



2023
ANNUAL
■ REPORT



Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill

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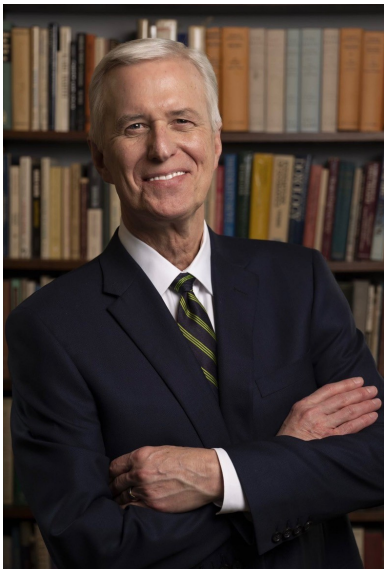
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from the *Interim Pastor*

I have had the privilege of serving as the church's interim pastor this last year. It was a great joy to return to congregational ministry after spending ten years training pastors at Princeton Seminary. But it was a particular delight to be of service to PCCH during its season of changes.

The summer months of 2023 were spent with the church responding to significant staff transitions through the first half of the year.



- The congregation said goodbye to its **Associate Pastor Rev. Brian Russo** in January and to its **Senior Pastor Rev. John Wilkinson** in April.
- **Megan Petero** became the Acting Coordinator of Children's Ministry after **Rev. Roberta Kearney** left at the end of 2022, and she assumed the role of Acting Coordinator of the Youth Ministry after Rev. Russo left. But she concluded her work with both children and youth in May of last year.
- **Megan Cullen** transitioned from being our Church Administrator to the Director of our Preschool in May.
- **Rachel Cline** became our new Church Administrator at the beginning of June.
- I began my service as Interim Pastor on June 1.
- **Dr. Russell Sullivan** joined the staff initially in May as a bridge pastor, and then became our Minister of Visitation in June. This is a half time position in which he focuses on pastoral care, serving the Board of Deacons, worship leadership, and occasional preaching.
- After spending the summer searching for new staff for our children and youth ministries, the Session hired **Julie Snyder** to become our halftime Director of Children's Education, adding to her existing position of Director of Children's Music. And we hired **Kate McGill Magid** to become our halftime Director of Youth Ministry.
- A **Pastoral Nominating Committee** was elected in September, and they immediately began their diligent search for our new pastor.

Although our committees and boards took a break over the summer, as is our tradition, we gathered faithfully for worship services that were focused on the Book of Acts and what it means to be a congregation in transition, living in the power of the Holy Spirit who has always kept the church moving.

After Homecoming Sunday on September 10, the congregation plunged into a busy fall season of worship, Bible Study, concerts, programing, and service in mission. New deacons and elders were elected, conducted planning retreats, and organized their committees' work for the

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church year ahead. The reconstituted staff similarly spent time in planning meetings as well as their weekly gatherings to help coordinate the church's worship and many ministries

With renewed energy the many committees of the congregation ensured that our church was moving ahead through this interim season with a commitment to flourishing. Our Social Witness Committee organized meaningful and impactful opportunities for service, our Church Life Committee put together wonderful opportunities to enjoy being a church family, and our Hospitality Committee ensured that every Sunday we could move from worshiping around the Lord's Table to fellowshiping around elegantly prepared tables of fellowship in Widener Hall. And the Center on the Hill filled the building every day with engaging programming for members of our community.

Worship through the fall used the choir and pulpit to follow the Hebrews through their journey to the Promised Land. This became a way of guiding our own journey as a church into a future filled with hope.

The fall Stewardship Campaign resulted in financial commitments to the congregation which exceeded the previous year, with most members increasing their pledges. This is a wonderful sign of investment in the future of the congregation.

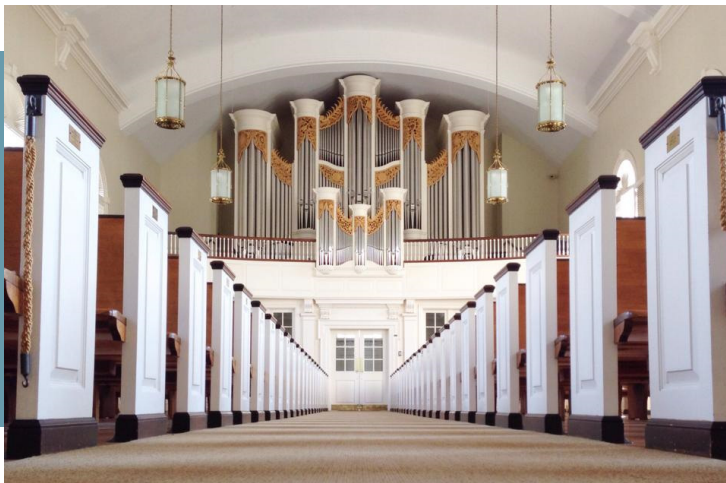
In Advent the church became focused on the gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love which the Savior brings. The beauty of the sanctuary prepared by our Flower Guild was matched by the beauty of the music presented each Sunday by the Gallery Choir, and especially at the annual Lessons and Carols service.

Along the way through all our worship, programing, administration, and missional engagements in the community we were being the church of Jesus Christ. But we were also being the church when the pastors went to visit a member in the hospital, when we conducted memorial services, baptized babies, welcomed new members, offered pastoral counseling, when Dr. Sullivan regularly visited members in their homes, and when Deacons carried flowers to the homes of those who cannot attend worship.

Through it all we became recommitted to our faith in God's great faithfulness to us.

M. Craig Barnes

Interim Pastor



from the Minister of Visitation

*Now to [God] who by the power at work within us
is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine,
to [God] be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations,
forever and ever. Amen.
—Ephesians 3: 20-21*

It's been a little over a year since I began my work at Chestnut Hill. I was hired as the bridge pastor, the function of which was to provide a transitional ministry until the church hired an interim pastor. That was a very temporary assignment! The Personnel Committee did not delay in its work, and within a short time, the Rev. Dr. M. Craig Barnes became your interim pastor. It has been for me a joyful experience to be a colleague with such an experienced and thoughtful leader, pastor, and preacher. Both staff and members have been truly blessed by Craig's work among us.



That meant a change in the focus of my ministry, and at that point I was asked to become your minister of visitation. My responsibilities over this last year have been threefold. First, I have made visitation of members who are in need or in retirement homes a priority. I have decided to expand that to include other retirees who live on their own. I also make hospital calls and other visits to our membership. Over the course of this last year, I have also officiated at the memorial services of several of our members.

My second responsibility has been to liaise the work of the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons is a committed group of servants who are dedicated to re-energizing the ministry of care and compassion in the congregation. After a retreat which I led, we structured that ministry around several teams on which deacons serve. (See the report from Cathy Brzozowski, Moderator of the Board of Deacons.)

And my third responsibility has been to provide leadership in your services of worship. And that has been an immense joy. Your worship service is the jewel in the crown that PCCH is. It undergirds our mission, education, fellowship, and outreach to the community. Craig's preaching, the choir and music, ably led by Dan and Jeff, and those who participate to prepare bulletins and serve as volunteers on Sunday - all have created a faithful and beautiful worship experience in response to the loving grace of God in Christ. We have such a wonderful pool of talent that enables our worship, and I am grateful for being part of this gift to our community.

The quote above from the letter to the Ephesians expresses the immense confidence in God's power and ability to accomplish things through us which we cannot even begin to imagine. Be sustained by this confidence in God's presence with us. I believe that God will bring PCCH into a bright future of faithful ministry and service that will respond to the needs of our world and community. Thank you so much for letting me be a small part of this journey with you!

Russell C. Sullivan, Jr.
Minister of Visitation



Session

Elders Class of 2024

Jill Bown
Jack Evans
Lisa Guyer
Kate Houstoun
James Lutz
James Spause
Margaret R. Spencer
Beth Nell Vaccaro

Elders Class of 2025

Shannon Cavanaugh
J. Matthew Eastman
B. Graeme Frazier
Ryan Mann
William Murphy
Michelle Shachtman
Taylor Slaughter
Harry M. Spaeth

Elders Class of 2026

Rebecca DePasquale
Gregory Dickinson
Elizabeth Podraza
William Storm
Clarke Woodruff



Baptisms

Brooke Barrett
Marlee Boyd
Lois DuBois
Adam Jones
William Pendse
Oliver Schneider
Tennyson Tippy

Deaths

John Armbruster
Barbara Butler
Joyce Fles
William Johnston
Richard Knox
William Mebane
Donald Todd



Ushers Team 1

Kevin Raphael (team leader)
Carolyn Manwaring
Emily McCahery
Ray McCahery
Sarah Wright

Ushers Team 2

Harry Spaeth (team leader)
Troy Foxworth
B. Graeme Frazier
Kate Houstoun
Jason Jones
Elsbeth Wrigley

Ushers Team 3

William Cobb (team leader)
Robert Bausman
Peter Cooke
Douglas Olson
Dominick Rebeck

Ushers Team 4

Joan Demme (team leader)
Shannon Cavanaugh
James Cupp
Michelle Shachtman
Robert Shachtman
Barbara Spause

Office Volunteers

Barbara Keeler
Sharon Kelly
Elizabeth Podraza
Alison Rudolf
Susan Shuchat



Deacons

*I*n 2023-2024 the Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill Deacons re-energized their outreach activities to support our ministry with compassion, witness, and service. With church members returning to in-person worship and attending fellowship events, the opportunities for Deacons to engage returned.

The Deacons gathered at regularly scheduled monthly meetings to discuss the care needs of congregants. Four areas of focus that encompassed the needs of PCCH members were identified—Communication, Life Transition, Prayer, and Connections. From our newest members at birth through time of death, these key areas would provide our foundation and guide action during the year.

Communications: Facilitate communications between the Board of Deacons and the congregation; raise awareness of the ministry of the deacons; and devise strategies to elicit requests from the membership for care.

Life Transition: Proactively mark events that occur in the lives of our members including birth and baptism, illness, death and bereavement, graduation recognition, and reaching out to our college students.

Prayer: Lead the prayer group and encourage member participation to pray over prayer requests, church needs, the community, the country, or whatever the Holy Spirit leads them to pray.

Connections: Provide a point of connection, nurture, or specific assistance. Examples may include: 1) incorporating new members into the life of the church; 2) transportation to appointments; 3) meals for families or persons who are experiencing difficulties; and 4) visits as needed to people, especially the homebound.

The Deacons will continue to work diligently to serve the needs of church members and support the overall mission of PCCH. Looking forward, we plan to expand activities to include connecting with our teens and college-age members and make connecting members with care easier than ever.

Cathy Brzozowski

Moderator of the Board of Deacons



Deacons Class of 2024

Kelly Baughman *1st term*
Beverly Heimbach *2nd term*
Lyn Huertgen *2nd term*
Jane McGill *1st term*
Amy Raphael *1st term*
Dominick Rebeck *2nd term*

Deacons Class of 2026

Nicolette Cobbold *1st term*
Alison Ellison *1st term*
Debby Evans *2nd term*
Ann Goslin *1st term*
Kristin Lawton *2nd term*
Thanice Petrak *1st term*
Rachelle Pretz *1st term*

Deacons Class of 2025

Emily Barth *2nd term*
Mark Bernstein *1st term*
Catherine Brzozowski *1st term*
Beth DeSoo *2nd term*
Becky Frazier *1st term*
Emily McCahery *1st term*
Barbara Olson *2nd term*
Linda Pettengill *2nd term*
Deborah Robinson *2nd term*
Sarah Wright *1st term*

Some of this year's Deacons activities



- birthday cards personalized and mailed to 80 members
- Fellowship Brunch served to 100 attendees in February
- meal preparation and delivery for families in need
- special recognition of baptisms with chancel rose and gift
- flower delivery at Christmas and Easter to senior church members
- ongoing prayer group
- regular visits to homebound and hospitalized members
- transportation support
- development of a Deacons Connect pew card and page on the PCCH website to help members more easily access support
- other services at the request of members

Children & Family Ministry

Megan Petero served as Acting Children's and Family Ministries Coordinator through June of 2023, and we thank her for her gifts and service to our program. During the summer the children participated in learning Psalm 23 and each Sunday they made art as their response to each of the verses. Many thanks to Greg Dickinson for his creativity and for leading the summer Sunday school classes.



In August of 2023, Julie Snyder was hired as Children's and Family Ministries Coordinator. During her tenure, the following goals have been achieved:

Our educational space in the Strouse Building is clean and fully functional, with two children's Sunday School classrooms, a music and drama room (shared during the week with the preschool), and a youth room.

Age-appropriate curriculum has been established in both of our active classes, with PreK-Grade 2 using Godly Play and 3rd-5th Grade using Memoria Press Christian Studies. 3rd-5th Grade is also focused on Bible literacy and each child was given a Deep Blue Children's Study Bible (Common English translation) at the start of the program year.

Our programming has moved toward and continues to strive for:

- All children knowing that they are uniquely loved and valued by God
- Cohesive programming among the liturgical season, worship service themes, children's

messages, children's music, and Sunday School

- Accessibility of the worship service to children and families through materials in *Praise Packs* and child involvement as liturgists and choral singers
- Larger numbers of children participating in Sunday School each week, with as many as 25 children on some weeks, and average class size at 10 (Godly Play) and 4 (3rd-5th Grade)
- A larger pool of adult volunteers to serve as teachers and shepherds

In general, there is a palpable sense of excitement and eagerness to learn among all the children. The children enjoy coming to church, have formed relationships with one another and their teachers, and are able to comprehend and synthesize Biblical themes.

We have already had a fun and blessings-filled beginning to 2024 and look forward to what the year holds in our Children's Ministry.

Julie Snyder

Director of Children's & Family Ministry

Michelle Shachtman (chair), Shannon Cavanaugh, Rebecca DePasquale, Greg Dickinson, Diana Rodgers, Buddy Storm, Julie Snyder (staff)



Youth Ministry

Senior High Youth Group

The PCCH youth group has had a busy year! Over the summer a large group of teens headed to Ghost Ranch, New Mexico and worked with Habitat for Humanity to rehab the interior of an adobe house for people in need. The experience taught them lessons about conservation and how conservation is in alignment with our faith.



Middle School Youth Group

The middle school youth group meets regularly in the youth room on Sunday mornings to discuss Bible stories, share middle school tales, and have fun. The enthusiastic group enjoys grabbing their Bibles and engaging in spirited discussion (usually over some donuts or cookies!) Our middle school youth enjoy one another's company outside the walls of PCCH as well, taking trips together to play mini golf, find their way out of an escape room, or take a hayride together. The future looks bright for these young people at PCCH!

Kate Magid
Director of Youth Ministry

The group has been preparing for their next mission trip to Bozeman, Montana in summer 2024. In Bozeman, they will volunteer with Love Inc, a charity that provides assistance to community members in need of home repairs, food and clothing, and life skills. Last December, the group cooked hundreds of pancakes for "Pancakes with the Elves," an all-church fundraiser to raise money for their mission trip. The group hit the kitchen once again in mid-April for the annual spaghetti dinner event.

Throughout the year, the group has met regularly to engage in service projects, deep spiritual discussions and fellowship.



Ryan Mann (Chair), Beth Lutz, Beth Nell Vaccaro, Kevin Welsh, Buddy Storm, Rebecca DePasquale, Dominick Rebeck, Jeannette Quirus, Kate McGill Magid (staff)

Children's Ministry activities



- Easter Egg Hunt
- Melody and Comedy in April
- Vacation Bible School in August
- Church-wide Day of Service in October
- Advent Wreath-Making Workshop in December
- Christmas Eve Pageant

Music and Arts

PCCH was again a beacon for music and the arts in 2023. The Gallery Choir has grown to its biggest yet, now at 31 singers! The choir continues to rehearse weekly for Sunday morning worship service and a handful of special services and concerts throughout the year. In our first full season together as a music staff, Jeff, Julie, and I have worked to strengthen the quality of music at PCCH and to create a clear progression for our young musicians to grow through the program.

In March we presented our Festival of Music and Arts concert featuring Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* to over 200 audience members. It was our largest concert to date, with 100 performers in the sanctuary including the Gallery Choir, the Drexel University Chorus, and a professional orchestra.

We had our annual Melody and Comedy performance with a silent auction in April, presented by the Music and Arts Committee, and it was another hit! It is always a wonderful opportunity to see the amazing hidden talents of our staff and congregation, and thanks to your generous bidding and

wonderful donations to the auction, we earned nearly double what we had the previous year! This money goes directly to funding performances in our Cantatas and Chamber Music series.

Our Cantatas and Chamber Music concerts featured a Good Friday performance of Bach's Cantata 4 with our soloists and consort, an October noon-time concert with Philadelphia Orchestra Concertmaster David Kim (and friends)—including our own Jeff DeVault, David's accompanist—and performances by the ensembles Trio Eos and Variant 6.

The Music and Arts Committee hosted the Souls Shot Portrait Project weekend in November with a Friday night opening reception for SSPP's seventh annual Philadelphia exhibition, followed by a performance of Herbert Howells' powerful *Requiem* by the Gallery Choir during Sunday morning worship.

Our acoustically brilliant sanctuary was the site of several performances by Piffaro, Tempesta di Mare, Commonwealth Youthchoirs, Constellation Men's Ensemble, and the three-time Grammy-winning choir The Crossing.

Daniel Spratlan

Music Director

Taylor Slaughter (chair), Mark Bernstein, Mark Conti, Joan Demme, Kathy Krantz, Sharon Rising, Julie Snyder, Harry Spaeth, Jim Spause, Margaret Spencer, Rebecca Thornburgh, Beth Nell Vaccaro, Matthew Ward, Clarke Woodruff, Marie Bender; Daniel Spratlan and Jeffrey DeVault (staff)



Children and Youth Music

Our Children's and Youth Music Ministries continued to flourish in 2023. Joyful Noise, our children's choir, met weekly after worship for rehearsals and sang in worship each month during the school year. In rehearsals, the children continue to work on vocal technique, ensemble singing, sacred song repertoire in a variety of styles, understanding the connection between our song texts and the scriptures, and learning the musical components of our worship service. In the fall of 2023, Joyful Noise began learning hymn repertoire and participated in the processional hymn each time they sang in worship.

Our Youth Choir has increased in size to ten singers, with a group of new middle schoolers joining the mix. The group sang several times in worship on its own and with Joyful Noise this calendar year, including leading the musical parts of the Youth Sunday worship service.

Several of the members of the Youth Choir have contributed musically to the worship service through offering instrumental preludes, and one member has also joined the Gallery Choir. Engaging the youth more actively in the musical life of the church is a continued goal of the music staff.



Joyful Noise and Youth Choir also performed two songs from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in our Melody and Comedy fundraiser in April. Both Joyful Noise and Youth Choir were an integral part of our Christmas Eve pageant service. The combined group of over 25 singers led two of the hymns and sang an offertory anthem.

Julie Snyder
Director

Church Life

The Church Life Committee was revitalized in the fall of 2023. We have tried to schedule an event each month of the regular program year.



Our first event was a trip to see the Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs. This has become an annual event that is always popular. Thank you to Clarke Woodruff for making the arrangements for this. We attempted to hold a family hike with hawk watching in September, but the rains and winds of Ophelia caused us to cancel. Look for a similar spring event in 2024. In October, a small but hearty group went to hear Jim Spause sing and play at VonC Brewing in Conshohocken. We had a great turnout for November's Game Night and Appetizer Potluck. The committee continues to support other all-church social events such as Poker Nights and Melody and Comedy.

We coordinated with Craig and with the Session to host new member information sessions and we will work to integrate new members and visitors into the life of PCCH.

Elizabeth Podraza (chair), Mark Bernstein, Rebecca Bernstein, Ryan Mann, Bill Murphy, Jeff Podraza, Jim Spause, Margaret Spencer, Tennyson Tippy, Craig Barnes (staff)

Flower Guild

The PCCH Flower Guild is proudly celebrating its 10th year bringing the beauty of God's world into our worship space. We especially appreciate the continued support from our PCCH members and friends who donate to the Flower Fund to support our mission.

The 19 Guild members arrange flowers on Sundays, on holidays and for special events. A weekly project of the Flower Guild is providing small arrangements for Deacons to take to homebound or hospitalized members, fashioned from the flowers from the large sanctuary pedestal arrangements. Over the year, over 100 small arrangements are distributed. Additional larger arrangements are made to place in locations around the church.

Flower Guild members also plant seasonal flowers in the outdoor urns along the driveway and at the front door as well as at the entrance to the Center on the Hill.

In the summer, a favorite Flower Guild project handled by Diane Cornely is leading an arranging workshop for the PCCH Bible School campers. The young campers are excited to take home arrangements they have made.

Our members work in teams of two to create the Sunday arrangements. We are always happy to welcome new members. Interested in getting involved? No experience is necessary. For more information, email Grace Stewart (glstewart1@verizon.net) or Diane Cornely (dcornely7@gmail.com)

Thanks go to our talented Guild members for their many years of service.

Diane Cornely and Grace Stewart (chairs)



Guild Members

Jill Bown
Cathy Brzozowski
Katie Connelly
Sandy Connelly
Debby Evans
Barbara Frazier
Linnea Johnson
Jane Kaufman
Barbara Olson
Linda Pettengill
Elizabeth Podraza
Alison Rudolf
Sue Shuchat
Barrett Stewart
Mary Anne Van Blarcom
Susan White
Suzan Willcox



PCCH *Preschool*

The preschool enjoyed another productive year of learning and fun! I was very honored to take over as the new director in June 2023, following Diana Rodgers' tenure as interim director. Diana's hard work, vision, and collaborative nature made the transition between us seamless and positioned the school for great success.



Our program continues to be a top-choice preschool for families in and around Chestnut Hill. We currently have 76 children enrolled from Northwest Philadelphia and the nearby suburbs. We are on track to exceed this year's enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year, with a goal of enrolling 84 children in seven classrooms.

The preschool is play-based and utilizes aspects of several curricula to enhance the children's learning experiences. We supplement our curriculum with experiential learning opportunities. So far this year, we've had visits from Quiver Farms, Opera Box, and Briar Bush Nature Center.



We continue to explore new ways for the preschool to partner with the church. This year, the children trick-or-treated at the Center on the Hill, and the preschool families contributed to the church's Thanksgiving and Christmas outreach programs. We are

looking forward to collaborating with the church on its garden projects this spring.

The preschool's parent committee has raised money to support both experiential learning and the preschool's scholarship fund. We are very grateful for the congregation's support of the

wreath sale in December. The parents also host frequent teacher appreciation events with delicious snacks, juice, and coffee for the faculty.

We currently have 16 talented and dedicated faculty members and an assistant director, Willa Douglas, who also teaches music and soccer. PCCH's very own Amy Raphael is teaching yoga to the children this year, and it has been a huge hit with both the children and the teachers.

I am grateful for Rachel, Evelyn, Felix, and Joan's help keeping the preschool running smoothly. That is no small task with nearly 100 children and teachers in the building each day. We also benefit greatly from the support and guidance of the preschool committee, whose oversight and direction are instrumental to our success.

Megan Cullen
Director

Jill Bown (chair), Lisa Guyer, Kristin Lawton, Beth Vaccaro, Becky Welsh



Center on the Hill

The Center on the Hill, the place for active adults at PCCH, spent its 13th year offering a variety of programs, events, and activities that enriched the lives of the seniors in Chestnut Hill and our surrounding communities. We continued to maintain an online presence for those still wanting to engage from home, but saw a substantial increase in people coming through our doors for in-person activities. We also continued to record many of our wellness lectures and speaker presentations to share them online, as well as continuing to post other online content such as fitness videos, 'watch and learn' presentations, interactive games, art lessons, community resources and more—all completely free for anyone to access via our website.

Throughout the year we often found ourselves with waitlists for many of our events, activities and classes. It was incredibly rewarding to see so many new people discovering the Center and attending our wide variety of program offerings. These include our community luncheons, fitness experiences such as Tai Chi, Golden Yoga, and Qigong; health and wellness lectures; musical cabarets, a range of art classes, as well as sessions in mastering mobile phone and computer use; and many opportunities to play games like Bingo, 'Name That Tune,' Bridge, Mahjongg, Rummikub, and more. We also sponsor support groups in grief counseling, well spouse support and Alzheimer's caregivers groups. This year we took day trips to Longwood Gardens and Grounds for Sculpture, and we also introduced our first Center on the Hill 'Lunch & Meet Up,' where we enjoyed a lovely lunch at Töska and a matinee performance of *The Fantasticks* at Quintessence Theater in Mt. Airy.



Grant money received from the Covenant Fund of the Presbytery in 2021 continued to support us through the first part of 2023 by helping many seniors from our surrounding communities participate in some of our paid programs that they would not have been able to afford otherwise. We applied for and received this grant again in August with an additional \$2500 awarded, bringing the year's grant to a total of \$7500. Thanks to the generous grant in 2023, 189 people were able to participate in programs that we offered at a reduced cost.

In February of 2024 I celebrated my fifth anniversary as Director of the Center on the Hill. I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to serve this community each year. I am thankful for the church staff who support the Center, and our instructors, partners and volunteers who make programs and events possible year after year. The Center on the Hill and the community we serve continues to grow each season through all our combined efforts, and I look forward to another vibrant and busy year ahead at the Center.



Mariangela Saavedra
Director, the Center on the Hill

Forum on the Hill

Presented in collaboration with the Center on the Hill, the Forum on the Hill is a monthly event (September-May) which appeals to our neighbors as well as to members of PCCH. It is a part of the church's outreach efforts and is a means to offer relevant and thought-provoking information presented by speakers who are knowledgeable and accomplished in their particular fields. PCCH's history of inviting guest speakers goes back nearly forty years.



In 2023 the Forum presented speakers such as church member Chris Petrak discussing Philadelphia and the birth of American ornithology. Author Eric Corson discussed his experiences with the Federal Prisoner Visitation program, and his book *Reaching Beyond Prison Walls*. Pharmaceutical chemist Eric Gershenow returned to talk about the science behind creating a new medication. And authors Dan Biddle and Murray Dubin discussed their book about Octavius Catto called *Tasting Freedom*. In the fall, historian Tom Keels returned to discuss 'Franklin's Forgotten Philadelphia.' Historical lecturer Paul Sivitz joined us to talk about how puritanical the Puritans were. And David Young led a lively discussion about his book *The Battles of Germantown and Effective Public History in America*.

The Forum continues to have speakers who engage our attendees in conversations and shared dialogue about their topic. Presentations are recorded and posted online after the event takes place for people who cannot attend in person. Typically our presentations are viewed anywhere from 35-75 times in the first two days after being posted on our website.

Mariangela Saavedra
Coordinator



Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee has been busy reinvigorating our post-worship coffee hour. Many thanks go to everyone who prepared or picked up treats, set tables, arranged centerpieces, washed dishes and tablecloths, and generally made Widener Hall a welcoming place to enjoy fellowship. The Hospitality Committee is a great place to make new friends, and the commitment is flexible. Please consider joining us!



Emily McCahery and Sandy Connelly (chairs), Martha Agate, Barbara Frazier, Diane Markowitz, Jill Bown, Kelly Garner DiCesare, Kristen Lawton, Laurie Menyo, Lisa Guyer, Christen Webber, Beverly Heimbach

Social Witness / Matthew 25

In 2023, our congregation embraced a return to full-fledged, in-person volunteer opportunities, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to bearing witness to God's love through various mission works. These endeavors included efforts to alleviate hunger, provide shelter for the homeless, mourn lives lost to gun violence, uplift children in poverty, extend hospitality to refugees, offer sanctuary to victims of domestic violence, support education for children, advocate for the innocent, and much more.

We continued our ongoing efforts to address food insecurity by collecting food for distribution to Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry throughout the year. Additionally, we maintained our engagement with Face to Face, providing "to-go" lunches and convening regularly to prepare meals, including a return to in-person serving and food preparation at Face to Face, with monthly visits.

During the summer, in collaboration with the Children's Education and Vacation Bible School, we furnished backpacks and school supplies for children in grades Pre-K through 5 at Community Partnership School. Our relationship with West Kensington Ministry continued, marked by various programs, including our sponsorship and participation in their annual golf outing.

West Kensington Ministry, and tending to our garden. Notably, this year saw an expansion of our service weekends as we ventured out into the community, including serving meals at Face to Face and engaging with our new mission partner, Urban Resources Development Corporation (URDC).



During the Christmas season, in partnership with the Preschool and Church School, we collected gifts for 50 children through ACHIEVEability, while also gathering and sorting donations for Face to Face, Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry, and West Kensington Ministry.

Financial support continued for our numerous partners, including Heeding God's Call, Dawn's Place, Centurion Ministries, Broad Street Ministry, and Souls Shot Portrait Project.



Beth Vaccaro (chair), Melissa Montgomery, Jeff Podraza, Elizabeth Podraza, Suzan Willcox, Rebecca Bernstein, Susan Burnell, Laura Brobyn, Bob Fles, Margaret Spencer, Emily McCahery, Bill Murphy, Ann Goslin, Craig Barnes (staff)



The Social Witness Committee's Weekends of Service Program remained robust, hosting three events in January, May, and October. These weekends saw congregants gathering in Widener Hall, the kitchen, and the front lawn to collaborate on projects such as making ziti and sandwiches for Face to Face, organizing clothes for a warmth drive for



Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for overseeing the congregation's annual giving, culminating with the receiving of pledges on Stewardship Sunday, the week before Thanksgiving.



2023 has been a year of continued transition for our congregation, as we bid farewell to more of our ministers, welcome interim leadership, and seek a new pastoral calling in the midst of finally returning back to pre-pandemic attendance levels. As such, our outreach efforts this past year were focused on encouraging members to make a commitment to the future of our church and hold fast to the strength of our community in the face of uncertainty. With the prompting of Matthew 6:21, we urged that the congregation first and foremost invest their hearts into the church with the hopes that their treasure will follow.

As of the printing of this report, we have received 133 pledges in response totaling \$560,980. The total dollar amount is an increase in the prior year by \$24,849, but this also represents a reduction of five pledges, after the previous campaign saw us regaining ground lost to the pandemic. Some of this can be accounted for by deaths and transfers. On a positive note, we do continue each year to gain new pledging households, which corresponds to new membership and therefore a continuing generational vitality in the congregation. And we are grateful for the ways the congregation is clearly investing in the future of the church during this interim season while we are still searching for our new pastor.



The Stewardship Committee will continue to pursue additional financial support throughout the year. We are optimistic that the dedicated work of the Pastor Nominating Committee will bear fruit in the coming year and help to bring greater clarity in advance of the next Stewardship campaign.

As always, we extend thanks to Rebecca Thornburgh, who brings life to our campaign through her design of the logo and all the printed stewardship material.

Thank you to all who pledge — your support makes our ministry possible, especially in this most important threshold year for our church.



Matt Eastman (chair), Mark Bernstein, Jim Lutz, Laurie Menyo, Taylor Slaughter, Craig Barnes (staff)

Personnel

It has been a year of service and rejuvenation for the PCCH staff and for the Personnel Committee. The Committee's role is to support our wonderful staff and to work with the Pastor on all matters relating to human resources. The Committee is grateful to the team for its dedication to the church and congregation, particularly during this year of renewal.

This past spring, we said farewell to the Reverend John Wilkinson, who left for a national calling with Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). John joined PCCH in 2019 and led the congregation following the departure of the Reverend Cynthia Jarvis and the tumultuous pandemic period. Fortunately, after a brief search, the Reverend Dr. Russell C. Sullivan, Jr. joined us as bridge pastor in May. Russell has extensive experience as a pastor and head of staff of several churches, most recently Pine Street Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, from where he retired in 2021 after serving 16 years.

In June, the Reverend Dr. Craig Barnes joined PCCH as our Interim Pastor. Craig has had a long and distinguished career as a pastor and educator, and his preaching, scholarship, and work on behalf of the denomination are known nationally. He serves as President Emeritus of Princeton Theological Society, and formerly served as pastor of Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. Wonderfully, Russell has stayed on as Minister of Visitation, providing care and continuity to the congregation.



In addition to filling pastor roles, the Committee has welcomed others as new staff members or in new roles. First, Rachel Cline joined as our new Church Administrator in early June. Rachel came to PCCH from Allens Lane Art Center in Mt. Airy. In August, Julie Snyder, longtime member of the Gallery Choir and leader of our Children's and Youth choir program, stepped into a new position as Director of Children's Education. Julie has been an educator for 25 years, and has been involved in leading church music, church school, and Vacation Bible School since she was a teenager. Soon after, in September, Katherine Magid joined as Director of Youth Ministry. Kate is a lifelong member of PCCH and a longtime educator and mentor.

Finally, this past fall, we welcomed our beloved former pastor Cynthia Jarvis back into the fold with the title of Pastor Emerita. It has been great to be able to officially welcome Cindy back, and we are profoundly grateful to be able to continue with her as part of our church family.

One other accomplishment, on which the personnel committee spent a considerable amount of time over the past year, is the development of a new Child/Youth Protection Policy. We worked with Craig and the staff to fine tune this over a number of months before presenting it to the Session in February. The Session approved the new policy during the March meeting. We have just completed annual reviews of all the professional staff.

Kevin Welsh (chair), Rebecca Bernstein, Jill Bown, Kate Houstoun, Elizabeth Podraza, Christen Webber, Craig Barnes (staff)



Administrator's Report

This was an eventful year here at PCCH, filled with growth, challenges, and achievements. Although I joined the PCCH Staff just this past June, everyone has made me feel like a part of the team from day one, and I am grateful for the warm welcome and support I have received from this wonderful community. I spent the summer transitioning to this new role with the guidance and support of Megan Cullen, who thankfully did not go far as our new Director of the PCCH Preschool. I am so grateful to have continued access to her knowledge!

Throughout the year, PCCH has continued to serve as a bustling hub of activity, hosting a wide range of groups and events that contribute to our vibrant community. Our sanctuary and chapel remain popular performance spaces, not only for PCCH's musical programs but also for other music and choral groups, including The Crossing, Piffaro, Tempesta di Mare, Philomusica Chorale, and Commonwealth Youthchoirs. Their concerts and rehearsals, combined with Jeff's regular organ and piano practices, mean our halls are consistently filled with music—very on-brand for PCCH! Our wonderful building is also a favored venue for various groups, classes, and events including Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, Rotary Club, Mount Airy Learning Tree, International Folk Dancing, The Royal Scottish Country Dancers, and Red Cross blood drives—to name just a few!

Our Property Committee has been hard at work in their role of the administration and upkeep of the grounds and building, under my direction and with the oversight of the Session. The first two building projects that were completed during my tenure involved our iconic steeple, as well as Widener Hall. Megan Cullen had shepherded these projects nearly to completion, so it was easy for me to see them through to the finish line. First, Widener Hall gained new remote-controlled window shades, ensuring extra ease and comfort in that space. Second, T-Mobile updated its cellphone tower which is housed in our steeple—in the process they removed the boxes from the exterior, patched leaks, replaced one of our windows, and re-painted a section of the steeple.

While getting through the busy Stewardship season, we worked to update the building's Wi-Fi network for the first time in nearly ten years! We now have better access and connectivity for everyone using our facilities. The final major project for the year was to update our exterior flood lights, allowing everyone to admire the beauty of our steeple even at night. As we look ahead, we are actively addressing maintenance issues, particularly with our heating, cooling, and electrical systems, to ensure the continued safety and comfort of our spaces.

My first time to navigate the busy Advent and Christmas season, filled with community spirit and festive celebrations, was a joyous experience for me. It was wonderful to see our spaces bustling with activities and gatherings, and I was in awe of all the work that our Flower Guild puts in to make our spaces extra beautiful during that special time of the year.



I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated staff, volunteers, and community members who contribute tirelessly to the success of PCCH, and whose hard work and dedication make PCCH a vibrant and welcoming place for everyone. As we continue our journey together, I am excited about the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead for PCCH. Thank you for entrusting me with this role, I am very much looking forward to rounding out my first year at PCCH in 2024. As we move through this new year, let us continue to build upon our strengths and embrace new opportunities for community, growth, and service.

Rachel Cline
Church Administrator

Jack Evans (chair), Matt Eastman, Graeme Frazier, Bill Murphy

Finance & Treasurer's Report

The Finance Committee and the Treasurer facilitate the adoption of the annual Operating Budget for PCCH. The Operating Budget is the financial roadmap for the church as we journey through the calendar year. Once the budget is set early in the year, the Finance Committee meets monthly to review our progress with the Operating Budget, as well as the finances relating to the restricted funds, e.g., Senior Adult Ministry, building maintenance, and the Preschool. Cash flow management for the church is also reviewed and monitored to coordinate with the Investment Committee for any draws that need to take place. We are updated weekly by our accounting firm, Main Line Accounting, to address any financial issues as promptly as possible.

The Finance Committee's findings and recommendations are conveyed to Session at their monthly meetings for review and/or action when needed. You will see a financial summary updated monthly in the Church bulletin throughout the year.

We are blessed to have our endowment invested for today and for the future of PCCH, but it's important to remember that most of the Operating Fund—and therefore the success of our budget throughout the year—depends on the response of our congregation and the annual pledges PCCH receives.

For 2023 we had a disappointing year with pledge receipts, primarily because we have been in a period of transition, ending the year with a \$10,725 deficit. Thank you to all who have kept up with your pledges! For 2024, we have shown progress on the stated pledge front, so please remember to keep those up to date and always feel free to pay any overdue pledges from any previous years. These are always kindly accepted.

If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Finance team. Thank you, one and all, for your dedication to stewardship for the Church.

Clarke Woodruff and Harry Spaeth (chairs), Graeme Frazier, Steve Bishop, Christen Webber, Jim Lutz, Craig Barnes (staff)

Investment Committee

The Investment Committee continued to faithfully oversee the Endowment Funds of our church. Our committee is responsible for investments that are managed by Merrill Lynch and PNC.

The 2023 Endowment Funds provided funds of \$148,996 to support the operating budget and \$120,839 to support the Senior Adult ministry of the church. This past year, the markets saw a continued rise in interest rates and a rebound in the investment returns for our Endowment Funds after a tough environment in 2022.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about the Investment Committee, please contact John Lawton at 215.527.5775. We meet four times a year on the fourth Monday after Quarter End to discuss performance and set strategic direction.

John Lawton (chair), Matt Abernethy, Harry Spaeth, Mark Nottingham, Dick Stewart, Steve Bishop, Craig Barnes (staff)



2024 Budget and 2023 Recap

	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	2023 Budget
Revenue			
Congregational response	\$ 693,000.00	\$ 612,805.00	\$ 715,200.00
Building Use and Other Revenue	\$ 158,000.00	\$ 160,036.00	\$ 145,537.00
Draws Against Endowment Income:			
Designated Draws	\$ 82,282.00	\$ 80,812.00	\$ 81,482.00
Other Draws	\$ 71,791.00	\$ 68,184.00	\$ 69,199.00
Total Endowment Draws	\$ 154,073.00	\$ 148,996.00	\$ 150,681.00
Total Revenue	\$ 1,005,073.00	\$ 921,837.00	\$ 1,011,418.00
Expenses			
Ordained Ministers	\$ 184,475.00	\$ 156,616.00	\$ 209,830.00
Lay Personnel Salaries & Benefits	\$ 358,594.00	\$ 331,237.00	\$ 309,437.00
Other Personnel	\$ 60,500.00	\$ 63,398.00	\$ 58,677.00
Personnel Total	\$ 603,569.00	\$ 551,251.00	\$ 577,944.00
Music and the Arts	\$ 20,300.00	\$ 20,043.00	\$ 20,234.00
Church Life	\$ 19,464.00	\$ 10,520.00	\$ 9,700.00
Christian Education	\$ 13,300.00	\$ 13,395.00	\$ 16,950.00
Worship	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,359.00	\$ 3,500.00
Administration	\$ 106,140.00	\$ 101,244.00	\$ 104,500.00
Building and Grounds	\$ 169,000.00	\$ 158,820.00	\$ 204,570.00
Mission	\$ 69,300.00	\$ 72,930.00	\$ 73,520.00
Total Expenses	\$ 1,005,073.00	\$ 932,562.00	\$ 1,010,918.00
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$ -	\$ (10,725.00)	\$ 500.00

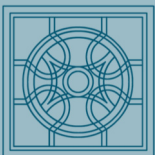
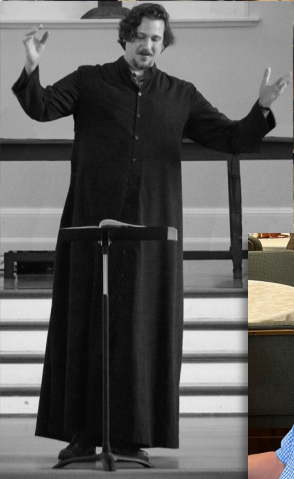
FOOTNOTE ON BUDGET SHORTFALL COVERAGE:

Schmidt Discretionary \$ 10,275.00

FOOTNOTE ON MISSION BUDGET FOR 2024:

Mission Tithe - 10% of Congregational Response

Senior Adult Ministry			
Carry over previous year	\$ 34,904.00	\$ 11,690.00	\$ 11,690.00
Gifts/Grants	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 8,600.00	\$ 5,000.00
Other Income	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 44,499.00	\$ 20,000.00
Draw from SAM endowment	\$ 118,118.00	\$ 120,839.00	\$ 120,839.00
Total Revenue	\$ 178,022.00	\$ 185,628.00	\$ 157,529.00
Expenses			
Personnel	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 91,589.00	\$ 110,000.00
Operating Expenses	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 39,135.00	\$ 20,000.00
Contribution to Church Overhead	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Total Expenses	\$ 165,000.00	\$ 150,724.00	\$ 150,000.00
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$ 13,022.00	\$ 34,904.00	\$ 7,529.00



Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill
8855 Germantown Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19118

215.247.8855
info@chestnuthillpres.org
chestnuthillpres.org