently reconfigured to greatly simplify the process. With a little bit of training / shadowing, you will find this job perhaps less intimidating than you might think. No previous sound experience is required. As with all of our ministry teams, many hands make light work. Please consider joining the rotation and help the Gospel to literally be heard both here at church and by those who tune in on-line each week. Thank you!



Coffee Ministry

If greeters are key to making a good first impression, Coffee Ministers are key to making a lasting one. Clearly people appreciate this ministry because it feels like our members are arriving earlier and staying longer every year. Long may this continue. Desa writes:

Greetings from the Coffee Ministry Team! We continue to serve our CCFC family each Sunday with smiles, we greet current and new members, and of course serve coffee. Our team is strong because we have several team members who sign up and show up frequently. Our frequent fliers. It's a big serve indeed as it requires our team members to be active in their ministry for a good part of the morning and into the early afternoon. A three-hour tour! I am honored to serve with and grateful for those who have continued their commitment over the last few years. I strongly urge we continue to discuss the merits of serving God and our church family by being involved in at least one ministry. It is a wonderful way for newcomers to become familiar with members and so rewarding to know you are doing more than just attending. Our service groups breath life into our church and help to create a positive, loving and safe environment. Caring, sharing, trust.

I look forward to welcoming more of our members to our service teams.

Greeters

Greeters hand out materials, let new people know where things are, and set the tone of the day, making sure that the first experience anyone has is a positive one. Bill & Joe write:

Greeters are usually the first people folks see when entering a church so a vibrant greeter team is important to the wellbeing of a church by making visitors feel welcome and comfortable, especially newcomers. Our team is blessed to have over 25 individuals and/or families who welcome worshipers on Sundays, distribute bulletins, provide direction to children's programs and answer questions. It is often said that folks looking for a church will generally put up with buildings in disrepair, bad music and even the occasional poor sermon but they absolutely will not abide being made to feel unwelcome. Fortunately, that is not the case at Christ Church as our greeters excel in making everyone who enters our doors feel welcome. Our thanks to all of them for their service. If you would like to serve on this important team, please contact either of the Team Leaders.



Readers

Readers have a liturgical role in reading scripture and prayers. Because we believe in the priesthood of all believers, and we have very few clergy here, it's important for our congregation to see a variety of people leading worship. Jim writes:

Thank you to our dedicated TEAM for sharing the Word of God during our Sunday services in 2023. Your commitment, reflecting on Revelation 1:3 (ESV) — 'Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near'—has enriched our worship and aligned seamlessly with the themes of the past year's sermon series.

Heartfelt thanks to my sisters and brothers for being the faithful readers who bring to life the love of Christ in our CCFC Family. Lastly, we are always looking for new volunteers, so please do not hesitate to reach out."



Servers

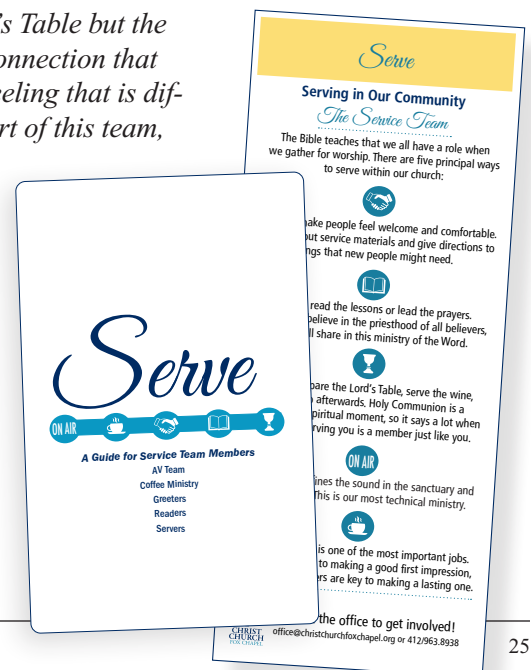
Servers share in a sacramental ministry serving Holy Communion (also known as the Lord's Supper), as well as helping to prepare and clear the table. In a more liturgical service like ours, often this is the moment where people respond most emotionally to the movement of the Spirit. Jane writes:

The Server Team has evolved into a dedicated group of a dozen faithful Communion Servers. There is a true team spirit when it comes to preparing the Lord's Table but the act of actually serving Communion provides the joy for this team. The connection that is made when serving the Lord's Supper can often be emotional. It's a feeling that is difficult to explain until you have experienced it. If you feel moved to be part of this team, please be encouraged to do so. There are detailed instructions for the process and several team members that would be glad to be your mentor!



How to Find Out More & Get Involved

The best place to start is by reading a serving card, which you can find around the lobby. If you'd like to know more about a specific role, please take a guidebook (located on the table under the TV just outside the Sanctuary), or ask one of the pastors or team leaders for more information and then simply give it a try. We are big on experiments here, so if you try something and aren't sure how you feel about it, try something else!



OPERATIONS



Bridget Michael

2023 was a busy year for Operations, with the main focus being on Buildings & Grounds.

Buildings & Grounds

Personnel Changes

We said a fond farewell to longtime employee Brian Zimmerman in April after 12 years of service. Brian was an integral member of the team—his dedication, wide skill set and sense of humor were appreciated by all. While it might seem that not having a full-time employee would have a negative impact, the new relationship we have with Brian via his new company has allowed us to continue to maintain the property at a high level while saving money. We can continue to count on him as a valuable resource and to be attentive to the complex needs of running a 17-acre property with a busy tenant.

Brian's main focus was in grounds care, but he did take care of some building maintenance as well. We have expanded relationships with several other contractors who we have been working with over a number of years to fill in this gap, namely Doug Morris of DLC Contracting. This has allowed us to be able to complete more projects in less time, and also take care of some issues preemptively.

Interior Projects

While no major construction was needed this year, maintaining a nearly 100-year-old building has lots of small things to take care of regularly. Projects included replacing water lines and shut-off valves in the basement, replacing a rotting door at the back of the Sanctuary, replacing old light fixtures & outdated outlets, and fixing water damaged walls.

Additionally, work done at the Rectory included replacing several broken appliances, tree removal, and minor re-pointing & caulking around windows. More preventive maintenance is planned for 2024.

Exterior Projects

The most obvious project was the replacement of our road & sidewalks, which was done in cooperation with Shady Side Academy per the requirements of their lease. What was not as apparent were the related projects that we began working on in the fall of 2022 to make the road project move forward smoothly and to take advantage of the opportunities that removing the roads opened up. This included:

- completing the trash area by adding attractive gates
- removing the (non-compliant) fire escape to allow for the widening of the sidewalk
- removing the islands in the main parking lot
- road widening in several areas
- tree removal to allow for new parking spaces in front of the school
- improvement of former trash area to be able to add parking spots
- run new electric lines under the road for future parking lot lighting

The road & sidewalk replacement was an all-consuming project for many weeks. Our contractor, Shields Paving, was great to work with, but of course there were unexpected delays from weather and issues with what we found under the old road



that needed to be addressed before installing the new sub-base. Multiple daily walk-throughs were completed to keep on top of the many details and questions that came up. Who knew that you needed to have several discussions about the color of the handicapped ramps, the best direction to dig when placing pipes for new drains, or what an exact science the painting of parking lot lines is? All the while, we also needed to continue working (even when the building was shuddering) in addition to figuring out how to have church off-site. The services held in Allegheny RiverTrail Park's indoor space were enjoyed by all, so much that we may return next summer!

The end result met our expectations and addressed problems far beyond just replacing a worn out road. We now have ADA compliant sidewalks, improved drainage from the building (our sidewalks are no longer angled towards the building causing water issues in the basement!), managing the flow of water from the entire hill to new drains and much needed additional parking spots.



Following the completion of the road work, a major clean-up was necessary. We utilized this time to not only restore areas affected by the construction, but to also clear out overgrown beds, replacing plants, and installing new plantings to further enhance the grounds and tie them in to the overall planting plan for the site. We also created & installed new signage to help direct those new to the property to both the school & church (more to come next year!)



The Building Campaign

As has been mentioned in other areas of this report, we began a building campaign to renovate the Parish Hall & Sanctuary. Refining the details of the project and securing contractors and bids needed to be completed in advance of producing the brochure and related materials. This was very time-consuming, but along the way there were many God moments—a carpet sample that was mailed to a deceased former employee that ended up being *exactly* what we were looking for, a window contractor who is willing to install our windows with no markup, a painter who reduces prices for churches by 25%—that will make our projects possible when the time comes.

Other Areas of Focus

In addition to Buildings & Grounds, Operations is also responsible for overseeing several other areas. Much of the work done in previous years in these areas has opened up our ability to focus on new projects to better meet the needs of our “growing and changing membership:

Administration & IT: creating materials & internal systems to increase efficiency; maintaining office equipment & computer systems & contract negotiation

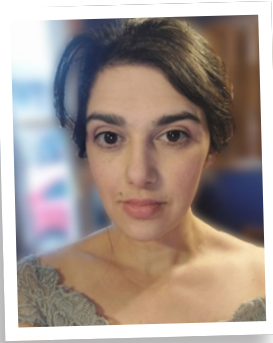
Communications: developing engaging, consistent & clear communication via both print & electronic platforms, and keeping them up-to-date

Facilities Management: working with the school and outside organizations using our space, ensuring that the needs of multiple groups can be met with available resources

Human Resources: ensuring compliance with labor rules, facilitating child safety protocols for staff & volunteers and maintaining employee records



I continue to be grateful for being part of such an amazing team. I couldn't ask for more grounded, supportive, talented and *fun* people to work with. The last 10 years have been a joy to be a part of—I'm excited to see what we can accomplish in the next 10!



Niki De Luca

Finance Manager's Report

Monthly budget and investment reports are being provided to the Vestry for review, and physical documentation of expenses are kept readily available to be reviewed at their choosing. To increase efficiency and cut costs, the majority of our checks are processed directly from our bank and most quarterly statements are being sent via e-mail. I continue to process payroll for all employees rather than outsourcing to a payroll company, which also saves money.

The financial burden of the repaving project was able to be greatly mitigated thanks to holding money in reserve and strong cash flow.

We kicked off a new building campaign with a multi-year plan to renovate the building. Projecting & tracking the level of funds will be key in determining when we can begin work.

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with our lay audit of financial records for 2022 to the Diocese. Our accounts were found to be in good standing.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2023 was a year marked by record income for our church due to increased giving as well as some one time non-operational income streams. We finished the year with a surplus even after deducting those one-time expenses, which is a remarkable feat in the current financial climate. We have put these funds in restricted categories for Vestry use to cover large capital projects that cannot be funded through normal operational giving, and to help balance the upcoming budget.

Our church functions almost solely through donations from our members. In order to properly maintain the property and adequately fund our ministries in the church, it is imperative that members let us know what they intend to give in the coming year, and that they fulfill those commitments to the best of their ability. Our operational surpluses over the past several years is not only due to the diligent regulation of spending by all staff, but also because we have to budget income conservatively due to the unpredictability of donor giving. The consistent policy of holding the majority of these surpluses in restricted funds allowed us to perform necessary maintenance on the property, and tackle the massive undertaking of repaving the road to the church without having to sacrifice our funding to our regular operations. We also began contracting out the building and grounds maintenance which has resulted in savings to the church.

Our 2024 budget includes a 3% increase to expenses, all while bringing on an additional Youth Ministry Assistant and making our Pastoral Care Minister full-time. However, we have a 15% reduction in giving based on conservative projections of donations and committed giving. To make up for this shortfall, the Vestry decided to carry forward the \$34,000 necessary to balance the budget from the \$91,000 operational surplus that we achieved in 2023.

SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENSES

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	% of Budget	2024 Budget
Income				
Giving				
Committed Giving	509,718	532,750	96%	477,000
Donations	302,639	199,500	152%	216,500
Crown Castle	47,806	47,800	100%	47,800
Other Income	163,971 *	38,937	421%	44,794
Total Income	1,024,134	818,987	125%	786,094
Expense				
Clergy	272,789	274,014	100%	296,881
Music	54,543	54,274	100%	55,852
Office	98,339	98,318	100%	102,412
Education	37,301	38,784	96%	41,815
Building	123,077	112,950	109%	114,310
Grounds	59,734	61,008	98%	53,204
Inside Parish	43,590	42,650	102%	28,450
Outside Parish	109,791	114,691	96%	111,958
Payroll Expense	14,722	16,300	90%	15,200
Total Expense	813,886	812,989	100%	820,081
Net Income	210,248	5,998		-33,987
			Partial Transfer of '23	
Non-Operating Income	-118,409		Surplus	34,000
*Adjusting for non-operating income	91,840 *			13

Capital Reserves Spending	
Signage	361
Road Work	179,341
Trash Area	2,996
Kitchen	7,000
Rectory Repairs	2,929
Computers	2,100
	194,727

Building Reserve Spending	
Promotional Items (Yetis)	3,424
Furnace (from Dec '22)	3500
Donation- Mission Partner	5000
	11,924

ASSETS & FUND BALANCES

PNC Operating Acct	\$	59,193	\$	53,769
CRF	\$		\$	5,424
Dollar Bank- Operating	\$	244,052	\$	191,896
Columbarium			\$	2,991
MOPS			\$	9,123
Capital Reserve (DB)			\$	40,043
Dollar Bank- Discretionary	\$	387		
Dollar Bank- Electronic Giving	\$	37,252		
Cetera				
Account x50	\$	617,231		
Account x51	\$	106		
Account x52	\$	-		
	\$	617,337		

Investment Fund Breakdown	
Total Unrestricted	\$356,408
Unrestricted- New	\$215,674
Capital Reserve	\$51,024
Vestry Reserve	\$89,711
Total Restricted	\$260,929
Music Interest	\$25,497
Music Fund	\$14,938
Building Reserve	\$209,775
Settlement Reserve	\$10,720



Bacon Sunday Crew



A Year of Building Community



Baptism



Christmas Fun



Sunday Coffee Hour



Without explanation



The New Road



CCYM Mission Trip



Mauddy Thursday Meal



Christmas Caroling



Summer Worship