



# Annual Report 2023

## The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church



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## Senior Pastor's Report: Rev. Molly Blythe Teichert

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? – Isaiah 43:19a*

God is always up to something new. In 2023 we felt the newness, still, of what it means to be church following the pandemic. We have long known the history of racism in Chevy Chase that excluded people of color from owning homes. Our Season of Justice focused on affordable housing. We learned more about redlining and the legacy of Senator Francis Newlands to whom the Chevy Chase fountain was dedicated. We felt God calling us to work with those seeking to have his name removed from the fountain. We rejoiced when the National Park Service agreed to do so.

The worship team continued to experiment with creative ways of bringing more of the Holy Spirit into our Sunday mornings. On Easter morning, Caseal Corkran danced us from tears and sadness into the bright joy of the risen Christ. All the while, we noticed more and more children coming up to the chancel for the Time with Children.



All through the summer we celebrated “A Future with Hope.” We planted “seeds of hope” in those early days of June and watched them take root and grow all summer. Some of those plants continue to flourish all these months later. As we looked toward a future with hope, we searched for a new director of the Week Day Nursery School. At just the right time, God brought us a Nicole Page, a wonderful addition to the church staff and excellent WNS director.

At Homecoming, we invited everyone to “Come to the Table” as we continued to explore new ways of doing worship. Many thanks to our Worship Team for their creative spirit! Many thanks to our amazing stewardship duo Susan Dentzer and Susan Brooks for helping us celebrate God’s sustaining presence in our lives and “Raise Us Up!” All the while, more and more children came up to the chancel area for our Time with Children.

We were all disappointed when our Acting Associate Pastor, Rev. Keith Thompson, announced that he would not apply for the Associate Pastor position, but would be leaving CCPC. Pastor Keith served our congregation well. He transformed Sunday School by introducing us to Godly Play. He loved leading Youth Group. He shared the presence of Christ with those he visited. He was a good colleague. While we miss Pastor Keith, we also know that God is doing a new thing, even now it is about to spring forth.

The year closed with a new sense of strength. Our worship services on Christmas Eve were attended by nearly a thousand people. We had great fun with a cow, donkey, and sheep at the Family services as we found “A Place for Jesus.” The music at our services of “Lessons and Carols” was sublime.

I am proud to be the pastor of this strong and vibrant church. We truly live into our vision “Christ our Center, Children our Blessing, and Justice our Passion” more and more each year. We look forward to 2024 knowing God is always up to something new.

*God’s Blessings, Rev. Molly Blythe Teichert*

## Session Clerks: Erik Woodworth & Tom Lutte

*The session shall have 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. (BoO G-3.0201)*

O when the saints, go marching in,  
O when the saints go marching in,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When the saints go marching in... ”

That traditional spiritual – New Orleans jazz band style – just popped into my head as I sit down to write this report. It’s both joyous and sad. Part trumpeting the triumphant entrance into the glory of the coming of the Lord, part tuba-paced dirge lightened up by a dancing clarinet.

Church pews are front rows to that often cheerful and sometimes challenging overlapping procession of life: births, baptisms, communions, graduations, new loves, marriages, moves, ordinations, breakups, new jobs, retirements, illnesses, recoveries and eventually, inevitably, death.

As clerks we record some of these as mere names, dates or numbers in session minutes and church registers. And yet there is so much more. So many stories to tell. Such as those of CCPC elders who went marching in this past year, Margaret Bacon in October and Linton Wray in December.

Who remembers being welcomed during an early visit to CCPC by Linton Wray (if Bob Day didn’t beat him to it)? Maybe it was his gentle southern accent (North Carolina?) that led us down that path, but it didn’t take long for him to figure out he and my father almost overlapped at Davidson College back in the day. When we made our statements of faith, there he was again. During the pandemic, he was back for Zoom ‘coffee hour’, happy to chat with whoever might join him. And just in September he was at the Men’s Steak Cookout with sons David and Walter. People like Linton are what make a congregation a close-knit community. May we all have a little Linton in us.

After losing Clerk Emeritus Norm Stant in 2022, we Clerks still had Margaret Bacon to turn to for institutional memory that stretched back decades with her photographic memory. And she was a prolific card-writer. She sent countless birthday cards every year to CCPC members (if you didn’t get one, maybe you aren’t over 70 years old yet). People like Margaret are what make a congregation a place where we celebrate each other. May we all have a little Margaret in us (though maybe with a greater urge to get off the phone...;-). Does anyone like to write cards?

### Session Retreat

Sessions have a life and rhythm of their own. While most of our regular meetings, typically held on the third Tuesday evening of the month for up to two hours, are focused on immediate congregational business or questions at hand, every so often we try and take time out to look at where we are as a church and where we want to go, what we’re good at and where we need to improve. To that end, we held a retreat in October 2023,

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The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church seeks to be a congregation where God is the center of our lives; we celebrate children and youth and equip them with faith to meet life's challenges; and we work for justice in local and global communities.  
***Christ our Center. Children our Blessing. Justice our Passion.***

traveling all the way to Geneva (Hall) for the occasion. We're very grateful to Linda Ertz, Christina Hudson, Carolyn Race and Deanna Troust who organized and led the retreat, and to both Chris and Linda Ertz for hosting a dinner afterwards.

Following much brainstorming, we settled on the following strategic priorities:

1. Grow a large team of leaders
2. Develop a communications strategy
3. Solidify and grow our foundation
4. Build relationships / fellowship

We each selected one of the four priorities to focus on as a team charged with making concrete suggestions to make progress towards these goals.

Meanwhile, we can each do our part: in keeping with priority #2, please read this 2023 Annual Report thoroughly as its pages highlight what groups within the church worked on and accomplished during 2023. In the spirit of priority #1, keep an eye out for where you'd like to fit in and bless us with your creativity, time and energy. In the process, you'll find ample opportunity for fellowship and relationship-building – priority #4. And in doing so, our foundation – priority #3 – will surely be solidified!

### 2023 MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

And now on to those records Clerks keep...

Combined Sunday worship service attendance in person and online during 2023 was relatively stable compared to 2022 at 195 vs. 198 the prior year. However, there was a substantial uptick in Christmas Eve service attendance in 2023 at 988 vs. 686 in 2022. Halleluja!

As for our official membership rolls, we recorded a slight increase over the past year to 505 members. In light of a decline in pledging units reported by the Stewardship Committee, we plan on reaching out to members who appear to be inactive and ask if they would like to remain members. Here are the 2023 membership statistics as reported to the Presbytery:

2023 Membership		2023		2022
<b>GAINS</b>		<b>Age Group</b>		
Prof/Reaf of Faith (18 & over)	8	17 and Under	12	12
Confirmands (17 & under)	5	18 – 25	35	36
Certificate of Transfer	2	26 – 40	74	68
Other	0	41 – 55	109	108
<b>2023 Total Gains</b>	<b>15</b>	56 – 70	109	116
<b>LOSSES</b>		Over 70	166	162
Death	7	<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Certificate of Transfer	2	Asian	18	19
Inactivity/Deletion	3	African American	14	11
<b>2022 Total Losses</b>	<b>12</b>	Hispanic/Latinx	11	10
<b>Ending Membership</b>	<b>505</b>	Middle Eastern	12	12
Female Members	300	Multiracial	4	1
Male Members	205	Native American	1	1
Non-Binary/Other Members	0	White	445	448

Finally, we thank Sawyer Massey (Youth Elder), Tom Lutte, Christy Schmidt and Deanna Troust as they rotate off the session this year. Each has made an imprint on our session and congregation as they have put their unique gifts and talents to the service of building God’s Kingdom, and will surely continue to do so in new ways, as they march on.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for the session, please share them with Erik Woodworth at 301.979.3092 or Tom Lutte at 202.374.6256.

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**Session Moderator**

Rev. Molly Blythe Teichert

**Ruling Elders**

**Class of 2024**

Susan Dentzer  
Tom Lutte  
Christy Schmidt  
Deanna Troust

**Youth Elder 2024**

Sawyer Massey

**Class of 2025**

Linda Ertz  
Christina Hudson  
Lynn Johnston  
Carolynn Race

**Class of 2026**

Kelsi Corkran  
Nancy Gwinn  
Ron Wick  
Erik Woodworth

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## **Board of Deacons: Marianne Toussaint & Elizabeth Woodworth**

*The Board of Deacons, led by current co-moderators Marianne Toussaint and Elizabeth Woodworth, under the guidance of Acting Associate Pastor Keith Thompson (until November 2023), serves the church in many ways with particular focus on congregational care and outreach. Its mission includes providing care and compassion within the congregation, organizing meal delivery for those in temporary need, keeping contact with members no longer able to participate fully in the life of the church, and arranging logistics for key congregational events.*

### **Deacon activity in 2023:**

Marianne Toussaint stayed on as Moderator of the Board of Deacons for 2023-2024. She was joined by Elizabeth Woodworth as co-moderator in the spring, providing leadership, vision, and coordination with church staff and clergy. Mike Miller, Sigride Lade, Karen Bartrice, Laura Kolar, John Silson, Mary Strauss, Bob and Margaret Garmin, and Brad Hunter joined or re-joined the Board for three-year terms expiring in 2026. The Board welcomed Harrison Ertz as a youth deacon for a one-year term. The Deacons met regularly on the second Tuesday of each month, either in person or via Zoom. Working with Acting Associate Pastor Keith Thompson, the board of deacons took steps to have more in-person engagement among the group and sought to improve coordination for deacon planning. In this regard, the board adopted a new communication application, Rallyhood.com, to have a one stop shop for communication, files, and sign-ups for deacon duties. The board also renewed some pre-pandemic efforts to better support congregational care.

### Congregational Care:

The Deacons continued efforts to resume traditional pre-pandemic activities and pastoral care duties, while maintaining some activities that they expanded during the pandemic like card writing and phone outreach. Of note, the deacons began offering rides to members unable to drive themselves to service. We currently have one member who regularly receives rides to and from Sunday service. This complements weekly flower deliveries, as well. The deacons continued to focus outreach on those members who may be homebound or otherwise unable to fully engage with our church community. Cards and flowers are also directed at new members, guests at services, to celebrate birthdays, new babies, and anniversaries, or to express gratitude and appreciation to congregants. The Deacons also provided meal deliveries for members in need.

Deacons organized the annual lilly and poinsettia deliveries at Easter and Christmas, respectively, again primarily focused on our homebound members. These events are generally an all hands event, as the board delivered flowers to 30-40 members over the holidays.

### **Congregational Events:**

The Deacons were pleased to continue organization of major church events including the confirmands' lunch and the 50-Year Members Reception. Both of these events were carried out with great success, and the Deacons plan to continue coordinating them going forward, though there will be no confirmand meal in 2024.

The Deacons took great care to honor our 50-year membership celebration, including soliciting stories from our longest members and inviting a couple to interact with our youth during the service was particularly meaningful and included stories of members' experiences during service. Following service members were invited to a coffee

hour with music by the youth choir (many of the older members joined in song, as well). Many members enjoyed reconnecting in Geneva Hall.

### **Goals and Challenges for 2024:**

The Board is thrilled to have Mary Strauss take over as moderator in the year ahead. Marianne Toussaint and Elizabeth Woodworth have reached the end of two consecutive terms serving on the Deacon board and therefore stepping down as required. The Deacons hope to install a new co-moderator as they welcome the new Board in April.

The Board of Deacons is eager to continue its service to CCPC, its congregation, and its wider community in 2024. The Deacons may also consider how to better serve and support our children and youth membership in the coming year. Our hope continues to be creating opportunities for more of our high schoolers to participate in the life of the church by working in conjunction with the Deacons.





## **Worship & Music: Ron Wick**

As we ended our first full program year of in-person services post-COVID, our worship program continued to “build back.”

We kicked off 2023 with a Season of Justice focused on the theme of Housing Justice. The series featured sermons from three guest speakers.

We celebrated Homecoming 2023 with our “Come to the Table” worship series. The sanctuary was adorned with a different decorated “table” on each of the four Sundays, representing the tables of love, joy, grace, and, on World Communion Sunday, peace. Congregants contributed to worship by sharing their faith and bringing items from home to symbolize what the tables meant to them. Later in the fall came our Stewardship Campaign, led by Susan Dentzer and Susan Brooks, with the inspiring theme “You Raise Us Up.” And our Advent season culminated with more than 980 in-person and online worshippers attending our five Christmas Eve services.

The Handbell Choir, Chancel Choir, and Chapel Choir (children and youth) rehearsed and offered their music throughout the year, focusing on music to highlight the readings. Our children and youth presented the spring musical, “David and the Giants,” as well as our annual Christmas pageant. We are most grateful for the extraordinary talents and dedication of Julie Vidrick Evans, our Director of Music, and Dr. Bobb Robinson, our Assistant Director of Music. Please contact either of them if you or your child would like to join the singing!

Our worship would not be possible without the teams of members who work behind the scenes. Special thanks to our teams of ushers for Sunday worship and memorial services, led by Pat Strauss and Greg Fudge; our terrific Flower Committee (see below); the Liturgists (who are usually ruling elders); the Communion Team (Ron Wick, Elizabeth Woodworth and Tricia Seduski – with a hand from members of the Sunday School classes) and our sound and lighting volunteer, Mark Sniegoski, who has been invaluable in helping us stream our worship services.

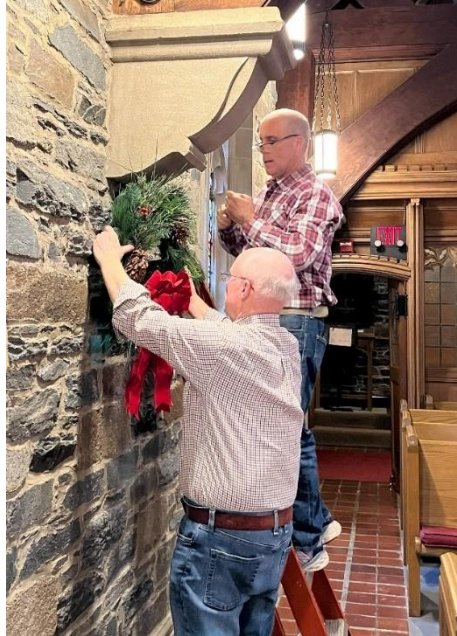
We’re looking for more volunteers to help with all of these ministry teams, and for new Worship & Music Committee members to help us with worship planning, evaluating and expanding our streaming capabilities, and brainstorming ideas to continue to offer vibrant and spiritually fulfilling services. Come join us! Please contact Ron Wick (202.257.6503)

### **Flower Committee**

Have you ever wondered how those beautiful flowers show up in our sanctuary or at your door, delivered by a Deacon? The Flower Committee provides flower arrangements every Sunday for the church chancel, in celebration of the wonder and beauty of nature that God has set before us.

Each member of the committee works individually or with another member to select the flowers and create arrangements that follow the liturgical calendar for the Sunday services. After the service is over, the flowers are taken down and bouquets are made for the Deacons to deliver to those who are sick, homebound or deserve a “thank you” for contributing to the church community.

For Christmas and Easter, however, the whole committee gathers to design and create arrangements to mark these special holidays.



When requested, the committee provides flowers for funerals, memorial services or other events. We also assist with other flower-related needs, such as corsages for 50 Year+ Members.

During Christmas and Easter, the Flower Committee canvases for donations for poinsettias and Easter lilies, in memory of/in honor of/in celebration of friends and family members of the congregation. The poinsettias and lilies are then given to congregation members in need of cheer by the Deacons.

As of February 2024, the Flower Committee has the following members: Janice Clark, Lauren Fernandez, Mark Fernandez, Julie Haifley, Nikki Heidepriem, Lynn Johnston (Chair), Chris Leahy, Ken Lowenberg, Anne Morin, Mimi Morse, Leah Roberts (Holidays), Nancy Rosan (Emeritus), Brittany Simpson, Christy Schmidt and Mark Sniegoski.

If you would like to join the Flower Committee, please contact Lynn Johnston at [ljohnston04@verizon.net](mailto:ljohnston04@verizon.net) or 703.915.4353.

### Concert Committee

The CCPC Concert Series completed its 52<sup>nd</sup> season with concerts by drummer and vibraphonist Chuck Redd, the Washington Balalaika Society, the Apollo Orchestra, and of course, the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Bach Marathon. The 53<sup>rd</sup> season opened this fall with performances by Patagonia Winds and the Maryland State Boychoir, as well as our annual Christmas Concert. The members of the Concert Committee are Julie Vidrick Evans (Staff Liaison), Phil Brown (Co-Chair), Dave Patterson (Co-Chair), Randall Kremer, Brad Hunter and Marissa Murphy. Please contact Julie Evans at the church office number if you'd like to get involved.



## **Congregational Life: Lynn Johnston**

Congregational Life encompasses several groups, all of which help connect members of the CCPC community to each other and to the church in some way or another.

### **Welcoming Team and New Member Mentors**

During the year, Pastor Molly offers opportunities for those seeking to become members of CCPC to learn more about the Presbyterian tradition as well as the responsibilities and rewards of becoming a member. Lynn Johnston coordinates the Inquirer's Sessions, which were offered in both Spring and Fall of 2023.

Elena and Kevin O'Quinn (children Isabel and Eloise) and Candace and Phillippe Rouchon (children Elodie and Phillippe Jr.) attended the class on 23 April 2023. Jim and Brittany Simpson served as mentors. The O'Quinns and the Rouchons joined the church on 14 May 2023.

The Fall Inquirer's Session was held on 24 September 2023. In attendance were John and Caroline Bressler (children Hans, Jack, and Leo) and Eric and Ashlee Bow (children Eleanor and Ellison). Tricia and Daniel Seduski and Doug Paetzell served as mentors. The Bresslers and the Bows joined the church on 8 October 2023.

If any of you would like to help welcome visitors or serve as mentors to new members, please contact Lynn (703.915.4353) to join the team.

### **Congregational Meals Team (Rita Hadden and Lynn Johnston)**

Rita Hadden and Lynn Johnston coordinate meals to celebrate fellowship at several events during the year. We are lucky to have the assistance of volunteers from the congregation, because without you we could not set the food on the table! These events are a wonderful way to connect with other members of the congregation, find out what is going on in church and learn what you have in common with those you meet.

Five congregational meals were held in 2023:

On 26 March 2023, the Congregational Meals Team served lunch after the Annual Meeting. The whole congregation was invited and over 80 people attended the lunch. Chicken was served, with curry sauce, lentils, rice, carrots, fresh berry salad and cake for dessert. Clara Fernandez, Melody Sooper, Bill Hadden, Lynn Johnston and Mary and Pat Strauss helped Rita with cooking and arranging the meal. Christina Hudson set the tables. Bob and Penny Garman served the food. Deanna Troust and Pricilla Huff helped with clean-up.

On 30 April 2023, new members who had joined between 2017 and 2022 were invited to lunch after the service. About 30 people planned to attend, including volunteers and children. The meal was marinated pork loin, bean salad, Caesar salad, fresh fruit salad, brownies and rugelach. Bill Hadden, Lynn Johnston and Joyce Zickler helped in the kitchen and with set-up. Helping with clean up were Christy Schmidt and Erik Woodworth.

Rita Hadden sets up for the reception after the Christmas Concert 2023.



The “Enjoy Your Summer” Lunch was held on 4 June 2023 with the whole congregation invited. Between 50 and 70 people were expected but about 100 people attended. Hot dogs and hamburgers, chips, oranges, salad and strawberries were served. Christina Hudson, Trudy Toussaint, Debbie Davenport and Lynn Johnston brought potato salad. Emily Mazella shopped for the food. Jim Simpson and Mark Fernandez volunteered to grill and other helpers included Mary Strauss, Christina Hudson and Erik Woodworth.

The Stewardship Lunch was held on 12 November 2023 immediately after the service, and the whole congregation was invited. About 80 people attended. The meal was lasagna (meat and veggie), fried chicken from Popeyes, grapes, salad, French bread and cake. Rita, Ingrid Dallaire and Lynn Johnston prepared the food and set-up the meal. Clean-up volunteers included Jim Simpson, Tricia Seduski, Susan Brooks and Susan Dentzer.

A reception was held after the Christmas Concert on the evening of 10 December 2023. The audience was invited to attend and about 80 people came. Flatbread sandwiches (chicken, ham and beef), grapes and strawberries, cheese, crackers, cake and cider were served. Several people, including Sue Martin and Priscilla Huff, provided home-made cookies. Volunteers Josie Stukes and Sue De La Torre helped with set-up and clean-up.

In addition to the meals hosted by the Connections Team, Susan and Arnie Brooks hosted a Homecoming BBQ at their home on 16 September 2023. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all.





Summer Lunch – June 2023



The team also recruits volunteers to provide light refreshments at coffee hour after the church service at 10:00 am. Rita Hadden worked tirelessly throughout 2023 to coordinate volunteers to provide food and/or host coffee hour. Thirty member households donated funding for coffee hour or volunteered to host coffee hour between April and December. Rita coordinated the schedule and sent out reminders. If a household donated funds or if no one had signed up for a Sunday, Rita bought and served the food. Attendance varied throughout the year with summer averaging about 40 people and the rest of the year somewhere between 40 and 70. Rita graciously agreed to continue to coordinate coffee hour through 2024.



The following members of the congregation helped make coffee hour a welcoming event:

Allen Blakey, Dottie Boerner, Susan Brooks, Bobbi Brown, John & Sally Cox, Debbie Davenport, Abigail Davis, Ann Duke, Linda Ertz, Carol Tucker-Foreman, Rita Hadden, Julie Haifley, Polly & Derek Hawver, Bill & Marie Hoffman, Grace Hyslop, Lynn Johnston, Melissa & Tom Jordan, Elizabeth King, Tracy Loh, Ken Lowenberg, Tamera Luzzato, Sue Martin, Emily Mazzela, Danielle Most & Peter Cherukuri, Susan Price, Candace & Philippe Rouchon, Nancy Rosan, Marianne Toussaint, Deanna Troust & Vic Fernandez, Erik & Liz Woodworth and the Earth Stewards.

We need your help in 2024 and beyond to make these fellowship events a reality! Please contact Rita Hadden ([rhadden@gmail.com](mailto:rhadden@gmail.com)) to volunteer.



### **Men's Steak Cookout (Mark Fernandez)**

The Men's Steak Cookout was held in the CCPC parking lot on Saturday, September 30, 2023, for annual Christian men's commensality. Thirty-five of us participated, including members of the custodial team, in the faithful fun, with a short worship exercise led by Pastor Keith, culminating in communal cleanup and bean bag toss. This Fall tradition is at least 25 years old, with a two-year hiatus because of COVID-19. We thank Mark Fernandez for organizing this event once again; please reach out to him to let him know you'd like to attend the next one – or even better to help him do the shopping! Mark's number is 202.557.8404.



### **Memorial Gatherings Committee**

While we have many types of gatherings at CCPC, the Memorial Gatherings Committee serves a singular and important function: when memorial services are held at CCPC, the families are offered the option of having CCPC prepare a reception with food and beverage following the service, for a very reasonable fee. The Gatherings Committee does the work to prepare and manage the reception. For example, they did a wonderful job hosting the reception following Margaret Bacon's memorial service on November 18<sup>th</sup>. This wonderful ministry has been chaired for many years by Dottie Boerner who is looking to transition out of the role. Whether you have special cooking skills or not, the Gatherings Committee is always looking for more saints to join their ranks. Please contact Julie Haifley (202.557.0341) for more information.

## Christ our Center

Many members of our community of faith meet in smaller groups on a regular basis outside of main worship services to get to know each other on a more personal level, deepen their relationship with God and develop their own sense of spirituality in a caring and supportive environment – and do some good for world around us in the process. Some of these groups have been gathering for years, some meet intermittently, and others are formed for short periods of time. And they even include icon painting!

In the Fall of 2023, Pastor Keith teamed up with Ruling Elder Kelsi Corkran to organize a couple discussion groups and enlisted Bill Hoffman to lead one of them. We organized these instead of “Dinners for Eight” which we had done occasionally in the past. Those two discussion groups are highlighted below, followed by longer-standing faith and spirituality groups.

### **Fall 2023 Small Group: Searching for Sunday**

Last Fall, Kelsi Corkran led a weekly small group discussion of Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church by Rachel Held Evans. The book describes Evans' faith journey through the seven sacraments of baptism, confession, holy orders, communion, confirmation, the anointing of the sick, and marriage. As the small group participants discussed Evans' perspective on each sacrament, they deepened their understanding of their own faith journeys and their connections with each other.

### **Fall 2023 Small Group: Reparations**

In October and November 2023, a small group of CCPC members met via Zoom to study and discuss the book Reparations: A Christian Call for Repentance and Repair by Duke L. Kwon and Gregory Thompson. The group, organized by Bill Hoffman, discussed the proposal for reparations to African Americans based on the damage done to their community and cultural identity under White supremacy.

The discussion focused on enslavement and its theft of African Americans' bodies, labor, wealth, history and identity, the failure of Reconstruction, and the continuous damage done by racial discrimination and violence against Black Americans throughout the history of the United States. The small group – and Kwon's and Thompson's book itself – struggled with how reparations might work, and how a system of monetary and other compensation could be created that would be viewed as fair by both victim and perpetrator.

While no formula for reparations was found, the group members discovered new ways to view the huge national costs imposed by White supremacy, the multifaceted thefts borne by African Americans, and the American church's role in that discrimination.

## Needlework Group



The Needlework Group was founded as an expression of CCPC's mission to support members, people associated in some way with the Church and others in times of joy or grief. We hand knit, crochet or quilt prayer shawls and lap robes distributed by the Deacons to comfort those needing an expression of God's warm love. Our hand-made baby blankets are given by the Pastors, Deacons, or Nursery School to joyfully celebrate births. The Needlework Group was founded by Ginny Spevak in 2007

or so. She had seen material about other such groups in churches and, as an avid knitter/quilter herself, started such a group at CCPC. The group decided to meet weekly on Tuesday mornings 12:30-2:30 pm in the CCPC Library, where we still meet. Ginny was our first coordinator. After Ginny's tragic murder, Florence Mills became coordinator.

Currently, active participants are Betty Beam, Sue Martin, Janice Clark, Sue de la Torre, Carol Lukaczer, Kim Kasprzak, Mimi Morse, Nancy Rosan, Rita Teresa and Florence Mills. We have also welcomed to our fellowship people who do not do needlework but want a warm group to spend time with. One such person was Alice Weicher who passed away in 2022. Attendance at weekly meetings varies between about three to eight or nine.

*Knitted and crocheted items are blessed during an October 2023 Sunday service.*



Two other smaller activities are the preparation of tiny baby blankets for the Perinatal Loss Program at Inova Fairfax Hospital and knitting or crocheting red scarves for young adults about 18 years old, who have aged out of the foster care system and have no family.

Larry Maxwell takes the tiny blankets to the hospital as part of a program to support parents going through the loss of a stillborn or a child dying soon after birth. These blankets range in size from 10 to 20 inches square. It is particularly difficult for parents to find suitable dignified blankets to wrap a very tiny stillborn when the available blankets of this size are for dolls.

Betty Beam manages the red scarf project. We make them, she gathers them up and sends them to an organization working with foster children for distribution around Valentine's Day.

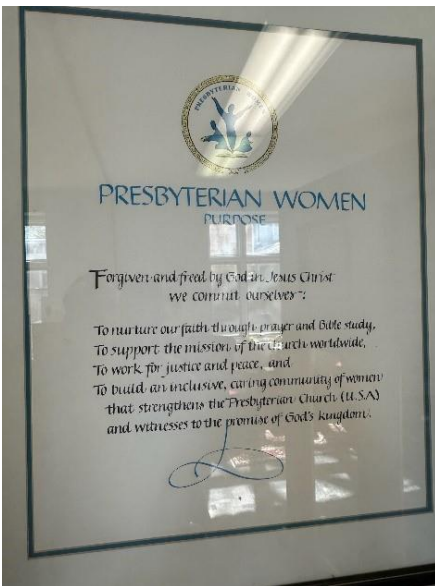




We like to think of our needlework as a tangible expression of God's love for the recipients. All our products distributed by CCPC have a printed label sewn in. It says "You do not go alone. We go together and our God goes with us." Art Sundstrom, pastor when the group was founded, used to conclude his services with this statement. In addition, all our products are dedicated during a Sunday worship service once a year or so with a Dedication written by Dr. Stephen Robertson, a former Associate Pastor.

The Needlework Group has a strong internal life of love and support for its members and others. We chat away, organize cards and visits for those we know need love and support. We have birthday and seasonal parties for members. This is not a stuffy, "religious" type group. When we had a little farewell party for Pastor Keith, we joked and talked a while about drinking whiskey!

The Needlework Group welcomes needleworkers of all levels; we have plenty of supplies and experienced needleworkers to help beginners advance their skills. Please contact Florence Mills (202.316.1776)



### Wednesday Circle

The Wednesday Circle, which meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 2:00 p.m. in CCPC's Geneva Hall, grew out of two circles that had met over many years. As the members grew older and it became difficult to meet in members' homes, the Wednesday Night Circle merged with Circle 11, and invited other women to join as well. Presently, there are 12-15 members who meet for fellowship, devotionals, and a brief program designed to get to know each other better. Each year, usually around Christmas, the Circle contributes the bulk of its dues to one or more charities. Leadership of the group rotates. The current co-leaders are Elizabeth King (301.318.2694) and Julie Haifley (202.557.0341).

### Faith Trek

With Zoom days behind us, Faith Trek meets again in person after the 10 a.m. service in the Conference Room on the 2nd floor. Members attend until noon for lively discussion of books that deal with contemporary and theological concerns.

Readings this past year included:

- Faith, a Journey for All by Jimmy Carter
- Sacred Nature by Karen Armstrong

- The Great Poems of the Bible by James L Kugel
- The Difficult Words of Jesus by Amy Jill-Levine

We share thoughts on the day's news and find relevance and context in the insights of these writers, but most of all we enjoy being with friends as we maneuver in a changing world. Others are welcome to join us at any time. Contact Allen Blakey at [allblakey@aol.com](mailto:allblakey@aol.com) or 703.622.3886

### Friday Morning Men's Spirituality Group

The group read the following texts since the last annual meeting:



- Armageddon: What the Bible Really Says about the End by Bart D. Ehrman

Myths about the apocalypse uncovered.

- Book of Amos

Amos 5:24 “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”

- Book of Micah

Micah 4:3 “He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will

they train for war anymore.”

Micah 6:8 “He has shown all you people what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

- Book of Hebrews

Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

- What Is Repentance? by R.C. Sproul

But what does repentance look like?

The group is currently reading My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer by Christian Wiman

“...if you believe at 50 what you believed at 15, then you have not lived — or have denied the reality of your life.”

The group meets religiously just about every Friday morning at 7:45 a.m. in Chadsey Hall. The only requirement for joining is to read, respond, and repent to the surprises that Christian faith journey uncovers.

For more information, please contact Pat Strauss at [pstrauss777@gmail.com](mailto:pstrauss777@gmail.com) or 202.747.4325.

## Earth Stewards Book Club

The Earth Stewards Book Club (open to all members of the congregation) began its reading of "The Climate Book" by Greta Thunberg. Please contact Lou Duff (202.251.1463).

## Wednesday Bible Study

Pastor-led Bible study continues to take place, both in person and by Zoom, on Wednesday mornings from 11:00 to noon. (No class is held on the first Wednesday of each month or during the summer and Christmas season.) Before Pastor Keith left, he and Pastor Molly took turns leading the class. Molly has led the class by herself since Keith's departure. The class generally studies one Bible book at a time using a study guide. Jeremiah has been studied using Walter Brueggemann's Returning from the Abyss, and Acts of the Apostles using Matthew L. Skinner's Acts: Catching up with the Spirit. The class has also studied Jesus's parables using Amy-Jill Levine's Short Stories by Jesus. About ten to twelve people typically participate. Additional participants are always welcome.

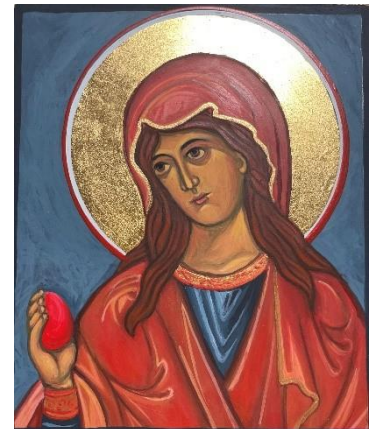
## Library Committee



There's a mobile bookshelf in Chadsey Hall. Have you noticed how the featured books magically change throughout the year? The friendly elves who do this work with care are none other than Sue Martin and Betty Beam. They also manage our church library on the ground floor a few steps from Chadsey Hall. The library is a very peaceful space that serves as a great meeting place for church groups such as the Needlework team and Earth Stewards and is full of great books you might want to explore. The Library Committee would love some new members, so if you're interested in learning more, please reach out to Sue Martin (202.277.3538) or Betty Beam (301.847.9985).

## Icon Painting

Pastor Molly's icon painting class resumed in the spring. Participants worked on completing an icon of Mary Magdalene. It is always a joy to gather and share in this spiritual practice and help one another give glory to God in sacred art. For more information or to sign up for the next class, please contact Pastor Molly (molly@chevyCHASEpc.org).



## Children Our Blessing

### Christian Education (Linda Ertz)

We had a joyful year for Christian Education in 2023. To celebrate the Lenten Season, the Sunday School had its Easter Festival on Palm Sunday, 4/2, when we learned more about Easter symbols, participated in the annual Easter Egg Hunt, and feasted on handmade decorated cookies – thanks to Mrs. Martin’s baking. Sunday School kicked off Sunday, 9/17, with the “Annual Welcome Back to Sunday School” in Chadsey Hall. This event was for students to “get to know” their teachers, fellow students, and have fun. The festival started during Sunday School and extended after the service in order to include all of the congregation. We did crafts, heard stories, decorated cards for our homebound members, and decorated Mrs. Martin’s famous cookies. We also had a joyous bounce house on October 1<sup>st</sup> to continue the opportunity for our youth to learn through play and build community.



We continue to use the Godly Play curriculum for our 5-year-old through fifth grade Sunday School students. The approach centers around children's spiritual formation based on creating a sacred space in which to present the stories of our faith, wonder about them together, and then allow the children open-ended opportunities to engage with the story on their own terms. The goal of Godly Play is to teach children the art of using the language of the Christian tradition to encounter God and find direction for their lives. Each week between 10-20 students meet with their teachers to develop trusted relationships with others, learn church is a fun, safe place, and practice and discover more about their faith.



For our older youth, we had Sunday School classes for Middle School and High School from our veteran teaching core. Pastor Keith led the way by driving our church van and taking our High Schoolers to the annual Montreat Youth Conference from July 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>. We shared this journey with St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church youth and the 2023 theme was “In Joy”. Student testimonials were presented during the July 16<sup>th</sup> service.

This year’s Deck the Halls, an intergenerational event to decorate the sanctuary Christmas tree, occurred on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. This year’s theme “The Trumpets of Christmas” was well represented. About 50 participants created popsicle stick and doily trumpeting angels, paper plate angels, and a CCPC record-long paper chain garland which wrapped around the tree more than 10 times. Keeping with the spirit of past Deck the Halls, we also had Mrs. Martin’s cookies.



Other Christmas season events included our annual Christmas Pageant and an intergenerational movie event. Dr Bobb Robinson blessed us all by working with our youth and producing an amazing Children’s Christmas Pageant on December 17<sup>th</sup>. On January 7<sup>th</sup>, we had an intergenerational pizza and movie night where over 30 people watched “Journey to Bethlehem”, a musical about the birth of Jesus, in Geneva Hall.



### Confirmation Class

Pastor Keith guided a group of five youths through the confirmation process using the PC USA curriculum We Believe. Despite one youth opting not to proceed, their significant contribution to the group dynamic was invaluable. The youths who professed their faith were Lea Perera, Benji Cherukuri, Charles Aluvale, and Matthew Stievater. The culmination of their journey, filled with profound faith exploration and personal growth, was marked by a weekend retreat from April 28-30. During this retreat, the confirmands led the Sunday worship while also enjoying the beach, downtown Bethany, table games, and Dollar General.

### Weekday Nursery School Program (Nicole Page, Director)

The CCPC Nursery School proudly introduces its new Director for the current school year, Mrs. Nicole Page, M.Ed. Mrs. Page assumed her role in July, succeeding Mrs. Noni Lindhal, and has demonstrated exceptional leadership, swiftly immersing herself in the vibrant community of the Nursery School. A testament to the success and popularity of our programs, all nine classrooms catering to children aged 18 months to PreK five-year-olds are operating at full enrollment. This achievement reflects the commitment and dedication of our 25-member strong team of caring and loving teachers and administrators. This school year has been marked by a strong emphasis on community building, fostering a sense of togetherness, and actively engaging with new families. We believe that creating a joyful community is fundamental to the success of our preschool environment. Recognizing the evolving landscape of educational requirements, the DC OSSE has implemented changes to credentialing. In response to this, our school community has been fortunate to receive generous donations from our families. These contributions are dedicated to supporting our esteemed teachers through the challenges posed by the credentialing adjustments. The school is committed to promoting their educational needs and facilitating a smooth transition during this process. The CCPC Nursery School extends its gratitude to our supportive community and looks forward to continuing our journey of excellence under the capable leadership of Mrs. Nicole Page. Together, we remain dedicated to providing a nurturing and enriching environment for our students and fostering a collaborative and inspiring atmosphere for our educators.



### After School Program (Kim Kasprzak, Kelley Abernathy – Directors)

Now in our 36<sup>th</sup> year, the CCPC After School Program is bigger than ever! We are fully enrolled at our max capacity of 80 students, with 9 full-time staff members. Due to our software provider change, we updated our childcare management software for the 2023-2024 school year, continuing online billing, automatic online payments and streamlining our financial operations. The process has gone smoothly both for our administrative team and for our families. Our ASP parents continue to appreciate and value the support and care we provide, and our students are thriving in our after-school environment! Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is underway! We anticipate being fully enrolled once again and are happy that we will have spaces available to be able to welcome some new families as we bid our beloved, graduating 5<sup>th</sup> graders adieu! We'd love to share a

favorite quote from one of our current families: "Thomas met all of his best friends at CCPC so it is his favorite place (and ours!)" To learn more about our program, please visit our website [www.ccpcasp.com](http://www.ccpcasp.com).

## Justice our Passion

### Mission Advisory Council (Christy Schmidt)

The Session acts as the “Mission Committee of the Whole” under advice from the Mission Advisory Council (MAC) comprised of Christy Schmidt (Chair), Ken Beam and Erik Woodworth. The MAC recommends policy and budget actions to the Session and coordinates across several mission program committees and groups. Mission is also responsible for four denomination-wide offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace and Global Witness, and Christmas Joy.

To assess our mission program, twenty members of the congregation gathered in December to brainstorm what does “Justice our Passion” mean to you? Their answer was sustained efforts and member commitment to energize our congregation and provide institutional support and funding. They emphasized the importance of intergenerational and cross faith community activities as well as engaging in advocacy to leverage our church’s power. The highest priority needs identified for our community and the world were insufficient housing, refugee issues, gun violence, hunger, and the destruction of our environment. Here are the programs of our church that demonstrate “Justice is Our Passion”:

### Transition Assistance Program



TAP has been helping homeless and working poor residents for 44 years from an office on the first floor of the church. We provide funds and guidance on applying for identification documents including birth certificates and IDs, without which a person cannot get a job, rent an apartment, or apply for benefits. We also provide Metro fare cards to help people get to new jobs or training programs. In 2023, we served 187 people in 347 visits. Along with the volunteer interviewers who assist clients, other church members make sandwiches that are appreciated by TAP clients who often travel long distances to get to TAP.

The MAC also made grants to non-profits in DC and Montgomery County, MD, that supply food, clothing, and shelter to people in need. Above is a picture of TAP

volunteers honoring leader Priscilla Skillman at a delicious lunch at La Ferme restaurant.

### Shikokho, Kenya

Our only direct international program beyond disaster relief, the program started over 30 years ago, and supplies support for three teachers at the Shikokho Primary School, 60 partial tuition scholarships for students at the Shikokho Secondary School, and a feeding program for preschool and primary school students at risk. The feeding programs provides a hot noon meal to about 210 children every school day. This program has become even more important due to a devastating multi-year drought and the war in Ukraine which has significantly limited food available. Please contact Jim Shelhamer for more information (240.204.2093).

**English as a Second Language Program** Each Sunday afternoon, volunteer tutors meet—either in-person or online—with newly arrived or extended-stay foreign nationals, providing a friendly, supportive environment and helping them improve their language skills. Emphasis is on conversation, written and oral comprehension and vocabulary building. During 2023, longtime ESL Chair Allen Blakey passed the baton to Melody Soopper. We thank Allen for his faithfulness to this cause, for the diligence, care and empathy he put into his hours and hours of teaching and for passing on a healthy and critical ministry to new leadership. For more information, please reach out to Melody (202.577.4878).

### **Disaster Relief and Denominational Mission**

Our congregation provided contributions to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for direct disaster relief nationally and throughout the world in addition to our donations to One Great Hour of Sharing. Further, CCPC made an annual contribution of \$20,000 to the Presbytery's mission activities.

### **Refugee Support**



In 2023, we continued a relationship started in 2022 when we assumed sponsorship of an Afghan refugee family of seven. Many hands and in-person hours helped them settle into housing, find employment, learn English, enroll their children in schools and access medical care. Along the way, we forged strong friendships and found time to have fun social time together.

Some church members also serve as volunteer tutors for Solutions in Hometown Connections, a nonprofit refugee services organization that grew out of CCPC's refugee work. The executive director and the board chair are both church members. SHC's mobile classroom was unveiled at a fundraiser at CCPC in 2023 with food prepared by the wives/mothers in the Afghan and Syrian families we sponsored. CCPC contributed \$15,000 of its mission budget to SHC during 2023. Please contact Merritt Groeschel (703.981.3655) to volunteer or for more information.

### **Earth Stewards**

The Earth Stewards areas of focus this year included plastics, native plants, and specialized recycling. They provided the congregation with the Earth Stewards Tips newsletter and specialty recycling drives for plastic planting pots and Christmas string lights. In April, the Earth Stewards planned our Earth Justice Sunday service. The group studies and works on a wide range of environmental issues, with an ever-growing sense of urgency as the climate crisis unfolds. Please contact Earth Stewards Chair Lou Duff to get involved (202.251.1463).

### **Youth Mission Activities**

Confirmation classes typically include mission-related activities. The 2023 class studied church mission projects such as gardening in Louisiana and scripture education in Minnesota. We are actively planning youth mission projects for 2024. Please contact Linda Ertz (202.679.3717) with any suggestions.

### **Gifts of Hope Alternative Gift Market**

This annual event allows congregation members to choose among several symbolic “gifts” as presents for friends and family. The total raised in 2023 was \$13,585 spread across six charities including Bread for the City, Interfaith Works, Shepherd’s Table, Heifer, Miriam’s Kitchen and Shikokho. Due to her assuming the co-chair role of the Stewardship Committee, Susan Brooks passed on the leadership of this ministry to Susan Price (202.302.4226) during 2023.

### **Friendship Place**

Church members participated in several projects for this homeless services organization. After church on February 12, we prepared bag lunches for 40 men living in La Casa, a permanent supportive housing facility. Our children decorated the bags with Happy Valentine’s Day messages. In July, we collected school supplies and stuffed 25 donated backpacks for children and teens in FP programs. Our Needlework Group regularly donate quilts for the children in The Brooks short term housing facility, and church members participated in the Friendship Place Walk for the Homeless in April. CCPC contributed funds from its mission budget to Friendship Place. For more information, please contact Susan Price (202.302.4226).

### **Season of Justice**

The 2023 theme was “housing justice” and included three guest preachers—Rev. Tim Warner pastor of Emory Grove United Methodist Church in Gaithersburg, MD; Rev. Dr. Derrick Harkins, Director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and Rabbi Aaron Alexander of Adas Israel Congregation and an affordable housing advocate for the Washington Interfaith Network. An Open Forum featured Jean-Michel Giraud, President & CEO of Friendship Place, and Scott Schenkelberg, President & CEO of Miriam’s Kitchen, who talked about housing and homelessness.

### **Affordable Housing**

CCPC is one of five congregations that are members of the Washington Interfaith Network’s Ward 3 Affordable Housing Group. At a fall Open Forum we discussed the lack of affordable housing in Chevy Chase and the efforts of WIN and other groups to create more. A priority is the inclusion of affordable housing, particularly at the Civic Core project where the city is replacing the Chevy Chase Library and Community Center with new facilities and affordable housing on top. For more information, please contact Susan Price (202.302.4226).

### **Inclusion and Racial Justice (Deanna Troust)**

During 2023, CCPC contributed \$3,000 from its mission budget to sponsor the February 2024 Harmony for Humanity benefit concert and \$3,000 to sponsor the Undesign the Redline (UTR) project on which Lynn Johnston led an Open Forum in October 2023. For more information about IRJ, or contact Lynn Johnston (703.915.4353) or Deanna Troust (202.251.7282)

In 2023, the Inclusion & Racial Justice Committee and Mission Advisory Council planned a successful, second benefit concert with Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland (HFHMM) and Rev. Tim Warner, featuring the [Jeremy Winston Chorale International](#). Branded **Harmony for Humanity**, the concert took place on February 4, 2024 and included the Adult Chorale from Congregation Beth El in a partnership that reflects our commitment to racial



equity, interfaith engagement – our 2024 Season of Justice focus – and increasing the availability of affordable housing in the DMV.



The performers sang to a packed sanctuary and generated comments like this one, from Tamera Luzzato:



*"I am hereby thanking and praising you three for playing a leadership role in one of my all-time favorite experiences in my nearly 30 years at our church. Yesterday's concert and words spoken about the importance of Habitat's work plus about our area's historic racism were beyond inspiring and meaningful. Beautiful music, an incredibly engaged full sanctuary of attendees and a fun and yummy meal with an impressive number of our congregants and our guests. Will be a memory that Alphie and I will cherish forever, as I bet will everyone else who was there. Many grateful blessings!"*



The post-concert meal was catered by Marsha Waters, a member of Rev. Warner's congregation, Emory Grove United Methodist Church. Funds from dinner ticket sales were donated to HFHMM to support a [planned development in the Emory Grove community](#) in Gaithersburg, MD., which was founded after the Civil War by formerly enslaved African Americans on land donated by a Quaker farmer.

The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church seeks to be a congregation where God is the center of our lives; we celebrate children and youth and equip them with faith to meet life's challenges; and we work for justice in local and global communities.  
**Christ our Center. Children our Blessing. Justice our Passion.**

### IRJ reports now accessible on chevychasepc.org and in Chadsey Hall

The committee also made updates to the IRJ history presentation and narrative documents that were created by our research team and presented during Open Forum sessions in 2022. They are now available on the CCPC website – here’s how to access them: If you’re reading this report on paper, you can scan this QR code with your phone, which will take you to the web page:



If you’re reading this report online, you can [click here to access the web page where they're featured](#).

Thanks to Lynn Johnston’s efforts, the presentation and QR code are **currently displayed on the stage in Chadsey Hall**. Check it out! If you have questions about any of these documents you can ask Lynn, Fred Schafrick or Bill Hoffman, who led the research effort.

### Undesign the Redline Exhibit and Open Forum



Ruling Elder Lynn Johnston has been hard at work on a CCPC-sponsored project called “Undesign the Redline” to prepare an informational exhibit and related events that are due to open in April 2024 illustrating the history and effects of race-based housing discrimination. We joined five other churches and synagogues and several non-profits to help plan and launch the UTR exhibit as a catalyst for education, conversation, and action to undo the injustices of racial segregation in our neighborhood and beyond. This is the first time that this entirely secular exhibit has been initiated by faith communities. Lynn led a very insightful Open

Forum on October 15th, 2023, to present her team’s work and plans. For more information, please use the above link or QR code, or contact Lynn Johnston (703.915.4353)

### Senator Newland’s name to be removed from the Chevy Chase Circle Fountain

With help from the Friends of Chevy Chase Circle, CCPC’s Session met with the National Park Service director in charge of the land inside the Circle. We’re happy to report that the NPS has authorized the removal of U.S. Senator Francis Newlands’ name from the fountain. As Molly shared in a January 2024 sermon, the Congressman, a land developer, helped establish Chevy Chase as an exclusively white and wealthy community through restrictive covenants and other tactics. Physical name removal procedures are still being worked out.

### Help Needed

Unfortunately, IRJ leader Deanna Troust’s Session term ends in April and she will be scaling back her church volunteer work to focus on her [new initiative](#). As such we are in need of help with the IRJ committee. If anyone from Session, Deacons or the congregation is interested in helping with or taking a leadership role in the IRJ Committee work, please email Deanna at [dltroustr@gmail.com](mailto:dltroustr@gmail.com). We promise to offer ample guidance and continuity.

## 2024 Stewardship Report: Susan Dentzer and Susan Sonnesyn Brooks, Co-Chairs

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up to more than I can be.*

The lyrics of this 2001 song, made famous in a version recorded by singer Josh Groban, comprised the core theme of the 2024 Stewardship Campaign at CCPC. Substituting the pronoun “us” for “me,” we heralded how God raises up all of us – as individuals and as a congregation – to be more than are because we are infused with God’s love, God’s peace that passes all understanding, and God’s grace.



**Sunday Services:** Over four Stewardship-themed Sundays in October and November 2023, Pastors Molly and (now former Associate Pastor) Keith preached sermons based on the song. In one – entitled “So We Can Stand On Mountains” – Pastor Molly noted that “Being fully alive and standing on the mountain is what God desires for each one of us... This is our Creator’s constant pull on our lives.” But sometimes, she said, the path up the mountain is steep – especially when we are forced to climb mountains in life that are not of our choosing. Yet, she added, “the assurance of our faith is that we do not climb alone.”

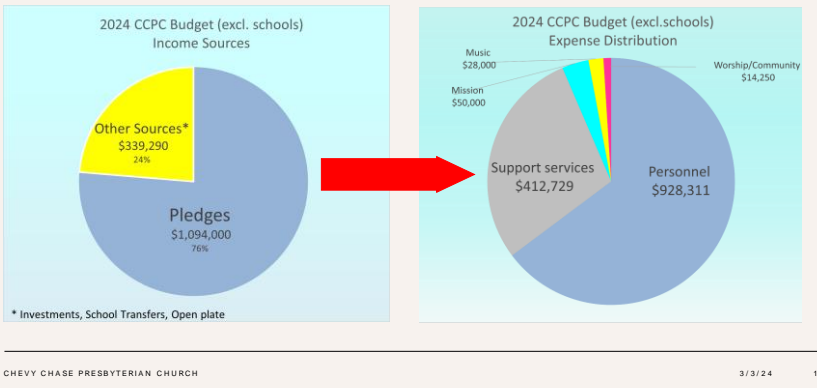
Accompanying these pastoral words and themes, Director of Music Julie Vidrick Evans arranged multiple Sundays’ worth of evocative music. The selections ranged from the classical – such as Felix Mendelssohn’s “Lift Thine Eyes (to the mountains)” from *Elija* – to the more contemporary, and culminated in a moving rendition of the theme song sung by Associate Director of Music Dr. Bobb Robinson. During the Time for Children, Stewardship Campaign Co-Chair Susan Sonnesyn-Brooks emphasized the many aspects of our church that stewardship makes possible.

CCPC members Chip and Joan Filson, Carol Tucker Foreman, Abby Davis, and Deana Troust gave “Faith Sharing” testimonies in person and on Zoom on being called by the Triune God to faith, and being inculcated at an early age in the critical role of stewardship in cementing that enduring faith. And on Dedication Sunday, November 12, after congregation members brought their pledge cards forward to the collection plate, we celebrated with a magnificent all-church lunch in Chadsey Hall, thanks to the dedication of planners and preparers par excellence, the Elders Rita Hadden and Lynn Johnston. **Financial Realities:** Even as we celebrated the congregation’s generosity in supporting the church, a key element of the campaign was making congregation members aware of the financial realities facing CCPC.

At one Sunday service, Elder and CCPC Corporation President Carolynn Race presented the outlines of the church’s budget. She noted that pledges are the largest single source of the church’s revenues, but even at more than \$1 million annually, they fall approximately \$400,000 short of covering all church expenditures (see graphics on next page). Other revenues that the church receives help to cover this funding gap, such as investment earnings from the endowment fund.

*Note: The “schools” references in the charts below refer to the fact that CCPC also incurs some expenses on behalf of, and receives some revenues and support, from the Weekday Nursery School and After-School program, not shown here.*

### CCPC's Budget: How Money is Raised and Spent

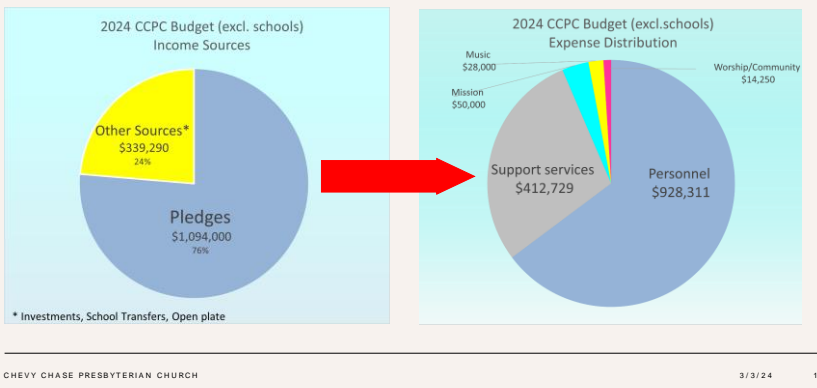


An all-church Zoom presentation and a pamphlet for the membership featured other key stewardship realities. The church faces rapidly rising costs in some areas for 2024, most notably for health insurance for CCPC staff; other forms of insurance to protect the church from exigencies such as fire and other damage; and utilities such as electricity.

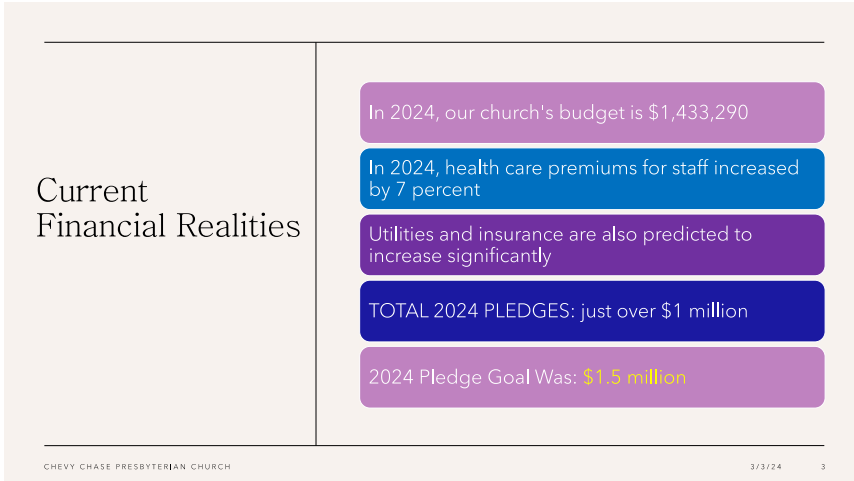
To cover all of the church's expenditures, and leave room for investments in other important activities, such as expanded mission outreach, an aggressive goal of raising \$1.5 million in pledges for 2024 was set. As we periodically emphasized to the congregation, achieving this goal would require far more CCPC pledges at roughly \$4,000 annually – a substantial change from the present, since approximately half of all pledges to CCPC are below this amount.

We are grateful that total pledges for 2024 reached \$1 million, but in the end, the aggressive goal of \$1.5 million was not achieved, as shown in the table below.

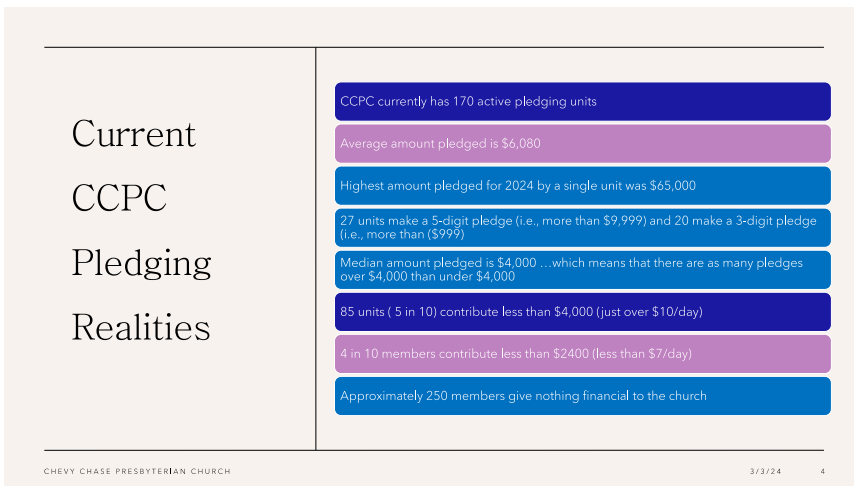
### CCPC's Budget: How Money is Raised and Spent



2023 Pledges Originally Made (as of 3/3/2023)	2023 Total Pledging Units	2023 Pledge Payments Recorded (as of 3/3/24)	2024 Pledges Made (as of 3/3/24)	2024 Total Pledging Units (as of 3/3/24)
\$1,094,043	201	\$1,111,447	\$1,028,130	170



Another cause for both joy and concern is the heavy concentration of pledge-giving among a relatively small number of congregation members. As shown in the chart above, CCPC has recorded 170 (CK) pledging units within a congregation of roughly 500 people – a decrease from the roughly 200 pledging units in 2023. The top 27 pledging units in 2024, who contribute \$10,000 or more annually – equal to 15 percent of those who pledge – contribute more than half (50 percent) of all pledge revenues.



Many of these pledging units at the top of the pledge distribution are composed of longtime members. We are grateful that, as they pass on, SOME of them are leaving legacies GIFTS to the church – often “endowing” their pledges so that their annual giving effectively continues in the future. At the same time, the ranks of these generous former members are not currently being replenished by younger people who are contributing at similarly high levels.

**Operating Realities:**

Another reality of each year’s stewardship campaign is that the work only begins with the four Stewardship Sundays each autumn, and continues aggressively into the first quarter of the following year. Substantial work by volunteers is needed to contact members and remind them not only to submit their pledges for the coming year – in this case, for 2024 -- but also to finalize their pledge payments for the previous year. A core lesson for the church is that we need to continue to expand the core group of people who, year after year, take the lead on this crucial aspect of the church’s life. We thank the many volunteers who helped in the 2024 campaign, especially Mary Frances Pearson, who provided enormous guidance and counsel, as well as a core of Session members who assisted in making calls and sending emails to church members. Sincerest thanks are also due Valerie Burrows, the church’s business manager, who has worked extraordinarily hard and well to update and refine the church’s financial and pledge records, and who produced the very helpful and informative graphics that were used in the campaign and are featured in this document.

Proportional Contributions Per Pledge Amount (#2)

((update for 2024))



CHEVY CHASE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3/3/24 7

As we reflect on the 2024 campaign and prepare for 2025, we will remind ourselves of Bible verses that capture the same spirit of the “You Raise Us Up” campaign theme:



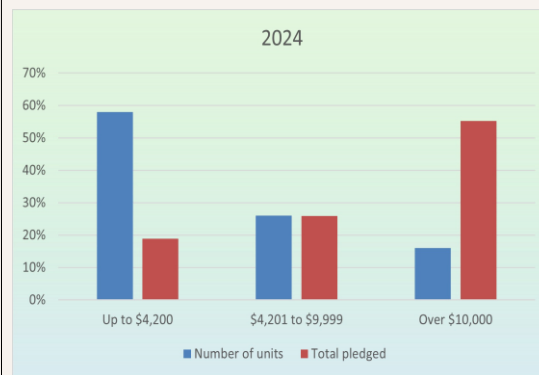
**Psalm 145: 14**

The Lord sustains all who fall  
And raises up all who are bowed down.

**I Corinthians 6:14**

God raised the Lord and will also raise us by God’s Power.

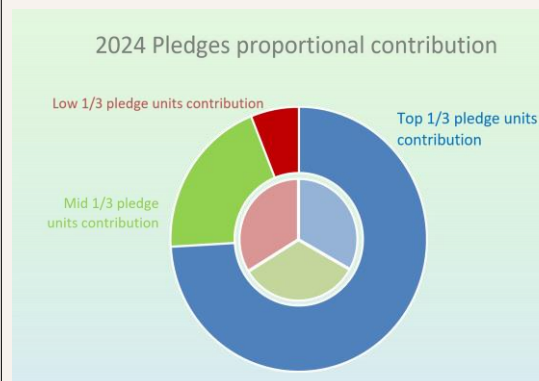
Proportional Contributions Per Pledge Amount (#1)



CHEVY CHASE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3/3/24 5

Proportional Contributions Per Pledge Amount (#2)



CHEVY CHASE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3/3/24 6

## Administration & Finance: Carolynn Race

Committee members: Carolynn Race (President), Chuck Alston, Kenneth M. Beam, Mark Fernandez, Jim Kasab, Lynn Johnston, John Weicher, Valerie Burrows CCPC business manager, & Tony Baez (Facilities Manager)

The Administration and Finance Committee and its sub-committees are charged with oversight of the financial operations of the church, the maintenance and safety of the building and grounds, and the overall support of the other committees charged with carrying out CCPC's mission in the community and the world. In 2023, our focus areas included continuing to streamline our business management practices, providing monthly budget and investment updates and offering a primer on CCPC's finances to Session, concentrating on building operations improvements, shifting back to more in-person and hybrid engagements, and managing our endowment and investment holdings. As you can see from the annual AUDITED 2023 financial information that follows, actual overall expenses tracked well to overall income, covering all obligations with a slight overage, which will be transferred to our general Church reserve.

### ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

As is highlighted in the table below, showing our 2023 financial information, our actual income (\$1,422,491) was above our budget (\$1,369,250) due in large part to increased pledges and supported by increased transfers from the CCPC nursery school and afterschool programs for use of facilities and staffing support (e.g., custodial coverage). Our actual expenses (\$1,383,851) were slightly above our budget (\$1,369,250) due to increased personnel costs required to remain competitive in this labor market, increased benefits costs and slightly higher administration and finance costs due to increased expenses for insurance.

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Proposed
Undesignated Giving	1,099,000	1,155,274	1,094,000
Invest Income	84,276	83,583	96,558
Use of Facilities	7,374	6,132	7,000
Other Income	145,260	177,503	189,348
Unanticipated Income	33,340		46,384
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,369,250</b>	<b>1,422,491</b>	<b>1,433,290</b>
Conn Steward Deacon	8,250	4,426	8,250

Chr. Ed. & Youth	6,000	4,000	6,000
Worship & Music	28,000	26,168	28,000
Mission	50,000	50,036	50,000
Support Services	280,600	301,004	314,859
Admin & Finance	104,400	94,601	97,870
Personnel	892,000	903,616	928,311
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>1,369,250</b>	<b>1,383,851</b>	<b>1,433,290</b>

## 2024 FINAL OPERATING BUDGET

The Final Operating Budget for FY 2024, totaling \$1,433,290 has been approved by Session. With gratitude to the Stewardship Campaign, we are projecting a stable undesignated giving given pledges received to date and included a placeholder for \$46,384 of unknown income (which could come in the form of increased pledges, or other giving, or investment returns) to balance our budget. This budget allows us to operate at slightly above “steady state.” We are awarding a cost-of-living adjustment of 4.4% to staff and the personnel budget assumes that our new Associate Pastor will start part-way through the year. The Committee is engaging with Personnel and Session on ways to manage benefits costs and continues to collaborate with the nursery school and after-school programs on appropriate space allocation, operations support and financial transfers.

## INVESTMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Investment Sub-Committee of the A&F met with our Vanguard investment advisor (due to a recent acquisition, this Vanguard function will become part of Mercer) to review performance reports, market trends/forecasts in September 2023 and in February 2024. The take-out of both meetings was that our investment policy had proven extremely successful in 2023 with a 17% growth and strong in the long term with an average annual growth of 7.3% since inception in July 2014. CCPC holds its investable funds in three specifically-focused accounts managed by Vanguard Institutional Advisory Services (VIAS) for the following purposes –

- To provide better synergies, flexibility and transparency of our endowment, memorial, and other investment funds.
- To provide a predictable annual earnings stream to help underwrite the continuing costs of church program outreach, on-going routine facility maintenance, and longer-term facility capital needs.
- To provide a specific and visible framework for the Planned Giving Committee to better channel bequests and large-scale special gifts.

The church funds are invested for the long-term. We do not attempt to ‘chase’ or ‘time’ the markets



when making our investment decisions; quarterly earnings withdrawals are taken on set dates while any “new” monies are transferred into the Vanguard funds within seven business days of receipt. In addition, we hold a smaller portion of funds, invested in short-term certificates of deposit, at PNC investments. As we shared in our 2022 report, following guidance from our accounting firm, Anderson Davis CPA, we applied for this Employee Retention Tax Credit established during the coronavirus pandemic. We received \$560,179 in 2023 and are expecting potentially up to \$160,000 in 2024. These funds are invested in certificates of deposits at PNC producing a return of about 5.4% until Session reviews and approves in 2024 a joint recommendation of the A&F and Personnel Committees recommending its future investment and use.

## VANGUARD FUNDS

### Vanguard Endowment Fund

These funds include moneys received from the congregation to ensure continuation of the Church mission as well as funds earned by WNS and ASP over their years with their respective activities. Investment holdings in this fund are postured for the long-term earnings are used to:

- Help underwrite the annual program outreach budget
- Provide a perpetual pipe organ maintenance fund
- Off-set costs of routine and large-scale facility and equipment repair and/or replacement

Balance as of 12/31/23 = \$4,844,774

### Vanguard Short/Intermediate Term Fund

This fund of near-liquid assets is maintained as a ‘safety net’ should daily cash on hand fall below needed levels, while still providing a reasonable rate of return

Balance as of 12/31/23 = \$431,049

### Vanguard Restricted/Governments Fund

This fund’s sole asset consists of the more liquid portion of the Columbarium maintenance balance as of 12/31/23 = \$10,337 For additional information, please contact the Business Manager: [businessmanager@chevyCHASE.org](mailto:businessmanager@chevyCHASE.org).

## AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE (Auditors: Mark Fernandez, Rebecca Fitz, and Richard Riegel)

Our Audit Committee, which is comprised of the auditors approved by the congregation, who each serve three year terms, meets with our outside auditor and CCPC Business Manager on a regular basis to supervise the accounts and records of the CCPC Business Office. In addition to this supervisory role, members of this committee conduct quarterly internal audits of selected CCPC accounting records following a very detailed list of procedures that have been outlined and approved by Session and our external auditor. Of note, Dick Riegel will be stepping down from the audit committee with over two decades of work on the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church's business operations. Dick reorganized the business manager role that previously included facility management, jointly managed over the transitions of four business managers, put order and focus to the work of the committee with a structured approach, re-wrote the "Business Management Continuity of Operations Manual," and did the business manager's job for over a year. His stewardship of the congregation's finances yielded clean external audit letters. His dedication and enthusiasm were driven by faith.

## Personnel: Christy Schmidt

### Personnel Committee

The 2023 personnel committee consisted of Christy Schmidt, Interim Chair, Tamera Luzzatto, Erik Woodworth, Greg Miller, and the Rev. Molly Blythe Teichert, Senior Pastor. Brad Hunter joined the committee as Chair in January 2024.

The committee meets monthly to address issues that impact church personnel. We conduct annual performance reviews for all staff. Input is received from church congregants. We are grateful for your input as many of you work directly with staff and provide great insight into their performance. The review process is based on written goals that are aligned with the CCPC Vision and Strategic Plan. The reviewers' individual comments are combined into one summary document. Each review concludes with the summary document, the staff's written assessment of their performance and the Head of Staff's comments.

Pastor Molly continues to lead the Congregation to grow and develop spiritually. She is constantly trying to identify ways to grow church membership and is visionary in her focus on ensuring the long-term health of the church. She has led the Congregation to embrace hybrid worship that has allowed members who prefer to engage in digital worship during the Pandemic to continue to do so while ensuring the we could welcome members back to the sanctuary as safely as possible.

In November, Rev. Keith Thompson, our interim associate pastor, decided to pursue a new career path outside of serving in a congregation. We are so grateful for his pastoral care and leadership: he reinvigorated our youth program, led the Deacons in their strong commitment and work caring for the congregation, and stepped up when the senior pastor took a leave of absence for surgery. We celebrated his time with us at a reception in December.

The search for a permanent Associate Pastor continues after the Congregation approved the formation of an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee in mid-2023. Their report is included separately, below, as they are independent of the Personnel Committee.

Please contact Brad Hunter (240.498.1428) with any questions for the Personnel Committee.

### Weekday Nursery School Personnel

This was a year of major change for the Weekday Nursery School. Noni Lindahl, who led the school for the last 6 years, retired in June. Her energy and creativity greatly enhanced the WNS offering for the children, parents and our surrounding community. She kept the school operating throughout the pandemic, oversaw the installation of a marvelous new playground, and left a strong foundation for the school's continued health and growth. Here is Noni's retirement message:

*Almost 6 years ago, I answered the call to lead CCPC's nursery school into a new era. I am proud of all that has been accomplished, most especially keeping school open in-person throughout the global pandemic. I plan to retire at the end of this school year. Like many have done, the pandemic allowed me to consider how to best live life. Now is the*

*time for me to have more flexibility and a schedule that allows ample time with my ninety-year-old mom and my three daughters who all live out of town.*

*I am honored to have been able to spend nearly 30 years at CCPC Nursery School and am confident the school is well positioned for continued success in the years ahead. Our teachers are so talented, they come to work every day with minds full of creative lessons and hearts full of love for each child. Our administrative team runs effectively and efficiently, and our families are the strong and sure foundation for continued growth through the next decade. CCPC Nursery School is thriving.*

*I can't tell you how much I will miss you all... each of you have enriched my life and my time as Director. It is a blessing I will treasure forever. I plan to enjoy each day this spring and savor all that makes CCPC a beloved and enduring institution.*

In preparation for Noni's retirement, the Personnel Committee launched a Search Committee chaired by Christy Schmidt along with Sarah Smith, Paula Fudge and Greg Miller. They were joined by a WNS parent for the final interviews.



We were delighted to find a passionate early childhood educator in Nicole Page our new WNS Director. She holds a Master of Science degree in early childhood studies and has nearly two decades of experience in early childhood education. In her own words:

*"I firmly believe that every child is a unique individual with boundless potential, and I am dedicated to fostering their curiosity, creativity, and love for learning."*

*"I strongly believe in the power of collaboration and communication with parents, educators, and community stakeholders to foster a strong support system for our preschool community."*

She previously served as the director of a church-based preschool in Annandale, Virginia, where she has worked for the last six years. Initially a morning-only preschool, the program expanded significantly during Nicole's tenure in response to the needs of the community during the pandemic. Under Nicole's leadership the school successfully grew into a full day program which now includes elementary school age before- and after-care. In her most recent position Nicole managed a team of over 20 staff members and filled the enrollment capacity with nearly 125 children under her supervision. She also successfully managed the county permit process for the expansion of the program's capacity to 230 students.

The Personnel Committee also established an on-boarding committee (Sarah Smith, Chair, assisted by Christy Schmidt) to assist Nicole in her first months. We also developed the bylaws for a new committee reporting to Session which will function like a Board for the nursery school. It will be comprised of the Director (non-voting), the Senior Pastor, a ruling elder (as Chair), a CCPC member (preferably from A&F committee), and two current or very recent school parents. We are filling the positions currently. Anyone interested should contact Sarah Smith (202.441.2129).

### **Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (Mark Fernandez & Rebecca Iverson-Hunter)**

The members of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) have been diligently working since August, well before Pastor Keith's last sermon, on the search for a new associate pastor. This five-member committee from CCPC is fortunate to have a volunteer advisor from the National Capital Presbytery, whose guidance has been invaluable in navigating both the hiring process and, more importantly, the discernment process. Meeting regularly, primarily on Mondays, the APNC reviews potential candidates sourced through the Presbyterian Church (USA) website known as the "Church Leadership Connection" (CLC), which is sort of like LinkedIn or Indeed for Presbyterians only! However, our posting on the CLC website was merely the first step. Encouragingly, the interviews conducted by the committee thus far have revealed an abundance of exceptional faith-based talent precisely when we need it most. We humbly request prayers as we proceed through the discernment process to identify the ideal candidate.

The members of the APNC are as follows:

- Benji Cherukuri (9th grade, confirmed 2023)
- Mark Fernandez (13-year CCPC disciple)
- Julie Haifley (46 year CCPC disciple)
- Rebecca Iverson-Hunter (lifelong Presbyterian)
- Ken Lowenberg (33-year CCPC disciple and former CCPC music director)
- Rev. Rose Wayland (Committee on Ministry of the National Capital Presbytery)

