

Concord Presbyterian Church & Preschool 2024 Annual Report

As Concord Presbyterian Church, we commit ourselves to be a Christ-centered people of God. By the Grace of God and energized by the Holy Spirit –

WE WILL FEED the spiritual, physical, and intellectual hunger of God's people.

WE WILL BUILD a church family that welcomes, embraces, and loves all people.

WE WILL SERVE the world around us, sharing in the concerns and struggles of its people.

WE WILL RESPOND to God's goodness with celebration!

Concord Vision Statement, 2024

Congregation Meeting Docket

February 2, 2025

Opening of Meeting

- Opening prayer by Moderator Eric Markman
- Declaration of quorum and note that Clerk of Session is present to serve as clerk for the meeting
- Purpose of the meeting
- Motion to make the meeting of the congregation and corporation congruent

Annual Report Overview (Pastor Eric Markman)

Financial Review (Ron McKinney – Treasurer)

- Review of balance sheet and 2024 financial results
- Review of 2025 budget
- Motion to RECEIVE the budget which Session has approved

Report from Pastor Nominating Committee (Nancy Tucker)

2025 Session Initiatives (Carol Haas, Clerk)

Close of Meeting

- Motion to adjourn and authorize Session to approve the minutes of this meeting
- Closing prayer

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

I arrived at Concord Presbyterian Church in March of 2024. On arrival I found a church with a deep faith in Jesus Christ. With that faith the church created a long tradition of outreach and mission, robust worship, an incredible music program (with a wonderful choir and special concerts throughout the year), a strong youth program (it took a little time before I realized that JAM wasn't grape jelly, but Jesus and Me!), fun congregational gatherings (I attended my first Chili Cook Off), Deacons who are actively caring for the congregation, a Preschool that functions as part of the church with an enrollment over 100 young people, and finally truly thoughtful and dedicated leadership.

I also found a church, like many other churches today, struggling with the aftermath of COVID. Like many churches across the United States much of our congregation is aging. However, there are quite a few younger folks who have also taken on roles of leadership. And finally, a youth program that is dynamic with excellent leadership. So, Concord Presbyterian fits into some of what many churches are facing – still it has much to be proud of and, I believe, a bright future.

Much of what traditionally kept church attendance and membership at high numbers has disappeared. There was a time when most Americans went to church, but sadly this is no longer true. And each year the numbers keep dropping. Now we celebrate good attendance on Christmas Eve and Easter but rarely at other times.

Why is this? Many people feel uncomfortable going to church, and for others it simply doesn't even cross their minds. And COVID only sped this along. It is a new day and age, and now we need to dream new dreams, have new visions, and find new ways to reach out to the neighborhoods around the church and make a difference in the community.

The Session and many other members of the church are working to find new ways to engage the community. We are exploring ways to utilize the Concord physical plant to better serve the neighborhood and perhaps house some programs such as "English as a Second Language" or other programs that neighbors might want to attend. However, it is a challenge due to the many physical levels in the building and security issues for our Preschool. But we have a team working on these ideas.

Music is a tradition at Concord. Every Sunday is filled with beautiful music reflecting the theme of the scriptures and service. Also, there are many wonderful concerts during the year. There are plans being made for more musical events taking place outdoors for the neighborhood to attend.

In the early 1990s Concord Presbyterian made a strong commitment to welcome all people and stated that gay and lesbian folks should be given full participation in the church, including ordination and marriage. Today, as the climate in our country has become less friendly and at times belligerent against the LGBTQIA+ community, the congregation has restated its beliefs, long held, that all persons are created in God's image and therefore are part of the beloved community. Holding a series of *Lunch & Learns* after church on Sunday, we explored many of these issues and explored how we can be more friendly and be clear to all who attend and/or visit the church where the congregation stands on this issue.

As God spoke to the people of Israel in the book of Jeremiah 29: 11, let us listen and heed the promise: *For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*

Let us work together to be led by our Lord to new and green pastures for God will give us a future with hope!

Peace,



Bridge Pastor Eric Markman



Pastor Eric at Trunk or Treat

Session

The Session has the responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness.

(PC(USA) Book of Order G.3.0201)

Class of 2025

John Barineau

Jenny Godowsky

Marj Johnson

Class of 2026

Liane Gehret

Carol Haas

Don Potter

Class of 2027

Sharon Brucker

Dottie Lund

Nancy Tucker

Moderator: Pastor Eric Markman

Clerk: Carol Haas

Clerk of Session

2024 was an eventful year for Session. In January, we celebrated Steve Clark's ministry with us and said our goodbyes. This included signing the Covenant of Closure that meant as a congregation we needed to move on from seeing Steve in a pastoral capacity. We also said goodbye to Kathie Pownall who faithfully provided pastoral care to our congregation over many years. In February, the Session managed through the transition before welcoming Pastor Eric Markman as our bridge pastor in March.

We worked as a Session to pursue some of the issues identified in our Mission Study. We appointed an LBGTQIA+ Task Force to help the congregation move from being welcoming to members of this community to being openly affirming. We also began conversations about how to better utilize the resources that our building provides and to connect more with our immediate community.

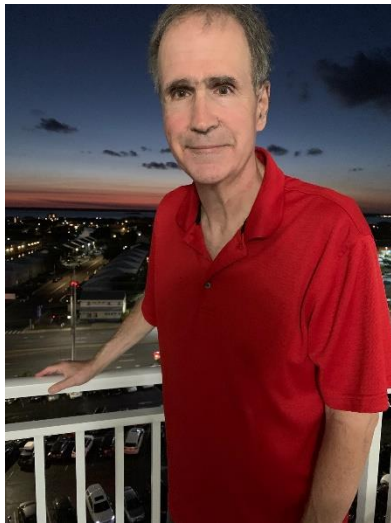
During the year we said goodbye to members who joined the church triumphant: Geraldine Crock, Robert Custin, Allene Goodfellow, Mary Hunter, Martha Gilbert, Jeanette Schaffer, David Hubinger, and Wayne Stahl. We also accepted the request to remove Carol Lind and Thomas Hall from the rolls. We celebrated four baptisms: Aria and Julianna Godowsky, as well as Simone and Nathaniel Moffett.

Carol K. Haas, Clerk

In Memoriam



Gerry Crock



Bob Custin



Allene Goodfellow



Mary Hunter (with Jim)

In Memoriam



David Hubinger



Martha Gilbert



Wayne Stahl

Board of Deacons

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Peggy Carter	Felleng Kalema	Renee Leeson-Fuchs
Chip Hazel	Nancy Tieste	A.T. Moffett
	Bonnie Twilley	Jan Moore

We wish to acknowledge the wonderful care we received from our advisor Rev. Kathie Pownall during the first months of 2024. She served as our advisor until her retirement on March 31. She constantly engaged us both as members of the congregation and as Deacons. She also encouraged us to be more active and passionate in all our interactions with members in our care and offered to accompany us anytime we visited members. She authored the report issued last year, some of which is used again here.

We lost two of the members in our care in 2024. Dan Pressley passed in March after years of contributing to Concord in many ways including singing in the choir and performing and directing portions of Concord’s spectacular Christmas concerts. Wayne Stahl passed in December after years of attending services at Concord. He was a veteran of many years operating the dishwashing system in Concord’s kitchen when meals were served. Wayne spoke of it frequently in conversations.

Quoting Kathie now: *“A few years ago, the Deacons started to refer to themselves as the “ARMS” of the church – the part of the body that reaches out to care for all of it. Each Deacon does this through personal visitation, and communication through telephone, mail, and email. During the pandemic, Deacons learned to be creative in the way they took care of folks, and they have continued to refine these techniques through the present time.*

*Our denomination [PCUSA} states that Deacons should be “**persons of spiritual character,**” those who have a deep faith and high standards committed to a life of prayer, study, and other spiritual disciplines. Attention to these practices helps Deacons persevere during times of burnout.*

The Deacons have provided pastoral care to congregational members by doing In-person visits when possible, making telephone calls, texting messages, and sending greeting cards and notes. Some Deacons have provided transportation to medical appointments, meals, and there have even been lunch dates. Feedback provided points to positive experiences for all.

Deacons make sure that those shut-ins who desire home communion receive it. This is usually done with another person to symbolically bring the “community of faith” to the person. In addition, Deacons are responsible for setting the table for communion in the sanctuary.

As Advisor, I have been blessed to work with the Deacons for the last few years and am impressed with their energy and commitment to be the arms of the church for those who need care. It is an important way to personally demonstrate God’s love for each of us by providing care for others.”

In 2024 Renee Leeson-Fuchs served as Moderator. Bonnie Twilley served as Vice Moderator. Chip Hazel served as Reporter (aka Secretary). During the year, Anais Brutus resigned from the Board of Deacons after prayerful consideration and discussions with the Deacons. The Deacons accepted her resignation, understanding her struggle to make the decision. We asked her to continue to be active at Concord and expressed gratitude that she took her work as a Deacon seriously.

Finally, we wish to thank the Nominating Committee for their long, hard work filling our Class of 2027 slate of Deacons. We welcome Renee Lesson-Fuchs (continuing), Jan Moore, and A.T. Moffett. Also, Felleng Kalema will serve out an unexpired term in the Deacons, Class of 2026.

Deacons’ Fund

As part of its ministry, Concord provides financial aid to members of our community who are in distress arising from sickness, job loss, a fire, or other acute circumstances, with a maximum of \$200 per individual. Funds are donated to Concord through designated contributions at any time and the loose offering on the first Sunday of each month.

The Deacons’ Fund is administered by Friendship House, which works with clients requiring financial assistance to understand their needs and develop a plan to address them, with a view to preventing eviction and homelessness. Concord sent about \$13,000 to Friendship House in 2024. This allowed Friendship House to help 65 households with utilities and rent. (In 2024 Friendship House assisted a total of 987 households with Delmarva bills and rental assistance, for a total of \$208,854.)

Chip Hazel, Deacons’ Reporter

Finance & Stewardship Committee

The responsibilities of the Finance & Stewardship Committee are outlined in the Declaration of Responsibilities and include managing all financial matters of Concord Presbyterian Church and Concord Preschool. The 2024 committee members were: Melanie Slezak – Finance & Stewardship Chair/Elder, Ron McKinney – Treasurer, John Barineau – Elder, Albert Lund – Elder, Alan Jewett – Financial Secretary; and Dick Carter – member at large.

In 2024, most of our Finance & Stewardship meetings took place in person. Each meeting included reports by the Treasurer on the monthly income and expenditures of the Church and Preschool, reports on insurance, and on any other pertinent topics. Financial matters and issues were discussed, and actions taken as needed.

Particular duties include keeping adequate financial records, establishing appropriate financial and accounting procedures and their oversight, organizing and scheduling counters* to tabulate and record all funds that come to the church and its activities (*Note – Using counters was paused in 2021 due to Covid protocols and has not resumed with a full slate of counters. At present, the Financial Secretary has been managing the weekly counting), investing Concord’s financial assets, maintaining appropriate insurance, preparing annual budgets, and reporting on Concord’s financial status to the Session and congregation.

Finance & Stewardship (F&S) assumed responsibility for the stewardship campaign beginning in 2018. Stewardship activities include: establishing a theme and timeline for the annual campaign, coordinating the Pastor’s stewardship letter, creating revised pledge cards, writing the committee’s stewardship letter, organizing packets for mailing to the congregation, assisting in the planning of the “First Fruits” service, established so that the church’s leadership body can dedicate their pledges before the congregation, and in some years, arranging Minutes for Mission (prior to Pledge Dedication Sunday) focused on the ways the church enriches the lives of its members and encouraging support of the stewardship campaign.

The Declaration of Responsibilities also suggests that the Finance & Stewardship Committee should, “Actively promote awareness that stewardship includes the offering of time and talent, as well as money.” Accordingly, F&S supports and actively participates in educating the congregation on ways to become involved in church mission and committees.

Melanie Slezak, Chair – Finance & Stewardship

Mission & Congregational Life Committee

The Mission Committee is responsible for the education, outreach, and vision of the church in response to God's calling for each of us to witness to His great love by alleviating suffering, by promoting justice and peace, and by caring responsibly for His world.

Our Congregational Life events often combine our church's giving spirit with fellowship activities.

In 2024, Concord participated in the following **MISSION activities**:

Monetary Donations

Designated Benevolences for contributions from the congregation included Friendship House, FH Clothing Bank, Habitat for Humanity, Concord's Blessing Box, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Emmanuel Dining Room, Concord Preschool Scholarships, Seamen's Center of Wilmington, Sojourner's Place, Water is Life, Blanket Sunday, Christmas Giving Program, and PC(USA) Special Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace & Global Witness, and Christmas Joy Offering.

Emmanuel Dining Room (EDR)

Monthly provision of lunch to the homeless and needy through the Ministry of Caring. Concord purchases the food, prepares, and serves meals to their EDR South location (500 Rogers Rd, New Castle, DE). Approximately 75-90 folks are fed on the first Tuesday of each month. The meal consists of meatloaf, baked potato, green beans, fruit, and cookies.

Christmas Giving Program

Annually, this holiday event is always a success for our church congregation, as well as the Preschool staff and families. In 2024 Preschool collected clothing, books, and toys for foster children through the Children & Families First organization. Our congregation collected donations for the Guatemala Chicken Project which provides chicks to needy Guatemala women to allow them to raise and sell chickens to increase their household incomes.

Blanket Sunday

Blanket Sunday donations allow Church World Service to provide blankets and tools to refugees in need around the world.

Seamen's Center of Wilmington

We continued our long-time support and involvement with the Seamen's Center. This year the congregation was invited to take a shoebox home to fill with necessities for seafarers far from home at Christmas and return the filled "ditty box" to Concord. Our wonderful group of knitters created hats and scarves to be included with these gift boxes. We contributed 33 boxes to be given to mariners arriving at the port of Wilmington at Christmas time. In addition, some members of our congregation serve as volunteers, providing rides for shopping trips, to mariners who come into port.



Prayer Shawl Ministry



A group of Concord members continue to knit or crochet prayer shawls. A supply of them is maintained in the church office. Anyone can take one and present it to someone who would benefit from this tangible sign of love and support from our church community. A group of knitters and crocheters stocks the church's supply of prayer shawls. Anyone wishing to deliver a prayer shawl to someone in need can pick one up in the office. Anyone wishing to join this group can contact Carol Haas or Marj Johnson for directions to patterns.

Friendship House

Friendship House is a non-profit, faith-based corporation in service to those individuals and families who are or are at risk of becoming homeless. Concord Presbyterian Church has a long history of supporting this organization and participated in the following opportunities in 2024:

- ***FH Clothing Bank:*** Their van was in our parking lot Spring and Fall to collect donations of gently used clothing from our members and the Fairfax community. Our Concord Youth throughout the year volunteered many hours at the Clothing Bank to sort clothing and fill orders. We also participated in their school uniform drive during summer and early fall.
- ***Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community:*** Concord has participated in this walk for many years to benefit Friendship House.

- **Code Purple/Code Orange:** Concord participates in providing food and volunteers for Code Purple (extreme cold weather) and Code Orange (extreme hot weather). Locations for overnight shelter for the homeless are organized through Friendship House.



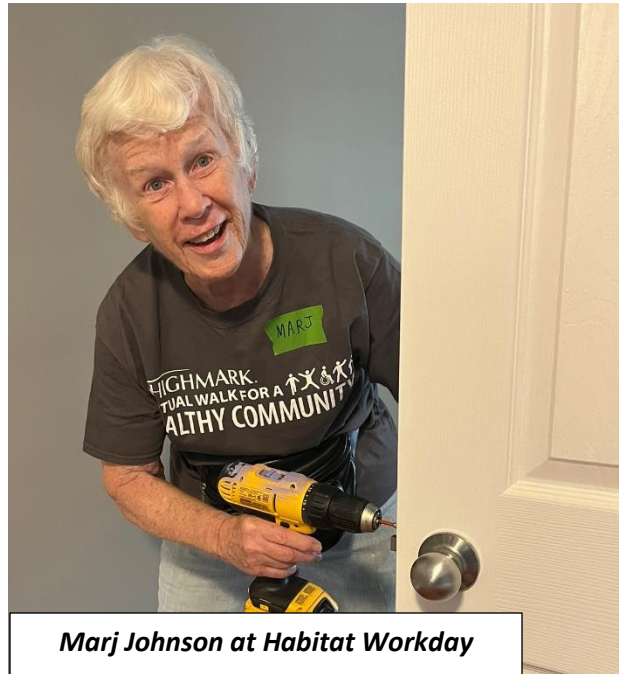
Rocky Bluewinkle, the Wilmington Blue Rocks mascot, joins Concord's team at the Highmark Walk.

Habitat for Humanity

This year we reestablished our connection with Habitat for Humanity by having a workday for Concord members and members from other churches. Ten people participated, and Concord provided lunch for the workers. Other workdays are planned for the future to increase awareness and involvement in the program.

Blessing Box

Our “blessing box” stands in front of the church on Fairfax Blvd., near our parking lot. It was constructed and placed by a Girl Scout troop of one of our members. The congregation and Preschool parents donate non-perishable food supplies to meet emergency needs. We invite the Fairfax community around the church to contribute as they can. Our motto is “take what you need, leave what you can”. M&CL and the Preschool kindergarten class restock the box three times a week.



Marj Johnson at Habitat Workday

Guatemala Partnership



This summer we became involved with some programs in the Presbytery's Guatemala Partnership. We funded a Guatemala Literacy Program in a remote village. The program is to teach adult women in the village to read and write Spanish, the national language, in addition to their native language. Our 2024 Christmas donations helped fund the Guatemalan Chicken Project. Donors received their own Blue Hen!

LGBTQIA+ Lunch & Learn

Congregational Life helped with providing the lunch for a series of informational sessions after worship to increase our awareness and advocacy for this community.

Liz Rowe and Gayle Hazel with some Trunk or Treaters!



The M&CL committee also sponsored the following **CONGREGATIONAL LIFE events**:

Trunk or Treat

Teamed with the Spiritual Formation Committee, we again partnered with the Fairfax Civic Association to provide treats for young children on Halloween weekend. Congregational members and Preschool parents decorated their trunks and gave out treats to the children participating in the Fairfax Halloween Parade. We provided free popcorn, and a food van was supported by FCA. We also had the Friendship House Clothing Bank van on hand to accept donations.

Gathering Time

We gather for light refreshments after worship each Sunday. Volunteers provide the refreshments and can sign up at church or online to participate. This is a great time to enjoy fellowship with our members and guests. GT is held outdoors during nice weather.

Annual Holiday Concert

Our committee assisted with the reception in Fellowship Hall following the Christmas Gala Concert on December 15. Over 300 people attended the event.

Homecoming Sunday

Our annual Homecoming Sunday service followed by a picnic was held on the second Sunday in September. The weather was a bit unpredictable, so we enjoyed our worship service followed by a potluck lunch, children's games, and crafts in Fellowship Hall. It was a great day of fellowship.

Memorial Receptions

Part of Congregational Life is honoring those who pass from our church community and supporting those who are bereaved. We offer memorial receptions in Fellowship Hall to our members, should they request them, after memorial services. Food and beverage expenses are provided by the family of the departed, but set-up, clean-up, and serving are done by our memorial reception volunteers to allow the family to visit with those attending services.

Mission & Congregational Life Committee

CPSP (Concord Presbyterian Scholarship Program)

The Concord Presbyterian Scholarship Program (CPSP) provides funds to enable high school graduates to continue their education. Former graduates are also eligible for undergraduate consideration. CPSP is primarily interested in offering scholarships to students who would not be able to pursue advanced schooling without some additional help. CPSP funds are designed to assist with residual educational expenses after primary funding sources are in place. Both college-bound students and those seeking skills training in specialized vocational settings are strongly encouraged to apply.

This program began over 40 years ago and was previously known as the Student Education Loan Fund (S.E.L.F.). This funding was changed from a loan repayment program to a scholarship initiative for easier administration by the church.

The CPSP Committee was pleased to continue assisting three students with their tuition in 2024. Our students are pursuing the following majors: Business & Economics & Bachelor of Science in Sports Management; Biology/Pre-Professional; Arts & Science English Major with a Philosophy Minor. The majority of our students maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.36. Due to wise investing by the Church's Finance Committee, we were able to award \$8,000 in funding for the 2024 school year.

CPSP is fortunate to have seven very dedicated member volunteers serving on this committee: Jo Ann Cipolla, Torill Drury, Jennifer Eppes, Gwen Fuller, Carol Schlegel, and Barbara Wise. They bring a varied background to assist in evaluating our students for funding each semester.

Donations from the congregation are continually encouraged. This program is another example of Concord's outreach to our community and surrounding areas.

Judy Hayes, Chair – CPSP

Nominating Committee

For 2024 the congregation elected a Nominating Committee of Gail Greene, Carly Twilley, Kay Jewett, John Barineau, and Eric Markman, ex-officio. The committee started meeting in August to identify candidates to prayerfully consider serving as Elders on the Session or Deacons on the Board of Deacons.

We are blessed that Sharon Brucker, Nancy Tucker, and Dottie Lund agreed to serve as Elders; Renee Leeson-Fuchs, Jan Moore, and A.T. Moffett agreed to serve as Deacons for the 2027 class; and Felleng Kalema taking an open position in the Deacons 2026 class. They were nominated and elected by the congregation on January 12.

The Nominating Committee is continuing to contact members to take an open position on the Board of Deacons Class of 2025, and members of the 2025 Nominating Committee.

John Barineau, Chair – Nominating

Physical Plant

A new air conditioning unit was installed to cool the sanctuary and preschool classrooms. This was a major endeavor that required a large crane, some serious tree work, and closing down part of Fairfax Boulevard. It has been functioning well and keeping the sanctuary comfortable.

The roof was found to be leaking, which required a call to a specialist due to the slate. The major leaks were repaired, and the work will continue to be done over the next two years.

The sump pump in Christina's office was backed up by a battery pack in case of a power loss during a storm in yet another attempt to keep the room dry.

Updated first aid kits were ordered and placed outside of the offices, kitchen, and narthex.

Lighting has been repaired/replaced/updated in Fellowship hall, the youth group room, preschool, and sanctuary.

Session has been discussing evaluating our church use policy to make the building more accessible to the community. We met with a contractor from Nowland Associates to walk through the building and get ideas to determine how to make the building more accessible while maintaining a level of safety for the preschool.

Chip Hazel, Jim Silvius, and Ron McKinney have been instrumental in initiating and following through with the multitude of projects that help maintain the integrity of our church.

Ryan Moffett, Chair – Physical Plant Committee



Installation of new air conditioning unit

Concord Preschool

2024 Overview

- Approximately 100 – 110 children enrolled.
- Ages: 1 year – Kindergarten.
- We offer “Preschool Only” 9:00 – 11:30am and “Full Time” 7:15am – 5:30pm. We also offer two-day, three-day, and five-day options.
- Approximately 30 – 35 staff, full- and part-time
- Music and gym classes
- Assessments for speech and developmental delays. We accept children with special needs and refer to Bush Early Education Center for additional services if applicable.
- We collect clothes for the Clothing Bank, food for our own Blessing box, and we also help with any outreach programs from the church. This year we collected close to 750 items for our food pantry.

Yearly Happenings

Last year we sadly lost three teachers that worked here between 17 and 35 years. It was a very emotionally tough year for all. **Thank goodness for Christina and Pastor Steve!** Because of their help and support we all made it through a difficult time.

Listed below are the activities that we offered this past year:

January

- Enrollment for following September and Summer Camp
- Parent/Teacher conferences
- *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* screening. Parents, at enrollment time, need to complete an online form each year for assessment for speech or cognitive delays.

February/March

- Spring Scholastic Book Fair in Fellowship Hall. Smaller than the Fall Book Fair

March/April

- Staff in-service training. All staff need training annually, including CPR and First Aid. Full-time staff need 18 hours and part-time staff need 9 hours per year. The Center closes one day a year for in-service training. We complete 5 hours on this day. The rest of the training is at various times and locations, paid for by the Center but on staff members’ own time.
- *Flower Power* fundraiser - Flowers to plant.

May

- End-of-year picnic
- Spring Concert
- Teacher Appreciation Dinner – put on for the teachers from the parents
- Kindergarten Graduation

June/July/August

- Summer Camp
- Vacation Bible School
- Fire Marshall visit to check all electrical systems, fire extinguishers, alarms, and exits.

September

- Class and individual pictures
- Re-licensing by the State of Delaware: A state inspector comes in and assesses the Preschool facility (physical plant) and all teacher and children's files, making sure we are up to date with background checks, physicals, and state-mandated paperwork.

October

- *Claire's Gourmet* fundraiser

November

- Food collection for Thanksgiving to be used for our Blessing Box
- Scholastic Book Fair
- Pasta Fundraiser – did okay, but probably will not continue

December

- *Share the Spirit* – collection of gifts for underprivileged families. We collected winter coats, hats, and gloves. Parents were very generous
- Lunch With Santa
- Christina does a St. Nicholas Day with the children
- Christmas Family Chapel
- Teachers' Christmas Breakfast



Christmas Family Chapel

***Chocolate Challenge contestants
promoting their entry***



Spiritual Formation

This year Concord saw an increase in Sunday attendance (particularly in the fall) by children, youth and families, as well as the addition of some new families. This has been encouraging and has enabled Concord to bring back a separate Sunday School class for older youth (Sunday Seekers Bible Study). We have also had an increase in adult volunteers to lead and assist with Sunday morning classes.

Due to participation in VBS by several 5th graders as jr. counselors and the bonding that occurred between youth, beginning in September, Concord included 5th graders in Youth Group (traditionally youth group has included 6-12 grade students), as well as a college freshman beginning in September 2024. This brought the total number of youth able to participate in Youth Group activities from eight youth to twelve.

Spiritual Formation also worked diligently, along with the head of Staff Relations, on updating Concord's Child Protection Policy.

Fellowship and Service opportunities that were highlights from 2024 include:

- **MLK Service Day** at Friendship House Clothing Bank for children, youth, and adults
- **Souper Bowl of Caring** food collection
- **Soup/Chili Cook Off and Chocolate Challenge** to raise money for Friendship House, Youth Mission, and Youth Conferences
- **Concord outdoor clean up and beautification**
 - Spreading mulch in the courtyard playground
 - Planting flowers in front of the sanctuary
 - Planting flowers in the large containers along the playground fence
- **Group trip to NYC** to see “Wicked the Musical”
- **Youth Sunday**
- **Highmark Walk** to benefit Friendship House
- **Vacation Bible School (VBS)** for children and youth of Concord Church and Preschool, community at large, and Life Chapel International, LCI

Mulching on Earth Day



- **Youth Misson week** serving Friendship House
 - Indoor deep cleaning of the FH offices
 - Sorting clothing and helping to get B Grade clothing in the truck (two days)
 - Yard work at one transitional housing location, clean out of basement at another
 - Group trip to the movies to see "Inside Out 2"
- **Adventfest** in coordination with Congregational Life
- **Christmas Drama** presented by the children and youth of Concord on Christmas Eve

In addition, Concord had one youth attend Massanetta Middle School Conference with NC Presbytery youth and one youth on the Leadership Committee for the same conference. In addition, two Concord youth attended the Montreat Youth Conference with NC Presbytery youth.

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Pressley, Director of Children's & Youth Ministries

***Cleaning Friendship House offices and
 making a new friend***



Adult Education

- **Mug & Muffin** continued to meet via Zoom Wednesday mornings during the year with about 6-8 participants, sharing joys and concerns and discussing the sermon text.
- **Mary Circle** is a women's Bible study group, meeting the first Monday of the month at 1:00pm September through June. We meet in the Sanctuary Lounge or, when weather permits, outside on the church grounds. This year there are eight members. We are always happy to welcome new members. We follow Presbyterian Women's publications for our Bible study. We are beginning a new study entitled "Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creatures." This year, as several years in the past, the Circle members and others have baked Christmas cookies for the men and women of Friendship House.



The Progress Pride flag displayed in our sanctuary is a visual representation of Concord's mission to be a welcoming and affirming congregation to the LGBTQIA+ community.

LGBTQIA+ Task Force

Session created this Task Force to advance one of the themes that emerged from our Mission Study process. While Concord has long been a welcoming congregation to members of the LGBTQIA+ community, Session wanted us to be openly affirming. The Task Force held three *Lunch & Learns*, has assembled resources, and continues to find ways to make Concord's welcome more visible. This work will continue in the coming year.

Staff Relations Committee

With Steve's retirement at the end of January, Staff Relations planned a farewell lunch with tributes and gifts for him. With Presbytery's help, we developed a job description and contract for a Bridge Pastor to work with us and prepare us to receive a new installed pastor. We interviewed candidates and were led to choose Eric Markman, who started with us at the beginning of March. We also extended the contract of Kathy Pownall as Parish Associate for the months of January through March to help us in the transition. Kathy retired at the end of March, and we organized a farewell and gifts for her at a Gathering Time. We also transitioned Sinae to a part-time employee from a contractual arrangement.

During the year, we revised the Personnel Manual and the Adult Protection Policy for Session approval. We also tried to keep informed and up to date with the changing Board of Pensions benefit package, which affects ordained staff.

In the fall, we did all but one of the staff annual reviews, and highlighted needs or concerns to Session. The remaining review will be done in January. With the talented and committed staff we have, reviews are always a time of sharing their desires and concerns, particularly this year in another period of transition.

We developed a tentative staff budget for 2025, given that we don't know when a new pastor will be installed or what the package for that person will be.

The Staff Relations Committee is grateful to our current staff for their expertise and creativity and their dedication to Concord.

Marj Johnson, Jan Moore, Nancy Tucker – Staff Relations Committee



Worship & Music

Thanks to Eric Markman, Matthew Pressley, Christina Pressley, Sinae Yun Lee, Margaret O’Boyle, Dennis Yoder, Bob Brown, Livestream Team, Worship & Music, Spiritual Formation, and Mission/Congregational Life Committees, Liturgists, Greeters, and Gathering Time volunteers. All of us continue to work together, enhancing our worship, music, and fellowship experiences.

A few of the Worship and Music highlights for 2024:

- Worship and Music ministries continue to reach out to all those in the congregation to participate fully in both worship and music, including youth/children/families, instrumentalists, greeters, liturgists, etc. We encourage and support inclusion of diverse genres with a commitment to quality across that diversity. In addition, we aspire to cultivate and encourage creative methods of expression and worship such as visual and performing arts, dance, movement, stillness, silence, prayer, and others, celebrating the many ways humans may be inspired by and drawn nearer to the Holy Spirit.
- Christina Pressley continues to offer Wondering Time for children early in Sunday services to consider the messages from weekly scripture, before leaving for the children’s Jesus and Me (J.A.M.) program.
- Gospel Music Sunday
- Easter with brass and timpani
- Special ensembles and employment of arrangements of “non-traditionally sacred” music
- In November, our music ministry added an invaluable team member in soprano Sujung Wang. She is our soprano soloist and choral leader. The captivating beauty of her singing, her high standards of professionalism, and her humble generosity are invaluable to our music ministry.
- The Concord Concert Series held its annual Christmas Gala featuring Handel’s *Messiah*, to a standing-room-only audience. Multiple committees and many volunteers provided a reception following the concert. We are already planning next year’s 20th anniversary celebration of this event.

- Concord continues building relationships with CoroAllegro, The Brandywine Blazers Big Band Ensemble, and others. We continue seeking other opportunities to collaborate with area performance organizations.
- Concord encourages and hosts aspiring musicians' recitals in our Sanctuary.
- This summer we again hosted The Blazers Big Band Jazz Ensemble for a free outdoor concert for the public.
- CoroAllegro, the region's preeminent chamber ensemble, makes Concord their rehearsal and performance home. Their December concert was complimented by singers and attendees alike for the acoustics, lighting, and logistical advantages of the Sanctuary as a venue for the performing arts.

The committee is comprised of both congregants and ministerial staff. Our focus is on two questions:

- *How do we create the possibility for an encounter with God through worship and music both in-person and online?*
- *Is our worship and music relevant in meeting the needs of Concord and the larger community?*

These questions continue expanding our ideas and practices as we continue to reimagine how to best serve everyone's personal and collective faith journeys. A few inclusions in 2024:

- Incorporating **multimedia resources** developed by *A Sanctified Art* to explore Biblical themes in worship and at home during seasons of Lent, Easter, Advent, and Christmas. This included mounted artwork, online displays, prayer cards, reflection booklets, bulletin covers, poetry, dance performances, children's materials, and liturgy resources.
- **Ash Wednesday** – midday parking lot "drive through" Imposition of Ashes by Kathie Pownall. Many preschool staff and neighborhood members appreciated the ashes and Lenten handout materials.
- Continued to add elements throughout all services that speak to **multiple senses** (sight, sound, movement, taste, and smell). Whether used in a pronounced or subtle way, these practices help all participants engage and provide meaning.
- Used **SignUp Genius** for volunteers to offer more seamless communication about greeters/ ushers, liturgists, and fellowship.

The Committee extends big thanks to the staff, committees, and many volunteers who make worship and music possible at Concord and in our community! ***Please help us reimagine how to be relevant for your needs and how to provide you with possibilities to encounter God in the coming year.***

Matthew Pressley, Minister of Music

Worship & Music Committee: Eric Markman (Pastor), Bob Brown, Jenny Godowsky, Carol Haas, Cynthia Miller, Matthew Pressley (Minister of Music), Raven Studer

Deacons in Charge: John Barineau, Richard Carter (ret.), Troy Gehret (ret.), Al Lund, Ron McKinney, A.T. and Ryan Moffett, Don Potter (ret.), Liz Rowe, Jim Silvius, Steve Studer

Gathering Time Fellowship: volunteers with leadership by Dottie Lund



Livestream Team

Three livestream team members meet in the Wizard Room every Sunday morning to provide this service for the congregation. The team also provides livestream for concerts, memorials services, and other events upon request if team members are available. Serving on the livestream crew does not require high tech skills. Anyone interested in a no-obligation, free trial visit in the Wizard Room to see if you would like to join the team should contact Ron McKinney, Carol Haas, or Nancy Tucker who serve as team leaders. **Livestream Team Members:** John Barineau, Bob Brown, Carol Haas, Dottie Harding, Chip Hazel, Alan Jewett, Marj Johnson, Ron McKinney, A.T. Moffett, Melanie Slezak, Nancy Tucker, Bonnie Twilley

Flower Guild

The Flower Guild is comprised of two overall co-chairs and other congregation members who sometimes assist as monthly chairs and at-large members. The group is responsible for decorating the Sanctuary for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter. Donations are solicited by monthly chairs (when applicable) and through *Concord Connects* and the weekly church bulletins. Orders are called in to florists and dedication information is forwarded to the church office. Parament changes are made according to the yearly liturgical colors schedule, and changes are also made due to events such as weddings or funerals. Oil candles are routinely checked and topped off as needed. Baptismal roses are also ordered as needed. Donations are collected to offset the cost of poinsettias and lilies. Handheld candles for Christmas Eve are ordered, cleaned, and assembled as needed.

Dottie Harding & Carol Schlegel, Co-Chairs – Flower Guild



***Getting the candles ready for the
Christmas Eve service***

2024 Financial Summary

Pledge/general donation income (\$293,479) was below budget, but Preschool and interest/dividend income were at or above budget.

Program spending and staff were under budget. Physical plant and Insurance expenses were over budget. Operating expenditure came in at 96% of budget. As a result, we transferred fewer funds from reserves than had been budgeted in order to BALANCE accounts. In all, about \$149,000 was drawn from existing funds (4.7% of financial assets) in 2024.

Balance Sheet (includes both church and preschool assets): Cash assets are lower than at the start of the year but still adequate for operational cash flow. The market increased this year. We liquidated a brokerage account to consolidate investments and generate cash, and non-endowment invested assets decreased 4.9%. However, Endowment assets increased (6.4%) despite withdrawing funds for special projects. Overall, financial assets decreased 0.4% during 2024.

2025 Budget

First page offers a rollup of major income and expense areas. The details are provided in Schedules A-G on succeeding pages.

General Benevolences are lower than last year. Staff budget is 12% larger than actual 2024 expense due to uncertainty with respect to a new pastor and moving some staffing cost from Worship & Music to Staff budget. Program areas are similar to last year. Physical Plant expenditures are budgeted to include \$45,000 expenditures for roof repairs and to replace air conditioning units in Fellowship Hall (offset by funds donated specifically for this purpose and from the Endowment Fund).

To cover these expenses, \$295,000 is budgeted for pledge/general donation income. We anticipate drawing \$177,000 from existing funds (Reserves, Housing, Endowment Funds, and CPSP), which is 5.6% of financial assets at the start of 2025.

Ron McKinney, Treasurer

December 31, 2024 Balance Sheet

	<u>Dec 31, 24</u>	<u>Dec 31, 23</u>	<u>% Change</u>
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings	262,254.36	292,530.29	-10.35%
Accounts Receivable	575.00	735.00	-21.77%
Other Current Assets			
3600 · Stock and Mutual Funds	1,404,518.47	1,476,711.90	-4.89%
3700 · Endowment Assets	1,501,503.79	1,410,908.66	6.42%
Total Other Current Assets	<u>2,906,022.26</u>	<u>2,887,620.56</u>	<u>0.64%</u>
Total Current Assets	3,168,851.62	3,180,885.85	-0.38%
Fixed Assets	<u>3,038,259.36</u>	<u>3,038,259.36</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>6,207,110.98</u>	<u>6,219,145.21</u>	<u>-0.19%</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities	91,263.24	69,185.82	31.91%
Equity			
4200 · General Fund Reserves	742,570.15	805,331.72	-7.79%
4300 · Prepaid Funds	60,880.00	68,830.00	-11.55%
446 · Youth Fund	4,103.18	6,315.64	-35.03%
447 · Worship Music & Arts Fund	7,325.90	6,760.90	8.36%
448 · CCS Fund	17,983.84	17,332.45	3.76%
450 · Memorial Fund	19,367.93	24,367.93	-20.52%
453 · CPSP Fund	190,144.89	198,194.89	-4.06%
457 · Housing Fund	51,309.06	61,309.06	-16.31%
458 · Flower Fund	3,087.47	2,942.64	4.92%
466 · Memorial Garden Fund	1,491.97	1,491.32	0.04%
467 · Projects Capital	10,981.00	18,750.00	-41.44%
472 · Endowment Fund	1,501,503.79	1,410,908.66	6.42%
479 · Credit card receipts	-73.75	6,874.00	101.07%
4800 · Preschool Funds	453,915.45	482,290.82	-5.88%
4900 · Property	3,038,259.36	3,038,259.36	0.0%
Net Income	<u>12,997.50</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
Total Equity	<u>6,115,847.74</u>	<u>6,149,959.39</u>	<u>-0.56%</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>6,207,110.98</u>	<u>6,219,145.21</u>	<u>-0.19%</u>

2025 Approved Budget for Congregation

	Income	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget
1	Pledged	296796	289036	295000
2	Non-pledged/Plate	3679	4443	5000
3	Preschool	91200	92400	92400
4	Rent	5558	5179	5200
5	Interest/Dividends	37079	36367	35000
6	Miscellaneous Income	4405	9246	4500
7	Transfer from other funds Sched F	149,225	149,878	178,000
8	Operating Income	587,942	586,549	615,100
9	<i>Designated Benevolences Sched G</i>	<i>109,164</i>	<i>87,118</i>	<i>86,200</i>
10	Total Income	697,106	673,667	701,300
	Expenses			
11	General Benevolences Sched A	47,747	44,238	43,500
12	Staff Expenses Sched B	369,362	347,624	390,000
13	Program Expenses Sched C	36,862	38,427	34,000
14	Physical Plant Exp Sched D	114,075	118,475	110,000
15	Finance and Stewardship Exp Sched E	19,896	37,785	37,600
16	Operating Expenses	587,942	586,549	615,100
17	<i>Designated Benevolences Sched G</i>	<i>109,164</i>	<i>87,118</i>	<i>86,200</i>
18	Total Expenses	697,106	673,667	701,300
19	SURPLUS / (SHORTFALL)	0	0	0

		2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget
	Schedule A General Benevolences			
20	General Assembly	6,000	5400	5100
21	Presbytery	9,000	8100	7500
22	Per Capita	4,940	4770	4700
23	Local Mission/Session	6000	5000	5000
24	Youth Mission Trip (via Youth Fund)	2,087	1198	1200
25	CPSP*	7,500	8250	8000
26	Preschool Scholarships*	12,220	11520	12000
27	Total:	47,747	44,238	43,500
	* from separate fund; see Sched F			
	Schedule B Staff Expenses			
30	Pastor - Salary & Housing	84375	81296	82400
31	Pastor - Benefits	32180	10631	40000
32	Subtotal -- Pastor:	116,555	91,927	122,400
33	Other staff and misc. expenses	252,807	255,697	267,600
34	Total:	369362	347,624	390,000
	Schedule C Program Expenses			
35	Spiritual Formation	2381	2918	2900
36	Worship & Music	3244	4788	3300
37	Congregational Life/Mission	713	400	600
38	Session	227	7896	100
39	Office Supplies	6879	5234	5500
40	Subtotal:	13,444	21,236	12,400
41	Youth Activities			1100
42	Flowers*	2,138	2,620	2600
43	Concord Concert Series*	8,593	10,544	15000
44	Music & Arts*	12,575	2,685	2800
45	Misc. Fund Expenses*	112	1342	100
47	Total:	36,862	38,427	34,000
48	* from separate fund; see Sched F			

		2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget
	Schedule D Physical Plant Expenses			
49	Maintenance and Supplies	10558	10537	10500
50	Utilities	28018	28460	30000
52	Security	1792	2389	2000
53	Housekeeping	17680	19780	20000
54	Information Technology	5555	2256	2500
55	Major Repairs/Projects	50472	55053	45000
56	Total	114,075	118,475	110,000
	Schedule E Finance & Stewardship Expenses			
57	Insurance	19014	37309	37000
58	Interpretation & Stewardship	0	0	100
59	Miscellaneous	882	476	500
60	Total:	19,896	37,785	37,600
	Schedule F Transfers from other funds			
61	General Reserves (investments)	39500	41096	72000
62	Housing Fund	12000	10000	12000
63	Endowment Fund	46500	36900	34000
64	Flowers	2138	2620	2600
65	Concord Concert Series	8593	10261	15000
66	Worship Music & Arts	12575	2685	2800
67	Memorial Fund	6000	6000	6000
68	Youth Fund	2087	2547	2300
69	CPSP (Benevolence)	7500	8250	8000
70	Preschool Scholarships (Benevolence)	12220	11520	12000
71	Project Capital		17900	11000
72	Other Funds	112	99	300
73	Total:	149,225	149,878	178,000

	Schedule G Designated Benevolences	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget
74	Deacons' Fund	17630	18674	18000
75	One Great Hour	2050	2005	2000
76	Christmas Offering	1235	1010	1000
77	Peacemaking	570	1550	1500
80	Habitat	3100	2100	200
81	Concord/Friendship House	3394	3039	3000
82	Other (e.g. Disaster Relief, Heifer Project)	16575	29840	30000
83	Wells (Water is Life Kenya, Marion Medical Mission)	32000	6000	6000
85	Blankets	2215	3050	3000
86	Youth Mission Trip	4235	160	2000
87	Share the Spirit -Guatemala Chickens	3500	3140	3000
88	Weekly Food Gleanings (in kind estimate)	7200	6500	6500
89	Clothing Bank (in kind estimate)	8000	10000	10000
90	Total (cash plus in kind)	109,164	87,118	86,200



Craft time at Vacation Bible School

CONCORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH & PRESCHOOL

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