

**First Presbyterian
Church of
Greenwich**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2024**

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INTERIM PASTOR'S REPORT

Rev. Dr. Lindley DeGarmo

2024 marked the second year of transitional pastoral leadership for First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich and my first year as your interim pastor. One of my main objectives this year was to create a sense of stability and forward momentum in the worship and work of the congregation. I hope you will find in reviewing the material in this Annual Report that we have been largely successful in doing so.

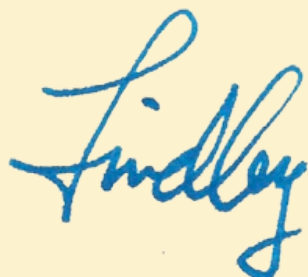
Credit for these for our accomplishments this year is widely shared. We are blessed with a highly capable and motivated Session of elders, all of whom chair committees and provide hands-on leadership of their portfolios. They are supported energetically by a dedicated staff that loves the church and its people. It has been a privilege and joy to work with all these folks. And let us not forget the important ministries of the Board of Deacons, which reorganized this year to provide more proactive and effective care for our members in need.

My role as interim pastor also involves guiding First Presbyterian through the sometimes-cumbersome Presbyterian process of finding a new permanent pastor. As preparation for electing a Pastor Nominating Committee, an ad hoc Congregational Assessment Committee oversaw at mid-year an assessment of our congregational health along with areas of challenge and potential growth. They surveyed the congregation in order to understand the range of views that exist at FPCG and the possibilities, willingness, capacity and energy for moving our ministry into the future. The results suggest that the church is primed to work toward greater vitality, drawing on latent gifts such as compassion, healing, and service to others. We show particular strengths and steady improvement over recent years in our Worship, Music and Education ministries. Several growing edges were also identified, including hospitality, governance transparency and stewardship.

It will now be the work of the PNC, which the congregation elected on November 17, to determine in light of this information the qualities and experience needed in a new senior pastor. They will then do the hard work of seeking and evaluating candidates for that position, with a goal of having a new, installed pastor in place toward the end of this year. I encourage us all to pray regularly for the PNC and to grant them the grace of patience as they do their important job.

Life at First Presbyterian goes on against the background of rapid and disorienting change in the larger world. We seem to have entered a period of questioning about fundamental civic values. It is easy to feel at sea. At such a time as this, the enduring truths of our faith, not least the constancy of God's inclusive love and our call to make it visible in the world, are more than ever our touchstone and our mandate.

The Rev. Dr. Lindley G. DeGarmo



ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S REPORT

Rev. Andre Castillo

Dear Church Family,

As we turn the page on 2024, it is remarkable to imagine that we are now a full quarter century into the new millennium. And I recognize full well that I am dating myself by still referring to the millennium as “new”!

It is also hard to believe that 2024 was the conclusion of a sabbatical cycle in my ministry with you, which means I am now in my eighth year of service at FPCG. As I reflect on our last eight years together, through all the wonderful and challenging moments, a fascinating research study comes to mind, which I think beautifully illustrates the character of this congregation.

In the 1970s, researchers conducted a study on addictive tendencies in lab rats. Placing a rat in a cage with the choice between regular water and water laced with illicit drugs, the rat would eventually and inevitably opt for the drugged water, to the point of its own demise. The results were replicated time and time again, leading researchers to conclude that, when presented with the choice, the rats would predictably follow a drug addiction to its terminable end.

But one Dr. Bruce Alexander suspected the experiment was looking at addictive compulsions all wrong. He replicated the experiment, but this time, within a curated environment he called “Rat Park”: an dynamic ecosystem with colored balls and active games for the rats to play. Most importantly, he pointed out that the rats in the former experiment had been caged in isolation, so he filled Rat Park with companions. The same options were made available for the rats’ hydration choices: one source of clear, fresh water, and one source of water laced with drugs. His findings were striking: the rats who lived in community with others opted exclusively for the regular water, forsaking the laced alternative. The overdose rate dropped from 100% to precisely 0%.

The importance of a loving community of people with whom we journey through this life cannot be overstated. We were created for this, and First Presbyterian Church is a place where the mutually loving and supportive aspect of God’s nature is lived out in full view. You will read in the pages that follow about so many ways we have connected as a congregation this year, but it is only a brief snapshot of the fullness of life at FPCG.

There is no mistaking that this is a community settled firmly in its love for one another, and consequently manifesting the abundant life we were all created to enjoy. Thank you, for the joy of being your pastor, and for the privilege of being a witness to God’s love at work in your midst.

Yours in service,



ADULT EDUCATION

Debra Mecky

Adult Education engages members, friends and the wider Greenwich community in the lifelong pursuit of knowledge. FPCG's faith and discipleship grow through programs that support the deepening of our faith and the intensifying of our commitment to our Christian mission. We explore current events, the arts, history and a broad range of topics that help us to dive deeper in our faith as we engage our hearts and minds in great conversation.

In 2024 adult education programs were planned by FPCG Committee members Debra Mecky, Elder; Kathryn Shorts, Delano Copprue and Rev. Dr. Lindley DeGarmo. The committee thanks our many presenters and helpers: David DeWahl, Hagar Chemali, Constance Royster, Nancy Maasbach, Stephanie Barnett, Simone Quartey, Chip Dobbs-Allsop, Rabbi David and Marie Rosen of Shir Ami, Derrick McQueen, F&ORB, Winnie Staniford, Caroline Worra and the FPCG soloists and choir; Dr. Paul Gaffney, Joseph O'Callaghan, Erin Keys and Randy Ante.

Thank you also to Rene Lux for leading the spring and fall seasons of "Fellowship Around the Bible" (FAB), to Colleen Giambo for organizing the Women's Book Group discussions, and to Rev. Dr. Lindley DeGarmo for offering Virtual Bible Studies on Monday nights in Spring 2024.

The Year in Review

Jan 7 Meet the Minister, David DeWahl with the Rev. Dr. Lindley De Garmo (32)

Jan 13 La Boheme Metropolitan Opera Trip (20)

Feb 4 Conversation with Hagar Chemali on Israel-Gaza conflict (50)

Feb 7 Constance Royster on Constance Baker Motley co-sponsored by Greenwich Historical Society, YWCA and F&ORB (28)

Mar 3 Chip Dobbs-Allsop on the King James Bible (24)

Apr 23 Second Seder presented by Rabbi David of Shir Ami (70)

May 26 Derrick McQueen on Jesus & the Disinherited presented by F&ORB (22)

Sept 15 Barbara Pritchard Baker on first-hand stories of Ukrainian Refugees (40)

Sept 29 Delano Copprue on John Winthrop's Model of Christian Charity (24)

Oct 13 Il Trovatore Opera Preview with Dr. Caroline Worra, Soloists and Choir (60)

Oct 26 Il Trovatore Metropolitan Opera Trip (19)

Nov 10 Dr. Paul Gaffney on The Galileo Affair (29)

Dec 8 Joseph O'Callaghan on Being with Dying: The Journey We All Must Take (27)



BUILDING & PROPERTY

Stephanie Schnabel

We continue to be extraordinarily blessed to have strength in our facilities team, led by Randy Ante. In partnership with our Business Manager, Erin Moore, they have addressed the facilities and safety needs of the congregation and Nursery School cost effectively, recognizing that our church building is aging. In addition to the regular cleaning, event preparation and breakdown, preventative and regular maintenance for our buildings and grounds, during 2024 the facilities team tended to major projects including repairs and replacements to the AV, HVAC, telecom systems, and buildings.

Assessments have been conducted to estimate the longer term repair/replacement needs and costs of the infrastructure. There is also an ongoing assessment as to the physical needs of the Nursery School, to ensure that it cost effectively continues to support the special, nurturing experience and can support outstanding programmatic offerings. In addition, the building usage policies and rate cards have been revisited and recommendations are being refined for Committee and Session approval.

I would like to thank the Staff and Committee for their work during 2024, and I look forward to collaborating with them in 2025 to ensure that the building and grounds meet the needs of our Church and Nursery School communities, despite significant budgetary pressures.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Lynda Cha & Ryan Kim

2024 was an amazing year thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, the openness and joy of our children, the love and dedication of our parents and above all, the wonderful grace of God. Under the leadership of Andre Castillo, Associate Minister, and Tara Church, Director of Children's Ministries, our dynamic programming helped our little ones build their knowledge about God and establish stronger relationships with Him. Children and Youth Ministries hosted various events throughout the year that not only included young families, but church members of all ages and backgrounds.

2024 Highlights

Sunday School
Vacation Bible Camp
Confirmation
Middle School Ministries
High School Ministries



2024 Events

Confirmation Sunday
Confirmation Kick off
All Church Bonfire
Wednesdays at FPCG
Children & Youth Sunday
PJs & Pancakes
Vacation Bible Camp
Midnight Runs
Parents Night Out
Advent Fair
Middle School Christmas Party
Kids in Crisis Wish List Gifts from Target
Caroling at the Mews
Children & Family Led Christmas Eve Service
Annual Christmas Pageant



CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Layne Grindal

At its April 9 meeting, Session formed an ad hoc Congregational Assessment Committee to conduct a mission review of FPCG consistent with Presbytery of Southern New England (PSNE) policy, before the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The purpose of the mission review was to gather a holistic view of the current and future ministry of the church that will guide the PNC in their search: who we are as a congregation, where we have been, and where God may be leading us to go. It was to consider our church's history, demographics, leadership, financial situation, physical property, and relationship to the Nursery School.

An important input to this process was the administration of a customizable assessment instrument called the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT). The CAT is a product of Holy Cow! Consulting and allows benchmarking against other mainline congregations that have used it. It is intended to:

- Measure the level of satisfaction and energy in the congregation.
- Identify the critical success factors for improving organizational climate.
- Pinpoint the strengths of our congregation's culture.
- Discover where members would like to go in the future.
- Gauge readiness for change.

The CAT was administered in May and completed by 172 respondents. The results of the survey were presented in detail to the church's leadership on June 2 by our consultant at PneuMatrix, Michelle Snyder. The data, together with an executive summary, were also distributed to the congregation, which was also invited to participate in a Zoom session on July 24, at which Michelle elaborated on her interpretations of the data, answered questions and solicited comments.

In subsequent discussions with the Commission on Ministry of PSNE, it was determined that the results of the CAT would satisfy their requirements for a mission review, so no further report was required of our committee.

CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Michelle Binnie, Liz James

Lee Ganshaw, Nancy Lomazzo

Layne Grindal, Chris Zadik

Tom Hipp, Lindley DeGarmo, ex officio

COMMUNICATIONS

Kate Minchin

The role of Communications is truly a team effort at FPCG, and we are blessed to have a host of wonderful staff, volunteers from among our congregation, as well as outside partners who share their gifts of ministry with us.

Our Office Administrator, Linda DiMarino, produces our weekly Sunday bulletins in conjunction with our pastors, staff members, and various committee chairs. Bulletins are printed Thursday mornings, so if you have an announcement to share, please let us know before noon on Tuesdays. Linda can be reached at officeadmin@fpcg.org.

Ashley Cooke is our outside communications consultant who has supported our church behind the scenes for many years with her expertise in graphic design and digital communication. Ashley executes the weekly First Press newsletter to your inbox each week, in addition to the Monday “In Case You Missed It” emails with video links to the prior Sunday’s worship service. Ashley also helps with the design of our outdoor banners, social media, updates to the church website, and producing this Annual Report.

We are grateful to Stasha Healy for applying her editing talents to our church publications each week. Stasha, along with Ross Ogden, Hamish Allan, Elizabeth Peyton, and Rev. DeGarmo met on an ad hoc basis to guide communication around the Congregational Assessment Committee and the Pastoral Nominating Committee activities.

Also new this year was the “Session Digest” missive from our Clerk of Session, Laura Geffs. This note to the congregation summarized the actions of the Session meetings. As a reminder, minutes of the Session meetings are available in the Church Office.

The email address session@fpcg.org continues to be a channel of communication available for members of our congregation, and your Session invites and encourages you to reach out with questions, concerns or comments. Messages sent to this email address are received by all members of Session and will receive a response from the Clerk of Session.



DEACONS' REPORT

*Ginger Boldt and
Julie Mather*

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in, I needed clothes, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you looked after me, I was in prison, and you came to visit me.” -Matthew 25:35

The Deacons of First Presbyterian Church Greenwich, a committee of 14, faithfully served the congregation and supported the ministers when needed.

Our Annual Spring Lunch was celebrated in May, where we served 65 members and guests with a delicious meal prepared by Bonnie Hann and Phil Carrone. Barbara Freeman provided centerpieces with blooms from her garden. Caroline Worra and the Melody Men were on hand for entertainment. We successfully hosted the afternoon at a reasonable cost and hope to expand the appeal for more to join us next May.

We encouraged members to return to the tradition of donating the chancel flowers to honor an occasion or honoree. To further the joy that flowers bring, on Mondays, we created 3-4 small bouquets from the Sunday flowers and delivered them to those who may have needed a lift or a special thank you.

In conjunction with the ministers, we have cared for our congregation, ushered memorial services, paid hospital visits, delivered meals, and provided transportation. In an attempt to be more visible, we have encouraged members of the committee to wear name tags during Fellowship Coffee Hour and serve as Sunday morning greeters alongside our usher teams.

The focus for 2025 will be for our committee to engage in more proactive programs addressing the needs of our senior congregation members.



FELLOWSHIP

Nancy Yao

What a year of fellowship! Thanks to everyone who served, participated, and came together to enjoy fellowship with one another. Understanding the many busy schedules of one and all in our community, Fellowship Hour became a welcome time to share program news and enjoy special time together. We saw many members and new visitors join after Sunday morning service. Partnering with Randy Ante and the Sextons, Fellowship hosted a Lunar New Year event brimming with dumplings, noodles, and other treats from Asian countries. We hosted our first to-be annual Robert Burns Dinner! What a poetic hoot! We welcomed over 80 guests to Fellowship Hall to celebrate the Scottish traditions of Robert Burns connecting guests to the Scottish roots of the Presbyterian Church. The Chili Cook Off showcased eight entrants all vying for Best Chili of FPCG! In April, we enjoyed a Fellowship Hour filled with Easter treats for all. Lenten Dinners warmed our Wednesday evenings as we prepared our hearts for Easter. Homecoming Sunday was festive and lively, activating a fall calendar centered on gratitude. Calendar magnets with special dates were provided to all helping build community at FPCG. Harvest Dinners took place in Fall 2024.

Thanks to our many hosts who welcomed members to their homes. These dinners culminated into a wonderful Harvest Fellowship Hour in early November with pie, pie, pie! Carols by Candlelight provided Fellowship to host a sweet evening of homemade cookies, cakes, and sweet treats! We were thrilled to provide avenues and opportunities for new members to get to know the church and community. We welcomed visitors and guests to events throughout the year. So many volunteers helped to provide fellowship opportunities all year at FPCG. Many thanks to all of the Harvest Dinner participants, hosts, and volunteers throughout the year! Special thanks to Randy and team, the Deacons, Nancilee Holland, Stasha and Addie Healy, William and Evangeline Maasbach, Diane Brown, Renie Blair, Caroline Worra and Greg Gotschall, and everyone who has helped with Fellowship in 2024.

FAITH & OVERCOMING RACIAL BIAS

Lee Ganshaw & Barbara McKelvey

Faith & Overcoming Racial Bias (F&ORB) is dedicated to raising awareness, understanding and acknowledgement of racial attitudes within ourselves and our community, to promote dialogue and to work toward anti-racism efforts that will offer hope and change, as well as a deeper understanding of how racism, and bias of all types, systemic or personal, affects us all.

In 2024, F&ORB hosted an adult education event inviting Rev. Derrick McQueen to discuss the book “Jesus and the Disinherited” by Howard Thurman. In the book Thurman interprets the teachings of Jesus through the experiences of the oppressed. We continued to promote community events related to our mission including the Coretta Scott & Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual conversation at the YWCA. Our plans include organizing another adult education program with Rev. Derrick McQueen in May 2025. We also created a new welcome banner “God loves you, no exceptions, Welcome to FPCG”

We welcome new members and if you are interested in joining us in the work, please contact Lee Ganshaw (ganshaw@me.com) or Barbie McKelvey (barbmckelvey@gmail.com)

FINANCE

Layne Grindal

The Finance Committee, in close cooperation with the clergy, staff, and Session, routinely met throughout the year to ensure the various missions of FPCG have the appropriate financial support necessary to achieve their respective goals. In addition to the annual budgeting process, the Committee also continuously monitors financial reporting and associated management of the Church and Nursery School, including compliance with governing bodies, policies, procedures, and internal controls.

Contribution income in 2024 increased by about 16% over 2023 levels. Expenses were lower than budgeted, resulting in a smaller deficit than projected. After considering other income from the Nursery School, we finished the year with a surplus of \$153,000. Thank you to all who contributed to this successful result.

Looking ahead, the Finance and Stewardship Committees coordinated with the Session to produce an annual budget that is in-line with core FPCG priorities and principles, yet also financially disciplined. The proposed budget for 2025 reflects continued optimism in our stewardship campaign as the church has regained stability under Dr. Lindley DeGarmo. Continued improvement in pledges and contribution income is even more important as we launch a search this year for a permanent Senior Pastor. In addition, strong pledges and giving will be needed to cover costs that are increasing and some that are expected for our facilities in the coming years. With the continued support of the congregation, we expect to achieve our 2025 Pledge and Contribution Income target of \$1.2 million. At the same time, we want to ensure that the Church's staff and programs continue to have the financial resources and support needed in our current environment. As a result, we are forecasting an operating deficit of approximately \$113,000 for 2025. We will be working closely with the Session and Dr. DeGarmo throughout the year on ways to reduce our operating deficit and strengthen the financial position of the church. *See next page for consolidated financials*

ENDOWMENT REPORT

Sue Sproule

The First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich Endowment Funds held assets of \$7,276,749 as of fiscal year-end 2024, up from \$5,991,348 at the end of 2023. The Endowment Funds benefited from strong market returns in 2024.

Our church is blessed to be able to use the Endowment Funds to support the mission of the church. The Funds produced another notable disbursement of \$276,689 in 2024. These funds will continue to support the church's operations and capital in 2025.

FINANCIALS

FINANCIALS 2024

First Presbyterian Church

Operating Income & Expense Statment for 2024 and Proposed Budget for 2025

<u>Description</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>	<u>2024 Actuals</u>	<u>2025 Proposed Budget</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Contribution Income	\$1,236,000	\$1,249,515	\$1,233,500
Non-contribution Income	\$60,000	\$138,316	\$83,000
Fund Transfers	\$190,327	\$190,327	\$210,618
Total Income	\$1,486,327	\$1,578,159	\$1,527,118
<u>Expenses</u>			
Personnel	\$1,116,744	\$1,018,265	\$1,107,283
Mission	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
Per Capita	\$39,000	\$39,130	\$33,500
Music	\$117,000	\$109,336	\$117,000
Worship	\$42,000	\$27,650	\$31,000
Children's Ministry	\$20,000	\$14,670	\$20,000
Youth	\$15,000	\$12,944	\$15,000
Academy	\$3,000	\$1,279	\$3,000
Fellowship	\$10,000	\$9,531	\$10,000
Community Night	\$0	\$0	\$17,000
Deacons	\$4,000	\$791	\$4,000
Stephen Ministry	\$1,000	\$446	\$1,000
Communication	\$10,000	\$9,409	\$10,000
Session	\$5,000	\$2,673	\$5,000
Administrative	\$90,000	\$80,123	\$85,000
Property	\$350,000	\$358,251	\$380,000
Membership	\$1,000	\$314	\$1,000
Total Expenses	\$1,903,744	\$1,764,812	\$1,919,783
Change in Net Assets	(\$417,417)	(\$186,654)	(\$392,665)
Other	\$221,300	\$340,647	\$279,256
Total Change in Net Assets	(\$196,117)	\$153,994	(\$113,409)

FINANCIALS

FINANCIALS 2024

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Consolidated Balance Sheet for the Year Ending December 31, 2024

	Operating Funds	Endowment Fund	Capital Fund	*Other Restricted Funds	Total
ASSETS					
Current Assets					
Cash & Cash Equivalents		238,997.38			3,969,140.16
Prepaid Expenses	2,686,129.87	-	69,111.55	974,901.36	21,987.08
Accounts Receivable	21,987.08	-	-	-	-
Due (To)/From Other Funds	-	-	-	-	-
	(50,600.00)		50,600.00	-	-
Total Current Assets	2,657,516.95	238,997.38	119,711.55	974,901.36	3,991,127.24
Investments		2,019,994.38			6,099,245.93
Property and Equipment	217,632.00	-	-	3,861,619.55	22,273,112.52
	-	-	22,273,112.52	-	22,273,112.52
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,875,148.95	\$2,258,991.76	\$22,392,824.07	\$4,836,520.91	\$32,363,485.69
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS					
Current Liabilities					
Deferred Income		-			1,710,006.08
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	1,710,006.08	-	-	-	158,961.14
Short-Term Portion of Debt	158,961.14	-	-	-	136,835.62
	-	-	136,835.62	-	136,835.62
Total Current Liabilities	1,868,967.22	-	136,835.62	-	2,005,802.84
Long Term Debt		-			1,366,585.39
	-	-	1,366,585.39	-	1,366,585.39
Total Liabilities	1,868,967.22	-	1,503,421.01	-	3,372,388.23
Net Assets					
Unrestricted Net Assets		2,356,088.76			29,229,972.46
Fund Transfers	1,178,510.37	(97,097.00)	20,717,074.42	4,978,298.91	(238,875.00)
	(172,328.64)		172,328.64	(141,778.00)	(238,875.00)
Total Net Assets	1,006,181.73	2,258,991.76	20,889,403.06	4,836,520.91	28,991,097.46
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$2,875,148.95	\$2,258,991.76	\$22,392,824.07	\$4,836,520.91	\$32,363,485.69

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Emily Sternberg

In 2024, the Membership Committee successfully executed its key initiatives with diligence and commitment to strengthening our church community. The committee's goals for the year included:

- Welcoming visitors warmly
- Encouraging visitors to join the church family
- Launching a Time & Talent survey to foster greater involvement
- Rationalizing and updating the membership roster

The committee—comprising of Michelle Binnie, Phil Carrone, Judy Kelly, Katie Poznyakov, Tricia Reville, Justine Schwartz, Emily Sternberg, and Linda Zang—met monthly to ensure steady progress toward these goals. The Committee tracked visitors through the Friendship Pads during worship services and referrals, hosting two orientations and receptions for new members. With the support of Bonnie Hann, a celebratory New Member Cocktail Party was organized in January 2024 to welcome those who had joined since the pandemic.

The committee took significant steps to reconcile and update the church's membership roster, ensuring that all information is accurate and addresses are current. This process was crucial to maintaining a reliable and up-to-date membership database.

In addition, the committee launched two important initiatives. In collaboration with the Deacons, committee members served as greeters each Sunday, offering a warm welcome to attendees, identifying visitors, and providing information about the service and childcare options. Furthermore, the committee rolled out a digital Time & Talent survey to help members identify areas of church life where they can contribute according to their skills and interests. This survey will be presented to each new member class to ensure seamless integration into the church community.

As every FPCG member is part of the Membership Committee, we rely on each individual to contribute to the church's welcoming culture. This includes greeting fellow worshippers, engaging with newcomers during coffee hour, and inviting friends and neighbors to join in our services. Through these collective efforts, we continue to build a thriving and vibrant community of faith.

MISSION ENGAGEMENT

Helen Ji

In 2024, the Mission Engagement Committee of First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich (FPCG) continued to embody its commitment to service, community impact, and faith-inspired action. Our partnerships and initiatives addressed vital concerns such as hunger, education, housing, mental health, displacement, disaster recovery, and more. The year was marked by collaboration with local, national, and global organizations to deliver meaningful change.

Local Mission Partnerships

FPCG deepened its collaboration with community partners, demonstrating unwavering support through funding, volunteerism, and community events:

- **Boys & Girls Club, Stamford/Yerwood Center:** Supported Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, benefitting over 300 children at each event.
- **Call-A-Ride:** Provided transportation for Greenwich seniors, including potential collaboration for church services. Recruited new board members to expand this essential service.
- **Kids in Crisis:** Monthly meal preparations and support for Fairfield County youth. Partnered with confirmands to create a Christmas wish list for children in crisis.
- **Neighbor to Neighbor:** Focused on food security through donations and intergenerational service projects, packing essentials for local families.
- **Greenwich Center for Hope & Renewal (GCHR):** Collaborated to deliver impactful community mental health programs, reaffirming our dedication to fostering holistic well-being and emotional resilience.
- **Pacific House:** Provided emergency shelter and affordable housing support through meals and holiday gift drives, ensuring a brighter Christmas for 75 residents.
- **Partnership to End Human Trafficking (PEHT):** Empowered survivors of trafficking with care packages, workshops, and funding for shelter improvements
- **American Red Cross Blood Drives:** Hosted three blood drives in Fellowship Hall, including two in collaboration with First Baptist, First United Methodist, Second Congregational, and Shir Ami. Collected donations from 190 donors, providing enough blood to save or prolong over 400 lives in Connecticut and beyond.

Global Mission Impact

FPCG extended its reach to communities beyond Greenwich, fostering global transformation through strategic initiatives:

- **Summits Education:** Supported education efforts in Haiti with \$5,000 in funding and direct outreach, addressing the needs of St. Marc School.
- **Refugee Resettlement Program:** Supported refugee families throughout the year as they settled locally, providing essential resources and assistance. During Christmas, gifted toys to refugee children and provided gift cards to families, ensuring they felt welcomed and cared for.

MISSION ENGAGEMENT

continued

Helen Ji

- **PCUSA Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA):** Provided critical support for disaster recovery efforts, including aid for Hurricane Helene and Milton, relief in Israel/Palestine, and contributions to the One Great Hour of Sharing initiative

Special Events and Initiatives

Faithful Service Weekend (April 26-28, 2024)

Guided by the scripture James 2:14-17, which reminds us to pair faith with action, the 2024 Weekend of Faithful Service united 38 volunteers under the inspiring slogan, "Every Member, Every Mission: Serving Together." Over three impactful days, FPCG members, families, and friends collaborated to serve both local and global communities, demonstrating faith in action.

Program Highlights

- **Midnight Run:** Volunteers sorted donations and prepared care packages with clothing and toiletries for the homeless in NYC. The event fostered community connection through dinner and fellowship.
- **Malta House:** Organized donation drives to provide essential support for mothers and children in Connecticut's only transitional living program for pregnant and parenting women.
- **Pacific House:** Prepared and served breakfast for 50 guests at this vital shelter, which supports homeless and at-risk populations in Stamford.
- **Refugee Resettlement Program:** Hosted 16 refugee children at the Norwalk Aquarium, offering a day of learning, joy, and community support.
- **Partnership to End Human Trafficking (PEHT):** Assembled 50 Welcome Bags filled with toiletries, snacks, and resources to support individuals vulnerable to human trafficking.
- **Summits Education:** Continued longstanding support for St. Marc School in Haiti, providing resources to ensure access to education, daily meals, and medical care for students facing challenging circumstances.

The Weekend of Faithful Service is a testament to the collective strength and compassion of our congregation. It continues to be a cherished tradition that strengthens our bonds as a church family and extends love and hope to those in need, both near and far.

Thanksgiving Dinner (November 28, 2024)

Our 27th annual event served over 100 local seniors and delivered an additional 100 meals to homebound residents. Thanks to Hellen Kim and 130 dedicated volunteers, the event showcased the spirit of gratitude and generosity.

MISSION ENGAGEMENT

continued

Helen Ji

Youth Mission Program

Though the 2024 Washington D.C. mission trip was canceled, the committee redirected efforts to local youth activities, including:

- Volunteering at the New Covenant Food Pantry in Stamford.
- Preparing meals for Kids in Crisis and participating in Midnight Run.

New Initiatives and Expansions

In 2024, the committee introduced new partnerships and reinforced existing programs:

- **Family Centers:** Initiated tutoring for K-5 students and allocated \$2,000 in funding.
- **Malta House:** Approved \$3,000 to support transitional housing and family services.

Financial Contributions

The Mission Engagement Committee allocated a total of \$80,000 across 20 mission programs. Significant investments included:

- \$17,532 to PCUSA Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) Funding.
- \$13,750 to Pacific House for emergency housing and meal services.
- \$7,000 to Boys & Girls Club Stamford.
- \$6,014 to Refugee-Jewish Family Services.
- \$5,500 to Kids in Crisis for ongoing youth support.

Looking Forward

As we move into 2025, FPCG remains committed to growing its impact by:

1. Expanding local volunteer opportunities.
2. Enhancing communication through updated digital platforms.
3. Exploring additional global partnerships to support underprivileged communities.

Through the grace of God and the support of our congregation, we will continue to serve faithfully, bringing hope and transformation to the lives we touch.

Faithfully,

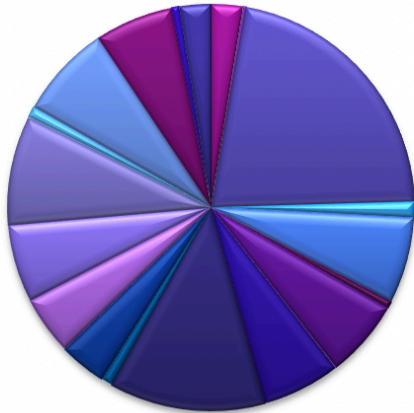
The Mission Engagement Committee

MISSION ENGAGEMENT

continued

Helen Ji

2024 Mission Donation



- Call A Ride
- Day of Faithful Service
- Envision NYC
- PCUSA PDA
- Habitat for Humanity
- Kids in Crisis
- Midnight Run
- Neighbor to Neighbor
- PEHT
- Pacific House
- Thanksgiving Dinner
- Malta House (New Mission 1)
- Mission Committee Expense
- Shelter Meals for Pacific House
- Summits Education
- Boys & Girls Club Stamford
- Youth Mission
- Refugee
- Greenwich Center for Hope & Renewal
- Summer Mission
- Pastor's Emergency Fund
- Family Centers

Committee Members - Mission Programs

- Wayne Atwell - Refugee Program
- Carol Barber - Pacific House
- *David DeWahl - Kids in Crisis
- Lee Ganshaw - Partnership to End Human Trafficking, Midnight Run, Youth Mission
- Nancilee Holland - Habitat for Humanity
- Terry Lohmeyer - Call A Ride
- Arline Lomazzo - Refugee Program
- Yvonne Loubiere - Boys & Girls Club (Yerwood Center)
- Ross Ogden - Red Cross Interfaith Blood Drive
- *Hellen Kim - Thanksgiving Dinner
- Elder Helen Ji - Summit Education, Youth Mission, Greenwich Center for Hope and Renewal

***Retired in 2024**

**** Individual not on the Mission Committee**

THANKSGIVING DINNER

Hellen Kim

For the 27th year in a row, FPCG opened Fellowship Hall to the senior community welcoming nearly 80 guests and delivering 100 meals to the homebound on Thanksgiving. Over 120 volunteers offered their time and talents to cook and serve a traditional holiday meal including turkey, sweet potatoes, stuffing, green bean casserole, salad and pumpkin pie. Guests were also treated to delicious pumpkin bread, baked by families at First Presbyterian Church Nursery School. Despite this year's wet weather, guests enjoyed dinner and dancing as Caroline Worra performed festive holiday tunes.

Special thank you to the Transportation Association of Greenwich (TAG) for transporting our guests. And this event could not have happened without the tireless work of Randy Ante & his team, Renie Blair, Lilian Eng, Lynda Cha and Julie & Blake Mather in ensuring another wonderful Thanksgiving celebration. Finally, we are grateful to the FPCG community for their enormously generous hearts. So many friends in the Greenwich community look forward to this annual event and we look forward to continuing this beautiful tradition!



**Thanksgiving
Dinner**

Thank you!



MUSIC

Dr. Caroline Worra

MUSIC on SUNDAYS

Everyone is invited to make music at FPCG! Our Chancel Choir leads our singing every Sunday with a 9:00 a.m. rehearsal to practice 3 hymns, an anthem, and a choral response. Our children, youth, families, and Steeple Band are invited to join the rehearsal in the sanctuary at 9:30. All ages are encouraged to participate each week by ringing the 10 opening bells followed by an all-age/all-group introit. Our offertory anthem is sung or played either by soloists or by one of our two bell choirs directed by Heather Antonissen. Our prelude and postlude are played on the organ by Jesse Pieper.

MUSIC REHEARSALS and DINNER-FOR-ALL on WEDNESDAYS

Rehearsals for all our FPCG music groups are on Wednesday evenings between 5:00 and 8:45 p.m. We also invite everyone...not only our music makers...but also our entire congregation, to join us for dinner and fellowship on Wednesdays from 6:00-7:15. We added a new sing/play along opportunity to join the Steeple Band from 6:30-7:00 for those interested in christian contemporary music.

BELL CHOIRS with HEATHER

Heather Antonissen is the director of our excellent bell choir program. She brings her passion and expertise every Wednesday from 5:00-6:00 in the sanctuary for the advanced/intermediate group of about 12 players called the Clarion Ringers as well as from 6:30-7:00 to the intermediate/beginner group called the Holy Ringers. These groups generally play in church once a month as well as on the Carols by Candlelight Concert. All styles of music are enjoyed as special bell techniques are learned and musicianship skills are improved. Practice recordings are sent out each week. The group also practices once a month on Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. prior to the service.

MUSIC with CAROLINE and KREG

I am joined by my husband, Kreg Gotschall, for toe-tapping music rehearsals in the 4th floor choir room, from 5:30-6:00 on Wednesdays for our Jubilate Choir (Pre-K through Grade 4) and Summit Sounds (Grades 5-8). All family members are encouraged to join in on the fun! We sing, play bells, play drums and other instruments, make-up choreography and even learn other languages, including sign-language for a variety of songs that we sing for the introit every Sunday. From 6:00-6:30, our older singers in our Advanced Vocal Ensemble (Grades 9-12) are invited to join our Summit Sounds to sing and play 2 and 3 part music as they prepare for special performances. From 6:30-7:00, we rock the house with our Steeple Band (Grades 5-adult) as we sing and play recorders, guitars, bass guitars, keyboards, tambourines, congas, bongos, and practice songs for both our weekly introit as well as our all-age recitals throughout the year. A practice video is sent out each week for the all-age, all-group, family-fun introit, so even if you cannot rehearse on Wednesdays, you can still join us to make music on Sunday mornings!

MUSIC

continued

CHANCEL CHOIR with CAROLINE and JESSE

From 7:15-8:15 p.m. on Wednesdays, upstairs in the 4th floor choir room, our Chancel Choir (Grade 5-adult) of about 20 singers, conducted by Caroline and accompanied by our own Jesse Pieper on the piano, rehearses 4 part hymns as well as anthems in all styles, ranging from early music to classical, to spirituals and modern, in 4 to 8 parts. We practice everything for the upcoming Sunday, and then from 8:15-8:45, we rehearse our music for future Sundays and special events. This group sings every Sunday morning, as well as for all special services including Carols by Candlelight, Christmas Eve, Blessing of the Animals, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. A full group performance recording plus individual practice recordings are sent out weekly. Even if you cannot sing each week, please feel free to come when you can!

SPECIAL FPCG MUSIC EVENTS IN 2024

This year, our Chancel Choir loved singing with our orchestra for Durufle's Requiem on Good Friday and for excerpts from Handel's Messiah on both Easter and Christmas Eve. We also combined forces with our children's groups as we performed songs from the musical Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat in April as well as animal songs for our "Blessing of the Animals" service in December. Our children, youth, and adult choirs combined with our bell choirs for a beautiful Carols by Candlelight service with the addition of a live nativity scene, and our Steeple Band helped to rock our all-age recitals in June, September, and November, featuring solos and ensembles from all ages and all styles of music. Our children and youth helped lead the music in several services this year, as well as singing solos and ensembles in the Christmas Pageant, and many of them performed in the Young Musician's Festival that was hosted in our church. We also had fun with a preview performance in Fellowship Hall of excerpts from Il Trovatore in October in preparation for the opera trip. Everyone is looking forward to the next one! And, we enjoyed singing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with our own Jeb Dennis on the piano in May! During the summer, Jeb led our music beautifully at both the beach services and in our sanctuary, along with many fantastic soloists of all ages. At the end of the summer, Kreg and I enjoyed making music with the children during the week of Vacation Bible School.

A NOTE FROM OUR MUSIC MINISTER, DR. CAROLINE WORRA

I have loved being a part of this church's rich history of excellent music. I think we have continued the tradition and added many new and essential "voices" to our worship experience. It is important to be able to share music of all kinds and to see people of all ages bringing their gifts to God. I am humbled to see the dedication of all-ages each week bringing joy and beauty to our wonderful community. My hope is that everyone always feels welcome to share their musical gifts at FPCG, and that the songs we sing, play, ring, dance, and enjoy, become a happy and meaningful soundtrack that will be in our hearts and minds throughout our busy days, weeks, and for the rest of our lives.

NOMINATING

Lilian Eng

According to the Book of Order, the Nominating Committee is elected by and reports to the congregation. We are grateful for volunteer service and leadership from our FPCG membership. Time, talent, and resources are important to the future of our church and providing love and care to our community. Serving as a Deacon, Elder, or on a nominating committee is one way to maintain the bond of your relationship with the church. We are blessed with members who attend worship, get involved in volunteer and community service through FPCG, and seek to grow their faith. We always welcome suggestions of names of members that the Nominating Committee can review for consideration. Please reach out to our 2025 Nominating Committee: Lilian Eng (chair), Laura Geffs, David Kelly, Nancy Lomazzo and Ginger Boldt (Deacon Representative).

During 2024, the Nominating Committee nominated a Congregational Assessment Committee (CAC) of seven: Michelle Binnie, Lee Ganshaw, Layne Grindal, Thomas Hipp, Liz James, Nancy Lomazzo and Chris Zadik. This committee was responsible for conducting a member survey, which the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) will use in the search for a new Senior Pastor. We thank these members for their hard work to hear the voices and vision of FPCG.

At the last Congregational meeting of 2024, a PNC was slated. The committee of nine is as follows: Michelle Binnie, Caroline Cleveland, Maria Crowley, Layne Grindal, Bob Giambo, Tony Kane, Heidi Novak, Hal Ritch and Tom West.

Also at the meeting, the Nominating Committee expressed thanks to outgoing Elders, Deacons, and 2024 Nominating Committee and welcomed new Elders, Deacons, and 2025 Nominating Committee as follows:

- Nominated Elders for Mission and Personnel for a 3-year term
- Re-upped our Elder for Property and Grounds for a 3-year term
- RE-upped our current Clerk of Session for an additional 1-year term
- Created and nominated two Youth Deacon positions for a 1-year term
- Nominated four new Deacons who will serve for a 3-year term
- Nominated two current deacons for an additional 1-year term
- Nominated a new 2024 Nominating Committee of five members (two of whom are Session representatives, and one of whom is a Deacon representative) for a 1-year term.
- Thank you to our 2024 Nominating Committee for their dedication and hard work: Michelle Binnie, Judy Kelly, Hellen Kim, Bob Giambo (Deacon representative), Kate Minchin (Session representative).

NURSERY SCHOOL

Megan Florentine
Michele Olsen

Director: Megan Florentine
Assistant Director: Michele Olsen
Total Nursery School Faculty: 28

First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich Nursery School (First Presby) is proud to continue its mission of developing a love of learning through play in a values-based environment, an emergent curriculum, and strong home-school connections. Our community has been enhanced by serving as the first school environment for many families who have recently moved to town. We are proud to be a place where both children and their families can find social support and connection. Our Nursery School is a place for the entire family and one where we encourage and enable parents to be an active part of their child's learning and development.

This fall we were delighted to welcome 136 children and their families to the school for the 2024-2025 school year. This is an all-time high enrollment for First Presby! These students have found happiness and have experienced wonderful growth so far this year in our Twos, Threes, Fours, and Fives classroom communities. Brand new as of the fall of 2024 is The Fives, a classroom for children who would benefit from "the gift of time" of an extra year in a nurturing preschool environment before moving on to kindergarten. The Fives' teachers put in months of planning and preparation last winter and spring before its launch, and children in this new program are thriving. We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from their parents. We are so excited about the success of The Fives!

This school year has been marked by other new and exciting happenings at First Presby: We Play, a program aimed at developing early athletic skills and teamwork in young children and led by Coach Kevin Delp, has become a highly-anticipated part of each student's weekly school experience. The Presby Parent Education Series continued with two evening events in 2024: one focused on developing rules and routines at home and the other on sensory development in young children. Two more Parent Education Nights are planned for the winter and spring of 2025, the first led by a pediatric speech and feeding therapist who will speak about strategies for helping children overcome picky eating. Prospective Parent Tours were expanded from one to two days per week in the fall of 2024. Over 100 individuals toured the school between late September and mid-November, 2024! These school tours, with a current parent joining to share her unique perspectives with each group, gave prospective First Presby parents a glimpse into our classroom spaces and piqued their excitement about joining our community. Finally, the Presby Parent Book Club read and discussed Dr. Becky Kennedy's *Good Inside* in 2024 and will discuss Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation* in the winter of 2025. We strive to be a school that continually evolves to serve our families well.

The days at First Presby are rich and full. The children benefit from regular We Play classes as well as exploring art, math, and science concepts through our STREAM program, and they receive lots of exposure to nature and the outdoors through our Nature Classroom. We also have monthly visits from Magic Dance, which is a class loved by the children and teachers. An exciting new addition to our school day enrichment program this year has been a pilot Spanish program for our Fives students! Lunchtime Enrichment for our three and four-year-old students has remained a very popular option, as has our Lunch Bunch program for our two-year-olds, both of which run three days per week. Our Mommy (or Daddy) and Me class has had strong interest from families in the community with children between 12 and 22 months of age. First Presby is a busy place!

NURSERY SCHOOL

continued

We take pride in supporting our families as their children grow, including assisting them in the process of applying to private schools for an extra preschool year or for kindergarten once their children are old enough. More and more, matriculation to a private school is an option First Presby families are pursuing. Last year we had 43 children apply to local private schools. The Greenwich private school admissions process is highly competitive, with far less spots available than are desired. We were thrilled when our graduates' acceptance rate to their top-choice schools was between 75-80%! It gives us joy and satisfaction to know that Presby kids are well-prepared to find success in their next school communities.

Of course, the Presby Parent Association (PPA) continues to work tirelessly on behalf of our families, led by the dedicated team of co-chairs, Katie Poznyakov and Meg Edwards. Highlights from last year's PPA efforts include the Fall Festival, the Valentine's Bagel Breakfast, a Moms' Night Out, and the Parents' Paddle Party. This group of dedicated parents meets regularly and works intentionally to support the school in any way they can. For example, the overwhelming success of last April's Spring Social funded our new We Play program this year. We are so grateful! Their mission to be welcoming and inclusive to all families directly contributes to First Presby's reputation of being a warm and dynamic community. Not only does the PPA support our families, but they are always looking for ways to help teachers feel cared for and honored. Their efforts mean so much to us.

Another way the PPA supports the Nursery School is through continued community outreach programs. This fall, our families donated over 4,000 diapers and over \$1,000 in cash to the organization Mothers for Others. They also baked and wrapped 265 loaves of pumpkin bread to contribute to the annual FPCG Thanksgiving Dinner. In December, over 60 toys were donated to benefit Toys for Tots. Serving others throughout the year is part of our curriculum as we strive to develop the whole child. First Presby is a community that loves to give back.

We are a close-knit community of 28 faculty members. Our dedicated teachers remain child-centered and deeply committed to their work. They are passionate about preparing our children socially, emotionally, and cognitively with readiness skills for a successful transition into kindergarten and beyond. To support the efforts of the teachers, First Presby maintains a regular and intentional schedule of professional development with an overall focus on child development. Teachers participate in independent or team planning, meet with the Director in age-level teams, and meet as a full faculty on a rotating basis every month. Additionally, last year the teachers worked to completely overhaul First Presby's Conference Reports. These new reports are a more specific and accurate glimpse of where each child is in his or her development so parents can be fully informed and know how to support learning at home. Also, the teachers in the Fours and Fives decided to embrace the intentional teaching of a correct pencil grip and letter/number formation by adopting the Handwriting Without Tears program. They have raved about this program and have seen great results with their students so far this year. Regular, targeted professional development gives the Nursery School faculty the time and space to work together in order to stay on the cutting edge of education and serve our students to the best of our abilities.

First Presby continues to flourish! As we look ahead to the upcoming 2025-2026 school year, we are already fully enrolled with a lengthy waiting list. We also look forward to six weeks of Camp Presby this summer; no doubt spots will fill up quickly! First Presby holds a stellar reputation and positive standing within the Greenwich community due to the combined efforts of our faculty and families. We are proud to continue to provide an exceptional environment for young children and their families to build a solid foundation as they begin their educational journeys.

PERSONNEL

Steve Waters

Committee Members

Stacy Grindal
John James (replaced Tom Nelson)
Julie Lorig
Charlene Roberson
Steve Waters, Chair
Dave Zapata

Staff Liaisons

Rev. Lindley DeGarmo
Erin Moore, Business Manager

The Personnel Committee met only ten times in 2024, reflecting the reduced pace of staffing changes under Rev. DeGarmo since his arrival at FPCG last January. Most of the Committee's activity focused on staff compensation and benefit requirements, and the Committee received thoughtful input from the Elders for Finance (Layne Grindal), Nursery School (Mary Paretti), and Property (Stephanie Schnabel).

Results..

1. Session approved both all-staff 3% bonuses for 2024 and a 3% cost-of-living allowance increase effective January 1, 2025 at the Nursery School and FPCG. There had not been salary adjustments at FPCG since 2020. Tara Church received a special bonus in the context of her additional work during the past summer.
2. Session awareness of Presbytery mandated policies regarding pension and medical benefits, which will need to be adapted to the incoming Senior Pastor.
3. An up-to-date Personnel Manual for Staff, including formal severance policies.
4. Hiring a new Office Manager, as well as approval for adding a part-time Sexton.
5. Continued Committee member liaison with individual staff members.
6. Adjusted summer working hours.
7. Rev. Castillo's sabbatical from June through August.

Still to Do.

1. Continue the more formal Review Process for staff, which has been difficult to institutionalize during the past three-year period when FPCG has had five different Heads of Staff.
2. Assist the newly-formed Pastoral Nominating Committee as its process becomes focused on specific candidates, especially on matters relating to compensation and benefits. The Personnel Committee will also need to build relationships with the new Senior Pastor.
3. On-going evaluation of FPCG's staffing model in the context of results from our stewardship efforts.

In conclusion, the Chair would like to welcome long-time member Jim Joyella as the new Elder for Personnel. Thanks are also due the FPCG staff for working hard to support the Committee and our Congregation. Lastly Stacy Grindal, John James, Julie Lorig, Charlene Roberson and Dave Zapata should be commended for the willingness to wrestle with the difficult personnel issues FPCG has confronted. Our Church will be at its best when all of us focus on the overall good of FPCG and our church community.

SENIOR ENGAGEMENT

Wayne Atwell

The Senior Engagement Committee proactively engages older FPCG members, fostering connections both to FPCG and to each other. In August, the committee organized a well-attended potluck dinner at the beach. Those in attendance enjoyed good company, perfect weather, and a beautiful sunset at the Westchester Country Club. In November, the committee performed outreach around the presidential election, offering to drive seniors to vote.

Committee Chair Wayne Atwell welcomes suggestions for outings and experiences and hopes to see even more FPCG seniors at the committee's events in 2025.



STEWARDSHIP

Brian Pennington

“We give thee but thine own, whate’er the gift may be; all that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.”

- William Walsham How inspired by I Chronicles 29

In 2024, our church was blessed with 176 pledges totaling \$1,217,153 which modestly exceeded our \$1,200,000 goal. Total 2024 contribution income was \$1,249,515

Our 2025 Stewardship Goal remains \$1,200,000 although I view that as a lower bound given that the Session is proposing a 2025 budget with a loss of \$113,409. We must continue to rebound from Covid and turbulence to raise our giving to a level that will support our aspirations. We cannot be timid about what level of giving we need to support the goals of the Session and Congregation. We endeavor to build on the success of the 2024 stewardship campaign, “Here I am, Lord”, which was a call for the congregation to be active participants in our stewardship efforts with our 2025 theme, “We give thee but thine own”, which reminds us that everything we have belongs to God.

As of the end of January 2025, we have received 79 pledges totaling \$542,105, 45% of our goal.

When we look at 2024, the number of pledges and overall giving were the highest since 2020, a positive sign.

However, we cannot ignore that our average pledge dropped below \$7,000. The average pledge times number of pledges is the total dollars that we have available to support the church, so both matter a lot and we need the average pledge to increase! We have a much larger percentage of pledges in the \$500-\$2,500 range and less in the ranges above that, particularly \$10,000-\$25,000.

The bottom line is that we clearly depend not only on new members stepping in, but also for our longstanding members to step up when they can.

What this says to me is that we need to continually work to encourage our congregation to step up to the “next level” as they are able to. We need them to give more. Certainly, we do not expect every \$500-\$2,500 giver to instantaneously jump up to the \$10,000-\$25,000 level—although several could easily do that. Many of our smaller givers are young people who are just starting their families. However, our emphasis must be to continue to stress that as God blesses us, our giving should reflect those blessings. I do not believe that it is a coincidence that one of the top priorities identified by the Congregational Assessment Tool was “Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church.” This priority is top-of-mind for stewardship in 2025.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Julie Mather

In each of our lives come times of stress and loss, regardless of our faith, spirituality, or carefully made plans. Stephen Ministers are congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. The confidential caregiver and care receiver relationship is usually conducted through weekly visits for as long as needed. In short, Stephen Ministry helps carry out the church's mission by listening and walking alongside someone during their difficult season.

This year marks the twenty-second year FPCG Stephen Ministry has served our congregation and community. Throughout 2024, Stephen Ministries continued its service to individuals in need of care, matched caregivers with care receivers, monitored the caregiving process, and, when needed, helped care receivers find professional assistance and resources, all within a context of strict confidentiality.

Given the evolving nature of our congregation and community, our Stephen Ministers have collaborated with the Board of Deacons to be combined into a more dynamic congregational care team. Our Stephen Ministers will work closely with the Deacons going forward to assess and meet the everyday needs of our congregation and to provide the specialized care a Stephen Minister can offer when the occasion arises. As always, if you or someone you know needs a caring word, gift, or visit, we encourage you to reach out to our leadership team to let us know how we can come alongside our neighbors in need.

We are deeply grateful for the ability to live out our calling by bearing one another's burdens and for the Stephen Ministers who have cared for those experiencing a difficult challenge.

2024 Stephen Ministers

Andre Castillo (Team Leader)

Carolyn Cleveland

Jim Joyella

Ryan Kim

Julie Mather

Nancy Sears

Catherine Stahl

WORSHIP

Our Mandate

Elizabeth Peyton

The Worship Committee works with clergy and staff to provide worship services that respond to God's invitation to come into his presence weekly with gladness. Responsibilities include identifying and addressing ways to improve the worship experience, providing for special services that celebrate the Christian calendar, managing the usher teams, recruiting ordained lay ministers to serve communion, ensuring the quality of streaming and recording services, tracking attendance, and monitoring the annual budget. This year, the Worship Committee was mindful of the results that emerged from the CAT survey, which showed that Worship came from being a significant area of concern to an area of strength, with satisfaction rising meaningfully since the last CAT survey.

The Year in Review

Our extraordinary ministerial team provided 78 services (excluding recitals) with an average of 121 present in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. While the annual average Sunday attendance remained consistent with 2023, a notable 11% increase in 4th quarter attendance year over year highlighted growing engagement. Total annual in-person attendance was approximately 7,800, inclusive of Lent, Easter and Christmas services. Easter Sunday drew nearly 700 worshippers across two services, reflecting a 36% increase from the prior year, while Christmas Eve welcomed nearly 500 attendees across three services. Virtual participation remained robust, with 2,100 viewers engaging with streamed or recorded services. On average, 23 watched the service live, and 35 more tuned in during the first week, which is considered peak time. This strong interest underscores the importance recording and streaming our services to connect with a broader audience.

The committee worked with clergy and staff on a robust schedule of regular Sunday and special worship services throughout the year. The Lenten season included services on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday, complemented by Lectio Divina services each Wednesday. Easter Sunday was celebrated with two morning services. The Seaside Garden at Tod's Point was once again home to five summer services, with attendance increasing about 8% from last year. During Advent, the congregation enjoyed cherished traditions such as Carols by Candlelight and the Christmas Pageant, culminating in three Christmas Eve services. Other highlights included World Communion Sunday, the All Souls Service, the Blessing of the Animals, as well as visits from guest preachers throughout in August. A special effort led by Dr. Caroline Worra successfully increased lay participation in services, further enriching the worship experience.

The Worship Committee, in its charge to monitor the budget, sought ways to manage expenses while maintaining the beauty of worship services. Measures to reduce the cost of weekly flower arrangements were taken, including procuring smaller weekly arrangements, utilizing potted plants during the summer months, and reintroducing the practice of weekly flower sponsorship by congregation members. These efforts reduced the net annual flower expenditure by more than 50%.

After thoughtful discussion, the Worship Committee recommended, and Session approved, the suspension of the 5 p.m. Chapel service. This decision considered multiple factors, including the decreases in the church's budget, staff and membership since the service was established in 2012. Additionally, the attendance rate (averaging 11 congregants per service), the relative cost of the service, and the growing competition from other local churches, were taken into consideration. The decision will be reassessed in a year to determine its alignment with the church's ongoing priorities.

WORSHIP

continued

The Worship Committee is grateful to those who contributed to worship services this year. Rev. Lindley DeGarmo provided thoughtful and collaborative leadership as our interim minister, and Rev. Andre Castillo offered faithfulness and wisdom as our associate minister. Dr. Caroline Worra's exceptional leadership of our music ministry enriched the worship experience, as did Randy Ante's dedication and meticulous attention to detail. We thank our many elders and deacons for communion service, our congregation members who led prayers and gave readings, and our dedicated ushers, led by James Waters, who ensured services ran smoothly.

The Committee

The Session expresses its deep appreciation to the lay members of our Worship Committee for their faithful service: Elizabeth Peyton, Elder for Worship; Lee Ganshaw, Colleen Giambo, Carolyn Hahn-Re, Susie Huang, Winnie Staniford, James Waters and Ron Wilson.



CLERK'S REPORT

Laura Geffs

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP DECEMBER 31, 2023 662

TOTAL MEMBERS RECEIVED DURING 2024 24

Received by profession or reaffirmation of Faith :	15
Transferred by letter:	2
Baptism:	5
Wedding :	2

TOTAL MEMBERS LOST DURING 2024 220

Certificate of Transfer:	16
Death:	18
Removal from roll:	92 *
Active to Other Participant:	94*

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP DECEMBER 31, 2024 466

* Families who have not attended or donated in the past 4 years were contacted to change their status from "Active" to "Other Participant". FPCG is not required to pay annual dues on "Other Participants." An "Other Participant" can reactivate upon request. In addition, the distribution of the CAT survey revealed a cohort of young adult children of members who are no longer living in the area. These families were contacted and parents affirmed the removal of these young adult children from our church roll.

IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of the members and friends of this congregation who entered the Church Triumphant during the year 2024.

Suzanne Bassett

Betty Von Bergen

Delores Collins

Peter Dott

Robert Feeley

Thomas Fong

Sandra Herman

Russ Harden

Kae Jacobs

Karen Joyella

John Kuck

Sally Kuck

Dr. Philip McWhorter

Robert Murch

Aldolfo Paniagua

Nancy Smith

Terry York

Ona Zeigler

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Minutes of The Congregational and Corporation Meetings of
The First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich
February 25, 2024

Call to Order of Congregational Meeting

Rev. Dr. Lindley DeGarmo called to order this Congregational and Corporation Meeting for the First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich and declared a quorum for the meeting.

Rev. Dr. DeGarmo led the welcome and opening prayer.

The call was read by Laura Geffs, Clerk of Session.

Approval of the Docket

Laura Geffs moved to approve the distributed docket for today's meetings. Seconded. No discussion. Motion Approved.

Approval of Minutes for our 2023 Congregational Meeting

Lindley DeGarmo moved to approve the meeting minutes from the Congregational Annual meeting held February 24, 2023. Second. Discussion. Lindley reminded the congregation that all meeting minutes are available in the church office at all times if a member wishes to read them. Motion approved.

Report from Pastors

Rev. Dr. Lindley DeGarmo- States after 8 weeks at the helm, feels things are off to a great start. Senses a good trajectory secondary to the positive energy in meetings and conversations with FPC leadership and members. Grateful for the opportunity to work with strong colleagues on staff and committed volunteers.

Rev. Andre Castillo- Requested everyone to refer to his report in the Annual Report for his yearly update. It's been a year of leadership and membership transitions. Congratulated the congregation for rising to the unexpected to embrace change and help move the church forward by continuing to work together. We have lots to celebrate, please read the annual report to learn more.

Report from Nominating

Lilian Eng, Elder for Nominating announced Liz Harden has agreed for another three year term and Renie Blair will serve for one year.

Lilian Eng moved to approve Liz Harden to be appointed as Deacon, Class of 2027 and Renie Blair Deacon, Class of 2025, with both terms to begin immediately. No discussion and no additional nominations were received from the floor. Motion approved.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

continued

Introduction of Staff

Lindley introduced FPC staff thanking each of them individually for the efforts to keep the church operating smoothly. Those present stood to be acknowledged and their work applauded.

Randy Ante, Facilities Manager

Heather Antonissen, Handbell Choirs

Andre Castillo, Associate Pastor

Rommel Espano, Day Sexton

Amelia Szabo, Interim Office Manager

Megan Florentine, Nursery School Director

Julio Romero, Day Sexton

Tara Church, Director of Children's Ministries

Erin Moore, Chief Financial Officer

Caroline Worra, Minister of Music

Jesse Pieper, Organist

Presentation of the 2024 Budget

Layne Grindal, Elder for Finance, began by thanking Drew Kelley for his past 6 years of leading the finance council and asked everyone to refer to page 18 of the annual report for the report. The 2024 budget will remain conservative with a projected income of \$1,486,000, and a projected deficit of \$199,000. He encouraged the congregation to submit pledges to help FPC reach financial goals stating the committee is extremely optimistic about reaching goals this year, thanks to stable leadership. There was a question from the congregation concerning the Manse purchase. He explained income from the Condo sale returns to the Clerical Housing Fund established after the sale of the Sound Beach Ave home.

Other Business

No new business.

Rev DeGarmo recessed from the Congregational Meeting, for the purpose of completing the business of the Corporation.

The Corporation Meeting

Election of Corporate Trustees

Rev DeGarmo motioned for the election of Sue Sproule, Wayne Atwell, Stephanie Schnabel, Brian Pennington, Layne Grindal, Ryan Kim, Elizabeth Peyton as Trustees for the Corporation of First Presbyterian Church, Greenwich. Seconded. Discussion: In this congregation, the Session Members (Elders) act as Trustees for the corporation/business of our church. These candidates are the newly elected session members. Motion Approved.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

continued

Election of Corporate Officers

Lindley DeGarmo moved to approve the following slate for election of Corporate Officers for First Presbyterian Corporation.

Laura Geffs, Secretary

Layne Grindal, President

Judy Kelly, Treasurer

Charlene Roberson, Vice President

Seconded. Discussion: The Corporation of First Presbyterian Church elects officers to represent its work and interest. *Motion Approved.*

Financial Assessment

Layne Grindal asked everyone to refer page 22 of Annual report. Reporting the total assets are \$31,252,548.08 of which \$22,273,112.52 is property and equipment, approximately \$6 million in investments with cash equivalents of \$3 million. There were no questions.

Rev. DeGarmo reconvened the Congregational Meeting

Prayer of Remembrance

Andre Castillo offered a Prayer of Remembrance for

Ronald Dederick

Paul Dickey, Jr.

Paula Jensen

George Hallenbeck

Dr. John (Jack) Larkin

Barbara Moore

Robert Nichols

Eugenie Smith

Dorothy Splittorf

Rev. George Pera

Karl Silas Walker

William Wolfe

Andre Castillo then closed the meeting in prayer.

Adjournment

Lindley DeGarmo moved to approve the adjournment of this congregational and corporation meeting. seconded. No discussion. *Motion Approved*

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Geffs

Clerk of Session

Rev. Dr. Lindley G DeGarmo

Moderator

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

continued

First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich **Congregational Meeting Minutes**

November 17, 2024 11:00 am

Rev. Dr. Lindley DeGarmo called the meeting to order after determining a quorum was met, then followed with a prayer. Laura Geffs, Clerk of Session, read the following call.

The congregation of First Presbyterian Church is called to a Congregational Meeting on November 17, 2024 for the purpose of hearing the report of the Nominating Committee and electing Ruling Elders, Deacons, 2025 Nominating Committee and the Pastoral Nominating Committee.

Lilian Eng, Elder for Nominating, thanked her committee members Kate Minchin, Michelle Binnie, Hellen Kim, Bob Giambo, Judy Kelly for their work in identifying this talented slate.

Lilian then read the candidates for Deacon, Elder and Nominating Committee (listed below) asking all candidates to stand when their name was called.

Deacon - Class of 2027

Diane Brown - 3 year
Catherine Stahl - 3 year
Barbie McKelvey - 3 year
Renie Blair - 3 year

Deacon - Class of 2025

Chris Zadik - 1 year
Carolyn Hahn-Re - 1 year
Annabelle Kim - 1 year as a youth Deacon
Griffin Olson -1 year as a youth Deacon

Elder - Class of 2025

Laura Geffs - Clerk of Session

Elder - Class of 2027

Stephanie Schnabel - Building and Grounds
Jim Joyella - Personnel
Lee Ganshaw - Mission

Nominating Committee 2025

Lilian Eng
David Kelly
Laura Geffs
Ginger Boldt
Nancy Lomazzo

Rev DeGarmo asked for any nominations from the floor. There were none. The motion was called. *The Nominating Committee of First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich motions that the candidates presented be elected as Ruling Elders, Deacons and 2024 Nominating Committee beginning January 2025.* Discussion. Lindley expressed his gratitude for the volunteers stepping up to serve the church. *The motion was approved unanimously.*

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

continued

Lilian Eng read the list below of candidates for Pastor Nominating Committee asking each to stand.

Layne Grindal
Bob Giambo
Michelle Binnie
Carolyn Cleveland
Maria Crowley
Heidi Novak
Hal Ritch
Tony Kane
Tom West

Rev DeGarmo asked for any nominations from the floor. There were none. The motion was called. *The Nominating Committee of First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich motions that the candidates presented be elected as the Pastor Nominating Committee.* Discussion. Lindley thanked the new committee, asking the congregation to support their work noting it can be a long process to find the right candidate. *The motion was approved unanimously.*

No further business, Rev Andre Castillo adjourned the meeting with prayer.
The meeting adjourned 11:25 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Geffs
Clerk of Session

Rev. Dr. Lindley DeGarmo
Moderator





2025 SESSION ROSTER



Debra Mecky
Adult Education

Class of 2025



Wayne Atwell
Senior Engagement

Class of 2026



Lynda Cha
Children

Class of 2025



Lilian Eng
Nominating

Class of 2025



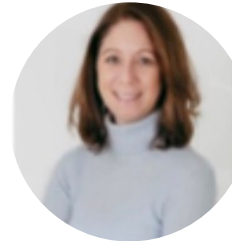
Laura Geffs
Clerk of Session

Class of 2025



Brian Pennington
Stewardship

Class of 2026



Lee Ganshaw
Mission Engagement

Class of 2027



Layne Grindal
Finance

Class of 2026



Ryan Kim
Youth

Class of 2026



Stephanie Schnabel
Building & Property

Class of 2027



Nancy Yao
Fellowship

Class of 2025



Elizabeth Peyton
Worship

Class of 2026



Kate Minchin
Communications

Class of 2025



Mary M. Paretti
Nursery School

Class of 2025



Emily Sternberg
Membership

Class of 2025



Jim Joyella
Personnel

Class of 2027



Sue Sproule
Endowment

Class of 2026

2025 BOARD OF DEACONS



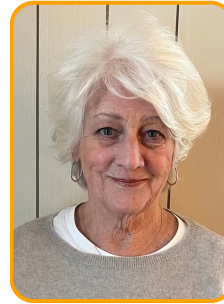
Hamish Allan
Class of 2025



Olivia Brooks Allan
Class of 2025



Carolyn Cleveland
Class of 2025



Ginger Boldt*
Class of 2026



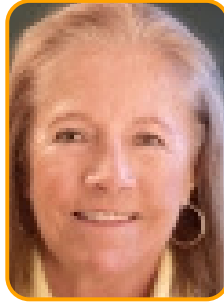
Bob Giambo
Class of 2025



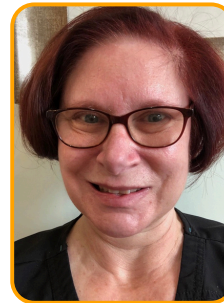
Julie Mather*
Class of 2026



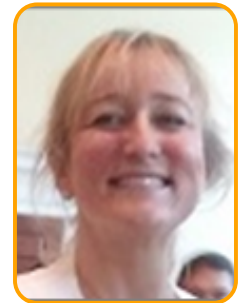
Renie Blair
Class of 2027



Liz Harden
Class of 2026



Carolyn Hahn-Re
Class of 2025



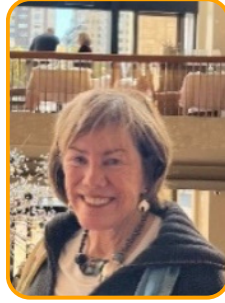
Margaret Mack
Class of 2025



Diane Brown
Class of 2027



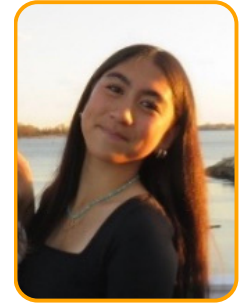
Chris Zadik
Class of 2025



Barbara McKelvey
Class of 2027



Catherine Stahl
Class of 2027



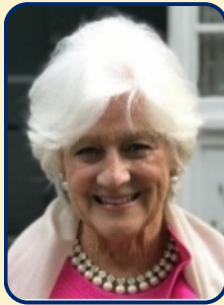
Annabelle Kim
Youth, Class of 2025



Griffin Olson
Youth, Class of 2025

*Deacon, Co-Moderators

NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2025



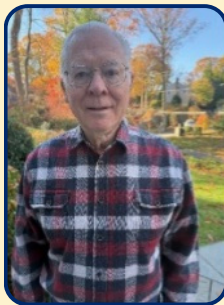
Ginger Bolt



Lilian Eng



Laura Geffs



David Kelly



Nancy Lomazzo

STAFF

Rev. Dr. Lindley G. DeGarmo, Interim Pastor

Rev. Andre Castillo, Associate Pastor

Dr. Caroline Worra, Minister of Music

Randy Ante, Facilities Manager

Tara Church, Director, Children's Ministries

Heather Antonissen, Director, Bell Choir

Jestin Pieper, Organ Associate

Rommel Espano, Sexton

Erin Moore, Business Manager

Jane Parker, Bookkeeper

Linda DiMarino, Office Administrator

Megan Florentine, Director, Nursery School



First Presbyterian Church
✦ of Greenwich ✦