



First Presbyterian

CHURCH OF EASTON

2023 Annual Report



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Easton, Pennsylvania 18042

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www.eastonfpc.org

PRESBYTERIAN POLITY OVERVIEW

The First Presbyterian Church of Easton is a ministry of Jesus Christ through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Presbyterian church governance (polity) is typified by the fact that decision making is made by assemblies of Elders. In the New Testament an Elder is a leader of a local Christian community. The Greek word (πρεσβύτερος) for "elder" is a presbyter.

Each local Presbyterian church is governed by a body of Ruling Elders called **the Session**. Elders are church members who have been nominated and elected by that congregation and ordained into that role. The Session is moderated by the Minister/Pastor (also called a Teaching Elder) who that congregation has called and elected to lead them. The other ordained role in our church governance is that of Deacon. Deacons are likewise called and elected by the congregation and charged to the lead ministries of care and compassion.

In the Presbyterian system groups of local churches form an assembly made up of Ruling and Teaching Elders known as the Presbytery. The First Presbyterian Church of Easton is one of thirty-two worshipping communities in seven counties of eastern Pennsylvania which makes up the Lehigh Presbytery. Presbyteries can be grouped into a synod. And Presbytery's join nationwide in a general assembly.

Presbyterian governance is considered to a "connectional" system because at each level of the structure Elders (laity and clergy) support the broader ministry of the Church - lending mutual support to our call to serve God and love neighbor.

SESSION

Class of 2024

Nancy Udut
980-310-3956
naomiudut@ymail.com

Darcel Hayes-Bridges (1 yr. term)
908-227-2162
Dblack29@aol.com

Class of 2025

Candy Gulotta (1 yr. term)
717-512-1609
lcread@gmail.com

Susan Mackay
908-507-2621
susan.mackay67@gmail.com

Class of 2026

Bill Bartlett
610-392-5785
suburban.dingo@gmail.com

Jim Middendorf
610-966-5590
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Bill Schroeder
609-306-7621
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Noralee Manzek
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Bud Martin
484-544-9311
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**DOCKET OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION AND
CORPORATION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF
EASTON, PA
January 21, 2024**

Voting Members:

Congregational Meeting: All active members in good standing

Meeting of the Corporation: All active members who are 18 years of age and over

Presiding:

Congregational Meeting: Rev. Vernon Van Hise (Moderator of Session)

Meeting of the Corporation: to be appointed

AGENDA:

A. MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

Call to Order, Opening Prayer, Declaration of Quorum

Minutes and Docket

a. Additions to and approval of today's Docket

b. Review of the Minutes of the Congregational and Corporation Meetings of February 5, 2023

Review of 2023 Annual Reports

a. Moderator and Pastor's Report

b. Clerk of Session

c. Board of Deacons

d. Teams

e. Financial Report of 2023

Budget report for 2023

Review of 2024 proposed budget

B. MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Call to Order

Minutes and Docket

a. Additions to and approval of today's Docket

Resolutions

a. Receive reports to the congregation as reports to the corporation

b. Receive budget of congregation as budget of corporation

Adjournment of the Congregational and Corporate Meeting with Prayer

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTON, PA
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION
AND CORPORATION
Sunday, February 5, 2023

The Annual Meeting began in Legacy Hall with Rev. Stefanie Muntzel pointing to the index cards that were available, asking all to write one word that is something you love about the church, or something that is important, or something that should be celebrated, then to share it with a person nearby. Attendees were asked to brainstorm with others about what they loved about this church and write it down; the cards were then read and displayed on the wall.

The Annual Meeting was then called to order at 11:59 a.m. by Rev. Stefanie Muntzel who opened with prayer. Approximately 35 members, staff and guests, including Rev. Alexandra Hendrickson, and Rev. Rick Taylor, were in attendance and a quorum was declared to be present. The docket was reviewed, and after a motion and second was approved as stated. A motion to accept the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting and Meeting of the Corporation was moved, seconded and approved.

Moderator and Pastor Report

Rev. Muntzel said we are a congregation of doers and everybody's hands are active, adding she was so thankful for everyone's hands that make things happen. She discussed concerns with the church buildings, and thanked organist Gloria Snyder and choir director Elizabeth Campbell for the incredible music ministry of the church. The Moderator/Pastor's report was presented and received.

Clerk of Session Report

The Clerk's report was presented showing 126 Communicant Members as of December 31, 2022. A moment of silence was held for the five church members who had died in the previous year.

Elder Shirl Keller asked what was the true membership level of the church; Rev. Muntzel said we will look this year to get a more accurate picture of membership.

Team Reports

Deacons: Deacon Moderator Susan Charlton said she was truly grateful for the support and love the Deacons continue to share, especially with our homebound members. She noted it was great to have more members on the Board of Deacons. Rev. Muntzel had the Deacons stand up to be recognized and applauded.

Mission: Elder Nancy Udut said there are only four members on the team, but really all church members are the Mission Team. She mentioned the upcoming Souper Bowl and asked people to bring something for the Blessing Box.

Personnel: The report was presented. Elder Nancy Udut said she really appreciates office Administrator Jonathan Acheson and his efforts.

Property: Elder Shirl Keller noted it is hard to maintain our building. Rich Linnell praised Elder Keller's efforts, saying she takes care of cleaning, painting, and fixing, and called for a round of applause to thank her.

Worship Team: Rev. Muntzel noted a switch in team leadership, with Donna Van Norman taking over from Bill Bartlett. The efforts decorating the church at Christmas and also providing flowers throughout the year were highlighted.

Stewardship and Finance Team: Rev. Muntzel recognized the efforts of church Treasurer, Elder Susan Mackay. Team member and Elder David Shoemaker reported on the church's financial situation, noting there is about \$100,000 that will last to end of 2024. Pledges have declined, he noted.

Barry Fugere said he reviewed pledge information and noted that in 2020 the average pledge hit a high of about \$3,000 per pledging unit while the 2023 average is \$2,900. This represents the third highest we've had even when we had more pledging units, he said. There are people here who are pledging and we should thank them, he said, adding that in these hard times people have stepped up and increased their pledges.

Elder Mackay said the team budgeted based on what the pledges were. Also, last year the church paid the full per capita amount for all confirmed members but this year we will only pay the amount we collect, so per capita to Presbytery is not included in the budget. She noted the church received a \$1,500 grant for the Blessing Box and a \$1,000 donation earmarked for spending. Regarding personnel, there is a new minimum requirement from the Board of Pensions so that line item has increased.

Regarding the Capital program, Rev. Muntzel noted the church has gotten the mortgage below a \$500,000 balance.

A motion to receive all reports was made, seconded, and approved. Rev. Muntzel gave thanks to all the church leaders for their efforts in 2022.

Presentation

Following a review of the 2023 Budget, Elder Art Charlton gave a presentation on behalf of Session of some options for the church based on its financial situation.

The church is in a time of discernment. Session has discussed our financial challenges as a group and with representatives of Presbytery and the Presbyterian Foundation. Session obtained recommendations on commercial real estate agents, and met with an agent who is very familiar with Easton and the real estate market here and in the region. The Realtor studied comparable properties to determine potential of First Presbyterian Church of Easton for increasing income, through sale or rental. Session also obtained a title search of our property. Based on those efforts, the following options are presented:

Option 1: Sell the Property

- Estimated value between \$750,000 and \$1 million for the buildings
- Estimated value of \$200,000 to \$500,000 for parking lot
- Total sale estimated at \$750,000 to \$1.5 million in today's market
- FPCE uses money to rent worship/office space, stays together, starts fresh, OR
- FPCE merges with another congregation, AND/OR
- FPCE uses money from sale to leave a legacy as a new church development fund or support for a mission, or something else that we would determine.

Option 2: Cut Expenses, Raise Income

- Part-time Pastoral Staff: Move to a part-time pastoral staffing model, reducing expenses by \$25,000-\$30,000
- Churches need a minister. A 30-hour a week position would need to be streamlined – for example the pastor

would devote time JUST to worship, emergency pastoral care and the transition. The congregation would need to step up and do more Christian Education, Fellowship, Administration, etc.

- AND Rent part of building in short term leases to increase income by \$15,000-\$20,000
- AND Continue to discern a future.

Option 3: Sell Half of the Parking Lot

- Sell approximately half of the Parking Lot
- Use estimated \$200k-\$500k revenue to reduce or pay off mortgage
- We will lose part of the \$24,000 yearly income we currently make from the lot
- We don't know how that land would be used
- AND aggressively rent out new spaces in building to make up for loss of parking income (Must add \$25,000-\$35,000)
- AND Parking Lot must still bring in revenue (\$10,000-15,000)

KEEP IN MIND

- Parking Lot was included in the loans, so our loan holder (PILP) would need to approve its sale.
- We would need legal assistance to sell all or parcel out the lot.
- Any change to pastoral terms of call must be approved by the congregation, and by Presbytery and its Committee on Ministry (COM).
- All sales of property must be approved by congregation and COM/Presbytery.
- All long-term leases must be approved by Presbytery.
- We need to figure out taxes on rental income.
- Rental fees must cover utility and maintenance costs.

Elder Charlton concluded by saying any decisions will be made with involvement from the Session, Congregation, Presbytery, and the Presbyterian Investment Loan Program (PILP), which holds the mortgage. Session is requesting feedback from church members and asked for comments via email to the church office, or members can speak with Rev. Muntzel or any member of Session.

Among the questions after the report, Chris Gulotta said he would like to know the assumptions that went into the calculations. Barry Fugere said what is missing from the report is engagement and growth, saying those should not be neglected. Many churches lost engagement during the pandemic, he noted, plus there was a split in the church in 2021. The pandemic did that to our whole culture, he said, and that lack of engagement stifles growth. Mr. Fugere suggested participating in the national "He Gets Us" campaign, which involves engagement, adding that we should all think of not how to raise money, but how do we bring more people to Jesus. Elder Udut said we sent a letter to area businesses, inviting them to support the Blessing Box, but it takes time to develop the support.

Asked about a time frame, Rev. Muntzel said we just had the upstairs space measured and got a title search, but "We don't have a lot of runway to launch anything new."

A motion was offered, seconded, and passed calling for comments within 30 days, and for Session to call another congregational meeting in approximately 60 days.

Terms of Call

The meeting was turned over to the Rev. Alexandra Hendrickson to moderate and Rev. Muntzel left the room so the congregation could discuss her terms of call. The minimum terms of call are set by Presbytery, and a motion and second were made to open discussion on the proposed terms. After the discussion and questions, the motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Rev. Hendrickson prayed for the church, and Rev. Muntzel was called back into the room.

Pat Koefoed said that we have applauded everyone from every committee, and it should be noted that Rev. Muntzel has attended most of those team meetings and gone through much with this church, from the flea infestation to the pandemic and everything else, and that she should be applauded as well.

A motion was made and seconded to approve all reports including the budget, which was approved.

At 1:46 p.m. a motion was made, seconded and approved to nominate David Shoemaker as president pro temp of the corporation, and he called the Meeting of the Corporation to order.

Motions to approve the docket, to receive the reports of the Congregation as reports of the Corporation, and to receive the budget of the Congregation as the budget of the Corporation were made, seconded and approved.

The meetings of the Corporation and the Congregation were closed with prayer at 1:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Art Charlton, Clerk of Session

PASTOR/ SESSION MODERATOR'S REPORT

Friends:

As I stand before you each Sunday morning and survey the congregation, I am struck by the fact that virtually everyone that I see sitting in the pews is actively engaged in the ministry of this congregation in one way or another. You serve on Session, as a member of the Deacons, as a member of one of our teams. Absent that, you are a greeter, or a liturgist. You sing in the choir or participate in the handbell choir. You manage the tech side of our worship services and make sure we can be seen and heard. You are on hand for our other activities such as mission outreach, clean up days, concerts, coffee hours or luncheons. Over the years I have served any number of churches – always as an interim – but I don't remember such a commitment to a church's ministry by most if not all the attending members of the congregation. That is unique in my experience and speaks to your love for this congregation and its ministry to the community at large. It also speaks loudly to the future of this congregation. It shouts HOPE! Well done, my friends!

I'm not going to list the many activities of the church in this space as the Team Chairs have done a fine job in the following pages of detailing the many events of the past year. Rather, I would prefer to use this space to ponder our future with you for a few moments. Our future in a word is "challenging". While we have slowly increased our worship attendance to near 40 a week and had a very successful Stewardship Campaign in November increasing our pledges 4% to \$88,500, there is much more that we have to consider and accomplish.

First and foremost is attracting more of the community to join us in spreading the Gospel message. Frankly, this is hard work as it seems so many of the younger generations are not particularly interested in joining a church or any other civic association. Volunteerism is down across all sectors of our society. We continue to reach out to our community through the efforts of our very active Mission Team and have formed the newly created Community Connections/Membership Team to explore new areas of introducing ourselves to our community. Beyond our Mission outreach programs, the other attraction we hold is our outstanding music program. We are blessed with very accomplished musicians in our midst and need to continue to "show them off", so to speak. Some folks find the attraction to a good music program irresistible. But that will not be enough. We need to continue to experiment with other ideas that will interest others in joining us each Sunday.

The other significant challenge is our church structure. It is beautiful in many respects and serves many functions – and could serve more. However, needless to say, it is old and expensive to maintain – and that will not change. We continue to explore opportunities to utilize our church building to realize more income and to better serve the community.

No life nor any organization is without its challenges. However, a strong grasp on hope for the future and the willingness to work together with the complete acceptance that God is with us - nothing is impossible. Obstacles can be overcome and challenges successfully surmounted. I look forward to working with you in the months ahead in meeting those challenges. God bless.

Larry Van Hise, Interim Pastor

CLERK OF SESSION

Statistical Report for 2023

Session met on the third Thursday of each month in 2023; meeting dates were: January 17; January 31 (Special Session); February 5 - Annual Meeting of the Congregation; March 21; April 6 (Special Session); April 16 (Congregational Meeting); April 18; April 30 (Special Session); May 7 (Special Session); May 21 (Congregational Meeting); May 23; June 11 (Special Session); June 19; July 16 (Congregational Meeting); August 3; September 5 (Special Session); September 21; October 19; November 16; December 21.

Communion was served on the first Sunday of each month in 2023: January 1, February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7, June 4, July 2, August 6, September 3, October 1, November 5 and December 3.

Special Offerings received in 2023 were:

- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Pentecost Offering
- Peace and Global Witness Offering
- Christmas Joy Offering

Communicant Members as of December 31, 2022	....	126
New Members	....	0
Members Transferred	....	1
Nancy Pruitt		
Members Deleted	....	0
Members Removed by Request	....	7
Shirley Keller		
David Shoemaker		
Lois Shoemaker		
Carl McGloughlin		
Julie DeMotte		
Luke McGloughlin		
Sofia DeMotte		
Deceased Members	....	5
Cindy Koch		
Fran Dean		
Harriet Spilman		
Naomi Smith		
Betty Minnich		
Communicant Members as of December 31, 2023	....	113
Baptisms Performed in 2022	....	1
Arlo Matthew Schick		
Marriages Performed in 2022	....	0

DEACONS

The Board of Deacons provided a ministry of caring and service to the congregation and community.

Current members of the Board of Deacons include Ruthann Arras, Carol Butler, Susan Charlton, Chris Gulotta, Shirley Heinsohn, Rich Linnell, Linda Martin, Sherrie Moki, Carol Schroeher, and Jacob Van Norman.

We are grateful for the service of Deacons Mercy Barrow, Julie DeMotte, Sofia DeMotte, and Noralee Manzek, who served their church family through work on the Board of Deacons, finishing their terms of service in June. We also were blessed with the leadership of Pastor Larry to help guide our work.

Deacons prayerfully and faithfully served the mission and people of our church as we:

- Stayed in touch with our church family, and especially Special Care members, with visits, meals, cards and phone calls;
- Provided flowers for the All Saints worship service to memorialize loved ones who died;
- Delivered flowering plants to Special Care members during the Easter and Christmas seasons;
- Hosted weekly coffee hours after worship;
- Provided a card ministry to our church family to celebrate joys and acknowledge sorrows, with special thanks to church member Cathy Burnet for creating beautiful handmade cards;
- Served communion during worship;
- Instituted the Deacon Honey Project, with special thanks to beekeeper Rev. John Heinsohn;
- Provided congregational updates through Soundings and weekly announcements, including “Get to Know Your Deacon” and “Get To Know Your Church Family” articles;
- Partnered with the Mission Team for “Let’s Do Lunch” community dining;
- Partnered with the Mission Team to coordinate two Progressive Meal events;
- Partnered with the Mission Team to coordinate the Angel Tree gift program for families in Northampton County.
- Sold Boscov’s “Friends Helping Friends” passes as a fundraiser.
- Initiated the AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) project that will be completed in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Charlton, Co-Moderator
Ruthann Arras, Co-Moderator
Board of Deacons

SESSION TEAM REPORTS

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS/MEMBERSHIP

Team Members: Susan Mackay-Team Leader, Noralee Manzek, Darcel Hayes-Bridges, Art Charlton, Nancy Udut

During 2023, the Community Connections Team and the Membership Team combined as a new team: Outreach & Membership.

Our goals are to reach out to inform the community of our existence and our mission, to invite people and welcome them to worship and church events, and to contact members who have not been involved in the church in recent years.

1.) The team resumed sending out New Mover postcards from "Outreach.com" each month, averaging 50 to 100 per month.

2.) The team started a new social media program from Outreach.com. Using post ideas from their library as well as pictures and posts from members, we post almost every day on our Facebook and Instagram pages. We then share these posts with several Easton area FB sites to expand our reach. That reach has expanded significantly, but so far has not resulted in new members. We are currently using the social media program on a trial basis.

3.) Partnering with the Mission Team, we promoted the Easton Municipal Band concert in December. Over one hundred people attended, and many stayed to enjoy refreshments at the reception.

4.) We sent a series of two letters to members who have not been active in several years. The letter said that we missed them and hope they are well. The letter also invited them to church events. We will send a third letter early in 2024 to those who did not respond asking if they wish to remain a member.

The team looks forward to promoting more events with the Mission Team and open to our neighbors, such as the Souper Bowl lunch and a wine and cheese event.

We invite anyone to submit photos or other material that would be appropriate for our social media pages. Please send them to susan.mackay67@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Mackay

MISSION TEAM

In 2023 the Team is: Pat Koefoed, Peg Ophhof, Carol Schroeher and Nancy Udut, and we welcomed a new member, Candy Gulotta. Also, Larry Van Hise has given us guidance and spiritual support. New members are always welcome to join the Team.

Food is a big part of our Presbyterian Heritage. We started the year off with a “Souper Bowl” Luncheon in February, which was very successful, and we asked attendees to bring a nonperishable item, preferably soup, for the Blessing Box. Then on to a “Progressive Dinner” to support One Great Hour of Sharing. In September, we enjoyed another “Progressive Dinner, but without the Dinner”; appetizers, desserts and socialization were the main theme and quite enjoyable. In October, we held the second annual (we hope) “Neighborhood Social/Street Fair”, which we cohosted with Genesis. In November, we sponsored a free “Soup Luncheon” for everyone, and we had fifteen outside guests attend. In December, we hosted a light reception after the Easton Municipal Band Concert in the Brainerd Parlor. I believe we ate our way through the year, oh what fun!

Pat Koefoed, with the support of Mission and Session, put together a program from a book titled *Forty days of Prayer*. Scripture was read by different people and videoed, then placed and made available in I Movie form to the congregation. It was amazing and positively received by those participating. We thank Pat for all her hard work, and we plan on rerunning it in 2024.

We continue to support the “Blessing Box”, which is located at the front entrance to our garden. A grant of \$1500.00 was received from the Presbytery to help support this mission. Also, the congregation has embraced this outreach to the community by either signing up for a week of food or bringing in food items on Sunday to be used for the Blessing Box. It is amazing how something so simple brings hope to those in need with food instability in our community.

The “Shawl Ministry” aka The Stitchers are always looking for new people to help with this program. Lap robes have been sent to Lehigh Valley Hospice four times this year along with baby blankets, hats, mittens, and scarves for other local organizations. We have the yarn and needles - just call the church office and someone will get back to you. They also provided hats, mittens, and scarves to all the children on the “Giving Tree” - another blessing from our very giving congregation.

First Presbyterian Mission Budget supports local, national, and international causes. We continued to support the four Denominational special offerings during the year: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace & Global Witness, and Christmas Joy.

The Team has also been progressive by looking into grants. The “Dinner/Lunch Church” Grant for \$4,000.00 was received and will support monthly lunches (such as the “Soup” one in November).

Our faith, hope and love continue to grow via our outreach within the community, by the congregation’s involvement and mission programs. 2024 will be a challenging year, but looking to and asking for guidance from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ everything is possible.

Blessings from the Mission Team to all!
Respectfully submitted, Nancy Udut

2024 MISSION BUDGET

\$5,000.00 (\$6,000)

<u>UNIFIED MISSION SUPPORT</u>	\$3200.00	<table border="0"> <tr> <td align="center" colspan="2"><u>TOTAL MISSION GIVING 2023</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unified Mission Support</td> <td align="right">\$3200.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>International Mission</td> <td align="right">800.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Mission</td> <td align="right">1400.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</td> <td align="right">400.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unspecified Mission</td> <td align="right">200.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td align="right"><u>\$6000.00</u></td> </tr> </table>	<u>TOTAL MISSION GIVING 2023</u>		Unified Mission Support	\$3200.00	International Mission	800.00	Local Mission	1400.00	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	400.00	Unspecified Mission	200.00	Total	<u>\$6000.00</u>
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<u>INTERNATIONAL MISSION</u>																
Presbyterian World Mission-Darren Kennedy	300.00															
Mission co-worker Serving in Egypt	300.00															
Garden Well (Presbyterian Giving)	200.00															
Youth Faces																
<u>LOCAL MISSION</u>		<table border="0"> <tr> <td align="center" colspan="2"><u>SPECIAL OFFERINGS</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>One Great Hour of Sharing</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pentecostal</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project of Easton</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Global Witness/Peacemaking</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christmas Joy</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CROP Walk</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<u>SPECIAL OFFERINGS</u>		One Great Hour of Sharing		Pentecostal		Project of Easton		Global Witness/Peacemaking		Christmas Joy		CROP Walk	
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Christmas Joy																
CROP Walk																
SAFE HARBOR	400.00															
Drop in Lunch	200.00															
Easton Area Community Center	200.00															
Easton Area Neighborhood	100.00															
Family Connection	300.00															
Third Street Alliance	200.00															
Other local causes																
<u>PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE</u>	400.00															
<u>UNSPECIFIED MISSION</u>	200.00															
To Be Determined																

NOTE: a \$1,000.00 donation for Mission is being used to bring Budget up to \$6,000.00

PROPERTY TEAM

Team members: Rich Linnell, Dave Foster, Noralee Manzek

The Property Team's mission is to watch over our beautiful and historic building and grounds and see that they are kept in good condition and provide any necessary repairs to all the parts and pieces that make up our church home. We maintain service contracts for many of our systems. These contracts provide regular inspections of the equipment, and when necessary, repair. For example, we recently had the heating system for Millheim Room repaired. The contractor found and corrected a wiring problem that had existed for a number of years and had just now caused a loss of heat. We also had another contractor find and repair a long-standing problem with the fire alarm system, which was giving us trouble messages for several months. A wire was found lying on top of a steam pipe in a storage area, and it finally failed. The wire was replaced and rerouted.

The members of the Property Team also perform repairs and maintenance when the jobs are within the scope of our abilities. This saves money for the Church. Our budget is the largest of any team in the Church, and we are striving to minimize expenses. We have a lot of help. Members and friends of the Church volunteer to help us when work is needed, be it raking leaves, cleaning the kitchen or helping park cars during GarlicFest or BaconFest. We are grateful for all the help.

We are also grateful for the work of our Administrator, Jonathan. He is the day to day eyes on the building to see if anything needs attention, and maintains the scheduling of our service contracts. Often he is the coordinator of contractors coming in to work on the building. He also prepares Legacy Hall each week for the use of the Easton Municipal Band, and the drop-in center.

This coming year we want to paint the outside doors of the building, and to get the windows scraped and painted. We are looking for a contractor that can give us an estimate of the cost for this large project. When we have the costs, we plan to ask the congregation to "adopt" one or more windows and pay for the refurbishment. Our building can be a beacon to the community, and whatever is decided about future building use, this project will improve its appearance and value.

Respectfully submitted,
Rich Linnell

PERSONNEL TEAM

Team members: Bud Martin, Ellis Finger, Victoria Opthof-Cordaro, Art Charlton

Personnel issues loomed large for the church in 2023, with financial issues always a factor in decisions. The departure last spring of Rev. Stefanie Muntzel prompted Personnel Team efforts in conjunction with Session members and Presbytery to find Rev. Vernon “Larry” Van Hise to serve as our part-time, interim pastor, and to sign a one-year contract with him. Discussions on extending that contract are underway. The team also reviewed and approved 2024 staff salary recommendations and held both formal and informal discussions with all staff throughout the year. A pay increase for our talented Office Administrator Jonathan Acheson was approved. We are blessed to have a hard-working and gifted crew in our employ. The Team also reorganized, with new Elder Bud Martin taking the lead role. Church members with an interest in personnel issues are always welcome to join the team, while members are also encouraged to speak to team members with their concerns as well as their kudos about church staff.

Respectfully submitted,
Bud Martin

WORSHIP TEAM

Members: Bill Bartlett, Elizabeth Campbell, Gloria Snyder, Jim Middendorf, Donna VanNorman, Rev. Van Hise

In 2023, hybrid worship continued to be our standard approach - with both in person and online access via Facebook live, YouTube, and our church website. Jacob Van Norman and Rich Linnell insured the video quality of the online worship. Bill Bartlett, Rich Linnell, and Pat Koefoed handled sound and camera duties. Thank you to our greeters. You have welcomed many members back to worship in the sanctuary.

We held communion the first Sunday of each month. We got back to serving one element at a time. Thank you to the Deacons, and others earlier in the year, for serving communion. And thanks to Shirley, Jim, and Donna VanNorman for preparing communion.

Thank you to our liturgists who assisted with worship services: Noralee Manzek, Pat Koefoed, Linda Martin, Peter Becker, Ellis Finger, Caitlin Omaboe-Mensah, Darcel Hayes-Bridges, Donna Van Norman, Ruthann Arras, Shirley Heinsohn, Art Charlton, Jim Middendorf, Candy Gulotta, and Bill Schroeher. Thank you to Jonathan for scheduling the liturgists.

When Rev. Muntzel left in April, our team made sure we had supply pastors each Sunday through June while Session searched for a part time temporary supply pastor, concluding with the hiring of Rev. Van Hise. Guest preachers during that time were Rev. Rhonda Kruse, Rev. Alexandra Hendrickson, Bill Bartlett, Rev. John Heinsohn, and Pat Koefoed.

Elizabeth as our Chancel Choir Director and Gloria as our Organist and Handbell Choir Director have prepared the lovely music for our services. The enthusiasm they have infused in the Choir and Handbell Choir, and the joy they have given to us all, are the beneficiaries of their music. Due to health issues through the year, the Choir did not participate every week, but thanks to them for stepping up whenever Elizabeth was feeling stronger. A special thanks to Bud Martin for being our guest organist, and Susan Charlton for directing the Handbell Choir, whenever Gloria was unable to attend.

Musicians participating in worship:

Chancel Choir
Handbell Choir
Susan Charlton - flute
Sarah Moki -soloist
Ken Gross -trumpet
Jerry Cirka -soloist
Elizabeth Campbell -soloist
Donna Van Norman -soloist
Rich Linnell - soloist
Rick Taylor -soloist
Art Charlton -guitar
Peter Becker -piano
Debbie Lahr -guest pianist
Dr. Barbara Thomson -guest organist

Christmas Brass Quintet:

Steve Kuder -trumpet
TJ Kurczewski -horn
Art Charlton -trombone
Ryan Lamoreux -euphonium
Sebastian Stanton -tuba

A baptism was performed 9/10/24 for Arlo Matthew Schick.

A joint service with Genesis on 10/15/23 and Neighborhood Social afterwards was enjoyed by all.

Thanks to all who helped decorate our beautiful sanctuary for the Advent season. Our Advent wreath candle lighters were Jerry Cirka and Alison Ann Kelly, Jim and Shirley Van Norman, Rick Taylor, Chris and Candy Gulotta, Shirley Heinsohn and Ruthann Arras.

We are grateful for Rev. Van Hise's time with us. Our team works together with Larry to keep the service enjoyable and meaningful.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Van Norman
Worship Team leader

STEWARDSHIP and FINANCE TEAM

Team members: Bill Schroeher, Susan Mackay, Bud Martin

The First Presbyterian Church is entering into a year of discernment and decision. The church has a lower membership upon which to rely for financial support. We are getting older, so we need to focus on attracting new members to help us carry on the mission of our church. But the good news is that our membership has responded with increased pledges for the coming year. Thank you for pledging your continued support.

When you look at the budget for 2024, our biggest expense is the cost of our buildings with Property Team expenditures for maintenance and the mortgage payments. We have gotten some good news in this area. The Presbytery has provided us with a grant of \$42,893.70 obtained from the sale of a church that closed. Unfortunately, this has become a common occurrence throughout the mainline churches in America.

The Session decided that the entire amount should be applied to the reduction of the principal of our mortgage debt owed to PILP, rather than retaining it and using it for monthly payments. We were also advised by PILP that the interest rate on our mortgage was going to substantially increase, but a telephone call made by Susan Mackay and Rev. Larry Van Hise successfully got a reduction. That rate adjustment, coupled with the \$42,893.70 principal reduction, will result in a monthly payment that is much more manageable.

In addition to the grant from Presbytery that reduced our mortgage, we also received from the Presbytery an additional \$29,000 in grants: \$25,000 for pastor compensation and \$4,000 for mission outreach. Altogether, we were blessed with \$72,000 in grant money from the Presbytery - very strong support for the ministry of our church.

As we enter 2024, we will have to explore our options to determine what is the best path for our church to take. Your input and support are critically needed.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Schroeher, Stewardship & Finance Team Leader

2024 Approved Budget - Amended 1/21/2024

OPERATING & MORTGAGE FUNDS	2024 Budget
INCOME	
Total Pledges	\$ 88,500.00
Prior Year Pledge Income	
Pre-Paid Pledge 2023	
Unpledged Contributions	\$ 7,000.00
Loose Plate Offerings	\$ 1,200.00
Recovery of Funds	\$ 2,400.00
Property Income (Parking)	\$ 18,000.00
Fund Raising	\$ 7,000.00
Interest and Dividends	\$ 150.00
Genesis + Other rental	\$ 14,000.00
Misc and Other Income	
Per Capita	\$ 2,000.00
William & Laura Wilson Fund	\$ 26,000.00
Other Estates	
Insurance and Other Rebates	
CD Interest	\$ 500.00
Presbytery Grant	
Capital Contributions	\$ 26,390.00
PILP Rebate	\$ 2,200.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 195,340.00
EXPENSES	
EXPENSES - Misc.	
Re-Fund Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$ 250.00
Re-Fund Lehr Fund	
Per Capita -Collected	\$ 2,000.00
Per Capita - Augmented	\$ 1,600.00
EXPENSES - Teams	
Administration	\$ 23,000.00
Outreach/Membership	\$ 1,500.00
Deacons	\$ 200.00
Education	\$ 150.00
Mission	\$ 5,000.00
Property	\$ 50,000.00
Stewardship & Finance	
Worship -Supplies & Organ Maint etc	\$ 3,200.00
Worship -Guest Ministers	\$ 400.00
Teams and Misc Total	\$ 87,300.00
EXPENSES - Personnel	
Pastor Salary/Housing	\$ 27,000.00
Bd of Pension Benefits	\$ 3,240.00
Vouchered Medical reimb	\$ -

Study Leave	\$	375.00
Auto Allowance	\$	250.00
Social Security Offset	\$	-
Sub Total Pastorate	\$	30,865.00
Admin Asst/Asst Treasurer	\$	29,120.00
Tech Intern	\$	1,230.00
Choir Director	\$	8,920.00
Music Director	\$	14,200.00
Child Care Attendant	\$	-
Payroll Tax	\$	4,200.00
Discretionary Bonuses		
Supply Pastors		
Sub-Total Other Personnel	\$	57,670.00
Total Personnel Expenses	\$	88,535.00
EXPENSES - Mortgage		
Regular Monthly Payments	\$	37,952.04
Extra Payments on Principal		
Total Mortgage Payments	\$	37,952.04
Total Expenses	\$	213,787.04
Operating Net Income (Loss)	\$	(18,447.04)

after pmt on Principal



FPC Financial Report Year End 2023

Investments (Reserves)		Total CD Int earned YTD	\$	443.09
PLIP 12 Month CD #1 Matures Sept. 2024	\$	10,621.44		
PLIP 12 Month CD #2 Matures May 2024	\$	10,560.95		
PLIP 6 Month CD#3 Matures October 2024	\$	10,695.19		
PLIP 6 Month CD #4 October 2024	\$	10,219.41		
TOTAL	\$	42,096.99		

	As of 12/31/23		2023 Budget	% of Budget
OPERATING FUND INCOME				
Current Year Pledge Income	\$	87,697.85	\$ 85,000.00	103.17%
Prior Year Pledge Income	\$	300.00	-	
Pledge Income Pre Paid			-	
Unpledged Contributions	\$	7,626.00	14,000.00	54.47%
Loose Plate Offerings	\$	1,897.25	800.00	237.16%
Extra Offerings			-	
Recovery of Funds	\$	2,400.00	2,600.00	92.31%
Property Income (Parking)	\$	18,750.00	20,000.00	93.75%
Fund Raising	\$	5,721.00	5,000.00	114.42%
Interest and Dividends	\$	232.71	250.00	93.08%
Other Income: CD Interest	\$	443.09	200.00	221.55%
Genesis + Other rental	\$	22,560.00	8,000.00	282.00%
Misc and Other Income	\$	306.20	2,200.00	13.92%
William & Laura Wilson Fund	\$	25,800.00	26,000.00	99.23%
Other Estates/Benevolences	\$	-	-	
Insurance and Other Rebates	\$	154.00	-	
Presbytery Grant	\$	25,000.00		
Events Work Group	\$	304.37		
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME	\$	199,192.47	\$ 164,050.00	121.42%

OPERATING EXPENSES - Teams & Misc.							
Re-Fund Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$	-	\$	-			
Re-Fund Lehr Fund	\$	-	\$	-			
Per Capita	\$	1,447.15					
Administration	\$	25,947.89	\$	21,000.00		123.56%	
Outreach/Membership	\$	355.83	\$	500.00		71.17%	
Deacons	\$	-	\$	200.00		0.00%	
Education (Fellowship & Faith Formation)	\$	85.37	\$	300.00		28.46%	
Mission	\$		\$	-			
Shawl Ministry	\$	4,810.28	\$	6,000.00		80.17%	
Property	\$	52,261.01	\$	45,000.00		116.14%	
Stewardship & Finance	\$	-	\$	-			
Worship -Supplies & Organ Maint, Guest Music	\$	3,366.94	\$	3,000.00		112.23%	
Worship - Guest Ministers	\$		\$	800.00		0.00%	
TEAMS & Misc. Total	\$	88,274.47	\$	76,800.00		114.94%	
Personnel							
Pastorate Compensation-Salary	\$	20,907.76	\$	35,950.00		58.16%	
Housing	\$	13,948.60	\$	18,000.00		77.49%	
Pastor Benefits	\$	10,521.90	\$	21,040.00		50.01%	
Social Security Offset	\$	749.97	\$	2,000.00		37.50%	
Study Leave/ Professional Dev	\$	-	\$	750.00		0.00%	
Auto Allowance	\$	-	\$	300.00		0.00%	
Total Pastorate	\$	46,128.23	\$	78,040.00		59.11%	
Other Personnel							
Admin Assistant	\$	23,394.00	\$	20,300.00		115.24%	
Admin Asst Benefits	\$		\$	-			
Choir Director	\$	8,920.08	\$	8,920.00		100.00%	
Music Director	\$	14,200.08	\$	14,200.00		100.00%	
Child Care Attendant	\$		\$	-			
Communication Tech	\$	1,050.00	\$	1,100.00		95.45%	
Payroll Tax	\$	3,638.65	\$	3,300.00		110.26%	
Supply Pastors	\$	1,360.00	\$	-			
Sub-Total Other Personnel	\$	52,562.81	\$	47,820.00		109.92%	
Total Personnel	\$	98,691.04	\$	125,860.00		78.41%	
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$	186,965.51	\$	202,660.00		92.26%	

OPERATING NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$	12,226.96	\$	(38,610.00)					
Mortgage FUND INCOME									
Mortgage Contributions	\$	21,045.88	\$	23,725.00				88.71%	
Plus: PLP Rebates	\$	2,307.12	\$	2,000.00				115.36%	
Total	\$	23,353.00	\$	25,725.00				90.78%	
CAPITAL FUND EXPENSE									
Regular Mortgage Pmts	\$	38,194.32	\$	37,200.00				102.67%	
Pmts on Principal	\$	-	\$	-					
Total	\$	38,194.32	\$	37,200.00				102.67%	
Capital Fund Bal. carried from 2022	\$	(92.96)	\$	(92.96)					
CAPITAL FUND BALANCE	\$	(14,934.28)	\$	(11,567.96)					
SUMMARY-OPERATING & CAPITAL FUNDS COMBINED									
Total Income	\$	222,545.47	\$	189,775.00				117.27%	
Total Expenses	\$	225,159.83	\$	239,860.00				93.87%	
Net Performance To Date	\$	(2,614.36)	\$	(50,085.00)				5.22%	
Bank Account									
Bank Balance as of December 31, 2023	\$	101,219.52							
Less Capital Campaign Funds Balance									
Less Restricted Funds**	\$	38,703.64							
Balance	\$	62,515.88							
Minus Negative Capital Fund	\$	14,934.28							
Balance Available to Pay Bills	\$	47,581.60							

* Fixed notes purchased to support mortgage and increase mortgage interest rate rebate

** Restricted Funds Include: Memorial, Lehr, OGHs, Project, PerCapita, etc. **

Mortgage Balance as of December 15, 2023

\$ 470,719.47

TEMPORARY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS (Dedicated Funds) - 2023

NAME	BAL 1/1/2023	DEPOSITS IN	PAYMENTS OUT	BAL 12/31/2023
Funds				
Lehr Fund	\$7,036.57	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$7,336.57
Pastor's Discretionary	\$193.39	\$0.00	\$104.75	\$88.64
Per Capita	\$297.93	\$1,667.82	\$1,965.75	\$0.00
Flowers	\$1,236.00	\$925.00	\$894.00	\$1,267.00
Child Protection Training	\$139.25	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$139.25
Special Gift Collection	\$13.51	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$13.51
Memorial Fund	\$9,411.63	\$3,280.00	\$1,747.16	\$10,944.47
Organ Fund	\$3,840.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,840.00
Women's Retreat	\$30.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30.00
Endowment Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Wilson Trust	\$0.00	\$6,500.00	\$0.00	\$6,500.00
Pentecost	\$209.20	\$119.60	\$267.26	\$61.54
Blessing Box Donations	\$324.45	\$100.00	\$78.49	\$345.96
Blessing Box Grant	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Make It Take It Grant	\$690.28	\$0.00	\$105.69	\$584.59
Presbyterian Disaster	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Joy	\$460.00	\$797.00	\$485.00	\$772.00
Peace & Global Witness	\$369.00	\$600.00	\$810.06	\$158.94
One Great Hour	\$0.00	\$1,049.75	\$1,049.75	\$0.00
Safe Harbor	\$87.36	\$0.00	\$87.36	\$0.00
Special Mission Fund Raising	\$1,050.00	\$1,000.00	\$134.57	\$1,915.43
Project	\$55.00	\$521.09	\$397.35	\$178.74
Presbytery Outreach Grant	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00
Deacon Coffee Hour Income	\$0.00	\$181.00	\$0.00	\$181.00
Deacon Honey Income	\$0.00	\$346.00	\$0.00	\$346.00
TOTALS	\$25,443.57	\$23,137.26	\$9,877.19	\$38,703.64

PROFIT/LOSS HISTORY 2020 -2024

	ACTUAL	ACTUAL*	ACTUAL	ACTUAL**
	2020	2021	2022	2023
OPERATING FUND				
INCOME	\$ 202,262.58	\$ 203,369.70	\$ 166,448.28	\$ 199,192.47
PPP LOAN (Forgiven)		\$ 43,429.75		
EXPENSES	\$ 174,687.47	\$ 203,130.58	\$ 204,617.24	\$ 186,965.51
PROFIT (LOSS)	\$ 27,575.11	\$ 43,668.87	\$ (38,168.96)	\$ 12,226.96
CAPITAL FUND				
BALANCE 1/1	\$ 15,207.85	\$ 23,357.61	\$ 7,025.00	\$ (92.96)
CONTRIBUTIONS/REBATES	\$ 46,226.36	\$ 21,595.99	\$ 30,070.50	\$ 23,353.00
PAYMENTS	\$ 38,076.60	\$ 37,928.58	\$ 37,188.46	\$ 38,194.84
BALANCE 12/31	\$ 23,357.61	\$ 7,025.02	\$ (92.96)	\$ (14,934.80)
COMBINED FUNDS				
PROFIT (LOSS)	\$ 50,932.72	\$ 50,693.89	\$ (38,261.92)	\$ (2,614.36)

*NOTE: 2021 "PROFIT" INCLUDES THE \$43,429.75 PPP LOAN

**NOTE: 2023 "PROFIT" INCLUDES THE \$25,000 PRESBYTERY GRANT TO HIRE PASTOR

BEGINNING IN 2024 - OPERATING AND MORTGAGE FUNDS COMBINED

	2024 BUDGET
INCOME	\$ 195,340.00
EXPENSES	\$ 211,787.04
BALANCE	\$ (16,447.04)

PILP Loan - Where We Were and Where We Are Now as of 12/31/2023

	Term	Principal Balance	Interest Rate*	Monthly Payment
Original Loan Oct. 2007	20 Years	\$ 825,000.00	6.960%	\$ 6,378.00
Refinanced Loan June 2014	25 Years	\$ 694,286.41	3.137%	\$ 3,340.00
Principal Balance as of 12/12/2022		\$ 493,047.31	2.897%	\$ 3,099.04
Adjustable Interest Rate Changed 12/1/2023			5.535%	\$ 3,736.68
Request for Interest Rate Reduction 12/8/2023			4.495%	\$ 3,467.24
Principal Balance as of 12/15/2023		\$ 470,719.47		

*Interest Rate Adjusted Every 2 Years

Additional Pmts on Principal in 2016		\$ 6,000.00
Additional Pmts on Principal in 2017		\$ 5,500.00
Additional Pmts on Principal in 2018		\$ 6,648.61
Additional Pmts on Principal in 2019		\$ 5,052.38
Additional Pmts on Principal in 2020		\$ -
Additional Pmts on Principal in 2021		\$ -
Total additional pmts on Principal		\$ 23,200.99

Payment To Be Paid on Principal in January 2024 \$42,893.70
 (Donation from Lehigh Presbytery)

PLEDGE HISTORY 2018 TO 2024

Year	NUMBER OF PLEDGES	PLEDGED AMOUNT	PLEDGES PAID	NON-PLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL PAID
2018	49	\$ 127,244.00	\$ 124,331.00	\$ 16,558.00	\$ 140,889.00
2019	40	\$ 118,842.00	\$ 150,817.00	\$ 28,098.00	\$ 178,915.00
2020	46	\$ 127,134.00	\$ 120,435.00	\$ 24,651.00	\$ 145,086.00
2021	37	\$ 111,094.00	\$ 111,014.00	\$ 21,868.00	\$ 132,882.00
2022	31	\$ 79,926.00	\$ 81,466.00	\$ 12,357.00	\$ 93,823.00
2023	29	\$ 83,842.00	\$ 87,697.85	\$ 7,626.00	\$ 95,323.85
2024	29	\$ 88,420.00			

1-YEAR MORTGAGE PLEDGE

2023	27	\$ 24,325.00	\$ 20,258.59
2024	23	\$ 26,390.00	

GROUP UPDATES

Brunch Bunch

The First Presbyterian Brunch Bunch continues to thrive! We have between 12 and 20 members who attend on the second Sunday of every month. New members are welcome! Bring your appetite and learn more about your fellow congregants as we merrily munch at local restaurants.

In 2023 we went to:

January – Long Horn Steakhouse
February – None - Church schedule conflict
March – Outback Steakhouse
April – None - Church schedule conflict
May – Frank’s Pizza at Southmont
June – Tacos and Tequila
July – Marblehead Chowder House
August – Longhorn Steakhouse
September – None – church schedule conflict
October – Frank’s Pizza at Southmont
November – Tacos and Tequila
December – Carrabba’s Italian Grill

Suggestions are always welcome!

Respectfully submitted,
Ruthann Arras, Brunch Bunch Coordinator

Book Club

The Book Club meets on the third Monday of the month at 1:00pm and has once again covered a variety of topics all of which were suggested by members of the club.

The topics covered ranged from a grandmother taking a “walk” (unbelievably nonfiction), to the establishment of the J.P. Morgan Library (also nonfiction), to a woman operating as a traveling library, to the response of two friends to gun violence (addressing friendship and racism), to an old classic, to an interesting trip with giraffes, and to chemistry lessons (now a TV series), to a tree of life and the prospect of endless life without aging.

Every book we read created interesting discussions and made us think about the world around us, not only from our own perspective, but from other perspectives as well. Books have something to say: take a step or leap out of own reality for a time for fun, relaxation, curiosity, or history. It’s a good thing for all of us to do.

If you would like to join our reading group, please get in touch with me and I’ll send you our list of books for the year.

Here is the list of books we read this year:

January 16	<i>Grandma Gatewood's Walk</i> - Ben Montgomery
February 20	<i>The Great Alone</i> - Kristin Hannah
March 20	<i>The Personal Librarian</i> – Marie Benedict & Victoria C Murphy
April 17	<i>The Teacher of Warsaw</i> – Mario Escobar
May 15	<i>Tuck Everlasting</i> -- Natalie Babbitt
June 19	<i>The Heirloom Gardens</i> – Viola Shipman
July 17	<i>The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek</i> – Kim Michele Richardson
Aug 21	<i>We Are Not Like Them</i> – Christine Pride & Jo Piazza
Sept 18	<i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i> – Betty Smith
Oct 16	<i>West With Giraffes</i> – Lynda Rutledge
Nov 20	<i>Lessons in Chemistry</i> – Bonnie Garmus
Dec. 5	Luncheon

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Stanek

Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir continues to roll with the punches and be a close knit group of devoted friends.

We took some time off last fall during my medical leave and returned in October, meeting every other Sunday morning, as dictated by my chemotherapy schedule. Heading into the new year, we are meeting each Sunday morning (generally at 9:30am) to work up an anthem for that morning. We hope to return to weeknight rehearsals in the spring.

We are very close, but always have room for more. It helps if you have experience reading music, but having a good ear can be every bit as valuable. Putting it simply, don't let a lack of experience hold you back. If you love music and love to sing, I encourage you to join us one Sunday morning or contact me directly for more information.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Campbell