

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



200 YEARS
1824-2024
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH COLUMBUS

First Presbyterian Church
www.fpccolumbus.org

512 Seventh Street, Columbus, IN 47201
812-372-3783

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MISSION STATEMENT

To be an active, growing, inclusive and caring church family that witnesses to God's love and shares the good news of Jesus Christ. Our mission leads us to invite all people to participate fully in our community and worship life as safe, loved, and accepted children of God, including:

- Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics
 - Children and adults of all ages
- People of all sexual orientations, gender identities
 - People of all races, & cultures
 - People of all socioeconomic situations
 - People of all mental and physical abilities
- Those who bring hope to the world and those who seek hope

STAFF

PastorThe Rev. Dr. Felipe Martinez
Director of Children and Youth Ministries.....Jen Riddle
Organist.....Jordan Lewis
Choir Director.....Jenny Heichelbech
Preschool Director.....April Hemmerlein
Church Administrative AssistantBrook Brown
Financial Administrative Assistant.....Missy Burton
Sunday Custodian.....Wayne Huff

First Presbyterian Church
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A Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation; member of the Synod of Lincoln Trails; the Presbytery of the Ohio Valley; the Ecumenical Assembly of Columbus, IN; MoreLight Presbyterians.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Membership

Information provided in this Annual Report covers
January – December 2024

Active Members as of 12/31/23 437

New Members 13

Jake Brooks (3/20/24), Kik Brooks (3/20/24), Sarah Anderson (4/17/24), Gracen Denoyer (4/17/24), Nate Booth (4/17/24), Maddie McCarver (4/17/24), Kyla Magee (4/17/24), Amanda Magee (4/17/24), Ellie Frazier (4/17/24), Bella Herbert (4/17/24), Dirk James (5/22/24), Andi Orben (10/16/24), Jerrica Dowling (12/18/24)

Deceased Members 10

George Anderson (1/25/24), Charlotte Battin (4/20/24), Jim Dietz (9/3/24), Pauline Barnes (11/12/24), Ted L Marston (3/31/16), John McCormick (7/2/22), Dorothea Frank (6/20/08), Phyllis Ryan (5/23/12), Rob Johnson (3/3/10), Ann Dickey (2/12/15)

Moved to Inactive 5

Herschel Crippen, Mike Ryan, Bill Nie, Medora Feree, Bob Davie (affiliate)

Active members as of 12/31/23 435

Location :

More Information :

+123-456-7890

Our Staff

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024 REV. DR. FELIPE N. MARTINEZ

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Philippians 4:4

I am grateful for our opportunity to be in partnership in ministry. I continue to work together with the various committees of the church to offer learning and service opportunities, to deepen our knowledge of scripture, and to support our call to work for social justice.

We are so blessed as a congregation to have been able to celebrate two hundred years of ministry! I am so grateful for the leadership and hard work of the Bicentennial Committee, led by Sherry Stark and Rachel McCarver. I was honored to be a part of their planning and implementation of a year-long celebration!

The FPC Housing Committee had a busy year, as we continued to learn about the need for affordable housing in our community, and as we rallied local leaders and helped them to consider that Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a tool we don't currently have and which we desperately need in our community. The big news is that we were able to partner with a non-profit developer who has committed to working with the community to bring PSH to Columbus. The developer is Volunteers of America (VOA), which just happens to have a program since 2020 near the church (at the old Post Office) called Fresh Start Recovery, an addiction recovery center for pregnant women and new mothers. VOA has experience in building PSH developments, and we are excited about this prospect. VOA has put together a team, which includes VOA staff, Carol Price as a representative for FPC and Mark Stewart from United Way. That team will participate in the 2025 Housing Institute offered in Indy by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA), which is a necessary step to applying for federal funding to support the creation of PSH. Keep us in your prayers as we continue in this important but long process.

The session started a strategic planning process (our last one was in 2015) which included contracting with Holy Cow! Consulting from Columbus, Ohio. With the support of two grants (by the Center for Congregations in Indy and our FPC Foundation) we started this project by asking the congregation to fill out a Congregational Assessment Tool, an online survey which just over 130 people completed (that's about our average Sunday attendance!). The committee leading this effort will schedule listening session with the congregation in February, and anticipates we will have a new strategic plan by Summer 2025.

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024

REV. DR. FELIPE N. MARTINEZ

I supported our transition in the music ministry of the church as we thanked Dianne Sprunger for her years of service, and we welcomed Jordan Lewis as our new organist.

We restarted our monthly birthday celebrations with our neighbors at the Armory. They take place on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm at the Armory dining room. Join us for cake and ice cream!

My work on behalf of the denomination continues to require a significant investment in time, and I am grateful for the support the session and the church have given me to offer leadership as the co-moderator of the Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. I attended the week-long 226th General Assembly (2024) of the PCUSA in Salt Lake City, Utah. My Unification Commission work started in December 2022 and will conclude July 2026.

For my Continuing Education time, I participated in the Common Ground Conference in Indy with three Columbus community leaders. I also helped teach at a CREDO conference, a retreat for newly ordained pastors (for two weeks: Spring, Fall).

For my community involvement: I continue to teach a module quarterly in Bartholomew County Works, a work-readiness program offered by Lincoln Central Neighborhood Family Services. I continue as a member of the Su Casa board. I started my second four-year term as a Trustee of Hanover College, a Presbyterian institution with which FPC has had a long relationship. I ended my eight years on the Heritage Fund board.

I look forward to our continuing ministry as we start our third century.

Shalom and Salaam,
Pastor Felipe

BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Honoring our Past — Building our Legacy
July 3, 1824

Members: Bonnie Boatwright, Zack Ellison, Paul Hoffman, Anthony Merida, Mary Ann McCray and Kellie Staley. Co-chairs: Rachel McCarver and Sherry Stark; Advisor: the Rev. Dr. Felipe Martinez; Student videographer: Claire Davis.

In early planning, committee members sought input from FPC members and friends as ideas were developed for the Bicentennial year. It was agreed to have a number of events and activities and to use window display art forms. Doug Wray played an important role in securing Paul Hoffman to refresh and update our church's 200 year history.

Although a variety of activities were considered, the most important decision was to identify a major project that would make a difference and be a lasting gift to not only our downtown neighbors but to the Columbus community at large.

FPC Bicentennial Legacy Project

In partnership with Lincoln Central Neighborhood Family Center (LCNFC) and Heritage Fund — the Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, the church has established a permanently endowed fund that will offer a “hand up” to our downtown neighbors and others.

To be eligible for a grant a person must have “skin in the game” and demonstrate motivation. Each grant is intended to be a “barrier buster” that allows people to move towards self sufficiency. Focus is on downtown neighbors but all in Bartholomew County are eligible. Heritage Fund holds most of the Project's funds and Lincoln Central Neighborhood selects and administers the grants. FPC will receive an annual report on grants awarded and received the first report from Diane Doup of LCNFC during FPC's December 8, 2024 church service.

Thanks to a highly successful Legacy Project fund raising campaign, individual and family gifts totaled over \$130,000 during 2024. The committee is grateful to the FPC Foundation for its \$100,000 challenge grant that was an incentive for successful fund raising. The first of two payments from the FPC Foundation brought the total received in 2024 to over \$180,000. Partnering with Heritage Fund the project also received a \$100,000 grant from Lilly Endowment that went directly to LCNFC for use in awarding the first Legacy Project mini grants. Pledges and other gifts continue to come in.

BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

In addition to the Legacy Project, there were a number of activities and events carried out throughout 2024.

Events:

Bicentennial "Bits" were given by committee members each month during worship

Bicentennial Video (Claire Davis's CNHS senior project) was shown during a June church service and is available on the FPC website

Ice Cream Social in church parking lot in July welcomed downtown neighbors

Community-wide Bicentennial Celebration at Donner Shelter House in September featured remarks, music, games, popcorn, lemonade & cookies

Calvary Community Church hosted a fellowship lunch for FPC in September

Bicentennial Committee members gave the sermon on December 8, 2024 recapping the year

Concerts:

Mandolin Orchestra — John Heichelbech

Flute and Harpsichord — Cindy McMillin and Maribella Minut

Post concert receptions — Mary Ann McCray

Adult Nurture classes:

Janet Lowery arranged classes on FPC Saints and on Bill & Ellen Laws

Video of Sherm Franz's sermon on Social Justice

Bicentennial recognitions:

Art/Historical facts/Oil Lamp displays in sanctuary windows

Banners and signs displayed around church exterior

Group photo of FPC members/friends displayed in Laws Room

Official City Proclamation by Mayor Mary Ferdon

The 200 Year FPC History Book was edited, written and published by Paul Hoffman (Books have been given to Bartholomew County Historical Society, Columbus Visitors Center, the DAR and former FPC pastors.)

Feature story on Bicentennial in The Republic newspaper

It was a joy to work with the wonderfully gifted Bicentennial Committee members. Each one contributed unique talents as we planned, produced and laughed our way through 2024.

Submitted by Sherry Stark, Bicentennial Committee Co-chair

Our Staff

JEN RIDDLE

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

2024 began as usual with Star Sunday and the word I drew for the year was “include.” I was excited to see where this word would show up in my ministry this year and it did so in spades!

In January, I led a group of 8 to the Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE) conference in St Louis. Our group included ministries of folks in the congregation who work with babies through adults. We took in lessons from 31 different workshops, 3 keynote addresses, and 3 worship experiences. This conference launched further work, particularly in the children’s ministry area. As a result of the learning at APCE, Children’s Nurture (CN) developed guiding goals for the remainder of 2024 that were the focus of every CN meeting. Goals were met in all but 1 of the 6 areas targeted for development! A group of six will be attending APCE in 2025, and it will be interesting to see what new ideas come out of the conference, especially related to youth ministry.

In February, another significant part of my inclusion ministry commenced—serving as a volunteer at the Columbus IYG center. IYG is an organization that serves LGBTQIA+ teens and young adults through social support, counseling, and social work services. My role at IYG is as a twice-monthly volunteer at their youth group meetings. The Columbus center opened in November 2023, so it was just getting off the ground when I began volunteering. It’s been a wonderful experience to show up, be my uncool self, and support queer teens on their life’s journeys. They come from all different backgrounds and many of them have experienced religious trauma. It’s been a fantastic opportunity to be a representative of the love of God to them, especially when they’ve felt abandoned or harmed by religious figures in the past. It’s my hope that my work there becomes a small part of their healing process.

In June, the second annual Interfaith Peace Camp was held at UUCCI. Co-led by UUCCI’s Adrienne Summerlot and me, the camp included participants from six different faith communities and the community at large. FPC had 10 children participating as campers from eight different families in our congregation. FPC Youth provided 7 student leaders who served as counselors-in-training and sports helpers throughout the week. FPC also contributed MANY hours of volunteer support from 14 adults who served as group guides and helpers, craft instructors, music leaders, sports instructors, end-of-day cleaners, lunch monitors, and support for kids needing a quiet space. Without the help of so many FPC volunteers, Interfaith Peace Camp wouldn’t have been so successful for the nearly 50 children who participated! I am continually thankful for the incredible support of our FPC teens and our children’s volunteers who care for our children, community, and our world. One of the final ways inclusion showed up in my ministry this year was through our students in youth group. We welcomed 7 students as members of the congregation through the confirmation process. Those students have continued to be active contributors to our shared life together through the year.

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Our Staff

JEN RIDDLE
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

They, among other students in our group, have consistently included students with disabilities in our group. This was especially apparent on the November Fall Retreat at Camp Pyoca. Without any adult prompting, the students noticed others who might be forgotten and left behind and consistently brought them into the group for discussions and games. It was a beautiful thing to see, especially amid the pervasiveness of bullying. 2024 was a whirlwind full of INCLUSION for children, youth, and young adults in and through FPC! This report just touches on a few of the ways in which our circle was drawn wider this year. I can't wait to see what God has in store for us in 2025 as my Star Word for the year is "focused." What might we focus on in new or different ways together for our children, youth, and young adults?

Respectfully Submitted,
Jen

Our Staff

JORDAN LEWIS, ORGANIST

This past year was certainly a transition. Some were more obvious than others but one that stood out was the transition of organists. Officially taking the reins in June, I was fortunate to have a two week overlap with Ms. Diane to help transition and get a sense of how things operate particularly with choir schedules, special services, and instrument maintenance.

The organist transition is particularly noticed in our individual style and interpretation of music and leading congregational singing from the organ console. Fortunately, I believe we both have the same end goal, to encourage others to sing, sing boldly, and to feel connected to God and one another.

In the six months I have been with FPC the music program has continued to thrive. There have been seven choir services, pickup choir, ten soloists/ small ensembles, cantata, and family Christmas Eve service. The music shared in worship has covered a wide range of genres from liturgical dance, early American, classical, and modern.

Our instruments are in fine working order. With the acquisition of Rays Hass' piano for the Laws room, the action had some regulation work completed, and we procured a new water-resistant cover. My piano technician from Barbara Martin piano service completed our winter tuning of the sanctuary Kawai and choir room Steinway. Bill the technician is deeply knowledgeable and was a former technician for the House of Steinway. He brought to my attention that there are 10-15 pins in the sanctuary Kawai that are loose and have been marked. This, though not a major crisis, is something that we will want to correct in the coming year to ensure proper care and instrument stability. It did not fall out of tune evenly but rather a portion was sharp and another was flat. The choir room Steinway is very old but serves its purpose to help accompany the choir during rehearsal. It does have significant cracks in the soundboard. The piano in the rainbow room remains in good order.

The organ is in fine condition. It was tuned twice in my time here. Once in May and again in December. In May one of the great trompette pipes was not sounding and in December one of the swell douçaine pipes was not sounding. These were both corrected when it was tuned. The main cause was the need to be cleaned of dust, grit, and dead bugs that had found their way into the pipe. A solution to help keep our pipes clean would be to have mesh covers made to go over the tops of the pipes. The temperature and humidity levels have the most noticeable effect of pipe organ tuning. Striving for a constant temperature will help create a constant organ.

Overall, this has been a successful and eventful year, and I am blessed to be a part of FPC.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jordan G Lewis

Our Staff

JENNY HEICHELBECH, CHOIR DIRECTOR

The music area of First Presbyterian Church saw significant changes this past year with the retirement of organist Dianne Sprunger in May and the hiring of Jordan Lewis in June. Through all the changes, the musical life of the church continues to flourish and enrich our worship services.

Jordan and Jenny are splitting the hours allotted to the music area, with some overage for both leading into the start of the choirs' season this fall, and in preparation for the annual Christmas cantata.

Jenny continues to plan, rehearse and conduct the Sanctuary Choir for twice-monthly services. Jenny and our choir were instrumental in planning and participating in the community "Day of Prayer" service at Southside Elementary Auditorium this spring and at the Columbus Pride Festival this fall. Also this fall, a "choir robe" committee opted to purchase new choir stoles sewed by Susannah Lipinski.

A major undertaking for the year was the Christmas cantata on December 15, which included the participation of children, readers, instrumentalists, vocal soloists & quartets. We again were joined by about ten community members who enjoy singing Christmas music with us.

Jenny plans, rehearses and conducts the Bell Choir, which plays for service once monthly. She also arranged for and set up a designated Bell Room upstairs, which makes scheduling rehearsals easier and less disruptive to other church meetings and reduces time for set-up/tear-down. Additionally, she arranged for a two-day Bell Clinic with Joyce Crowder that was well-received.

Jenny scheduled special musicians for Sundays during the summer and for worship services when there is no choir to sing or play, completed weekly reports to OneLicense and CCLI to comply with copyright and streaming licensing laws, attended Worship Committee and staff meetings, managed two choral section leaders and sorted and integrated piles of music donated to FPC by the former North Christian Church. She attended the weeklong Conducting Intensive Seminar at the University of Michigan this summer.

Thank you to all the musicians who give of their time and talent to make music at FPC so special: Sanctuary Choir, Bell Choir, Livin' by Faith and all special musicians.

With gratitude,
Jenny Heichelbech

Our Staff

APRIL HEMMERLEIN, DIRECTOR OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL

The 2024 calendar year began with receiving another award for “The Best Preschool in Town” through the Republic Newspaper. We are very proud to continue to have this distinction with the best staff around as well as being one of the oldest Early Childhood programs in Columbus.

In April, we saw the return of our All School Musical and Ice Cream Social. All classes sang and performed for their loved ones; it was a lovely time. The Ice Cream Social provided families with a wonderful opportunity to engage with one another. The event also helped to bring in donations to help meet our goal for our Scholarship Program. Over \$18,000 in scholarships were awarded for the 2024-2025 school year.

The August 2024-May 2025 school year marks our 70th year of preschool! Since 1954, First Presbyterian Preschool has had 6 directors and provided a strong early childhood education for countless number of children. It is amazing to think that our oldest students are now 73 years old! The preschool started with one class of eighteen 3 and 4 year olds and has grown to over 175 children ages 2 through 5 in over 13 different classes. Over the years we have added a childcare program before and after class as well as math, reading and science enrichment programs.

This Fall we had our 3rd Annual Family Fun Day. Children and their families enjoyed donuts, music, games and fellowship outside. Through generous donations at this event, preschool was able to make upgrades to our STEAM area (science, technology, engineering, art, and math). The retaining wall was cleaned and painted, new safety structures for the windows were installed, and additional materials and exploration areas were added to the space.

We are proud to have 26 staff members and that 15 of them have been here 9 years or more! One teacher completed her master’s degree in Early Childhood last spring and we had 4 teachers begin the process to obtain their Child Development associate’s degrees. This involves over 120 hours of outside training, the completion of a professional portfolio, class observation and passing of a competency exam.

As the year closes, we are fortunate to be in a place where preschool and our families and staff are thriving!

Respectfully,
April Hemmerlein

Session Reports

ADULT FELLOWSHIP AND EDUCATION (AFE)

Committee members include Johanna Anderson, Donna Brand, Jake Brooks, Dianne Farrar, Leah Jackman-Wheitner, Joy King, Dale Nowlin, Sandy Thomas, and (from the staff) Felipe Martinez and Jen Riddle.

The Adult Fellowship and Education Committee (AFE) coordinates a variety of programs at FPC to encourage adults to make new relationships, deepen existing relationships, and grow in our faith. Rather than attempting to summarize our 2024 accomplishments, I have asked individual committee members to share why they do the part they do and how it adds meaning to their role at FPC. Whether it is a Bible study, a discussion after worship, a pitch-in meal, second Sunday donuts, or some other activity, one common thread in all of our programming is building relationships. I encourage you to join us for any of the activities that seem like a good fit for you, let us know if you have other ideas for fellowship and education opportunities, and consider joining us for our bi-monthly meetings to plan for these and other activities. - Dale Nowlin, AFE chair

Zoom Church and Coffee Hour

My name is Leah Jackman-Wheitner. I run the Zoom church and gather prayer requests from Facebook during worship services. When the pandemic started, I had already been using zoom for a few years, so I volunteered to help on Sunday mornings and offered my zoom account. During the last 4+ years of Zoom church I have gotten to know people more deeply and had more time to discuss people's real concerns than I did between 1995 and 2020. Zoom church - and the time before church and after church where we talk and catch up - have been a time of true connection and relationship building. That's why I keep doing it. As most people returned to in-person church, we realized that online attendance was still a vital part of our church community. When people travel, they log in to zoom, facebook, or youtube. When people are home recuperating after an illness or injury, they can log in online. When the weather is rough, people can log in virtually. Running Zoom and Facebook services matters to me. Creating an online space for people to connect to the church, attend worship, and get to know each other matters to me. That's why I do it. It's something I can do for others that fills me up too. If you ever cannot make-it for in-person worship, consider joining us for Zoom church.

AFE Conversations after Worship

My name is Sandy Thomas. I facilitate the Adult Fellowship and Education group conversations most Sundays after the service. One of the things that I find most meaningful about being a member of First Presbyterian Church is connection with others. The AFE time helps me use my experience and strengths in facilitating groups, to connect others and connect with others. I value discussing the sermon, a passage from a book study, or other ways that we explore our faith and Christianity. We meet in the Crump room; open to any and all to participate. Please join us.

Session Reports

ADULT FELLOWSHIP AND EDUCATION (AFE)

Fellowship Meals

My name is Dianne Farrar, and I organize congregational pitch-in meals. I just love seeing our church family enjoying good food and good conversation! It's rewarding for me to plan the events, to set nice tables, and to welcome all of the delicious foods that members bring to share. There is joy in seeing people enjoy one another's company and the food. These fellowship opportunities truly enhance our sense of community, and our enjoyment of one another as people of faith. Since we were unable to share meals together during the time of the pandemic it has been particularly rewarding to have meals together again! These fellowship events provide time to make connections with people that we have not had the opportunity to know, as well as to enjoy time with those that we do know. Friendship always seems to be enhanced by sharing food! We will gladly welcome new ideas from our church family for fellowship events. We would also love to have new people to share in the fun of planning and serving for future fellowship meals! This has been a rewarding way for me to be of service!

Inductive Bible Study

My name is Dale Nowlin, and I coordinate the midweek, inductive Bible Study. I believe the Bible is the foundation for the way we live our lives and for the social justice that we seek in our world. I also believe that when we read the Bible we come away with as many questions as we do answers. That's why I am passionate about inductive Bible study. It is not about coming to a correct conclusion about scripture. It is about sharing our questions and ideas in an open and affirming space. We read the verses for the upcoming worship service, bounce ideas off of each other, consider different perspectives, and get to know each other along the way. In 2024 we had two four-week sessions. We are hoping to have another round (4 or 5 weeks) during Lent in 2025. We meet on Tuesday evenings and begin with a meal together. Whether you consider yourself a Bible expert or a Bible novice, please consider joining us.

Faith in Action Day

My name is Joy Basa-King, and I had the privilege of helping lead the 2024 Faith in Action Day, a morning dedicated to service, fellowship, and impact. On July 14 FPC volunteers came together, united by faith, to make a difference in our community. This day holds deep meaning for me because it embodies what we strive for at FPC: putting our faith into action to meet real needs and to lift each other up. It also highlights the power of collaboration, as the AFE committee partnered with other committees to organize projects. From splitting firewood for families in need to assembling bed rails for children's safety and writing letters advocating for food security, every task reminded me how much we can achieve when we come together with purpose. Faith in Action Day is more than an event; it resonates with me because it is a call to serve. In its second year, it has already become a new tradition that inspires connection and compassion. I invite everyone to join us in 2025 as we continue this impactful work!

Session Reports

CHILDREN'S NURTURE (CN) COMMITTEE

2024-25 Inspirations & Goals: We will continue discussing these topics throughout the year, and be intentional in using time at our meetings to develop core focuses and evaluate our programs through the lens of these goals:

1. Exploratory Based Kid's Church: Through discussion, explore the best way to implement a Montessori/Godly Play type model.
2. Expand Intergenerational Connections: Grandparent buddies for young families; tweens paired as buddies with younger kids.
3. Sensory Needs in Worship: Explore Options For sensory needs in worship for all ages. Look at how Intergen Sundays can continue to become more child-friendly.
4. Faith At Home: Learn more about faith at home resources from Lilly Grant Groups – Jen will stay connected and share with the committee. Plan a discussion with some of those resources, and our own ideas for supporting family faith formation in the home.
5. Worship Coaches: On Intergen Sundays, how can Kids Church teachers and maybe teens, help to model worship coaching for young families, essentially training parents how to do this themselves.
6. Communication: Use Remind? Other text system? for sharing events as well as info share (such as faith development at different ages)

The Children's Nurture Committee met monthly during 2024. As a session representative to this CN Committee I have been amazed and enlightened by the amount of work done by a relatively small group of dedicated volunteers to assure that there are weekly programs and activities for the children of our church. From educational programs for children during "Kid's Church", intergenerational activities with children and adults, and on to Parent/Kids Parties, this group does a lot of work every week requiring a lot of volunteer time, a lot of energy, all while maintaining enthusiasm. Most of that seems to occur "behind the scenes". Every Sunday there is a "Time with Children" when we all have learned "thumbs up/thumbs down" and recite the prayer phrases along with the children!

The budget was reviewed toward the end of the year and the bottom of the line was that funds were underutilized, but allow for more expenditures this year investing in Godly Play items for story telling and for staff/volunteer training. Budgets for the future should consider the importance of sending staff and volunteers regularly to trainings for educational updates on curriculum and to maintain support and enthusiasm. These people work hard and give of their time. Yes, we may think that "some volunteers" must do some work with the Easter Egg Hunt or the Children/Family Friendly Christmas Eve service...but look a little deeper into what this loving group of people do for our children and families all year long!

Reviewing our "2024 Inspirations & Goals" noted above let me list a number of achievements:

1) We started Godly Play on 8/11/24, a Montessori based approach to faith development for children to deepen their faith in and knowledge of God's love for them. We have two experts in this spiritual guide for children in Vernetta Safford and Jen Riddle. The entire Godly Play schedule for Winter Spring 2025, complete with lessons and scripture has already been created. There are plans for some staff attending a Godly Play training in Georgia in April and an "in-house" training in February. And the children seem to have really taken to this newer curriculum!

Session Reports

CHILDREN'S NURTURE (CN) COMMITTEE

2) There were church second hour workshops during Advent that allowed for many intergenerational learning/social connections from creating luminaries for Christmas Eve to decorating cookies for shut-ins. There have been several Parent/Kids Parties that have occurred or are planned to help younger parents to socialize, while their children are involved in playful activities at the church with volunteers.

3) New storage areas in our church entry ways were updated to include children being able to personally select items from "Worship Bags" to make items available that more meet the individual sensory needs of the child. This change helps to make "Intergenerational Church Sundays" more child-friendly. The children have enjoyed this new change.

4) Lately there has been a "Family Lending Library" in the gym during coffee hour where children/parents are available for signing books and other resources emphasizing faith formation at home activities and discussion.

5) The CN Committee has been investigating the possibilities of utilizing "worship coaches" such as teachers and teens who could help model worship with the children and young families. More to come this next year.

6) Jen has developed an active text system for communicating with the children on the FPC Kids Facebook page daily to share upcoming events and faith development experiences.

7) Children were involved in a week-long day "Peace Camp" this summer, which was coordinated by several other churches as an inter-faith experience. Well attended by children, staff, and volunteers during the hottest part of the summer. A fall camp experience for the children and youth at Camp Pyoca was also on the schedule, cooler weather, but wet and muddy!

8) Staff and volunteers have attended the annual APCE training (Association of Professional Christian Educators) which focuses on continuing education workshops, marketplaces for new products, and building interest and enthusiasm for church professionals and volunteers. I highly recommend that financial support for this opportunity be considered in the Children's Nurture budget.

9) Sunny Currier has been the "champion" and educator on the "OWL" program at our church. She provided programs/trainings on Our Whole Lives: Lifespan Sexuality Education...a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curriculum adapted for faith communities for children, teens, and young adults/adults...especially here to help children and youth to be better informed to make healthier decisions about sexuality. It is built on Respect, relationships, and responsibility.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Brinkman

Session Reports

YOUTH NURTURE (YN) COMMITTEE

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

Committee Members: Stephanie Cunningham, Sunny Currier, Amanda Magee, Julie Daiker-Moderator, Jen Riddle-Staff.

Christian Education/Faith Formation: Several of the Youth Leaders attended the APCE (Association of Partners in Christian Education) Conference in St. Louis. We had an immersive and inspiring experience attending workshops and youth networking events, and returned with renewed enthusiasm and new ideas. Confirmation Class was held during the 2023-24 school year. Classes were held for eight youth and their adult mentors using the new PC (USA) Matthew 25 Confirmation Curriculum, and concluded with Confirmation Sunday on April 21. The Youth Group spent months preparing for Youth Sunday, the day they take over the worship service. Youth Sunday allows our youth to deepen their understanding of worship, and also allows them to explore some of the things they navigate in their everyday lives, looking at them through the lens of their faith. Their theme this year was "When Your Neighbor Doesn't Love You". Our Whole Lives (OWL) comprehensive, inclusive sexuality education classes for grades 7-9 began in fall of this year, and will conclude in May 2025. We attended the Fall Youth Retreat at Camp Pyoca for the first time in a while, and it was a great experience for our youth as they explored "Faith in Action: Living Out the Gospel in a Divided World."

Service Projects: Our youth continue to help in serving Hot Meals. They led our congregation in the Souper Bowl of Caring, and raised \$341.50 for Love Chapel. They also led the Pentecost Offering, which is collected to help at-risk children and youth, and shared between Presbyterian Mission and a local beneficiary. They chose Beloved Bags, an organization serving foster children, as the local recipient. A total of \$2153.00 was raised, of which \$861.20 went to Beloved Bags, and the remaining to Presbyterian Mission. Our youth organized the Heart Tree, and again partnering with Beloved Bags, collected enough items to fill 47 Birthday Party Bags for local children in foster care. We're grateful for the generosity of those who purchased birthday party items. While at the APCE event in January, youth leaders connected with the folks at Presbyterian Mission, who loved hearing about our Alternate Giving Fair fundraiser for building latrines, to aid safety for women and community hygiene in areas without them. They interviewed us, and published an article about our creative fundraiser.

Leadership Opportunities: We were privileged to have a Youth Elder this year. Katie Frazier served on Children's Nurture Committee and Session. We all appreciated Katie's leadership, faithfulness, and contributions. Teens continue to serve as Lay Leaders in Worship. Some have sung with the adult choir for special occasions. They also help with the children's Easter egg hunt. Interfaith Peace Camp in June was a chance for our teens to step up and be leaders. We appreciate Nate Booth, Sam Brown, Violet Dornfeld, Macy Eaton, Katie Frazier, Bella Herbert, and Kyla Magee, who all volunteered their time to help provide a great experience for the young campers. We reconnected with our college aged young adults over the summer, and with the help of a small amount of grant money, they planned and carried out a table in the Teen Tent at Pride. They did a great job knowing what would engage teens, and we were so excited for them to experience the structure of support our church provides for the social justice issues about which they care so deeply. Thanks to IYG Columbus for inviting us.

Session Reports

YOUTH NURTURE (YN) COMMITTEE

Support, Encouragement, and Connection: Fun, faith, and fellowship happen at youth group each week. We share a meal, some learning, games, and prayer concerns. Our annual Christmas Caroling/Dessert Party at the Armory Apartments continues our connection with the residents. MEGA Youth Group, with other local youth groups, continues to be a fun way to connect with other groups of teens with shared values. We celebrated our High School grads in the worship service with a video for each grad, a handmade prayer shawl, and other gifts. We continue to support and encourage our college/career aged young adults during their transitional years. We send them care packages before finals each semester, and remember their birthdays with gift cards. We appreciate the support of the congregation in our work to create a caring community where all youth are welcomed and loved.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Daiker

Session Reports

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Committee: Leigh Ann Figg (Chair), Lynne Hyatt, Janet Sharpe, Carol Pennington and Pastor Felipe Martinez(staff)

Mission: To oversee and administer personnel-related activities of the church in accordance with the Book of Order and the First Presbyterian Personnel Policy Manual in a manner that supports and furthers the mission of First Presbyterian Church, Columbus Indiana.

2024 was fortunately not as busy of a year for the Personnel Committee as 2023; however, in addition to our involvement in the staff's year end reviews, we also participated in the hiring of our new organist.

Summary of 2024 Accomplishments:

1. Adding a new member to the Committee: In 2023, the Committee had three members (with the resignation of Karlene Kurtz in late 2022.)Carol Pennington was elected an Elder in January of 2024 and she joined the Personnel Committee at that time. Carol is a long-time member of FPC and has been a valuable new member of the Committee.

2. Search for new Organist: In December of 2023, Dianne Sprunger submitted her Letter of Retirement with an effective retirement date of May 31, 2024. Effective January 1, 2024 until retirement, Dianne transitioned to the organist only position at 10 hours per week and Jenny transitioned to the Choir Director position at 15 hours per week. The Committee launched a search committee for a new organist in the first quarter of 2024. The search committee was scheduled to interview two (2) candidates; however, one of the candidates withdrew his application. With support by the search committee and Personnel Committee, the Session approved the hire of Jordan Lewis in April with a start date in May of 2024.

3. Payment Changes for the Choir Director and Organist:Prior to splitting the Choir Director and Organist positions into two positions, Diane Sprunger was paid as a salaried employee. However, the payment structure of Jenny and Jordan does not legally qualify them to be salaried employees; therefore, effective January 1, 2024, these positions were changed to hourly. A new system was set up to track Jenny's and Jordan's hours per week. Felipe is monitoring these hours.

4. Annual Staff Reviews and Review of Felipe Martinez: In November of 2024, the Committee supported Felipe's staff performance reviews and Leigh Ann is scheduled to conduct Felipe's annual review in late January, 2025. Annual COLA increases for the staff and Felipe were recommended by the Committee at 3% which was approved by the Session effective January 1, 2025.

Session Reports

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Christmas Bonuses were given at the end of the year to the professional and support staff to show appreciation for their good work and dedication.

A look ahead to 2025:

A formal job description for the FPC Pastor shall be facilitated by the Committee.

Timely reviews of Felipe and the staff will be coordinated and supported by the Committee.

The Committee will continue to support Felipe with staff issues, as needed.

Respectfully submitted,
Leigh Ann Figg
Chair of the Personnel Committee

Session Reports

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Committee: Terry Molewyk, Danny Sanders, Jim Farrar, Bob Smitherman, Doug Sprunger, and Zack Ellison (moderator). Thanks to these members for their help, many on an as needed basis.

Mission: The purpose of the Property Committee is to ensure the church building and grounds are maintained and updated as needed. 2024 was a good year with the Property Committee overseeing the projects listed below, plus many others.

Projects Completed in 2024:

- 1.The gymnasium floor was refinished with high quality polyurethane.
- 2.Both kitchen stoves/ovens were replaced because the old ones could not be repaired due to repair parts not being available any longer.
- 3.An ongoing project for 2024 was to keep the heating and cooling systems working. There were several air conditioning compressor failures and a boiler pump failure that had to be repaired. The good news is that we continue to have heat in the winter, and cooling in the summer.
- 4.Multiple smaller jobs were completed: many fluorescent light fixtures were upgraded to LED lights
- 5.Multiple electrical wiring jobs completed by our resident electrician, Danny Sanders.
- 6.Worked with GigaBitNow to route fiber optics into our IT room in preparation of converting from cable service.
- 7.Repairing outside door hinges that corrode and need replaced due to age.

Projects planned for 2024:

- 1.Kitchen window replacement with one that opens for better ventilation.
- 2.Replace the furniture in the Reeves room.
- 3.Complete the upgrade of our internet system to fiber for faster upload and download speeds.
- 4.Installation of gymnasium rooftop solar array with battery backup which will reduce our electric expenses by 75%. Work should be completed by late spring 2025.
- 5.Other work as needed.

Respectfully submitted,
Zack Ellison
Property Committee Chair

Session Reports

SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. “ Mark 10:14

Committee: Mary Ann McCray, Alexa Staley, Brook Brown, Vernett Safford, Sunny Carrier-Moderator, Jen Riddle-Staff

Mission: The mission of the Safe Church Committee is to support and enable First Presbyterian Church in providing a safe environment for all. Effective ministry for children and youth requires a safe environment to learn, grow, and experience God’s love in relationships with caring and mature adults. By setting and supporting appropriate guidelines and boundaries, we can create a safe environment for our children, teens, and the adults that interact with them.

The required annual training of officers was completed at the Officer Retreat. Safe Church training of child care workers and leaders of children and youth took place at the start of the school year. This year, thanks to our Preschool Director April Hemmerlein allowing us to attend the preschool’s CPR training, we were also trained and certified in First Aid and CPR.

A tornado drill was held on May 5, where it was discovered that basement shelter access was blocked by the Preschool interior doors being locked. It was decided that Felipe would instruct Wayne to add those three doors to his Sunday unlocking-relocking routine. These doors are located at the bottom of the loggia ramp, the bottom of the stairs between the kitchen and gym, and the bottom of the stairs going down from the Door 9 area.

A fire drill was planned, but was rained out. Going forward, we will schedule both a drill date and a rain date.

Due to the length and detail of the emergency policy, we developed a quick-reference guide with a few key points for each potential major emergency. It has been placed in frames and has been posted all over the church, for quick reference.

We have spent much of this year identifying our policy gaps and needed updates. We are editing the Safe Church Policy and the Emergency Policy in order to: document what we are already doing, update to reflect needed changes, and to simplify forms and procedures. For example, we are documenting the safety checks that already happen, such as checking AED pads for expiration dates, fire inspections, etc. so that these important checks won’t fall through the cracks in the event of any future staff turnover. Revision of these policies is still a work in progress, but we hope to complete it in early 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Sunny Carrier

Session Reports

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE (SJC)

Matthew 25: 35-36 "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

In 2024 the Social Justice Committee continued to work on ways First Presbyterian Church can help those facing hunger and poverty; we also focus our efforts on homelessness, racism, healthcare, climate change, and fair immigration reform. The committee is chaired by Richard Safford; other committee members include: Ann Jones, Carol Price, Amy Hale, Sarah Sanders (secretary), Paul Hoffman, Vern Jorck, Tess Weathers, Cara Bywater, Heather Reeves, Payton Emberton, Mandy Dornfeld, and staff support from Felipe Martinez.

In 2024 we worked with the Mission Support team to approve Foundation grant requests for Just Friends, Mental Health Matters, Jewish Voices for Peace, Damou Mission in Haiti, the Columbus Bicycle Co-op, Faith in Place, Women's United, Calvary Community Garden, and Love Chapel. We also approved requests to help fund the church Christmas Stocking project and the purchase of emergency food and supplies for those who visit the church in need. In addition to the Foundation grants for mission work, 25% of the church budget goes to mission, including the Community Mission allocation to local non-profit agencies like VIM Care, Su Casa, Horizon House, BCSC Book Buddies, LCNFC, Indiana Youth Group, and Love Chapel; it also helps fund Hot Meals, Pride Alliance, FPC Faith in Action Day, and a scholarship to FPC Preschool.

The membership of this committee contributes to God's mission of justice and love and serves the church in two main ways: 1) by raising awareness and encouraging advocacy among congregants and the community about a broad range of social justice concerns; and 2) by helping to be stewards of the funds FPC designates for community missions, locally and globally. An emphasis is placed on sharing with organizations that serve people who have been marginalized by systemic poverty (such as those experiencing homelessness) and/or discrimination in its many forms and along many axes (e.g. race, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigrant status). We welcome anyone interested to sit in on a committee meeting any time! See what we do, and then decide if this is a place you are drawn to serve. 2025 meetings will be on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm at church and on Zoom.

Session Reports

OPEN AND AFFIRMING SUB-COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Mission: The mission of the Open and Affirming Committee is to nurture a welcoming ministry for all of God's children, both in our congregation and in our community, including persons of any sexual orientation or gender identity and their families. FPC desires to be an open church, and an affirming Church, in an open and affirming community.

In 2024, First Presbyterian and the Open and Affirming Committee participated once again in the community's annual Columbus Pride Festival at Mill Race Park. The Pride Festival was held safely on a sunny, warm afternoon at the end of September, with more than 100 vendors and exhibitors, and thousands of people attending – individuals and entire families. FPC was a sponsor and an exhibitor, and many wonderful volunteers from our church shared smiles, flags and pins, and information about our church during the expanded six-hour event. This year's festival, the biggest yet held in Columbus, was a welcoming and affirming event, celebrating the inclusion of all into the life of our community.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God." Matthew 5:9.

"Never forget that both John the Baptist and Jesus sided with the poor, the marginalized and the disenfranchised." Father James Martin, S.J.

Wishing God's peace for each and every one of us, from your Open and Affirming Subcommittee.

Rich Stenner, on behalf of the Committee

Session Reports

MISSION SUPPORT

Mission Support was originally created in 2005 by the Stewardship and Finance committee as a short-term taskforce to allocate Foundation funds for mission. Now, Mission Support functions as a permanent committee of the Session. Mission Support considers mission grants that have already been approved by another church committee (usually, but not always, the Social Justice committee). Mission Support members represent specific church groups + 1 at-large position. Current members of Mission Support are Sarah Sanders from Deacons (chair), Pastor Felipe Martinez, Richard Safford from Social Justice, Vern Jorck from Social Justice, Mary Ann McCray from Finance, Dale Nowlin from AFE and Session, Pam Robertson at-large, Julie Daiker from Youth Nurture, and Bill Jones from the Foundation. In 2024, Mission Support approved grant requests for Just Friends, Mental Health Matters, Jewish Voices for Peace, Damou Mission in Haiti, the Columbus Bicycle Co-op, Faith in Place, Women's United, Calvary Community Garden, and Love Chapel. We also approved requests to help fund the church Christmas Stocking project and the purchase of emergency food and supplies for those who visit the church in need. Mission Support has allocated more than \$700,000 to local, state, national, and international programs since it started in 2005. If you have an idea about how Foundation funds could be used to support local, national, or international mission work, please contact Sarah Sanders (sanderss1621@gmail.com) or any member of Social Justice or Mission Support.

Session Reports

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Our Team

· Members who served on Stewardship and Finance Committee for some or all of 2024 included: Treasurer Jayne Farber, Cindy Frey, Lynne Hyatt, Mary Ann McCray, Chip Orben, Luther Pierson, and Rich Stenner. Reverend Felipe Martinez provided staff support to the Committee.

Our Purpose:

- Our Stewardship and Finance Committee is a committee of the Session and exists to:
- monitor church finances and accounts throughout the year (with the Treasurer)
- provide monthly and annual financial reports of the Church's finances with year-end audits/reviews/compilations (using staff and volunteers)
- conduct the annual stewardship campaign securing pledges of support for the next calendar year.
- conduct the Christmas Joy offering.

Our Work

- The Committee is deeply grateful for the resilience and generosity of our members; despite challenges such as inflation, economic uncertainty in our community, and a smaller number of in-person worshipers compared to pre-COVID times. We finished 2024 in a strong financial position reflecting a net surplus in the FPC Operating Budget of \$20,471. We are truly blessed to be part of such a giving and faithful congregation who continues to give from the heart.
- Total Income received in 2024 was \$676,812 against a budgeted \$674,318. Net income positive variance of \$2,494. Total Expenses in 2024 were \$656,341 against a budgeted \$674,318 - reflecting a positive variance of \$17,977. Great job by our Staff and Committees to investing wisely in 2024!
- Our Treasurer drafted the Church's budget of \$700,240 for 2025, an overall increase of 3.8%, based on input from all the working groups with the Church, which was approved by session in December 2024.
- The Committee also had two members who went through our official roster to identify inactive members who we are still paying per capita to consider removing so we can reallocate the funds.
- We posted with frequency budget updates in our weekly eblast and newsletters to keep the congregation up to date on our financial outlook.
- The committee would like to thank Jayne Farber for serving as our treasurer for the last three years. She has done a fantastic job of updating policies and procedures to ensure we have a good picture of our finances at any point in time.

Session Reports

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE COMMITTEE

2025 Stewardship Campaign Recap

- The Fall 2025 annual stewardship campaign theme was “Sharing our legacy of faith through service and generosity” There were traditional mailings to the congregation, 3 moments for missions from a diverse group of members, consecration breakfast hosted by Deacons, numerous reminders in newsletter and weekly updates regarding the campaign. We encouraged members to prayerfully consider a 3% increase for 2025 to help offset the impact of inflationary pressures at FPC.
- Update on 2025 Stewardship and Pledge Campaign as of EOY 2024
- Pledge Goal: \$647,730
- Pledges received: \$505,260 (78% of goal)
- # Units Received: 79 (goal 90 units)
- We also recognize there are members who traditionally give to FPC but do not fill out a pledge card. Typically, we look at prior years history to estimate this pledge income.

**The Reverend Felipe Martinez, Full-time Senior Pastor/Head of Staff
2025 Compensation Package**

12.18.14 jmf

	2% COLA		3% COLA	
	2024		2025	
<i>Base Salary</i>	57,233	<i>Base Salary</i>	58,950	Base Salary represents 3% COLA increase for 2025
<i>Cash Salary</i>	52,855	2025 Cash Salary	54,440 <u>1/</u>	Cash Salary represents Base Salary minus SECA (7.65%)
<i>Housing Allowance</i>	<u>34,976</u>	<i>Housing Allowance</i>	36,025	Represents 3% COLA increase
<i>Effective Salary</i>	87,831	Effective Salary	90,465 <u>2/</u>	Represents Cash Salary (as adjusted above) plus Housing
<i>Pension/Health Dues</i>	34,254	Pastor Health, Pension, D&D, Temp Disability, plus Family Health @ 100%	38,900 <u>3/</u>	New - Pastor Transitional Benefits Plan (Decision Tool) based on Effective Salary
<i>SECA</i>	4,378	<i>SECA</i>	4,510 <u>4/</u>	SECA based on adjusted 2025 salary of \$58,950
<i>Professional Expenses</i>	2,500	<i>Professional Expenses</i>	2,500	
<i>Continuing Education</i>	3,000	<i>Continuing Education</i>	3,000	
<i>Vouchered Mileage</i>	1,000	<i>Vouchered Mileage</i>	1,000	
Total Package	132,963	Total Package	140,375	7,412 5.6%
<i>Other Compensation</i>		<i>Other Compensation</i>		
<i>Vacation</i>	5 weeks	<i>Vacation</i>	5 weeks	
<i>Study Leave</i>	2 weeks	<i>Study Leave</i>	2 weeks	
<i>Sick Days</i>	10 days	<i>Sick Days</i>	10 days	

2025 HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1/ Cash Salary includes COLA increase for current year, minus 7.65% SECA.
- 2/ Effective Salary is Cash Salary plus Housing Allowance
- 3/ Pastor Transitional Pension and Health Plan (new BOP pricing in 2025) based on Effective Salary.
- 4/ SECA tax rate is 7.65% of Base Salary

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2024 End-of-Year: Budget vs Actual and 2025 Budget

	2024	2024 EOY		2025	Percent
INCOME	BUDGET	ACTUAL	<i>Variance</i>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Change</u>
Pledge and Gift Income	\$ 627,571	\$ 614,879		\$ 647,730	
Other Income	\$ 46,747	\$ 61,933		\$ 52,510	
Total Income	\$ 674,318	\$ 676,812	\$ 2,494	\$ 700,240	3.84%
EXPENSES					
Church Programs					
Nurture: Child/Youth/Adult	\$ 20,410	\$ 12,020		\$ 21,376	
Music	\$ 7,755	\$ 7,001		\$ 9,431	
Social Justice	\$ 2,200	\$ 2,200		\$ 1,450	
Worship	\$ 6,300	\$ 4,177		\$ 6,100	
Stewardship Program	\$ 950	\$ 720		\$ 950	
Deacon Program	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,300		\$ 1,300	
Celebration of Life	\$ 500	\$ 489		\$ 500	
Officer Retreat	\$ 400	\$ 200		\$ 400	
Sabbatical Reserve	\$ -	\$ 167		\$ 3,000	
Financial Review	\$ 430	\$ -		\$ -	
Subtotal Church Program	\$ 40,245	\$ 28,274		\$ 44,507	
Mission Giving	\$ 84,195	\$ 83,945		\$ 89,838	
Professional Staff					
Pastor	\$ 132,963	\$ 132,121		\$ 140,376	
Director CYYAM	\$ 64,815	\$ 65,080		\$ 67,229	
Choir Director/Organist	\$ 60,169	\$ 65,160		\$ 62,908	
Subtotal Professional Staf	\$ 257,947	\$ 262,361		\$ 270,513	
Office Expenses	\$ 101,716	\$ 103,855		\$ 105,050	
Facility Expenses	\$ 166,345	\$ 154,036		\$ 166,462	
Per Capita Assessment	\$ 23,870	\$ 23,870		\$ 23,870	
Total Expenses	\$ 674,318	\$ 656,341	\$ 17,977	\$ 700,240	3.84%
<u>NET SURPLUS/(expense)</u>			\$ 20,471		

2024 Annual Reports

WoodWeShare Ministries

The 2024-25 season started with a mercifully cool July Faith in Action and a new client. Another four were later added bringing the calendar year total to nine receiving twenty-two deliveries. Some use relatively little while others burn considerably more. All have so many needs.

Borrowing the FIA byline "We are God's Hands", volunteers are always welcome. During cold weather, there is usually just a day or two notice.

Submitted by Doug Sprunger
woodweshare@gmail.com
260-589-6757

2024 Annual Reports

SWEET DREAMS MINISTRIES

The mission of the Sweet Dreams Ministry is to provide children in need who live in Bartholomew County with new beds and complete bedding. In our seventh year of this wonderful Ministry, we delivered approximately twenty (20) beds. Most of our referrals came from the Department of Child Services (DCS) but we had a few others from Advocates for Children (CASA) and other vetted sources.

DCS requests beds for their unlicensed relative placements who do not get any form of reimbursement for caring for children whereas foster parents are generally reimbursed for these expenses, but not always. The caseworker who is requesting a bed will let us know the child's favorite colors and what they enjoy. We had a significant number of teens this year, so the bedding was mostly plain colored, but for the younger girls, they requested princesses, fairies and unicorns for their bedding. We also provide stuffed toys and books for the younger children.

In early 2024, Doug Sprunger alerted the Sweet Dreams Ministry that Indiana University was disposing of a large number of slightly used and very sturdy XL Twin bed frames. Doug and Leigh Ann made a couple of trips to Bloomington to purchase and transfer approximately 2 dozen beds. The beds are made to stack into bunks and bedrails are needed for our younger children, so during Faith in Action Sunday, Doug set up a team made up of Brett Herrick, David Spencer, and Luke, Jordan and Alexis Spurgeon to make these bedrails. We are so grateful to this team and Doug's leadership and skill. While we set up mostly twin beds, we did set up some bunkbeds (and used bedrails made by the Faith in Action team), as well as one crib and one toddler bed.

We have all kinds of stories that come from each specific situation. One of the touching stories from this year involved delivering two separate bunkbeds to three little girls and a teenager. The teenager is 18 and is the sister of two of the little girls and the aunt to another little girl. The 18 year-old, who rents an apartment with another teenage girl, took in the three little girls while their mother is trying to get back on her feet. It's both heartbreaking and heartwarming to know that the 18 year-old sister has the maturity to work full time as well as care for three little girls under the age of 10.

In addition to Doug Sprunger and those listed above who helped on Faith in Action Sunday, others involved in this Ministry in 2024 were Janet and Ted Sharpe, Kerry Norris, Doug Wray and Leigh Ann Figg.

All involved in this Ministry are so grateful to our church for this opportunity to help provide some desperately needed stability and love to these children. Each complete bed and bedding that we provide costs approximately \$300. Thank you for your support and please hold these children in your hearts and prayers.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Sharpe and Leigh Ann Figg

Session Reports

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Meeting Members: Marsha Sunkel, Janet Lowery, Terri Glackin, Marquita Tuck, Anthony Merida, Lisa Porter, Jordan Lewis, Jenny Heichelbech, Felipe Martinez; Other contributors: Luther Pierson, Hanna Salas, Tracy Heaton Martinez

One of the biggest changes we've seen to our worship this year has been the addition of 3 larger, installed screens in the sanctuary and the upgraded projector system that accompanies them. These are an undertaking which has involved many people's efforts that I will attempt to acknowledge and account for. First, Luther Pierson and Warren Ward were instrumental in getting the technology in place, researching what was needed and who could install it at a reasonable price, and getting approval from the session and foundation board for the Reeves Fund to cover the costs. Then for each service Hanna Salas creates a presentation and inserts the visuals and text for the service that both the online and in-person worshippers use. Jenny Heichelbech compiles the copyright information necessary to broadcast everything to an audience beyond our congregation. Felipe and other staff and volunteers do later additions and edits to fill out the service liturgy and get it in presentation form before the Sunday they're used. For worship we have a whole team of skilled AV folks, including Luther Pierson, Jason Tracy, Chris George, and Paul Hoffman, who make the hymns and service text available to us as they happen both in the sanctuary and online. Furthermore, the prayers that are shared through Leah Jackman-Wheitner and those who fill in for her on Zoom and Facebook have become a very meaningful way of helping us keep up with the joys and concerns of all who worship with us, as yet another way we come together as the body of Christ, though we may be separated by city blocks or state and national borders. So the screens may be a major visual change for some of us and take some getting used to, but they are a nice upgrade and investment that hopefully will continue to help us worship visually and virtually in ever more creative and meaningful ways.

In 2024 we came out of Sabbatical and into our 200th anniversary year with some new insights and goals, and new partners in planning, with the 200th committee contributing art, special guests, moments for mission and celebration, and more. One of our committee's goals included having guest preachers every 6-8 weeks, to provide everyone with some diverse Sabbath experiences, including Felipe. Throughout the year we have enjoyed sermons from "guests" including Carla Warren, Tim McNinch, Jen Riddle, Sharon Williams, Janet Lowery, Richard Safford, Susan McGee, and our national church co-moderator Rev. Tony Larson. These folks' perspectives have helped us learn and grow in countless ways.

Session Reports

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Faith in Action Day was another worship event that we wanted to keep from our Sabbatical summer of 2023, so folks from Worship committee, Children's and Youth Nurture committees, Adult Fellowship and Education, Social Justice, Property, Deacons, and other interested "members at-large" collaborated to put together July 14 as a day where we did God's work, in the spirit of our Matthew 25 initiative, as worship, fellowship, mission, and education for the day. Some of us did prayer and meditation as work in the sanctuary or on Zoom, some cooked in the kitchen, some chopped wood or made bunk beds in the parking lot, some visited friends who needed a visit, and some pulled weeds and did home improvements in the community, from 8:30am to noon. Over 100 people participated in the experience in some way, culminating in a friendly lunch in the air conditioned gym, open to all.

On Pentecost Sunday, we as a church and as a committee wished Dianne Sprunger a happy retirement as our organist and accompanist and welcomed Jordan Lewis to the keyboard and to our meetings. We feel very fortunate to have found Jordan to fill this role. He has been delightful to work with and is full of hidden talents in addition to his musical ones; he offers beautiful prayers to help center our meetings and arranges flowers like a pro, just to name a couple.

Worship committee has also been working with Children's Nurture over the past 16-20 months to foster intergenerational engagement in worship. Jen Riddle received a grant to align with this goal, and with it Children's Nurture has put together a worship bag buffet for anyone who would like to pick up a sensory activity, fidget toy, and/or "service animal" (beeny baby with a bio) to hold during the service. It's certainly popular with children, but it's available for everyone. We continue to aim at making liturgy texts accessible to new readers so children and newer English learners can more fully participate. Children 5 and older worship with us on Communion Sundays (1st Sundays) for the whole service, and for the first $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of the service on other Sundays before they're released to Kids' church for Godly Play lessons. While children are present, we are intentional about planning worship that is multi-sensory and engaging in meaningful ways for everyone. Dianne Sprunger and Lisa Porter coordinate with the Worship Committee and staff to make plans for the elementary kids to have a Worship Arts experience after the service for each of the Sundays they have Kids' Church, where during those 15-20 minute sessions kids do worship songs and other activities to prepare them for worship participation and leadership.

Session Reports

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Advent/Christmas season was full of joy, hope, peace, and love. The schedule for the Christmas Eve services at 5 and 9pm that we have had for the past 2 years seems to have met the needs of those who wished to worship with us that evening, with great attendance, story telling, reading, acting, smiling, singing, silence, energy, light, and a clear message that God's love came to us, and now comes through us. I hope we continue with all of that into 2025!

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Porter,
Worship Committee Chair

Other Reports

DEACONS

Deacon Class 2025: Anna Denoyer, Leah Jackman-Wheitner, Julie Orben (co-chair), Scott Weathers, and Bella Herbert, 1 year term as Youth Deacon

Deacon Class 2026: Doug Wray, Alexa Stayley, Linda Pierson, and Sarah Dismore

Deacon Class 2027: Leanne Loutner, Jerrica Dowling, Sarah Sanders (secretary), and Sandy Thomas (co-chair)

The Board of Deacons (or Diaconate) is a group of elected individuals who serve the church congregation. We are responsible for ministry and service, often focusing on compassionate care, outreach, and hospitality. The Diaconate operates under the supervision and authority of the Session (the governing body of elders), but they are distinct in their focus on service and care. Deacons are nominated by members of the congregation and elected by the congregation, serving for a 3-year term. We may be organized into subcommittees or teams to address specific needs within the church or community. Deacons play a vital role in welcoming new members, providing spiritual care, reaching out to those in need and fostering fellowship within the congregation.

Each Deacon has a list of individuals and families they reach out to over the course of the year. Ideally, each member of the church (and many frequent visitors) should know who their assigned Deacon is, so that they can reach out to that person with concerns or special needs. Deacons also coordinate ushering each Sunday and lead several fellowship events throughout the year. Fellowship events include Deacons & Donuts in February, Easter Brunch in the spring, Church Picnic at Donner Park in June, and the Consecration Brunch in November. Deacons strive to create a welcoming environment and to connect with long-time members and first-time visitors.

In 2024 the FPC Deacons had two new initiatives: Transportation coordination and Heads Up, a mental health initiative. The Deacons have a designated Transportation Coordinator and a list of 5 local paid drivers we can use in addition to church volunteers. We were fortunate to get a grant from the Smock Foundation to cover transportation for elderly church members. This year, the Deacons also wrote and received a grant from the Center for Congregations to fund a series of speakers and workshops related to mental health care and how we can help end the stigma around mental health needs. We call this initiative Heads Up and will begin 2-3 mental health support groups beginning in March of 2025. For more information about transportation help or mental health support, please contact the 2025 Deacon co-chairs Sandy Thomas and Julie Orben or our Heads-Up leader, Scott Weathers.

DEACONS

We are thankful for the service of the Deacons whose term ended this year: Vernett Safford, Jeff Karr, and Victor Friend. Thank you to Sandy Thomas and Sarah Sanders for agreeing to serve a second term and to our new Deacons beginning in 2025: Leanne Loutner, Jerrica Dowling, Leah Jackman-Wheitner, and Bella Herbert (who is serving as our youth Deacon).

Submitted Respectfully,
Sarah Sanders

Other Reports

PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION OF COLUMBUS, INDIANA

2024 Annual Unrestricted Grant Funds Available	\$179,940.71
2024 Grants Awarded from Unrestricted Funds:	
Mission support (1/3 of available funds)	\$46,192.34
Hispanic Scholarship (Year 3 of 4)	10,000.00
Bicentennial Matching Grant	50,000.00
Hot Meal Grant (Year 1 of 5)	5,000.00
Turning Point Grant	10,000.00
Heads up Grant	4000.00
Holy Cow Grant (Strategic Plan)	9,000.00
Calvary Community Kitchen	10,000.00
Children/Youth leaders to APCE	8738.84
Love Chapel Emergency Needs	10,000.00
2024 Total Grant Disbursements from Unrestricted Funds	\$162,931.18
Remaining Balance at 12/31/24	\$17,009.53
2024 Grants Awarded from Restricted Funds	
Sanctuary AV Updates (Reeves Fund)	\$41,000.00
Foundation Balances at 12/31/24:	
Vanguard Investment Account	\$3,775,385.00
Columbarium – New Covenant Investments	21,400.00
Columbarium – First Financial Checking	
Organ Maintenance – New Covenant Investments	171,740.00
Harrison Youth Fund – New Covenant Investments	14,008.00
Foundation – First Financial Checking	
Private Donor Fund	227,785.00
Other	
Reeves Fund	\$1,130,100.58
(Endowed benefit trust held at the Heritage Fund)	(as of 12/31/24)

Other Reports

PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION OF COLUMBUS, INDIANA

Highlights during 2024

- Clean audit for 2023 conducted by Agresta, Storms & O'Leary.
- Our accounts followed the market uptick and had excellent gains.
- We were able to assist a local church (Calvary Community) and two local non-profits (Turning Point and Love Chapel) with projects. We were also able to support our church with several facility improvements and assist in funding a Deacon mental health and Session planning initiative.
- We were able to assist the church in starting a community grant project that will celebrate our bicentennial long into the future.

2024 Foundation Board of Directors and Officers

Colleen Herrick	President
Clare Moore	Vice President/ Legacy Circle / Planned Giving
Eric Riddle	Treasurer
Tim Denoyer	Investment Committee, Chair
Warren Ward	Investment Committee
Bill Jones	Mission Support
Leigh Ann Figg	Secretary
Leah Jackman-Wheitner	Webmaster/Public Relations

We give heartfelt thanks to Clare who is retiring from the board after serving faithfully and competently for a total of 8 years.

Memorial & Honorarium Gifts

During 2024, the Foundation received a total of \$1,355.00 remembering our loved ones:

Memorials:

Eric Ericson, Jr.
Rev. Cal Brand

Grants

Those interested in applying for a grant are encouraged to contact any Foundation Board member or the Rev. Felipe Martinez for guidance. Please remember that grant requests are to be submitted to the Session for review prior to being considered by the Foundation.

To learn more about submitting a grant, please visit our website at www.fpccolumbus.org/foundation/

2025 FPC Foundation meeting dates:

February 4, April 1, June 3, August 5, October 7, December 2 (annual meeting).

Respectfully submitted, Colleen Herrick (Board President)



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

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